

The FREETHINKER

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ROME ON THE RATES:

CONCERN BY BISHOPS OVER CHURCH SCHOOLS

"In these enlightened, ecumenical times," said the General Secretary of the National Secular Society in a recent press statement, "it is useful to be reminded of the real aims of apologists for church schools and the privileged position of Christianity in the educational system." He was referring to the Conference of Catholic Bishops of England and Wales which has decided to ask the Church's Education Commission to study the theology of education and to make a full inquiry into the educational needs of the Catholic Church in two countries. The bishops gave their "full support" to the continuing existence of Catholic schools, and the Commission will make recommendations "to ensure that Catholic schools are educationally at least as good as any other." It will also "give careful examination . . . to the way in which children are prepared to go out as well informed Catholics, to bring their Christian belief to bear on their whole life and work as adults."

Sectarianism, Prejudice and Bigotry

The bishops, the N.S.S. statement continues, "want to produce 'well informed Catholics'; those who are genuinely concerned about social welfare would prefer to see the schools produce well informed and educated citizens. And when they talk about bringing 'their Christian belief to bear on their whole life and work as adults', the bishops really mean they hope that the products of Catholic schools will become the vanguard of anti-progressive and sectarian elements in society.

"Religious segregation in school is most rigorously practised in Northern Ireland and Scotland. It is difficult to ascertain if these schools produce 'well informed' Catholics (and Protestants); they certainly turn out the most committed and enthusiastic. The result is a society poisoned by sectarianism, prejudice and bigotry."

Growing Discontent

The desire to ensure that Catholic schools are educationally "at least as good as any other" is described by the National Secular Society as "a clear indication that critics of standards in such schools can no longer be ignored or dismissed as anti-Catholic propagandists. The growing discontent amongst Catholic parents about poor educational standards and the divisive nature of church schools is, no doubt, very much in the bishops' minds.

"However determined the bishops may be to keep Catholic schools it is the Government which, in the last resort, will make the decision. And if the taxpayers, who have to foot the bill to the tune of millions of pounds annually, pressurise their representatives at Westminster, the Catholic bishops will eventually be deprived of their classroom fodder."

Depriving the bishops, Catholic and Anglican, of their "classroom fodder" is an issue with which the freethought

and humanist movements have long been concerned, though despite the more facile assurances to the contrary from some of our friends the struggle is by no means irrelevant. Ever since the 1944 Education Act was slipped through a wartime Parliament we have had Rome, and Canterbury, on the rates, and the rates are continuing to rise. In 1944 church schools were awarded half the cost of repairs and alterations, a figure which subsequently rose to 75 per cent in 1959 and to 80 per cent in 1967. This is, if nothing else, a tribute to the efficiency of Catholic, and similar, pressure groups behind the political scene.

Divisive and unjust

It has become fashionable amongst clerical apologists in recent years to present religious instruction and sectarian schools as having a new, "open", smiling face; but the fact remains that the essential, declared purpose of such schools is still not primarily to teach the three Rs but to turn out good Christians. The social divisiveness, and low standards of church schools in straight academic terms have been apparent for a long time; but politicians have preferred, doubtless with an eye on the next election, to keep their eyes pharisaically averted from this issue. Rationalists must continue to bring it to the public's attention, even if this does embarrass those who would prefer to pretend that a thoroughly unjust system does not at present exist.

If the churches want to run their own schools that is their own affair, *so long as they foot the bills*. There is no merit in demanding that the general public should pay to have the nation's children instructed in schools of a religion one of whose founding fathers, Tertullian, said: "After Jesus Christ, all curiosity is superfluous." Indeed, as humanists it is our duty to oppose the political methods by which a bankrupt ideology is attempting to slow down its own decline.

SOME FREETHOUGHT WRITINGS FROM EPICURUS TO THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY*

J. S. L. GILMOUR

* The text of this article is based on the first of the Sandars Lectures, delivered in Cambridge in 1971 and in London (to the Freethought History & Bibliography Society) earlier this year. The text of the second lecture, covering the nineteenth century onwards, has been published in *Question 5*, 1972 ("Some Freethinkers and their Writings").

Freethinking is one of the many words—like religion, philosophy, and, say, permissiveness which are much more used as vague emotional weapons in heated controversy than with a clear and agreed definition in rational discussion—so I think I had better start by putting to you the definition I have adopted, namely that a Freethinker is any writer who has openly attacked the whole concept—or some important aspect—of revealed religion.

Classical Authors

Nobody would dispute, I think, that the Greek Atomists, followed by Epicurus and Lucretius, are the founders of modern freethought. One might call Epicurus the founding father and Lucretius his public-relations officer.

Unfortunately very few of Epicurus' writings have survived, and we have to rely on extracts in Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, written in Greek in the third century A.D., on the some manuscripts found at Herculaneum and, of course, on his disciple Lucretius for the content of his ideas.

Laertius was first printed (in a Latin translation) at Rome without date, but probably in the early 1470s. If one could ever find this first edition and a first edition of Lucretius, these two would, of course, be the foundation stones of any collection of Freethought books.

The most complete modern edition of Epicurus's exant writings, with an English translation, was published by Cyril Bailey in 1926, and has just been reprinted. The best modern book on Epicurus in my amateur opinion is by Professor de Witt of Toronto, published in 1954.

If freethinkers had a Bible, it would certainly be *De Rerum Natura*, by Lucretius. It is possibly one of the greatest poems ever written—certainly the greatest poem dealing with philosophy, ethics, and science. Of the first edition (Ferrandus, Brescia, c. 1473) Cosmo Gordon's magnificent Bibliography records only three known copies, one in the Laurentian Library in Florence, the second at Chantilly, and the third in the John Rylands Library at Manchester. The first published English translation was by John Evelyn: this was of Book I only, in 1656, but two or three years earlier a young girl called Lucy Hutchinson completed a translation of all six books. This was, unfortunately, never published, and is now in the British Museum.

I now turn to the period between Lucretius and the sixteenth century. Between Classical times and the sixteenth century there is, for obvious reasons, an almost complete gap in anything that can be called freethought writings, unless one includes the Arab world, or, indeed, even some of the heresies within the Church. I would, however, mention here a book called *The Heretics* published in 1963 by the American, Barrows Dunham. To a freethinker it is extremely fascinating and entertaining, but I am not sure what a Christian historian would think of it!

The Sixteenth Century

The first writer to be included in Margaret Knight's *Humanist Anthology* (1961) after Classical times is Montaigne, who died in 1592. I do not know, however, how many of us would agree that his is the first voice that can be regarded as a herald of modern freethinking. He was technically a Catholic, but the famous *Essays* were put on the *Index* for their guarded expression of anti-Christian freethought views. The *Essays* were first published at Bordeaux in two volumes in 1580, and the first English translation, by Florio, was published in London in 1603. They are both very rare books, but there are many modern English editions of Florio's translation, including one in the Everyman Library.

I will mention only one other sixteenth century figure, Christopher Marlowe. Marlowe, was, of course, well known to be a freethinker, and was, in fact, under order of arrest when he was killed in a tavern brawl. Marlowe was a Corpus Christi (Cambridge) man, and I occasionally remind my friends at Corpus—not known as a particularly heterodox college—that in the past they have housed within their walls at least three notorious heretics, Christopher Marlowe, his friend Francis Kett, who was burned at Norwich on 14 January 1588, and much later, Llewelyn Powys.

Hobbes and Bayle

This brings us to the seventeenth century, which I will deal with very briefly. It, I think, must be regarded from two points of view—first as a development from the fairly wide-spread freethinking of later Elizabethan times, and second as a preparation for the vast expansion that was to come in the eighteenth century. It is fair to suggest, I think, that the appalling religious wars of the seventeenth century cannot have helped the spread of orthodox Christianity at this time.

I will include only two seventeenth century writers—Thomas Hobbes and Pierre Bayle. Hobbes cannot be said to have attacked religion directly, but his general attitude encouraged freethinking, and he has, of course, had a considerable influence on freethought during the last 300 years. I have mentioned him more especially for two reasons. First, because his great work, *Leviathan*, went through three editions in 1651, distinguished by three different ornaments on the title page (see Macdonald and Hargreaves' *Bibliography*). The second reason concerns its condemnation to be burned in 1666 after the panic caused by the Plague and the Great Fire. There is an excellent little book by J. A. Farrer, *Books Condemned to be Burnt* (1896), which gives an account of how these burnings were publicly carried out.

The influence of Pierre Bayle on the history of freethought has, of course, been incomparably greater than that of Hobbes, especially on the French freethinkers of the eighteenth century. Born in France, he fled to Holland to avoid persecution and his main work was his monumental *Dictionnaire*, published at Rotterdam in 1697. He introduced many sly digs at religion, but avoided more direct attacks by, for example, omitting articles on God

and Immortality. The first English translation was published in five large folio volumes in 1710, in time to influence many English freethinkers of the eighteenth century. My friend Dr. Duncan Forbes tells me there is a real need for a modern and comprehensive book on Bayle, although an excellent life, with a bibliography, by H. Robinson appeared in New York in 1931.

The Enlightenment

Coming to the eighteenth century I need hardly emphasise the vast expansion in freethinking that took place, and I can only touch on a few selected writers and books during the period. There are, of course, many histories of the Enlightenment, if one chooses to call it that, but one of the best, for a general background to the period, is still, I think, the late Kingsley Martin's *French Liberal Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, first published in 1929.

It may be convenient to deal with the eighteenth century selection under three broad heads: (1) the English Deists of the early and mid-century; (2) the French Encyclopedists, and (3) a miscellaneous group that does not quite fall under the first two categories.

The Deists

Robertson defines deism as "Belief in God, and usually in Immortality, without belief in revealed Religion." Preceded by what might be called the proto-deists in the seventeenth century, such as Charles Blount and Lord Herbert of Cherbury, there grew up in England a fairly closely knit band of deists, who carried on a lively series of controversies with the orthodox Christians. Incidentally, there is a fine collection of deist literature in Clare College Library, Cambridge, presented by the Rev. Bouchery, who was presumably on the side of the angels.

I will deal with only one deist, often called the first English, or rather Irish, deist, John Toland. Born in Ireland in 1669, he fired the opening shot of the deist campaign with his now rare *Christianity not Mysterious* in 1696. This was condemned by the Lower House of Convocation and burned at Dublin in 1697. He later published many other books on the same lines, including *Letters to Serena* in 1704, addressed to the Queen of Prussia, whom he had visited in Germany. He died—to quote—"with the calmness of a philosopher" in 1722.

Other well-known deists were Anthony Collins, Mathew Tindal, Thomas Chubb, and, of course, Bolingbroke.

Diderot and D'Holbach

I have not the time, or the competence, to go into the history of the great French *Encyclopedia*, edited by Diderot. The first two of its 17 volumes appeared in 1751 and it was one of the main influences on the later development of freethought.

Diderot had many collaborators, but I will only mention one of them, Baron D'Holbach, certainly one of the leading freethinkers of the eighteenth century. Nearly all his books were published anonymously or pseudonymously, and only an inner circle of friends knew that they were by the noble Baron. One is of particular interest to British freethinkers, namely a Miscellany entitled *Receuil Philosophique*, published in Amsterdam in 1770, despite the fact that it has "Londres" on the title page. Besides essays by D'Holbach and others it contains the first appearance of David

Hume's two suppressed dissertations, in French translations—*On Suicide* and on *The Immortality of the Soul*. The full story of these is told in Mossner's *Biography of Hume*. This is the only mention I am going to make of Hume, great as his influence was, since, to do him justice I would have to devote a whole article to him!

One other small point may be possibly connected with the *Encyclopedia*. It concerns a small volume of free-thought essays called *La Raison* with no place of publication but the date "L'An XXV". Internal evidence shows it was written about 1775-6. What is the significance of "L'An XXV"? No one, as far as I know, has solved this puzzle. Could it be a reference to the publication of the first two volumes of the *Encyclopedia* in 1751, 25 years before?

Meslier and Mandeville

Of the third group of eighteenth century freethinkers, I will deal with two: Jean Meslier and Bernard Mandeville. Voltaire should, of course, be included but, like Hume, he demands a whole essay, if not two!

The Abbé Meslier was one of the most surprising figures in the whole history of freethought. Born in France in 1664, he became Curé at Etrépin, in Champagne, in 1690 where he remained till his death in 1729. Outwardly he was a model parish priest, but when he died, his parishioners discovered three manuscript copies of a document called *Mon Testament* which is one of the most violent attacks on Christianity ever written! Further copies were made and widely circulated in France. They had a great influence, especially on Voltaire, who printed the first extract from them at Geneva in 1762, of which there are two editions, both of them extremely rare. The only complete edition was published in Amsterdam in three volumes in 1864. There are extracts in Margaret Knight's *Anthology* and elsewhere, but we still lack a complete English translation.

D'Holbach's *Bon Sens* has sometimes been attributed to Meslier, as it was frequently printed with an extract of Meslier's *Testament*. A Paris edition of 1830 is entitled *Le Bon Sens du Curé J. Meslier, suivi de son Testament*.

Lastly, there is Bernard Mandeville. He was born in Rotterdam in 1670 and migrated to London in 1690. He was broadly a deist, with very heterodox ethical views. The most famous of his several books was *The Fable of the Bees* (1714) which is lucky enough to have been given what I think must be the finest critical edition of any English work of comparable length: this was published in two large volumes at Oxford in 1924 by the American scholar F. B. Kaye. Although *The Fable of the Bees* was first published in 1714 (in two editions), there was an earlier version under a different title—*The Grumbling Hive*, of which two editions were published in London in 1705, and another in Boston, Mass., under the same title in 1811. All these, including the first edition of the *Fable*, are very rare books.

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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. Manchester: Grass Roots Bookshop, 271 Upper Brook Street, 13. 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.

Freethought books and pamphlets (new). Send for list to G. W. Foote & Co. Ltd., 103 Borough High Street, London, SE1.

Humanist Postal Book Service (secondhand books bought and sold). For information or catalogue send 5p stamp to Kit Mout, 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.

British Humanist Association, Kensington Central Library lecture theatre, Thursday, 4 May, 7.30 p.m.: Dr. James Hemming, Christopher Price, Mary Stapleton, Grace Berger, Dame Margaret Miles—"People First."

Havering Humanist Society, Hornchurch Public Library, North Street. Friday, 5 May, 8 p.m.: Michael Allaby, "A Question of Survival."

South Place Ethical Society, Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, London WC1. Sunday, 30 April, 11 a.m.: Prof. Julius Lewin, "Legacy of Empire"; 3 p.m.: Jocelyn Barrow, "Immigration and our Schools." Tuesday, 2 May, 7 p.m.: a medical practitioner, "Nature Cure and Homoeopathy."

Worthing Humanist Group, Burlington Hotel, Marine Parade, Worthing. Sunday, 30 April, 5.30 p.m.: H. J. Blackham, "Humanist Morality."

BIRTH CONTROL POSTER REFUSED

"Once again," says the National Secular Society in a strongly-worded statement that will come as no surprise to *Freethinker* readers, "the high-minded wonders of London Transport's advertising department have made asses of themselves by refusing an advertisement about the Marie Stopes Memorial Clinic contraception advice service. The proposed advertisement included the words 'fear', 'pregnancy' and 'unmarried', and it appears that such words are too strong for the sensitive souls who sit in judgement at Transad House."

A London Transport official is reported as saying: "We have a strict code of advertising conduct." The N.S.S. General Secretary, William McLroy, comments: "It is a curious code of conduct which permits advertising of cigarettes, and results in the rejection of an advertisement of a non-profit-making organisation which works to promote family health and happiness and to reduce the strain on our national welfare services."

The N.S.S. statement continues: "At a time when . . . between 200,000 and 300,000 unwanted pregnancies occur every year, it is intolerable that the work of family planning organisations should be hampered. This is the kind of anti-social mischief we have come to expect from Roman Catholic organisations—traditional saboteurs of family planners' work. But when a body such as London Transport rejects advertisements . . . dealing with a subject which is acceptable to the vast majority of the travelling public, it is time they were reminded that they are running a service in London; not in Dublin, Madrid or Rome. The National Secular Society calls upon M.P.s, local authorities and others concerned, to let London Transport know what they think about such censorious behaviour."

Dr. Malcolm Potts, a member of the Marie Stopes Clinic board and Medical Director of the International Planned Parenthood Federation, said that he was "astonished at this decision." We, frankly, are not. Less than ten years ago there was another furore when London Transport refused a Family Planning Association advertisement (intended for display in Underground trains) as a result of (largely Catholic) religious pressure. Perhaps their advertising department is terrified that the Holy Father might put an interdict on the faithful's using public transport in the metropolis if they allowed any more posters dealing with contraception.

"When I travel on the Underground," commented Dr. Potts, "I see sexually orientated advertising, and advertising for pregnancy testing, and it is extraordinary in this day and age that London Transport should refuse our poster." In fact, the official advertising conditions specifically preclude posters that "advertise contraceptives directly or indirectly" [art. 11]. Mind you, they also forbid advertisements that "depict murder, scenes of terror, horror or acts of violence [art. 1] . . . Depict or refer to indecency, or obscenity," [3] and this has, I am sure, been observed with painstaking conscientiousness in the case of every single film and magazine poster displayed for our innocent, tender gaze . . .

ISSUES AND NOTES

FIFTY YEARS AGO

The *Japan Times Weekly* (March 4) contains a column of well written comment on the recent discussion of birth control in the English Press. After drawing attention to the support accorded to this movement by Lord Dawson, Sir William Arbuthnot Lane, and Dr. Bernard Hollander, our contemporary pointedly adds that "this important branch of social economics would never have reached its present stage but for the bravery of the great atheist, the late Charles Bradlaugh," who "braved public condemnation" and "much wearisome litigation." "Now everything is changed," the article continues, and even many Christians "outside the Roman Catholic community" admit the vital importance of the population question. "The society of today" and "the working girl" are urged to remember that they "both owe to Charles Bradlaugh the change in public opinion that has made this possible." This reminder is by no means superfluous even in England.

—From *The Freethinker*, 30 April 1922.

"PEOPLE FIRST"

People First is the title of a new "Humanist Manifesto" published last week by the British Humanist Association* and sponsored by some forty M.P.s, journalists, academics and scientists. Kenneth Furness, the B.H.A.'s General Secretary, in a press statement on the publication of *People First*, said: "The manifesto points the need for a radically changed society, for new values, new priorities and a new approach, emphasises the appalling present misuse of resources and the dangers of population growth. It refers to the advocates of continued economic growth as guilty either of wishful thinking or deliberate deceit."

In its own words the manifesto "is not designed as a final answer to all our problems . . . What, however, cannot be altered, what cannot be ignored, is the urgency of the problems facing us today. Population, pollution and procrastination are the enemies. They can only be fought by strong concerted action." The present economic system, says the pamphlet, is one of "waste, self-seeking, inequality and the frantic exploitation of limited resources. The system must be changed to serve mankind instead of man serving the system, to make it preserve man's habitat instead of constantly threatening it. And not only man's habitat, the habitat of life itself."

"Short of war, epidemic or famine," the manifesto continues, "nothing will stop the world's population doubling in the next 35 years." The aim of mankind should therefore be "to stop a further gigantic increase and to bring about an eventual fall." The B.H.A. calls for contraception and abortion to be made freely available to all who want them, backed by a propaganda campaign "to bring home to everyone the vital need to limit family size." The paragraph concludes with a sinister note: "If after fifteen years this shows no sign of working, we may have to resort to measures of compulsion."

People First goes on to advocate recycling of valuable natural resources, and production for quality and durability rather than for quantity and obsolescence. Political power, too, should be shared more equally.

With the exception of the section on "Education for responsibility" much of this manifesto could be taken for

a publication of the Conservation Society; it is, however, none the less welcome. Its highlighting of the vital issues that threaten the quality of modern life, backed by copious and interesting notes, make it a useful *vade mecum* for those who wish to counter the bland idea that the population and pollution problems are sociological "paper tigers"; or that *Homo sapiens* can muddle along "somehow" with his head buried in the sands of time.

* 13 Prince of Wales Terrace, London, W8 5PG.

CATHOLIC PRISONERS

"Until recently there had been no full-time Catholic priests serving in Her Majesty's prisons, and as a consequence all Chaplains were Church of England. Miserably for us, the proportion of Catholics has steadily crept up to the point where, in a number of major prisons, the services of a full-time priest have become necessary: hence they are now known as R.C. Priests."

—Fr. Anthony Lawn, S.J., writing in a recent number of *To Our Friends*.

SEXUALLY CONCLUSIVE

The *Times Educational Supplement* quotes the following from the report of a sixth-form research project carried out recently by girls from a Kent grammar school:

"The team also noted a positive correlation between the possession of blue eyes and a fair skin, though the correlation is not complete. An attempt was made to demonstrate that the possession of blue eyes confers a greater degree of sexual attraction and there was an indication that this might be so, but the team did not have the time to make the very large numbers of tests necessary to get conclusive results."

Tough luck, but any day now these enterprising young ladies can expect to receive an open cheque and letter from the Sexologist Laureate, Professor Borman Mohl, offering them limitless funds and laboratory resources to complete this unfinished study—in technicolour and cinemascope, of course!

APARTHEID BY COMPUTER

Quest News Service reports that the British company, International Computers Ltd., has won a contract for computerising the South African Pass Law system through its subsidiary, I.C.L. South Africa, in which it has an 85 per cent stake. In the words of *Anti-Apartheid News*, I.C.L. "has joined Polaroid, which supplies photographs for passes, in helping the South African government to make the Pass Laws workable."

NINETY YEARS AGO

"The Anti-Semitic agitation which commenced in Germany, under the auspices of no less a person than the Court chaplain, has extended itself to Russia; and in the land of the White Czar there has for several months been carried on a Jew-hunt that recalls the persecution and massacres of the Middle Ages . . . Thousands of Jews are homeless and destitute, hundreds have been murdered, and multitudes are making a new exodus from worse than Egyptian misery . . . The thunder of wrathful humanity will make itself heard even in the deep seclusion of the guarded palace, where the Czar abjectly crouches in base fear of his life."

—G. W. Foote in *The Freethinker*, 30 April 1882.

BOOKS

THE CARLYLES: A Biography of Thomas and Jane Carlyle, by John Stewart Collis. Sidgwick & Jackson. £2.50.

This short, informative and lucidly-written book is not a biography of two individuals but rather the story of a marriage, ending abruptly with Jane Welsh Carlyle's death and Carlyle's plunge into remorse and loneliness.

Perhaps nothing so well became Thomas Carlyle in his marriage like his regret at its ending. Unconsciously or no, he had mistreated his partner during their time together and it was only at her death that he knew how much and what she had been. His biographer, J. A. Froude, wrote: "It was at once pitiable and noble. A repentance so deep and so passionate showed that his real nature was as beautiful as his intellect had been magnificent."

Carlyle's *Reminiscences* were punctuated with cries of penitence and regret—"Poor, forlorn darling!"; "Poor, loving soul!"; Oh, my poor, martyred darling!"; "Insane that I was".

But if Carlyle was late in realising, Jane perceived some of the reasons for his behaviour long before when she said to John Sterling—if inappropriately—"My dear, whatever you do, never marry a man of genius".

Yet the heart has its reasons . . . Despite all, they came together: she longing to marry a man of genius, yet herself a person of intelligence, simple charm and warmth. He was arrogant, aloof, seemingly unfeeling and single-minded in his literary tasks—could he have been otherwise when he began anew after the first six books of *Frederick The Great* were inadvertently destroyed. Ruskin, who found Carlyle's "perpetual whine" and portentousness too much near the point of ill manners, said that he had been "born in the clouds and struck by lightning".

In what way did Jane not suffer! Her illnesses she often hid from him and he was too self-absorbed to perceive them. In the early years of marriage they lived remotely in Scotland; often he would ride, eat and work alone.

Carlyle, though, was an odd mixture, with much to recommend him—if not always qualities which commend themselves to a wife: his cast-iron integrity, his massive compendious knowledge and startling industry. He was a Cobettian radical who despised democracy, considered Cromwell a great moral force, attacked philanthropists and radical intellectuals and disliked the technological trends of his age. His humour was Dickensian and he was capable of many acts of untrumpeted kindness. When Jane was ill he could be affection itself and their letters to one another before and after marriage are often embarrassingly tender.

How much he truly cared for Jane and how much of his repentance was a guilt reaction we shall never know. Certainly, she did much for him in return for so little: she endured and she protected. In his work he truly lived. He once said that writing demanded "a paroxysm of clairvoyance" and in it he "came alive". His brother said that he wrote "with his heart's blood in a state of fevered tension".

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Partly, this may have been sublimation—though why Mr. Collis should evoke that horrible yet fascinating liar Frank Harris to support the idea of Carlyle's impotency is strange. When Carlyle developed a strange, asexual attachment for Lady Ashburton the marriage was further disrupted and Jane contemplated suicide, desertion and remarriage. Had she taken any of these paths how different matters might have been—but how less interesting.

TERRY PHILPOT

JOURNAL OF MORAL EDUCATION. Edited by Derek Wright. Pemberton Publishing Co., £2.50 per annum (3 issues post free) or £1 per issue.

Just how trendy moral education is becoming may be gauged from the fact that our old friend Philip May (if he is not your old friend you have never read N.S.S. pamphlets by Maurice Hill) has been around 337 maintained schools investigating the subject, or rather attitudes to suppositious studies under this label; for I imagine there are fewer actual syllabuses to be found in schools today than during the experimental days of the Moral Instruction League at the turn of the century. Apart from Mr. May, an institution in himself, there are the Schools' Council Moral Education Curriculum Project Team, the Farmington Trust Research Unit, and the Campaign for Moral Education. Robert Maxwell's Pergamon Press (an organisation of unimpeachable morality) found the journal *Moral Education*, but this folded. Now, replacing it, comes Pemberton's *Journal of Moral Education*, edited by the well-known Leicester psychologist and secular humanist Derek Wright. If the first number (October 1971) is anything to go by it will satisfy a long-felt need.

As Mr. Wright points out in his editorial, "from being an activity guided by agreed assumptions and 'self-evident' beliefs, moral education has become an open, problematic and exciting issue, attracting the growing concern of researchers, philosophers, teachers and parents alike." Now that it has become an academic discipline related to but in many ways different from moral philosophy, and certainly from moral theology, teachers and parents may fear that it will amass the jargon that currently seems an inescapable undergrowth of the Vale of Academe, but the editor believes that "the technical content necessary for an adequate research report need not render it unintelligible to those whose special training has been of a different kind" and he triumphantly vindicates this claim in his own pages. Though the various papers do not burke references, charts and statistics where these are relevant, they are all eminently intelligible and (what is not always a concomitant) worthwhile.

In a short review it is impossible to describe the arguments of each essay, much less attempt to bolster or refute them. To *Freethinker* readers, most controversial will probably be Donald Horder's "The Lancaster R.E. Project" by the Deputy Director of the Schools' Council Project on Religious Education in Secondary Schools at Lancaster University. In this both the churches' "dogmatic" approach and the N.S.S.'s "anti-dogmatic"

REVIEWS

approach are rejected in favour of "undogmatic" presentations. What Mr. Horder seems to overlook, however, is the difference between sophisticated moral theology and the psychology and sociology of religion which one may do at a university and perhaps in sixth-form specialist courses, and what must inevitably be the content of R.E. at earlier ages and acts of worship at all ages.

On the question of independent moral education (i.e. independent of R.E.) there are, as is right and proper, many other controversial observations. While there is less mention of "rational" decisions than is to be found in most of the work emanating from the Farmington Trust, there is the same concentration on "autonomy", "free will", "altruism" and other worthy—but, I fear, largely mythical—concepts. Admittedly it is more difficult in their absence to go on to speak of "responsibility", but I believe it is possible to develop a theory that is both non-fatalistic and realistic (I try to do this in a forthcoming book on *Nucleoethics*). Thinking of Mr. May again and the surveys on R.I. by which he made his name, readers will note with pleasure a paper by J. Davies on "Shaken with the Wind: the effects of group pressure upon the expression of moral belief." It should be required reading for everyone unduly sensitive to the "findings" of opinion polls and psephologists.

Much other useful information can be gleaned, most of it not surprising but here well-documented. School councils are found to work best, on the whole, at independent boarding schools; teachers are deemed to be inadequately prepared for moral education (which need not, and I think should not, be syllabised) at colleges of education; aggressive children are found to identify more with "power" figures than with relatives and friends, girls with "pop media" and boys with "street culture"; "sex education is a function of the entire curriculum." Altogether a good buy.

DAVID TRIBE

PAMPHLET

SWEDEN'S SOCIAL DEMOCRACY

by Russell Lansbury (Young Fabian Pamphlet, No. 29).
Fabian Society, 25p.

I suppose Sweden must be the most misunderstood country there is at present. This has always amazed me, since there is no lack of communication between ourselves and the Swedes, Britain being the second most important export market for Sweden, and nearly every Swedish schoolchild having the chance to join at least one educational visit to Britain. The language practice is, of course, the attraction, not because the Swedes are interested in Britain, but because they are interested in America, where English is spoken.

What Russell Lansbury's scholarly Fabian Society pamphlet does is to put over in simple language the salient

facts required to understand what gives Sweden today the highest standard of living in the world, the most extensive personal equality in Europe, and, for my money, the most progressive and truly socialist society this side of the Iron Curtain.

That is not to say the pamphlet is without its faults, albeit minor ones. The hardest criticism I can level at it is that it reads too much like Swedish Institute information booklets, reeling off facts and figures, only sparsely intermingled with personal recollections and impressions. This is a pity, since the pamphlet is by way of being a report of some 18 months' research done in Sweden by the author. Articles and other writings I myself have produced from my experiences in Sweden have been coloured by personal impressions, my argument being that anyone can go and buy *Facts on Sweden* or *Letters from Sweden* or other Swedish Institute publications, if only the bare facts are required.

Russell Lansbury's pamphlet also contains far too much history for my liking, although in fairness it is usually related to present-day situations, and it could be argued that the development of modern Swedish social democracy from the early days was of much interest.

Factually, the booklet is irreproachable. What it does include is accurate, laid down logically and written fairly brightly.

I am more disappointed by what it does not include, such as impressions of the Swedish character, what makes the Swedes more productive at work than any other nation in the world, and accounts of the various dissenting movements in the country, which have, historically, been in the vanguard of progress.

But, by and large, the booklet should be interesting and informative for anyone wishing for a first acquaintance with the Swedish social system, which has been the model for so many societies trying to get out of the political rut.

ERIC WILLOUGHBY

LETTERS

Roman Writers on the Early Christians

Robert Morrell (*Freethinker*, 8 April) says it is strange that Pliny the Younger appealed to Trajan for advice on how to deal with the Christians, if in fact Nero had persecuted them "a few [i.e. forty] years before." But Pliny, out in his province, would not have been able to consult official records. In any case, it is inconceivable that Trajan would have regarded Nero's conduct towards the Christians as setting a precedent; Nero's conduct was notorious even in his lifetime, so there would have been no point in Trajan's consulting the records either.

Mr. Morrell finds it "even stranger" that Tacitus was not consulted, given "the fact that Tacitus was a friend of Trajan and once governed Pliny's province." However, there is no evidence that Tacitus was a friend of Trajan, and in fact he was in charge of the province of Asia some ten years after Pliny was in the province of Bithynia-Pontus, asking Trajan for advice.

NICHOLAS REED.

Proportional Representation in Ireland

In your editorial of 1 April, you say that the cause of peace in Ireland will be prospered by a diminution in the power of organised religion. Agreed, but organised religion is at least as powerful south of the Border as north of it, yet there is a very striking contrast in the relations between the religious communities. While there is certainly more than one reason for that contrast, one important reason must be the difference in electoral system. The Ulster Unionists misguidedly secured a change to a system which forces an elector to vote as if he thought candidate X was perfect and there was nothing to be said for anyone else; that is unhealthy anywhere, and in the circumstances of Northern Ireland it is asking for trouble.

We have high hopes that P.R. will shortly be restored in Northern Ireland, and when this happens it will be due very largely to the efforts of this Society. I hope you will join us and help in our work.

ENID LAKEMAN,

Director, Electoral Reform Society.

There have also, of course, been moves in the Irish Republic to abolish Proportional Representation there as well. Such attempts have, however, met with fairly staunch opposition. (Ed.)

Representation and Democracy

Getting through to people is certainly difficult—one must just keep on trying.

Charles Byass (letters, 15 April) asks "how in the name of reality can there be any form of democracy without the 'representative principle'?" The idea of the sovereign representative institution was a necessary seventeenth century invention. It was devised to fill the vacuum created by the demise of absolute monarchy. It was crystallised by the Levellers, in their *Agreement of the People*, arising out of the experience of the Long Parliament and the First Civil War. It was enthroned by the Second Civil War of 1648 and Cromwell's series of experiments in the 'fifties. Constitutional monarchy, accepting representative government, followed.

There is nothing particularly democratic about the representative principle. From December 1648 until the parliamentary reform movement of the nineteenth century representation amounted to the representation of property through the persons of the propertied. The ensuing struggle for democracy switched the franchise to folk but it left the essential executive machinery of the State, in the era of Arnold and Jowett, where it had always been—in the hands of the few. The advent of selective examinations for the Armed Forces and Civil Service preserved the system by making it more efficient—its character remained.

As the consequence of two world wars and under the influence of Keynesian thinking (Keynes being the Bentham of our time) the professional machinery of the central State has grown to such vast proportions that Parliament has become irrelevant. At the same time in the private section the sheer complexity of everything has put an end to the age of tycoons (see Galbraith's *The New Industrial State*) and publicly and privately we are in the hands of enormously powerful bureaucracies against whom the representative principle is effectively powerless. We go on paying lip-service to it in default of an alternative. There is an alternative and it is critically important that we start to identify it. The disillusionment with representative democracy is currently expressed in the gathering wave of direct action, civil disobedience, strikes and violence—but what does this mean?

It is no answer to turn the clock back and try to make Westminster work again. It is absurd to suggest that 630 amateurs can handle the future of Britain—the job can only be done by some two million professionals and volunteers and they are already doing it, but the whole political system gets in the way.

If you ask yourself the question: to what extent are business, the professions, arts, sciences and local community life governed by the representative principle, the answer clearly is—hardly at all. They are governed by the professional principle (working for objectives that are good in themselves), the entrepreneurial principle (working for a living) and the voluntary principle (working for love). It should not be difficult, in a Britain of 44 city states, to translate these principles into an exciting new extra-parliamentary system but we cannot even make a start so long as thoughtful people stand by their mental blockages and refuse to use their imagination. There is no lack of ideas, as Leopold Kohr and Laurens van der Post have shown in their Conway Memorial Lectures.

PETER CADOGAN.

Trade, War, and Marxism

I refer again to Mr. C. Doran's letter (8 April) in reply to my article on Lenin: Mr. Doran says that Colonel A'Court Repington, in his book *The First World War 1914-18*, wrote that the said War was caused by Anglo-German trade rivalry.

The Colonel says hardly anything about trade rivalry between the two countries. Indeed he hardly ever mentions trade and when he does he seems to think it is not very important (Dammit, Sir, can't expect an officer and a gentleman to bother about such things!). But he is frightened of German power in general. Of the secret talks between British and French military and naval officers before 1914 he says: "The story dates back to the end of 1905 when Germany showed an evident disposition to pick a quarrel with France over the Morocco question . . . Russia was *hors de combat* at the time and of little service to France as an ally . . . It was Germany's chance . . . I had been watching her closely ever since she had begun to display hostility to us . . . Clear enough; he is frightened of Germany and thinks Britain must back Germany's rival, France.

So the cause of the talks (about which, by the way, I had heard of before Mr. Doran brought the matter up) was national sovereignty which is the main cause of war. The remedy is world government.

Mr. Morgan says "to talk of Lenin not being aware of other dangers besides capitalism . . . is nonsense," but he makes no attempt to answer my argument. It is the main weakness of Marxists that they keep staring at the evils of capitalism and never think of any other.

When Lenin at last found himself in a position to run a country the great Marxist theory proved an inadequate guide to help him. Mr. Morgan talks of foreign intervention and civil war; but the civil war was over when the Rabkrin incident occurred and Lenin was free to concentrate on the home situation. If the Marxist theory had been what it is claimed to be Lenin should have been able to cope with his difficulties. But it was not. Result—the Stalin era, in which innocent people were killed.

Also Mr. Morgan says that my reply "is one to be found at any time on the refuse tip of popular prejudice." Popular prejudice is that held by the majority of the people. And in Britain the majority are members of the working class, which, according to Marxists is *the class*. So what Mr. Morgan is saying is that, according to Marxism, my reply is correct.

I. S. LOW.

Capitalism and War

If I. S. Low re-reads my letter he will see that I did not state that the Czar's Foreign Minister who "welshed" with a large bribe from Britain, did not or would not do what he was bribed to do. What I did say was that the British plotters had to overlook his swindle and give him the same amount again! The Czar's Minister did "play fair" the second time and as we know Czarist Russia became our ally.

If I. S. Low would learn about capitalist politics and diplomacy he would learn that under our social system the Government is merely the executive committee of Big Business. The same Big Business owns not only the economy, even the parts which are nationalised, but also the Press (the worker's press with its comparatively tiny circulation proves my point) and all the means of manipulating so-called "public opinion". These are other elements causing national, racial and religious enmity, but the basic cause of modern wars is economic! I. S. Low has little understanding of capitalism if he thinks that the big business tycoons are so patriotic that they take all the smaller capitalists into consultation. Strictly speaking one could say that the controllers of capitalism are international. The composition of the Common Market is proof of that!

Our sneering scribe thinks he has scored a point because nearly the whole of the British capitalist class was left out of the plotting in France—1906-1914! Really, does this man's understanding of "democracy" not tell him that such a system of *hidden dictatorship* is more effective than the open, brutal kind! However, more and more people are beginning to see through the rick, hence the tentative attempts to bring in laws now, not considered necessary in the past. I. S. Low, in his innocence, thinks he has scored a point when he fails to see the contradiction involved in British capitalists—named incidentally—trading with the enemy, as instigated by Admiral Consett when he found he was powerless to carry out the task he was ordered to perform!

CHARLES DORAN.