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THE SPORT OF CZARS

One of the more encouraging pieces of news in recent weeks is the fact that the Soviet Government has considerably stepped up the number of exit visas given to Jewish citizens wishing to emigrate to Israel, though it does not appear at present that a mass-exodus is at all likely, or will be allowed.

The story of the Jewish communities in Russia is a pretty tragic one, particularly during Czarist times when a policy of "divide and rule" was used to cow the various minorities in the imperial dominions. The average person today is given a charming and not-too-grim account of old Russian Jewish life in, for instance, *Fiddler on the Roof*, but the details of the pogroms were, in their day, too horrible to make light of at the time.

Ninety years ago the poet Algernon Charles Swinburne, infuriated by Czarism and its anti-Semitic outrages, wrote his *On The Russian Persecution of The Jews*. It was published first in the *Daily Telegraph* of 25 January 1882, and in this paper four days later. This seems an opportune time therefore to consider the fate, not of the Jews under the Christian Czars, but of their descendants under a Marxist-Leninist state.

To attempt an unprejudiced assessment of the Soviet Jewish problem is like trying to intervene in a fight between two black cats in a coal-hole. One hears much vituperation, but hard facts are very difficult to discern. For instance, we do not know exactly the figures involved, for a start. It is generally agreed that the Jews are the eleventh largest minority group in the Soviet Union, but estimates of their numbers vary from 2 to 3½ millions, depending upon whether one accepts Soviet or Zionist figures. And the number of these wishing to leave for Israel is equally difficult to assess, but perhaps 50,000 would be something like a fair estimate. This may represent only 2 per cent of the total, but 50,000 people

are, in themselves, of importance as a social and human problem.

In theory, of course, anti-Semitism is illegal in the USSR, as are all other forms of racial and national discrimination; the Russian Jews have a homeland provided by the government in 1934, the Birobidjan Autonomous Region, described by the Soviet apologist Solomon Rabinovich as occupying "an area of 35,800 sq. km.—larger than . . . Belgium". In fact it contains only 14,269

Jews out of a total population of 162,856 (1959 census). However, in a country where anti-Zionism is staunch government policy distinctions are inevitably blurred. T. K. Kitchko's *Judaism Without Embellishment*, which would be regarded as anti-Semitic in the West, was defended by the authorities as simply "anti-religious propaganda".

Now it seems clear that a large majority of Soviet Jews are reasonably satisfied with living where they do, and many are Jewish in a "national" rather than a "religious" sense. Such people have been integrated into Soviet society, and occupy prominent positions in professional life. It is those Jews who practise their religion strictly, and have a desire to "return to Zion" that concern us here. There is little doubt that once a

Soviet citizen has asked to go to Israel he is treated as an outcast. This has been spelled out by the *Ural Worker*: "To flee one's homeland is criminal. Such an action has only one name—treason." Once a man has declared for going to Israel, he has burned his boats in the Soviet Union. Therefore why impede him? The argument that he will join the Israeli army is reptilian, and does not justify keeping families languishing for years, and in any case such treatment will surely infuriate others into joining the Israeli forces.

(Continued on page 39)

ON THE RUSSIAN PERSECUTION OF THE JEWS

*O Son of Man, by lying tongues adored,
By murderous hands of slaves with feet red-shod
In carnage deep as ever Christian trod;
Profaned with prayer and sacrifice abhorred
And incense from the trembling tyrant's horde,
Brute worshippers or wielders of the rod,
Most murderous even of all that call thee God,
Most treacherous even that ever called thee Lord;
Face loved of little children long ago
Head hated of the priests and rulers then,
If thou see this, or hear these hounds of thine
Run ravening as the Gadarean swine,
Say, was not this thy Passion, to foreknow
In thy death's hour the works of Christian men?*

January 23rd, 1882

A. C. SWINBURNE.

The Freethinker, 29 January 1882.

GODFREY HIGGINS: A BICENTENARY

R. J. CONDON

Although the nineteenth century produced many great social reformers and profound scholars, few could justly be claimed as outstanding in both fields. A notable exception, little heard of today, was Godfrey Higgins. Born on 30 January 1772, at Skellow Grange near Doncaster, he displayed little promise in his early years. From a local school he went to Cambridge University, but failed to take a degree. On his father's death he inherited the family estate at Skellow, and in 1800 he married. He might then have settled down as a country gentleman, but war between Britain and France was imminent, and Higgins joined the Army, becoming a major in 1808. Three years later he resigned his commission following a severe fever which left him in permanent ill-health.

Returning to civilian life, Higgins was appointed as a magistrate, an office to which he brought a strong sense of compassion and fair play. He soon realised that the York Lunatic Asylum, where the mental cases he had to certify were sent, was an object of dread to their relatives. His suspicions were further aroused by the condition of a discharged patient, and he determined to investigate for himself. Paying a surprise visit to the asylum, he found conditions there even worse than he had feared. The building, designed for 54 patients, held three times that number. Rich patients received preferential treatment, while the poor were savagely beaten and locked away in filth and degradation. The more attractive of the females were set apart from the rest for the enjoyment of the young men of the town. At least 144 deaths had been concealed. Higgins wrote: "The number of casualties in this house cannot be known, because when a man's brains are dashed out, he is entered in the Books, 'died'; and when a patient has disappeared, and can never afterwards be heard of, he is entered, 'removed'?" It took Higgins and his friends two years to expose all the abuses and put things right. He was largely responsible for the building of a new asylum at Wakefield in 1818.

Many other social questions aroused Higgins' interest. He published pamphlets drawing attention to widespread poverty ("One fourth of all the inhabitants of England are paupers or insolvent"), and condemning excessive taxation, the Corn Laws, exploitation of child labour, flogging in the armed forces, and Negro slavery. He proposed detailed fiscal reforms, and even suggested a decimal coinage based on a shilling of ten pence, a plan which many now consider would have been superior to that recently adopted in Britain.

"Systematic Liars"

Few could have suspected at this time that Higgins was laying the foundations of an unrivalled archaeological scholarship. He joined the Royal Asiatic Society, the British Association for the Advancement of Science, and other learned bodies, and for many years devoted ten hours a day to the investigation of religious beliefs and their origins. An utterly fearless and honest man, the published results of his studies typically made no concessions to religious convention, an attitude which led to a perpetual feud with the Church. In the preface to his last and greatest work, *Anacalypsis*, Higgins called the clergy "though with many exceptions in all sects, regular, systematic liars, lying

from interest, and boldly defending the practice". He went on to express his "detestation of an order which exists directly in opposition to the commands of Jesus Christ—which in no case is of use to mankind, but which has produced more demoralisation and misery in the world than all other causes put together". Many comments of this kind enliven the 1,300 pages of *Anacalypsis*.

At a time when men were regularly being imprisoned for publishing controversial books on religion, it is perhaps understandable that the printer and editor of the posthumous second volume of *Anacalypsis*, William Smallfield, felt it prudent to dissociate himself from Higgins' views by prefacing the book with an "advertisement" in which he "avows his firm conviction of the divine mission, the death (by crucifixion), the resurrection, and the ascension to a state of immortality, of Jesus of Nazareth", whose second coming "the Editor gratefully anticipates". One could hardly be too careful.

In 1826 Higgins published a short work called *Horae Sabbaticae, or An Attempt to Correct Certain Superstitions and Vulgar Errors*, in which he argued that Sunday ought to be a day of festivity instead of Christian misery. The result, predictably, was a flood of reproving clerical pamphlets. His first full-scale book, *The Celtic Druids*, appeared the following year. In it Higgins suggested that the Druids were the priests of an ancient and civilised nation called the Celtae, originating in India and sending out colonies of emigrants to many parts of the world. The thesis was supported with numerous lithographed plates showing the similarity between druidical remains in widely different areas. In Britain only the *Gentleman's Magazine* appears to have reviewed *The Celtic Druids*, expressing appreciation of its author's erudition coupled with regret at its anti-clerical tone. Higgins' next book, *An Apology for the Life and Character of Mohammed* (1829), further upset the pious by unfavourably contrasting the Christian religion and priesthood with those of the Arabian Prophet.

Higgins' Masterpiece

Throughout the years in which these books were being written, Higgins was gathering and arranging the material for his masterpiece. In 1833 the first volume of *Anacalypsis* appeared. The title, a Greek word meaning "unveiling", refers to the statue of Isis at Sais, which bears the inscription: "I am everything that has been, and is, and will be, and my veil no mortal has uncovered". The work is a massive survey of the mythologies of the ancient world, in which the author demonstrates that all nations had the same basic religious concepts. The Gospel story is shown to be unhistorical, and derived in the main from pagan solar cults. Despite this, Higgins felt that a human figure lay under the myth; a book he did not live to write would have given his idea of the true Christianity taught by Jesus. Evidence is adduced that many scientific discoveries of the last few centuries were known in the remote past, a theory currently enjoying a revival. Many more or less related subjects are dealt with in *Anacalypsis*; the common source of languages and alphabets, the migrations of races, and the ancient notion that history repeated itself in regular time-cycles whose periodicity could be determined each age culminating in the appearance of a superhuman personage.

There is much on cycles in *Anacalypsis*, and much on the secret doctrine, common to all faith, but taught only to an inner circle of initiates. All Christian writers up to 150 AD, says Higgins, acknowledged that a double meaning existed in their own as well as in pagan religions.

Anacalypsis has proved both an inspiration and a rich source of material for subsequent writers on comparative mythology. A Liverpool surgeon, Thomas Inman, was stimulated by it to study the evolution of religion, publishing his conclusions in *Ancient Faiths Embodied in Ancient Names*, and other works written between 1868 and 1876. Inman, unlike Higgins, thought phallicism the principal key to religion. There are more than a hundred references to *Anacalypsis* in T. W. Doane's *Bible Myths and their Parallels in Other Religions* (1882), itself an oft-quoted source-book, and it has also been heavily drawn upon by Kersey Graves in his *World's Sixteen Crucified Saviours*.

Less Reputable Use

These were legitimate borrowings, but *Anacalypsis* has been put to a less reputable use. Madame Blavatsky, the

high priestess of Theosophy, published in 1877 a work in four volumes which her followers soon accepted as the cult's bible. Rumour had it that the books Madame needed for her research had materialised out of thin air. The prosaic truth was that she had three collaborators working for her in the Reading Room of the British Museum, abstracting material from *Anacalypsis* for her to garble and interweave with her own irresponsible assertions. While Higgins had modestly sub-titled his work *An Attempt to Draw Aside the Veil of the Saitic Isis*, Blavatsky boldly called hers *Isis Unveiled*, as if that settled the question. Higgins constantly referred to "the secret doctrine", a phrase unblushingly appropriated by Blavatsky as the sub-title of one of her volumes.

Worn out by constant ill-health, Higgins died on 9 August 1833, his long cherished hope of journeying to the Orient unfulfilled. He is buried at Wadworth, a few miles from his birthplace. *Anacalypsis*, for all its influence on later writers, has always been a rare book, its three full editions totalling only 1,150 sets. No full-scale biography of its author has yet been written, an undeserved neglect of one of the greatest humanists of his or any age.

JUST A FUNNY OLD NOSE

CHARLES BYASS

A young child is looking up at my face and saying to me: "You do have a funny nose". I agree with the child, for I too have noticed that—as noses go—mine is rather a snubby one. I can see the funny side of my nose and can laugh about it with the child. We can enjoy together the shape of my nose. The child is not "holding it against me"; nor am I. The shape of my nose is a sort of "natural fact" (hardly a "wonder") for which I am "not held to be responsible". The child and I can see this. We decide to thank nature for not making all noses the same shape; life is much more fun this way.

There are many things about my person which the child notices, apart from my rather snubby nose. I, too, am aware of other distinctive features about my person—just as I notice some distinctive features about the child. The child and I can cheerfully swop observations about each other. We can agree that "natural facts" can be very funny.

Having come to this appreciation of our external qualities, we then go on to the question of our "unseen" ones. The child and I can both agree that we can see "each other's noses" but we can't see what we are experiencing while "using our noses". I can see the child sniffing a rose, but I can't tell the child; "I can see inside your 'sniff' ". The child tells me what is "inside the 'sniff' ", by expressing the experience in some "external" way—words are very useful, but they are not the only way of "communicating" the sniff.

The child and I agree that there is no point in saying the rose sniffs "horrible", if in fact it sniffs "heavenly". We can—it is true—agree that there are some occasions when it is "fun" to say the opposite of what we really "sniff". But we can also agree that it works best when both of us know we're really "fooling".

Seeing and Using

It is now agreed, between the child and I, that there is a difference between *seeing* the shape of my nose and my "using" it as a "sniffer". Also, we agree that having used it as a "sniffer" I can try to communicate the "sniff" in all sorts of ways. If I sniff the rose and like the sniff, I might then pick the rose and take it home to the girl I love best. If on the other hand the child takes a sniff and doesn't like it at all, the child might run as fast as possible in the opposite direction. We can see the point: we would both be acting in a "natural" sort of way, but differently. But what if, after sniffing the rose, I picked it and then started jumping up and down on it? We agree that this would be very odd behaviour, but we also agree that it could be "understood" in a "natural" sort of way. But say I picked the rose and then started to attack the child with it? The child and I agree that this behaviour would be something more than "very odd" or "naturally understandable". I would be attacking the child "unjustly"—the child has done nothing to deserve being attacked (nor could the child do anything).

The child and I agree that life is more enjoyable if we can 'disagree' about things without attacking each other with those things—even when one of those things is the scent of a rose.

Incidentally, to my eyes and in eyes, the colour of this child's face is a consistent, beautiful brownish-black; my own facial colour is a rather uninspiring pinkish-yellow—and I have noticed a few brownish moles as well. (The colour of the rose, by the way, is—the child and I can agree—a sort of "rosy-red".)

NEWS

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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, WC1; Freethinker Bookshop, 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.

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

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.

Leicester Secular Society, Secular Hall, 75 Humberstone Gate, Leicester, Sunday, 30 January, 6.30 p.m.: Commander Edgar Young, "Soviet Foreign Policy".

National Secular Society, The Clarence, Whitehall, London, SW1, Friday, 4 February, 8 p.m.: Philip Hincliff and Pat Sloan, "Marxism".

South Place Ethical Society, Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, London WC1, Sunday, 30 January, 11 a.m.: Dr Ann Faraday, "Dream Power". Tuesday, 1 February, 7 p.m.: Harry Knight, "Suggestology—A New Subliminal Teaching Method".

Welwyn Garden City Humanist Group, c/o Toren Hesselbo, 12 Elmwood, Welwyn, Saturday, 29 January, 8 p.m.: Discussion on the "Little Red Schoolbook".

Worthing Humanist Group, Burlington Hotel, Marine Parade, Worthing, Sunday, 29 January, 5.30 p.m.: Michael Duane, "Education for What?"

BANGLADESH—THE AFTERMATH

It is to be hoped that the Indian and other governments will ensure that the authorities in Bangladesh arrange for the prompt evacuation to West Pakistan of an estimated one million non-Bengalis (mainly Biharis), at present living in conditions of terror, overcrowding and starvation, and at risk of being massacred by the understandably incensed majority in the new state. Nevertheless, vengeance and blind revenge will achieve nothing; the time has come for the people of Bangladesh to show themselves to be generous, except perhaps to those against whom there is clear legal evidence of atrocities.

The appalling human cost of Yahya Khan's holy war against the Bengalis is now becoming apparent. During their December campaign, Indian troops advancing through Bangladesh found that the Pakistanis had daubed the homes of Hindus with black hand and yellow "H" symbols, just as the Nazis painted seals of David on the houses of Jews.

The West Pakistan troops are currently estimated to have raped some 200,000 women during their "pacification" of Bengal, and many of these women have been subsequently abandoned by their husbands because Moslem tradition there decrees that a man should shun a wife who has been touched by another man, even if unwillingly and by force. It is perhaps as well that I was not observed to puke when I heard this, or else I should have been told that I was a "bigoted old-fashioned atheist" by those who tell us that religion is "such a comfort" in time of adversity. Yeugh!

HUMANIST NURSES' SUBMISSIONS TO LANE COMMITTEE

The Humanist Nurses' Organisation has added its contribution to the many now received by the Lane Committee on the Working of the Abortion Act. The HNO evidence runs to some considerable length, and so it is not possible to publish the text here *verbatim*. The following is a brief summary:

In the preamble the Humanist Nurses' Organisation sets out its attitude to abortion and related subjects in terms of its aims and objects. It considers that the 1967 Abortion Act "was, and still is, an important and necessary piece of progressive social legislation", and that "The nursing and medical services exist to *treat* people, not *judge* them".

There then follows a condemnation of outside bodies who "contrive to use nurses and doctors as tools for the furtherance of their own narrow, sectarian interest". Details of particular incidents are given, for example the Catholic Men's Guild (Knights of St Columba) and Harold Wood Hospital, Essex.

The report goes on to say that a margin of abuse "is inevitable in any scheme of State social/medical welfare, and is to be preferred to a total denial of the needs of the majority in any community". It points out areas where abuse most occurs, apparently among "young, unmarried girls in the 15-20 age range", and makes suggestions which might ease the problem, together with considerable emphasis on the need for proper education, facilities, and counselling.

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The submissions then deal with the question of hospitals that find their facilities overburdened with abortion cases whilst others seems to have a very light work-load in this field. The HNO proposes that hospitals should maintain "a workable ratio as between those willing to co-operate with abortion work, and those unable to on grounds of conscience". A ratio of 5 to 2 in favour is suggested.

The HNO further adds that "it is our view that the availability of abortion should be seen as a service, not a convenience", but, "within this framework, there should be no restrictions whatever against the principle of abortion on demand for all who need it, since we hold it to be morally unacceptable and unjustifiable that anyone should be compelled to have an unwanted baby".

The submissions conclude by pointing out that the Abortion Act will work better when it is seen as part of a comprehensive package covering the whole field of sexual relationships, attitudes, etc. Finally, the HNO takes to task those hospitals that require "junior theatre nurses to dispose of aborted fetuses in the boiler furnaces . . . This is not the kind of task best calculated to produce in our nurses those qualities and standards which have made them the envy of the whole world".

CIVIL LIBERTIES AND INTERROGATION

The NCCL has submitted the following evidence to the Privy Council Committee on Interrogation Procedures:

The National Council for Civil Liberties is concerned with all cases where individuals are deprived of their liberty and where individuals, whether or not lawfully detained, are treated inhumanly, or in a manner which is humiliating or degrading or which may result in physical or mental suffering.

The Committee on Interrogation Procedures will be familiar with the many statements contained in the Law of the United Nations, the Geneva Conventions and the European Convention on Human Rights which condemn ill-treatment of prisoners both in times of war and in times of peace.

We draw attention particularly to Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: "No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment".

To Article 3 of the Geneva Convention (1949) which applies, *inter alios*, to those in detention and which provides: "The following acts are and shall remain prohibited at any time and in any place whatsoever . . . (c) outrages upon personal dignity and, in particular, humiliating and degrading treatment".

To Article 17 of the Convention regarding prisoners of war which provides: "No physical or mental torture, nor any other form of coercion, may be inflicted on prisoners of war to secure from them information of any kind whatsoever".

To Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights (1950) which provides: "No one shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment."

The Committee will also be aware of the condemnation by the Commission of methods adopted by the Greek Government in the cases brought by Denmark, Norway and Sweden in 1967 (published 1970).

The Committee will also be aware that the forms of interrogation found to have been used by the Compton Report (wall standing, hooding, noise, deprivation of sleep, deprivation of food and water) are at least tortious and may be criminal acts and that there is no common law or statutory provision which justifies their use.

The National Council for Civil Liberties believes that regulations should be made at once forbidding these methods of interrogation and any others of a like or more drastic kind. In Northern Ireland today, the consequence of the officially confirmed use of such illegal methods is to weaken further in the eyes of a substantial minority the legitimacy of the established forces of law and order. Thus by deliberately infringing the civil liberties of individuals those forces not only act illegally but also begin to destroy the basis of their own authority.

HUMANIST "INSTRUCTION" SCANDAL

The gala dinner that was to have been held by the Assembly of Bloomsbury Heretics to mark their 3,000th performance of Professor Borman Mohl's controversial sex-education film, *Detumescence* (soon to be made compulsory viewing for all schoolchildren over the age of 4½), has had to be abandoned owing to a major row that has erupted and which threatens to split the Assembly from top to . . . er . . . bottom.

His Beatitude Roger Montmorency, High Moderator of the ABH, has been accused of providing young "surrogate instructresses" for "immoral purposes" for men taking part in the Assembly's course of "Applied Religious Heresy in Contemporary Erotic Expressionism". Mr Montmorency denies the charge: speaking to the press at the gates of his elegant Highgate residence on Monday he said: "The course was purely an informal affair—outside the official activities of the Assembly; all the ladies in question are members of my personal commune and what we do outside the portals of Humanist House is nobody else's business".

The allegations against the High Moderator were originally made by Dr Ilych Haczetmann, the world-famous Jungian psychoanalyst and whipper breeder, who is also the Hon. Paediatrician at Humanist House (a purely nominal title since the Young Heretics' Saturday School was closed in 1929). I was able to interview him after a press conference given by the Social Morality Sub-committee of the ABH on Tuesday. Dr Haczetmann's usual calculating caution had evaporated in the excitement of the occasion. He offered me his hot, wet hand, and said between rapid, deep breaths: "Now we have got Montmorency where we want him, at last! Exposed for the degenerate he is!"

Asked if legal action would be taken against Mr Montmorency, the Doctor replied: "Of course! The Director of Public Prosecutions is bound to find a charge in law against him—I mean, he has got to, hasn't he? Got to? He must!"

At this point Dr Haczetmann fell panting to the floor, convulsed, and appeared to enter into a trance-like state, whereupon he was carried away by two of his aides.

My colleague from *The Episcopophagist*, the Hon. Peregrine Burke, who had thus far sat impassively through the heated press conference reading a review copy of the 968th impression of *The Little Red Book* (Mao's), at this point arose, spat his quid of tobacco on to the floor and made to go out. Passing me he commented: "I see that bourgeois atheism is as usual sowing the seeds of its own destruction. Like, you haven't got the dialectic, comrade."

BOOKS

THE SCIENCE OF WAR AND PEACE

by Robin Clarke. Cape, £2.95.

"We have been compelled to create a permanent armaments industry of vast proportions", said President Eisenhower in 1961 before leaving the White House. "We must understand its grave implications . . . We must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for this disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist."

That warning was given ten years ago. Since then the American Defence Department has doubled its colossal expenditure. In 1968 Senator Eugene McCarthy said: "With military missions in many parts of the world . . . with its own business of selling billions of dollars' worth of arms, for cash or credit, all around the world, the Defence Department has become perhaps the strongest independent power in world affairs". The last remark was not just a turn of phrase; it was a statement of fact. Last year the Defence Department received more money than the national income of any other country in the world, with five exceptions—Britain, France, West Germany, Japan, and the Soviet Union. Its budget was bigger than the gross national product of the whole of Latin America.

Mr Clarke's book is packed with figures and facts of this description. He has burrowed to good effect in many technical journals and other sources hardly accessible to readers in public libraries or beyond them. What his indictment, serious not shrill in tone, amounts to is this: since the invention of the first atomic bomb almost a generation ago, scientists and technologists have led a new way of life. The majority of them are engaged in research or other activities in the service of the warfare states. Mr Clarke indicates how their work has taken them up into space as well as down into the depths of the oceans in the search for better security against inventions of their own making. He points also to new dangers that lie ahead as technology forces the pace of needless discoveries and their applications, flying in the face of our current concern with the environment. Technology has become warfare by other than traditional means. The arms race has degenerated into a laboratory contest with the unknown rather than a competition in armaments against supposedly hostile rival powers.

If you are not a scientist, there is a limit to the amount of this kind of information you can absorb before you grow bored with the whole subject. Perhaps that is one reason why the newspapers tell us so little about what is afoot. A better reason is this: ordinary citizens could be moved to the point of persistent protest if they began to realise how fantastically wasteful is the enormous expenditure on arms.

We who live in Britain have no grounds for complacent comparison with the United States. Three years ago Frank Allaun, MP, made this estimate: Out of each pound spent by the Treasury, defence takes 25p. By contrast, Government subsidies to public housing take one penny. (Incidentally, it seems to remain a mystery why funds for housing are borrowed at high rates of interest while a battleship is built and paid for out of current revenue). Mr Allaun calculated that if we had reduced our expenditure of over £2,000 millions a year on the armed forces

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by one third, then nearly all the financial problems facing the (Labour) Government could have been solved. There would have been enough money not only for housing but for schools, roads, and amenities we all want. In Britain research into terrible new weapons of war costs £200 millions annually; and occupies numbers of our best scientists.

On the day I was writing this, *The Guardian* reported that Britain is selling 800 Chieftain tanks to Iran at a cost of about £150 millions; also various other arms which will make Iran in military terms the strongest country in the Middle East—where it shares a long frontier with the Soviet Union. Britain, as David Fairhall points out, is in the arms business in a big way. Our Ministry of Defence runs a sales-to-foreigners division in order to increase our exports of deadly weapons to those countries (including South Africa) which we are happy to help. These sales are made in competition with our friends in the Pentagon. One reason for these sales is that when a new military project is designed, a factor always weighed is whether its heavy cost can be limited by its export potential. So the lunacy goes on and on.

Robin Clarke has compiled a book of substantial value to reformers and critics who put sanity first. He would, however, have added to its value if he had explored the way out of the incredible situation. In his last chapters, he puts his faith in "conflict resolution", a fashionable subject of research by American academics who have infected some of their British counterparts. Their aim is to study how men behave in a time of international crisis leading to war. Faith in this study seems to me misplaced. A better way would be to ask whether our economic and social system requires the wastefulness of war and preparations for war, as a means of avoiding drastic internal reform and reconstruction. Readers who want to pursue this line of thought should read that excellent Penguin *Monopoly Capital* by Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy, two outstanding American economists. Mr Clarke should read it, too.

JOHN GILD

GOD AND MAN by Archbishop Anthony Bloom (with Marghanita Laski). Darton, Longman & Todd. £1.50.

Some humanists who speak on the air shrink from calling themselves atheists. Perhaps they think that agnostic sounds a shade more respectable. Not so Marghanita Laski. She makes no bones about it.

Her televised encounters with Archbishop Anthony Bloom have now been published in a book, together with some homilies by the Archbishop which will not greatly interest readers of *The Freethinker*. They may be a little puzzled—as I am—to find anyone with such an un-Russian name holding high office in the Russian Orthodox Church. But it is a sign of the paucity of popular home-bred apologists that the BBC should have to cast its net so wide.

The discussion was entertaining although it was bound to cover well-trodden ground. It was like watching two skilful duellists, each of which occasionally left a dangerous opening. Miss Laski, for example, was incautious enough

REVIEWS

to confess that to overcome the pain of a slipped disc she once followed St Gregory's method of meditating on the Lord's Prayer. It proved to be effective.

What else did it prove? Nothing. The Archbishop was quick to seize the opening. "My difficulty", he said, "is the fact that the Lord's Prayer, for instance, is addressed to someone. If the someone does not exist at all, how does it affect you?"

A good point. Miss Laski had to admit that she did not know the answer. She found it easier to explain why the text "I will lift up mine eyes to the hills from whence cometh my help", was more meaningful to her. What it meant, however, is still obscure.

It was her turn to score when the Archbishop rashly asked if there was any basic difference between saying "I know that God exists" and "I know that love exists".

You do not need to have served an apprenticeship in logical analysis to see that there is a big difference. Love can no more be said to *exist* than beauty—unless you believe in Platonic ideas. There is the fact of loving, a form of human behaviour that can be observed and experienced. Love is a verb as well as abstract noun. God is not a verb.

What do we mean when we say that X exists? Surely we mean that it makes some perceptible difference. If I say that in addition to the law of gravitation there is a law of levitation, and when you ask what effect that has, and I reply it has no effect whatever, I am not making a really intelligible statement. I am talking what is literally nonsense.

Again, if you ask whether I believe in X, I am bound to inquire, what is meant by X? If it cannot be defined or described, what can I possibly say? In so far as the attributes given to Yaweh, Zeus, Allah, etc. constitute a description I can say emphatically that I do not believe there are such beings. Unless I know what a thing means how can I believe it?

Miss Laski made a good point when she asked how religious experience of the presence of God would reveal whether she was encountering a Christian, a Jewish or a Moslem God. Indeed if the issue of Theism was settled, once and for all, and God's existence could be demonstrated beyond all doubt, it would still leave the claims of any specific religion—e.g. Christianity—unsupported except by faith.

And what is faith? The Archbishop said it was "certainty" that an experience one has had is real and not illusory. Whereupon Miss Laski neatly riposted that if you have got certainty why do you need faith? She might have pointed out that in the ancient world no one doubted that the gods of a city state were as real as its ordinary citizens. It was not until men began to have doubts that faith became necessary if belief was not to be undermined.

There is no need to pursue the dialogue in further detail. Both participants had their minds made up before they began to argue, but there is considerable interest in frank and sincere exposure of differences on problems that have haunted some of the best minds for thousands of years.

HECTOR HAWTON

N.S.S. SUPPORT FOR HEALTH SERVICE BILL

The National Secular Society has welcomed Phillip Whitehead's National Health Service (Family Planning) Amendment Bill which received an unopposed Second Reading in the House of Commons on 21 January last. The Bill aims to secure the provision, as part of the National Health Service, by local health authorities of voluntary vasectomies on the same basis as the contraceptive services provided under the 1967 Act. In a press release issued on the day of the debate, the NSS says that one of the unfortunate shortcomings in the 1967 Act is that it does not allow local health authorities to contribute towards the cost of providing facilities for voluntary vasectomy. During the last five years male sterilisation has become widely accepted as an effective method of contraception. Waiting lists for voluntary vasectomies (carried out privately by the Family Planning Association) have greatly increased, and if Mr Whitehead's Bill become law it will do much to ease the situation.

The NSS statement further adds:

"This attempt to strengthen the 1967 Act enjoys all-party support at Westminster, but it can be safely assumed that the traditional opponents of contraception, the Roman Catholic Church, will exert its influence in order to defeat Mr Whitehead's Bill. Fortunately, Members of Parliament are not so susceptible to Roman Catholic pressure as they were a few years ago, and the Church's opposition to contraception is ignored by the public, including large sections of the Catholic community. And when a free family planning service, as part of the National Health Service, is eventually introduced, even more Catholics will opt for reliable methods of contraception rather than Vatican Roulette."

The increase in male sterilisation will contribute much to the quality of family life. It should not be the responsibility of voluntary organisations to cope with the huge demand for voluntary vasectomies. W.McI./N.S.

THE SPORT OF CZARS

(Continued from front page)

This is not an apology either for Israel or for Zionism; it is simply a plea for people whose search for what they seek as happiness is being frustrated by officialdom and politicians. Jew-baiting should have died with Hitler's mob and the Romanoffs; the time has come for the Soviet authorities to show the world that the "Sport of Czars" is dead, and seen to be dead.

Perhaps, for once, Moses might be allowed to have the last word in these columns:

"Let my people go!"

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LETTERS

Mr Hinchliff and Mr Young on Europeans

Nothing so ill-fits a review as pompous patronising. It both identifies the inadequacy of the reviewer and prevents the reader seeing for himself the nature of the problem that is supposed to be under review.

I had something to do with the publication of G. K. Young's *What Are Europeans?* As soon as I heard him give the lecture (of which the pamphlet is the text) it was apparent to me that Mr Young located a question that is rarely asked and provided what seemed to be a most valuable answer.

The question is: "What makes a European European?" The problem has nothing to do with race and colour and everything to do with culture. The ancient Egyptians knew how to make use of the properties of triangles and rectangles for the purposes of civil engineering, and left it at that. The Greeks, however, discovered their abstract character as the theorems of geometry and started the whole European process of the objectification of phenomena.

The Greeks did not, in consequence, put down the arts and philosophy in the name of science—this was left to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries of our era; and Jeremy Bentham's utilitarianism completed the process. Everything of any importance was reduced to impersonal forces of an atomic order. The self was exiled and all manifestations of the subjective were put out to grass, to be tolerated but not taken seriously. The achievements of Blake, Lawrence, Jung and others are now helping us to redress the balance.

But in Africa and the East the situation was the exact reverse. There the self retained its critical place as the centre of the universe, but the absence of anything comparable to the European tradition of objectification meant that societies never enjoyed the actual or potential control of their environment that science, for good or ill, makes possible.

This is incredibly important. Both East and West have vital insights to offer each other but we shall not be able to give and receive properly so long as we persist in the absurd European Christian delusion that in every African and Asian there is a white man trying to get out. And it is not only Christians who believe this.

In Biafra I saw the horrific effects of the bland transfer of alien institutions to a foreign culture and we have just seen it again in Bangladesh. This kind of thing will go on happening until we have a much deeper understanding of our situation.

The case for diversity, so ably put by Mr Young, follows naturally from the discovery of the nature of diversity in the first place. It should not be necessary to indicate the obvious.

If anyone doubts the validity of this reply to Philip Hinchliff let him consult also the article written on the opposite page of the same issue by G. F. Westcott. This is a classic example of the very thing indicated by G. K. Young. We are enjoined to essay "a theory of ethics . . . capable of being described objectively and of being tested scientifically". Q.E.D.

PETER CADOGAN,

General Secretary, South Place Ethical Society.

"Evolutionary Ethics"

I have rarely read a piece of writing more muddled than that of G. F. Westcott in *The Freethinker* of 15 January. Entitled "Evolutionary Ethics", it gave us no definition of evolution and told us nothing about ethics. What we were offered was a facile history of the world, and a few paragraphs informing us that "evolution is a fact which must be accepted". From among the many points that irritated, let me select just two as being particularly dangerous.

Firstly, Mr Westcott, evolution is not another word for progress. Beginning with Darwin himself, all scientific evolutionists have agreed upon that; and those who try to contradict the fact are usually churchmen. Evolution is merely the process of change, any further label which we like to fix to that change, such as "good" or "bad", "progressive" or "retrogressive", must be a subjective judgement. To say that "the function or direction of evolution has been . . . to increase adaptability to, and freedom, consciousness and understanding of, existence", is merely to pass judgement on the changes undergone by one rather self-opinionated species, on one small planet, during a very, very short space of time. In the last instance mankind has no more understanding or freedom of existence than had the dinosaurs. To talk of controlling evolution, of altering its course, is silly conceit: any

change brought about by a supposed conscious decision of man is no less a part of evolution than was the extinction of the Dodo. Because we live in an evolving world, everything we do is by definition part of natural evolution. We need not be cajoled to accept the principle of evolution: we have no alternative but to do so.

Secondly, we are told that since man's rational capacities are limited, we should supplement them with electronic and mechanical devices. This assumes that reason is the quality which should be fostered above all others—such an assumption is unprovable and must remain the subjective wish of its instigator. Man is not merely a rational animal, an inefficient computer. He laughs, paints, sings and lusts, often for the most illogical reasons; and, what is more, he enjoys doing these things. At times he likes killing, praying, or just sitting in the sunshine. Those who are frightened by what they see, try to squeeze this most haphazard of beasts into a mould which they can understand, a mould carved with the magic wand of reason. We will never fit, Mr Westcott: so, please, before you start to plan out our future, try to understand what we are now.

J. STEWART ROSS.

"The Emerging Ethic"

Privileged as I must feel at being criticised in a single edition of *The Freethinker* by two such eminent figures as Miss Brigid Brophy and Mr David Tribe, I shall be grateful for a little space for mild correction.

I knew, when David Tribe told me he was to review my book, that it would bring on an attack of the twitches, and I'm sorry to have caused him discomfort. However, he should have steered himself to read more carefully the section on religion, and for the sake of my good name I must repudiate ever suggesting "all you need is love"—the quotes, naughtily, are Mr Tribe's. Faults I may have, but goey sentiment is not one of them. As to orgies, I only mentioned them to refute their usefulness in the matter under discussion. I still aver that there is a little original work in *The Emerging Ethic*, specifically my analysis of maturity and its significance and vital role. And I firmly adhere to my contention that Christianity has done great damage in degrading the Dionysiac, the flesh and the role of women in Western culture. I've just read Gordon Rattray Taylor's *Sex in History*, and am interested to observe that he comes to a similar conclusion, by a different route. So did the untrendy Norman O. Brown in *Life Against Death*. Indeed, I quoted just as many unfashionable sources as "trendy" ones, as Mr Tribe surely observed. To retreat to the epithet, of course, is the last resort of the emotional response.

The beautiful friendship remains, but I must draw Mr Tribe's attention to another unfashionable thinker, Wilfrid Trotter, who sapiently remarked: "When we find ourselves entertaining an opinion about the basis of which there is a quality which tells us that to enquire into it would be absurd and obviously unnecessary, we may know that that opinion is an irrational one". It may, however, console Mr Tribe to know that *The Emerging Ethic* is only likely to be seen in its present limited edition of 600: bookshops don't like Dr MacEwan's cheaper method of printing, and big publishers don't like books about ethical values written for people with normal vocabularies. The naïve idea that I might make money with the book is just a hoot.

Surprisingly, Miss Brophy displays emotionalism, too. "Comfy" is not really an applicable adjective to the unpalatable belief that there is no short cut to the maturity of man, and that such maturity alone will heal our relationship with the non-human. Far from "waiting" for man to grow up mentally, I insist that it is urgently necessary to fight for this development; hence my years of battle against censorial paternalism. Of course, it all depends, as Miss Brophy says, how one defines maturity. I am staggered by her statement "Masters of Fox-Hounds are adult". Scratch practically any of them and one finds a sexual schoolboy, paternalistic and prudish, with Edwardian values. Nice chaps, no doubt, but that's not the point. Educate their children to think for themselves, to question "Christian values", to be sexually confident and capable of friendship with women, and the fox-hunt—together with even more undesirable phenomena—will disappear.

I am not so hopeful as I was when I wrote *The Emerging Ethic* that we can re-educate man in the time left to us before we pollute this planet to extinction, but I am still sure that it is the only way to deal with the disease, rather than the symptoms which Miss Brophy and her friends are concerned about, and I still passionately believe we must try.

My thanks to Maureen Duffy for filling a long-felt want. James Reeves's book I have; I'll buy the *Common Muse* at once.

AVRIL FOX.