

## GET RID OF CHURCH SCHOOLS!

### —THE CASE AGAINST SECTARIAN EDUCATION

"If you are opposed to church schools and want to get rid of them, it's no use just talking about it," says a new pamphlet just published by the British Humanist Association. "There are opportunities to take local action." The *Case Against Church Schools* has been written by Patricia Knight as part of the work of the B.H.A.'s Abolish Church Schools Project Group. Ultimately," she says, "the abolition of church schools will be a national political issue. There will be a new Education Act within the next few years, which will determine educational policy for the next thirty years. If it is to be an Act which gets rid of church schools then humanists and other opponents of these schools have to start pressing this issue in political parties now." They should demand that Aided and Controlled schools be no longer maintained by rates and taxes—"They should be taken over as county schools or left to the Churches to finance without any aid from public funds"—and that Aided schools in single-school areas be converted without delay into county schools.

#### Freedom and indoctrination

Patricia Knight points out that the main argument used by the supporters of church schools is that they allow parents freedom of choice in the education of their children. "However, by doing so, they contravene the rights of children not to be indoctrinated. Church schools are substitute churches practising indoctrination by teaching one particular religious viewpoint to the exclusion of all other ideas."

But children have a right to information on a variety of different viewpoints, and to provide this information is one of the purposes of education . . . Schools should encourage critical examination of a wide range of attitudes to life and not preempt the child's choice by forcing his acceptance of a particular view. Children have the right to be provided with the means of checking the truth or falsity of statements, including statements about religion. They have a right to make up their minds on the available evidence.

In point of fact, parental freedom of choice is often curtailed by the present church school system, particularly in single-school areas. "The Anglican school at Ide Hill in Kent, for instance, is the only primary school in the village. At Cuckfield, Sussex, the only primary school is a Church of England one—the nearest county school is five miles away."

A non-religious or non-Christian parent forced to send their child to this church school would get a notice saying, 'In close co-operation with the vicar, who is chairman of the managers, we do our best to bring up the children as practising Christians.'

Mrs. Knight also cites the case of Wheathampstead, Hertfordshire, where the only primary school was a Church of England school: "A parish meeting voted to have a county school instead, but the Church authorities simply stated that only an Act of Parliament could take away their trust deed, and the school carried on. A county primary school was not obtained till seven years later."

#### Education and church power

The pamphlet begins with an explanation of the complex historical origins of the church school system, demolishing, as it goes along, the myth that these schools were founded primarily for philanthropic reasons. Indeed, it

was not until 1902 that church schools received rate aid for the first time—"greatly to the disgust of the Nonconformists, many of whom refused to pay rates in protest." The author also adds: "Attempts by Utilitarians, Radicals and Secularists in the nineteenth century to obtain secular education failed because of the strong institutional power of the Church of England and its political connections."—A sobering point indeed!

In recent years people have supposed that with the growth of modern educational ideas, church schools would gradually wither away. In fact this has not happened. Since 1944, says Mrs. Knight, "they have become more deeply embedded in the educational system" and "their financial position has become steadily more favourable."

The reluctance of the churches to close any school in the course of secondary reorganisation on comprehensive lines is already increasing their share of the total school places. In the London Borough of Brent, where voluntary school places already account for 29 per cent of all school places, the plans for comprehensivisation would raise the proportion to 35 per cent.

#### What can be done ?

Fortunately, the new B.H.A. pamphlet also gives some practical suggestions as to what opponents of religious segregation in education can do to oppose the spread of sectarian schools at local and national level. A successful example is given from Macclesfield where in 1971 "a new church school was proposed, but a correspondence in the local press initiated by humanists led to a poll, based on the electoral register, on the subject, whereupon the proposal was soundly defeated."

Patricia Knight's pamphlet will have a considerable appeal for humanists, for whom it will provide invaluable reference material and ammunition. It is greatly to be hoped that it will also be widely read in political and educational circles and by the public at large. Concerted action on this issue is long overdue.

*Copies of The Case Against Church Schools, by Patricia Knight, may be obtained (price 20p plus 3p postage) from G. W. Foote & Co. Ltd., 103 Borough High Street, London SE1 1NL.*

## THE FREETHINKER

Editor: NIGEL SINNOTT

103 Borough High Street,  
London, SE1 1NL

Telephone: 01-407 1251

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

### POSTAL SUBSCRIPTION RATES

#### Inland and Overseas

Twelve months: £1      Six months: 50p

#### U.S.A. and Canada

Twelve months: \$3.00      Six months: \$1.50

Please make cheques, etc., payable to G. W. Foote & Co. Ltd. (Foreign subscriptions by cheque or *International Money Order*, please.)

The *Freethinker* can also be ordered through any newsagent.

# NEWS

heinous and innately repulsive, can calmly accept the regular ritual of eating the 'flesh' of their saviour-god, Jesus.

We now know that modern European man has been mistaken in supposing that cannibalism is "unnatural"; his aversion to the practice is largely a matter of social conditioning, as is shown by comparative studies with other cultures, where in certain cases it is a mark of respect and good manners to eat parts of the corpses of the dead during their funeral ceremonies. By doing so the participant is supposed to receive some element of the 'spiritual' strength or virtues of the deceased. However one generally finds that there is a correlation between such practices and societies in which there is a shortage of readily available protein. Thus whatever the religious rationalisations for the practice may be, it also has—or had—a more obvious and rational survival value.

It is also curious how modern man, with his strong aversion to cannibalism, can at the same time tolerate the protracted cruelty and exploitation often involved in providing him with meat from other animals. In the case of city-dwellers this may partly be a case of "out of sight, out of mind," but it is not entirely so. From a rationalist viewpoint, which deprives man of a 'special position' in the universe, it could well be argued that eating dead bodies (so long as this did not involve murder) is a sensible way of conserving protein, and far less morally objectionable than, say, the mass-rearing of anaemic calves for the purpose of obtaining veal.

## A MISERABLE NEW YEAR FOR MILLIONS

1972 has had a rather inauspicious start, characterised by the sufferings of the grief-stricken, homeless inhabitants of Managua in the aftermath of an earthquake, of the people of central India, faced with another drought, and of the victims of President Nixon's futile and repulsive war in South-East Asia. Then, at the individual level there was the pathetic story of the old Polish immigrant found dead in his bed-sitter; he had choked to death on a piece of garlic which he kept in his mouth—in Britain, in 1973—as a precaution against vampires!

Earthquakes and droughts are natural catastrophes against whose effects only long-term, sophisticated advances in technology will provide a reliable remedy, but is it wholly beyond the power of intelligent men to prevent the cause of the misery that invariably attends warfare and superstition?

The new year has also seen Britain dragged, like an irascible Alf Garnett, into the European Economic Community. The Common Market's capital already boasts of two "ecumenical centres," Catholic and Protestant, which we are informed will give the British Churches "a chance to influence policies in Brussels." Fanfares for Europe are all very well, but when the music stops we are going to have our work cut out. Let us get on with it.

## ANTHROPOPHAGY

Readers of this paper will already be familiar with newspaper reports of the recent air crash in the Andes mountains where the survivors, after being rescued, admitted that they had cut up and eaten some of the bodies of the dead as an aid to their own survival. One of the curious features of this episode was the lack of popular emotionalism and hysteria at this case of cannibalism which one would certainly have expected, say, ten years ago.

Rather subtly, the survivors forestalled criticism of their behaviour by saying that their actions were "the will of God," in some ways a rather curious defence as most of them were strict Catholics. However, when one considers the fact that millions of Catholics and other Christians perform acts of *ritual* cannibalism every week, this approach makes sense. It is curious in fact that Christians, who have generally considered cannibalism to be both

## VICTORIANA

We were highly amused by the *Sunday Times's* recent story about the two statues of her late Britannic Majesty Queen Victoria, which have become the object of fertility worship in Thailand's two main cities. A reader even wrote in to say that during the Japanese occupation, when the statue in Bangkok was boxed in, the local people complained that the dear queen could not "breathe", and so the Imperial Japanese army finally gave way, and cut air holes in the box.

Nearer home, one of our few remaining Victorian myths has fallen victim to the march of the Permissive Society: "Mrs. Grundy", the Editor's office *Aspidistra*, reneged over the recent public holiday and 'did her own thing'—by bursting into bloom. At first we thought of sending her away to a quiet greenhouse in the country to hide our shame, but finally thought better of it; after all, one must *appear* to be broad-minded nowadays. (But God knows what Albert would have done!)

## N.C.C.L. BENEFIT PERFORMANCE

A special benefit performance of *Trials and Errors*, by Dawn Pavitt and Terry Wale, is to be held at the Mermaid Theatre on Saturday, 28 January (8 p.m.) All proceeds will go to the National Council for Civil Liberties.

*Trials and Errors* is "a dramatic anthology on the theme of crime and punishment" and includes the words of Dickens, Swift, Shakespeare, Wilde, Eliot, Byron, Hardy, Lawrence and others, together with many traditional airs and ballads.

Tickets (£3, £1.50 and 75p) may be purchased direct or by post, from the Box Office of the Mermaid Theatre, Puddle Dock, Blackfriars, London EC4 (telephone: 01-248 7656).

# AND NOTES

## WINING AND DINING

This year's Annual Dinner of the National Secular Society will be held at the Pavours Arms, Page Street, London SW1, on Saturday, 31 March. The guest of honour will be Richard Handyside, the publisher of *The Little Red Schoolbook*.

*Tickets (£2 each) may be obtained from the General Secretary, N.S.S., 103 Borough High Street, London SE1 1NL.*

South Place Ethical Society's Annual Dinner will be held at Conway Hall, London, on Friday, 16 February, and the guest speaker will be T. F. Evans.

*Tickets (£1.50 including wine) are available from the General Secretary, S.P.E.S., Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL.*

The Annual Dinner of the British Humanist Association will be held this year at the Pavours Arms, Page Street, London SW1, on Saturday, 3 February. The chair will be taken by George Melly, and the guest of honour will be Lord Brockway.

*Apply for tickets (£2 each) to the General Secretary of the B.H.A., 13 Prince of Wales Terrace, London W8 5PG.*

## STRICTLY NON-RELIGIOUS

In conversation with Lord Raglan the other week, an American (Catholic) lady solemnly informed him that the cause of the current 'troubles' in Northern Ireland had nothing whatever to do with religion. "It's that the Catholics are being discriminated against," she added.

*According to a survey published in Washington last month, more than two-thirds of Catholic women in the United States are using methods of contraception forbidden by their Church.*

## MAMMON AGAIN

A reader has recently sent us an illuminating specimen of fund-raising literature emanating from that well-known missionary enterprise, the Osborn Foundation. The essential component is a booklet containing twelve detachable pages (one for each month of the year). Every month the faithful are supposed to tear out a page, write name and address on one side, and a personal request for "Daily prayer" on the other, then post it with £2 to the Rev. T. L. Osborn, who will duly oblige. Like the little homily on the back of slip no. 5 says: "To 'love money' too much to use it in God's service of soulwinning is like loving your life too much to serve God. To invest it in evangelism is investing *your life* to win the lost—*plus* assuring your own financial prosperity for God's glory and His work's sake."

If you think these are lofty and unselfish motives, the accompanying brochure goes even further, citing plenty of Bible references in justification: "You can have plenty—when others are in need! . . . You can have health—when others are sick! . . . Your prayers can be answered—when others are abandoned! . . . You can prosper—when others are in distress! . . ."

Personally, we rather prefer good old mediaeval indulgences, but if you, gentle reader, feel near to throwing up, not to worry: "T. L. Osborn, Daisy Osborn and co-workers" are "praying *daily—for you!*"

Yecccch!!!

## GHOULISH BAPTISMS

Readers of this paper may have read accounts of a quaint ceremony occasionally performed by Mormon missionaries in this country—that of rooting through old parish registers and posthumously 'baptising' people whose names appear in them (Bradlaugh and Foote are probably 'Mormons' by now). However, the Catholic Church apparently goes in for a more ghoulish variation on this theme: baptising abortions, both natural (spontaneous) and induced, as is shown by a letter in the *Catholic Herald* of 5 January.

The writer says that she "was always able to administer the Sacrament of Baptism to foeti—using the conditional formula—whenever on duty." The letter further says: "These 'non-viable' children were nature's abortions (commonly known as miscarriages) but I am sure this practice exists for the therapeutic abortions."

Readers of the *Catholic Herald* were also assured that "All nurses I came into contact with, no matter what creed, were keen to see that 'anything' remotely human was baptised; even the humanist nurse endeavoured to get someone to baptise the smallest foetus."

From 'humanists' such as this, Good Lord deliver us!

## EPISCOPAL MALE CHAUVINIST

The concept of "Women's Lib" does not appear to have penetrated the confines of Llandaff Cathedral. The Dean of Llandaff is reported as saying, "I have known women sidesmen in church, but that surely is an admission of failure." (Church Information Office)

## NINETY YEARS AGO

The struggle is near at last. Soon after this number of the *Freethinker* is in the readers' hands the great Blasphemy Trial may begin . . . We do not know how it will end, but no termination will find us unprepared.

Whatever happens, the *Freethinker* will go on. On the eve of battle we ask all our readers to stand by it through thick and thin. It will, we believe, always be worthy of their support, even in the worst circumstances . . . How often, as we have heaved a sigh of satisfaction over some difficulty removed, and looked at the *Freethinker* still out, and still bearing its old message to thousands of readers, we have thought of Byron's heroic words!

"Yet Freedom, yet, thy banner torn but flying  
Streams like the thunderstorm *against* the wind."

. . . If one standard-bearer is stricken down, another will take his place, and if need be another his, and another his. Danger never terrified Freethinkers in the old stormy days, and it will not terrify them now . . .

Yes, the *Freethinker* will go on, and everything else issued from our office will go on too . . . Our course is now clear. Gambetta turned his defence of Delescluze into a impeachment of the Empire; and we (however far after him) will try to turn our defence into an impeachment of Christianity. The colossal imposture of eighteen centuries shall, if we can do it, be dragged to the bar and tried with us.

—G. W. Foote in *The Freethinker*, 21 January 1883.

## OBITUARY

### Ruth Kamofsky

We regret to announce the death last month of Mrs. Ruth Kamofsky; she was 51.

Mrs. Kamofsky was an outstanding teacher, both at the personal and organisational level, as well as being a devoted wife and mother; and she faced her last illness with great fortitude.

The funeral took place at Golders Green Crematorium on 21 December, and the last tribute was paid by Mrs. Kamofsky's father, Professor Hyman Levy. Mrs. Kamofsky also leaves a husband and three children, to all of whom we extend our sympathy.

# ONE OR NONE

PETER CROMMELIN

*We do not necessarily agree with all the sentiments expressed in this article, but publish it as the possible basis of a discussion of the first principles of freethought and humanism. For the benefit of new readers of The Freethinker we would point out that Peter Crommelin was for 26 years a Catholic priest until leaving the Church in October 1956. He eventually married and thereby found great personal happiness. Strictly speaking, he says, he is not an atheist, though he is prepared to acknowledge that there may be some good causes that can only be won by a militant atheism. There is, he believes, one God who has no objection to atheism. (Ed.)*

This is not an article about birth control or family planning; it is about the logic of atheism. Every day we see more clearly that which divides the religionist who is human but not a humanist from the humanist who is also human but not a religionist. Apart from their religion many people are perfectly normal human beings; apart from their humanism many humanists are perfectly normal human beings. The difference between the two types of humanity is caused by a radical difference in the attitude to God.

Now there may be one God or there may be no god; both are equally possible from the purely logical point of view. Polytheism is the only kind of theism that has proved itself unacceptable to the logical mind. Any religion that desires to gain or retain the allegiance of civilised people must somehow present its god as one God. This necessity has sometimes caused embarrassment to Christian theologians: they find it hard to explain (and do not want to explain) how God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, can be three divine persons without also being three gods, which would of course completely destroy the essential logical unity of God. The theologians call it a mystery, but mystery is only a word invented to cover a multitude of intellectual sins.

## Spinoza's monotheism

It is quite simple to construct a rational monotheism that does not claim to be derived from any supernatural source of information, but depends solely upon our ability to think logically and without reference (or at least without any direct or immediate reference) to sense perception. The monotheism of Spinoza was probably the most absolute monotheism ever formulated by the mind of man; it was totally humanist and non-religious in character, and for this reason it is not surprising that it was condemned by the Synagogue: it made the God of Israel look like a tribal deity. Spinoza was one of those very rare individuals of whom it might be said that the whole purpose of his life was to know, love and serve God. God for Spinoza was the Creator of the Universe and the real, though invisible, foundation of all existence which would not have excluded that minute portion of existence that is subject to the laws of biological evolution here on earth. Spinoza, however, lived a long time before Darwin.

The life of Spinoza should make us feel a sense of shame if we present humanism as a rather sub-human attempt to infuse large quantities of atheism into the body of mankind. Atheism is an attitude of mind to God. It can be brought about under suitable conditions by the sheer physical agony of personal existence. It can form part of a definite philosophical activity in which everything, including the existence of God, is subjected to Cartesian doubt and scrutiny; but it never should be suggested that atheism, whether militant or passive, is the be-all and end-all of secular humanist activity.

The importance of atheism in the lives of some great and famous humanists of the past has been greatly exaggerated. Let us consider very briefly a few examples. Voltaire dedicated his life to the God of Reason, and his pen to the service of humanity. Where was his atheism? Thomas Paine dedicated his life to the Rights of Man, to the Light of Reason and to a radical criticism of the Bible as a source of information about events in the ancient world. Where was the atheism? Charles Bradlaugh was much more dedicated to parliamentary democracy than he was to atheism; it seemed to him totally absurd to introduce religious acts of piety into the administration of Law or into the working of Parliament. It is difficult for us to appreciate the quantity and the quality of the moral courage that went to the making of Bradlaugh and his determination to enter Parliament without swearing by Almighty God. But we do small honour to the memory of the man if we think of him *simply* as an atheist. The only thing that the ignorant are likely to remember about Karl Marx is that he was a communist and an atheist. For neither title was he fully qualified: Marx devoted the major part of his working life to what he regarded as a serious and scientific study of the workings of the capitalist system of production and distribution of material wealth; for this purpose he invented an instrument of research that has come to be known as "dialectical materialism." This, however, had absolutely nothing to do with his so-called atheism. There is no logical reason why a devout Christian should not become a "dialectical materialist" for the study of political economy. Marx regarded the political and economic power of organised religion as the main obstacle to the peaceful progress of mankind. We have no right to deduce from this fact that Marx was in his own private life a complete atheist: we know that as a philosopher Marx was a disciple of Hegel; he never repudiated his master. Hegelian idealism is much more compatible with monotheism than it would be with total atheism.

## The Protestant Reformation and the Humanist Revolution

I think these facts should make us pause before asserting that a private and personal atheism is a necessary result of the right to think and the freedom to think. To me it seems that the Humanist Revolution is the natural successor to the Protestant Reformation: the militant humanists of the twentieth century would have been the militant Protestants of the sixteenth century; but the need to reform the Church was brought to an end by the death of the Christian faith. All Christians have combined to keep the death an official secret but it approaches more and more to the status of common knowledge. It causes a visible anxiety to appear in the body of so august a potentate as the Pontifex Maximus of ancient Rome: the poor old boy puts on a brave face; he pretends to believe that all the world bows down before his divine majesty and infallible authority, but it becomes perfectly obvious that he has some doubts and fears.

Humanists date the death of the Christian faith from the publication of *The Origin of Species*. This work triggered off the Humanist Revolution here in 1859; from England it has spread and is still spreading over the world. The Christian world is no longer so obviously divided into Catholic and Protestant except in the backwater of Ulster. A much more important distinction is emerging between the religionist and the humanist. The religionist believes

in God by supernatural revelation. The humanist either believes or disbelieves in the divine origin of Creation, but never claims either for belief or disbelief anything more than the natural light of reason.

In the course of a fairly long life I have come across many curiosities in the literature of art, science, philosophy and religion. I have had some experience of what may

have been in the mind of religious mystics when they have written of the Beatific Vision or the voice of God. All the weight of evidence seems to point to the conclusion that there is no god; yet despite all the physics and the chemistry of what seems to be so very much like a godless chaos and confusion, the existence of one God remains a logical possibility. So long as this is so, I am not prepared to call myself an atheist.

## THE RING AT BAYREUTH

I.S. LOW

Anticipation is said to be better than realisation.—Not always true; last summer I saw Wagner's *Ring of the Nibelungs* at Bayreuth and I was not disappointed.

The *Ring* is a sort of serial opera. It consists of four operas, on the same theme and with the same characters. The operas are called *The Rheingold*, *The Valkyrie*, *Siegfried* and *Dusk of the Gods* (*Götterdämmerung*). Each opera is performed on a different night and they take from three to six hours each to perform.

### Symbolic myths

The story deals with the struggles of gods, giants, Rhinemaidens and Nibelungs (dwarfs) for possession of a ring which brings power to its owner but also disaster. These mythical beings are supposed to symbolise real life human types. Prominent among the characters are Wotan—storm tossed, conscience-stricken chief of the gods; the Valkyrie Brunnhilda—beautiful, heroic and idealistic; the sinister Nibelung Alberich, who renounces love for power; and Siegfried, the revolutionary, who makes short work of gods, giants and Nibelungs.

Full marks to Theo Addams for a really sensitive portrayal of Wotan. Jean Cox as Siegfried was a little heavy (it is not generally realised that Siegfried was a lively, even humorous character) but he did well in the great duet with Brunnhilda at the end of *Siegfried* and he certainly looked the part. Caterina Ligendza was good as Brunnhilda and so was Gustav Neidlinger as Alberich (he is said to be the best Alberich in the world).

The main criticism made was that the stage was shrouded in too great darkness. Also the tremendous final scene of *Götterdämmerung* rather flopped. Valhalla, the home of the gods, was very "abstract." The Valkyries wore slacks and headdresses that suggested Cleopatra. Winged helmets were out. Of course new ideas are a good thing but somehow these costumes do not fit in with the atmosphere. Perhaps the Valkyries should wear miniskirts?

In spite of all this, some people thought there were not enough new ideas. One man booed Herr Wolfgang Wagner, the producer, when he appeared at the end. Herr Wagner took it cheerfully as well he might. He is a silver haired, rather cheeky looking old gentleman, not unlike his great ancestor in appearance. We also saw another member of the Wagner family—Miss Sieglinde Wagner who acted a Valkyrie.

The main feature of the Bayreuth theatre is its simplicity. The seats slope straight down from back to front with no galleries or boxes at the side (though there are boxes at the back). There is a deep pit for the orchestra—so that you never see it at all (except the conductor at the end).

Apart from the first night, each opera has two intervals each lasting an hour. You can wander through the wooded

grounds or have a meal (if you do the latter I advise you to try the self-service café). When the opera is about to start again those in the grounds are summoned by trumpets playing themes from the opera—which is rather romantic.

### The greatest of all operas

The result of all this is that you do not just go to see the *Ring*—you live it! It is a thrilling experience; in fact it is too thrilling—getting back to everyday life and work is more than usually difficult. I think the *Ring* is the greatest of all operas and you may say this is just my opinion. But what is not an opinion but a fact is the intense enthusiasm this opera can produce in so many people: I know of no other opera that can do it.

I also saw Wagner's early opera *Das Liebesverbot* performed at Bayreuth (though not at the Wagner theatre). Wagner composed this opera when he was about twenty and full of the joy of life. It is extremely lively and with hints of the power to come. It should be performed more often.

Formerly I believed that Bavaria was an overwhelmingly Catholic country. But I found that there are quite big Protestant populations at Bayreuth and Nuremberg. Some of the streets are called after Protestant heroes—for instance Calvin Strasse and Gustav-Adolf Strasse.

If you can get to see the *Ring* at Bayreuth I advise you to do it.

DAVID TRIBE

**BROADCASTING,  
BRAINWASHING,  
CONDITIONING**

25p plus 4p postage

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

103 Borough High Street, London SE1 1NL

1973

Relentless time proclaims the coming year,  
That brings unknown delight, or grief, or fear?  
Courage—acceptance, this philosophy  
Helps us to live and love, and hopefully  
We dream again that Spring is on the way.  
Hope is reborn, life is renewed each day.

SYLVIA WINCKWORTH

# WAS JESUS A POLITICAL REBEL?—PART 1

G. A. WELLS

In his most informative letter in *The Freethinker* of 23 September, the Rev. Michael Brierley mentions a number of recent scholars who have argued that Jesus was executed as a rebel against Roman authority; that the evangelists, in order not to offend the Romans, tried to suppress all mention of his political activism, and pretended that he was condemned by Jews for heresy—not by Romans for sedition; and that evidence of his revolutionary behaviour and connexions nevertheless shows through the gospels, even though they have been most carefully edited to erase it.

These scholars concede that much in the gospels is fiction, but they believe that the evangelists did not make the whole story up, but built on a genuine tradition about a Jewish Messianic pretender or political rebel who was put to death by Pilate. Difficulties attending this theory are: (1) all Christian documents earlier than the gospels portray Jesus in a way hardly compatible with the view that he was a political agitator; and (2) if his activities had been primarily political, and the evangelists were not interested in—or deemed it inexpedient to mention—his politics, then what was the motive for their strong interest in him? How did they come to suppose that a rebel, whose revolutionary views they tried to suppress in their gospels, was the universal saviour?

## Pilate's 'responsibility' for the death of Jesus

A viable alternative to this theory of a political Jesus can be provided if it can be shown that there was good reason for the invention of a tradition of Pilate's responsibility for his death, and that such a tradition is therefore no more historically reliable than the gospel modification of it which shifts the blame to the Jews. This paper offers some evidence to this effect, without claiming that it is any more absolutely conclusive than that put forward by the advocates of a political Jesus.

Jesus is not linked with Pilate, nor indeed with any historical situation in any document earlier than Mark, the earliest gospel, and in a previous article<sup>1</sup> I have given reasons for dating Mark very late in the first century. Other early Christian literature includes:

(a) *The Pauline letters*. These are the earliest exant Christian documents—all written before A.D. 70—and they speak of Jesus as a supernatural personage who assumed human flesh some time after the reign of David. When Paul writes of Jesus' death, he says nothing of Pilate, nor of Jerusalem. The late Professor Brandon (the most eminent advocate of the 'political' Jesus) admitted that Paul gives the crucifixion "no historical context, so that nothing is known of when or where this Jesus lived . . . or where he had been buried and the mode of his resurrection."<sup>2</sup> Paul has nothing to say of the time or place of the resurrection appearances he mentions; and later Christian documents which are explicit as to the place are in complete contradiction on the matter, in that Matthew sites the appearances to the disciples exclusively in Galilee, whereas Luke confines them to Jerusalem.

(b) *The epistles of the late first century*, namely, the letter to Hebrews, the first epistle of Peter, the letters of James and John, and (outside the canon) the first epistle of Clement of Rome. All these are later than Paul's letters, and share his silence about Pilate—indeed none of them refers to Jesus' life in the way one would expect. The first epistle of Peter, for instance, is said by the theologian

Professor Kümmel to "contain no kind of hint of an acquaintance with the earthly Jesus, his life, teaching and death, but refers only to the 'suffering' of Christ"<sup>3</sup>—and, I may add, obtains its information on this subject not from traditions about Jesus' life on earth, but from the description of the sufferings of the 'servant of Yahweh' in Isaiah.

The dilemma thus posed is clear: namely, if the gospels were based on reliable historical tradition, how is it that Paul and these other Christian writers earlier than the gospels (or at latest contemporary with the earliest gospel, Mark) make no reference to this tradition? Christian scholars sometimes reply that—in the words of Professor E. Käsemann—"the Easter events dominate the whole, and do so even in the gospels," which devote a disproportionate amount of space to the final few days of Jesus' life in Jerusalem. On this theory, then, early Christian writers who are silent about Jesus' life and doctrines and dealings with Pilate knew of them, but neglected them because they regarded the resurrection as so much more important. This does not explain why the neglect extends (as it repeatedly does) to occasions when Jesus' life and doctrines (as recorded in the gospels) would have supported the views which these writers were trying to establish, and the facts are better explained if we assume that, for the early Christians, Jesus was a dying and rising god of whose human biology nothing was known. In an article of 1965, published in a German theological journal, E. Grässer concedes that the importance of the resurrection to the New Testament epistle writers of the first century explains only their unwillingness to write of Jesus' life as detached historiographers, not their almost total silence about it; he candidly designates this silence as an unexplained riddle.

## An important difference

There is, however, one really important difference between Paul's epistles and Christian epistles of the late first century, namely that the latter allege that Jesus lived on earth in the "last times." Paul's epistles fill about 100 pages of print and include many references to Jesus' earthly life, without once indicating *when* it occurred. The furthest Paul goes towards committing himself on this issue are his statements that God sent his son to earth "when the fulness of the time came" (Galatians 4:4); and that the Christian lives in a new era: "If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things are passed away" (2 Corinthians 5:17). But this falls short of the quite explicit statement of 1 Peter 1:20 that "Christ . . . was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but was manifested at the end of the times for your sake." Even this may originally have meant no more than that his coming inaugurated the final epoch (however long) of man's history—the epoch which would culminate in his return to end the world and judge mankind. But it could easily have been taken to mean that he was on earth in the recent past; and this is what the epistle to the Hebrews and Clement's first epistle (A.D. 96) had come to assume of Jesus. Misunderstanding and reinterpretations of this kind have played an important rôle in the development of religious ideas.

The next stage was to pin-point the recent past in which Jesus allegedly lived in such a way as to specify a precise historical context, and this is what we find in:

(c) *The epistles of the early second century*, i.e. the pastoral epistles—the two letters to Timothy and the letter to Titus—which although ascribed to Paul in the

canon are almost universally accepted as second century works; the second epistle of Peter, which is the latest book in the canon, later even than the gospels; and the extracanonical letters of Ignatius of A.D. 110. This group of documents, together with the gospels, certainly does link Jesus with Pilate, and I tried to indicate in an earlier article<sup>4</sup> how this linkage was motivated. Here, I will mention some additional relevant factors.

### Paul, Ignatius and the Docetists

For Paul, Jesus was a heavenly being who assumed a body of flesh—and thus placed himself open to sinfulness (2 Corinthians 5 : 21)—in order to come to earth and redeem us by his suffering. But this approximation to sin could well be held to compromise his divine status, and it is surely to avoid any such implication that Paul sometimes says that God “sent his own son in the *likeness* of sinful flesh” (Romans 8 : 3), that Christ was made “in the *likeness* of men” (Philippians 2 : 7-8). To some this compromise formula did not go far enough, and the so-called Docetists believed that Jesus lived on earth as a phantom, without a real body of flesh. About the end of the first century, sectarians, mentioned in the epistles of John, were denying that he had “come in the flesh” at all. They may have been Docetists or Christian gnostics for whom, as for all gnostics, flesh was essentially evil. Now I have shown above that it was about this very time that the idea that Jesus had been on earth recently was beginning to take root, and so the obvious way to refute them would be to specify details of his human birth and recent activities. But the author of the epistles of John does not do this. He says that only those who admit that Jesus has “come in the flesh” are to be accepted, and warns against “false prophets,” but does not give a single biographical detail to confute them. It seems, then, that no such details were available to him; but the need to confute heretics of the type he mentions must have led fairly rapidly to the invention of the necessary biographical tradition, for about A.D. 110 Ignatius was able to draw on it in his crushing reply to heretics of the same type. He considered salvation dependent on sacramental eating of the saviour’s “flesh.” If Jesus’ body were a mere phantom, there could be no salvation; and so Ignatius insisted, against the Docetists, that “Jesus Christ, David’s scion and Mary’s, was really born of a virgin and baptised by John, really persecuted by Pilate and nailed to the cross in the flesh.” And then the fourth gospel unambiguously affirmed that “the word became flesh,” thus correcting the Pauline formula “in the likeness of flesh.”

The Zürich theologian Professor Schweitzer has said that, when Mark wrote, “Jesus was a mere name,” and the message of salvation might as well have been connected “with Hermes or Attis or any other saviour.”<sup>5</sup> The gnostics, he adds, “were about to draw this consequence.” And he clearly implies that Mark wrote in order to prevent them from doing so. The earliest Christian references to Pilate are in Mark and in the (Pastoral) first epistle to Timothy, where Jesus is said (6 : 13) to have “made the . . . noble confession and gave his testimony to it before Pontius Pilate.” This may well refer to the oral testimony which, according to the gospels, he gave in the presence of Pilate, although the Greek can equally well mean that his “testimony” or “witness” was his martyrdom in the time of (*epi*) Pilate. J. N. D. Kelly has noted that Pilate has “no place in the earliest summaries of the kerygma,” but that the formula given in the first epistle to Timothy rapidly became “almost routine,” and is found in Irenaeus, Justin, Irenaeus and Tertullian. He believes that the passage

echoes a baptismal creed which mentioned Pilate in order to specify the historical setting of the crucifixion. “A date was called for so as to bring out that these events did not happen anywhere at any time, and that the Gospel is not simply a system of ideas.”<sup>6</sup> He of course accepts the historicity of the crucifixion under Pilate, and argues only that specific mention of him in the creed became in due course expedient for the reason given. But I would argue that this reason was itself a sufficient cause for the concoction of a formula mentioning Pilate without any historical basis.

### Early Christians and the Roman government

Another reason why Jesus’ fate came to be linked with Pilate emerges if we take the *epi* to mean his confession ‘in the presence of’ Pilate. The earliest Christian documents mentioning Pilate were written when Christians were anticipating persecution for refusing to offer sacrifice to the Emperor as a token of their loyalty to Rome. Mark 13 : 13 implies a situation in which the “name” of Christian is a capital offence; and the context of the reference to Pilate in the first epistle to Timothy proves, as Professor Cullmann says, that “we are here concerned with a judicial action, and that Timothy had appeared already for the first time before a court, and had ‘witnessed the good confession before many witnesses’.”<sup>7</sup> He is instructed to continue the “good fight,” that is, to confess his faith before the authorities. In this situation he could strengthen his courage by recalling that Christ had fearlessly proclaimed his Messianic kingship before Pilate. Hence, says Cullmann, “Pilate probably owes the honour of being named in the Credo to the fact that Christians of the early period were summoned to confess their faith before the representatives of the Roman government.” Instead of thus arguing, with Cullmann, that the situation of these early Christians was such as to make them appropriately recall the historical facts of Jesus’ behaviour towards Pilate, we can equally well affirm that this early Christian situation was conducive to the formation of a legend that Jesus himself had been hailed before a Roman authority and had behaved in the unflinching manner expected of Christians under similar duress. It is not in dispute that many legends have originated as tales of encouragement to the oppressed.

Those who try to account for Christian origins without an historical Jesus are often accused of positing a complicated and involved series of processes in order to explain what can be much more simply explained by assuming the existence of a preacher who was crucified under Pilate. However, the correct explanation is not necessarily the simplest hypothesis that comes to mind, but the simplest one which can account for *all* the relevant facts. The facts represented by the earliest Christian literature are hard to explain on the assumption that Jesus was active in Palestine in the first century A.D.

### NOTES

- 1 WELLS, G. A. 1972 November 11. “Form Criticism and the Date of the Gospel of Mark.” *Freethinker* vol. 92 : p. 364.
- 2 BRANDON, S. G. F. 1951. *Time and Mankind* : p. 159.
- 3 KUEMMELL, W. G. 1965. *Introduction to the New Testament* : p. 298.
- 4 WELLS, G. A. 1972 January 22. “Did Jesus Exist?”—Part 2. *Freethinker* vol. 92 : pp. 26-27.
- 5 SCHWEITZER, E. 1963-64. “Mark’s Contribution to the Quest of the Historical Jesus.” *New Testament Studies* vol. 10 : p. 421.
- 6 KELLY, J. N. D. 1950. *Early Christian Creeds* : pp. 149-150; 1963. *A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* : p. 143.
- 7 CULLMAN, O. 1949. *Earliest Christian Confessions* : p. 25.

# JOTTINGS

WILLIAM McILROY

## BARNUM WAS RIGHT

A decade or so ago an eight-year-old American girl toured some of the sleazier Christian mission halls of Britain in an endeavour to show us the way to salvation and light. She preached, played hymn tunes on a trumpet and concluded with a tap dance. Mercifully this Shirley Temple of the pulpit has long since left these shores without making any noticeable impact. However, where precociously pious juveniles of the Christian and other faiths have failed perhaps a pudgy, 15-year-old Indian boy, Guru Maharji Ji, may hit the jackpot.

For a start, his Divine Light Mission has persuaded the Charity Commissioners to accept its application for registration. To have succeeded in softening the hearts of the Commissioners will be regarded by many as in itself indicative of supernatural powers. For some years they have been on the warpath, and a wide range of organisations have been cast into financial outer darkness; but it seems that a sure way to the Commissioners' stony hearts is by declaring that your objectives are promoting the knowledge that God is the supreme ruler of the universe, and the realisation of God without denominational bias.

Guru Maharji Ji already claims millions of followers throughout the world, and when he recently stopped for a short time at London's Heathrow Airport he was greeted by 1,500 weeping premies (devotees). They describe him as "the Perfect Master", "our Lord", "Lord of the Universe", "the Lord Incarnate", and a large number of his British followers travelled to India for an international gathering.

When his father, also a guru, died in 1966, the seven-year-old boy "took upon Himself the Holy Knowledge of Name and Light." Since then he has travelled widely (usually by jet plane or Rolls Royce car) "spreading the Knowledge of Truth." When asked what this knowledge is he replies: "It is the Knowledge that Jesus Christ gave, that Guru Nanak gave, that Krishna gave, that Ram gave, that Mohammed gave and which I am giving. It is the supreme Knowledge. It is the sacred Knowledge."

No doubt the jargon and mumbo-jumbo will divert his followers' attention from the fact that "the Lord Incarnate" is simply carrying on the well-established family business. His brother is revered almost as much as the guru himself. When the Mission became a registered charity his mother was named as the patron and she nominated the Board of Trustees. They are referred to by the faithful as The Holy Family.

The Mission's activities, from press conferences to jumble sales, are described as "Divine". Many of the devotees live in ashrams (communal houses), and they plan to open a school for boarders and day pupils in London. Attention is being given to strengthening the organisation and to public relations.

I recently visited a Divine Light Mission House to obtain literature and to discuss the guru's message with one of his followers. On arrival I could hear someone inside the house playing rather frantically and off-key on a pipe or tin whistle. After pressing the doorbell three times without attracting attention, I rattled the letter-box. The music ceased, and seconds later the door was opened by a pale, lethargic young man who languidly informed me that the bell was out of order. (It is quite remarkable that so many

of those who claim to have found the answer to the most complex questions of this and all other possible worlds cannot master elementary mechanics.)

He invited me into the main room which was very comfortable and covered with a thick, blue carpet. The focal point was a chair draped in white material on which rested a framed photograph of Guru Maharji Ji. There was a vase of flowers at each side of the chair and, for some reason which escaped me, two oranges.

We sat down for satsang (spiritual discourse) and the premie told me that he been a drug addict until he encountered the Divine Light Mission a year ago. He accepted the guru's teachings without reservation, and his testimony was punctuated with expressions like "it's great" "it's beautiful", "it's marvellous", "it's fantastic". He referred many times to "the light inside", but every attempt to examine his statements or elicit a more specific explanation only sent him off into another paroxysm of praise for the teenage "Lord of the Universe". Finally I gave up; it was like trying to trap bubbles in a wind tunnel.

Walking away from the house I could hear that the follower of Guru Maharji Ji had started playing his musical instrument again—not quite so frantically as before, but still off-key.

## FILM CENSORSHIP

The saga of the *Oh! Calcutta!* film continues. Large audiences have been seeing the stage version in London for over two years, and they look no more depraved when they leave the Royalty Theatre than before they go in. However, the purity brigade have been campaigning to prevent the film version being shown in cinemas although it has been given an X Certificate by a Greater London Council sub-committee.

The Nationwide Festival of Light sent all members of the G.L.C. a document which purported to be a summary of the film. I have not seen the document, but one councillor has described it as being "totally unfair and stupid." He also believes that "the Festival of Light looks more sinister than ridiculous and . . . their campaign the thin end of a very nasty wedge."

Barbara Smoker, President of the National Secular Society, wrote to G.L.C. members urging them to ignore the demand of this "ensorious group of people who wish to impose their narrow, evangelical standards on the public." Barbara Smoker recalled previous attempts at censorship by individual councillors. Probably she had in mind Lady Dartmouth's campaign against the film *Ulysses*, and that other councillor and lay preacher (if the Festival of Light will allow *that* term) who tried to stop *Oh! Calcutta!* being staged at the Roundhouse. No doubt the publicity which followed in both cases helped to swell the queues at the box office.

Mr. Michael Farrow, G.L.C. member for Ealing, will now try to have the matter brought before the full Council on 23 January; and the tiresome Raymond Blackburn has threatened the G.L.C. with legal action. *Freethinker* readers, and everyone in Greater London who is opposed to censorship, should make their views known immediately to their G.L.C. member or to the chairman of the G.L.C. Arts and Recreation Committee, County Hall, London SE1. Is several minutes and a 3p stamp too great a price for cultural freedom?



## CLASSROOM POLITICS

The Royal Society of St. George, one of those outfits which equate right-wing politics with patriotism, recently announced that it was setting up a commission to inquire into the activities of left-wing teachers and organisations in Britain's schools. Of course Tories have always regarded the Union Jack, the Crown and national ceremonies as part of the fixtures and fittings of Conservative Central Office, and their supporters in the teaching profession have no scruples about inculcating conservatism and conformity.

Now the boot is on the other foot, and there is trouble brewing in Hertfordshire where the Conservative Central

Office organised a series of conferences for sixth-formers during school hours. Although these conferences were advertised as being about the Third World, it appears that they were used as recruiting rallies for the Young Conservatives. Norman St. John-Stevas, M.P., spoke on Conservative education policy, and the sixth-formers were given questionnaires which, when completed, were passed on to the party's M.P.s in the county. Teachers had to participate in the conference as part of their normal duties.

Perhaps Lord Longford, a Labour peer with some experience of such matters, will be persuaded to set up a commission to inquire into the activities of right wing politicians and teachers.

# REVIEWS

## BOOKS

**DEATH IN THE MIDDLE AGES: Mortality, Judgement and Remembrance** by T. S. R. Boase.  
Thams & Hudson, £1 (£1.95 cloth).

Anyone who has a fancy to catch a passing time-machine and return to the Middle Ages would do well to read this book first. Reading it is an easy task; Dr. Boase's insight, his spare, clear language and the many excellent illustrations make this a model history book. But it is a horror story from start to finish; from the descriptions of their agonising deaths to their hopes (but more often fears) of their life beyond, it is enough to make one glad to be an agnostic, alive and well in the twentieth century. Here is an example of why:

Thabit, a Lebanese doctor, told how the Franks brought him a knight with an abscess in his leg, which he poulticed till it opened and began to heal. Then one of their own physicians intervened, saying, 'This man knows nothing about the treatment required,' and asked the knight whether he preferred to live with one leg or die with two. The latter opted for life with one, and another knight was summoned with a sharp axe, who struck the leg a severe blow but failed to sever it. He dealt another blow, upon which the marrow of the leg burst out and the patient at once expired. 'I was looking on' said Thabit.

Food was unhealthy and a frequent cause of death, "more real than the poisons often suspected at the time. A 'surfeit of lampreys' that precipitated Henry I's death was no doubt dangerously inedible. It was after eating stale fish that the notorious Fulk de Breaute was found 'dead, black, stinking and intestate'."

Raymond of Aguilers, describing the capture of Jerusalem wrote:

... For some of them, the easiest way, had their heads cut off; others were shot at with arrows and fell from the towers; some indeed were harshly tortured and were flaming with fire. In the streets and square, there were piles of heads and hands and feet . . . They rode in blood up to the knees and bits of the horses by the just and wonderful judgments of God.

But stay and read on: of damnation, tortures and everlasting fire; and also how these could perhaps, through penance, pilgrimages and gifts to the poor, be avoided. St. Augustine had established a doctrine of how expiatory pain suffered on this earth might reduce the duration and severity of purgation. St. Bernard confirmed this but was "more explicit":

There are three regions, Hell where there is no redemption, Purgatory where there is hope, and Paradise where there is Beatific Vision.

Following this came the doctrine of the "Treasury of Merits, the infinite merits of Christ and accumulated virtues of saints and martyrs, whose resources could be administered by the Church [which] was widely held as a means of salvation. Anyone that questioned its efficacy in reducing the period of purgation roused much popular resistance." Dr. Boase notes the deep impression upon contemporary thought of Dante's gigantic *Inferno*, with its Seven Terraces of Purgatory, leading to his *Paradiso*, where his conception of terrestrial paradise is so transcendent and becomes so abstract that mathematics are invoked to describe it: magnificent and inspiring, but a mumbo-jumbo, nevertheless.

"With Purgatory a more accepted concept," says Dr. Boase, "prayers for the dead received proportionately more urgency," and monasteries and churches received large sums for repeating frequent masses for the dead. Since the Protestants later could not prevent the sale of these services and indulgences, they simply abolished Purgatory, leaving their believers only the choice of heaven or hell. Not very kind of them, one might think; but one result of this may be that there is less public corruption in countries where the purchase of benefits is not part of the religious way of life.

The design and provision of tombs and memorials reflected not only the changes in the doctrines of the church but its increasing obligation to lay benefactors, for whom the churches became open for burial. The well printed and well annotated photographs show us pictures and especially sculptures of a marvellous variety and imagination, of vitality, comicality, grandeur, grisliness, and occasionally of tenderness and repose. If some of the postures are stiff or naïve to our taste, others were executed by artists who knew as much about the human form as any later sculptor; nor had they any need to wait for anatomy lessons from Michaelangelo. Dr. Boase ends the book:

They [the memorials] confront the predicament of mortality in varied ways, at times with an excessive panoply of display, but never without a basic resignation to a divine purpose, whose justice stood beyond question. Unfortunately for Christendom, the justice was given visual form in terms of Heaven and Hell, represented with such genius that they long dominated all thoughts of the life to come. Medieval Hell may have been at times a useful deterrent; it was certainly the grossest incident in the debasement of things spiritual to anthropomorphic crudities.

When life is rough and tough and short; when pain, illness and death strike suddenly and unexplained, it should not be beyond our understanding that they saw the cause in a God who also was harsh, cruel and vindictive. However, if these qualities are attributed to God, how great an encouragement through example there is for one human to treat another in the same way.

LORD RAGLAN

**WELLINGTON: Pillar of State**

by Elizabeth Longford. Weidenfeld and Nicolson, £3.95.

It is easy to assume that the Duke of Wellington was simply the victor of the Battle of Waterloo (18 June 1815) and that thereafter his peacetime activities were either regrettable or insignificant. Elizabeth Longford has already supplied us with an excellent study, *Wellington: The Years of the Sword*, which vividly and faithfully assessed his triumphant campaigns, from the saving of Portugal in 1808 until Napoleon's defeat at the end of the "Hundred Days." This, in itself, was a durable and remarkable work; but it covered the familiar, military section of Wellington's career, leaving open the misconception that the "Iron Duke" was, after Waterloo, finished as a formative public figure.

If that error were ever entertained, it must now be set aside by Elizabeth Longford's eminently scholarly and thorough sequel: her study of Wellington as statesman, instead of soldier, which she has embraced in her latest volume (all 472 pages of it). It is a sound work of research, based upon a huge range of sources, both manuscript and published. As one would expect from such a detailed study, it reveals Wellington's politics in a better, or at least a less simple light than the habitual verdict of reactionary and protagonist of law and order. After all, he had to operate in the unstable years after 1815, and in the contexts of "Peterloo" (1819) and the Cato Street Conspiracy (1820). He found the Tory Party devoid of a constructive philosophy, and he was called upon, perhaps unfortunately, to lead it after the deaths of Castlereagh (1822) and Canning (1827). In that rôle (which was probably an uncongenial one), Wellington had to discover that repression was not enough: as Prime Minister, from January 1828 until November 1830, he rallied to his support the remnants of the Canningite reformers, such as Huskisson and Charles Grant, and he carried through both the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts (1828) and the Catholic Emancipation Act (1829).

So Wellington became a public figure as a politician, as he had earlier been as a soldier. Perhaps it was essentially an ambiguous and unsuitable rôle: his determined opposition to the Reform Act of 1832 certainly earned him the dubious reputation of being "the last of the old Tories." On the other hand, his desire to preserve the constitutional fabric of the State against the avalanches that followed Waterloo may have been necessary for those times—and even formative for the future—and one must never forget that Wellington did support Peel in the crisis over the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846. The victor of Waterloo had, by then, evidently conceded that his beloved country should undergo evolution instead of revolution.

All these features of the "Iron Duke" emerge from the pages of this book. Of course, there is much that is still repellent and unfashionable today about the politics of Wellington: the soldier never really discarded, even in peacetime, his military notions of good order, discipline, control, and devotion to "King and Country." Nevertheless, the years from 1815 to 1827 may well have demanded, for England, their measure of stability and acquiescence. Later, Wellington did accept the need for reform and change; and Elizabeth Longford's book is outstanding, I think, for precisely two reasons. In the first place, it indicates Wellington's great and lasting merit as a statesman who always refused to be subdued by party politics—his loyalty was foremost for his "King and Country"—and secondly, it suggests the great and engaging humanity of

the "Iron Duke," which belies all his usual public images. Both of those aspects, of course, are historically important, and they must vindicate this book as a work of great originality, impeccable integrity of purpose, and permanent scholarship. As such, it deserves to be widely read—and not only by those who are likely to be in sympathy with the aims or assignments of the "Iron Duke."

ERIC GLASGOW

**HENRY LABOUCHERE AND THE EMPIRE 1880-1905**  
by R. J. Hind. University of London (Athlone) Press, £4.50.

In a world of economic uncertainties there is one growth industry: the production of doctoral theses. They may reveal information so obvious that nobody had ever before thought it worthwhile investigating, or so recondite that it had hitherto seemed inconceivable that anybody would be interested. They may be read by nobody but the postulant's tutor, or be published and become standard works. The operation is something like this. In the course of one's pass degree one finds a byway in the subject that has been imperfectly explored, especially an alley down which one's professor or senior lecturer casts interested glances. Then, claiming him as a sponsor, one applies for a studentship and the appropriate grant. In pursuing one's researches the most important thing is to visit as many shrines of source material, or putative source material (especially MSS.), as possible, for this adds to the length and impressiveness of acknowledgments and may well qualify for further grants. The main object is to get the Ph.D., with the *entrée* to a good university post this automatically entails (or used to entail, until tight-fisted and evil-minded Tories took a jaundiced look at the whole industry), but naturally the author desires publication of a document which, whatever other merit it may have, has usually entailed a great deal of work. At this stage a colleague in the English department is often called in to make the piece more literary, though from the finished product it is far from clear what he has done apart from removing spelling or grammatical errors. Finally, a publisher has to be found, often a university press, and further grants are solicited to subsidise this somewhat speculative venture.

*Henry Labouchere and the Empire 1880-1905* lies in the quality range of the industry's output, and its etiology may, for all I know, bear little relation to the above scenario. But it does appear to have started life as a doctoral thesis, it has been heavily subsidised, it has led the author far and wide into the personal correspondence of most late Victorian politicians of note (but not of Labouchere himself), its introductory chapter is even more intricate than those which follow, its chronology is curious and its presentation repetitious. Above all, since it demonstrates that "Labouchere's protests and stratagems failed to modify significantly one major policy towards the empire during a period of twenty-five years" there does not appear to have been any very pressing reason why it should be written at all.

Nevertheless, the period itself is so interesting and the personality of Labouchere so exotic that this work will be read with profit by all serious students. There are no exact parallels for him in modern politics and publishing. I can think of two near parallels but dare not mention them, for share-puffing and stockmarket manipulation were among his numerous activities and no doubt were the chief reasons for his failure to gain office. Even in his disinterested and genuinely reformist campaigns (and they were

many), somehow his work lacked the documentation and the planning of his great contemporary and parliamentary colleague, Charles Bradlaugh. Just as his *Truth* was less reliable than *The National Reformer*, so his actions seemed always those of the eager amateur, the flibbertigibbet of politics, a journalist who was often deadly but who might indiscriminately make great things small and small things great, a lively conversationalist who diverted you with his fund of good stories about other people till you began to wonder what he would later say about you.

Dr. Hind traces Labouchere's involvement in Ireland (he acted as a go-between among Gladstone, the Home Rulers and Chamberlain), Egypt, the Sudan, the Transvaal, India, Burma and Cyprus. It was over Ireland that he came nearest to success but in the end saved neither Home Rule, nor the Liberal Party from splitting. Throughout he was "a critic of imperial policies rather than an opponent of empire" and he showed a "lack of constructive proposals for British dependencies." But "the ideas and attitudes towards the empire that Labouchere espoused and propagated did not suffer a gradual eclipse with the decline of the liberal party. All British parties in the twentieth century acted upon principles that were analogous to parts of his creed." I think that Dr. Hind could have made more profitable use of Bradlaugh's *National Reformer* (and more mention of Bradlaugh himself), but he has on the whole pursued his limited brief conscientiously and well.

DAVID TRIBE

**IN THE LIGHT OF HISTORY** by J. H. Plumb.  
Allen Lane The Penguin Press, £3.50.

"It is the duty of man," wrote Thomas Paine, "to obtain all the knowledge he can and make the best use of it."

Dr. Plumb, who quotes this at the beginning of his new volume of essays, sees the duty as particularly binding on the professional historian like himself. "I feel," he says, "that it is an historian's duty not only to pursue his own historical researches but also to attempt to lay bare to the largest possible public what may be the historical roots of some of our own problems."

Constantly, therefore, Dr. Plumb has his eye, his trained historian's eye, on the present, not only in an occasional aside—like the comparison of the "Mohawks" of the seventeenth century to the skinheads of today—but in full-scale essays like "Secular Heretics" where he makes a detailed comparison between the hippies of the 1970s and such religious fanatics as the Brethren of the Free Spirit in the fourteenth century and the Ranters of the Commonwealth. "In the light of history" Dr. Plumb sees the great tradition of ancient astrology behind the inanities of What the Stars Foretell and the tradition of human sacrifice behind the original Olympic Games—a comment made before Munich.

Two of the most meaty essays in this admirably meaty collection will appeal particularly to freethinkers: "Reason and Unreason in the Eighteenth Century" and "Edmund Burke and his Cult."

The former essay brings home to us very clearly how radically English society was secularised in the eighteenth century. "Religion not only invaded less of men's lives, but also took up fewer shelves in their libraries." Even after the inevitable reaction, Paine and Priestley were still far more widely read than Johnson. In the centres of intellec-

tual life in the English provinces, in Manchester, Birmingham and elsewhere, we find "knots of enlightened men with a passionate regard for empirical knowledge," men predominantly "secular in their intellectual attitudes."

The latter essay differentiates skilfully between the "cult of Burke" and his genuine historical importance. "In pages of compelling eloquence," Dr. Plumb concludes, "Burke gave an air of virtue, morality and godly wisdom to an attitude that was anti-intellectual and dominated by the meaner and more aggressive aspects of human nature . . . Intellectually most of Burke's political philosophy is utter rubbish, and completely unhistorical."

In the literary and socio-literary fields Dr. Plumb himself is occasionally unhistorical. He scatters the post of Poet Laureate with a princely hand: neither Sir Henry Newbolt nor Thomas Hardy wore the laurel, though both are described here as "the Poet Laureate."

Dr. Plumb is surely in error when in the essay "The Victorians Unbuttoned" he writes that

. . . The spearhead of lower middle-class godliness joined the Order of Rechabites, pledged to drink only water, banished all profane literature from their houses. Tennyson's poems along with Dickens's novels, would not allow their wives to cook on Sundays, regarded the theatre as a snare of the Devil and any manifestation of sex as a sure passport to Hell.

Not every spearhead was thus blunt. My grandfather, a Victorian cabinet-maker, was secretary and treasurer of the Salisbury Rechabites for many years. He was an ardent Dickensian, his shelves full of Dickens, Scott, Shakespeare, Burns, Cowper, Jane Austen, Milton, Goldsmith, Trollope . . . I first read *Tom Jones*, *Tristram Shandy* and *Jude the Obscure* in copies borrowed from his library. In his youth he played an occasional small part when troupes of professional actors used to perform Shakespeare in Salisbury market-place. In his young manhood in London, when he lodged in the Borough, he spent Saturday nights at the Lyceum and Sunday mornings at the Methodist chapel. He venerated Henry Irving and John Wesley about equally.

R. C. CHURCHILL

**THE TOXIC METALS** by Anthony Tucker  
Pan/Ballantine, 50p.

The economic expansion to which the advanced countries are committed has been recognised for some time by conservationists as a criminally short-sighted policy. Technological prosperity has to be bought at the ruinous cost of depletion and eventual exhaustion of finite natural resources, together with irreversible environmental pollution. All of us, together with the life forms on which we depend for existence, carry in our bodies varying amounts of D.D.T. and other organochlorine pesticides, which can never be eliminated and for whose harmful effects there is no built-in defence mechanism. On top of this we have unnaturally large concentrations of mercury, lead, cadmium and other poisonous metals. These also, once absorbed, are with us for life, and there is a limit to what can be tolerated. In *The Toxic Metals*, Anthony Tucker gives us a painstaking and profoundly disturbing survey of the ways in which these insidious and persistent pollutants get into the environment, how they act on the body, and what little can be done about them.

Nothing whatever can be done to reduce the toxic metals, hundreds of thousands of tons of them, already

released into the atmosphere, waterways and crop-growing land via factory chimneys and effluents, car exhausts and the use of mercurial pesticides. We shall still have to live with them—and probably die of them—even in the unlikely event of a drastic cut-down in this form of pollution. Many have died already. Much of this book is devoted to a detailed analysis of an eight-year epidemic of mercury poisoning which began in 1953 at Minamata, Japan. 43 people died and many more were permanently disabled as a result of eating fish taken from tidal waters contaminated by a factory effluent. A feature of this case, all too common among governments and industrialists, is the lack of any real concern for the victims, or to prevent further catastrophes. The factory in question has never admitted liability; the Japanese government did tighten up its regulations regarding effluents, but as late as 1971 these had not been effectively applied. Throughout the world, as Mr. Tucker makes clear, those in a position to do something about pollution constantly underestimate the size of the problem. Often they have a selfish interest in maintaining the present state of affairs.

In sub-lethal amounts mercury destroys brain cells, leading to premature senile decay. Experiments with rats indicate that environmental lead may be drastically shortening the average life span. Cadmium, used as an undercoat in chromium plating, renders bones brittle and porous, resulting in skeletal collapse and agonising disablement. In smaller doses it causes hypertension and cardiac disease. All the toxic metals are carcinogens. In this respect nickel is particularly dangerous, since its existence in the atmosphere as a gaseous carbonyl means its ready assimilation via the lungs. Comprehensive as the author's investigation has been, he has not noticed the use of nickel as a catalyst in the manufacture of margarine and artificially hardened cooking fats. Traces of nickel are usually detectable in these products when analysed; in the course of a few years an individual may be expected to have ingested a significant amount.

Mr. Tucker points out ways in which outfalls of metallic pollutants can be reduced, without expecting that they will be. "The burdens of toxic metals as a whole," he writes, "and of organochlorines, have already degraded the entire context of the life system." The most we can hope for at this late stage is to prevent disaster from becoming worse disaster.

R. J. CONDON

**SCIENCE AT THE CROSSROADS** by Herbert Dingle.  
Martin Brian & O'Keefe, £3.

It is ironical that, in the very field in which science has claimed superiority to theology—in the abandoning of dogma and the granting of absolute freedom of criticism—the positions are now reversed. Science will not tolerate criticism of special relativity, whilst theology talks freely about the death of God, religionless Christianity, and so on . . . Unless scientists can be awakened to the situation into which they have lapsed, the future of science and civilisation is black indeed.

This fascinating and disturbing book is an account of Professor Dingle's lone challenge to Einstein's theory of special relativity and his struggle to make his voice heard among the scientific community.

For thirteen years, Professor Dingle, whose reputation in the world of mathematical physics is considerable, has been convinced that Einstein and his followers, to put it bluntly, got their sums wrong. Or rather, that they have been guilty of a simple logical mistake in the foundations of relativity theory—a mistake which, if Dingle's criticism is right, is almost incredible. Still more incredible is the

response of physicists to Dingle's exposure of the fallacy. His proof of the falsity of special relativity has been ignored, evaded or suppressed, and as he says, "treated in every possible way except that of answering it."

The conclusion that Dingle reaches is that physicists have lost their way with a vengeance. There is a grave threat to scientific integrity in the refusal of physicists working in this sphere to subscribe to the fundamental ethic of science—that reason and empirical evidence are alone the criteria of truth. Nor is this merely an academic issue, since Dingle maintains that special relativity lies at the heart of modern experiments in atomic physics. If scientists are working with a theory they do not understand, and whose falsity Dingle regards as proven, the consequences could be disastrous.

For non-physicists, much of Dingle's technical argument is tough going, though well worth tackling. Einstein's theory of special relativity, which he announced in 1905, concerns two regularly-running clocks, A and B, in uniform relative motion, working at different rates. Special relativity theory holds that as there is no absolute standard of rest in the universe, there is no way of telling which clock, A or B, is the moving one. That is, it is just as true to say that A moves whilst B is at rest as it is to say that B moves whilst A is at rest. Now given that the relative speed of working of the two clocks does not vary, special relativity holds that the moving clock works more slowly. For instance, if we set the clocks in motion when they both read noon, B (the "stationary" clock) reads 2 p.m. when A (the "moving" clock) reads 1 p.m. The problem, however, is to determine within the framework of the theory which clock is the slower working of the two. As it is not possible to say that one clock is at rest compared to the other, since we rule out "absolute" motion in the context of relativity, we are forced to conclude that A works faster than B and that B works faster than A. In other words, the conclusion of the argument is a self-contradiction—which necessarily invalidates the theory.

Professor Dingle's challenge to the world of physics is this. *Either* show how the slower clock may be distinguished or admit that whole theory of special relativity is based on a gross logical fallacy. His own conclusion is that the premises of the special relativity theory are self-contradictory. Since this theory is universally accepted, the question arises how physicists of undoubted intellectual calibre can continue to use it, and to teach it to their students, without discovering the fallacy. Professor Dingle argues that this arises from the confusion between mathematics and reality, in the sense that a mathematical argument may be rigorously correct yet its symbols may in no way correspond to observable processes or bodies in the real world. However, since modern physicists have been bemused by the mathematical apostles of special relativity into assuming that a valid mathematical argument will always have some sort of counterpart in reality, they do not see that the mathematical impeccability of Einstein's theory cannot necessarily guarantee that the actual universe will conform to his algebra. And Professor Dingle argues that since special relativity theory is founded on a contradiction, this *logically* invalidates its application to reality.

In assessing the value of this book, I think several critical points arise. I am not competent to say whether Dingle is right or wrong, since I do not understand his subject. But he writes so elegantly and lucidly that I am tempted to say that he must be right, if only that he is

able to express in a few words the essence of his criticism of special relativity, to which none of the distinguished physicists he has debated with in the scientific press seems able to reply. If Dingle is right, then a fundamental revolution in the structure of physics is called for—a revolution which, as he hints several times in this book, would be psychologically unacceptable to the physicist to whom special relativity is gospel.

But what is perhaps even more significant is the appalling chronicle of evasion, dishonesty and arrogance recorded in this book. None of the scientists that Dingle has corresponded or debated with has been prepared to answer his simple question about the logical basis of special relativity. The scientific press has closed its mind to the question, refusing Dingle the chance to press his argument home. On a basic postulate of modern physics, famous scientists—their exact words quoted at length in this book—have confessed that they do not understand relativity, that they have not had the “time” or the “inclination” to determine for themselves whether the relativity arguments are logically correct, or that they regard the question as one to be settled by “gambling” on the rightness of the theory, rather than by the application of ordinary scientific method. No wonder that Professor Dingle felt compelled to write this book, for the attitude of leading scientists in this matter seems nothing less than a public scandal.

Fundamentally, scientific integrity depends not so much on the honesty and ethical values of individual scientists, but on adherence by the scientific community at large to the canons of the scientific approach to the world. This demands an openness of debate, a freedom of expression, and a readiness to accept that one may be wrong, which have been conspicuously absent from modern physics. To judge from this book, there is indeed something rotten in the state of Denmark.

PHILIP HINCHLIFF

## FREETHINKER FUND

We are most grateful for the generous manner in which readers of *The Freethinker* have responded to the news of the paper's financial difficulties by their donations to the December Freethinker Fund. We hope that all readers will give what they can to the Fund from time to time, especially when renewing subscriptions.

Our particular thanks to the following: Anonymous, £1; H. A. Alexander, 50p; J. L. Allison, £2; Mr. Arkell, 50p; W. Armstrong, £1 Miss Brigid Brophy, £1; C. Brunel, £1; C. W. R. Byass, £1; D. C. Campbell, £1; Mrs. F. Campbell, 50p; A. S. Carneiro, £1; N. Cassel, £1; D. C. F. Chambre, 50p; Ralph Champion, £1; Sidney Clowes, £2; Mrs. Elizabeth Collins, £10; H. W. Day, £2.50; W. H. Dobson, 38p; A. A. H. Douglas, £1; J. Dwyer, 81p; A. Elsmere, £1; Robin Fennell, 83p; Owen Ford, £2; A. Foster, £2.50; J. D. Groom, 37p; N. S. Harvey, £1; Mrs. E. M. Hay, £1.50; James Hemming, £2; E. W. Hewitt, 52p; P. W. Hinchliff, 50p; Mrs. F. M. Hornibrook, £1; E. J. Hughes, £1.55; H. H. Jones, £9; Mrs. Patricia Knight, £1; I. S. Low, £20; S. M. Marshall, £1; Winifred Mawson, £1; Mrs. Juanita Monrad, 53p; A. V. Montague, £2; E. A. Napper, £1.50; M. H. Nash, 50p; Mrs. K. Pariente, £1; Frederick Pearson, £1.25; Robin Price, £3; G. Raphael, 50p; Mrs. M. Sachs, £1; F. H. Snow, £10; W. Southgate, £1; A. E. Stringer, £1; Mrs. L. F. Stupart, £4; J. C. Sutherland, £3; R. E. Sutton, 32p; D. C. Taylor, £3; Miss M. Tolfree, £1; Mrs. L. Van Duren, 25p; Donald Wood, £1; I. Yettram, £1. Total for December 1972: £113.31.

## LETTERS

### Family Planning Gains in Australia

In view of the wide interest shown by freethinkers in the problems of family planning and related subjects, readers in Britain may like to know that the change of government in Australia from Liberal to Labour on 2 December has brought great improvements in the availability of contraceptives. Formerly, a month's supply of the Pill cost \$A1.90, which included 15 per cent Sales Tax. The new Government has agreed to lift this Sales Tax, and also to place all contraceptives on the National Pharmaceutical Benefits List. This will reduce each prescription fee to the common charge of \$A1 (U.K. 50p).

It is also Labour policy to make it legal to advertise contraceptives. All this is fairly remarkable in view of the large traditional support of the Labour Party by Roman Catholic voters. (The new Prime Minister, Mr. Whitlam, is a nominal Presbyterian.)

Under the Australian Medical Benefits Scheme the patient must pay the doctor's fee for every consultation, and is only partly re-imbursed by the Scheme. Fees vary from doctor to doctor and from suburb to suburb, but the unrecovered balance would seldom be less than \$A2 per consultation. In the poorest families, particularly among the depressed Aboriginal minority, even the present moderate cost of adequate contraceptives may still prove an intolerable burden.

Despite these improvements on the family planning front, the battle (mainly against the Catholic Church) in the fields of abortion, homosexuality, censorship and euthanasia still has its ups and downs, particularly the abortion issue which is currently being traduced with all the customary misrepresentations and sickening sentimentality.

Wahroonga, New South Wales.

B. R. BENSLEY.

### Nucleoethics

I am most grateful to Antony Flew for a perceptive and generous review (9 December) of *Nucleoethics*; *Ethics in Modern Society*.

With unerring accuracy Professor Flew went straight to the entry which caused me the greatest anxiety. In a book which includes a number of neologisms (invented to assist in the systematisation of a subject which has never, in my view, been systematised before) it was desirable that a glossary should be included. I was tempted to evade a definition of “moral,” since it took two chapters and many other paragraphs in the text to refine its meaning; a single-sentence definition must inevitably be unsatisfactory. But such an omission would have looked cowardly and foolhardiness prevailed.

My “hesitation quotes” around “voluntary” in reference to behaviour derived from my need to reconcile the physiological differentiation between voluntary and involuntary motor activity with my belief in philosophical determinism. This I do in the text by analogy with computers. The social implications of my definition are just as controversial.

I did not intend, by the way, to suggest that “I wrong someone else only insofar as I hinder him from performing what he deems to be an important duty,” for I believe that a third party's obligation is to the person whose life is “directly” affected and not to whoever has an intention towards him. Thus it is a moral duty to frustrate inquisitioners in their torture of heretics and Jehovah's Witnesses in depriving their children of blood transfusions, however strongly these people may feel they are doing their “duty.” But I plead guilty to the other inferences drawn by your reviewer.

If an individual is of mature years and of sound mind he must be assumed to be the best person to assess whether or not he has been wronged. Others may deem him mistaken and seek to disabuse him; but I believe that the expectations of “society” are only a consensus of the expectations of individuals. Thus these expectations differ widely from social group to social group according to its heredity and environment, especially the latter. On this basis a person of sound mind should be able to seek and get euthanasia even if his family doctor deems it his duty to continue living, and a doctor who accedes to his wishes should not be charged with murder even if other people would not want euthanasia themselves.

Because our society is so impregnated with the “Golden” Rule concept of morality it tends officiously to “save people from themselves” in many ways that Professor Flew and I may disapprove of. But again it is Christian expectations of what should be done and a belief that what affects their “brother” or their own sensibilities directly affects themselves. Most moral debate centres on what is or is not a direct effect. I would therefore submit that my definition satisfactorily explains moral outlooks both conservative and radical, while by stressing “important” matters of duty I omit social conventions like shaking hands.

Neutral Bay, New South Wales, Australia.

DAVID TRIBE.

## Mozart as Dramatist

I. S. Low (letters, 16 December) reads significance into my not contradicting his "criticism" that Mozart's operas are broken-backed. You cannot contradict an opinion; you can only oppose it by another. Mine, since he solicits it, is that anyone who thinks *Cosi, Figaro* or *Entführung* broken-backed is tone-deaf to form.

Mozart's account of the dispute with Raaff does not, indeed, say anything about Raaff's side of it. But it does, which is why I cited it, say something about Mr. Low's hypothesis that the dispute is a "legend" invented by E. J. Dent.

That some London musicians sent Mozart's sister money in 1829 does not contradict my view that ours is the first century as a whole to accord Mozart recognition. It does, which is why I cited it, contradict Mr. Low's assertion that it is doubtful if Mozart was early appreciated in England. Mr. Low's statement that "the main enthusiast for Mozart in the nineteenth century was a gentleman with the fine old English name Oulibicheff" suggests that he has not read the praise of Mozart written, before the nineteenth century was out, by the perfect Anglo-Scots-Irish Wagnerite, Shaw.

Were Mr. Low to read beyond the first sentence, he might discover that *Mozart the Dramatist* argues that Mozart was the dramatist in the sense of being the chief shaper of the structure of his librettos. People with a sense of form can compare the form of Mozart's and da Ponte's *Cosi* with the lack of form in Martin's and da Ponte's charming *L'Arbore di Diana* (whose libretto da Ponte thought well of, as his *Memoirs* show).

Mr. Low's "If Mozart was a forceful character why did he never gain a position of affluence?" must be the most philistine question ever posed in your pages. His statement that nowadays "people have less and less time to read" is also philistine. Happily, it is contradicted by the facts. Library borrowing increases every year. From public libraries alone (school, university and private libraries excluded) there is now one borrowing a month per man, woman or baby in the population. People are in fact making more and more time to read.

BRIGID BROPHY.

## Up With Music!

I much appreciate I. S. Low's concern for my feelings (letters, 16 December); his Mozart article did not hurt them. My reference to "all that Mozart created" was intended to cover not only quantity but quality and diversity also! Quality is of course less easy to prove than quantity.

I would agree that not even Bach should be allowed to become a sacred cow—nor even the extra-musical achievements of Wagner and Verdi. There is of course more than "beautiful" music in Mozart's operas. "Up with Music! Down with Ideology!" say I.

CHARLES BYASS.

## Without Jesus or Lenin

In typical Stalinist style, Pat Sloan (*Freethinker* reviews, 16 December) has now taken to imputing to others likings they have never expressed and about which they have never been consulted.

There is no need to turn to Karl Korsch for an appraisal of Lenin's crude, abusive and obsolete work *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*. John Lewis tells us that "Marx repudiated the notion that knowledge was derived from the mere reception of impressions from the material environment.—The view, which Engels also sometimes appeared to adopt, and Lenin propounded in some passages of his *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* but subsequently repudiated after reading Hegel" (*The Marxism of Marx*: p. 78 & n.).

This is confirmed by Shlomo Avineri in his *Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx* (1968): he says (p. 70) that "Lenin himself ultimately gave up the mechanistic approach initially developed in his *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*."

Jacques Monod, the molecular biologist, also refers to "the epistemological bankruptcy of dialectical materialism" and to Lenin's onslaught on Ernst Mach, the famous physicist and anticlerical, whose philosophy, says Feuer, inspired Einstein. As for Lenin's "copy theory" of sense-perception, Monod points out that advances in neurophysiology and experimental psychology show that "the information the central nervous system furnishes to consciousness is in codified form, transposed, and framed within pre-existing norms: in other words, assimilated and not just restored."

As regards Lenin's outburst, Valentinov relates that the bolshevik Bogdanov, who was also a doctor and natural scientist, said that "As a doctor, I concluded that Lenin occasionally suffered from a mental condition and displayed symptoms of abnormality." As reported by Katkv, Lenin did indeed die of a disease of the central nervous system and whatever the aetiology of this disease, mental symptoms would have preceded the somatic manifestations by many years.

JUDEX.

## World Government and Monopoly Capitalism

In the cause of brevity I see I left too much unsaid. I certainly did recommend Hugh Stephenson's *The Coming Clash* as an important source of facts on the domination of the capitalist world by giant monopolies. I could have drawn attention also to Frances Cairncross in *The Observer*, and to the publications of Counter-Information Services, to hammer home the point about the concentration of capital in Britain. And while these tendencies are happening under our very noses, Marx foresaw that they must happen under capitalism, and Lenin drew attention to their international implications in the small book which I. S. Low (letters, 30 December) "tried to understand," but, alas, failed.

The fact that the oil countries of the Middle East are now fighting back is excellent, and bears out exactly the sort of struggle which Lenin outlined, when monopoly capitalism would ultimately be assailed by the exploited countries as well as by the exploited workers in the capitalist countries.

As to "world government," I am all in favour, as countries go over to a socialist system based on co-operation for the common good, of their pooling their efforts and resources jointly. Ultimately a world-wide socialist or communist system will result; but any suggestion of world government now as a practical policy is far more likely to strengthen those agents of monopoly capital who are at this moment murderously bombing Vietnam with a ruthlessness not even achieved by Hitler. I cannot understand the relative silence of professed humanists on this practical manifestation of what monopoly capital in power leads to. PAT SLOAN.

## Politics and Philosophy

On reading the reviews and letter on Marxism in the 16 December *Freethinker* I was reminded that Edward Hulton (wartime editor of *Picture Post*) once pointed out that there were two main schools of thought. The first was the Indian mystic school; and the second the Greek scientific cultural school.

In German philosophy it is easy to see that the Indian mystical school was represented by Arthur Schopenhauer, who claimed that "The Vedas, and the Upanishads, have been my comfort in life, and will be my comfort in death." This was a parody of his enemy, Hegel's remark, "I was born in the Lutheran Church, and will die in it." (Hegel represented the Greek scientific school.)

Similarly, after Voltaire had said that "If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him," Count Mikhail Bakunin made the classic reply: "If God really existed, it would be necessary to abolish him."

It has been observed that Communism is "religion" disguised as politics, whereas Roman Catholicism is "politics" disguised as religion; and that is why they are always at each other's throats.

JOHN SUTHERLAND.

## Pornography and Our Real Priorities

Martin Cavendish's assertion (letters, 23 December) that David Holbrook is the sole anti-'porn' crusader to take an interest in our journal is very wide of the truth. My experience, reaching from the days of Chapman Cohen and R. H. Rosetti, is the exact reverse.

Mr. Cavendish likes pornography as it "fulfils a legitimate function" in his life as an occasional entertainment. Few, if any, secular humanists would wish to deny him such entertainment, but why his zeal to stimulate others to become pornographers? Extreme libertarianism, judging by its effects in many fields (particularly on adolescents), is harmful to moral and mental health, and to the image secularism must maintain to become a respected, influential force.

Today, as in the past, the prime concern of most secularists is, if not in crusading against pornography, its subordination to the upholding of those principles which appeal to us as enhancing the prospect—faint as it currently appears—of a world-fellowship free of religion's repressive dominance.

Freethought should be careful lest its main objectives are misconstrued. (The normal man is by no means wedded to Mr. Cavendish's pornographic ideas and generally prefers healthier subjects for his mental digestion.) There is nothing the churches fear as much as the teeth of the alleged 'dead horse' of atheistic propaganda; and it is our urgent task to show that the 'horse' is not defunct. Our premier job is to restore *The Freethinker* to its weekly status; this can only be done through a very generous subscribing to its funds, and this was never more needed than now for the preservation of the good old *Freethinker*. Opportunity knocks!

F. H. SNOW.

## Misguided Prejudices

David Holbrook (letters, 23 December) is making the big mistake of attributing to youngsters the twisted imaginations of sexually frustrated adults. I am sure that to the majority of youngsters, the song "My Ding-a-Ling" implies no more than a toy (silver

bells hanging on a string). Indeed, a mother has stated that she and her children had been enjoying this 'pop' song immensely until Mrs. Whitehouse raised the issue and put the idea of dirtiness into their heads. Such ideas had never entered their minds and never would have done if it had not been for Mrs. Whitehouse.

I too can endorse this statement. My wife and I have asked youngsters for their views on this number. Some of them did not know what Mrs. Whitehouse was talking about and others—mainly the older ones (13-16 years)—said that she was just a dirty old woman. Thus, we did not find any youngsters who had identified the words of the song "My Ding-a-Ling" with the practice of masturbation.

The same can be said of the 'pop' song, "Je t'aime." How many youngsters are there who can identify "sounds of orgasm"? Again, how many youngsters are there who would be incensed to acts of violence through watching *Tom and Jerry*?

Almost everything can be construed for good or bad. Take for example some of the hymns children sing at Sunday School and some of the Psalms they have to read. Many contain sexual and indeed homosexual implications and many rate most highly in the praise of violence!

Those of us who are responsible adults realise only too well how easy it is to implant wrong ideas in young and immature minds. Whether or not the ideas are accepted for any length of time depends to a large extent on the status and authority of the purveyors.

Who are these "crude brutes of television"—the purveyors of the nasty, vicious ideas which they implant into the minds of the youngsters? Those responsible are none other than the self-appointed, self-styled "Protectors of Public Decency"! The fact that they lay claim to superior education and status (and are thereby afforded greater publicity) makes their behaviour all the more loathsome and reprehensible. It is to be deplored that they are afforded any publicity at all. I have also read Mr. Holbrook's contribution to the Longford Report and I am only too sorry to see that he has used his talents for the wrong purpose.

*The Freethinker* is quite right in not attacking harmless entertainers whose motives are to provide joy and pleasure to others. However, it should attack those who abuse their elevated status and inflict upon others their misguided prejudices.

DENIS FLANNERY.

### Dirty-Minded?

David Holbrook (letters, 23 December) suggests that evidence that a book has contributed to the phantasies behind a psychopathic murder justifies banning that book and, presumably, similar books. But I seem to remember an Agatha Christie 'whodunit' inspiring a real-life crime some years ago; and almost any of the classics, including fairy-tales, might well bear similar responsibility. As for that collection of book, the Bible, it has certainly inspired more violence than all the hard-core 'porn' ever written. The point is: once you begin suppressing books, where do you stop?

Almost anything under the sun could be harmful in some hands and in some circumstances. If all indigestible food were to be banned, everyone would starve to death—for some people cannot digest dairy produce, others eggs, others fruit and green vegetables, others root vegetables, others bread.

Mr. Holbrook then goes on to castigate the televising of unsophisticated girls singing "My Ding-a-Ling." Somehow he manages to make it sound appalling. But I happened to see the programme myself, in the company of four young nieces and nephews. I confirm that some of the youngsters on the screen looked a little coy when caught by the camera, but the idea that this might be due to embarrassment at the words of the song did not occur to me—nor, I am sure, to them. They naturally felt shy to be singing in front of a microphone. As for the reaction of my own nieces and nephews, the youngest just took the words literally, while the three older ones giggled delightedly and delightfully.

To describe this silly little song as "dirty-minded" would be laughable if the porn-hunters were not taken so seriously. The song is dirty-minded only insofar as people like David Holbrook and Mary Whitehouse have contrived to make it so—at the same time, unfortunately, putting some of the guilt back into masturbation.

BARBARA SMOKER.

### Food for Thought

The air crash in the Andes mountains gives us food for thought. The dead were eaten that the living could be saved. However, according to my education only those dark heathens in hottest Africa were or are ignorant enough to have such habits.

Now supposing the crash survivors had all been of a darker shade. "Expect it, old boy; in their blood, you know. Be having a feed of roasted human leg in Uxbridge if we are not careful!"

One survivor excused himself by saying it was the will of Jesus. I suppose the crash was too. (It's enough to make Charles Byass and Gerald Samuel agree.)

ARTHUR FRANCIS.

### Animals With Souls

With reference to Mr. Montague's letter and your comments of 30 December, if there is such a thing as a soul then, certainly, many animals possess one.

A lawyer said to Jesus, "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus asked him, "What is written in the law?"

The lawyer answered, "Thou shalt love . . ." Jesus replied, "Thou hast answered right, this do, and thou shalt live."

The answer is clear, if you love, you have a soul and will survive death. Many animals love and so, on this teaching of Jesus, have souls.

We can, of course, reject the idea of a soul but, for Christians, who believe in the existence of a soul and also claim to follow the teachings of Jesus the rejection of the belief that at least some animals have souls is wrong.

Either humans—and animals—have no soul or humans—and some animals (those who love)—have souls. If there is a heaven, I do not want it if there are no animals there.

(Rev.) RONALD ADKINS.

### KICKS FOR A CARDINAL

[" . . . Today I want to speak of the Irish who are growing up in the great English towns. Materially their task is easier. But spiritually it is much more difficult for them than for the refugees of the Famine . . . In one way at least they are at a disadvantage: they have no enemies. They meet no open opposition to their religion. Today the young Irish Catholic will meet with no hatred from Protestants. In England Protestants and Catholics are united in Christian charity. The problem for the modern immigrant is that there are no enemies left—nobody to remind him that the Faith matters even enough to hate it." Cardinal Heenan, Catholic Archbishop of Westminster, in an address in Dublin's Pro-Cathedral, 14 March 1971.]

YOUR EMINENCE,

Instead of mouthing masochistic  
Nostalgia to a mute audience  
For what you never knew  
—The ash-fractured ribs  
Of England's Catholic bones,

Why not, craving enemies for your flock  
As you do, and following  
In Christ's wake, first take off  
Your own frock—that lordly chain,  
Which, you will allow, leaves you somewhat  
Immune to man's pain—  
His violence, anyway;

And when the heat is on, wearing  
A boiler suit, try taking a stroll,  
Say, down beyond the Falls Road.

If lucky, the world will heap on you  
Luxuriant fruit. If not, they will  
Weep and declare you a saint. Either way  
You have nothing to lose.  
For what are the loss of eyes  
To those already blind?

Think of it. To be borne  
Back to your palace through  
Every last cheering, booing street  
Of Belfast—your true haven—  
(The base and logical conclusion  
Of your thesis)—what a feat!

Alternatively, you might use your  
Power to face the honest  
Crossfire of an unpicked audience.

CECILY DEIRDRE BOMBERG.

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

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.

# EVENTS

Brighton and Hove Humanist Group, Imperial Centre Hotel, First Avenue, Hove, Sunday, 4 February, 5.30 p.m.: Dr. JAMES HEMMING, "Religion in Schools, or none?"

Leicester Secular Society, Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Sundays at 6.30 p.m. 21 January: BARI LOGAN, "Travels in North Africa"; 28 January: GILLIAN HAWTIN, "Remember to Keep Holy the Sabbath"; 4 February: P. J. BOYLAN, "The Work of the Leicester Museums and Art Gallery Service"; 11 February: discussion.

London Young Humanists, 13 Prince of Wales Terrace, London W8. Sunday, 21 January, 7.30 p.m.: G. HOWARTH, "Freedom under Law."

Nottingham and Notts Humanist Group, University Adult Centre, 14 Shakespeare Street. Friday, 9 February, 7.30 p.m.: EDGAR EAGLE, "First Impressions of Jamaica."

South Place Ethical Society, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1. Sunday Morning Meetings, 11 a.m. 21 January: MICHAEL DUANE, "Freedom—a Biological Imperative"; 28 January: PETER CADOGAN, "In Defence of Utopias—Against Sir Karl Popper"; 4 February: RICHARD CLEMENTS, "Humanism and Nonconformity." Sunday Forum, 3 p.m. 28 January: BRIAN RICHARDSON, "The Appalling State of British Architecture." Tuesday Discussions, 7 p.m. 23 January: RALPH HARRIS, "Inflation Today"; 30 January: HUGH FRASER, M.P., "Inflation—Assessment of Tomorrow."

Sutton Humanist Group, Friends' Meeting House, Cedar Gardens, Sutton. Thursday, 15 February, 8 p.m.: PETER GAMMON, "The Sutton Town Plan." (Saturday, 27 January: Social Evening—for details and venue contact Miss Erica Haslam, 397 41110.)

Worthing Humanist Group, Burlington Hotel, Marine Parade. Sunday, 28 January, 5.30 p.m.: PETER HARPER, "Social Responsibility in Science."

## 1973 HUMANIST DIARY

Convenient pocket size (10.5 x 7 cm) with waterproof red cover. Contains usual general information including London theatre and Underground maps, plus 16 pages of specialised information: Sayings of the Century, Humanist events in 1973, useful names and addresses and 1973 anniversaries.

### Prices, including postage:

One diary, 53p; two diaries, £1; 5 diaries, £2.25; 10 diaries, £4.15; 15 diaries, £6.

### All orders, with remittance, to:

Miss BARBARA SMOKER, 6 Stanstead Grove, London SE6 4UD.

# PUBLICATIONS

TITLE	AUTHOR	Price	Post
An Introduction to Secular Humanism	Kit Mouat	45p	3p
The Longford Threat to Freedom	Brigid Brophy	10p	3p
Nucleoethics: Ethics in Modern Society	David Tribe	£2.95	9p
Rebel Pity	Eddie & Win Roux	45p	7p
Club Life and Socialism in Mid-Victorian London	Stan Shipley	60p	9p
Boys and Sex	Wardell B. Pomeroy	25p	7p
Girls and Sex	Wardell B. Pomeroy	25p	7p
Life, Death and Immortality	P. B. Shelley and others	10p	3p
The Freethinker 1970 Bound Volume	Edited by D. Reynolds and W. McIlroy	£2.00	25p
Religion and Ethics in Schools	David Tribe	7½p	3p
Religious Education in State Schools	Brigid Brophy	12½p	3p
Ri and Surveys	Maurice Hill	5p	3p
Ten Non Commandments	Ronald Fletcher	12½p	3p
The Cost of Church Schools	David Tribe	20p	3p
Humanism, Christianity and Sex	David Tribe	2½p	3p
Freethought and Humanism in Shakespeare	David Tribe	10p	3p
The Nun Who Lived Again	Phyllis Graham	2½p	3p
The Secular Responsibility	Marghanita Laski	10p	3p
An Analysis of Christian Origins	George Ory	12½p	4p
A Humanist Glossary	Robin Odell and Tom Barfield	20p	4p
Morality Without God	Chapman Cohen	3p	3p
Humanist Anthology	Margaret Knight	60p	9p
The Martyrdom of Man	Winwood Reade	60p	12p
Rome or Reason	R. G. Ingersoll	5p	4p
Materialism Restated	Chapman Cohen	25p	10p
Thomas Paine	Chapman Cohen	5p	4p
Religion and Human Rights	David Tribe	3p	3p
Comparative Religion	A. C. Bouquet	50p	8p
Objections to Christian Belief	Various	17½p	6½p
Objections to Humanism	Various	17½p	6½p
Rights of Man	Thomas Paine	35p	8p
The Dead Sea Scrolls	John Allegro	35p	8p
100 Years of Freethought	David Tribe	£2.10	14p
What Humanism is About	Kit Mouat	52½p	11½p
Impact of Science on Society	Bertrand Russell	30p	8p
Authority and the Individual	Bertrand Russell	35p	8p
Political Ideas	Bertrand Russell	30p	7p
The Conquest of Happiness	Bertrand Russell	60p	9p
Unpopular Essays	Bertrand Russell	45p	8p
Roads of Freedom	Bertrand Russell	60p	8p
Power	Bertrand Russell	65p	8p
Legitimacy versus Industrialism	Bertrand Russell	37½p	7½p
Bertrand Russell: A Life	Herbert Gottchalk	25p	7p
The Bible Handbook	G. W. Foote and W. P. Ball	37½p	7½p
The Vatican Versus Mankind	Adrian Pigott	20p	7p
President Charles Bradlaugh MP	David Tribe	£4.00	25p
Birth Control	N.S.S.	20p	3p
Christianity: The Debit Account	Margaret Knight	3p	3p
The Little Red Schoolbook	Soren Hanson & Jesper Jensen	30p	6p
The Misery of Christianity	Joachim Kahl	35p	7p
A Chronology of British Secularism	G. H. Taylor	10p	3p
Did Jesus Christ Exist	Chapman Cohen	3p	3p
Controversy	Hector Hawton	60p	10p
Faith Healing	Louise Rose	30p	7p
Education and the Social Order	Bertrand Russell	60p	9p
Richard Carlile, Agitator	Guy A. Aldred	25p	8p
Jail Journal	Richard Carlile	15p	4p

• Please make cheques, postal orders, etc., payable to G. W. Foote & Co. Ltd.

• The above list is a selection of publications available. Please send for complete list.

**G. W. FOOTE & Co. Ltd.**

103 BOROUGH HIGH STREET, LONDON, SE1 1NL

Tel. 01-407 1251