

# The FREETHINKER

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## CATHOLICISM AND TYRANNY

### —“THE WEST WILL SOON FORGET”

The recent visit to London of the exiled Catholic Primate of Hungary, Cardinal Joseph Mindszenty, provided—as might have been expected—a splendid publicity display for the Catholic Church, and was greeted with warm applause by romantic Rightists and militant anti-Communists. One or two left-wingers, it is true, objected to the cordial reception of this “reactionary” and some may have repeated an older accusation against Cardinal Mindszenty, that he was a “Fascist”. It is probable, in fact, that the Cardinal would be quite happy to wear the label of ‘reactionary’: he is an old-fashioned conservative in outlook, a man who would be termed a High Tory in a British context, but the accusation of ‘Fascist’ is somewhat unfair. Many old-fashioned conservatives regarded Communists and Fascists alike as upstarts, and Mindszenty seems to have been no exception. From all available evidence his stand against the Nazi occupiers of Hungary in the 1940s was as consistent—and as risky and brave—as his resistance to the Communist régimes in Budapest since the Second World War. One may disagree with Cardinal Mindszenty’s religion and his politics, but his courage and tenacity are deserving of respect.

### Cardinals Mindszenty and Stepinac

We would have said no more on the subject of Cardinal Mindszenty were it not for an address given in his honour by the Catholic Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Heenan. “The visit of Cardinal Mindszenty,” said Cardinal Heenan, “is a reminder of the Christian duty we owe to our suffering brethren. When Archbishop Stepinac, Primate of Yugoslavia, was put on trial and imprisoned, President Tito said: ‘The West will soon forget.’ Of course he was right . . .”

Now to mention Cardinal Mindszenty and Cardinal Stepinac, almost in the same breath, is no compliment to the former. Whilst we are content to acquit the Primate of Hungary of accusations of Fascism, there is no doubt whatsoever that the revolting Stepinac was not merely a Fascist, but an out-and-out Nazi collaborator of the worst sort. It was Alois Stepinac who, in 1941, wrote: “Hitler has been sent by God”, and after the fall of Yugoslavia to the Germans and Italians, became the religious figurehead of a puppet state of Croatia, run partly by the Croatian equivalent of the Nazis, the Ustasha. In 1944 the Ustashi régime decorated Stepinac, “having as Archbishop [of Zagreb], denounced the rebels on the territory of the Croatian state, not only in the country but in foreign lands”. The rebels, of course, included the Yugoslav partisans.

### Catholics and Ustashi atrocities

Between 1941 and 1945 occupied Yugoslavia witnessed some of the most revolting atrocities of World War II. They included the liquidation of the local Jewish community, the forcible conversion of Orthodox Serbs to Catholicism, and the extermination of three-quarters of a million Serbian men, women and children. Numerous massacres were carried out by Ustashi murder squads, among whose leading lights were Croatian Catholic priests and friars, particularly Franciscans. The Vatican was deluged with documentary and photographic details of these killings from Yugoslav and other Allied intelligence agencies—and probably even from horrified Italian soldiers,

but only Cardinal Tisserant attempted to raise any voice of protest. Anton Pavelic, the Ustashi ‘Poglavnik’ (Führer) was received at the Vatican by Pope Pius XII, and when Pavelic was dying—peacefully in bed, in exile in Madrid in 1959—he received the personal benediction of Pope John XXIII!

The West has indeed forgotten the trial of Archbishop Stepinac: worse still, it has forgotten why he was put on trial. Full details of the Ustashi atrocities, and the involvement of the Catholic clergy in them, were given in a book written by Edmond Paris and published by the American Institute for Balkan Affairs, *Genocide in Satellite Croatia* (Chicago, c. 1962), and it is greatly to be deplored that this work is not widely available this side of the Atlantic.

### The Ustasha today

All this might be dismissed as past history, were it not the fact that the Ustashi movement is alive, well and flourishing in exile. Friends in Australia recently sent to this office a copy of *Ustasha under the Southern Cross*, a pamphlet by the Port Melbourne tugmaster Marijan Jurjevic, whose flat was bombed last year by the Ustasha in an effort to silence him. (Jurjevic escaped; other Yugoslavs in Australia—and Sweden—have been less fortunate.) The pamphlet explains only too well how the Ustashi movement, as vicious and ruthless as ever, has been sheltered by right-wing politicians and is still being run very largely by Croatian Catholic priests! In America the Ustashi newspaper *Danica* is published by Croatian Franciscans; other Ustashi groups are at work in South America, West Germany, Austria and Spain. Given half a chance they have every intention of carrying on their genocide policies where they were forced to leave off in 1944/45.

“There can,” writes Jurjevic in his pamphlet, “be no compromise with Fascism. The spirit of Pavelic and his masters, Hitler and Mussolini, lives on through the various extremist organisations in Australia. Only public awareness can destroy it forever.”



## THE FREETHINKER

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# NEWS

decline in religion, we occasionally protest at never being allowed any air-time at all unless a Christian spokesman is standing by to have the last word.

The report also notes, besides the decreasing allegiance to the Churches, the "increasing realisation that their social policies are often against the best interests of humanity".

Organisations like the N.S.S. have played a significant rôle in creating this situation. However, there is still much to be done to combat religious belief, privilege, and harmful social teachings.

"Freedom of speech and publication is constantly threatened," the report concludes. "It is up to all who value such freedom to defend it against attack from all quarters, religious and secular, Right and Left."

*Annual Report 1972-73: obtainable from the National Secular Society, 698 Holloway Road, London N19 3NL.*

## MASSACRE ALLEGATIONS

Much has already been written elsewhere about the allegations made by young Catholic priests of civilian massacres in Mozambique by Portuguese troops, and about counter-claims from the Portuguese authorities of massacres by FRELIMO guerillas. We are, of course, in no position to confirm or refute any of these claims.

However, one fact which has come to light is that, until it was embarrassed by the priests' charges against its troops, the Portuguese government allowed the missionaries, and virtually no one else, complete freedom of movement in its African 'Overseas Provinces' so long as they kept their noses politically clean. We hope that the world's Press will eventually unearth the truth about the alleged massacres, and that, thereafter, it will investigate rather closely the precise rôle of the religious missions in Portuguese Africa.

## ABORTION

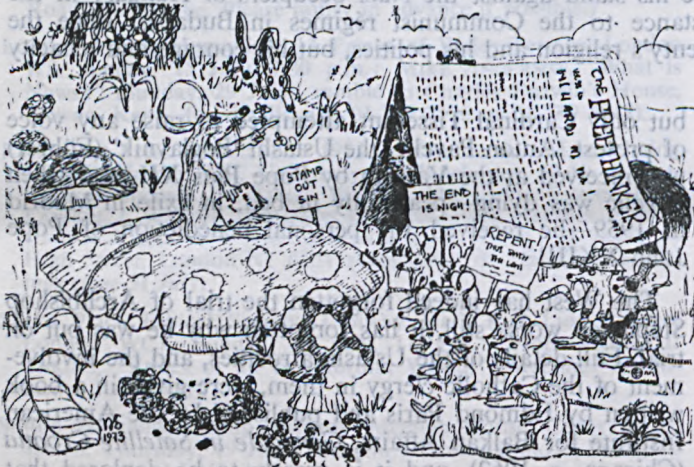
### Banned in Uganda

Sergeant Amin, the Ugandan Führer, who claims to be guided by God (who appears to him in dreams) has joined the ranks of the anti-abortionists. Abortion, he says, is "first-class murder" (he should know) and an offence against the State and himself personally. Worse still, Uganda's population is "seriously threatened" by abortion, according to Idi Amin; or, in other words, the Sergeant is short of cannon-fodder. His sentiments are entirely in line with those of the late Corporal Hitler, whom Amin admires so much.

### Legalisation campaign in France

In France, the Catholic hierarchy are throwing their full weight against the campaign to legalise abortion in that country. The bishops have pointed out, as something ironic, that the same pressure groups which condemn capital punishment and campaign against French nuclear tests are willing "to kill a baby in its mother's womb".

In a message of support to the French progressive and secularist movement, Barbara Smoker, President of the National Secular Society, said that she could see nothing ironic in the abortion law reform lobby's attitudes. "Indeed," she said, "the bishops' view is a complete reversal of what is to us the true irony of the situation. How can people who profess to take their respect for human life so seriously that they regard even a potential human life as sacred, be willing to increase the incidence of cancer in



## HARD WORK AHEAD

"The progressive movement generally, and the National Secular Society in particular, have no easy task ahead," says the latest N.S.S. Annual Report, just out. "If the past year has a main theme," it says, "it must surely be the theme of man's inhumanity to man."

The report points out that although the Americans have pulled out of Vietnam, "other wars around the globe have proliferated—in particular, religious wars." It cites the escalating violence in Northern Ireland, the Middle East and Catholic/Muslim conflict in the Philippines.

In the more 'advanced' countries of the world, torture for political prisoners has reached almost epidemic proportions, reminiscent of the Inquisition, and examples of torture in many unlikely quarters have been disclosed by Amnesty International.

In the West, says the report, the Churches "continue to exercise undue influence in society, although in most countries the number of church-goers is steadily declining, and, wherever religion is not actually on the run, it is torn by internal dissension between the moderates and the old guard . . . The British Churches, however, are more united—mainly against secular humanism, which they see as the common enemy."

. . . Mrs. Mary Whitehouse has actually stated that humanists are trying to take over the media of communication because, while religious broadcasting continues unabated despite the



# S AND NOTES

living human beings, including leukaemia in children, merely for the sake of a national armaments programme? This seems to us the acme, not only of irony, but of cynical inhumanity."

Miss Smoker pointed out that there was a further irony in the fact that the anti-abortionists apparently ignored the harm done by radioactive fall-out to the foetus in the womb. "Not only does fall-out cause stillbirths and congenital defects," she added, "But its harmful effects continue for many generations."

## N.S.S. ANNUAL OUTING

This year's National Secular Society outing will be to a number of places of interest in Hertfordshire. The party will visit St. Albans, where a large section of the Roman wall can still be seen; Shaw's Corner, in the beautiful village of Ayot St. Lawrence, where George Bernard Shaw lived for forty years; and historic Hatfield House.

The coach will leave central London, and there will be picking-up points in north London. Those taking part will be advised of times and points of departure. The trip will cost £2.35 per person (including return coach fare, packed lunch, and admission to Shaw's Corner and Hatfield House). Places must be booked in advance.

All bookings and inquiries to the General Secretary, N.S.S., 698 Holloway Road, London N19 3NL (telephone: 01-272 1266). Please state if a vegetarian lunch is required.

## SOME SHROUD! SOME MYSTERY!

### Christendom's "most precious relic"

"An official announcement by Pope Paul that the Holy Shroud, in Turin Cathedral, is beyond doubt the burial cloth of Christ is expected to be made in Holy Year—1975." So leaks the Catholic newspaper, *The Universe* (27 July).

The Pope's pronouncement will follow "stringent tests carried out secretly in the past four years by leading biochemists, scientists and electronics experts, using the most sophisticated modern equipment". *The Universe* continues:

For centuries the authenticity of the Shroud has been disputed. But the final proof which has convinced the Church it is genuine is believed to have come from detailed blood tests and minute clinical examinations of the fabric, revealing traces of myrrh and aloes—known to have been used to anoint Our Lord.

R. J. CONDON writes:

Before advising readers of *The Freethinker* to seek instruction in the Faith, we would like the following point clarified. If science has 'proved' the shroud to be genuine, what are we to make of the article on the subject in the *Catholic Encyclopaedia* by the learned Jesuit, Father Herbert Thurston? He tells us that the shroud is one of several in existence bearing the impress of a figure, and that it was not known before the fourteenth century. In 1389 the Bishop of Troyes appealed to Pope Clement VII to put an end to the scandals connected with this shroud, saying that it was the work of an artist who had some years before confessed to having painted it. Witnesses of the fifteenth century speak of the bloodstains appearing to be fresh, but they are now hardly recognisable. Fr. Thurston asks why, if the shroud were authentic, the blood should have looked fresh after fifteen centuries and then aged rapidly in four more.

We note that the present investigation has been carried out by a commission consisting entirely of Catholic experts, whose scientific detachment may of course be relied upon. It is to be hoped that this august body will not be disbanded, but will at once set to work to determine which, if any, of the numerous prepuces of Jesus now in existence is the genuine article. We await the commission's findings with interest.

BARBARA SMOKER adds:

It is to be hoped that when the research findings on the Shroud of Turin are made public, they will include such fascinating details as the divine blood group. Such revelations would demand a new celebratory hymn to be sung on the Feast of the Precious Blood.—Something like this?

*Thou precious blood of Jesus,*

*Long congealed,*

*'AB' and factor Rhesus*

*Now revealed*

## NO ATHEISTS NEED APPLY

### Scottish 'Children's Panels'

A recent issue of the *Glasgow News* drew our attention to the power of the old *odium theologicum* in selecting suitable candidates for filling Children's Panels in Scotland. These are groups of lay people, assisted by a social worker, who deal with juvenile crimes referred to them by the Crown Office. They take the place of the old juvenile courts which consisted of a magistrate and a sheriff.

JOHN CARLYLE writes from Glasgow:

When Children's Panels were first instituted most of the panel members were drawn from the traditional middle classes. However, as 95 per cent of the crime in Glasgow is committed in the lower working class areas, it was felt that class prejudice was creeping into the proceedings. Glasgow Corporation then mounted a big campaign, with local press, radio and television coverage, to recruit 'working people'.

I had already applied before the campaign. (I fulfilled all the so-called qualifications; am a labourer, married, have children of my own, and am an active trade unionist.) I filled in the forms and was eventually interviewed. All went well until I was asked for my religious affiliation: "Atheist," I replied.

"Do you mean agnostic?"

"No," I asserted.

The interviewer followed this up with slow and intensive questioning as to my exact beliefs. Needless to say, I was not accepted. (I might add that the other person being interviewed with me in the same room was being questioned by a nun.)

In Scotland the unfortunate thing is that virtually all approved schools and remand centres are run on religious lines: Catholics go to their own; 'Prods' to others. The schools also have religious names, such as St. John's Approved School. I suppose that by the authorities' logic they were right to reject me—I would be against committing a juvenile to a religious school (although I did not say that at the interview). Some research certainly ought to be done into the question of the Churches' involvement in the running of juvenile correction units.

*Shelley's pamphlet, The Necessity of Atheism, for which he was expelled from Oxford University, and the text of which we published in The Freethinker last year, is now available from the National Secular Society, who have re-issued it as a free leaflet.*



## CHURCH AND STATE IN AMERICA

Last May in Providence, Rhode Island (according to the magazine *Church & State*), Judge Michael DeCiantis ordered that a baby being offered for adoption be baptised immediately. The mother, a Catholic, had waived the usual religious requirements as she wished the child to have the widest range of possible adoptive parents.

In the same month the Washington State Supreme Court ruled that various state aid programmes to sectarian schools were unconstitutional. This was followed by a similar decision of the United States' Supreme Court in June that various 'dodges' being employed by the private and church schools lobby, such as income tax credits, and the voucher plan (state reimbursement of fees) also violated the First Amendment.

## PRIEST TO IMPEACH NIXON

It is somewhat unusual for *The Freethinker* to give a Jesuit a pat on the back, but on this occasion our secular blessing is extended to Father Robert F. Drinan, the first Jesuit to be elected to the American House of Representatives. He has moved a resolution to impeach President Nixon for various "high crimes and misdemeanours", including the bombing of Cambodia without Congressional approval, the Watergate scandal, and so on.

There is a certain element of poetic justice in this development. As we mentioned in our May issue, Nixon has betrayed the spirit of the American Constitution, with its insistence on the separation of Church and State, by his support for the parochial (state funds for sectarian schools) lobby and by presenting the Billy Graham circus at the White House. (We eagerly await Dr. Graham's comments on the proposed impeachment.) There is no lack of metaphors to cover this case: we leave readers to choose between Nixon's being hoisted by his own petard, or the old saying that "He who rides a tiger cannot get down."

The President himself may well regard his proposed impeachment by a Catholic priest as a case of "biting the hand that feeds him". Perhaps; we just hope that Representative Drinan's bite carries political peritonitis.

## ALL THIS, AND HEAVEN TOO

We have long suspected that God and Mammon are but two faces of a Janus-headed figure, and an advertisement in *The Times* of 30 July last rather bears out this hypothesis. In it, a firm of estate agents announced that it was "seeking men of above average ability with Christian or public spirited ideals" to help "manage and let furnished property" in London's West End. The advertisement continued:

Successful applicants should within 12 months be managing their own suburban branch selling freehold property, where salaries are in excess of £3,000 p.a. plus car and fringe benefits.

So, "if you have the energy and ability to go to the top", you too can serve the Lord and line your pockets appropriately, perhaps from a mock-Gothic estate office with the Parable of the Talents pinned to the wall beneath the local street plan. And, at the end of a hard day, you can bemoan the "materialism" of the godless, secular world, struggling to keep up its rent or mortgage payments.

## TOURIST CHARGES

On hearing that the Dean of Salisbury had decided to charge tourists 10p a head (5p for children and pensioners) to look round his cathedral we turned for comfort to the battered pages of the office Old Testament—to be precise, to the Book of Ecclesiastes, of which we are rather fond. In chapter 5, verse 10, we read:

"He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase. This is also vanity."

Gentle reader: mark, note, learn and inwardly digest.

*The Icelandic Government, after a lapse of a thousand years, has reinstated Thor, Odin and company, by 'recognising' the worship of the old Norse pantheon: their cults now enjoy equal status with superstitions like Christianity. This news has been greeted with whoops of delight by our Welsh pagan next-door neighbour, who is now pressing ahead with his life's dream of reviving the Anglesey Druidic centres by means of an Arts Council grant—he hopes.*

## CHURCH FINANCE

Another heartbreaking, tear-jerking case of ecclesiastical poverty: according to the *Daily Telegraph* (17 July) a new office building in the City of London, Leadenhall House, which is being developed by an investment firm "in association with the Church Commissioners for England", is being offered for an annual rent of £2½ million.

## FREETHINKER FUND

The Freethinker Fund was originally set up ninety years ago as the "Fighting Fund" when Messrs. Foote, Ramsey and Kemp were prosecuted for 'blasphemy' in an attempt to close down *The Freethinker*. Foote and Ramsey were imprisoned for a year, but thanks to the Fund the paper is still going strong today, and it is still fighting!

We are most grateful to those readers who kindly contributed to the Freethinker Fund during July. Our thanks to: Anonymous (£1), S. Clowes (50p), Mrs. Elizabeth Collins (£5), Dr. Willard E. Edwards (36p), T. H. Ellison (50p), D. Harper (£5), Alexander Henry (25p), D. J. King (50p), Frank Lonsdale (£2), R. McGarry (25p), R. B. Ratcliff (64p), Patrick Richards (£3), A. E. Smith (£1), T. Wallace (£2), F. Westwood (£2) and Miss C. Wrench (30p). Total: £24.30.

*"I feel the same way about school committees as I do about mayors: I am against Jews in these positions, not as a race, but merely on the grounds of religion . . . I feel that a Christian must serve on the school committees. This is part of our Christian National education system."*

—Dominus Dawid Botes, minister of Odendaalsrus East Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (Dutch Reformed Church), quoted in the *Johannesburg Sunday Times* (17 June).

## NINETY YEARS AGO

At Westminster Police Court, the other day, Charlotte Veazie was charged with pretending to tell the fortune of Elizabeth Read. The prosecutrix said that the prisoner had told her she had "had five young men." The fortune-teller got twenty-one days' hard labour.

At Jacob's Well, A.D. 30, Jesus Christ told a woman that she had had five husbands. The fortune-teller was rewarded with a seat at the right hand of his father in heaven. *O tempora! O mores!*

—From *The Freethinker*, 12 August 1883.



# HARE KRISHNA: A DUBLIN CASE-STUDY

T. K. DANIEL

Grafton Street is a most elegant shopping street in the most elegant of Irish cities. On a warm June day it is thronged with Dubliners making purchases—a jewelled wristwatch, perhaps, or a small water colour or a side of smoked salmon—or (for inflation is hitting us all) merely gazing at such enticing things in the tradesmen's seductive windows. They encounter friends and exchange greetings and often find they have sufficient time to spare to repair to a neighbouring street and ingest a glass of some nourishing local beverage. The conversation on these occasions is urbane and civilised and, like all Dublin conversation, shot through with wit, for Dublin is a sophisticated city and its inhabitants are broadminded and tolerant. It is very different to Belfast where, we are told, bigotry and intolerance thrive.

Many of these good people are dressed in a way that indicates their vocation. There are priests by the score and monks by the dozen. Nuns slip discretely by, sometimes in ones and twos, sometimes in larger groups giving the momentary illusion of a penguin colony telling its beads. On a good day you might even be jostled by a meditating bishop. Even so, there is no reason to fear. The clause that recognised "the special position of the . . . Roman Church as the guardian of the Faith possessed by the great majority of its citizens" has been excised from the constitution by a vote of the people and by the gracious permission of the Cardinal Archbishop. And a jolly good thing too. There is no discrimination in the South. The Republic cherishes all of its children equally.

## Arcane mysteries

Hare Krishna is a religious sect professing arcane mysteries of the East tempered, it is believed, by the softer climate of Southern California. Its devotees dress as monks in pink, yellow and orange robes and shave their heads. In a purse hanging from the wrist they carry beads which they tell as they pray. As they walk along the street, thinking beautiful thoughts, they play soft Eastern music with tiny hand drums, cymbals and tinkling bells. In this way they spread sweetness and light.

On a warm June day five of these young men walked down Grafton Street, in single file, modestly (and they hoped legally) in the gutter. A stranger to the city might have thought that meditating monks, with robes and tonsures and beads would have passed unnoticed in Dublin. He would have been wrong. The law in all its majesty descended upon them.

## "Ridiculous garments"

The five, who had been immeasurably less obtrusive than a Corpus Christi parade, appeared before District Justice Breathnach in Dublin District Court 6 charged with "using noisy instruments, to wit, cymbals and drums for the purpose of distributing literature relating to a religious sect for the purpose of gathering people together", with "committing an offence—to wit, marching in single file, playing instruments, and obstructing traffic", and with "insulting behaviour, whereby a breach of the peace may be occasioned."\* The District Justice (who was tastefully attired in judicial robes and a wig) inquired why the defendants were "dressed up in those ridiculous garments" and informed one that "I could sentence you for contempt, wearing a scarf in Court like that."

The defendants testified that they did distribute literature, obstruct traffic, or insult anybody but District Justice Breathnach is too shrewd a man to be taken in by evidence. "I can warn you," he warned them, "that you are lucky not to have been assaulted by a crowd. Any decent Irishman would object to this carry-on. I've no jurisdiction to order a forfeiture of these things, bells and leaflets. If I had I'd be fairly radical and confiscate these nonsensical things."

"Why do you say nonsensical?" asked a defendant.

"Because you're disturbing the peace of this city, and I'm sure my colleagues will agree with my only regret, that I can't have you locked up," replied the District Judge. He then fined them a total of seven pounds each on all the charges. "I can tell you," he added, "that the only reason I'm not imposing heavier fines is that I don't have the jurisdiction." As decent an Irishman as you could hope to meet.

Interestingly, a few weeks before in Belfast, where (you will recall) we are told that bigotry and intolerance thrive, these young monks had walked through the centre of the city, spreading sweetness and light. They were sympathetically treated by journalists and got their picture in the paper. Nobody arrested them. The Orangeman's drums are larger and his cymbals louder and he strikes them with a sturdy self-confidence but there are times when he is justified in his claim that they ring out for civil and religious liberty.

\* All quotations from the *Irish Times*, 9 June 1973.

## ANNOUNCEMENT

The Board of G. W. Foote & Company have learned with much regret that *Mr. Nigel Sinnott*, Editor of *The Freethinker* is resigning. He vacates the editorial chair after the September issue is published.

Mr. Sinnott has devoted himself with energy and enthusiasm to the editorship since he took up the post in January 1972. We are most appreciative of his work, and feel certain that readers will join with the Board in wishing him success and fulfilment in his future career.

*Mr. Christopher Morey*, a contributor to *The Freethinker* and a member of the National Secular Society Executive Committee, has agreed to edit the October, November and December issues in a part-time capacity. A new editor will be appointed at the end of the year.

G. N. DEODHEKAR,  
Chairman, G. W. Foote & Company.

## DOUBT

Jesus Christ, Superstar,  
How I wonder where you are,  
Up above and burning brightly  
—Or at the Odeon, twice nightly?

JACK CUMMINS



# ANOTHER NUCLEAR DANGER

ALAN RICKARD

In the current, world-wide debate on French nuclear testing in the Pacific, one serious aspect is in danger of being overlooked.

Protests have tended to force testing underground in many places, but those responsible for testing in Alaska, in Nevada, U.S.A., and elsewhere over the past year or so have ignored the warnings of American and Canadian seismologists that this could be destructive of the Earth's crust and may be the cause of the alarming increase in severe earthquakes and tidal waves.

## Nuclear tests and earthquakes

A New Zealand airline pilot, Bruce Cathie, who has researched this matter in considerable detail, says that there has been a 400 per cent increase in earthquakes since nuclear testing commenced.

He lists a number of earthquakes which occurred after the French tests at Mururoa in 1966. There were three major quakes in the eastern provinces of Turkey in August of that year, with a death toll estimated at some 3,000 people. At the same time the town of Matsushiro in Japan suffered two strong tremors, but fortunately no one was killed. On 18 October 1966 there was a major quake on the coast of Peru, with the epicentre around Huacho and a death-roll of hundreds, while at the same time there was another of greater intensity at Bogotá, Colombia.

Then, on 28 December the same year, China exploded an atom bomb at its Lop Nor test site. The following day there was a major earthquake in northern Chile, east of Antofagasta, causing heavy casualties and damage, and another at Mendoza, in western Argentina, near the Chilean border. Commenting on this, Bruce Cathie wrote: "According to a Chinese report this test was a 'great victory for the invincible thought of Mao Tse-Tung and a new rich fruit of the great proletarian revolution'. While they were thus glorifying each other in China, hundreds of unfortunate people in South America were buried alive. Rich fruit indeed!"

Again there was a Mururoa test in about May 1970 and on 31 May and 1 June a devastating earthquake rocked Chimbo on the coast of Peru. In this case the epicentre was just off the Peruvian coast at 59.21 degrees from Mururoa Island and Mr. Cathie shows that all the above quakes and many others over the last few years have occurred at a great circle distance of around 60 degrees, or 3,500 to 4,000 nautical miles, from the respective test site.

There are many earthquakes reported in the Press which do not appear to be related to testing as far as we know, but we must reflect that protests have often caused news of tests to be suppressed and there may be a number of explosions of which we are not aware.

## Seismologists' fears

On 10 March 1973 an earth tremor was felt on the east coast of Australia, affecting the cities of Canberra, Sydney and Newcastle. Seismologists said that a huge rock layer, extending from Narooma, on the south coast of New South Wales, to Muswellbrook, west of Newcastle, shifted slightly and that the movement lasted about 30 seconds. The repercussions, however, were felt for 20 minutes in

some areas. They added that further minor tremors could be expected in this area as the base layers of the earth's crust settled into place. Though this tremor is not known to be linked with bomb testing, it is an indication that the fears of seismologists may not be without foundation.

Statistics show that in recent years more than 700,000 people have been killed in earthquakes in various parts of the world. In view of the extreme dangers involved, and the fact that the doubts are widely shared by experts, there should be an immediate cessation of all nuclear testing everywhere while there is the slightest suggestion that this activity could be the cause of such catastrophes or of even more serious long term effects.

*Since this article was written, the Peruvian Government has threatened to break off diplomatic relations with France, and there have been demonstrations against the French tests in Mexico City.*

## FIFTY YEARS AGO

In Alsace-Lorraine, . . . the Catholics and their priests are strenuously opposing the diffusion of the French language under the pretext that it represents "irreligion, Paganism, immorality, and Freethought." . . . In Alsace, . . . the Catholics intrigue and organise. In Italy, they triumph, for Mussolini is their man. He cannot govern without them, and is continually making concessions to the popular party (the Catholics). To curry favour with the mob of priests and their followers he attacks the Freemasons and excludes them from the *Fascisti*. The Church applauds his open intolerance of criticism, his frank admission that if he cannot rule with the assent of the people, he will use the regiments by which he is surrounded, for religion has always been the sworn enemy of liberty and democratic government.

It is incredibly stupid to think the militant propaganda of Freethought is not as much needed now as it was forty or fifty years ago. The forces of ignorance, superstition and intolerance are just as active and just as strong. Slackness on our part and some unforeseen combination of circumstances might land us where Italy is today, away back in the barbarous Middle Age. Even here in England, the home of liberal ideas, there are now not a few who would welcome a dual dictatorship of wealth and religion. But if we get a Mussolini—we shall deserve him.

—From *The Freethinker*, 19 August 1923.

## HYSTERIA

Apollo blasts off towards the moon

Three smiling men, last hearty breakfast,  
And no unscheduled thoughts to conflict with

The machine. Though once in his youth,  
Tubercular Chichester flew his flimsy moth solo;

And late, old man, cancerous around Cape Horn.  
Now Bonnington is setting out again.

And I by command of some omnipotent force,  
Possessed of demons, am bound down

In this Promethean paralysis. Yet travel the same  
Dangerous air-pockets, the slippery steep crags,

The uneven shock-waves of the mind, in an  
Inner space, that is lonelier, darker and more  
Fathomless, than my limited pen can log down.

CECILY DEIRDRE BOMBERG.



# ANUP THE BAPTIST

R. J. CONDON

The earliest mention of John the Baptist in secular history is to be found in Book 18 of *The Antiquities of the Jews* by Josephus. As this work was written around A.D. 93, researchers into Christian origins have sometimes assumed the historical existence of John to be indisputable. It is even possible to hold this view while denying the reality of Jesus Christ, for a fictitious Jesus does not necessarily imply a fictitious John, any more than it implies a fictitious Pontius Pilate.

But is the passage concerning John in Josephus so obviously beyond suspicion? It occurs in the middle of an account of the war between Herod the Tetrarch and Aretas, King of Arabia Petrea, in which Herod's army was destroyed. Here it is in its immediate context:

1. . . . So Herod wrote about these affairs to Tiberias; who, being very angry at the attempt made by Aretas, wrote to Vitellius, to make war upon him, and either to take him alive, and bring him to him in bonds, or to kill him, and send him his head. This was the charge that Tiberias gave to the president of Syria.

2. Now, some of the Jews thought that the destruction of Herod's army came from God, and that very justly, as a punishment of what he did against John, that was called the Baptist; for Herod slew him, who was a good man, and commanded the Jews to exercise virtue, both as to righteousness towards one another, and piety towards God, and so to come to baptism; for that the washing [with water] would be acceptable to him, if they made use of it, not in order to the putting away [or the remission] of some sins [only], but for the purification of the body; supposing still that the soul was thoroughly purified beforehand by righteousness. Now, when [many] others came to crowd about him, for they were greatly moved [or pleased] by hearing his words, Herod, who feared lest the great influence John had over the people might put it into his power and inclination to raise a rebellion (for they seemed ready to do anything he should advise), thought it best, by putting him to death, to prevent any mischief he might cause, and not bring himself into difficulties, by sparing a man who might make him repent of it when it should be too late. Accordingly he was sent a prisoner, out of Herod's suspicious temper, to Macherus, the castle I before mentioned, and was there put to death. Now the Jews had an opinion that the destruction of this army was sent as a punishment upon Herod, and a mark of God's displeasure against him.

3. So Vitellius prepared to make war with Aretas . . . (18:5:1-3).

## An interpolation ?

This testimony to John the Baptist was not noticed by any Christian or other writer until the middle of the third century, when Origen mentioned it in his work *Against Celsus*. It resembles the admittedly spurious reference to Jesus Christ in the same book of *The Antiquities*, in the way in which it interrupts a narrative with which it has only a remote connection. Remove it, and the third paragraph follows smoothly from the first. We might reasonably have expected a fair amount of historical material about such an influential character as John is here said to have been, yet all we have is this one doubtful piece. His existence certainly cannot be said to be demonstrable from history.

John is one of the oldest and most widespread of names, traceable in some form in virtually every ancient and modern culture. In New Testament Greek it is Ioanes or Ioannes, which is practically the same as the Babylonian Oannes. The Babylonians had a water-god of that name, in whom some scholars have seen the original of John the Baptist. Modern forms of John include, Ian, Jan, Juan, Jean, Johan, etc. Essentially the name consists of two

words; Io, meaning god, and An. An was a name of the Egyptian god Osiris, who hardly resembles the Baptist at all. But the Egyptians had another god named John, the dog-headed Anup or Anubis, and here we do find some remarkable similarities.

To start with, Anup, as the son of Osiris and Nephthys the sister of Isis, is a near relative of Horus, whose career in Egyptian mythology closely parallels that of Jesus. Anup and Horus, like John and Jesus, are cousins in the older and wider sense of the word.

In the Gospels John is said to have fulfilled the alleged prophecy of Isaiah 40:3, "The voice of him that crieth in the desert a highway for our God." Yet this is only a fragment repeated from the Egyptian mythology, where Anup was the crier in the wilderness and the guide in the desert of Amenta, the underworld. He and his *alter ego* Apuat, though not named, are the gods entreated at the beginning of the *Book of the Dead* to "open the way and lay open the paths to perfected souls in the Temple of Osiris" or House of Heaven. In chapter 31 Anup is the god of the day of reckoning. Similarly John proclaims that "The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand" (Mark 1:15). John's remark that "he must increase but I must decrease" (John 3:30) could equally have been made by Anup, who had to yield his place as god of the dead when the cult of Osiris became dominant.

The *Book of the Dead* has two chapters in which Anup is associated with the ritual washing which constituted baptism in Egypt. Represented by his sceptre, he is invoked by the speaker (Horus or Osiris) in these terms: "Lo, I come that I may purify this soul of mine in the most high degree; let not that impediment which cometh from your mouth be issued against me; let me be purified in the lake of propitiation . . ." (chapter 97, Renouf's translation. The "impediment" may be paralleled by the reluctance of John to baptise Jesus (Matthew 3:14).

## The "beloved son"

Chapter 145 has a tenfold baptism in which Horus is washed in waters prepared by various gods, of whom Anup is one. When Jesus is baptised by John, a voice from heaven cries: "Thou art my beloved son", and Jesus immediately goes off into the wilderness for his temptation by Satan, which of course he successfully resists. In chapter 145, not only do we have Anup or John as Baptist, we also find that Horus, after his baptism, becomes *sa-meri-f*, literally "his beloved son" (of Osiris), and at the very time of his "dispute with Set, and when victory is given unto him". Set was Satan by name in Egypt, and the wilderness or desert was his natural abode.

It is evident that enough mythic material existed for the construction of at least an outline of John, the Forerunner and Baptist. There is no need whatever to assume his historical existence.

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# I WAS ONE OF THE FIRST BRITISH FASCISTS

R. STUART MONTAGUE

*The writer of this article joined the British Fascist Party in 1925, though he subsequently became a Marxist, which he has remained. He now lives in retirement, still at Richmond, Surrey.*

The great upheavals of the First World War (1914-18) in Europe gave birth to the successful Russian bourgeois revolution of 1917. The German proletarian revolution of 1918-19 was defeated. In Italy a counter-revolutionary political party was formed in 1919 called the Fascisti. Though by 1922 the Italian industrial workers were striking and occupying the factories in 'sit-ins'.

The British capitalist class, alarmed by this revolutionary upsurge in Europe, formed their own counter-revolutionary party in London in 1923 called the British Fascist Party, or National Fascisti. An old public-schoolboy friend of mine became one of the first members, and in the summer of 1925 he recruited me and I was made a Troop Leader. I wore a large, black, enamelled badge in my jacket buttonhole; in a half circle at the top of the badge in gold lettering were the words "FOR KING AND COUNTRY". In a circle in the centre was the letter 'F'. Underneath the badge, but part of it, were the gold lettered words "TROOP LEADER".

## Puzzling

It often puzzled me why I was made a Troop Leader at the age of 23 as quite frankly I never understood the aims of this Fascist group in London. Maybe it was because I had been a Troop Leader in the first Stanwell Troop of Boy Scouts. Our scout master, a soldier in France in 1915, was captured by the Germans. From a prison camp he wrote a letter requesting me to take over the running of the First Stanwell Troop of Scouts. So at the age of 13 and 14 I had been a scout master, believe it or not.

The leaders of this British Fascist Party gave talks in small village halls to the local youth: grocers' assistants, butchers' boys and the like. We handed out sticky-backs on which were printed slogans about the Jews. I never understood why we were opposed to the Jews. I was really not the type to take this Fascist movement seriously. One summer evening I had to meet an attractive young lady arriving at Richmond railway station. She carried a bundle of copies of the *British Lion*, the paper of the British Fascist Party. We walked through the town selling them. She walked on one side of the street and I on the opposite side straight up Richmond Hill to the park at top and we then continued on through the big gates. (Considering these were the days long before our permissive society my membership of the first Fascist party of Great Britain was at least educational in more senses than one.)

## Police partiality

On one occasion a photograph appeared in the press of my school friend, in plus fours and a black shirt, between the two other fascists, all with drawn swords. It had been taken outside the headquarters in Chapel Street, just off the Edgware Road, the day after an attempted raid by the 'Reds'. A few of us and some of the Communists finished up in cells at Marlborough Street Police Station, though it seemed that the police favoured us while appearing hostile to these young working-class men they



*The Chapel Street 'National Fascisti' guarding their headquarters, July 1925. (Mr. Montague's friend is in the middle.)*

[Associated Newspapers copyright]

called "the Reds". While we were released later in the evening to go on a drinking spree in the West End, the 'Reds' remained in the police cells. In 1925 I had never heard of Karl Marx and the class struggle but my Marxist education had now begun.

One day, towards the end of 1925 or early in 1926, my old school friend and I arrived at Marlborough Street Police Station, this time by our own free will. We were invited below to the practice shooting range. With two or three policemen we did a little practical shooting at targets with six-chambered revolvers. I was not unfamiliar with the use of guns but my school friend insisted it was pure accident when he fired his revolver down at my legs, missing my knee by a fraction of an inch.

In May 1927 I arrived at the Royal Albert Hall for a mass rally and was surprised and deeply impressed on encountering a large number of most attractive, young upper-class ladies wearing black shirts and Boy-Scout-style hats. My old school friend and I occupied one of the best boxes near the platform with three important-looking gentlemen. I was under the impression that our Leader or head of this first Fascist group was Commander Locker-Lampson, a Tory M.P. Clara Butt, the famous singer, also performed and about a thousand Fascists were present. It was soon after this that I broke with the movement.



### The "Friends of Order"

Over ten years later I read the classic story by William Morris, *News From Nowhere*. I found it remarkable how Morris had foreseen in 1890 the rise of a counter-revolutionary movement in London so similar to our first Fascist party. In chapter seventeen, he writes:

The rich citizens were enrolled as an extra body of police, and armed with bludgeons like them; many of these were strong, well-fed, full-blooded young men, and had plenty of stomach for fighting; but the Government did not dare to use them, and contented itself with getting full powers voted to it by the Parliament for suppressing any revolt. (1908 edn.: p. 125.)

William Morris named these future British Fascists the "Friends of Order". He continues:

Whatever the Government might do, a great part of the upper and middle classes were determined to set on foot a counter-revolution. Bands of young men armed themselves and drilled, and began on any opportunity or pretence to skirmish

with the people in the streets. The Government neither helped them nor put them down, but stood by, hoping that something might come of it. These 'Friends of Order' as they were called, had some successes at first, and grew bolder. (p. 142.)

In January 1936 I became a member of the Communist Party. I began an intensive study of the philosophical works of Marx and Engels which were a revelation to me. I soon learned how correct F. A. Ridley was when he made the observation that the Communist Party of Great Britain was not Communist, was not a party and had nothing to do with Great Britain.

However, still a member of the C.P. in 1936, I now opposed the British Union of Fascists and took part in the famous 'Battle of Cable Street' in the East End and the 'Battle of Thurloe Square' in Kensington and other fights with the Fascists of Sir Oswald Mosley. But all that, dear reader, is another story of "old, forgotten far off things and battles long ago"—or bottles long ago!

# REVIEWS

## BOOKS

**ON RELIGION** by K. Marx and F. Engels.  
Progress Publishers/Lawrence & Wishart, £1.

An analysis of the relationship between socialism and religion is long overdue at a time when the Labour Party officially supports church schools and even Marxist groups hesitate to attack the churches; but this book (a translation of a Russian edition), is on the whole a disappointing contribution. It contains some splendid passages on the Marxist theory of religion but they are buried under indigestible and often obscure extracts dealing with nineteenth-century history and long forgotten philosophical controversies. It comprises in date order every single statement made by Marx and Engels on religion, but would have benefited from much greater selectivity in choice of documents and from a commentary. However, the diligent reader can trace the key developments in the Marxist assessment of religion.

Marxism regards religion, like philosophy and morality, as the product of economic conditions, "Man makes religion, religion does not make man". Religion is "... the fantastic reflection in men's minds of those external forces which control their daily lives, a reflection in which the terrestrial forces assume the form of supernatural forces." The content of religion changes when one ruling class overthrows another: Roman Catholicism was the religion of feudalism, but the English middle class adopted Puritanism and Nonconformity in their struggle with landed interests. The question of whether religion is a necessary element in capitalist ideology, or whether capitalism could survive on a secularist basis, was not tackled by Marx, and is still to be answered.

The core of Marx's views on religion is found in the *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, 1844. In a few brilliant sentences he analysed the role of religion in capitalist society and the necessity of a secularist basis for socialism, "This state, this society produce religion, a reversed world consciousness, because they are a reversed world." Religion is the "spiritual aroma" of an exploitive society; at the same time it is an

attempt to express and solve real problems, "... the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world..." and a method of keeping the working class in order—"the opium of the people". Rejection of religion can be the first step to class consciousness:

The demand to give up illusions about its conditions is the demand to give up a condition which needs illusions... The task of history therefore, once the world beyond the truth has disappeared, is to establish the truth of this world... thus criticism of heaven turns into criticism of earth, the criticism of religion into criticism of right, the criticism of theology into the criticism of politics.

At its most subtle, religion pretends to favour social improvement, but this is to be achieved not by analysis and change of the economic structure, but by the redemption of "wicked" individuals; it puts "the liberation of mankind by means of 'love' in place of the emancipation of the proletariat through the economic transformation of production." It commands "Love one another—fall into each other's arms, regardless of distinctions of sex and status, a universal orgy of reconciliation." The British working class has been sidetracked by religion on a number of occasions. Methodism, which gained a good deal of working-class support in the early nineteenth century, is now recognised to have been a substitute for constructive political activity. Energies dangerous to the social order were released in open air revival meetings, religious ecstasies and mysticism. In Methodist camp meetings, as at the Festival of Light activities last summer, "Several drop down as dead and are as still as a corpse, but in a while they start up and cry 'Glory, Glory'."

Class struggle in Britain has only occasionally been linked with hostility to religion. But one example was the 1855 Sunday Trading riots marvellously described by Marx. To impose evangelical Sunday observance Lord Robert Grosvenor proposed a bill prohibiting the opening of shops on Sundays. This was recognised as blatant class legislation, "The working class get their wages late on Saturday, they are the ones for whom shops open on Sunday." The Chartists called a demonstration in Hyde Park "to see how religiously the aristocracy is observing the Sabbath and how anxious it is not to employ its servants and horses on that day." 200,000 people gathered in spite of police attempts to disperse them, and the fashionable parade of the carriages and horses of the rich was rudely disrupted. Crowds of working class people lined the route, jeering and shouting, "Go to church." "One lady soothingly



offered a prayer book from her carriage, 'Give it to your horses to read' came the thundering reply". Some demonstrators saw this as the beginning of a new phase of class conflict; opinions such as "This is the first step" and "We hate them" were voiced by various groups. Bradlaugh, incidentally, was present at this demonstration and later complained to an investigating commission about the conduct of the police.

The antithesis between socialism and religion was amply demonstrated by Marx in 1847:

The social principles of Christianity have now had eighteen hundred years to develop . . . The social principles of Christianity justified the slavery of antiquity, glorified the serfdom of the Middle Ages, and equally know how to defend the oppression of the proletariat . . . The social principles of Christianity declare all vile acts of oppressors against the oppressed to be either the just punishment of original sin and other sins, or trials that the Lord in his infinite wisdom imposes on the redeemed. The social principles of Christianity preach cowardice, self-contempt, abasement, submission, dejection, in a word all the qualities of the canaille, and the proletariat not wishing to be treated as canaille needs its courage, its self-feeling, its pride and its sense of independence, more than its bread. The social principles of Christianity are sneakish, and the proletariat is revolutionary. So much for the social principles of Christianity.

In reply to a survey early in this century, the majority of Labour M.P.s said they had obtained their chief inspiration from reading the Bible; if they had read Marx instead, the Labour Party might have a more socialist policy today. This book would have been improved by an introduction making points like this explicit, and relating Marxist theory on religion to the actual situation in the British and European labour movements.

PATRICIA KNIGHT

**BUILDING THE CITY OF MAN: Outlines of a World Civilization** by W. Warren Wagar. Freeman, £1.40.

Most of us have tucked away somewhere inside us a dream-picture of what we would like the world to be; but the value of the dream depends on how much reality it can take in and then how it can relate the dream to the possibilities—not that one is likely to get wide agreement as to just what is the reality and what its possibilities are. Wishful thinking does not get us far. We have to grasp the conflicts as well as the harmonies, present and struggling to emerge, and somehow find how those conflicts can be resolved along useful instead of destructive lines. Religions in general and utopian models from Plato onwards show how little effect on society is produced by fantasy-constructions and didactic exhortation unless they are dovetailed into the actual needs and potentialities of the human situation—though we would be much poorer without the utopian dream, which has sometimes had a complex though oblique impact, heartening men to get down to more immediate aspects of struggle. It does not help us on very much to the desired goals to be told that we would be happier if we were happier, and so on.

W. Warren Wagar's book has many utopian weaknesses; but he does try to start from where people are, not merely from a point in his own mind. His discussion of what is wrong with the world is vivid and comprehensive, and, like so many of us, he comes to the conclusion that, "left to its own devices, the system (together with the race of creatures it 'protects') is programmed for inevitable self-destruction." He also glances with considerable understanding at the positive aspects and the limitations of the peace movements, the new radicalism, especially of the young, the would-be revolutionary movements that hope by some naïve trust in spontaneity to conjure up great

mass-convulsions by a timely bomb or slogan. But as usual, it is easier to point out what is wrong with the situation and with other people's panaceas than to provide with any precision just what strategy and system of ideas are going to do the job and to pull the new world-system out of the hat.

Wagar wants "a new organic civilisation", and again in this is saying what many thinkers have been saying for quite a time. He admits that since the aim is something that has not yet existed, there are no models to follow. He wants a world-party in every country, which will work for "the mundialization of national power, the transfer of sovereign power intact and complete to the world-republic, which can begin to exist in a formal sense the moment that the first national state accepts mundialization". But it seems to me that here we come up against the sort of problem that all utopian systems meet, even when set out with as much intelligence as here: they neglect the question of power. Extension of unifications can result in an enormous extension of tyranny unless the under-bases are secure and we know just where the power lies. Hitler's European Order was not an advance on the Europe of separate nations, however bad in many ways was the latter; and the same objection, it seems to me, applies to the genteel imitation of that Order, the Common Market—not that the latter will necessarily work out as the bulwark of big business and multinational companies.

Not that Wagar is unaware of this problem. He says that the world-order will have to be socialist in some shape or form, though he understandably has reservations about any existing socialist system. He incidentally (and rightly in my opinion) looks sympathetically to Lenin; but he might have made more of the way in which he, like Marx, wanted a world-society without blueprints: one which would have its form and course determined by people as they went step by step into wider freedoms and fuller control of their own lives. Unfortunately, the Leninist procedure was not merely neglected in the U.S.S.R. after his death; it was essentially reversed, and though some efforts have now been made to return to his ideas, the core is still lacking. Hence the sad gap between any existent system and the intelligent dream of men like Wagar.

The author makes many interesting suggestions as to the way of life and attitudes of the people in his future world-society; but I always feel that such constructions, worth while making in so far as they stimulate thought about the present, all come under the same criticism. They presuppose that attitudes, brought about by complicated causes, are going to continue in a straight line—whereas, in the struggles and changes that alone could bring about a new world-order, all sorts of ideas and emotions and organisational forms are going to interact and beget unforeseeable syntheses. Since the essence of our situation today is bourgeois disintegration, it is dangerous to argue that any positions, however much one may like them or approve of them at the moment, are going to persist just as they are, or develop along the same lines, when the central dynamic of society has radically altered. For this reason it seems to me that all discussions about such matters as the future of the family are merely projections of contemporary conflicts, compromises, and tendencies. Not that the future will be unaffected by what is done and thought today; but it will certainly not consist of a simple one-way movement from the present or of a selection of positions which for one reason or another attract people today. Everything depends on that central dynamic—though for our world today centrifugal would perhaps be a better adjective.



Finally, I do not feel too happy about Wagar's claim that the main task is "the formation of revolutionary élites". In so far as he is arguing for hard and clear thinking, and against the delusion of some spontaneous explosion of the "people", I do not demur. But the aim has a narrow and self-defeating note about it, and brings out the lack of any clear conception of how the idea of an organic world-order is to be linked with the various organised forces which today are slowly (all too slowly) gathering and pressing against the barriers. In so far as the author can get many of his ideas across to those organised forces, the better equipped they will be; but any belief that an élite of thinkers, however numerous or well-intentioned, can do the job by themselves is liable to lead into the utopian impasse.

JACK LINDSAY

**THE FAILURE OF ILLIBERALISM** by Fritz Stern.  
George Allen and Unwin, £3.50.

This book contains some fourteen essays, reviews and lectures Professor Stern wrote over a number of years for various publications. Edited and brought into chronological order, these essays are to prove the author's contention that the Germans, having founded the Reich in 1871, deliberately opted for what he terms "Illiberalism" as a kind of ideology and, having once embarked on this course, it inevitably delivered them from Bismarck's iron grip into the clutches of Hitler. A contributory factor is seen in the disinterest shown by the educated Germans in the grubby business of politics and their subsequent flight into culture as an ersatz religion, thus leaving the administration of the nation in the hands of unscrupulous manipulators and charlatans.

I do not for a second maintain that Bismarck's Germany represented a liberal paradise, but where in contemporary Europe was one to be found that could have served as a model to the newly found nation? Was England, where proprietary qualifications left large sections of the population permanently disenfranchised, a democratic Utopia? In France the gay 'decadence' of the second empire had just ended in "La Débâcle", which made it even less appealing to the more austere Teutonic temperament. Besides, the French Establishment of the day could be as 'illiberal' as any when its authority was challenged, as the fate of the Parisian Commune amply demonstrated. Russia had a semi-feudal régime to contend with. The United States after the Civil War was herself too young a nation to exert much influence one way or the other.

Bismarck, never a liberal at heart, became an autocrat almost by default as there was simply no one of equal stature on the political scene to oppose him. To give him his due, Bismarck's foreign policy aimed to keep Germany out of any international conflict; this aim became an obsession that caused him to neglect the internal affairs of the state.

The retreat from political life by the German intelligentsia had taken place long before the Bismarck era; centuries of German particularism and political frustration had seen to that. Although every century produced its dreamers, little could be achieved in a country so hopelessly divided. *Deutschland über alles* was not, as is often believed, a call on the Germans to dominate the world, but a plea to the German speaking peoples and their rulers to strive for a united *Germany above all (else) in the world.*

The book contains informative character-studies of Bismarck, Bleichroder, Bethmann-Hollweg and others; it also analyses the German political scene from 1871 to 1945. In his essay on the Weimar Republic the author unfortunately iterates most of the well known clichés, namely that the German people despised the new democratic republic; they longed for the re-establishment of the authoritarian Empire; they mistrusted the Left, and so on. Yet when one looks at the election results between 1919 and 1932, one finds that up to 1930 the Social Democrats were by far the largest single party in parliament while the Nazi Party, even in 1932, held only about one third of the total mandates which made them just about equal in numbers to the parties of the Left. Hitler gained power by Presidential decree, the President being urged on by an unholy alliance of the Right, not by the vote of the people.

Sixty years of a nation's history is in my opinion too brief a period to account for the outrages of the Hitler régime, and I doubt whether the answer is to be found there.

S. D. KUEBART

**THE NUMBERS GAME: The Bland Totalitarianism**  
by Harry Hopkins. Secker & Warburg, £2.80.

Statistics are playing an increasingly dominating rôle in our lives. The kind of school our children attend at secondary level is still largely determined by highly suspect I.Q. tests based on minute samples of the general population. The country's currency is devalued, floated or upgraded on the foreign exchanges at the behest of statisticians who present us with balance of payment figures which sometimes prove ludicrously inaccurate.

This book comes as a breath of fresh air to dispel the miasma of statistical muddle. "Once", the author writes, "we 'thanked our lucky stars'; now we nervously eye the 'indicators', the indexes, the ratings—the confidence index, the growth rate, yesterday's Dow Jones or *F.T.* Industrial Average, our children's I.A. scores, the TV ratings of our politicians . . ." That most important product of statistics, the Gross National Product, which is supposed to reflect the Domestic Product plus net income from abroad, is, indeed, gross, says Mr. Hopkins, a gross agglomeration of like and unlike with only one thing in common: they can be expressed numerically and added together. A rise in crime, for example, involving an increase in the police force and therefore police pay has the effect of increasing the Gross National Product. The more pollution there is in the atmosphere, the more money spent on cleansing it, the greater also will be the Gross National Product. But the valuable services of housewives, which cannot easily be reduced to numerical terms, do not appear in the Gross National Product.

There is, says Mr. Hopkins, a self-fulfilling quality about statistical predictions. "The more an 'inflationary spiral' is delineated in the headlines and those charts, the faster is it likely to spiral." Even that banal statistic, Top of the Pops, however inaccurately its proclamation may be at first, once proclaimed may go on to fulfilment. William H. Whyte gives the example of an employee that a company was planning to promote. They first got in touch with a consultant firm who gave the man a personality test. When this was compared with a "group norm" the consultants gave a report which warned about the man's stability. The company was puzzled because the employee had consistently done a fine job. However, they decided to



accept the consultant's advice and told the man that the promotion he had worked so hard for was to go to someone else. Six months later the man had a breakdown. The company now regards this as confirmation of the accuracy of the personality test.

Mr. Hopkins has done a splendid job in this lively, information-packed book.

REUBEN OSBORN

## PAMPHLETS

**THE RECURRENT CRISIS OF LONDON: C.I.S. Anti-Report on the Property Developers.**  
Counter Information Services, 60p.

Having pilloried Rio-Tinto-Zinc and General Electric for their anti-social activities, C.I.S. have now put the property speculators in the limelight. This anti-report is, or rather should be, compulsory reading for all those who have the future of London, and other big cities, at heart. If I had my way, a copy would wing its way to every member of the Greater London Council in the hope that its devastating indictment of the handling of London's affairs might at last get the G.L.C. off its collective bottom and stop the steady ruin of London.

Much of this report is devoted to the activities of Stock Conversion and Investment Trust, hardly a household name like Marks and Spencer, yet one which is vastly profitable to its director, Joe Levy. By buying up the north side of Euston Road, between Warren Street and Great Portland Street tube stations, and building thereon the Euston Centre, Mr. Levy made a capital gain of around £64 million. There was the minor irritation of having to find accommodation for the displaced tenants—many of them old people—of the buildings that had to be pulled down to make room for Mr. Levy's development. C.I.S. gives a case history of one tenant, bribed to move into a single room in Mornington Crescent by a cash payment of £50, which she refused. Whilst this tenant now struggles daily with falling plaster and broken windows, Mr. Levy has turned his attention to Piccadilly.

Hand-in-glove with the excesses of the property developers have been the London boroughs. Westminster's threat to 'redevelop' Soho would destroy what is still left of central London that has character. Stock Conversion already has an enormous stake in Soho, extending almost to Leicester Square, and wholesale redevelopment of the area would mean wholesale profit for Mr. Levy. Or consider Tolmers Square, near Hampstead Road, N.W.1. Stock Conversion made a deal with Camden Council under which they would build 250,000 square feet of office space in this working class area, and the remainder of the site, apart from some industrial development, would be turned over to Camden for council housing. It would not have been possible for Camden Council to buy the site outright, owing to the dizzying rise in the price of land in the area once Mr. Levy's interest in Tolmers Square became known.

As much of central London becomes a wasteland of offices, where do the people displaced by Stock Conversion go? Not any more to traditional low-cost working class areas like Camden, Barnsbury and Brixton, for these and similar parts of inner London are being "gentrified". Taking advantage of the easy availability of mortgages, the galloping growth of owner-occupation, the cheapness of development loans from the banks and insurance com-

panies, and above all the generosity of government improvement grants, the property companies are buying up whole areas of working class housing and converting them into middle-class flatlets. This process is enormously profitable. It does, of course, improve beyond recognition the grey areas of London, as anyone who has watched the gradual transformation of Notting Hill would agree, but its effect on the ordinary workers of London is disastrous. Their homes and jobs are lost, and they are priced out of London.

Counter-Information Services argue that the capitalist system is ultimately to blame for London's crisis. The private ownership of land and the concern of property developers for nothing save their immediate profit prevent any fundamental change for the better in the housing, transport and amenity problems of London. There is much in this analysis which is correct, but I came from this anti-report still wondering how much of the speculative frenzy in land and property in London is caused by the wicked capitalists and how much by the inertia, lack of imagination and bureaucratic remoteness of the authorities. Whilst the G.L.C. can seriously propose gratuitously to inflict such wounds on London as the motorway box, cutting great swathes of concrete, ugliness, noise and pollution through the heart of the city, and incidentally making a fortune for Mr. Levy and his ilk, I wonder.

PHILIP HINCHLIFF

**THE MASK OF ANARCHY** by Percy Bysshe Shelley.  
Kropotkin's Lighthouse Publications\*, 20p.

The Peterloo Massacre of 1819 is a well-known historical event, when the government sent troops of the Manchester Yeomanry and the 15th Hussars to disperse a peaceable gathering of thousands of working men, women and children. News of this shocking event reached the ears of the poet Shelley, who subsequently wrote a poem entitled "The Mask of Anarchy" that has rarely been included in published collections of his work.

Kropotkin's Lighthouse Publications has now issued the work in pamphlet form, complete with informative preface and footnotes. Shelley herewith confirmed his support for the great masses of underprivileged workers throughout the country; he exhorts them in lines full of passionate feeling to maintain their strong, silent stand against the oppressors, who must eventually fall. It is a call for sense, not madness, one of the first definite statements calling for non-violent direct action, as echoed many times since in similar situations of unjust authority wielding too great a power.

The little booklet provides half an hour of thoughtful reading, and the cover is liberally illustrated with cartoons to bring the story home. Anarchy here, by the way, should be taken to mean chaos.

LINDSEY HARRIS

\* c/o Housman's Bookshop, 5 Caledonian Road, London N1.

JOACHIM KAHL

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# THEATRE

**ENDGAME** by Samuel Beckett. The Shaw Theatre.

We are presented with a world of entropy; a world which seems to be dying out, bar the faint hope of the boy perhaps seen approaching from the distance. This is a terminal world; there could have been a holocaust outside, but this is too specific; we are simply presented with images of decay and dying.

Clov is blind and cannot move from his wheel-chair, Hamm cannot sit down but impishly serves his master. It is a bleakly comic situation and every ounce of black comedy is weaned from the occasion. Front stage, ensconced in dustbins, are Nagg and Nell, the two progenitors now reduced to poking their heads out and asking for food or beginning to wrest a story from bitter-sweet memories. But memory clouds and confuses, there are momentarily recollected instances of tranquillity—Lake Como—but they bear little weight and rapidly pass. Not even the redemption of memory then.

The bleak setting of grey walls and wooden floor seems just right and one feels that "Beyond is the other hell"—of life? Hamm is the only mobile character in a play which speaks of the "torment of being active", and he wrenches comedy from his by-play with the ladder to see out of the windows—where apparently nothing significant can be seen.

It could be taken that these figures all represent entities of the same mind—a colossal skull is the stage set, with the two windows black hollow eyes. Hamm and Clov are the death wish and the rational part of the mind. But this again is perhaps too specific: "Beckett works on pure symbols which will mean different things to everyone, depending on his state of mind when he sees the play."

Is this an intolerably pessimistic play? I do not think so: humanity creeps in and the two Aristotelian pin-points of pity and fear combine to give a cathartic effect in this well-acted performance.

JIM HERRICK

**JUNO AND THE PAYCOCK** by Seán O'Casey.  
The Mermaid Theatre (until 25 August).

*Juno and the Paycock* is one of those great plays that have risen out of Ireland's 'troubles'. It is set in a Dublin tenement during the Civil War of 1922, and tells the story of the sufferings and final disintegration of the Boyle family. Idleness, greed, selfishness and arrogance precipitate the disasters that overtake the family. O'Casey has called the play "a tragedy of vanity", but it is also a comedy of vanity. The strutting 'Captain Doyle and his sycophantic hanger-on, Joxer Daly, are two of the theatre's great comic creations. Juno, his long-suffering wife, excellently played here by Siobhán McKenna, is sardonic, courageous and warm-hearted. By virtue of what she is, rather than what she does, Juno has become one of the theatre's folk-heroines. She decries the "murtherin' hate" that finally claims her own son as one of its victims, yet has the resilience, after that loss, to plan a future for herself and her pregnant daughter. It is Juno's strength, tempered with compassion and faith, that gives this play stature. It should give us hope too.

This production, by the late Seán Kenny, offers no chance for easy commitment and pat conclusions. Nor, with its mainly Irish cast, does it give us fake Irishry. I

was already familiar with the play, but discovered fresh and often disturbing facets to it. In a strong cast, Niall Buggy's performance as the maimed, guilty son is particularly striking. Terror and fanaticism show in his eyes and in his every movement. By contrast, his warm, boyish reaction to a rendering of "If you're Irish, come into the Parlour" shows the potential that violence has warped.

One might have strictures about Seán Kenny's 'rustic' use of timber for the set. I found it visually daring and inspired, and in harmony with the play's atmosphere.

Despite the play's disquieting immediacy, this is an evening both of mirth and triumph.

VERA LUSTIG

## LETTERS

### Blasphemy and the Law

There was a verbal slip in Pat Knight's review (June) of Paul O'Higgins's excellent book, *Censorship in Britain*: she speaks of the offence of blasphemy being still on the Statute Book. The 1697 Blasphemy Act was, of course, repealed by the Criminal Law Act 1967. Unfortunately, at the same time the common law offence of blasphemy was not statute barred, and so still stands.

In his book Dr. O'Higgins points to the authorities' continuing reluctance to bring prosecutions for blasphemy, and cites, as an example, their failure to prosecute the play, *Council of Love*, following a complaint by Mr. Geoffrey Russell. In this connection he might have mentioned the points arising from the subsequent private prosecution of the play by the Dowager Lady Birdwood (*Freethinker*, 27 February 1971).

As is well known, since the passing of the 1959 Obscene Publications Act, those bringing prosecutions against allegedly obscene publications have attempted to evade the partial safeguards afforded by that Act. They have done this by using powers given in certain wide-ranging nineteenth-century statutes or by resurrecting (some would say trumping up) vague common law offences such as 'conspiracy to corrupt public morals'. Accordingly, when the Theatres Act, 1968, was passed with the intention of putting theatrical performances in roughly the same position with regards prosecution as publications, it was felt necessary to write into the Act certain additional safeguards. These were first that prosecutions could not be brought either under these other statutes or under the common law, and second that prosecutions could be brought only with the consent of the Attorney General. Unfortunately, the legislators overlooked to make provision for the possibility of a prosecution for blasphemy, so that the section of the Act which was intended to prevent prosecutions at common law reads: "No person shall be proceeded against . . . for an offence at common law where it is of the essence of the offence that the performance . . . was obscene, indecent, offensive, disgusting or injurious to morality." There is no mention of blasphemy.

This omission gave Lady Birdwood the loophole she was looking for. The Theatres Act did not prevent a common law prosecution for blasphemy, and as her prosecution was not then a prosecution under the Theatres Act the Attorney General's consent was not required. As it turned out, the prosecution failed (in fact, it was withdrawn), but only on account of factual errors in the wording of the charges. But for this, it is difficult to see how the prosecution could have failed, for the play was nothing but blasphemous, did nothing if not "scoffingly or irreverently ridicule or impugn the doctrines of the Christian faith" with "contumelious reproaches of Jesus Christ"—the classic ingredients of blasphemy. It was by this narrow margin that the most recent successful prosecution for blasphemy occurred in 1940, and not in 1971.

CHRISTOPHER MOREY.

### 'Holy Enema' Cults

Although informative as far as it goes, your magazine has hitherto had almost nothing on Satanism's recrudescence in the modern world. Hence this letter.

The practice of accepting Satan as one's own personal saviour began in mediaeval Germany. According to divinity students using this topic for their doctoral theses, there is evidence that Satan-worship was secretly practised in New York City as long ago as the 1870s, when the first great wave of German immigrants



arrived in America. But it was only a few years ago, and in California, that the English-speaking general public first heard of Satanism.

Have any of your German readers any information on the extent to which the "holy enema cult" still survives?

Prussia east of the Elbe used to have certain religious cultists celebrating the eucharistic service with sacramental enemas. Apparently a survival of mediaeval Satan-worship, the "holy enema cult" was widespread as late as Bismarck's time. My Oranienburg great-grandparents' family doctor said that among his patients were several families having accused him of advocating sacrilege when he told them to use enemas instead of laxatives when subjecting their children to the Saturday-evening cleanout that was almost universal during the nineteenth century.

It is questionable whether this cult has survived nearly thirty years of rule by the Communists, as the latter harass cults in general much more severely than they harass ordinary churches. However, the Enema Lady, New York City radio station W.B.A.I.'s leading comedienne, says that there is evidence that it still survives among some of the countless Eastern Prussian families who have settled in West Germany and elsewhere. She says that her own ancestors came from Koenigsberg, and she has aired descriptions of ancestral memories similar to mine. Although she is a fire-breathing atheist, and although she admits that her own daily "water-sports" are just for fun, she mentions the "holy enema cult" whenever she does programmes on all the different kinds of enemas.

It was for purely ablutionary reasons that my mother used to enematise me, and I know no language strong enough to describe how awful it was.

457 Fay Avenue, Elizabeth,  
New Jersey 07202, U.S.A.

RICHARD STERN.

### The Turban Saga Again—Unwrapped

Several years ago, finding no reference in Frederic Pincott's article, "Sikhism" (*Religious Systems of The World*), on the religious injunction for Sikhs to wear turbans, I questioned various Sikh acquaintances on the matter. I was told that there was no such injunction. The Sikh is obliged never to cut his hair, and although he is never to uncover his head, the typical style of headdress is no more than a matter of custom. As could be seen on the television coverage of the Olympic games, Sikhs do not wear turbans when playing hockey. Frederic Pincott writes:

"Guru Govind Singh ordained that every Sikh should always retain about him five things each beginning with the letter *k*; that is, *kes*, 'hair', *kanghā*, 'a comb', *karad*, 'a dagger', *kirpān*, 'a sword', and *kachh*, 'short drawers'. The meaning of these things is this: a Sikh is to be distinctly different from both Hindu and Muhammadan, both of whom shave the head. A Sikh is never to shave, or even to cut either hair or beard, as long as he lives; and, on account of the *kes*, or hair, the *kanghā*, or comb, is necessary. The sword and dagger are for fighting even 'to the knife'; and the short drawers are to give the body freedom in fighting, by keeping it clear from the entanglement of long garments. Whoever omits to carry about him any one of these five objects cannot be a true Sikh.

"Sikhs are strictly enjoined to reject both the Hindu and the Muhammadan sacred books, to reject the authority of the scholars and expounders of those faiths, to abstain from visiting their sacred places or joining in their ceremonies, and never to wear any of their distinguishing marks. A Sikh is never to salute one who is not a Sikh; and if he salute a Musalman or shave his head like a Hindu, he is worthy of hell."

I have always found my turbaned acquaintances most courteous and *disarming*; never stingy with their salutations to Hindus, Moslems or atheists like myself. Freethinkers are going to have plenty of company where they are going—we'd better start learning Punjabi!

BRIAN KHAN.

### Atheist Slander of Hinduism

The report, in the February *Freethinker*, of the World Atheist Congress at Vijayawada, India, would have been merely amusing to Indian readers had it not been for the slander of Hinduism and distortions of known historical facts concerning the "atheists of ancient India".

Firstly, the bravado at the 'Atheist Meet' was grossly misplaced, as 'meets' organised by fashionable nothing-to-do secularists, in some bye-lane of an out-of-the-way town in India, have been a regular Christmas activity for many years.

Secondly, the novelty and 'heroism' of inter-communal marriages is a thing of the past, and for the last fifty years such marriages have been taking place by the hundred every week without any ado or fanfare, without any let or hindrance. People have ceased to mind them.

That is the amusing part of the report. However, the statement that, "due to religious intolerance and Hindu fanaticism, the Lokayata literature had been completely destroyed and one had to reconstruct the story of the Lokayatas by looking at the intense criticism to which they were subjected by the theistic writers in those days", is a travesty of truth and mischievous in the extreme.

History records the visits of a succession of Chinese and other foreign scholars to India over the centuries and none of these visitors has ever reported religious intolerance on the part of the Hindus or the destruction of any religious or philosophical literature by "Hindu fanatics". On the other hand, it is an historical fact that a great wealth of Hindu religious literature was destroyed by the Muslim and Portuguese invaders of the country. However, much of it is still available, resuscitated from oblivion by many a Western scholar and Indologist, and there is no need to reconstruct and fabricate history for an account of Charvaka and the other Lokayatas. For those interested in the views of Charvaka, the *Sarva Darshan Sangraha* (Collection of Philosophical Views) by Madhavacharya should suffice.

The learned pundits of Charvaka's times not only gave him the fullest opportunity for free discussion, but his dialogues are recorded in some detail, without any derision or disrespect to the atheist philosopher. The historians also record that Charvaka was allowed to preach his views in the Hindu temples, and they also pay tribute to the foremost women atheists, Gargi and Maitreyi, for their power of rhetoric. At about the same time, in the second century A.D., St. Thomas was allowed to preach Christianity to Hindus from his shelter in a Hindu temple; even in the sixteenth century, the Jesuit, De Nobilli, was given refuge in a Shiva temple. Buddhism was able to spread in India only because of the tolerance of Hinduism.

If, as the Indian atheists complain, the literature of the Lokayatas was destroyed by "Hindu fanaticism", they should have no grievance at all, since their present activities consist mainly of the burning of copies of the *Manusmriti*, the *Gita* and other Hindu religious texts. I am wondering how *The Freethinker* could accommodate these vandals, enemies of free thought!

Editor, Masurashram Patrika, BRAHMACHARI VISIHWANATHJI,  
Bombay, India.

### Philosophical 'Third-Way' Humanism

May I congratulate Ralph Champion for the honesty and sincerity he displayed in his "What Is Humanism?" (July *Freethinker*). Such light-hearted—though perhaps somewhat weird 'abuse', can hardly be considered offensive, and it is refreshing indeed to find such criticism avoiding the all-too-common folly of uncritically absorbing second-source writings and then accusing others of *belief*.

However, the "variations" on humanism he produced, with their sniping asides at science and materialism, left me with the impression that he too falls into a heavily populated category; what may perhaps be described as the philosophical 'third-way' humanist. By that, I mean one who commences to theorise at a point somewhere above epistemology and therefore in a haphazard way, and 'rescues' ideas as they appeal to him from the floating flotsam of conflict. For to speak of "knowledge . . . enlightenment . . . liberation"; of being "freed from disease and pestilence"; and yet fail to acknowledge (except by criticism) the one activity of man that has above all given to us these standards, is, I consider, ample evidence of this.

Mr. Champion's "repeatedly suggested" principles: "the minimisation of suffering, the avoidance of tyranny and the promotion of tolerance", are magnificent stars, and are at their brightest when the glaring sun of reality has ceased to expose the grim struggle and conflict of the 'here and now'. Only the 'slave ethic'—turning the other cheek—could rightfully lay claim to them. For if, as he says (and at this I fully agree), "We are liberated by actions", how then can the *black* humanist of South Africa, for instance, achieve his aims without turning the proverbial 'blind eye'? And how could the *white* one defend him?

A programme of action will, of necessity, fail to follow the moralisings of the Johnny-sit-on-the-fence types, and as Joseph Dietzgen once remarked: "Between the liquid and the solid there is a horrible mush!" He was of course, referring to the philosophical 'third-way'.

TREVOR MORGAN.

### Old Church Buildings

When I was a Roman Catholic priest I was once rebuked by a retailer of charms and talismans for treating these sacred objects with a "pagan smile". It may have been with the same sort of smile that the N.S.S. became "gravely concerned at the wanton destruction of church buildings of architectural merit", as reported in your News and Notes for July.



During the past seventeen years my main occupation in life has been the cultivation of a purely secular "humanist conscience". This I have come to feel as the only moral force capable of generating genuine freedom of thought, as something totally different from the mental confusion generated by the "media", or the many other ways by which a free people are stopped from thinking. In consequence of my humanist conscience I have made it a rule of life never to enter a church even on the pretext of admiring the architecture or listening to music. For this particular individual all church buildings, whether beautiful or ugly, are haunted by their evil association with religious bigotry. They have, in fact, been the main obstacle to the progress of secular humanism.

For this reason I see nothing to regret in the demolition of church buildings. My only regret is that the physical destruction of church buildings would not, in itself, remove from all human hearts the illusory sense of having been called by God to suppress heresy and to kill the heretic.

PETER CROMMELIN.

The Editor comments:

Yes: but, to be consistent, what about all the other buildings of supreme architectural merit, often built with slave labour or starvation wages—the Taj Mahal, the monuments of ancient Egypt, and so on? The early Christians and Moslems destroyed colossal quantities of works of art and literature because these were not consonant with their doctrines. I would hate to see modern secular man update this sort of philistinism, though some of our 'developers' are having a damn' good try.

Myths about Fascism

My attention has been drawn to a review in your July issue, by Denis Cobell, of a book about the pre-war "Fascist movement in Britain".

He says he counted "at least 969 references, mostly from contemporary newspapers and magazines". If he will tackle the monumental task of checking on the original sources he will discover that a number of them are taken out of their context, or even spurious. The publishers of the Benewick book have apologised for this and offered to make suitable amendments in any future edition.

Any serious discussion of modern politics is obscured by the perpetuation of the myths of the Thirties in such publications. One such myth is that "contempt for the masses was the essence of Fascism". The masses responded to this nonsense by giving Fascist candidates 23 per cent of the votes recorded in the L.C.C. elections in Bethnal Green in 1937—on a register from which most young people were then barred, as only householders were qualified to vote in local elections.

All this is ancient history. Mosley has now withdrawn from party warfare to advance his ideas as an individual. Our Action Party propagates policies based on those ideas. They have advanced as far beyond the narrow nationalism of pre-war Fascism as they have beyond the myths in which that creed is still shrouded, as a substitute for serious research and argument.

E. J. HAMM, Secretary, Action Party (Union Movement).

Fascism in Britain

In his review of *The Fascist Movement in Britain* (July *Freethinker*) Denis Cobell points out that "there was a latent anti-Semitism in East London". This unfortunately was true; I know this because I took part in many campaigns and public meetings against Mosley's British Union of Fascists.

It deserves to be placed on record that it was the Stepney Communist Party who played the main part in organising opposition to the B.U.F. I regret to say that the powerful Stepney Labour Party, with an overwhelming majority on the council, did little or nothing against Mosley and his anti-Semitic propaganda: in fact, in the famous "Battle of Cable Street" (at which I was present) the East End working class, with the dockers in the forefront, fought thousands of blackshirts and police. They did so, I am glad to say, against the wishes of the right-wing leadership in the Labour movement who advised people to stay away from counter-demonstrations against Mosley as "it wouldn't do any good".

Similar advice was given to the German workers by their Labour Party during Nazi demonstrations—the results of which we know only too well.

J. H. MORTEN.

Fascism and Bolshevism

I have not had the opportunity of reading *The Fascist Movement in Britain* by Robert Benewick but I would like to make two observations on Denis Cobell's review in the July *Freethinker*.

He says, "It was not until October 1932 that black shirts were worn by Fascists." Neither Benewick (an American) nor Mr.

Cobell was born when the Fascist Party was formed in Britain in 1923. It so happens I was one of its first members. Even in 1923 the Fascist Party was anti-Semitic, and its young men and women certainly wore black shirts.\*

I was delighted to see G. V. Plekhanov mentioned again in F. A. Ridley's book review. Mr. Ridley rightly says that Russia was still a semi-feudal social system" in 1917 and Plekhanov eventually adopted a critical attitude towards Bolshevism."

Yes, Plekhanov had stated that Lenin would do a great deal of harm in attempting the impossible task of establishing socialism in peasant Russia. Subsequent history has proved Plekhanov right and Lenin wrong. Our old friend Ridley should have known better than to call Russia "the first socialist state".

One can but repeat that Russia is a capitalist country. Almost all the forces of wealth production are state owned. In Britain or France only a small percentage are state owned. State ownership is not socialism.

R. STUART MONTAGUE

\* See photograph on p. 120. However, Denis Cobell was largely dealing with the later British Union of Fascists. (Ed.)

The Dogmas of Stalinism

It is palpably false to suggest that in 1875 Marx, in his *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, spoke of a "socialist society" and "a higher stage" of communism. It was Lenin and Stalin who, in adapting Marxism to Russian backwardness, sought to identify the first of Marx's two phases of communism with "socialism". The Yugoslav philosopher Gajo Petrovic deals with this in depth in *Marx in the Mid-Twentieth Century*.

The intention of my June article was not what is "wished" on to me by Pat Sloan but to consider Olssen's thesis that "Ignorance of the New Testament sources of Hegel's politics disqualifies one from any understanding of Marx that goes more than skin deep." My article is thoroughly documented from a wide variety of sources and by a number of specialists who cannot just be dismissed, in authoritarian fashion, by Mr. Sloan. It is based on a thorough and prolonged study of Marxism, free from any need to conform to any Party dogma or propaganda. As for Sloan's notion that only three of my references are to my principals, I make it at least five, and in less than 700 words I presented three groups of quotations from Marx, one from Engels, one from Hegel, and two from Lenin.

With regard to a contemporary society such as the U.S.S.R., even the communist historian Professor E. J. Hobsbawm says that that country's major objectives of rapid economic growth, technical and scientific development and national security have "no special connections with socialism, democracy or freedom" (*Marxism and Anarchism*). What critics have condemned the U.S.S.R. for is for being "one of the most barbarous and murderous régimes the world has ever seen" (Lichtheim, 1970). Pat Sloan should really study what Soviet citizens such as Roy Medvedev (*Let History Judge*, 1972), Dr. Andrei Sakharov, the U.S.S.R.'s outstanding nuclear physicist (*Progress, Coexistence and Intellectual Freedom*, Pelican, 1969), and Andrei Amalrik, have to say. Sakharov compares Stalinism with Fascism and denounces the "neo-Stalinists" and the "bureaucratic élite".

JUDEX.

The Threat to the 1967 Abortion Act

Your readers are probably aware that anti-abortion organisations are becoming both more numerous and more vociferous. SPUC and LIFE between them boast more than ninety local groups, with more being formed weekly. Currently they are planning a mass lobby of Members of Parliament to urge either repeal or restrictive amendment of the Abortion Act. This threat should not be taken lightly, as the anti-abortionists have the power, organisation and money of the Roman Catholic Church behind them.

Would those who are prepared to help retain the benefits of a liberal abortion law please complete the form below and return it to ALRA immediately.

DIANE MUNDAY (Mrs.).

General Secretary,  
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To: ALRA, 22 Brewhouse Hill, Wheathampstead, near St. Albans, Herts. AL4 8AG.

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Freethought books and pamphlets (new). Send for list to G. W. Foote & Company, 698 Holloway Road, London, N19 3NL.

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.

Humanist Counselling Service, 13 Prince of Wales Terrace, London W8 5PG; telephone 01-937 2341 (for confidential advice on your personal problems—whatever they are).

London Secular Group (outdoor meetings). *Thursdays*, 12.30 a.m.—2 p.m. at Tower Hill; *Sundays*, 3—7 p.m. at Marble Arch. (*The Freethinker* and other literature on sale.)

# EVENTS

Freethought History and Bibliography Society, 13 Prince of Wales Terrace, London W8. Tuesday, 18 September, 7.45 p.m.: DR EDWARD ROYLE, "Secularism's Lost Leader—the reputation of G. J. Holyoake."

Humanist Holidays. 21—23 September: Weekend in Coventry, based at the Croft Hotel, Stoke Green. Will include sightseeing tour, theatre visit, and tour of Bradlaugh haunts at Northampton (led by BILL MCILROY). For further details contact Mrs. Marjorie Mepham, 29 Fairview Road, Sutton, Surrey (telephone: 01-642 8796).

London Young Humanists, 13 Prince of Wales Terrace, London W8. Sunday, 19 August, 7.30 p.m.: LESLIE SEWELL and IKEM ARINZE, "Capitalism v. Socialism: which is the answer to our problems?" (Discussion).

"Salute to Robert Owen", Saturday, 13 October: train/coach trip to Newtown, Montgomeryshire and the Robert Owen Museum, followed by tour of mid-Wales. £3.50 return from London. For further details contact Mr. J. M. Alexander, 01-722 9503 (home) or 01-629 9496 ext. 225 (office).

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