

FREETHINKER

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CATHOLIC PARENTS ORGANISE TO OPPOSE SEGREGATION

Catholic parents in Stafford have formed an action committee to fight against what they describe as educational segregation. They are campaigning for the right of their children to attend a non-Catholic secondary school. The children, who are at present attending St Anne's Primary School, have been allocated places at the Blessed William Howard Secondary Modern School. But the Catholic parents are anxious that their children should go to the Walton Comprehensive School. The chairman of the Action Committee has told Mrs Thatcher, Secretary of State for Education, that they do not want their children to be segregated from children of other denominations. A spokesman for the Department said that the parents' complaints are under consideration. This is the second time in recent months that Catholic parents have made a determined attempt to secure a non-denominational education for their children. In Birkenhead, a group of them have taken a test case to the High Court, but a decision has not yet been reached.

Dangers of Segregation

David T. Nowall, secretary of the Stafford Action Committee, said he believed that children should mix with others who hold different religious views. Such contact made them better prepared for life. He added: "We do not like being told, just because we are Catholics, that we must not send our children to the same schools as our neighbours. Separation can lead to the sort of situation seen in Northern Ireland today".

Despite the strident demands by priests and organisations that all Catholic children shall be educated in Catholic schools, there have been growing doubts amongst parents about this policy. It affects them financially, for although the State almost completely foots the bill, this does not prevent priests from pressurising Catholics to pay huge sums every year for "education". There is much dissatisfaction about teaching standards and facilities, and enthusiasm for the time spent in prayer and indoctrination sessions is beginning to pall.

The campaign against religion in school and the subsidising of Church schools has contributed significantly to this change of attitude. It must not fade out at a time when even Catholics are beginning to realise the foolishness and potential danger of segregating children along religious lines. Already, large numbers of Catholic parents would be glad to send their children to non-Catholic schools. But, so long as State schools are transformed into part-time churches, Catholic parents will have difficulty in resisting pressure to send their children to Catholic schools.

Secular Education

The complete secularisation of education will enable parents to send their children to school knowing that though they will mix with others from different religious backgrounds but not be indoctrinated. It will also mean that freethinking parents and pupils will not be subjected to worry and embarrassment over withdrawal from Religious Instruction and acts of worship.

EASTBOURNE TORIES REJECT MP

It seems likely that Right-wing puritans will be losing one of their champions at Westminster. Sir Charles Taylor, Conservative MP for Eastbourne for 36 years, will not be re-adopted by his constituency association at the next General Election. Sir Charles was on a yachting holiday when the Eastbourne Tories decided to give him a sailor's farewell. The move follows conflict within the association. Brigadier Edwin Flavell, a strong supporter of Sir Charles Taylor, was voted out of office as chairman.

ANOTHER UNDERGROUND PROSECUTION?

Another "underground" paper may be prosecuted. This time it is one of the provincial advocates of the "alternative society" which is threatened with prosecution. Police visited the Barnsley offices of *Stryng*—a paper which recently came into existence and circulates in Yorkshire—and issued questionnaire and list of charges that may be brought against the publishers. The questionnaire was comprehensive, requesting information about writers of articles, members of the staff, and if it was registered as a charity or a limited company.

Parts of the second issue of *Stryng* including cartoons and certain words which the paper's staff described as "common or garden working men's club talk", were considered to be "indecent".

Stryng claim that the Police said the offences committed were against the Indecent Advertisement Act of 1889, the Registration of Business Names Act, 1926, the Official Secrets Act, and the Newspaper Libel and Registration Act, 1881.

The publishers claim that the technical nature of the charges seems to indicate that the authorities are intent on destroying the paper financially. They also claim that pressure has been put on the printer not to print the next issue.

DESTINY OR DELUSION: GREAT BRITAIN AND THE COMMON MARKET

MARTIN PAGE

Gollancz recently published a timely and important contribution to the so-called "great debate" in the form of a volume of well reasoned and well researched essays by distinguished academics, politicians and industrialists who, whatever their political party or creed, are united in their criticism of the supposed benefits for Britain and the international community of British entry into the EEC.

The undoubted economic burden of entry for Britain is trenchantly analysed by Douglas Jay, MP (a former President of the Board of Trade): the termination of Britain's traditional cheap food policy on which her prosperity and greatness have been built; massive payments to the Common Agricultural Policy to subsidise antiquated, inefficient farming on the Continent; the imposition of Value Added Tax; a substantial reduction of free entry and preference rights for British exports within the Commonwealth and EFTA; the loss of exports all over the world due to the ensuing higher British labour costs; and the loss of exchange control over all funds exported to the enlarged Market.

Richard Body, MP, exposes the economic lunacy of the EEC's Common Agricultural Policy, which HMG has accepted, although this Policy could add between £500 million and £1,000 million annually to Britain's balance of payments difficulties (according to the Economics Editor of the *Financial Times*) and produce an 18 to 26 per cent rise in British food prices (according to the 1970 White Paper).

Speculation

The shipbuilder Sir John Hunter critically examines the claim that entry would necessarily produce a higher national growth rate and increased prosperity for Britain: such a claim is at best gross speculation and certainly discountenanced by the known facts and balance of probabilities. A Britain weakened by scandalously high unemployment and mounting inflation seems unlikely to derive economic benefits from the so-called "dynamic" effects of entry into a Community where there are very few (if any) captive markets for British exports. As Professor Harry Johnson points out, Britain would be on the periphery of the EEC: with the Market's policy of the free movement of capital, capital and labour would tend to gravitate towards the bustling continental centre of the unified Market. And because of factors such as transport costs international companies would probably prefer, say, the Ruhr complex to depressed and more remote areas of the British Isles. A common currency in the EEC would deprive Britain as a member of the ability to alleviate her own economic difficulties. Like other advanced industrial states, Britain has undoubted economic problems, but there is no reason to suppose that her entry to the EEC would solve or even reduce any of these problems.

The Government's White Paper of July 1971 declared (para. 56): "In the light of the experience of the Six themselves, and their conviction that the creation of the Community materially contributed to their growth, and of the essential similarity of our economies, the Government are confident that membership of the enlarged Community will lead to much improved efficiency and productivity in British industry, with a higher rate of investment and a

faster growth of real wage". Yet European countries outside the EEC have grown as fast as countries inside; as Sir John Hunter points out (p. 52), "there is little statistical evidence to suggest that GNP growth rates in the six EEC countries have been higher on average than they would have been had the Treaty of Rome not been signed"; and even if the EEC countries have made economic progress it does not follow that Britain would make similar progress as an EEC member. The fishing, coal and steel industries and many small businesses in Britain would almost certainly be among the losers and the casualties of British entry; and it is significant that in the 1971 White Paper there was not even an attempt to evaluate the impact of entry on British invisible earnings like tourism, banking and insurance. In any event, the mass of British people do not share the technocratic obsession of some of their leaders with economic growth and GNP.

Look to the East

Pro-Marketeers talk vaguely about wider markets, yet far from securing wider markets for Britain, British membership of the EEC seems certain to have the contrary effect. British trade with the EEC accounts for no more than one quarter of total British exports; and who can deny the immense potential of Australia and Canada—to name but two Commonwealth countries—which our long-standing economic and cultural bonds should enable us to share, outside the EEC? HMG has not negotiated any "special arrangements" for Australia and Canada (1971 White Paper, para. 101); and Britain's entry into the EEC on the terms so far agreed would seriously disrupt New Zealand's dairy-farming and Australia's fruit-growing and sugar-cane industries, which have been specially tailored for the British market, with little success in obtaining new outlets (e.g. in Japan), and largely serviced by ex-servicemen from the fight against Nazism.

David Wall points out that Britain imports a higher percentage of goods from the less developed nations than does the EEC; that the trade of Commonwealth countries not covered by the Yaoundé Convention would undoubtedly suffer as a result of Britain's entry; and that the enlargement of the EEC with its tariff barriers would in itself represent "a substantial worsening of the overall trade position of the Third World". In a brilliant essay, William Pickles rightly insists that the great world problems of race, over-population, nuclear war, pollution, and the growing division between the developed and underdeveloped nations, can be solved (if at all) only by multi-racial, intercontinental and truly international agencies, not by semi-continental, inward-looking blocs like the EEC, preoccupied with the problems its own existence has created and obsessed with a European identity confined to a part of Western Europe. True to her traditions of world trade and of free trade, Britain could negotiate a free trade and cultural agreement with China which would be at least as likely to promote international goodwill and world peace as Britain's entry into the EEC.

A Force for Peace ?

On the one hand, pro-Marketeers maintain that the EEC, fortified by Britain's entry, will be a great bulwark

against Communism; on the other, they claim it will strengthen peace in Europe. Yet far from promoting peace, as Mr Heath apparently believes, an enlarged EEC in Western Europe would almost certainly be a divisive force, heightening existing tensions in Europe and perpetuating the sterilities of the cold war. The suspicions and fears of Russia and even America would certainly be aroused if, to shout as loudly as these two super-powers, the EEC decided to develop a nuclear capability on a comparable scale, in addition to conscription in peacetime, to defend its frontiers and tariff barriers. Needless to say, the concept of a socialist EEC is a delusion: if it were otherwise, why have two Conservative Governments within the last decade been so eager to take Britain into the EEC? The Common Market is clearly designed to foster international capitalism and economic competition. In Italy and Western Germany, where Fascism and Nazism were rampant yesterday, neo-Fascism is resurgent today (Giorgio Almirante has made considerable headway, and Willy Brandt's majority is perilously slender); in France, Gaullism has triumphed over socialism; Belgium is riven by conflict between Flemings and Walloons; and fascist Greece is an associate member of the EEC. The European Parliament has virtually no power within a "community" where dictatorial government has long been the rule rather than the exception.

Political power concentrated in the hands of the unelected bureaucracy in Brussels; economic power concentrated in the hands of the giant international companies; spiritual power concentrated in the hands of the Vatican: that is part of the appalling prospect confronting the British people if their Government hijacks them into the EEC. In the Common Market countries, strikes, unemployment, inflation and general social unrest have become increasingly grave and disruptive: in Italy, where strikes and unemployment already abound, the introduction of Value Added Tax in January could well have dire consequences; in Belgium, there was a shopkeepers' strike earlier this year when VAT was introduced (prices rose 20-25 per cent overnight); in West Germany, production has been down by some three per cent this year, with a £90 million internal deficit during the first three months of the year, and VAT is to be raised soon. Dissatisfaction over the EEC's policy of disposal of agricultural land and related matters resulted last March in a massive demonstration in Brussels by some 100,000 French, German and Belgian farmers which provoked violence and bloodshed. The need for Britain to safeguard her political independence and economic base against dangers and threats from across the Channel is a bitter lesson that has emerged from centuries of her history; and in her struggle for survival she has had to rely heavily—in military and economic terms—on her Commonwealth friends and allies.

The Loss of Sovereignty

Paradoxically, international co-operation, goodwill and security may well best be furthered by nations that retain a strong sense of their own identity. Pro-Marketeers claim that national sovereignty is illusory already, but also claim that sovereignty—or "essential" sovereignty—would be protected if Britain joined the EEC. Comparisons in this respect between the Common Market and, say, NATO, EFTA or the UN are spurious: for whereas none of these three international authorities can legislate for the internal affairs of its member countries, which have the legal right to withdraw from any of these organisations, this is not the case with the Common Market. The fact that sover-

eighty may have been eroded already in certain respects is clearly not in itself a compelling reason for sacrificing more or abandoning it altogether. Moreover, the EEC's commitment already to a common currency and a directly elected Parliament—apparently by 1980—would stimulate the loss not only of sovereignty, but also of national independence for Britain if she joined. If, as the 1971 White Paper maintains (para. 30), "France and the French are no less French, Holland and the Dutch are no less Dutch, after 20 years of Community life", this says little for the EEC's supranational institutions and uniformist policies, and tells us nothing about the degree to which the elements of the Market will retain a national identity or character after "20" years of Community life (the EEC came into operation on 1 January, 1958, but what is one error among so many in this White Paper?).

"The English and Scottish legal systems will remain intact", asserts the White Paper (para. 31); yet this seems increasingly unlikely as the EEC moves towards political union as a giant supranational state with a unified legal system. In any event, English legal concepts like *habeas corpus* and a man being innocent until proved guilty are not exactly entrenched in some of the EEC countries. The return of identity cards to the British Isles would be "almost inevitable" if Britain joined the EEC, as the Chief Constable of Bedfordshire and Luton recently had the candour to admit. Moreover, whereas under the Treaty of Rome, capital can move freely across the frontiers—"Money has no motherland", as Napoleon said—trade union membership, protection or agreements cannot be transferred so easily; and certain classes of Commonwealth immigrants to Britain would apparently be excluded from participating in the so-called free movement of labour within the EEC.

Public Opposition

On 5 May, 1970, Mr Heath said in Paris: "It would not be in the interest of the Community that its enlargement should take place except with the full-hearted consent of the parliaments and peoples of the new member countries". The Conservative Party Manifesto at the last General Election clearly stated on the Common Market issue: "Our sole commitment is to negotiate; no more, no less" (p. 28); and just before the Election Mr Heath publicly declared that British entry "would be impossible unless it was supported by the British Parliament and people". Yet now, having negotiated terms for British entry, his Government has steadfastly refused to hold a General Election or even an advisory referendum to test and seek public support for his policy on this uniquely important issue, despite the fact that Britain's co-applicants for membership are holding national referenda. Despite widespread public suspicion and opposition to his policy, Mr Heath persists in a policy that would impose new and totally unnecessary burdens on the British people without their consent (including more than 12,000 Common Market regulations drawn up and approved without regard for British conditions), and bind their successors and a future British Government with an irrevocable act of entry under the Treaty of Rome.

The Government calls for a "great debate" and yet it conceals vital information from the public and spends taxpayers' money on highly controversial and extremely misleading propaganda, giving immense moral and financial support to one side only—the pro-Marketeers.

FREETHINKER

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The views expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the Editor or the Board.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

The *Freethinker* is obtainable at the following addresses. London: Collets, 66 Charing Cross Road, WC2; Housmans, 5 Caledonian Road, King's Cross, N1; Freedom Press, 84b Whitechapel High Street (Angel Alley), E1; Rationalist Press Association, 88 Islington High Street, N1; Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC2; *Freethinker* office, 103 Borough High Street, SE1. Glasgow: Clyde Books, 292 High Street. Brighton: Unicorn Bookshop, 50 Gloucester Road (near Brighton Station).

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 5p stamp to Kit Mouat, Mercers, Cuckfield, Sussex.

Minority Rights Group's latest report—on the Southern Sudan and Eritrea—just out, price 30p from MRG, 36 Craven Street, London, WC2.

EVENTS

Ashurstwood Abbey Secular Humanism Centre (founded by Jean Straker), between East Grinstead and Forest Row, Sussex. Telephone Forest Row 2589. Meeting every Sunday, 3 p.m.

Humanist Holidays. Details of future activities from Marjorie Mepham, 29 Fairview Road, Sutton, Surrey, Telephone: 642 8796.

DAVID TRIBE'S PRESIDENT CHARLES BRADLAUGH, MP

£4.00 + 20p postage

David Tribe took on a formidable task when he decided to write the story of Bradlaugh . . . a life crowded with incident and argument.—Kettering Evening Telegraph

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NEWS

PRIESTS AND POLICE ANNOY TOURISTS

One of the two nuns who were recruited to help Vatican guards watch out for visitors who are "immodestly dressed" has had to give up the job. After two months of dealing with tourists in hot pants, sleeveless dresses and other shocking garments, the poor thing was suffering from nervous exhaustion. Cardinal Dell is also disturbed by mini skirts and see-through blouses, and in his "message of welcome" to visitors warned them against immodesty in Rome, "a city which is and must remain sacred". (The cardinal seems to be innocently unaware of the sacred city's reputation for prostitution, crime and racketeering. Hundreds of tourists are turned away every day from the doors of St Peter's basilica as they are not dressed in a manner acceptable to the clergy.

The activities of prudish busybodies are not confined to the Vatican, the police making asses of themselves in a number of cities. British consulate officials in Florence are indignant about the arrest of a teenage British girl who was held in prison for two days on a charge which was immediately dismissed in court. The 17-year-old girl was seen kissing her American boyfriend, and they were arrested and charged with "committing obscene acts in a public place". British authorities are demanding an apology from the Italian police.

A 27-year-old Dutch girl has been arrested in Palermo after appearing in public wearing hot pants. If convicted, she can be sent to prison for a month. The Palermo branch of Women's Liberation is organising a sexy protest parade outside the office of the city's chief judge.

Tourist industry officials are deeply concerned by the activities of the "guardians of decency" in Italy and other Catholic countries. Young people seem to be the chief target, and it is feared that the arrests and court cases could bring these countries into disrepute and young people would boycott them. Spain is another offender. Every week hundreds of obscene acts are committed in the country's bull rings with the approval of the authorities. But if a priest catches a glimpse of a shapely thigh or a nun's eyes are drawn crotchwards, there is a storm of protest.

If enough people remember these incidents when arranging future holidays on the Continent they would be well advised to avoid Italy and Spain. By doing so they are more likely to be free from annoyance by the police; they will also reduce the incidence of blood pressure amongst religious watchdogs.

THE COST OF CHURCH SCHOOLS

By DAVID TRIBE

Foreword: MARGARET KNIGHT

20p (plus 3p postage)

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AND NOTES

OBJECTIONS TO CELIBACY

A report compiled by Monsignor Emilio Colagiovanni at the request of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith shows that objection to the celibacy laws is the main reason why priests resign. Monsignor Colagiovanni, a Vatican lawyer and sociologist, investigated all dispensations from their priestly duties granted to priests from 1939 to March 1969. The Netherlands had the highest number of defections (5.9 per cent).

Monsignor Colagiovanni reports that as the defection rate rises the age of defecting priests drops. In 1964, half the priests who resigned were aged 46 and over. But five years later half of them were under 38. It is predicted that nearly 21,000 will leave the priesthood during the next five years.

The bishops in Germany have also carried out a survey which shows that 53 per cent of German priests ordained after 1956 regard the abolition of obligatory celibacy as necessary.

WASH AND BRUSH-UP FOR "ICONOCLAST" AND "SALADIN"

Nigel Sinnott writes: The peace which normally prevails in the Nonconformist section of the vast Brookwood Cemetery (containing upwards of 250,000 graves in all) was broken recently by the arrival of a working party of London Young Humanists equipped with shears, scrubbing brushes, and a picnic lunch. The object of this strange exercise was to indulge in what Malcolm Muggeridge would call "an act of piety", namely, to clean up (wait for it, Mrs Whitehouse!) the graves of two famous free-thinkers buried in that portion of the necropolis.

The grave of Charles Bradlaugh, "Iconoclast" (died 30 January, 1891) was dealt with first. The monument had been severely damaged by metal thieves a few years ago, who stole the famous bronze bust of Bradlaugh by F. Verheyden, which has not been recovered (the Fascists had stolen it earlier, in 1938, but it had been returned on that occasion). The yew shrubs flanking the grave were pruned back as they were greatly overgrown, the granite pedestal scrubbed and cleaned, and the chains at the sides so arranged as to disguise the worst effects of the damage done when the Verheyden bust was pulled off. At least now the inscription is visible from a distance.

The working party then proceeded to another grave about a hundred yards away, that of William Stewart Ross, "Saladin" (died 30 November, 1906), which was much overgrown, despite some clearing a year ago. The tombstone was scrubbed down, and the area of the grave cleared of bracken, heather roots, and oak and birch shoots, as was that of the adjoining grave of Isabelle Jessie Ross.

Whilst walking through the Nonconformist section of the cemetery, the LYH party stumbled upon the graves of two more famous freethinkers: Dr George Drysdale, "GR" (died 19 November, 1904) and Charles V. Drysdale (died 7 February, 1961), the former active in the Malthusian League and South Place Ethical Society. The Drysdale grave is still in very good condition, and only a few feet from that of Bradlaugh. What poor Ross, who was a morbid opponent of birth control, would have thought if he had known he was to be interred near some of the foremost advocates of "Neo-Malthusianism" is an interesting speculation. Ross sarcastically dubbed Bradlaugh's National Secular Society "the erotic school of free-thought", as distinct from his own respectable "neo-secularism".

Despite a few blisters and sore muscles, there is no doubt that the volunteer party felt that they had done a good day's work, even if activities like this raise a few eyebrows in the movement at large. In an age when prudery about death has replaced the older prudery about sex, there is something to be said for gestures such as this, if only to remind the freethought movement that the example and courage of its dead are not forgotten. We are obliged to those who kindly provided labour and transport: Robert Goodsman, Richard Hall, Tony Hunt, Margaret Pearce and John Wilby. London Young Humanists are grateful to Basil Bradlaugh Bonner and the London Necropolis Company for permission to carry out this work.

SUNDAY, 12 SEPTEMBER
A DAY IN SUSSEX
 Visit thirteenth-century Michelham Priory,
 Long Man of Wilmington and Brighton
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PUBLIC DEBATE:
THAT MAN NEEDS GOD
 Proposed by
 Sir DAVID RENTON, QC, MP
 Opposed by
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 author of *100 Years of Freethought*,
 President Charles Bradlaugh, MP, etc.
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TUESDAY, 14 SEPTEMBER, 7.30 p.m.
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BOOK

RADICAL POLITICS 1790-1900: RELIGION AND UNBELIEF by Edward Royle. Longman, 65p.

I have often complained about the treatment of free-thought history in the academic world. Drs Susan Budd and Colin Campbell have, in my view, based large hypotheses on exiguous research and grafted contemporary prejudices on to the past, while Professor Warren Sylvester Smith's *The London Heretics 1870-1914* has preserved balance at the price of hair-raising inaccuracy of detail. It is therefore a great pleasure to find in Edward Royle an academic who is indefatigable in research, vicarious in historical imagination and humble before the facts, ever willing to revise hypotheses in the light of further evidence. With great care he has gone through the MS and pamphlet collections of many provincial public libraries, catalogued the Holyoake and Owen collections at the Co-operative Union Library in Manchester, written *George Jacob Holyoake and the Secularist Movement in Britain 1841-1861* (1968) as a doctoral thesis (a copy of which he has kindly deposited in the NSS library), offered to catalogue the NSS's Bradlaugh Collection and run of *National Reformers and Freethinkers*, and written many technical papers which will be of permanent help to future scholars. In *Radical Politics*, one of a series of "Seminar Studies in History" specially written for sixth formers and undergraduates but admirably lively for the general reader, his work and name will, for the first time, reach a wider public.

There is no shortage of works on radical politics but a great dearth of books dealing adequately, or even at all, with its relation to religion and freethought. Most studies that touch on this theme seem concerned to inflate the claims of Christian Socialism or plead that the "Labour Party owes more to Methodism than to Marx". On the other hand, many freethought writers have ignored the great number of sects that used to flourish half-way between Christianity and infidelity, overlooked the "religious" element in humanist organisations (especially the one that claimed their allegiance) or tried to write freethought history in a political vacuum (to avoid party sensibilities). Though Dr Royle is, I understand, a Methodist, he approaches his difficult theme with a judicious sense of balance. Some religious reviewers may, perhaps, take out of context such statements as "nineteenth-century radical politics were rooted in religion", but the author acknowledges that "this is not to claim that the modern labour movement has a specifically Christian heritage. The most important element in the making of the working class was certainly not Christian in any orthodox sense". Indeed a "distinguishing characteristic of the early radical consciousness was opposition to religion". Behind this paradox are a number of facts: the word "infidel", i.e. lacking faith, was used, especially in the early nineteenth century, by Christians and freethinkers alike in such a way as to suggest that religious faith was of supreme importance in the salvation or the corruption of mankind, depending on what view of it was taken; Owenites, secularists, positivists, ethicists, the Labour Church and many isolated nineteenth-century groups that rejected Christianity parodied the Christian liturgy in their meetings and to some extent shared the Christian belief that ideology, notably their own ideology, brought moral dividends in the life of the individual. It is in the light of this paradox that other controversial statements in the book must be seen: "In the late nineteenth century, both Secularism and religion were in

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decline. Religious aspirations were being translated into social action, and secularisation had made Secularism unnecessary" and "The decay of organised religion, . . . the virtual disappearance of militant Secularism . . . can all be seen as aspects of that comprehensive change which became noticeable at the end of the nineteenth century—the disappearance of the old style of radical politics in which religion and unbelief played so great a part, and the end of the radical tradition". Of course there are still plenty of people who would call themselves Christians or secularists or radicals, but their ideas do not quite have the messianic fervour of the nineteenth century. Cynics might even say that this is one reason why Britain has lost an empire and not yet found a role.

A valuable addition to Dr Royle's book is a collection of 33 source readings, including Bradlaugh and Holyoake. References and the extensive bibliography are ingeniously combined, though where journals are involved it is generally impossible, under this blanket system, for the reader to refer back. I detected only about a dozen small errors, which will no doubt be corrected in the subsequent editions to be expected of so useful a work.

DAVID TRIBE

**RADICAL POLITICS 1790-1900 :
RELIGION AND UNBELIEF**

by EDWARD ROYLE

65p plus 7p postage

FREETHINKER PUBLICATIONS

(G. W. Foote & Co. Ltd.)

103 Borough High Street, London, SE1

PAMPHLETS

EDUCATION FOR THE OPEN SOCIETY

British Humanist Association, 25p.

The Educational Revolution must be one of the greatest non-events of the century. It is true that there have been great changes in the schools. The new maths, programmed learning, team teaching, language laboratories; these are just some of the innovations. But do they add up to progress? Many educationalists now believe that the result of these improvements is that we can now teach children more rubbish than ever before.

Many of the changes in schools have been like the transformation of old fuddy-duddy Religious Instruction into new, swinging Religious Education. Where before the children drew maps of the journeys of St Paul, they now act them. This is not what I would call a great improvement. Some humanists, however, support the Christians in their introduction of improved techniques of indoctrination. These humanists are given renewed support from the British Humanist Association in their latest document on education. *Education for the Open Society* states: "Religious education—to include the range of religious outlooks—has a part to play" in social and moral education. It goes

REVIEWS

on to say that RE "should not be regarded as the basis of moral education". But I have always believed that the humanist case was not only that religion should not be the basis of morality, but that it should not have anything to do with it at all. But things may be different in the Open Society.

It is not clear whether the BHA genuinely supports RE or whether it feels that this concession is necessary for a deal whereby the Christians accept some of our ideas. This concessionary theory would explain how such a reactionary proposal on RE can be found in this pamphlet alongside many sensible, and even radical, ideas on other educational issues.

For example, *Education for the Open Society* recommends that schools should be run on democratic lines with the pupils having a full share of responsibility. There is nothing new in this idea. Some schools have been running councils of this sort for over 40 years. This does not mean that the idea is generally accepted. The *Little Red Schoolbook* case has shown that encouraging young people to think critically about education is officially "obscene". To be even vaguely progressive in school circles has always been risky, apparently it is now also risqué. This makes education rather difficult.

Of course schools are now better places than they used to be. Pupils are more aware, more critical. Injustices in schools now get more publicity than they used to, but so does Mrs Whitehouse. She has taken an increasing interest in education recently, and her influence is a reminder of how little progress there has been. Whilst *The Little Red Schoolbook* is banned, the sex education books of the kind Maurice Hill and I criticised in *Sex Education: the Erroneous Zone* remain "recommended reading". There is much still to be done.

Most schools are still based on competition. The traditional encouragements to rivalry—exams, streaming, house points, and so on—are still the norm. Even some primary schools set examinations (though they call them "standardised tests" which makes it all right!). The BHA pamphlet is rightly critical of all this, pointing out that the aim of education should be to encourage co-operation not rivalry.

The pamphlet claims that in the secondary schools "great progress has been made . . . with new methods and syllabuses". In the great majority of schools, however, things are much the same as they have always been. There are rigid time-tables, subject lessons, and the traditional "sabre-toothed curriculum" leading to the inevitable exams.

Exams, says this document, should go. This question of examinations is a good illustration of the gulf between educational theory and practice. Most educationalists are agreed that examinations are anti-educational; despite this the tendency today is towards proliferation instead of abolition. It is only a few years since the introduction of the CSE exam and now schools are threatened with "F" and "Q" levels.

Many good points are made in this pamphlet. Most of them have been made before, but it seems that these things need saying many times before anything practical happens. Many teachers now pay lip service to these ideas. Putting

them into practice is another matter. The case of Risinghill is a clear warning to anyone tempted to put radical ideas to the test. Of course if the experiment fails you will get away with it; Michael Duane's crime was that he showed that radical ideas could succeed.

What makes it likely that radical changes will soon occur in our schools is that the pupils themselves are increasingly reluctant to put up with what is going on. In *The School that I'd Like* (Penguin), an anthology of young people's views on education, one finds that the most exciting developments are being suggested not by the "experts" but by the pupils. Another advantage of listening to what the kids have to say is that because they are thinking their ideas out for themselves, their views are refreshingly free of educational jargon.

Education for the Open Society is obtainable from the British Humanist Association, 13 Prince of Wales Terrace, London, W8.

MICHAEL LLOYD-JONES

CONSOLIDATION: ANNUAL REPORT OF THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY. NSS, 12p.

Consolidation is not at first glance a typical NSS activity, but one, as this report claims, made necessary by the "recklessly oversold" position in which the broad humanist movement finds itself. Well, that may be, but this crisp well-written document shows a year's work of sustained vigour and quite typical energy pursuing its perennial objectives: secularism, freethought, civil liberties and social reform.

It opens with a very able summary of the world's present state—mostly problems, of course, some of them dire. This has been with a view to offering what aid it can. This aid is largely expressed in words, spoken or written (they utter a good many!) and critical where need be. At the moment, for example, there is a strong challenge to the "open society", and many other "instant panaceas" of recent times are under sharp review. A good thing.

The NSS is not alone in this reappraisal. In a section entitled "Rock of Ages Cleft", the report outlines the problems of Holy Mother Church, and pretty desperate they seem to set out here. The income, of course, from £46 million plus of capital, is somewhat larger than the National Secular Society's, but for all its vast resources it is crumbling through internal dissension and external indifference. In this situation the NSS will do doubt take the advice its distinguished member, Baroness Wootton offered when speaking at the RPA dinner recently: "When citadels show signs of crumbling, 'give them a little push'".

The NSS flair for pamphleteering is strong. It seems able at all times to call on distinguished writers, MPs, specialist advisers and publicly known people of all kinds in its laudable aim of inducing the general public to change its attitudes. These documents are outlined here as well as the many Press releases, conferences, submissions to committees, broadcasts, etc. *Consolidation* is indeed a stimulating document.

An outstanding president of the Society for the last eight eventful years, David Tribe, steps down. He will be greatly missed, but it is a gratifying coincidence that his splendid book on the Society's founder *President Charles Bradlaugh*, MP has just been published. The conspiracy of silence about Bradlaugh is breaking down and we shall all gain by this.

JESSE COLLINS

LETTERS

The Culprits

According to Lord Raglan's theories of nationalism we ought all now to be speaking Norman French or Church Latin. In fact the former concept is not too far-fetched. Had Lord Raglan not been so exclusively preoccupied with Celtic nationalism, during the last two years he might have reviewed two books, Basil Cottle's *The Triumph of English, 1350-1400* (Blandford, 1969), and Mario Pei's *The Story of the English Language* (W. H. Allen, 1970), which deal with the struggle of the English people to obtain status for their own language.

The writers of historical novels are hardly the culprits for the defensive upsurge of Celtic nationalism. Those culprits are rather the Victorians of lesser eminence who decided that the benefits of a general education meant teaching Welsh, Scottish-Gaelic and Irish children exclusively through the medium of English. Before the advent of general education linguistic frontiers moved very slowly, whereas now languages can virtually disappear in a couple of generations. It is hardly surprising in this context that Celts who have withstood the systematic brainwashing process should refuse consent to the destruction of their own culture in the interest of what others please to tell them is "progress".

As regards Lord Raglan's other theory that national consciousness is a result of treaties and legal documents I should mention that I am a Cornish nationalist. Cornwall, which was also known as West Wales was annexed some thousand years ago. Even lacking a protective state or prince our culture survived until Tudor times, when the unenlightened policy of centralisation began the process of erosion. Without in any way disparaging England's language or culture we nationalists object to their stifling our own.

Lord Raglan merely cloaks his English nationalism/imperialism with a bogus internationalism. His review had little to do with rationalism, but very much to do with an attempt to provide an updated version of "God bless the squire and his relations . . ." for the Celtic proles and peasants. Anglo-Saxon attitudes can also inhibit freethought!

MARGH AN GERDEK.

English Nationalism

I wonder if you would permit me to comment on the observations of Lord Raglan in his review of *The Welsh Extremist*, by Ned Thomas. What staggers is not so much Lord Raglan's apparent lack of knowledge of Welsh history as his almost unbelievably prejudiced outlook towards the ideas underlying nationalism in Wales.

It is common among opponents of nationalism to say that we "want to put the clock back", and that such moments are almost "always harmful". If your readers will forgive me for saying so, this is a point of view very common among Englishmen. The English identity is so strong and so unthreatened that it is possible for Englishmen to forget that they are among the most nationalist people on the globe, and have carried their language, culture and values with them to all parts of the earth. For an Englishman to conceive how a Welshman feels about his national identity, let him imagine the following: that England is wholly governed by Moscow, that Russian is the language of administration, the Law Courts and the schools, that signposts are in Russian, not English, that the Russian language is displacing English in common use, but the glories of English—of Shakespeare and Wordsworth—are forgotten. Would the English people willingly accede to that? Of course they would not, because they are nationalist, although the absence of any such threat to their national identity means that their nationalism remains latent, and not explicit.

In Wales, a situation which is precisely analogous exists now, and the growth of nationalism is a response to it. Lord Raglan may regard this as "harmful", and the alternative is the disappearance from the world of a people who are Welsh. Our sense of pride and nationalism is weak, but it is not so weak as to permit that.

Lord Raglan has totally ignored the positive aspects of nationalism that Ned Thomas' book discusses, and instead erects the well-known and worn-out myths that the Welsh nationalist is hostile to the English. Three out of my four grandparents are English, but I do not have to be hostile to them simply in order to believe that Welsh civilisation, like English civilisation, is worth keeping and enhancing, if only because the world is already too featureless, too much dominated by big business and power-blocks. There is more to human life than the pursuit of power, and wealth, and respect for human values is one of them.

DAFYDD WILLIAMS.

General Secretary, Plaid Cymru.

The Open Society and the BHA

By not specifying the people and organisations whom he attacks ("some humanist circles", "many of its (i.e. the open society's) supporters", etc), David Tribe (*Freethinker*, 17 July) leaves a line of retreat open to himself in the event of criticism while adding positively Delphic weight to his utterances for those initiated in the mysteries of his love/hate relationship with the British Humanist Association.

The following points, therefore, are intended to clarify the BHA's position.

1. The promotion of the open society is not "the primary, if not the only, goal" of the BHA. Our first objective is to promote humanism.

2. We do not recognise the need to conform either to Bergson or to Popper in our use of the term "open society". We have developed the idea in our own writings beyond what either of them propounds.

3. To imply that the BHA is attempting to "disrupt existing society and political institutions [in order] to impose on the world a blueprint we are convinced will be better" is arrant, mischief-making nonsense. Advocacy of the open society is not a substitute for thought: the BHA does not have a "blueprint" to which we turn to find the true doctrine on specific points. Rather, "open society" is a label attached to our developing notions of a desirable community. Our approach is avowedly an empirical one of "piecemeal social engineering"; that the several reforms we advocate fit into a pattern is scarcely surprising in anyone capable of coherent rational thought.

4. Accordingly, it is scarcely surprising that by selective quotation out of context David Tribe can produce "ambiguities" in the "theory".

5. David Tribe's use of smear techniques and implications of guilt by association in suggesting that adoption of the open society idea constitutes a sell-out to the Roman Catholic Church, an implausible proposition unsupported by relevant facts or logical argument, is unworthy even of one whose clairvoyant ability to see Catholics under every bed would make him a hero in Orange Ulster.

If your readers are interested in what the BHA actually says about the open society, I would invite them to write to us for copies of the relevant leaflets and issues of *Humanist News*.

DAVID POLLOCK,

Chairman, British Humanist Association,
13 Prince of Wales Terrace, London, W8.

An Unworthy Sneer

It is remarkable that David Tribe elects to write at length about the Open Society and the "New Humanism" so soon after the publication of *Towards an Open Society* with only a veiled and extensive but irrelevant allusion to the book. He is over anxious to show the "New Humanists" sharing with their "new clerical friends" a sunshade which resembles the emperor's new clothes as being as vast and as vague as the open sky. In the same issue you quote with approval from John Mortimer's closing speech at the OZ trial a description of one aspect of the open society in much the same terms as the "New Humanists" have been using for some time past. I regret to have to suggest that the article is nothing but an unworthy sneer.

H. J. BLACKHAM.

No Humanism Without Democracy

In his pamphlet *The Humanist Himself* H. J. Blackham lists the personal problems each of us has to face and can solve really only in a rational fashion. The failure to establish a democratic relationship with children may worry even those who do not believe that everything that happens is God's will. Parents' study groups based on Rudolf Dreikurs' book *Children, the Challenge* have shown happy results in the United States, Canada and Germany. Parents, or father or mothers alone, interested in taking part in the first one of these groups to work for ten sessions are invited to contact the undersigned.

PAUL KOM,

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