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THE ANOMALY OF CHURCH SCHOOLS

—DISADVANTAGES OF SECTARIAN EDUCATION

"The Social and Financial Cost of Church Schools" was the theme of a public meeting organised by the National Secular Society in London on 6 December. The principal speaker was Mrs. Patricia Knight, a member of the N.S.S. Executive Committee and Organiser of the British Humanist Association's Abolish Church Schools Project Group. "It is interesting," she said, "to look at the origins of Church Schools. They were not philanthropic efforts at all—as their supporters would like us to believe—but were mostly founded at the beginning of the nineteenth century to keep the working classes in order. It was an age of revolutionary unrest, and there were sinister rumours going round that the poor were selling their Bibles to buy copies of the *Rights of Man*. Having established their own schools the churches then held back all attempts to provide secular, state education: in 1807 a proposal for rate-aided schools was opposed by the bishops who argued that this 'would enable people to read vicious books and publications against Christianity'."

"The nurture of the Christian Church"

In 1848, Mrs. Knight added, the Bishop of Oxford had said: "Perish all state assistance, if the education given by it was the mere stuffing the heads of children with secular education instead of training them up in the nurture of the Christian Church."

The ethos of the early church schools, said Patricia Knight, was one of hard work, thrift, industry, and submission to the established order and the *status quo*. Connoisseurs of modern Church School brochures would find that in many cases the attitude had changed little, with their emphasis on "character building" and producing "Christian citizens." In one school, admission was by interview with the parish priest only.

Basically, said Mrs. Knight, the aims of Church Schools were the inculcation of one particular ideological belief to the exclusion of all others. They were also the means (together with Church control of religious instruction in other schools) by which the churches perpetuated themselves. If one supported Church Schools then it was only consistent also to allow racialist schools, or separate schools for children of Communists, Fascists, Conservatives and Spiritualists.

Infringement of freedom

Church schools infringed the right of children not to be indoctrinated; they also curtailed the freedom of parents, particularly in single-school areas where the Church School was often the only available one. Patricia Knight also cited the case of Catholic parents in Stafford and Birkenhead who had wanted their children to go to non-denominational secondary schools: their wishes had been turned down by the Local Education Authorities for reasons of administrative convenience.

The speaker also objected to Church Schools because they led to segregation of children by their parents' religion, resulting, particularly in Northern Ireland, in job and housing segregation, and conflicting cultural myths and

stereotypes. Also, there tended to be more single sex Church schools than County ones, and girls' schools often provided fewer resources for science and mathematics teaching than co-educational schools.

There was, said Patricia Knight, a tendency to imagine that Church Schools were a negligibly small proportion of modern schools and were fast disappearing. This was far from the truth; 33 per cent of primary schools were Anglican or Catholic schools, and 20 per cent of secondary schools were Church Schools. With the modern reorganisation of schools on a comprehensive basis, the position of church schools had become more favourable, despite the fact that a church comprehensive school was rather a contradiction in terms.

"Outdated anomalies"

In conclusion, the speaker pointed out some of the ways in which more effective opposition could be mounted against sectarian schools, such as by registering formal objections (requiring ten signatures) to new Church Schools, by deputations to local councils, demonstrations and letters to the press, and emphasising the fact that the churches already have a £14 million education deficit, and that the teaching methods in many Church Schools are antiquated. We should also insist that no more money be provided for denominational schools and that Church Schools be converted into County Schools, starting with those in single-school areas. "We must put an end to these outdated nineteenth-century anomalies before they become permanently embedded for good."

At the beginning of the meeting the chairman, Miss Barbara Smoker, had announced with regret that Lord Raglan and Edward Blisshen, both of whom were billed to speak, would be unable to do so as they had been struck down "by the notorious 'flu." Instead, Christopher Macy, the editor of *New Humanist*, had kindly agreed to step in at short notice.

(Continued on next page)

THE FREETHINKER

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

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National Secular Society. Details of membership and inquiries regarding bequests and secular funeral services may be obtained from the General Secretary, 103 Borough High Street, London, SE1 1NL. Telephone: 01-407 2717. Cheques, etc., should be made payable to the N.S.S.

Freethought books and pamphlets (new). Send for list to G. W. Foote & Co. Ltd., 103 Borough High Street, London, SE1 1NL.

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.

Promenade Gallery, Hornsey Central Library, Crouch End, London N8. 16 December—6 January (Sundays excepted): Exhibition of paintings by Oswald Blakeston.

EVENTS

Leicester Secular Society, Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate. Sunday, 17 December, 6.30 p.m.: J. S. L. Gilmour, "The Literature of Freethought." (No meeting on 24 December.)

London Young Humanists. Thursday, 21 December, 7.15 p.m.: Annual Unchristmas Dinner (for details contact Tim Sherwood, 01-789 4308).

South Place Ethical Society, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1. Tuesday, 19 December, 7 p.m.: Francis Clark-Lowes, "Camus". (No meetings on 17, 24 or 26 December.)

Sutton Humanist Group, Friends' Meeting House, 10 Cedar Road, Sutton. Thursday, 21 December, 7.30 p.m.: cartoon films by Derek Phillips.

NEWS

(Continued from front page)

The Church School system in Ireland

In her introductory remarks, the chairman had mentioned the harmful effects of sectarian schooling in Northern Ireland. Mr. Macy then explained that he had made a study of the education system in the Republic of Ireland, where state primary education was given by the National Schools, but virtually all the secondary schools were run by religious orders or by secular clergy. There were a few (secular) Vocational Schools, but until very recently these did not cater for pupils taking the School Leaving Certificate (required for university entry in Ireland). The Vocational Schools had been denounced by Archbishop McQuinn as "atheistic, subversive and immoral."

Christopher Macy pointed out that until recently the system in Southern Ireland meant that a non-Catholic child who wanted to go on to higher education either had to attend a Catholic secondary school or else an expensive, private Protestant school, of which there were few. Everyone in Ireland seemed to be ashamed of the system, and the Fianna Fáil government's proposals for community schools had been strongly criticised, particularly by parents, for being undemocratic. The Church School system in the Irish Republic had resulted in the religious indoctrination of the young, but it had also materially hampered the raising of educational standards as well.

Following each of the speeches there were a number of lively questions and comments from members of the audience, including supporters of church schools. It was also announced that a pamphlet, *The Case Against Church Schools*, by Patricia Knight, would be published in the near future.

THE DOUBLE STANDARD

It appears from complaints in the *Evening Standard* and elsewhere that several London hotels are still refusing to serve drinks or refreshments to unaccompanied women, even in this Year of Grace 1972. The nineteenth-century "double standard" is obviously alive and well!

This petty sexual discrimination, which can often be most distressing and embarrassing to its victims, is as outrageous as it is unjustifiable. The usual lame excuse we hear from hoteliers and restaurateurs is that refusing to serve unescorted women prevents their premises being used for soliciting by prostitutes, but it seems incredible that hotel staff, often with years of experience at their work, cannot distinguish between a *demi-mondaine* in search of a pick-up, and a tired, respectable lady in need of a pick-me-up.

In any case, why the double standard? After all, the fellow sitting with his brandy-and-soda in the corner may be an exhausted paterfamilias after a hard day's honest toil; he might equally be a gigolo, male prostitute, or child molester in search of a victim. But of course in our wonderful, enlightened, permissive age we should never hear the end of it if men were only allowed into bars or hotel lounges on condition they were accompanied by a lady.

S AND NOTES

BOMB SENT TO CHIEF RABBI

Tel-Aviv police were recently called upon to defuse a letter bomb sent to the home of the newly-elected Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Israel, Shlomo Goren. The bomb is believed to have been sent by ultra-orthodox extremists.

Rabbi Goren made himself somewhat unpopular with Jewish orthodox conservative elements when, as chief chaplain to the Israeli army, he took up the case of Hanoch Langer and his sister Miriam. Both of them wished to get married, but in 1965 the Tel-Aviv rabbinate had declared them *mamzerim*: bastards, and therefore not entitled to marry within the Jewish community. (And as readers of *The Freethinker* are aware, there is no civil marriage in Israel.) Upon his latest appointment, however, Rabbi Goren quickly assembled a rabbinical court, declared brother and sister to be legitimate, and arranged for them to be married to their respective partners, thus ending a seven year wait. Jewish extremists, needless to say, were not amused: some tore their clothes in the streets as a symbol of grief, and others tried to attack Rabbi Goren at a funeral. In Israel, as elsewhere, 'live and let live' is a philosophy foreign to the mind of the fanatic; but it is to be hoped that the latest unsavoury incident will nudge the Israeli government into secularising the country's marriage laws.

NEW, IMPROVED DEVIL

The Devil, it seems, is making the beginnings of a comeback, after being exiled to limbo for many decades largely (we suspect) as a result of rationalist lampoons around the end of the last century. However, this particularly unsavoury figment of the Christian imagination is now in vogue again, even in the best theological circles.

In the *Catholic Herald* (24 November) we read that Pope Paul regards one of his Church's greatest needs as being that of "defence against that evil which we call the Devil." For the Devil, said his Holiness, really existed.

Contemporary Catholic theology had tended to demythologise many items of traditional faith, including the fiery personage with horns and a tail, but the Pope said that the devil did exist as 'a dark and enemy agent' . . . Anyone who did not put himself on guard 'with a certain moral rigour' against the Devil, risked his very salvation.

This rather conjures up an image of a suave, cloaked figure, using brimstone-scented aftershave, with a copy of *The Freethinker* tucked into the top of big, snow-covered boots, and wearing a Red Army fur hat pulled well down over his face. The whole concept would be as laughable as the villains in old silent films were there not a more serious and tragic side to all this.

Whilst most human beings are sufficiently resilient, even as children, to treat sadistic Christian nonsense about the Devil and hell-fire with the contempt it deserves, there have also been sensitive and impressionable children who were taken in and terrified by it all. The same religion that holds up its hands in Pharisaical horror at the "corrupting" influence of pornography now wants to reinstate an old and rather depraved theology which served in the past to blight and inhibit the lives and happiness of many of its victims two generations or more ago. Indeed, the battles between rationalism and superstition are by no means "all over."

SUNDAY DRINKING

It is hardly surprising that the new licensing laws proposed by the report of Lord Errol's committee should have caused distress to the Band of Hope, which has depicted the report's provisions as "a return to the evils of the past before the reforms of such stalwarts as Lloyd George and Lady Astor."

No doubt the idea of continental-style café-pubs would have caused a stir in the breasts of some of the long-dead temperance stalwarts in the freethought movement of a hundred years ago. Certainly some of the near-monopolistic brewing giants are not going to like it, either. But times and circumstances change.

The report also proposes that the permitted licensing hours should be the same on Sundays as on any other day of the week.—There will be great wailing and gnashing of teeth when they hear of this at Lord's Day House! We look forward (with, we must confess, a certain uncharitable glee) to the next number of *Joy and Light* (journal of the Lord's Day Observance Society, Inc.), which will doubtless contain a heartrending fulmination from the pen of Mr. Harold Legerton, exhorting the faithful few to yet another last-ditch, death-or-glory stand against this final onslaught of the vile, Satanic continental Sunday!

"By the Breweries of Babylon", perhaps?

FIFTY YEARS AGO

It completely passes my comprehension how anyone can read the New Testament with an open mind and then claim anything for it on account of its favourable influence on the position or character of women. It knows very little of the domestic side of female life, and it places woman under the complete control of her husband . . . A Church which stamped married life as lower than that of celibacy, which held woman when married to be a mere article of her husband's property, which denied her the right to play her part in public life, can have no other effect than that of eventually lowering her character . . . And one of the most promising signs of the times is that she is throwing off her ancient thralldom and demanding to be placed upon, at least, an equality with man.

—Chapman Cohen in *The Freethinker*, 17 December 1922.

ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO

News from Scotland informs us that the Marquis of Huntley has adopted, to say the least, a questionable mode of endeavouring to win votes in his contest with Professor Huxley, for the Rectorship of Aberdeen University. He has "bribed" the constituency with the offer to found a medical bursary; but it is a pity the candidates cannot go to the poll on their merits.*

—From the *National Reformer*, 15 December 1872.

*We are pleased to record that, nevertheless, T. H. Huxley won the election. (Ed., 1972)

FREETHINKER FUND

These are trying times, and *The Freethinker* is glad of all the financial support it can get. We are therefore most grateful to those readers and friends who gave so generously to the Freethinker Fund during November.

Our particular thanks to: Anonymous, £1; A. Bradley, 70p; Vera Brierley, £4; Richard Condon, £15; W. V. Crees, 35p; Mrs. H. Eckersley, £2.45; W. R. Grant, £1; T. H. Grimley, £1; R. J. Hale, 21p; M. E. Hart, 70p; E. J. Hughes, 45p; James Kent, 35p; S. D. Kuebart, 45p; A. J. Martin, 25p; R. Mathewson, 90p; Rupert McGarry, 25p; Mrs. M. O. Morley, 45p; E. A. W. Morris, 45p; T. Myles-Hill, 70p; Professor H. Newman, £1.45; R. G. Peterson, £1.42; F. G. Shaw, £1.05; W. R. Stevenson, £2.45; N. Toon, 45p; Mrs. L. Van Duren, 25p. Total for November: £37.73.

Please remember the Freethinker Fund during December and January—the season of goodwill, after all.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION—IS IT STILL INDOCTRINATION?

MICHAEL LLOYD-JONES

There was a time when religious instruction syllabuses openly boasted of their intention to indoctrinate children with religion. Now the authors of these syllabuses are more circumspect; indeed they often specifically disavow that intention. But it would be naïve to take their assurances at face value. A critical examination of syllabuses and textbooks indicates that the old intention remains, the disavowals are merely camouflage.

The government-sponsored Schools Council has recently published a Working Paper on *Religious Education in Primary Schools*,* and it declares: "Indoctrination into a particular set of beliefs is no longer acceptable, and religious education on such a narrowly conceived basis is held to be both undesirable and inappropriate in state schools today." The body of the working paper, however, provides no evidence that this statement is anything more than a perfunctory gesture, designed to forestall any secularist criticism.

Aims of R.E.

The Schools Council carried out a survey of 213 primary schools in England and Wales. The schools were picked because "their religious education was considered by well-qualified observers to be above average in quality." One of the questions asked in the survey was "What are the aims of religious education?" The answers, the working paper reports, fell into three categories.

The first aim, "considered by many teachers to be especially valuable in infant schools," is "spiritual growth." This seems to mean the creation of "an awareness of a loving Father who cares for all his children," and the "appreciation of the beauty, grandeur, and infinite variety in nature, recognised as God's creation." The second aim is "to give children knowledge of the Bible," and the third aim ("frequently recognised") is variously defined as helping children "to find the real meaning of life and their place in God's scheme"; "to find a religious view of the whole of life and experience," and so on.

Proof of discrimination against humanists

The survey also found that "it was frequently said by headteachers that if Christian values are to have a place in the life of a school and if the teaching is to be in any significant sense religious, teachers themselves must be convinced that religion has a relevance to everyday life." Of course this must not be taken to apply only to teachers of religious education. Primary schools are mostly staffed by general teachers who are responsible for all subjects, and so here is further proof that humanists are discriminated against when general teaching appointments are made.

It is not surprising to learn that of the schools surveyed, "Ninety-four per cent of the total number of headteachers in all the schools said they were committed Christians, and the rest said they were nominal Christians."

Forty per cent of the teachers questioned said that the "greatest problem facing them in attempting to give religious education in school" was the "non-religious background of the pupils." One result of this is that parental unbelief is "frequently reflected in children." The working paper gives several examples of the effect of this. In one case a "teacher's account of the biblical story of the creation was greeted by an 8-year-old who said, 'God

didn't make the world like that: there was a big explosion'." In another school some children "raised the problem of evil. One of them said, 'If God made everything he must have made the bad things too'." It says much for the arrogance of the Christians, and throws a great deal of light on their real intentions, that this sort of honest scepticism in children should cause their teachers "real concern." The working paper does not say what happened to these children who were impertinent enough to question what they were told.

Deliberate deception

The working party reports that—

the myths of Genesis 1-11 are taught in many primary schools, and inevitably received at infant stage as if they were literally true. This is especially the case with the story of Noah's ark, which seems to be considered by many teachers to be too good a story to omit. It is sometimes even bolstered up by an appeal to 'archaeology' . . . The very skill with which it is taught and impressed on the minds of young children in many infant and junior schools may make the shock all the greater when a child awakes to the fact that it is not to be regarded as literally true.

But if the story "is not to be regarded as literally true," why is it "bolstered up by an appeal to 'archaeology' "? The supporting evidence can only be dragged in to make the children believe the story is true. When one of these children accepts the story as being "literally true," it is not as the result of an innocent misunderstanding, as the working paper seems to suggest, but because of a deliberate deception.

The working party gives nineteen examples of "observed religious education." It is impossible to outline each of the examples here, but a few should suffice to convey the general flavour.

An infant teacher talked to a class about helping people. This was followed by a story of two boys who rescued some baby birds. After the story the children said, "Thank you for those who help us," and "in a short silence that followed, the teacher suggested that they should thank God for any people they knew who help others."

Another teacher showed her pupils "a bowl of lovely rosy apples and they enjoyed the beauty of them together." The teacher told a story of an old lady whose apple tree only produced twenty apples, and yet she gave them all away to twenty handicapped children. "Perhaps Jesus would have been happy if he had been there," added the teacher. Finally the class sang a verse from "All Things Bright and Beautiful," ate a piece of apple and said a short prayer!

Another example is of a school project on Beauty, which went through nine stages: Nature, Fashion, Space, Sea, etc. We are told "Prayers of the 'Thank-you God . . .' type were said by the teacher and children at every stage of the project."

Typical of these examples is the trick by which an apparently secular theme is suddenly given an irrelevant and gratuitous religious twist. For example, towards the end of a lesson on power, the teacher suddenly introduced the "power of God," and "put forward the suggestion that the energy in all the stages of evolution from inanimate matter to animate beings is the power of God at work in the world of nature."

The Working Paper seems to call for an end to this kind of teaching, though not, unfortunately for the best of reasons. The objection appears to be that this kind of teaching tends to "separate religion from life." In its place the working party recommends two kinds of "thematic teaching."

Firstly, Biblical themes, in which children "find out a good deal about life in Bible times and how the Bible came to be written." What relevance the primitive habits and customs of ancient tribes are supposed to have to modern life is not made clear in this report.

Secondly the working party recommends themes "which explore human experience." These themes, we are assured, will be "laying the right foundation for later development of basic theological concepts." This kind of teaching requires not only "educational expertise," but also "a high degree of theological insight."

'Preparing' children for worship

The authors of this paper also recommend, "with some trepidation," that schools should give up the "notion that a county primary school assembly ought to be an act of Christian worship in the commonly accepted sense." Instead an assembly should be "an enjoyable corporate

experience," and "closely integrated with the life and work of the school and the neighbourhood." The kind of assembly envisaged will bring children "to the verge of worship," and "can then be thought of as that part of the curriculum which prepares children for worship." The children will acquire "the basic presuppositions of worship."

Parts of this working paper do appear to make concessions to the secularist case. But the presumption throughout is that the religious approach to life is desirable. The aim is to "lay the right foundations for later development of basic theological concepts," and this is, in fact, the key to the 'revolution' in religious education. Teachers have found that despite their efforts, society is becoming less and less religious. The changes in curriculum and method are an attempt to remedy that situation; they have not come about because Christians have at last recognised the truth of what secularists have been saying for years. R.E. must be judged not by the bland assurances of its teachers, but by what goes on in the schools. The aim of religious education continues to be the production of committed Christians. That is indoctrination.

**Religious Education in Primary Schools*. Schools Council Working Paper 44. (Evans/Methuen Educational, 50p.)

REVIEWS BOOKS

THE MARXISM OF MARX by John Lewis.
Lawrence & Wishart, £2.

The disenchantment with the political régimes of Eastern Europe and the U.S.S.R., and the realisation that their objectives have no special connexion with socialism, freedom or democracy, have produced a number of attempts to rejuvenate Marxist metapolitics with fresh interpretations of Marx. Nothing more clearly demonstrates the many-sided quality and ambiguity of Marx's life-work than the fact that so many contradictory interpretations of Marxism and disputes about its union of theory and practice base themselves on Marx and can all make out a case for doing so.

The book under review claims to go back to the original writings of Marx and to present their "essential character and purport." The *new* Marx's Marxism is said to be "a highly practical and contemporary policy about *modernisation*." It "transfers its theories from the study to the world, and keeps theme there," and "demands constant criticism and revision of one's working hypotheses." Dr. Lewis does not, however, simply rely on the work of Marx himself but frequently cites other writers, particularly Lenin, in support of his arguments. There are in *The Marxism of Marx* some 20 references to, or quotations from, Lenin, including one alleged quotation from page 180 of volume 38 of his *Collected Works* which, however, is not to be found there—at least not in my copy. Yet the index does not even mention Lenin, or Engels who is also quoted or referred to many times, although it does include Stalin and we are given a 27 line quotation ascribed to him which is said to be perhaps the clearest statement of all on its subject.

On page 9 it is asserted that when Marx says that the

laws of capitalist production work "with an iron necessity towards an inevitable goal," he is referring to the economic laws of capitalist *economists*. Reference to the real Marxism of Marx (namely, *Capital*, vol. 1: p. 8) shows, however, that the words "capitalist economists" are not to be found in the passage quoted, and it is clear that it is Marx himself who is setting out what he claims are the laws of the capitalist mode of production. This is confirmed on page 763 of the same work where Marx states that "Capitalist production begets with the inexorability of a law of nature, its own negation."

The communist historian, Professor E. J. Hobsbawm, endorses what is stated by Marx and refers to "The most powerful argument of classic Marxist analysis, the historic inevitability of proletarian revolution." This plainly contradicts the arguments put forward in Dr. Lewis's book (pp. 173 and 248) that for Marx there is no inevitability in history. Again, on page 23 we are told that Marx saw no inevitable victory in the struggle between classes; and this notion, like others, is reiterated several times. The *Communist Manifesto* states, however, that "What the bourgeoisie therefore produces, above all, is its own grave-diggers. Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable." What the unsuspecting reader is given in support of the contentions set forth in the present book is a truncated fragment of a sentence also taken from the *Communist Manifesto* and described by Professor Hook as "out of tune with the main emphasis."

When we get to Marx's theory of "increasing misery" (pp. 152-153) we learn that the point of the argument is firstly that "real wages cannot rise permanently much above an economic level." On page 239, however, we are told firstly that it can hardly be denied that since the Second World War "the standard of the majority of workers has risen" and then that the present economic situation seems more likely to lead to "real decline." A more trenchant verdict is given by Ronald L. Meek, a Professor of Economics and member of the Communist Party up to the time of the Hungarian uprising. He states quite definitely that of Marx's four "laws of motion of capitalism,"

including the increasing misery of the working class and the falling rate of profit, only one (the concentration and centralisation of capital) has manifested itself in a reasonably and unambiguous manner in the last half century in the more advanced capitalist countries. The other "laws" have by and large turned out substantially differently from what Marx expected.

The chapter in *The Marxism of Marx* on "The Way Out" refers to the "socialist societies" of the U.S.S.R., East Germany, Hungary, and elsewhere. It makes no mention, however, of the fact that, according to Paul Sweezy, one of the world's foremost Marxian economists, these countries are not socialist and are not moving in that direction either but are in transition between one class exploitative society and another. The communist scholar Lucio Colletti also says that these are not socialist societies, "nor could they be."

Dr. Lewis calls another of his chapters "The Man Nobody Knows," and expresses astonishment at how little has been written about Marx's life. But since he does not refer in this chapter to any of the biographies of Marx written in the last 35 years or so, this can hardly be taken seriously. Robert Payne's massive biography (1968) and his *The Unknown Karl Marx* (1971) are ignored, as is the recent English edition of Werner Blumenberg's well researched illustrated biography. Instead of an uncensored account of the human Marx we get a description in hagiographic style of the charming and witty young philosopher and the spring of tenderness in this stern man. We are not told that Marx became a communist before he worked out the theories with which his name is associated, and nothing is said of his callousness and repeated quarrels, or of his hypocritical treatment of his illegitimate son, or the suicides of his daughters.

What we are told is that the concept of "alienation" or estrangement of man from his "true nature," which is to live a communal life of co-operation, is central to Marx's whole thought; and that Marx held that alienation is caused by capitalism but is overcome and man's "true nature," actually established when he attains a fully social being in a classless society (pp. 120-122). In short, only communism is in accordance with human nature. Elsewhere, however, in contradiction to this, we are told that Marx had no belief at all in any constant or fixed human nature and he is quoted as saying that "The whole of history is nothing but a continual transformation of human nature." (pp. 24 and 101-103.)

It is interesting to note Dr. Lewis's acknowledgement of the Hegelian basis of Marxism and the admission—in his chapter on the dialectic—that Engels's conception of a "dialectics of nature" is an "all-embracing metaphysic." The quotation attributed to Lenin at the beginning of this chapter does not appear to be authentic. What Lenin actually said was that "It is impossible completely to understand Marx's *Capital*, and especially its first chapter, without having thoroughly studied and understood the whole of Hegel's *Logic*."

The shadow of Hegel is indeed cast across the twentieth century. The Marxism of Marx, Leninism, and fascism, were all influenced by Hegelian thought and share a common collectivist conception of man which identifies the human personality with "the ensemble of social relations" (Marx). It is this Hegelian model which has generated justificatory arguments in support of tyranny and terror, the mass immolation of the young, and the decimation of whole populations.

MARXISM AND PHILOSOPHY by Karl Korsch.

N.L.B., 70p.

Nobody who is not literally steeped in the history of Marxist controversy will make head or tail of this collection of four pieces published respectively in 1922, 1923, 1924 and 1930, suitably regurgitated this year as a paperback with an introduction by Frank Halliday. At the time of publication Korsch may have provided food for heated controversy within the Communist movement, but can hardly have caused a ripple outside that charmed circle.

Korsch is a polemicist-philosopher. As an active Communist for years, holding leading positions in Germany, he in due course fell foul of the Communist establishment, and then fled from Nazism. Then he trod the well-worn path to academic and research work in the U.S.A. From his own account (pp. 89-104) Korsch's Social Democrat and Communist critics grievously misrepresented him; but seeing here how he himself misrepresents Lenin, he at least paid back in kind.

Consider only Korsch's treatment of Lenin whose outstanding philosophical work was *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* written in 1903. The purpose of this work was specifically to combat the philosophical trend initiated by Ernst Mach, and espoused by a number of Russians linked with the revolutionary movement such as Bazarov, Bogdanov, Chernov, Suvorov, Lunacharsky, Valentinov, Yushkevich and others; men whom Lenin described as "refuting materialism as such" while posing as being critics only of individual materialists. In Lenin's view these writers were tending to deprive the working class movement of its scientific basis in dialectical materialism, and therefore had to be exposed. Yet Korsch dogmatically asserts that "no one" had "ever seriously thought of questioning" the materialist position.

Korsch's technique includes the use of quotations without relevant dates, and the convenient omission of highly relevant passages. For example, Lenin's "appreciation" of the scientist Haeckel (the German exponent of Darwinism) is contrasted with Engels' criticism of him. But the facts are these: Engels had died in 1894. In 1899 Haeckel published his *magnum opus*, *The Riddle of the Universe*. In relation to *this work* Lenin in 1903 in his book quoted an appreciative passage from Franz Mehring. Korsch counterposes this to Engels' earlier and critical comment on Haeckel to demonstrate Lenin's parting company from Marx and Engels. But this is not all; for, after his quotation from Mehring Lenin went on: "Haeckel's defect is that he has not the slightest conception of *historical* materialism, which leads him to utter the most woeful nonsense about politics, about 'monistic religion,' and so on and so forth." If Engels had lived ten more years, he might have concurred completely with Lenin's reaction.

Again, Korsch sneers at Lenin for writing of the "famous scientist Haeckel (without quotation marks) in contrast to the 'famous philosopher' Mach (with quotation marks)" as if there were something inconsistent here. But is it not clear that Lenin could respect Haeckel as a *scientist* while deploring his ignorance of historical materialism, while, as for Mach, his 'philosophy' was beyond the pale!

Finally, the Lenin of Korsch "flouted the dialectical materialist outlook" of Marx and Engels (p. 115), and his "undialectical conception . . . is explicitly stated on every page of his philosophical work" (p. 118). But turn to the work itself, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, and the Preface stresses that "Marx and Engels scores of times termed their philosophical views dialectical materialism"

while the entire book is an attack on men who had dismissed these views as "mysticism" and "antiquated."

Korsch's method runs true to type: while he claims to be applying dialectical materialism to "the whole history of Marxism" he is, fact, indulging in the intellectual sleight-of-hand so beloved by Marxism's denigrators the world over.

The book, therefore, while totally unreadable to those uninitiated into the internal wrangles of Marxism, is of no use to Marxists either, except, perhaps, to one who is working on a thesis on the techniques of misrepresenting Marxists. But Judex, of course, will like it.

PAT SLOAN

THE OFFSHORE ISLANDERS by Paul Johnson. Weidenfeld & Nicholson, £4.25.

One of the central themes of this brilliant history of England is the agonising slowness which the English people have long evinced when faced with the demand for reform. When changes do come at last, they often serve to reinforce the existing social structure. Even in the nineteenth century, regarded as the age of improvement, the pace of change must have seemed unbearably slow to the enlightened.

To illustrate this point of his, Mr. Johnson takes the comparatively small but significant matter of the compulsory payment of church rates. This, he says, was an indefensible anomaly which rightly enraged not only progressives but most non-political men and women. A test case was brought in Braintree. It was fought over sixteen years, before 28 judges and in eight courts, four deciding in favour and four against. Eventually, in 1853, the House of Lords gave a complex judgment which, in effect, made it extremely difficult to enforce payment. But not until fifteen years later were compulsory church rates abolished by statute.

This nineteenth-century example is only one of many that crop up. Free trade provides another when the general retreat from it left Britain isolated on a lonely sandbank. You can catch Mr. Johnson's tone here:

The immense conservatism of the English, their unwillingness to contemplate radical change without decades of investigation, the huge built-in barriers to reform which existed at every level of the political system, united to inhibit any sharp response . . . Abandon free trade, merely because some foreign governments had lost faith in it? It was what England was all about. One might as well propose to abolish the monarchy, or the established Church, or the public schools, or even the navy. No leading politician of either party was prepared to contemplate such a proposal. The depression of the 1870s exposed the English public mind at its worst: drugged by a dogma which had once enshrined empirical truth.

These pages are studded with phrases that flash like diamonds. Mr. Johnson is an excellent journalist, who edited the *New Statesman* for five years until 1970. He is also a Roman Catholic, or at least I presume he is, because he was educated at Stonyhurst before he went to Oxford. Readers of this journal need not be put off by that. If Mr. Johnson's ear for theological niceties is sharp, so is his sense of social justice. If he believes in Christianity, he seems to dislike churches and clergymen. In the fourteenth century, he tells us, clergymen claimed "a separate caste status."

They enjoyed between a quarter and a fifth of the wealth of the country. But they lacked a recognisable rôle in society: they were parasites and seen to be parasites, and public opinion at all levels of society could easily marshal itself against them.

Above all, the book misses no opportunity to underline "the characteristics of the English." Under that heading in

the index (which is otherwise quite inadequate), there are 33 entries ranging from anti-clericalism to xenophobia! I doubt if there is a modern historian of England who can compete with Mr. Johnson in this respect. Not that he is unaware of those other qualities which, as he remarks, have made the English people the most agreeable to live amongst, not least to those of us who grew up elsewhere and can thus claim a measure of detachment in striking a balance in the assessment.

It appears that Paul Johnson was moved to complete this study in the hope that it would help to show how foolish it is to enter Europe and so reverse "a thousand years of history." But whether you are in favour of or against the Common Market, you are sure to enjoy learning a great deal about English history from this unusual treatment of it.

Not that the book is without weaknesses. Its handling of empire-building is unsatisfactory and so is its under-estimation of the economic factors at work all the time; and its words of praise for our "efficient judicial system, distinguished both for its fairness and its dispatch" are mistaken, as any experienced radically-minded lawyer can testify. One other minor point: Thorstein Veblen was entirely American; he was not a German sociologist.

I hope this courageous book will get into many college and public libraries and be widely read.

JULIUS LEWIN

LETTERS

Revolution, Socialism and the Proletariat

Having read at least two of Jack Lindsay's books with great interest, I was surprised that in his review (2 December) of Mary Charlesworth's *Revolution in Perspective* his Marxist understanding was no better than that of Miss Charlesworth.

There are a number of reasons why, in the permanent state of crisis of world capitalism, no socialist consciousness has developed amongst the world proletariat. Jack Lindsay says that it is in the remaining peasant countries where the revolutionary dynamic is at work. However, the successful anti-feudal peasant revolutions are establishing state-capitalist régimes, and not socialism. Yes, "Russia in 1917 was a predominantly peasant country." It was obviously a bourgeois revolution ending Czarist feudalism.

Jack Lindsay says, "Mao produced a proletarian revolution with practically no proletariat." With all respect to Mr. Lindsay this is a terrible clanger. The classic bourgeois revolution in China was from 1925 to 1927; it was the ending of an agrarian peasant régime. The industrialisation of state-capitalist China is now producing a proletariat which will one day unite with the world proletariat for international socialism.

In the meantime I watch with amusement how the ruling group in Russia is forced by the economics of world capitalism to form trade pacts with one capitalist country or another, while the ruling group of China is forced to do exactly the same with some other capitalist nation. At the same time Russia and China are at loggerheads, instead of being united in socialist fraternity, and are accusing each other of returning to capitalism when in fact they are only just catching up with modern capitalist development.

"The emancipation of the working class is the task of the working class." The present situation is far from amusing, but is a tragedy for humanity.

R. STUART MONTAGUE.

Muslim Rights to R.I. in Schools

If anyone has been interested enough to follow the exchange of letters—one would like to have been able to say the exchange of views—on this subject, they may have noticed an extraordinary pattern. First the Secretary of the N.S.S. writes to the *Times Educational Supplement*, on our behalf it seems, to protest about the demand by Muslims to obtain equal rights in the matter of R.I. in schools. In that letter is a reference to the sad state of affairs in Northern Ireland. You object to or at least question the validity of my objection to this unnecessary and unfair bringing together of two disparate issues by suggesting that I object to all

things Irish; an Irishism if there ever was one. Bill McIlroy then seizes the opportunity to take me to task for holding views about which, he says, others are laughing; a strangely ill-fitting remark for the secretary of a non-conformist organisation. He further goes on to suggest that if I do not desist from pointing out the racialism inherent throughout *The Martyrdom of Man* and from pointing out the perhaps unconscious misrepresentation of things Judaic in secularist publications, then things might well become even worse. (What else is one to read into his suggestion that those who are working for tolerance are hampered by those who see Jew-haters under every bed?) All this, he the Secretary of the N.S.S., brings up because I had the temerity to be out of step. What on earth or heaven has this to do with Muslim education?

Mr. McIlroy introduces Bangladesh since his Northern Ireland reference does not stand up. I was not aware that the tragedy enacted in that country was brought about by giving R.I. to a small minority. He now denies that Northern Ireland or Bangladesh were at all relevant to his argument. Why then did he introduce them?

Of course, a secretary of the N.S.S. cannot in 1972 be expected to acknowledge the simple rules of logical thought, especially when the fallacies to be avoided are usually expressed in Latin. *Ad hominem*, an attack on a speaker or writer when one is unable to answer the points made, is an elementary fallacy. *Non sequitur* is another fallacy which deserves more attention. Bill McIlroy has assumed that because I objected to his reference to Northern Ireland in the context of Muslim R.I. in schools that I was saying that Muslims are not capable of barbarities. This is an example of a *non sequitur*. Another example is his sneer (letters, 2 December) regarding my silence in the matter of the caning of Muslim children. This contains an element of *ad hominem* as well as a *non sequitur*. It is nevertheless the standard of discussion which the National Secular Society requires in the 1970s of its Secretary.

GERALD SAMUEL.

Sectarian Schools and Exploitation

May I add my small voice to the debate between William McIlroy and Gerald Samuel which began with the report on 2 September of Mr. McIlroy's unpublished letter to the *Times Educational Supplement*. Surely Mr. Samuel knows that one cannot write a thesis when writing to a paper on a particular subject. Some things have to be implied, otherwise most letters would be rejected on the grounds of length. I thought Mr. McIlroy made his position quite clear with regard to the privileged position of Christianity in schools and the inevitable consequence in the form of demands from other religious leaders.

Schools should have no part in inculcating any system of belief whether this be done by separate sectarian schools or by segregation within the same school at certain times for the purpose of administering parents' chosen brand of indoctrination or that of the Education Act. Separating children by religion at any time is laying the foundation for later misunderstanding and can foster a community of hard-liners who have no idea of other belief systems. One way of promoting understanding between Hindu, Muslim, Christian and Jew is to see that they are educated together and that they have a knowledge of all the world's major religions. There should be no act of worship since this presupposes there is a God to worship and who wishes to be worshipped.

When people are separated by their religion their own identity tends to become submerged beneath their religious label; they are then more open to exploitation by power seekers—something which is indeed being demonstrated in Northern Ireland where integrated schools would surely have contributed something towards better understanding between the two factions.

MARGARET MORLEY.

Humanist attitudes to R.E.

May I ask for an assurance that Mr. McIlroy wrote his letter of 2 December in his personal capacity, not in his official rôle as a spokesman for the N.S.S. and the humanist movement in general, when he agrees that "Muslim children . . . [and] children of other faiths . . . should receive [religious education] in their homes and places of worship."

I should have thought that most humanists would regret that any child should receive religious indoctrination (which is clearly what is meant by "religious education" in this correspondence), while accepting that humanists have neither the power nor the right to prevent it.

May I also suggest that, in such discussions, humanists should make a point of referring to "the children of Muslim, Christian (etc.) parents," rather than "Muslim and Christian children"?

GEORGE D. RODGER.

Popper and His Critics

In reply to Peter Cadogan (letters, 9 December) I can only suggest that people actually read Chapter 17 in *Conjectures and Refutations* and re-read my defence of Popper (*Freethinker* letters, 23 November).

RALPH CHAMPION.

Mozart: a Rejoinder

In reply to Charles Byass's letter of 2 December, if I have hurt Mr. Byass's feelings with my Mozart article I am sorry.

I admit Mozart's achievement in composing so much in so short a life was a great one. But even allowing for this, I think the operatic achievements of Wagner and Verdi overshadow Mozart's (Wagner composed or at least worked on an opera while actively taking part in a revolution whose aim was to set up democracy in Germany—I repeat, taking part in a revolution whose aim was to set up democracy in Germany.)

Of course there is beautiful music in Mozart's operas; I said so in my article. But to write beautiful music is not enough. My objection is that Mozart has been made a sacred cow; we must bow down to his music without questioning or criticism. This uncritical attitude is unfair to other composers and makes for low standards in music.

However, let me assure Mr. Byass that if it was not for the unbalanced attitude criticised above and for the unfair attacks on Wagner made by men like W. J. Turner, Alfred Einstein and the late Eric Blom, I. S. Low would be prominent in the ranks of those shouting "Up with Mozart!"

Now for Brigid Brophy. This lady has written a book on Mozart and may therefore be supposed to be an expert. So it is interesting to note that she makes no attempt to contradict my main criticism, that Mozart's operas lose their impetus after the middle.

No doubt Raaff did oppose the *Idomeneo* quartet but his opposition has been exaggerated. We never hear Raaff's side of it; it is typical that Miss Brophy thinks a letter by Mozart decides the matter. If Mozart was a forceful character why did he never gain a position of affluence and influence? As regards nineteenth-century England appreciating Mozart, this contradicts the first sentence in Miss Brophy's own book: "Our century which will surely be the most execrated in history . . . is recognising Mozart."

Rather than Brigid Brophy call her book *Mozart the Dramatist* she should have called it "Da Ponte and Schikaneder the Dramatists" as it says more about the librettos (and just about everything else) than the music. Rather than write a rambling book in days when people have less and less time to read she should have gone straight to the point and been clear and concise. Let me tell Miss Brophy that in spite of E. J. Dent's faults one learns more about Mozart from Dent's book than hers.

I. S. Low.

Thomas Paine on the Stage

Unity Theatre will consider the production of a play based on the life of Tom Paine. A large cast will be needed, so would any freethinkers who can help with the production of this play please contact me at Unity Theatre, 1 Goldington Street, London NW1 1UD.

Pre-production will need considerable research and there will be scope for all who can give their time. JOHN ILLINGWORTH.

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