

FORMER ARTS MINISTER CAMPAIGNS FOR SUNDAY THEATRES

Fresh attempts are being made in the House of Lords to reform the Sunday Observance laws. And although the initiative has been taken by two Labour members it is believed they will have significant Conservative support. Lady Lee, who was Minister for the Arts in the Labour Government, has published a Sunday Theatre Bill, and will seek a second reading later this month. It is intended to apply recommendations of the Crathorne Committee, and in effect would mean that theatres could open for the performance of plays after 1 p.m. At present only private, membership theatres can do so. In the past, performances have been cancelled following complaints by sabbatarian informers. These included a students' revue at Cambridge in which Prince Charles was taking part, and a performance of music and ballet in the ruins of Coventry Cathedral. Numerous other performances, many of them in aid of charity, have also been sabotaged by the gloomy brigade.

Supported by the Profession

The Lords have previously supported proposals to alter the law, but filibustering and other unscrupulous tactics by the sabbatarian lobby have defeated the reformers' efforts in the Commons. The names of two freethinking MPs, John Parker and William Hambling, will always be associated with the struggle in the Commons for Sunday law reform.

Lady Lee's bill will be widely supported by the theatrical profession. Commercial managements will support it on economic grounds at a time when production costs and overheads are rising sharply. They would be glad to open the theatres on Sunday in the certain knowledge that audiences would be much larger than on some evenings during the week.

New theatres have been opened in London and the provinces during the last seven years. Many of them are not privately owned and are heavily subsidised in order to break even. Certain performances can be given without breaking the present laws, but the removal of silly, irrational restrictions—relics of an age in which completely different social conditions prevailed—would enable them to use their facilities and resources to the full.

Lady Lee said last week that her bill enjoys the support of those employed in the theatre. Sabbatarians often claim they are concerned for those who would have to work on Sunday if certain activities were permitted by law. (These humbugs have never shown much concern about the conditions under which men, women and children have worked under on other days of the week.) But, however much a miner, a factory worker or a bank clerk may enjoy a fixed day of rest, it means little to actors and actresses who are "resting" for a large part of their working lives.

Safeguards

Lady Lee's claim is undoubtedly justified; members of a profession which has traditionally experienced chronic unemployment will welcome an opportunity to work, irres-

pective of our Lord and his day. Performers would be protected by a prohibition in the bill which would prevent a Sunday performance by an actor who had been working on each of the six previous days for the same employer.

Lord Strabolgi's Sunday Cinema Bill is aimed at ending the "charity tax" on Sunday performances. This was imposed in 1932, and stipulates that a percentage of Sunday takings should be contributed to charity.

The Sunday Cinema Bill also propose to end the rule which limits the power of a licensing authority to permit Sunday opening only in areas where an opening order, approved by Parliament, has been made. Rights of appeal against a refusal of Sunday opening would be the same as those which apply in respect of weekday opening.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL DEMANDS INQUIRY

Amnesty International has called for an independent, international Commission of Inquiry to investigate all aspects of treatment of internees in Northern Ireland, and report publicly. A report issued on Monday alleging ill-treatment of persons held in custody in Northern Ireland, is based on material, individual statements and affidavits which reached Amnesty International headquarters in London between 9 August and 30 October. The Sir Edward Compton Commission of Inquiry covers only 48 hours of that period. The Home Office has rejected Amnesty International's suggestion that the Compton Commission's terms of reference should be extended to cover the period between 9 August to 31 August.

Amnesty International points out in a memorandum that under the Civil Authorities (Special Powers) Act, 1922, the Northern Ireland Minister of Home Affairs is granted

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WHITER THAN WHITEHOUSE

MICHAEL LLOYD-JONES

In recent times, Christian apologists have been increasingly compelled by the advancing scrutiny of science, history and philosophy, to confine themselves to vague and ambiguous statements about their faith. Their hope is that this will make their claims less susceptible to challenge and confutation. As people have become less and less willing to have anything to do with religion, so the churches have been compelled to dress their windows that much more enticingly. They have realised that if they are to survive they must swim with the tide and if the current proves too strong, well there are always straws to be clutched.

Christianity has been remarkably good at surviving seemingly catastrophic blows to its fundamentals. The proofs of God's existence from reason, the authority of the Bible, the special creation of Man by God—all these illusions have been shattered, and yet Christianity has survived. Only the Roman Catholic Church feels able to present to the modern world a face virtually unretouched since the Middle Ages, and even she has been compelled to make some concessions.

But despite the apparent anxiousness of the new Christians to disassociate themselves from the old doctrines, the basis for their faith remains intellectually without foundation, and their promises and claims are as invalid and as delusive as ever. It is usually in the persuasion and conditioning of the young that Christians display the maximum guile, and so it is refreshing to find that the authors of the *Little White Book* (an answer to "destructive and godless ideas") are honest enough to reveal their real intentions and to say exactly what they want.

In short they want a return to "biblical standards". But, despite frequent quotations from the holy scriptures, the authors have conveniently omitted to explain why the Bible should be regarded as a reliable guide to human conduct. The biblical ideal, the authors tell their readers, is the complete postponing of all sex experience until marriage. Indeed since they warn against teenage marriages, they are effectively insisting on no sex before one is 20. How they expect teenagers to do without any form of

sexual expression when they are by nature at the peak of their sexual powers, is not clear. Even masturbation is condemned: "It is worth remembering that sex as God gave it is for sharing between male and female in a life-long partnership".

The authors also condemn abortion ("sacrificing innocent children"), divorce ("What God has joined together, man must not separate" is held up as one of God's everlasting changeless laws"), homosexuality ("shameful passions") and pornography ("God's curse is on them"). In fact there isn't much the authors seem to be in favour of—except the Bible—they certainly seem anti-sex, which is, of course, the traditional Christian view.

There be Demons

The writers are quite clear in their views about morality ("You have no right to make your own standards"), and they are graphic in their description of what happens to those who try: "What you don't see are the rainy days when they are cold and miserable, when they are suffering venereal diseases, hooked on drugs or terrified by unwanted pregnancy. The pictures don't record the stink from the dirty straw mats or the loneliness, despair and despondency of their hearts".

The authors are equally candid about what has happened to these people; they have been seduced by Satan. "Don't be fooled into thinking that demons belong only to the Middle Ages . . . The one aim of these satanic spirits is to subdue and dominate the human personality".

Humanists will not call for the banning of this tract, as Christians did for the prosecution of *The Little Red Schoolbook*. We do not believe in the censorship of those views with which we disagree.

This little book may be thrust into the hands of the young, for their "enlightenment" and "salvation". They are unlikely to give it a very solemn reception. *The Little White Book*, with its shrill Bible-thumping and condemnation of "fornicators" and "adulterers" is more likely to provoke laughter than to promote chastity.

JOHN SHEPHERD

SAINT MUGG

It has long been my wont to watch the saintly Malcolm's television programmes in which he meanders from his chair in the studio towards the carefully chosen questioners who may possibly include one mild opponent. After he delivers a comparatively long and pious homily on his and other Christians' lives and views there is little doubt as to what the level of the questions will be.

When he recently appeared in the old steam radio programme, *It's Your Line*, to answer questions which were telephoned by listeners, we heard the slightly rasping voice of the angelic one deploring the "sins" of porn, sex education in schools, abortion, and the general permissiveness of the age about which, apparently, God can do nothing. The main difference between *It's Your Line* and the television programmes was that more than one unbeliever was allowed to put a question to Malcolm Muggeridge. But I suspect that even these were carefully selected. Certainly my question, which was telephoned from the Somerset village where I live, was not put. But my disappointment was somewhat allayed when an agnostic teacher from Glasgow certainly gave Muggeridge something to think about, and even caused him to raise his voice in judgement against freethinkers.

Predictably, and rightly, Malcolm Muggeridge extolled

the work of the Salvation Army and the charitable work of good Christian men and women. He has a special affection for missionary workers, particularly Mother Teresa. I do not wish to denigrate the efforts they make to help the suffering and under-privileged. But I would like to ask why such activities should be inspired by a love for something supernatural and unknown. Could it not simply be for love of humanity about which we know?

This Life

It is on this life we should concentrate our energies and resources. Malcolm Muggeridge made no mention of the latter commodity which the Roman Catholic Church, the Church of England and other churches have acquired over the centuries, often by the most dubious methods. That is why they are able to finance charity and relief work. After describing such work Muggeridge exclaimed: "What have freethinkers done down the years to compare with this!" Apparently he does not know of the commendable efforts of individual freethinkers to help others; not in hope of reward in heaven, nor fear of hell for not so doing. And he ignores the fact that but for the positive work to promote family planning which the freethought movement pioneered in this and other countries there would be even more hunger and human misery.

TOWARDS A NEW PHILOSOPHY OF DEATH

S. L. HENDERSON-SMITH

This article is based on an address to the annual general meeting of the Voluntary Euthanasia Society in London last week. Dr Henderson-Smith, who is now a general practitioner in Huddersfield, has worked in Africa and China with a Baptist Mission.

What do we think of death today? Very little. It has replaced sex as the taboo subject. This is due in part to a general decline of religious belief, the enormous multiplication of distractions to serious thought resulting in an apathetic indifference to the subject. Most people would say it is irrelevant. The success of medical treatment has made death unthinkable. There is almost a conspiracy to prevent thought on the subject, sustained by the influence of psychiatrists. To consider death is clear evidence of depression. A few tablets and you can be brought back to conformity with the standard mode. "A little water clears us of this deed", said Lady Macbeth; a little Valium or Librium and you will soon be rid of all that nonsense about dying.

Few believe today in a literal Last Judgement, even less in the validity of a death-bed repentance. Yet we cling to life, however painful, useless, degraded by incontinence, the mumbling of the decerebrate, the gasping of the anoxic, as a kind of long distance marathon, every extra hour of infinite value. Value for what? And the extraordinary thing is that those who profess most faith in the life to come are the most entrenched in their refusal to allow anyone to opt out of this life.

It is dying men fear today, not death. The public are increasingly restive. There is a growing sense that we have changed every other aspect of existence but obstinately leave death on a shelf marked "Not to be touched". It is often said that Parliament is ahead of the public on moral questions like capital punishment and homosexual law reform. But on the question of voluntary euthanasia, as on abortion, the public are more sensitive than their MPs. "Why can't you shorten the suffering, Doctor?" you are constantly asked by the cancer patient's relatives. There is a mute demand that something be done.

The Sanctity of Life

Consider the case of one of my patients whom we shall call Mrs B. She was aged 83, had gross valvular disease of the heart, cerebral anoxia, then bleeding from the bowel. Care at home was impossible and she was admitted to hospital. She had often talked to me about dying—having read an article I published in the local newspaper and thoroughly approved—and was perfectly willing to die. To my horror I received a letter from the hospital saying "she had been given several pints of blood and responded reasonably to this". Is this not an abuse of the Blood Transfusion Service, of hospital care, of medical science? I do not criticise doctors concerned. They were acting in accordance with their training. I quarrel with a society which says life is always better than death, which refuses to allow someone to give up that which they no longer want, which insists on making people live as long as possible regardless of their wishes. As Mark Twain said: "Why is it we rejoice at a birth and grieve at a funeral? It is because we are not the person concerned".

The sanctity of life is indeed the treasured, unassailable foundation stone of medical practice. But what life? Mere existence? Human life today is embarrassingly abundant. The increase in men's numbers is the gravest, most intractable problem of mankind. Other things such as water, food, fuel, even oxygen may soon be more "precious" than human life. We have accepted our right to interfere with unborn life. We say, "You must not come in". But at the same time we say to others, "You must not go out".

The Archbishop of Canterbury said in *The Times*, 3 May, 1971: "When a patient is lingering on in great distress, without any possibility of continuing life or happiness or purpose, it is not necessary for the doctor to continue keeping him alive". Is it such a huge step from this to voluntary death? Why should such an act not be a perfectly natural, acceptable and in fact joyful thing for a person to ask for, a summation of the art of living, something to be incorporated into the normal scheme of things?

Living for others is the best way out of boredom. Can we not see dying for others as an equally civilised thing to do—to spare them the strain of nursing a paralytic from stroke, to enable them to have more room for their children, to save so many young and overworked nurses from the appalling strain of geriatric nursing? So many regard voluntary euthanasia as a counsel of despair. It is rather a counsel of hope—one last altruistic act left to the invalid from incurable cancer, the aged, the utterly dependent.

Safeguards

At one time people wanted to live for ever. They sought the elixir of life. Today people in general want to live as long as possible. In the future people will live as long as they want. There are three criteria a civilised society should insist upon: obligations to society have been fulfilled; the applicant should be certified as of a sound mind; he should not be under duress. When a person in the categories mentioned in Lord Raglan's Bill, or an old person who has fulfilled these three criteria asks for Voluntary Death, it is for society to remove from this option any taint of self-killing, the unctuous horror, the lurid fictional overtones, and accede to the request. These must be safeguards to deter the sick in mind and frustrate the criminal. People's right to live must be guarded to the limit, but the rights of the minority who want to die must also be respected and formalised by Act of Parliament.

We need to take dying out of the seclusion with which our prejudices have surrounded it. Dying should be a simple matter, a natural matter as it was before the excessive sophistication of medical science made it necessary for most people to die three or four times over. As Alexander the Great said: "I am dying with the help of too many physicians". When will the day come when a cancer sufferer, an old and weary person dreading leaving home for an institutionalised terminal existence will be able to say to me, "Doctor, I want to die", in as ordinary a voice as he now says, "I want to have my gastric ulcer operated on". And, the formalities completed, I shall be empowered to accede to his request: "Drink this, my friend, you will sleep and none will waken you".

Voluntary euthanasia is an extension of human freedom. We must assert the dignity of man in the face of so much misery, appalling decrepitude, loneliness and fear. We must learn to die—at the right time.

FREETHINKER

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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 officer, 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.

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.

Belfast Humanist Group, War Memorial Building, Waring Street, Belfast, Monday, 8 November, 8 p.m. Film on Abortion.

Brighton and Hove Humanist Group, Imperial Centre Hotel, First Avenue, Hove (sea front), Sunday, 7 November, 5.30 p.m. Richard Clement: "Robert Owen, 1771-1858".

Brighton and Hove Humanist Group, Empire Grill, North Street, Brighton, Saturday 20 November, 7 p.m. Annual Dinner. Tickets £1.10 from Mrs Pariente, 97 Valley Drive, Brighton, or Mr Millard, 142 Western Road, Hurstpierpoint, Sussex.

Croydon Humanist Society, Wednesday, 17 November, 7.45 p.m., Fairfield Halls, Croydon. Public Meeting: "Secular Education Now!"

Guildford Humanist Group, Guildford House, Guildford, Thursday, 11 November, 7.45 p.m. Grace Berger: "Moral Judgements and the Law".

Humanist Holidays. Details of future activities from Marjorie Mepham, 29 Fairview Road, Sutton, Surrey, Telephone: 01-642 8796.

Leicester Secular Society, Secular Hall, 75 Humberstone Gate, Leicester, Sunday, 14 November, 6.30 p.m. Avro Manhattan: "Conspiracies and Plots, Past and Present".

Merseyside Humanist Group, Royal Institution, Colquitt Street (off Bold Street), Liverpool, Saturday, 20 November, 9.45 a.m.—5.30 p.m. Symposium on Sex Education. Tickets 50p (lunch, 40p extra) from Marion Clowes, 26 Speedwell Drive, Barnston, Wirral L60 2SZ (enclosed stamped, addressed envelope).

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NEWS

THE OZ APPEAL

The largely successful appeal by the three OZ editors against conviction and sentence was welcomed by many people, including some who have never found the magazine particularly interesting or even readable. But the attitude of Judge Michael Argyle towards the defendants and defence witnesses, which was criticised by Lord Widgery, led to a strong suspicion of bias. The committal in custody and the hair-cutting episode at Wandsworth Prison resulted in the belief in public and legal circles that Judge Argyle was being vindictive.

In the Court of Appeal the Lord Chief Justice said that Judge Argyle had seriously misdirected the jury on matters of law. He added that Judge Argyle had "found time far too often to have a dig at the witnesses and to say something derogatory about them".

Despite the quashing of prison sentences and substantial reductions in the fines, the verdict of the Court of Appeal will give little comfort to the underground Press or anyone concerned with freedom to publish. The working of the Obscene Publications Act is likely to become more severe in its application. For the effect of the judgement is that the proper test of obscenity, in the case of a magazine or a publication with a number of items, is that if one item is found to be obscene then the whole article is obscene. In the OZ case the magazine was considered as a whole and not as a collection of individual items. But Lord Widgery made it clear that the item-by-item test would be applied in future.

The "cleaner-uppers", who only a week before had been rejoicing over Richard Handyside's unsuccessful appeal in *The Little Red Schoolbook* case, were exceedingly glum when the outcome of the OZ appeal was announced. Mary Whitehouse described it as a disaster, adding charitably, "I do not have anything personal against these young men".

The Royal Shakespeare Company will be performing a dramatised version of the OZ trial and appeal at the Place Theatre, London, on three successive Sundays.

CATHOLIC OPPOSITION TO FAMILY PLANNING SCHEME

Alderman Leonard Hill, Roman Catholic chairman of Sutton (Surrey) Education Committee, has attacked the council's decision to spend £10,000 on making family planning facilities available to local residents. Contraceptive advice will be free to married and unmarried. Alderman Hill said: "Whatever you may think of family planning among married people, there is no case for telling 16-year-old girls to go along to their family planning clinic and then do just as they like—especially in an age when figures for venereal disease are rising".

The attitude of the Roman Catholic Church towards family planning is only too well known, and has caused incalculable human misery, not least amongst its own dupes. The family planning movement has been vilified from its earliest days by the Church, and its work sabo-

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tagged by Catholics in local government and the medical profession. At a time when national governments and United Nations organisations are trying to seek a solution to the world population problem, the Pope orders his stooges in these bodies to oppose family planning schemes.

Alderman Hill is rightly concerned about the rise in VD figures. But such concern is no justification for chicanery. Those who advocate free family planning services are also concerned, and they do not tell 16-year-old girls to "do as they like". Indeed it is very doubtful if young people want to have sexual intercourse with a succession of partners. It is the experience of those who are involved in the work that young people who are responsible enough to seek contraceptive advice are generally having a sexual relationship with one partner.

Ignorance and the lack of contraceptives are no protection against venereal disease; they simply mean the additional risk of an unwanted pregnancy. Sex education in school is one of the best forms of protection for young people and society. But, like contraception, that is also fiercely attacked by religionists.

INFERIOR EDUCATION

William McKechin, a Paisley councillor and a member of Renfrewshire Education Committee, shook a Catholic audience in Glasgow when he told them that some pupils in Catholic schools are being given an inferior education by inferior teachers. Councillor McKechin, who had taught in Catholic secondary schools for five years, and is now a lecturer in physics at Paisley College of Technology, was addressing a conference of the Glasgow University Catholic Society. He claimed to be speaking on behalf of many Catholic parents when he said children were being sacrificed.

Councillor McKechin said that the attainment of children in Catholic schools is inferior to those in non-denominational schools. The percentage of those leaving school in Renfrewshire with qualifications equivalent to university entrance was just over eight per cent. In non-denominational schools it was more than 16 per cent. He added: "I think one will find the same trend throughout Scotland. One also finds the qualifications of Catholic teachers tends to be lower than in other schools".

Councillor McKechin failed recently to get partial integration of Catholic and non-denominational schools in Renfrewshire to ease the teacher shortage. The Roman Catholic Church in Scotland is adamant that religious segregation will continue in schools.

David Tribe's "The Open Society and Its Friends" (which originally appeared in the "Freethinker") has been published by the National Secular Society. Philip Hinchliff's review, on page 367 of this issue, is included as a foreword. The pamphlet costs 3p and there are discount rates for quantities. It will provide a stimulating basis for group discussion, and merits the widest circulation in the freethought/humanist movement.

XMAS STAMPS

Barbara Smoker, a member of the National Secular Society Executive Committee, has written to the public relations department of the Post Office: "Once again all the special Yuletide postage stamps depict the Christian nativity story as though there were no other suitable commemorative symbols for the winter solstice. Yule logs, holly, ivy, mistletoe, Xmas puddings, decorated conifers—all these are far more ancient than Christianity, and would not only make a welcome change from the same old dreary annual theme but would provide far more scope for artistic talent. It is high time the Post Office woke up to the fact that Christianity is now only a minority cult in this country".

Freethinker readers who wish to follow Miss Smoker's example may like to note that the address of the Post Office Public Relations Department is 23 Howland Street, London W1P 6HQ.

The Clarence, Whitehall, London, SW1
(One minute from Trafalgar Square)

PUBLIC LECTURES

Friday, 19 November, 8 p.m.

RICHARD HANDYSIDE

THE LITTLE RED SCHOOLBOOK AND RELATED ISSUES

Friday, 3 December, 8 p.m.

MICHAEL LLOYD-JONES

SEXUAL MYTHOLOGY

Friday, 17 December, 8 p.m.

R. J. CONDON

THE NATIVITY MYTH

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NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY 01-407 2717

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unlimited power to keep the peace as he thinks fit. (The Prime Minister of South Africa quoted this Act in reply to British criticism of his regime.) It was under the Special Powers Act that 337 people were arrested on 9 August.

Many of the men were brutally attacked by soldiers, and it is alleged that Alsatian guard dogs were allowed to chase the internees to within inches of their bodies. Some of the victims were released within 48 hours of arrest, having been arrested by mistake. One of the most severely brutalised was a man, aged 61 who was beaten up by soldiers in his own home and later at an army camp. It transpired that he is a Protestant who happened to live in a Roman Catholic area and on friendly terms with the local police.

As a result of the Amnesty International statement it is expected that the European Convention on Human Rights will be asked to institute proceedings against the United Kingdom.

BOOKS

CONVERSATIONS WITH KAFKA

by Gustav Janouch. Andre Deutsch, £2.

THE TERROR OF ART: KAFKA AND MODERN

LITERATURE by Martin Greenberg. Andre Deutsch, £2.25.

Reading Kafka is rather like looking through a kaleidoscope: everyone looks and see a different picture. The evanescent, evasive quality of his writing, particularly in the two incomplete novels *The Trial* and *The Castle*, is perhaps the one fact about which all readers agree; and yet most readers seem to have no doubt that for various reasons his writings affect us profoundly; there is even a consensus that his books are what he said all good books should be—"an axe for the frozen sea within us". Here then are two books to give us clues as to why Kafka, though remaining a persistent puzzle, left us writings of permanent interest.

So much has been written about Kafka's life and work that there needs to be good reason for two more full length works to add to the library of the Kafka reader. Gustav Janouch's *Conversations With Kafka* is a considerably enlarged version of a previous edition: he had for some years resented what he felt to be the mutilation of his first version, but stumbling across the original typescript in an old cardboard box, he realised that only part of the manuscript had ever reached Max Brod, who saw it through publication. (One imagines Kafka, who requested all his own manuscripts to be destroyed, would have appreciated the irony of this.) These conversations show us Kafka at work and at thought. He often receives the younger Janouch in his office in the Accidental Insurance Institution and on one occasion welcomes him with the words, "Greetings from my paper dungeon". So we are given a vivid picture of that institution which so shaped Kafka's detestation of bureaucracy: when Janouch refers to his respected position in the Insurance Institution, Kafka replies, "That is not an occupation, it is a form of decomposition". We are given vivid glimpses of Kafka's life, his kindness to a charwoman, his constant preoccupation with his health, his honest conversations with the younger aspiring writer, Janouch. And in those conversations we are made aware of attitudes to life and writing that provide in a characteristically aphoristic way, revealing comments on his work.

For example, when Kafka is about to depart for a sanatorium, he questions the possibility of a cure, so, when Janouch wonders why he is going, he replies, "The accused always endeavours to secure a postponement of sentence"—an insight which enhances our understanding of Joseph K, the accused in *The Trial*. Again, when they have been discussing the theatre, Kafka remarks: "The theatre makes its strongest effect when it makes unreal things real. Then the stage becomes a periscope for the soul, illuminating reality from within". Such a statement displays Kafka's concern with the relationship between dreams and reality (something which Mr Greenberg's book explores in some detail) and shows how he uses the clichés of religion in a far from conventional way. Are we to believe from this remark that *The Castle* is an exploration of inner reality—the castle beyond and around K—or is it more complicated, more kaleidoscopic? A final quotation illustrating the thought-provoking quality of Kafka's conversations: "There are no longer any regulations, prescriptions, directions. Men are afraid of freedom and respon-

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sibility. So they prefer to hide behind the prison bars which they build for themselves". This concern with freedom and responsibility is central to his work, and possibly provides a reason for that furrowing quality which Kafka impresses on his readers.

Such remarks, culled at random, sufficiently indicate the value of this book both to Kafka connoisseurs, and thinking, questioning readers. Before returning to that concern with freedom and responsibility as a door to the endless tunnel of Kafka's significance, let us consider a critical analysis of his writings: *The Terror of Art*. This book has the merit of being valuable to someone embarking for the first time on Kafka's tales, and at the same time offering insights to those who have ploughed through the canon of Kafka criticism. My only cavil is that Mr Greenberg might have briefly surveyed this literature (in which he is obviously well versed) giving an indication of where his interpretations develop and differ from previous writers. Mr Greenberg's great strength is that he succumbs neither to a Freudian view of the Father-Authority nexus, nor to an obsessively religious pre-occupation with guilt, sin, and aspiration to an immanent deity: instead he constantly returns to the texts and examines them on their own terms. He is consistently concerned with the dream nature of Kafka's technique and illuminatingly discusses the way in which the symbol is no exact analogical parallel, but a dynamic whose main subject is itself.

Throughout Mr Greenberg's survey radiates the idea of the struggle of the self to be itself within itself. For readers in 1971 this seems to me a particularly important aspect. We are shown how Georg Bendemann in *The Judgement*, Gregor Samsa in *Metamorphosis*, Joseph K in *The Trial* and K in *The Castle* all wage a struggle with a sense of non-being: a confronting, convulsing power that might, and in the case of Gregor Samsa and Joseph K does, annihilate one. This force envelops Joseph K, in *The Trial*, as an unknown, incomprehensible accuser, and tantalises K in *The Castle* as a desirable but fearful power around him. Appropriately, one of Kafka's aphorisms reads: "Man cannot live without a permanent trust in something indestructible in himself". And I think it was important to Kafka, as it is to us as humanists, to see that that something need be neither a conventional and institutionalised deity, nor an analytically comprehended delving into ego and subconscious along hackneyed Freudian lines. Perhaps there can be moments when we are seized with the truth of our lives as was Gregor Samsa when he awoke to find himself a beetle-like insect, or Joseph K when he arose to find that his whole life was on trial. To awake to a truth that is ourselves as human beings.

Another pre-occupation of Kafka's, which Mr Greenberg makes clear, is the need to establish an ethic of some kind without an absolute underwriting it. Witness his aphorism: "Nobody can remain content with the knowledge of good and evil alone; he must also strive to act in accordance with it". So there is the concern with an immediate, tangible sense of how to act here and now. Yet, our consciousness of this makes us afraid—so we rush to build our own evasion routes, our own prisons: the fear of the need to make decisions without a received morality. Kafka was aware of Nietzsche's pronouncement that "God is dead" and the consequent pre-occupation with a morality "Beyond Good and Evil". These are still our concerns. (One may applaud the way Mr Greenberg

REVIEWS

examines such "existentialist" concerns; while eschewing the ghastly jargon of that peculiarly continental trend. These are some of the problems that the two books raise, and since they demand that we continue to consider them and that we repeatedly return to Kafka's words, they are valuable.

Finally to return to the image of a kaleidoscope. Janousch reports an occasion on which his father, a fellow worker in the Insurance Institution, had been making a memorandum on changes and improvements. Kafka comments on this: "... the world picture only alters in that something dies and something is born. Something falls and something springs up. That changes the arrangement of the splinters in the kaleidoscope. But only very small children believe that they have reconstructed the toy". Kafka, if we read him carefully, provides a continual salutary reminder about what we are as human beings and in what ways we want or are able to change our society.

JIM HERRICK

PAMPHLET

THE OPEN SOCIETY AND ITS FRIENDS

by David Tribe. National Secular Society, 3p.

A century ago, it was widely believed by freethinkers that organised religion was the main enemy of progress. Sweep away the pernicious influence of the churches and humanity would advance in wisdom and knowledge under the benevolent umbrella of science. The optimistic climate of the nineteenth century gave rise to Marxism, which proclaimed itself a ruggedly scientific doctrine that revealed once and for all the laws governing social and economic progress. Marx and his followers proceeded, however, to erect a curiously metaphysical ideology on this narrow materialist base. The socialist revolution could take place only when the workers were ready for it; that is, when the objective conditions of capitalist society had created the necessary revolutionary consciousness among the workers. The great paradox of Marxism is that, in the name of human freedom, it makes automatons of us all; for consciousness is determined by the relative state of capitalist production. Religion may well be the "opium of the people", but the decline in religious belief has been followed by a dramatic growth in other opiates, arguably much more harmful.

David Tribe has done a service to the humanist movement by demolishing one such myth. The "Open Society" is defined as one in which "men have learned to be to some extent critical of taboos, and to base decisions on the authority of their own intelligence". This idyllic state of affairs is to be contrasted to the closed society of, say, mediaeval times or the Communist states of today, in which a rigid belief-system is imposed on the rest of the society by its governing elite. Put in this way, of course, the contrast is one which leaves us no choice: humanists are automatically believers in the open society. Yet, as David Tribe points out, the practical implications of this belief are almost nil. For the cultivation of "openness" is quite compatible with almost any political ideology. Take, for example, the extreme free-marketeer who would abolish virtually all government intervention in the economy. Is

this not restoring to the people (or some of them, at any rate) the right to take their own decisions? And yet, on the other side of the political spectrum, one standard criticism of modern society by the Marxist New Left is that it effectively suppresses human liberty by taking away from people the right to run their own lives. Identical diagnoses—but very different prescriptions. Paradoxically, Marxists consistently denounce the "shallowness" of the concept of the open society, which to them is merely a kind of hangover from classical liberalism, without perceiving that their own case derives directly from that same theory. For Marxism came into being as a reaction to the inadequacies of liberalism, and can be vindicated only in so far as it fulfils the liberal promise. But to articulate a vision of the socialist future in which the liberal dream has been not only put into practice, but vastly enlarged and improved, is to beg the question of the original content of that dream. If the open society is, on analysis, an empty concept, then what are we to say of Marxism?

It would be a mistake to be too harsh. Openness in the formulation of public policy, the widespread dissemination of information, and the freedom to broadcast ideas of whatever kind, are the hallmarks of a free society. And those who care for freedom should be on their guard against those utopianists who—for doubtless the best of motives—would jettison reason for metaphysics and, worse, blind faith in the redemptive power of revolution. For the open society is really a kind of method, not a final, utopian goal. We can all argue in the pubs about what kind of society we want to see. But it is quite another thing, as David Tribe trenchantly makes clear, to imagine that the open society can only be arrived at by imposing on all and sundry our own notion of what is best for them.

Equally, of course, there is a danger in assuming that we have somehow outgrown ideology and can freely bask in the light of reason. One of the more sinister intellectual offspring of Marxism is what Karl Mannheim and others have called the "sociology of knowledge", which attempts to show that the various political ideologies are directly conditioned by the social habitat of the thinker, including perhaps his psychological quirks, and so directly destroys the basis of rational discussion. For if whatever your opponent argues can be explained away by reference to his so-called "total ideology", then clearly his arguments need not be taken seriously. The sociologist of knowledge is himself immune from criticism, however, since what Mannheim terms the "highest synthesis of objective knowledge" can be attained only by the freely operating intelligence—which, by definition, belongs to you and not to your opponent.

Now clearly those who advocate the method of the open society—the use of reason rather than ideology—may be in danger of falling victim to that same intellectual arrogance that characterises the sociologists of knowledge. Yet it remains true that only a climate of intellectual freedom can guarantee the systematic growth of knowledge, as opposed to opinion or unsubstantiated faith. And this, as David Tribe cogently argues, is the real triumph of free-thought. Freedom, once achieved, is not something to be lightly thrown away. In a very real sense, therefore, freethinkers have to be determined conservatives; for, just as radicalism must always be tempered by realism, so must the rational approach be defended against the onslaught of superstition. These days, unreason is to be found as much in the ranks of "progressives" as in the ecclesiastical legions of Rome.

PHILIP HINCHLIFF

RELIGIOUS TREASON AND PLOT

Avro Manhattan, author of *The Catholic Church Against the Twentieth Century*, and many other books, spoke at the third in a series of public meetings being held in London under the auspices of the National Secular Society and the *Freethinker*. The meeting took place on 5 November, and Mr Manhattan's talk was suitably entitled *Religious Treason and Plot, Past and Present*.

Mr Manhattan said the Roman Catholic Church had waged an unrelenting war against the Russian Orthodox Church. Since the fall of Constantinople in 1453 the ultimate aim of the Vatican had been to neutralise Russia so that the Catholic Church could absorb the Orthodox Church. Sixty years ago the Austro-Hungarian Empire was the bastion of Roman Catholicism in central Europe. One of its secret societies, the Black Hand, plotted the Serajevo tragedy which precipitated the first world war. This resulted in the total collapse of Imperial Russia, defender of the Orthodox Church. Czarism was substituted by Bolshevism which preached world revolution where established religion had no say.

The West was terrified and set out to exterminate "the Red peril". The Church led the anti-communist crusade, but the Orthodox Church was prostrate and Rome started secret negotiations with Lenin, offering to help starving Russia if the Communists agreed to grant privileges to the Roman Catholic Church in the country. An incident in Portugal led to a complete break between the Vatican and the Bolsheviks. Three peasant children claimed the Virgin Mary spoke to them and said she wanted communism destroyed. Russia must be converted. The cult of Fatima rapidly grew into an international crusade against the Soviet Union.

Special Privileges

At first the Church tried to fight Bolshevism with her own political parties. In Italy, where the Catholic Party had been a most effective opponent of Mussolini, the dictator started negotiations with the Pope. The Fascists would grant the Church special privileges provided the Catholic Party supported Fascism. A bargain was struck; the Catholic Party was ordered to dissolve. Don Sturzo, its founder and leader, received direct orders from the Pope to disband the party. The Lateran Treaty and Concordat were signed.

In Germany the Vatican tried to oppose Hitler through the Catholic Party. But Hitlerism grew, and there was a repetition of the Italian sell-out to Fascism. Hitler was determined to come to power legally, but was unable to get a majority at the elections. The voting figures were 12 million Socialists, Communists and others, 11 million Nazis and 5½ million Catholics. The idea was put forward that if the Church supported Hitler a Concordat would be granted when he came to power. Von Papen, leader of the Catholic Party, began negotiations with the Nazis. Catholics would vote for Hitler. At the general election in January, 1933, the Nazis got their majority, the extra votes coming from the Catholic Party which had been ordered to disband. Hitler became Chancellor and Von Papen Vice Chancellor of Nazi Germany. In July, 1933, a Concordat was signed.

Mr Manhattan said that Pope Pius XI later regretted his support for Fascism and Nazism, and decided to speak out openly against both. He summoned Italian bishops to hear his speech, but died two days before he was due to

deliver it. The text of the speech vanished mysteriously. Mr Manhattan claimed that the speech was in fact stolen by the Secretary of State, Pacelli, the pro-Nazi architect of the Vatican-Hitler Concordat and later Pope Pius XII.

As the end of the second world war approached the Vatican gradually aligned itself with the allies. The Catholic Church became the spearhead of a new anti-communist crusade which eventually turned into the Cold War. There was talk of a military attack on Russia. While the United States strengthened its armed forces the Vatican mobilised its ecclesiastical apparatus. The Pope began to excommunicate Socialists, Catholic parties were revived and the cult of fatima was given a new impetus.

The Cold Warriors

The Hungarian revolt took place in 1956 and once again Cardinal Mindszenty planned the restoration of the Catholic monarchy. The Cold War was waged by a most determined trio: John Foster Dulles, Cardinal Spellman and Pope Pius XII. Their operations spread to Vietnam where President Diem carried out their policies and persecuted not only Communists but all non-Catholics.

The Vatican was deeply involved in the Irish troubles since before the first world war. Prior to the Easter rebellion of 1917 the insurgents sent a delegate to the Pope and told him when the uprising would occur. This was denied for 30 years until the delegate himself admitted the truth.

Mr Manhattan concluded: "A feature of any examination of world events is the intrigues of Vatican diplomacy and the religious emotionalism of the Roman Catholic Church. The specific intent of promoting political and social unrest has always been the furtherance of Catholicism. Pope Pius XII was the greatest intriguer of the century with the possible exception of Stalin. Pope Paul VI, as Monsignor Montini, was a participant in many unsavoury plots. The religious treason and plots engineered by the Vatican can be reckoned as significant as those engineered by Russia and the United States. Because of this they should be considered as important contributors to the instability of our century".

DAVID TRIBE'S PRESIDENT CHARLES BRADLAUGH, MP

David Tribe's book, whether regarded as a portrait of a man or a mosaic of an age, makes fascinating reading.—Humanist News

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EVENTS (Continued from page 364)

South Place Ethical Society, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, WC1, Sunday, 14 November, 11 a.m. P. J. Cronin: "The Justifications of Religious Belief". Tuesday, 16 November, 7 p.m. G. K. Young: "The Acceptance of Diversity". God Must Die so That Man Can Live! All those interested in participating in a public celebration of the death of God are asked to contact KENOSIS, 23 South Villas, London, NW1. Telephone 01-485 7770.