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INDECENT DISPLAY

—PROPOSAL TO CONTROL SOFT PORNOGRAPHY

The Home Secretary, Mr. Carr, has announced legislation to control the display of indecent pictures. It will also contain provisions for the delivery of unsolicited and indecent material, whether by post or by hand. In the case of displayed books and magazines, the legislation is aimed at the cover pictures, while the contents will remain subject to the Obscene Publications Acts. Consequently, publishers, booksellers and newsagents will have to decide whether to adopt discreet covers for their wares, or to retain alluring covers, but make them available only in private areas, to which the public would have resort only at the specific invitation of the owner. The test of what is to be banned is indecency, but no attempt is to be made to define what is meant by this term. Said Mr. Carr, "I don't think this concept of indecency is capable of precise definition in words which could be applied with complete uniformity from one case to another from one moment to another." The opportunity of this legislation is also to be taken to remove an anomaly which at present exists whereby cinema clubs are subject neither to local authority licensing as to what they exhibit or to the Obscene Publications Acts. It is proposed to put clubs run for profit under the former and clubs not run for profit under the latter.

A necessary concession?

Many freethinkers will welcome this measure as a means of consolidating their position against the censorship lobby. If, they will say, we meet their demands on the point of public display, we can the more forcibly oppose their demands to control even more than at present what the individual is free to see and read in private. In this, it can be likened to the Street Offences Act, which sought to remove soliciting prostitutes from the streets, while not making their services unavailable to those who cared to seek them out.

However, the proposed measure is open to considerable objection. Mr. Carr probably has a good idea of the material he wishes to have removed from public display, but unless he makes some attempt to communicate this to those who will have to enforce the Act, confusion will reign. For instance, Mr. Carr says, that it is not aimed at nudity as such, but "nudity in suggestive poses and circumstances". But will those enforcing the law take a similar view, or will they hold that all nudity 'offends and disgusts', the usual test of indecency? The Magistrates' Association is confident that its members are an adequate sounding board for public taste and sees no objection in the fact that a country bench will take a very different view of what is indecent from that of a city stipendiary. The Law Society, however, thinks differently: such discrepancies bring the law into disrepute, and make it impossible for solicitors to perform one of their major functions, advising their clients in advance whether a particular course of action will infringe the law.

Who will decide?

It has not been made clear, moreover, who will have the power to bring prosecutions. If the legislation does not exclude the possibility of private prosecutions, sellers of literature will be subject to grave inconvenience and loss at the hands of over-zealous citizens. But, even if private

prosecutions are excluded, can the authorities be relied upon to administer the law sensibly? Experience suggests they cannot. In many areas the police have already harassed newsagents over their stocks of 'girlie' magazines. If they do this when the test is obscenity, what will be the position when the lesser test of indecency is available? The unreliability of officials in matters of taste was amply demonstrated recently, when the Customs impounded a sex education kit widely used in the United States by the Unitarian Church, which had been ordered by the B.B.C.

Narrow view

Moreover, the police and magistrates always tend to take a narrower public position in these matters than they adopt in private, or which they would apply to themselves. Nudity, for instance, is no longer as shocking as the authorities may imagine. In its first annual report the Independent Broadcasting Authority describes two surveys it carried out on this very question. The controversial film on Andy Warhol was watched by a much larger audience than would have been expected. In view of the publicity it received, it was seen in no less than seven and a quarter million homes. In the survey, however, only one per cent of those questioned were offended by the nudity, and one per cent by the language used. In the case of the play, *A Point in Time*, which featured male and female frontal nudity, only eight per cent were offended by the nudity, while nineteen per cent specifically stated that they were not offended by it.

It would seem, therefore, that the government has been pressurized by the censorship lobby into introducing legislation which is dangerously vague in an area where legislation is always technically unsatisfactory. It is surely unnecessary for sex to be singled out yet again for special treatment. Many commercial activities carried on in public are unsightly and distasteful, but, it seems, they warrant

(Continued overleaf)

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NEWS

It was a joy for me to hear Secular Humanism put across without visualizing the speakers in borrowed dog-collars, terrified of offending the feelings of the all-powerful anti-Humanists they are meant to be opposing. I usually feel after seeing or hearing so-called Secularists on radio or TV, that if they be our friends who needs enemies. Not so in this case. The N.S.S. clearly believes it is more important to speak up for those who really need (and deserve) its support. If several points could have been made more forcefully (especially, perhaps, with the blind listener, to make it clear that it is often sentimentality and romanticism that go with mysticism rather than compassion and poetic vision), few were neglected. I rather doubt if many Women's Liberationists need to be reminded about the anti-feminism of Christianity, or not without being told exactly what the N.S.S. has been doing about the Sex Discrimination Bill (I didn't see them in the House of Commons or Caxton Hall) to compare with the militant action of Christian feminists.

In making these small criticisms (more a matter of balance than content) I recognise the programme as a historical victory over B.B.C. censorship against Humanism. The N.S.S. deserves all praise; not just for this achievement, but also for its calm, determined and informed presentation of Secular Humanism. And make no mistake, this remains a subject about which the majority of people in this country are still ignorant. Just as well then that this most valuable 100-minute programme was repeated on Radio London the following Friday.

What hope now, perhaps, that Auntie ("Uncle" I think might be a fairer euphemism) will show his knees, or at least get up off them, and allow alternatives to the all-invasive religious propaganda put out on Radios 1, 2, 3 and 4? Couldn't someone just whisper in his ear that it is now 1973, not 1873? Go on B.B.C.! Give the Christians a chance to prove they have, if not the truth, enough courage, dignity and honesty not to keep hiding behind microphones and pulpits for fear of questions they cannot answer.

Well done N.S.S. And thank you.

BUT...

The Rev. Alan Laurence Gowdey, an Anglican industrial chaplain, warns Christians not to knock religious TV. They should remember, he says, that unlike in other countries they get it free. The B.B.C. and ITV transmit around 300 hours a year of religious programmes which reach a large, mixed and varied audience. He urges them to exploit the possibilities of local radio, which welcomes the co-operation of the churches.

If, however, the religious broadcasting schedules of the new London commercial radio stations are anything to go by, Mr. Gowdey need have no worries over the strength of the position of the churches on the air. The London Broadcasting Company intends to have each evening a religious *Thought for the Night*. On Sundays religious news, interviews with visiting evangelists and local ministers beginning social experiments will be featured in a news magazine programme to be broadcast from 6 to 9 a.m. At midday there will specifically Christian worship spot, *In Praise*, while in the afternoon there will be an eighty-minute phone-in religious debate, *We Believe*.

(Continued from front page)

legislation only when they involve sex. Nor can it be consistently said that the aim is to protect children who may wander into, say, a newsagent's. For, if this is the intention, why is no action taken to protect them from the more real danger of the sweet counter, or to shield their eyes from the public display and use of cigarettes? Indeed, I suspect that most children are capable of coming to terms with pornographic sex more readily than most of their parents. To children pornography is just one of the many strange pre-occupations of some adults.

It is little wonder that this proposal has been welcomed as far as it goes by Lord Longford. It uses, in the case of display, a test not unlike that recommended by Lord Longford and his pseudo-commission for general application. Unfortunately, it is open to the same objections, in that the uncertainty of the extent of its application will make it more trouble than it could ever be worth. In view of the difficulties that have arisen in the administration of the Obscene Publications Acts, one would have thought the government would have hesitated before making the situation infinitely worse.

FREETHINKERS BREAK BROADCASTING EMBARGO

KIT MOUAT writes:

Auntie B.B.C. really showed her ankles when she ushered freethinkers from the National Secular Society on to Radio London's *Platform* on 26 September, and an excellent performance it was too. Bill McIlroy was, as always, an outstanding chairman with his blend of gentle firmness and courtesy. The supporting cast of Barbara Smoker, Patricia Knight, Rona Gerber, G. N. Deodhekar, Michael Lloyd-Jones, Christopher Morey and John White, with their summary of Secularist aims, history and purposes were excellent. Perhaps it was a pity that all the panel seemed to have been Church members at one time, for it may be too easy for our opponents to use the 'converts are always the most militant' argument against us. But it was also made clear that no one in this Christianity-conditioned country can hope to escape indoctrination to some degree, and that to oppose this undemocratic situation is one of the N.S.S.'s major tasks.

ISSUES AND NOTES

Religionists are re-assured that commercials will not be allowed to interfere with the worship and late-night programmes.

Even Capital Radio, which is intended to provide a 24-hour service of music and entertainment, makes its bid for respectability with a half-hour phone-in programme on Sunday mornings for listeners' problems, queries and arguments on faith.

LABOUR PARTY DODGES RELIGION AND SCHOOLS ISSUE AGAIN

Readers of *The Freethinker* will recall that in July 1972 the Labour Party's National Executive rejected a recommendation of its Education Advisory Committee that opting out of school religion should be replaced by opting in. This is a perennial problem for the Labour Party, which as a would-be radical party is, nevertheless, forced to avoid the radical position because of its reliance in certain constituencies on a working-class Catholic vote.

When, however, Mr. Roy Hattersley, Labour's shadow spokesman on education, made his outspoken speech on what a future Labour Government would do to independent schools, it might be thought that here at last was a Labour education spokesman, who was sufficiently committed to an ideal commitment that he would lead the Party into tackling the complex of issues associated with religion and schools. But at an early opportunity Mr. Hattersley took part in a religious broadcast to state that, whatever happened to the independent status of schools, their religious integrity would be maintained. This he "devoutly" undertook. Schools meeting the needs of parents, who were concerned that the education of their children should be within a religious environment, would be allowed to continue.

At the Party's annual conference the question of state schools and religion came up for debate again. A resolution of the National Organisation of Labour Students included clauses instructing the next Labour Government to introduce an Education Act incorporating (i) an end to the streaming system and all segregation whether based on class, sex or religion, and (ii) the abolition of compulsory religious education and worship. The casual reader may be excused for imagining that the former clause abolishing segregation by religion would involve the abolition of church schools, but not so according to Mr. J. O'Keefe seconding the motion. This resolution should not be interpreted, he said, as an attack on denominational schools. What he wanted to see stopped was the perversion whereby children of many different denominations were being taught religion by a teacher who could subscribe to any religion or none.

It was no surprise then that Miss Joan Lester, the schools spokesman, successfully moved that the resolution be remitted to the National Executive. It contained, she said, things it would be unfair of them to commit themselves to at this stage.

GURU CHARITY

In July the Charity Commissioners asked the Divine Light Mission of Guru Maharaj Ji to submit up-to-date accounts in view of publicly expressed concern over the activities

of the Mission. It appears now that the Guru and his disciples are making the most of their charity status as if they know it may not last. In London's West End you are likely to be invited to buy a copy of their newspaper, *The Divine Times*, "in aid of charity". However, William McIlroy, General Secretary of the National Secular Society, has come across, an even more questionable use of their charity status.

WOULDN'T IT MAKE YOU HAPPY TO SEE THE BACK OF THAT . . . ?

Whatever it is, we may be able to help you. We are working to spread world peace and for the betterment of mankind. Furniture, Antiques, Paperbacks, Household goods, Pianos, etc. We would be only too pleased to collect from you **PHONE NOW!** 802 6605. All proceeds to Charity (Regd. No. 264682).

He writes:

This advertisement appeared in a recent issue of the *Hornsey Journal*, a North London weekly newspaper. When I telephoned 802 6605, the number given in the advertisement, a man's voice replied: "Divine Sales", and when I asked where the gifts should be delivered the answer was "363 Green Lanes".

Being familiar with the religious scene, I realised this was one of the secondhand shops being run by Guru Maharaj Ji's Divine Light Mission. But how many others, particularly elderly people, will be duped into donating gifts to a religious organisation which they would not knowingly support? For the Divine Light Mission, despite the jargon and the nebulous chatter, is simply a religious outfit endeavouring to promote mindless adulation of a teenage Indian boy. There are those who believe that the whole operation is a family business.

The foregoing prompts several questions: (1) Why did the devotees of Maharaj Ji (who don't normally hide their divine light under a bushel) omit their name from the advertisement? (2) Such a form of advertising may be legally permissible but is it ethically acceptable from the followers of one who claims to be "spreading the Knowledge of Truth"? (3) Is it right that a religious movement can obtain charity status merely for being a religion at a time when a large number of reforming and educational organisations are denied this advantage? (4) Should this organisation be allowed to bring disrepute to the activities of more worthy charities?

OBITUARY

Mr. John Bellamy

Mr. John Bellamy, who died recently in his ninetieth year, had a remarkable record of public service in London's East End, where he spent most of his life. He was born into a working-class family, and the terrible living conditions in the East End of his youth influenced his decision to campaign for better housing. He served on many committees, and was a founder and chairman of the Shoreditch Housing Association. Mr. Bellamy was a Liberal member of the former Shoreditch Borough Council, and was also a full-time Liberal agent. He was a member of the National Secular Society and a *Freethinker* reader for most of his life.

Mr. Bellamy is survived by his four sons, eleven grandchildren and ten great-grandchildren. The general secretary of the National Secular Society conducted the committal ceremony at Enfield Crematorium on 13 September.

ANTI-ABORTION LOBBY

Readers of *The Freethinker* are reminded that their support is needed to counter the mass lobby of Parliament, when M.P.s will be asked to repeal or dramatically amend the Act. Please write to your M.P., encouraging him to resist religious pressure on this issue, or contact the General Secretary, Abortion Law Reform Association, 22 Brewhouse Hill, Wheathamstead, Hertfordshire.

THOMAS PAINE HONOURED

NIGEL SINNOTT writes:

A toast to the memory of Thomas Paine was proposed at a candlelight dinner at The Phoenix, Palace Street, London, on 6 October last by Mr. Christopher Brunel, chairman of the Thomas Paine Society. The dinner was held to mark the tenth anniversary of the founding of the Society, and a traditional English menu—the sort of food that might have been available in Paine's day—was served.

Guests included Miss Audrey Williamson, whose recently published biography of Thomas Paine is reviewed in this issue, Mr. W. J. Mond from Auckland (the Society's liaison officer in New Zealand), and Mr. Michael Foot, M.P., the president of the T.P.S. In his speech Michael Foot paid tribute to Miss Williamson's new work on Paine: some reviewers, he said, had criticised her book for relating Paine's life and opinions to contemporary events, but it was in fact difficult not to do so if one took Thomas Paine's ideas about democracy seriously.

The Society's secretary, Mr. Robert Morrell, said that when the T.P.S. was founded—at Conway Hall, London, in 1963—he was told that it would only last a year. It had now seen ten years of healthy growth. Future plans would include publicising Paine's influence during the American war of independence to mark the two hundredth anniversary (1976) of the Declaration of Independence; and it was also hoped that in view of Paine's activities in the early days of the French Republic, the T.P.S. would be able to develop and expand its contacts in France.

After the dinner, guests were shown a number of interesting items that the Thomas Paine Society had recently acquired from the Bartlett Collection. These included a lock of Paine's hair (prepared for exhibition purposes by an earlier biographer, Dr. Moncure Conway), and the earliest known document bearing Paine's signature (without the 'e'), his marriage certificate of 1759, which was written on linen.

CLERICAL BLUES

Many theological colleges are facing difficulties, both financial and in finding candidates for the ministry. In a period when the number of graduates being produced by the universities has increased enormously, the proportion of candidates for the ministry who are graduates is declining. In fact, the numbers taking theology degrees appears to be increasing, as does the number taking religious knowledge in the G.C.E. However, many, if not most of these, prefer a career in teaching or social service.

One college, St. John's, Nottingham, has found a means of swelling numbers of students for any college with a lack of candidates. Five young wives of students at the college have suspended their own careers and are themselves undertaking a one-year course at the college.

We wish them well and hope that their course does not include a lecture on exorcism. If it does, we suggest they skip it. During the last week of term at St. Stephen's House, Oxford, during a lecture on exorcism, we are told, an ordinand was "gripped by an evil spirit". He went into a "severe frenzy" and had to be exorcized by a priest. So serious was the incident considered, that the episcopal visitor, the Bishop Oxford, was called in to give pastoral advice.

If this is the sort of thing that happens in theological colleges, the findings of Dr. Hugh Eadie, of the Cairnville Institute, South Varra, Australia, in a survey into the mental health of Church of Scotland ministers are, perhaps, not surprising. He found that the typical minister's personality comprised a pronounced inferiority complex, excessive self-blame, a compulsive need for admiration, and in some cases fancies of omnipotence and repressed sexual impulses. Sixty-eight per cent had suffered from some form of mental disorder since their ordination. Fifteen per cent had deeper disorders usually involving sexual obsessions and subsequent fear of exposure. "His stresses are self-imposed," he says. "He is attracted to preaching to resolve his own inner conflicts, yet finds that the job actually intensifies them."

FIFTY YEARS AGO

The police guarded Dumbarton Parish Church on a recent Sunday following the rector's action in voting against feeding necessitous school-children. Over four hundred unemployed men and women demonstrated outside the church. This is a striking example of Christianity in action.

The Freethinker, 28 October 1923.

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

The recent outburst against [artificial insemination], one of the newest social scientific achievements of a scientific age, by the Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission, is what everyone of course expected. It is even suggested that the practice should be made a criminal offence. But surely the Church should be satisfied! For until now, there has been no known technique of procreation available which completely avoids cohabitation, and reduces the whole contract to a level of cold unemotional procedure which would have delighted the hearts of mediaeval saints.

J. B. Sturge-Whiting in *The Freethinker*, 17 October 1948.

FREETHINKER FUND

We are most grateful to those readers who kindly contributed to the Freethinker Fund during September.

Our thanks to: H. I. Bayford (27p), Miss Brigid Brophy (90p), J. E. Burdon (25p), A. E. Dawn (90p), H. Eckersley (£3.90), R. C. Essex (£1.75), E. J. Hughes (£1), Professor H. A. Newman (£2.15), A. M. Parry (90p), J. P. Roche (£3), E. Wakefield (£1). Total for September: £16.02.

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SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL

Dr. Fritz Schumacher is one of the good guys. The odds he is up against in this book are fantastic. He is out to confound the whole of modern economics from Adam Smith to the present day, including (lest it be supposed otherwise) Karl Marx.

The exercise is undertaken impressionistically. There would seem to be two reasons for that. In the first place this is patently a collection of lectures and essays knocked into book form and therefore it lacks system, logical development and is for ever taking off at tangents. Fundamental definitions are avoided (there is no proper treatment of the basic problem of value for example) and this is a pity if only because it will offer Dr. Schumacher's fellow economists the opportunity to dismiss the book as lightweight stuff, which it certainly is not. In the second place, however, suggesting a new economics is such a vast enterprise that perhaps a short book of vital clues may be of more value than a massive tome of indigestible comprehensiveness.

The thesis that small is beautiful is not, of course, new. Schumacher, Leopold Kohr, John Papworth and others have been hammering away at it for years: "Modern man does not experience himself as a part of nature but as an outside force destined to dominate and conquer it. He even talks of a battle with nature, forgetting that, if he won the battle, he would find himself on the losing side."

Nature's capital

In the course of this illusory 'battle' with nature we have been so fascinated by the scale, complexity and apparent success of our techniques that we have forgotten that they are "only a small part of the total capital we are using. Far greater is the capital provided by nature and not by man—and we do not even recognise it as such." Now, after two hundred years of the industrial revolution, the natural values and capital of our environment, always hitherto taken for granted by the economists, face critical threats. This takes us back to square one.

It is plain that we cannot continue on our present course. The Earth is finite, it can be used up; but it is also self-renewing through the power of the sun and the seasons. We can latch on to the whole natural recycling process and "see the possibility of evolving a new life-style, with new methods of production and new patterns of consumption, a life-style designed for permanence."

This means a new economics and he uses a new word to suggest it:

Economics operates legitimately and usefully within a 'given' framework which lies altogether outside the economic calculus. We might say that economics does not stand on its own feet, or that it is a 'derived' body of thought—derived from meta-economics. Meta-economics consists of two parts—one dealing with man and the other dealing with the environment. In other words, we may expect that economics must derive its aims and objectives from a study of man, and that it must derive at least a large part of its methodology from the study of nature.

Chapter Four opens with a refreshingly tangential paragraph: "'Right Livelihood' is one of the requirements of the Buddha's Noble Eightfold Path. It is clear, therefore, that there must be such a thing as Buddhist economics."

Small is Beautiful: A Study of Economics as if People Mattered by E. F. Schumacher. Blond & Briggs, £3.25.

PETER CADOGAN

Whereas in 'The West' the notion of work has been debased to the level of a necessary laborious evil, a clock-watcher's disutility, an automated expendability,

the Buddhist point of view takes the function of work to be at least threefold: to give a man a chance to utilise and develop his faculties; to enable him to overcome his ego-centredness by joining with other people in a common task; to bring forth the goods and services needed for a becoming existence.

Goods or people

Then to the central thesis:

What is the meaning of democracy, freedom, human dignity, standard of living, self-realisation, fulfilment? Is it a matter of goods, or of people? Of course it is a matter of people. But people can be themselves only in small comprehensible groups. Therefore we must learn to think in terms of an articulated structure that can cope with a multiplicity of small-scale units. If economic thinking cannot grasp this it is useless.

In that context he makes the case for regionalism, "not in the sense of combining a lot of states into free-trade systems, but in the opposite sense of developing all the regions within each country."

Schumacher puts the power of ideas back in the middle of the picture. We shall always be the victims of circumstances if we let size, cost, 'efficiency', growth, and so on, be our masters.

[If our ideas] are mainly small, weak, superficial and incoherent, life will appear insipid, uninteresting, petty and chaotic. It is difficult to bear the resultant feeling of emptiness, and the vacuum in our minds may only be too easily filled by some big, fantastic notion—political or otherwise—which suddenly seems to illumine everything and to give meaning and purpose to our existence.

As ex-Economic Adviser to the Coal Board, Dr. Schumacher is hardly likely to prescribe 'two acres and a cow'. "Large-scale organisation is here to stay. Therefore it is all the more necessary to think about it and to theorize about it. The fundamental task is to achieve smallness *within* large organisation." And from this he derives his Principle of Subsidiary Function, "that the burden of proof lies always on those who want to deprive a lower level of its function."

Planners and planning

He makes some very helpful semantic side-swipes, for example, over the word 'planning'. "To apply the word 'planning' to matters outside the planners' control is absurd." One makes *estimates* or *forecasts* about events outside one's own control. The mess that people can get into when this is not understood was well exemplified by the notorious "National Plan" of 1965. In the event it came to exactly nothing and had to be quickly forgotten, George Brown notwithstanding, because it was never a *plan* in the first place.

Again, none too soon, the social 'sciences' are put in their proper place.

Great damage to human dignity has resulted from the misguided attempt of the social sciences to adopt and imitate the methods of the natural sciences. Economics, and even more so applied economics, is not an exact science; it is in fact, or ought to be, something much greater: a branch of wisdom.

At the end of the book Dr. Schumacher takes up Tawney's all too neglected thesis that "the remedy for over-centralisation is not the maintenance of functionless property in private hands, but the *decentralised ownership of public property*."



Dr. E. F. Schumacher

He proceeds to a new formula for industrial ownership. Briefly, he urges that when a company reaches a certain size it should be free of taxation on its profits but be obliged to issue one share to a local Social Council (not made up of Civil Servants or Local Government Officers) for every share issued to its private shareholders. Half the dividends would then go back to the community through the Social Council composed of people from four quarters: (1) local trade unions, (2) local employers' organisations, (3) local professional associations, (4) local residents. The Social Council would then allocate the funds received as it thought fit in the promotion of the quality of local life, but would not have any executive control over companies except by virtue of a special formula for use in emergencies. It reads like a most valuable suggestion, the kind of thing on which experimental evidence might lead to the reconstitution of business practice, the more so as company law is now under fire and people in high places are looking for answers. One is only afraid, though, that Dr. Schumacher's imagination is too much for any present or future resident of No. 10.

Cardinal virtues

The book ends on a strong ethical note with Christian connections, the case for the Four Cardinal Virtues—prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance—but they *don't* mean what you might think they mean. "The pre-eminence of prudence means that realisation of the good presupposes knowledge of reality. He alone can do good who knows what things are like and what their situation is." And temperance, it seems, is nothing to do with

teetotalers and abstinence—it simply means knowing when enough is enough. Schumacher refers us to Joseph Pieper (whose name I had never come across before), three of whose books have been translated into English and published by Faber and Faber.

Despite all this, and although the book has great merits, there is still another side to the picture. Dr. Schumacher, in the opinion of this writer, has some blind spots.

Apart from the reference to regionalism, critically important though it is, he seems to be unaware that there is a political problem. He takes the western centralised nation-state for granted, he ignores the problem of inflation and sees no connection between these two. He is liable, therefore, to be overtaken by events and this is the very thing that should *not* happen to the perceptive theoretician. The assumption that our present political constitution can be made to work is more than questionable.

He writes, "the dominant modern belief is that the soundest foundation for peace would be universal prosperity." I think that if Dr. Schumacher were simply to ask around he would discover the contrary. The prevailing belief is "there have always been wars and there always will be wars", and that we hold on to peace in the West by the skin of our atomic teeth. How else do we go on so complacently putting up with that grossly irrational thing, the military-industrial complex?

Wishful thinking

Ecologists, Dr. Schumacher included, are very liable to wishful thinking. "The condition of Lake Erie should serve as a sufficient warning. Another decade or two, and all the internal water systems of the United States may be in a similar condition." This is guess-work, not evidence. One might equally well guess that in twenty years time Lake Erie and other waterways will be cleaned up. It is already happening to the Thames.

His view of war and peace is shallowly economic: "Only by a reduction of needs can one promote a genuine reduction in those tensions which are the ultimate causes of strife and war." No mention of the rôle of the military as the *makers* of wars.

"The essence of education is the transmission of values." This is too static. Wittgenstein did better: "Education is guided invention." And there is an interesting contradiction in these words: "Education which fails to clarify our central convictions is mere training or indulgence. For it is our central convictions that are in disorder . . ." But if our central convictions are bad then what we need, surely, is not to clarify them but to change them?

He begins an analysis of the paid and unpaid parts of the working day but he does not do it well or comprehensively. It can only be done properly if one is leading up to a theory of the gift economy and that, manifestly, Dr. Schumacher is not doing. He is content with money and a managed market.

He goes on to develop the idea for which he is best known, that of intermediate or appropriate technology for the Third World. In the West the assumption is that "what is best for the rich must be best for the poor." The result is nuclear reactors for Taiwan, South Korea, the Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia, Iran, Turkey, Portugal and Venezuela. Yet the real economy in these places is that of the rural poor. He continues:

Development does not start with goods; it starts with people and their education, organisation and discipline. The task then is to bring into existence millions of new workplaces in the rural areas and small towns.

He then proceeds to translate this into a statistically intelligible formula. The rural poor have a capital investment of £1 a head; in the West investment runs at £1,000 a head. The second cannot be imposed upon the first without untold social destruction. What is needed is the concept and practice of £100 a head—an investment that is intermediate and feasible.

No simple solution

This really is too simple. Given the political structure of Africa and the present forms and state of credit, there is just no way to get the £100 a head to where it might do what Dr. Schumacher suggests. The only solution would seem to be a new quality of political leadership so that there are basic changes in priorities and new institutions devised accordingly—and of this there is, at present, no sign. It seems that the people of Africa will just have to suffer and find out for themselves like the people of Ireland. We got them into this mess and they

can only get themselves out of it. It is an appalling situation. The best thing we can do is get off their backs, and then respond to initiatives that come from *them*.

Finally he points out, very wisely, that we are still trying in the twentieth century to get by on the ideas of the nineteenth: "The ideas of the fathers of the nineteenth century have been visited on the third and fourth generations living in the second half of the twentieth century." And this, of course, is impossible. Our ideas have to be such as match our circumstances, and those circumstances have changed out of all recognition. Our thinking is therefore out of touch with our being, and the result is the present shambles. Dr. Schumacher is, however, mistaken in giving the nineteenth century the credit for originating the main structure of today's thinking. That credit belongs to the seventeenth century as has been shown so brilliantly by Whitehead in his *Science and the Modern World*. And what is true of science is equally true of politics.

EUTHANASIA FOR INFANTS

NICHOLAS REED

During the recent publicity about euthanasia, voluntary or otherwise, the attitude of the medical authorities has slowly become clear. While they oppose the right of the patient to ask for an easy death, they are willing to give pain-killing drugs which might secondarily shorten life (a principle even the Catholics have admitted for years), or to turn off a respirator when there is no chance of a patient regaining consciousness. Both these actions are of course very far from the right which supporters of voluntary euthanasia wish to see legal—that of the patient being able to make his own decision, based on the doctor's advice, if he has reached a painful and irremediable condition in his health. Thus, if one unexpectedly finds that one's doctor is one of those who wishes to 'save life at all costs', one should have the right to ask for and receive the services of another doctor who will administer euthanasia. This would then protect the freedom of conscience of those doctors who feel they should never administer euthanasia. We may notice that these safeguards are exactly analogous to the safeguards in the Abortion Act.

The crying need for some step like this is obvious, but it does not get us far. Many of such children, unless actually killed, are going to live even if not operated on. They will then be far worse off than if they had had the immediate operation to mollify their worst handicaps. And of course, when mongol babies are born, they too will survive into adulthood, with no hope of taking part in society. Handicapped as such children already are, many are faced with even worse difficulties if their mothers either completely reject them, or find that they simply cannot cope, or that (as has happened) the effect of such a child has been enough almost to break up the rest of the family. In such cases the child goes to an institution, where in the nature of things it can have only a fraction of the amount of attention and help it would normally receive at home.

Ironic distinction

The problem is well put by Mr. Leach. Some defects we happen to be able to detect in the womb, even early on in pregnancy. Other conditions we happen not to be able to detect at all until the baby is born. (Among the latter are spina bifida and hydrocephalus.) It is ironic that in the first instance, a therapeutic abortion is automatically (and rightly) given, but in the second, the 'sanctity of life' ethic precludes any similar action. Mr. Leach reasonably suggested (as one possibility) that we ought to be able to assign a "probationary period" of life to children, during which time it can be decided whether they should live or not. This solution would also remove the strange situation in which abortions are given for *possible* defects (as when a mother has had German measles during pregnancy), but at the only time when we actually *know* whether the child is deformed, it is considered too late to do anything.

However, only one person has pointed out that there is just as good a case to be made out for euthanasia where defective children are involved. In a letter to *New Humanist* (April 1973), Barbara Smoker wrote that part of the blame for the thalidomide disaster must be laid at the door of the doctors and midwives who did not kill any of the horribly deformed babies they were confronted with. Admittedly, they were held back by the law, which would make them guilty of murder, even if the parents themselves would prefer the child to die. The question, in a minor form, arose recently as a result of a statement by Mr. Lloyd Roberts of Great Ormond Street Hospital, that spina bifida children should be left to die, rather than operated on to save their lives. (I take it it is unnecessary for me to dwell on the appalling lives to which the majority of such children are condemned. Anyone unaware of the facts may consult the relevant chapter in Gerald Leach's *The Biocrats*.)

I assume, then, that we should remove the penalties on doctors who carry out euthanasia. (Though of course, if they do so 'with malice aforethought' they would be charged with murder, just as is envisaged in legislation for voluntary euthanasia.) The question then arises, who de-

cides when euthanasia is to be adopted? It is normally suggested (as by Miss Smoker) that the decision is the doctor's alone. The analogy with adult euthanasia, however, suggests that it should be the parents who decide. After all, it is they who would have the awesome responsibility of caring for the child if it lives; just as adults should be allowed the decision over termination of their own lives, so parents should be allowed it over their child, at a time when clearly the child itself cannot decide.

Difficulties

There are difficulties on both sides, whether parents or doctor decide. On the one hand, parents who want the defective child to die (so that they can try to have a normal one, as soon as possible afterwards) may be opposed by their doctor saying that it ought to live (or indeed, that it has a "right to live", even if it will be doomed to an institution.) On the other hand, a parent may want to keep the child, even if horribly deformed, either because "God gave it to them", or because (as some have later claimed) it was "spiritually uplifting" to see what pain and anguish a child can put up with if it has to. And they may want this, even when the doctor can see that it would be better off dead.

I would propose the following way out of this dilemma. Although it may have its drawbacks, it is, I suggest, better than the present situation, and better than simply allowing doctors the decision in every case. To avoid the first difficulty I have mentioned, the decision should rest with

the parents, when they have been informed of the likely extent of the child's handicap in future years. If, after much heartsearching, they decide that it should die, they should be able to ask their doctor to 'put it down'. If he refuses, he should be legally obliged to pass them on to another doctor who will. (This is, after all, what happens now when abortions are requested.)

Let us now take the case where the parents wish it to live, yet it is clear to the doctor that the child will never have anything like a normal life, will continually suffer severe distress, and once grown up could never become part of society at large. It is well known that if parents who are Jehovah's Witnesses refuse to allow their child to have a blood transfusion, and would prefer it to die rather than have this taboo broken, such a child is made a ward of court, so that it can have a transfusion. In the instance I have outlined, the doctor, after consulting with colleagues and finding he is in agreement with them, would similarly apply for a court order, and could then perform euthanasia, rather than allow the parents to condemn the child to a life of misery. The doctor would only be allowed to do this in the severe circumstances I have described. But the parents would continue to have the absolute right to have the child put down if severely defective.

This is only a proposal. The reader may be able to suggest something more satisfactory. He may even manage to show that the present situation is better than any alternative. If so, I shall be pleased: there will then be one less cause for Humanists to fight for!

GODSTAR SUPERSPELL

ALAN JOWETT

The huge coverage given by the media to the most recent visit by Billy Graham brought wonder to this sinning cynic. Dr Graham had proclaimed to the gathered Fleet Street flocks that in the nick of time before doomsday the long-awaited superstar would make a comeback appearance to please all His old fans, triumphantly besaddled on a white charger, sword in hand, and with an army of Heaven's Angels beside Him.

Dismissing the irreverent thought that the reverend doctor had been at the fire-water instead of the holy water, I noticed the arrival at my local cinema of *Godspell*, the folk rock opera much beloved by the young 'forward-looking' clergy.

Supposing that 'the miracle musical' must have been good to get all those vicars in a twist, that afternoon I filed foyerwards in the wake of the matinee-boppers, the large queues showing the old 'prophet motive' at work.

Ghastly gospel

The epic began. Under a dark New York sky, developed a brash Brooklyn brouhaha. Matthew's gospel was gauchly and grossly deformed and distorted as the bunch of fresh-faced Christniks jumped joyfully around the municipal fountains preparing for the Lordsday, and when the curly benefactor appeared, careered around a convenient junkyard spreading chaos and biblical aphorisms.

After a couple more reels at this unrelenting pace, I sought the sweet September sunlight, wondering how the local pillars of the church would take to this translantic trash. Not the motorcycling sermonizers but the stout 'post-menopausal monsters' of the Mothers' Union and W.I., to

whom 'heavy music' means Mrs Mills and Harry Secombe on *Stars on Sunday*. For them these are graffiti, the gospel of the john.

Far from approving, Mother Church is horrified at the T-shirted godsquad's success at wowing them in the aisles. It's only one short step from being uninhabited, exhibitionist Jesus-freak to being a perverted subversive Cleanliness is godliness; grime's a crime.

We must, however, look on the bright side. The public are now even more sceptical of organised religion than of politicians, as can be seen from the *Evening Standard's* poll, of May 1973. Only 26 per cent of the people had "a great deal of confidence in the institution". Even local government beat that at 27 per cent, with parliament at 31 per cent. Moreover, we see that religion gets a 37 per cent score from the over 65 age group, 30 per cent in the 45-64 age group, while the group aged 25-44 gave only an 18 per cent rating of confidence to religion.

The pew-crew dwines. God is dead and His followers will soon be with Him.

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REVIEWS

BOOKS

THOMAS PAINE: His Life, Work and Times
by Audrey Williamson. Allen & Unwin, £4.85.

It is perhaps a good indication of the continuing value of Thomas Paine's ideas that his very name can arouse in all manner of people the most violent of passions. This was demonstrated during the period when the proposal to erect a statue to him in Thetford, his Norfolk birthplace, was being discussed. The vociferous opposition to the statue was led by a local Conservative councillor who, as his many utterances eloquently testified, shared in the general ignorance of the life and work of Paine displayed by all too many of his critics.

I rather suspect that this new biography by Audrey Williamson will bring all the old prejudices to the fore once more, for there are many who cannot forget the rôle Paine played in the establishment of an independent United States, and the fact that he addressed himself largely to the working class in a manner they could well understand. Quite a large number of individuals would prefer Paine to be relegated to some quiet academic backwater, there to lie unnoticed other than by a handful of specialist writers addressing themselves mainly to fellow specialists through journals few, if any, members of the general public see, let alone read.

Paine is, despite the scope and importance of his work in Britain, America and France, and the massive influence his writings had upon the radical and socialist movements, a forgotten man. Others, and one thinks of Carlyle, share this fate, and the manifest injustice of the situation becomes starkly clear when one reads just what they achieved for their fellows through great personal sacrifice.

Paine, like Carlyle, has been poorly served by biographers. It was his unfortunate lot to have as his first biographer a government clerk who had been employed to write a life that would smear his reputation. How well this succeeded is demonstrated by many who used this work without bothering to check its claims, among these was Sir Leslie Stephen, who, to his credit, apologised after being taken to task by John M. Robertson in his brilliant little essay, "A Vindication of Thomas Paine".

It is also unfortunate that all too many of Paine's friendly biographers, and regrettably Moncreu Conway must be included, saw it as a duty to eulogise him in answer to the sneers and slanders of his hostile biographers; this has caused many academics friendly towards Paine and other radicals (thankfully a growing number) to express a desire for an objective biographical study. Professor A. O. Aldridge attempted this with his book, *Man of Reason*; but while this work has considerable importance, particularly in its coverage of Paine's life in France, it failed to re-examine much of the data used by earlier writers and so continued certain errors, and also incorporated several significant mistakes. In her new book, Audrey Williamson starts quite literally from scratch and takes nothing for granted. She has researched her subject thoroughly and at first hand, read all the important works on Paine—in so far as one can judge from her quotations and bibliography—and has, accordingly, come up with some quite startling new material. She is the first biographer to utilize fully the important material on Paine recently discovered in Lewes. It was briefly touched upon

by the late Henry Collins in his introduction to the Penguin edition of *Rights of Man*. She has thus helped to illustrate Paine's political apprenticeship before he left Britain for America. She corrects Conway's error respecting the religious status of the Ollive family, into which Paine married, and also that made by all previous biographers concerning the age of 'Clio' Rickman when Paine lived in Lewes.

Miss Williamson writes of her subject with warmth and sympathy, but this does not prevent her from saying when she thinks Paine went wrong, or made the proverbial ass of himself. She muses on whether it would have served his reputation better had he responded with more enthusiasm to the efforts of American friends to have him appointed U.S. Postmaster in the 1791 Washington administration. Had this come to fruition we might never have had that epic of biblical criticism, *The Age of Reason*, but one suspects that the United States would have commemorated him with a postage stamp long before they grudgingly did in 1968. (Poland issued one showing him in 1938!)

Throughout this book of almost 300 pages the author paints a word picture of the historical background and relates Paine to the events and ideas of his time. All too frequently biographers seem to display an ability to treat their subjects as though they existed in some form of historical vacuum, thus giving an element of unreality to their work. This Audrey Williamson certainly does not do, and, more importantly, she illustrates time and time again how Paine's ideas transcend their historical setting and have a message for today. How many people are aware that Paine discusses the issue of wages in an inflationary situation, and the questions of corruption in high places and financial scandals? Respecting the latter Miss Williamson suggests that the motivation behind the attempt to suppress *Rights of Man* was stimulated not so much by Paine's call for administrative reform and massive social legislation but because he drew attention to a financial swindle of gigantic proportions. "The rebel who produces facts and figures," writes Miss Williamson, "and argues cause and effect, is always most dangerous to authority."

This biography, then, is likely to arouse controversy. It is a work of very considerable scholarship, but unlike many other such works is addressed as much to the ordinary reader as to the academic. As an experienced Audrey Williamson has the ability to present her material in a very readable manner, and it is her experience in this field that probably prompted her to check on what so many others have taken for granted and simply incorporated into their books. This checking and the new material in the book dates all previous biographies of Paine and ensure that *Thomas Paine: His life, work and times* will become essential reading for anyone seriously interested in the great events of the late eighteenth century which did so much so influence the structure and ideas of society as we now know it.

Miss Williamson has given us an important work, undoubtedly the best biography of Paine yet written. It is remarkably free from errors, although the description of the title page of the eighth edition of *Common Sense* as being the first edition cannot be overlooked, coming as it does almost at the beginning of the book. The range of illustrations is excellent, many being of items and individuals not frequently illustrated, and the whole is backed by a good index and a striking dust wrapper. The main fault is the high price, but perhaps the publisher will consider a paper back addition: one can but hope that he will.

R. W. MORRELL

FREUD: The Man, His World, His Influence edited by Jonathan Miller. Weidenfeld & Nicholson, £3.75.

What are we to think of Freud today? There are some psychologists who regard the model of the human mind that Freud constructed as completely out-dated. They deny the right of psycho-analysis to call itself scientific. At the other extreme there are still orthodox practitioners for whom the pronouncements of Freud must be accepted like religious dogmas. They are the 'believers' and form a diminishing band, because, like all religions, heresies and deviations appeared almost from the start. There is also a middle position in which the insights of Freud are partially accepted, if not as truths, at least as working hypotheses.

This handsomely illustrated volume comprises a reevaluation of Freud by contemporary writers drawn from various disciplines. It shows the influences at work on the young Freud, and the influence he came to exert in so many different fields. Our attitude to child rearing has been profoundly modified by Freud, as Dr. Catherine Storr points out. George Lichtheim compares the contributions of Freud and Marx. An early disciple, Wilhelm Reich, held that each provided what the other lacked—a view which led to Reich's exclusion from the international psycho-analytical movement and also from the Communist Party. Today Marcuse has renewed the attempt with better luck.

One great difference is that Marxism is an optimistic creed, whereas Freud was pessimistic. Both teach that liberation must be sought through understanding. For Marxists the road to scientific socialism is found by the awakening of political consciousness; and for Freud the subjugation of dangerous instinctual urges entails the substitution of reality-thinking for fantasy-thinking. But whereas Marx was concerned with changing society, rather than with individual salvation by employing the techniques of revolution, Freudian therapy is addressed to the individual directly by using the techniques of analysis.

Freud's view of society derives from the materialism of Hobbes. He believed that civilisation arose from the sublimation of instincts. Contrary to the popular idea of him, he did not regard repression of sexual drives as a bad thing: without it we should be in a state of barbarism, lacking all the higher products of cultural life. But how far he regarded civilisation, or even life itself, as worthwhile is an open question. For it was part of his fundamental pessimism that our overriding impulse is to get rid of having impulses. Thus, although it looks as though we are impelled to seek sexual gratification, we only really want it in order to be without it.

To regard love as a basic need is therefore a romantic fallacy. We are continually exposed to a variety of stimuli. The truly basic instinct is the longing to abolish these stimuli and be no longer troubled by them. The satisfaction of love is not an end in itself but a detensioning. In a bold metaphysical flight Freud postulated a tendency as universal as entropy which he rather unfortunately named *thanatos*, or the death instinct. This response to stimulus could only finally achieve its goal by getting rid of all stimulus by the return of life to the inorganic realm from which it emerged.

Few of Freud's followers accepted this theory, but it appealed to the imaginative and artistic. There is no evidence for it, but undoubtedly it gave a kind of coherence to the Freudian conceptual scheme. It stressed man's innate

aggressiveness, and supported Freud's view that "war is inevitable and indeed biologically useful".

Freud himself, so far from being the pioneer of sexual permissiveness, was a stuffy Victorian prude in his private life. His attitude to feminism would give any member of Women's Lib. apoplexy. For example:

Nature has determined woman's destiny through beauty, charm and sweetness. Law and custom have much to give women that has been withheld from them, but the position of women will surely be what it is: in youth an adored darling and in mature years a loved wife.

Antony Quinton sums up the philosophical objections to psycho-analysis very fairly. Although Freud insisted that his approach was strictly scientific, it fails to pass the test of falsifiability. It is common enough for an analyst to decide that a patient hates his father. When the patient protests that on the contrary, he loves his father very much, the analyst merely retorts that the hatred must be unconscious. One cannot win such an argument. Nothing could falsify the analyst's verdict. It is heads he wins, tails you lose.

There is some analogy between Wittgenstein's refusal to take philosophical problems at their face value and the Freudian search for hidden causes of neurotic symptoms. Indeed, Wittgenstein believed that linguistic analysis was a kind of therapy. To worry about the reality of the external world or whether the fundamental substance is matter or mind is therefore a kind of malaise due to the "bewitchment of language". But there the parallel ends because Wittgenstein held that a scientific psychology is impossible.

The clinical objections to psycho-analysis are put quite strongly by Dr. Henry Miller. There is, of course, the practical difficulty that even if the theory is true it is too protracted and costly a treatment for general use. Judged by success in curing neuroses it is no better, and sometimes inferior, to other techniques. Dr. Miller concludes that "recent triumphs in psychopharmacology bid fair to make analytic theories irrelevant to clinical medicine long before anybody can discover how far they are true and how far false."

Freudian theory, however, does not stand or fall by the results of its clinical applications. Nor is it valueless because the Freudian model of the human mind is what Vaihinger meant by "useful fiction" instead of a true description as Freud himself believed. It certainly throws light on the wilder shores of experience. Dawn Ades shows the influence of Freud's concept of "the unconscious" on surrealist art and there are some excellent illustrations. One can see echoes of Bosch in Miro, Max Ernst and Dali. They were fascinated by "the Realm of the Illogical". Their paintings were as fantastic and "as beautiful as the chance meeting on a dissecting table of a sewing machine and an umbrella".

Freud was opposed by any surrender to unreason. Mental health and civilised life must depend on the victory of the *ego* (conscious reason) over the *id* (impersonal unconscious urges). But although some repression is necessary, we must avoid what Marcuse terms "surplus repression".

No one can put down this symposium without realising the greatness and the immense range of Freud's influence. He towers above his successors and his critics like a giant over pygmies.

HECTOR HAWTON

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NEILL! NEILL! ORANGE PEEL! a Personal View of *Ninety Years* by A. S. Neill. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £3.75.

A. S. Neill died on 23 September. This review is published as a tribute for the inspiration he gave to those inclined to give children the freedom and responsibility necessary for their fullest development. His views on religious education led him to support the Secular Education Campaign. At his request his widow, Mrs. Ena Neill, is to continue running his school, Summerhill.—Ed.

This is the nearest A. S. Neill has come to writing an autobiography and then it only covers the early part of his life, the second part of the book being devoted to a collection of essays on a wide variety of subjects. Neill was born and brought up in Forfar, Scotland, and he describes his family, his devotion to his sister Clunie, and his education; how he was a late developer and for a while his father despaired of his ever even passing the civil service examinations. His upbringing was Calvinist and his schooling strict, two influences which he has strongly reacted against in becoming an atheist and the founder of a famous progressive school. He started his teaching in Scotland as a 'young dominie', and then went to Edinburgh University. After this he moved to London as a journalist, where he may have developed his simple and straightforward style. His "inglorious career as a soldier" during the First World War ended with a nervous breakdown—which with characteristic candour he suggests was "the method used by my unconscious to keep me from danger".

He subsequently met Homer Lane, the founder of the Little Commonwealth, a school for delinquents: this man was to be a formative influence in his educational ideas. Homer Lane became his analyst. He joined the King Alfred School, Hampstead, which was co-educational and had abolished prizes, marks and corporal punishment. But this was not enough for Neill; he wanted self-government by the pupils. "One of us has to resign", said the headmaster, and again Neill found himself unemployed. His next venture was a visit to Germany where he stayed and helped to found the Internationalschule at Hellerau. Of course, here there were difficulties with the authorities and after this phase—"the most exciting period of my life"—he returned to England and bought a house in Dorset called Summerhill. Here was to begin the school—subsequently transferred to Leiston, Suffolk—that was a pre-occupy him for the rest of his life.

Summerhill is now famous and Neill's educational ideas can still provide the basis for a heated controversy among teachers. This book gives no clear outline of his educational philosophy, but the gist emerges. Above all Neill believed in the education of the emotions; he was vehemently against corporal punishment and all forms of authoritarian discipline. The children are free to attend lessons as they wish and the school is entirely self-governed by the pupils. Neill was not interested in academic successes but wanted his pupils to mature emotionally in an atmosphere of freedom and understanding; he wanted pupils and teachers who were 'pro-life'. His contention is that "school exams, by and large, deal with things that do not matter".

How influential have Neill's ideas been? I suspect, despite the fact that they have been frequently discussed and even occasionally imitated, that the average state school is still an authoritarian and repressive organisation obsessed with marks and exams. There has been some talk of child-centred education and some primary schools have developed a greater emphasis on play and creative expression (though usually within a rigorously structured framework).

How successful was Neill with his pupils? This is very difficult to assess since Neill in talking of Old Boys says, "I am not primarily interested in whether they are professors or bricklayers; I am interested in their character, their sincerity, their tolerance; I like to think that they have a better chance of being pro-life than disciplined, moulded children have." For Neill's ideas to be widely accepted I fear we would need a radical change in society, for education is the process whereby society socializes its children and necessarily reflects the values of society.

It is interesting to note that Neill was staunchly against religious education. In an essay on religion he writes:

I am quite aware of the limitations of rationalism. To the humanist, as to the believer, life is a mystery that cannot be solved. How did the universe begin? I look at my granddaughter, three weeks old, and marvel at her being. When she raises her hand she does something that no computer, on Rolls Royce engine can do. We have simply to accept the mystery of life knowing that it is a mystery. To postulate a God who was the architect of the grand design seems to me pure childish superstition. Even if we call God cosmic energy we are not solving anything. God is dead because man has taken over his energy function and has used energy to give us TV. sets and pollution plus the almighty H-bomb. 'God's in his heaven; all's right with the world.' Ask the relatives of six million Jews.

The book is written in a clear and limpid style and A. S. Neill's sincerity shines through. These essays range over topics as diverse as humour; ignorance, failings and aversions; sex, repression and pornography. His comments are acute and if not always learned (Neill makes no claim to learning) are invariably lively. An attractive personality emerges and one wonders whether it was not his personal integrity rather than his educational ideas that held the school together.

Now that he is dead it is worth recording that he faced death rationally, with courage and humour:

Sad thought: death means the end of fun. If the Bible had even one joke in it I'd be inclined to believe in heaven. Heaven for holiness, hell for company, said Bernard Shaw. Might be some fun in hell after all. If there is one I know who are in it—Shaw, Wilde, O. Henry, Damon Runyan, Mark Twain. But their light style may be cramped by the presence of St. Paul, Calvin, John Knox—and of course most politicians.

JIM HERRICK

A CATHOLIC/HUMANIST DIALOGUE: Humanists and Roman Catholics in a Common World edited by Paul Kurtz and Albert Dondeyne. Pemberton Books, 90p.

In October 1970 Catholics from the Secretariatus pro Non Credentibus and humanists from the International Humanist and Ethical Union came together in Brussels for their second "dialogue". It will come as no surprise to those versed in Vatican diplomacy to hear that "only two of the Roman Catholic priests present wore clerical garb". Indeed, I should not have raised an eyebrow if they had all practised full frontal nudity.

Ecumenical gestures, I fear, always bring out the most cynical in me. In fact I do not need to be reminded that the average Catholic priest is a serious, hard-working man who sees himself as a benefactor of humanity, and I hope sober Catholics think the same about humanists. It should not be necessary to go to Brussels to make these discoveries.

The subjects announced for the "dialogue" were education and an open society; common global responsibilities; modern humanism and the Christian faith in God. As the proceedings unfolded Howard Radest, Secretary-General of the I.H.E.U., "was struck by the basic agreements underlying our traditional differences". Does this signify

notable progress in solving the problems of the world? I wish I could say yes.

On reading the report of proceedings, however, *mirabile dictu*, I could glean no such impression. Certainly protagonists from both sides discussed the same—or similar—subjects, used the same language and were scrupulously polite. In a narrower field one could readily imagine atheists and theists discussing God in every spirit of genial reciprocity, even agreeing on the same desirable attributes and the same definitions, and coming into conflict only on the question of whether or not he exists. Even if one does not declare “*Vive la différence!*” there may well be general agreement that the difference is all-important.

And so it was in Brussels. Briefly, everyone wished to advance education and accept common global responsibilities, but when speakers came down to the nitty gritty of life they found that either man or God got in the way of agreement. Or rather, that is what they would have found at the nitty gritty level, for most of the discussions began and ended a few atmospheric layers above.

If the participants had come together as unlabelled professional men to discuss, say, phased disarmament or pollution or child welfare, it is possible progress would have been made. Unfortunately they were there, consciously or unconsciously, to defend irreconcilable entrenched positions, so any hope that social agreement would flow from the deliberations was nugatory. When Professor van Praag proposed ten humanist postulates Professor Caffarena, S.J., said he agreed with them all—well, all except an “essential distinction” in point 8: “the world is not thought of as dependent on a creator, nor is there an empty space left vacant by an absent creator”. No need to worry about “an upper or outer world” for every good modernist now agrees with Tillich that God is within us. The point is, of course, that once he accepts God any intellectual has no difficulty in accepting an authentic teaching church, the only thing which gives theism any shape or purpose.

I must say that personally I enjoyed this book, for I like self-perpetuating abstract arguments. But if the “dialogue” wished to have any social spin-off it would have done better to concentrate on pure theology—yes, pure theology; that is, to explore the concepts of “progressive revelation”, “probabilism” and casuistry seeking to find a theological formula to justify divorce, contraception, voluntary euthanasia and cultural freedom.

Instead the humanists came “committed to an open mind in an open society”, thus ensuring the deliberations would lack any link with reality. Mr. Blackham’s paper on the “Demands of an Open Society” showed some concession to humanist critics in questioning the possibility at primary school of “a programme of *general* moral and religious education”. But Father Gaine had no difficulty in demonstrating that it is impracticable to separate ends and means, regarding one as purely private and the other as purely public. In rejecting the pluriform society, which allows private education and parallel development of sub-cultures, the open society leads to the paradox of either subsidising or banning social differences.

Mr. Blackham’s concern is, of course, to undermine the secular concept, which he regards as leading to a nineteenth-century confrontation where “there can be no solutions except in terms of political power and its compromises”. While modernist humanists update themselves

in this statesmanlike, fascinating and utterly inconsequential “dialogue”, the churches can safely concentrate on political power and forget about compromises.

DAVID TRIBE

GEORGE ELIOT and Her World by Marghanita Laski. Thames and Hudson, £2.25.

This is the latest in an excellent series of illustrated biographies. Well produced, with delightful pictures of people, houses and scenes associated with George Eliot, and crisply written by Marghanita Laski, it brings out the dark side of George Eliot’s genius.

I had always thought of her as the grandmummy of Women’s Lib. This somewhat heroic view of our greatest English novelist takes a bit of a beating in this study of her life and background. From the time she became known and successful, writes Miss Laski, “she and Lewes were preternaturally careful of her public reputation, or, as we should say her image, and identification with unconventional causes such as Women’s Suffrage—‘an extremely doubtful good’ she wrote to Sara—was not for her.” She was deeply conscious of respectable opinion, was inordinately gratified at eventually being invited to dine with Queen Victoria’s daughters, invariably behaved with earnest and forbidding propriety on all public occasions, so much so that her Sunday ‘at homes’ became “reverentially dull”, or, as one friend remarked, they had “something of the solemnity of religious functions with the religion cut out”.

She was no doubt compensating for her unconventional religious views and marital arrangements, by excessive obedience to convention in other directions. Perhaps it is natural that she should have reacted in this way, given the strength of Victorian disapproval of her life-long liaison with G. H. Lewes, whom she was unable to marry for the very good reason that he was married already, having had four sons by his wife, who then had two further children by his best friend, at which point he not unreasonably abandoned her for George Eliot.

Despite this, their eminently respectable liaison was for many years greeted with much more hostility than Lords Lambton and Jellicoe attract now, call girls and other scandals notwithstanding. Even her brother, the close friend of her childhood, broke off all relations with her until she eventually married many years later. This too is an extraordinary story and a faintly mysterious one.

John Cross was more than twenty years younger than herself. On their honeymoon in Venice, he jumped from the balcony of their hotel into the Grand Canal and nearly died. Incredibly enough, he then survived until 1924. How did he occupy himself in the long years (44 of them) of his widowhood other than by writing a disastrous biography of his late wife (published in 1882)? It would be fascinating to know more. Incidentally, George Eliot chose to marry him at St. George’s, Hanover Square—not, as Miss Laski points out, in a registrar’s office, or even a Unitarian chapel. And then there are all those sentimental, arch and gushing friendships with lonely women, who addressed George Eliot as “Madonna”—a singularly inappropriate appellation one might have thought.

All this detail, though riveting, is perhaps trivial. Her monument is *Middlemarch*, for my money the greatest novel in the English language, described by Virginia Woolf as “one of the few English novels written for

grown-up people". Miss Laski is interesting about the ebb and flow of her literary reputation, and points out that it was not until as recently as 1948 that Eliot was truly reinstated in her proper place in our literature by F. R. Leavis in his critical work, *The Great Tradition*.

This is an altogether excellent introduction to George Eliot's life and times and can be warmly recommended both to established admirers and to those who are not yet familiar with her work.

MADELEINE SIMMS

THE MISSIONARIES by Geoffrey Moorhouse.
Eyre Methuen, £3.95.

Could a book about the development of the missionary societies and the activities of the Christian missionaries be of interest to freethinkers? *The Missionaries* is to a considerable extent critical of the behaviour of the would-be proselytisers and I found it a fascinating book to be regarded as almost necessary reading for atheists. It should be something of an eye-opener for Christians and the more who read it the better.

One of the earliest Christian missionaries was a Thomas Thompson who, after five years spent in New England for the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, was sent to the Gold Coast in 1751. At the end of four not very successful years there, he wrote a leaflet the title of which speaks for itself, *The African Trade for Negro Slaves Shown to be Consistent with the Principles of Humanity and with the Laws of Revealed Religion*.

The period from 1792 to 1835 saw the formation of many missionary societies, including the Baptist Society and the Church Missionary Society (Anglican). During the early part of the nineteenth century there was great enthusiasm to send missionaries abroad to convert the heathen but the Church Missionary Society had such great difficulty in finding British volunteers that they had to obtain their early missionaries from Germany and Switzerland. Of the first two Germans sent to Africa by the C.M.S. within a short time one had deserted to become a slave trader.

The Baptist Society and the London Missionary Society (Congregational) found it much easier to find volunteers as the members of their congregations had more zeal than those of the Church of England. However, when they reached their destinations and discovered the conditions in which they had to live and work, the missionaries often regarded themselves as having been deceived. Their bitter disappointment was the reluctance of the natives to accept the gospel. Robert Moffatt, who became Livingstone's father-in-law, went to South Africa for the L.M.S. in 1817 and after five years he lamented, "no conversions, no enquiries after God".

Much has appeared recently to correct some of the myths surrounding the name of David Livingstone. He was certainly a brave explorer but was hardly a successful missionary. He saw himself as making a path for commerce and Christianity (in that order), and he hoped his explorations would result in the British colonising Central Africa.

The account of the competition and conflict between the Catholic White Fathers and the Protestants in Uganda, which eventually led to the Battle of Mengo (1892), was very interesting.

1890 to 1914 saw an abundance of both money and people for the work and there was more missionary activity than ever before. However, the 1914-18 war brought this boom to an end and white Christians fighting each other were a puzzle to the Africans.

After the First World War the number of missionaries sent to Africa again increased but the rate of increase was much slower. Quite soon after the 1939-45 war the colonies started to obtain independence, and it has to be admitted that most of the leaders of the newly independent countries of Africa had been educated in mission schools and, not surprisingly, were committed Christians.

It is remarkable that while there are about sixty million Moslems, the number of Africans accepting some form of Christian belief has been estimated at only about twenty million, in spite of the great efforts of the missionaries over a period of more than 150 years.

There certainly are some African humanists. While teaching in Botswana about five years ago I came in contact with about eight. A humanist society was formed and probably we had more success than many of the humanist societies in Britain. I am sure that humanists from Britain can make a useful contribution to African development and for those who may contemplate working in Africa, I think reading *The Missionaries* would be of considerable value. Even if you do not envisage going to Africa you should find this book very interesting.

DON BAKER

THEATRE

EQUUS by Peter Shaffer. The National Theatre.

A new play by Peter Shaffer, the author of the successful and intensely dramatic *The Royal Hunt of the Sun*, is quite an event. The central confrontation of this play is between a psychiatrist, Martin Dysart, and a seventeen-year-old boy, Alan Strang, who has blinded six horses with a metal spike. As the play unravels it becomes not so much a who-dun-it as a why-was-it-done: the tension mounts as the psychiatrist and the audience delve deeper into the psyche of the boy criminal. We discover that religion, sex and fantasy have all become inextricably bound round the boy's obsession with horses. The boy had a traumatic experience, which we see re-enacted on the stage, when at the age of six he rode a horse on the sea-shore; his father had angrily stopped him saying it was dangerous and destroyed his pleasure by pulling him off the horse.

From this genesis the boy becomes obsessed with horses, and a curiously masochistic view of religion inculcated by his mother, to the scorn of his father, is oddly linked with his horse-love: a picture in his room of Christ beaten and scorned is replaced by the staring head of a horse. We learn that after he had obtained a weekend job at a stable he used occasionally to ride the horses naked at night. We see, in the climax of the first act, how under hypnosis he re-enacts his horse-riding at night, clearly an exciting sexual experience.

The horses are acted by men dressed in brown with metal hooves and horse's heads: the way they mimic the motions of the horses is brilliantly dramatic. The acting is powerful, with Alec McCowen finely understating the passionate concern with this strange case that so challenges his assumptions and Peter Firth excellently portraying the surly, disturbed and excitable boy. The two parents are accurately depicted by Alan MacNaughton and Jeanne

Watts, the one an opinionated printer the other an anxious ex-schoolteacher. John Dexter's production is admirable throughout; restrained, integrated, gripping and rising clearly to the moments of climax.

The end of the play is very dramatic. By means of a trick—a false truth drug—the psychiatrist gets the boy to abreact and he re-enacts the night on which he committed the crime. It is impossible to summarize the scene, but it is worth mentioning that the nudity is totally unsensational and the psychological insights are penetrating. The play may sound clinical, but it is fascinating, moving and asks crucial questions, for the psychiatrist, recognising the passion in the boy—he seems to see in the boy's defiant look the words, "At least I galloped, when did you?"—asks himself whether in curing the boy he will not be destroying a primitive pain and ecstasy that he has no right to negate.

JIM HERRICK

THE WOOD DEMON by Anton Chekhov. The Actors' Company on tour to Hull, Norwich, Manchester and Liverpool.

Styles of theatrical presentation may have changed radically over the past decade, but the structure of the acting profession itself is still rigidly hierarchical. The Actors' Company snowballed round two highly successful but disaffected actors. The number rose to seventeen, policy evolved, a tour of the regions was planned, and took place last autumn. It was a popular success, and the majority of the Company's founder members have returned for this second tour. Their policy is equality of pay and status for all members, and full participation in decision-making. Major rôles in each of the three productions taken on tour are fairly distributed among the actors. The Company's hope is to create a popular, but not kitsch theatre, and to perform a mixture of mainstream and avant-garde plays. Ian McKellen has aptly called the movement "a quiet revolution".

A dramatist whose works foreshadowed a far more violent, historically important revolution was Chekhov. *The Wood Demon* was shelved in 1889 after a bad production. It proved to be the basis for that delicate masterpiece. *Uncle Vanya*. *The Wood Demon* lacks the fine construction and detail of the later play; it reminds me of a chock-a-block Christmas stocking thrust into my arms by a quaint, exuberant and much loved uncle.

I think David Giles must have done a better job than the original director. He holds our interest throughout, but he does not always quite capture the Russian character. Tenniel Evans just does not look Russian, but his amiably self-destructive George is a subtle study of a human being rendered useless by *ennui*. Ian McKellen has often played Russians. He has a gift for histrionic, mercurial acting, for bringing a note of self-parody into his checked-sob delivery. His performance as the Wood Demon is at first jerky and 'mannered' (his detractors' pet word), but it matures, gaining both weight and sensitivity. As Sonya, Sheila Reid skilfully avoids playing the crabbed, lovesick spinster for laughs or pathos, while Helen, the unhappy but faithful wife is played with remote dignity by Marian Diamond—"all passion spent". There was something very direct and moving about Helen's quiet resignation and Kruschov's diatribes against our callousness towards our fellows and our environment.

Some may prefer the brighter trinkets, others may find nothing of value. Something has been achieved, though, in the revelation of new aspects of Chekhov's writing.

VERA LUSTIG

LETTERS

Josephus and the Baptist

It is an exaggeration to say, as Mr. Condon does (August), that Josephus' paragraph about John the Baptist has no relation to the context in which it is found. The previous paragraph has informed us that "Herod's army was destroyed", and then John is introduced with the words: "Some . . . thought that the destruction of Herod's army came from God, . . . as a punishment of what he did against John, that was called the Baptist".

Furthermore, if this latter passage was interpolated, as Mr. Condon supposes, the interpolation was presumably effected by a Christian writer acquainted with the gospels; in which case it is very surprising that he inserted into Josephus a different version of the Baptist's career and of Herod's motives for killing him from that contained in the New Testament. If one compares this passage with those about the Baptist in the Slavonic version of Josephus' *Jewish War*—all of which are today generally agreed to be interpolations—one finds that when they give information also contained in the gospels, they are in harmony with the latter.

G. A. WELLS.

Popper and socialism

I have, since reading him, considered Karl Popper to be both a competent philosopher and stimulating writer. It was, however, of some interest to learn from Ralph Champion's article on him (September) that Popper has been described as the greatest philosopher of science of all time, and the greatest all-round philosopher of his generation. In the same issue Professor Antony Flew informs us that Popper is "of all the philosophers who have worked in this country during our century", the one, "whose philosophical ideas have had, and deserve to have, the greatest influence." Popper, then, seems to have far greater standing than I imagined him to have, although on the basis of his published works it is difficult to see why he should be held in such esteem.

Professor Flew, one would have thought, should be aware that the idea of 'falsifiability' is something that was around long before Popper expressed it in the manner he did. Essentially it is nothing more than the age long notion of every theory being relative, and this idea is even found in certain religious systems of thought, as, for example, in the writings of the Persian sage, Baha'u'llah.

It was, perhaps, of some interest to find that Professor Flew devoted a good half of his review to an attack on Marx and socialism. Compared to Marx, Popper is a rather pathetic figure, and having read his attack on Marxism I can only say that I was left with the impression that Popper did not understand, or want to, what he was seeking to undermine; however, as one of the great multitude of twentieth century philosophers who have 'had a go' at Marx, he has put himself firmly on the approved list.

Professor Flew seems to labour under the impression that nationalization has something to do with socialism, and that the criterion by which to judge the political colour of a party is its attitude to the issue. As a self-declared Popperian, he dislikes 'sweeping' social change; but is nationalization really 'social change', sweeping or otherwise? Professor Flew, expressing what he terms "that Popperian spirit of tentative, inquiring, meliorist, piecemeal, social engineering" illustrates just how useless Popperianism really is. It's the very fact that the Labour Party have adopted a policy that runs away from radical social change that has left the nation with so many pressing problems.

Marxism in contrast calls for sweeping changes, not nationally but internationally, and as the same problems face people in Russia, America, China, India and Latin America, as they do people in Britain, only the type of radical change condemned by Popper but proposed by Marx, is likely to achieve any concrete results. Popper, in short, has academic interest; Marx, on the other hand, gave ideas that can be put to practical use. This, in the last analysis, is the reason why Popperianism will remain an interesting academic talking point, while Marxism will change the world.

R. W. MORRELL.

Professor FLEW replies:

Mr. Morrell says: "Professor Flew . . . should be aware that the idea of 'falsifiability' . . . was around long before Popper expressed it in the manner he did". Yes, and he is. But the claim was not that Popper invented the idea of falsifiability, or that he expressed it in some novel way, but that he developed the notion that, in the words of the book I was reviewing, "*Falsifiability is the criterion of demarcation between science and non-science*".

Mr. Morrell says: "Professor Flew seems to labour under the impression that nationalization has something to do with socialism

... Yes, so I do. So clearly did those who wrote Clause IV into the constitution of the British Labour Party. So clearly do all the Communist Parties, who make the implementation of Clause IV a first step after seizing power. So clearly do those who are now dominant in the Labour Party, and who disagree only on precisely how massive an extension of public ownership to propose in their next election programme.

If Mr. Morrell wishes to use the word 'socialism' in such a way that nationalization is not a necessary condition of socialism, that, indeed, it has nothing to do with it at all, then the very least he should have done was to indicate what sort of glory he wants to make the word refer to. It is hard to be condemned for not following Mr. Morrell's eccentric usage when he does not even tell us what it is.

People like Mr. Morrell may well succeed in this country, as they have in so many others in sweeping aside what there is of the "Popperian spirit of tentative, inquiring, piecemeal, social engineering". But anyone who is concerned not merely to change the world but to change it for the better, must take account of such Popperian objections as this, quoted from Magee: "To claim rationality for sweeping plans to change society as a whole is to claim a degree of detailed sociological knowledge which we simply do not possess".

Stalin's Stages of Barbarism

Pat Sloan can hardly deny what is plain for all to see. His distinction between "socialist society" and "a higher stage" of communism was made with specific and direct reference to Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Programme* (*Freethinker*, July). He is now obliged to admit that it is not to be found there. Furthermore, his dogmatic assertions and interpretations of what Marx "really meant" are contradicted by the work of many outstanding Marx scholars. Verification of this is provided by Professor Hobsbawm who joined the British Communist Party nearly 40 years ago and the Yugoslav, Petrovic (for citations see August *Freethinker*), the Australian, Kamenka (*The Ethical Foundations of Marxism*, 1972) and the American Professor Tucker (*The Marxian Revolutionary Idea*, 1970).

Mr. Sloan seeks to identify the U.S.S.R. and what he terms "socialism" with Marx's "first place" of communism. Engels, in 1875, declared that "with the introduction of the socialist order of society the state will dissolve of itself and disappear." Whereas Mr. Sloan refers to "public ownership", Professor Nove points out that public ownership in Russia "by no means implies social — as opposed to elitist — control" (*Socialist Economics*, 1972, p. 9).

The "disadvantage" of following the path of Lenin and Stalin is manifest. It led to "one of the most barbarous and murderous régimes the world has ever seen." The distinguished Soviet Academician Dr. Sakharov who, says Sloan, "may" have compared Stalinism and Fascism, testifies as follows:—

"Fascism lasted 12 years in Germany. Stalinism lasted twice as long in the Soviet Union. There are many common features but also certain differences. Stalinism exhibited a much more subtle kind of hypocrisy and demagogy, with reliance not on an openly cannibalistic programme like Hitler's but on a progressive, scientific, and popular socialist ideology. This served as a convenient screen for deceiving the working class, . . . At least 10 to 15 million people perished in the torture chambers of the N.K.V.D. [secret police] from torture and execution, in camps for exiled kulaks . . . and in camps 'without the right of correspondence' (which were in fact the prototypes of the Fascist death camps . . .)." (*Progress, Coexistence and Intellectual Freedom*, Pelican, pp 46-47.)

Unlike latter-day Stalinists, Freethinkers are concerned about censorship, oppression and terror, whether in the Soviet Socialist Republics, in Northern Ireland, or anywhere else, and whoever may be responsible. JUDEX.

Philosophical 'Third-Way' Humanism

Charles Byass (September) says of my comments of the previous month: "If I take it more or less right . . ."—and then proceeds to the furthest degree of 'less' he can possibly go, without actually disappearing. I explained the phrase I used, saying, "By that, I mean one who starts to theorize at a point somewhere above epistemology . . ." Agnosticism? What prompted me to use the expression was a combination of the following.

Richard Avenarius is quoted as once saying, "I know nothing of the physical nor the psychical, but only some third". And, as is usual with possessors of such remarkable "knowledge" he died, intellectually speaking, intestate.

Karl Popper, we are told, produces some "exciting" theories, such as the "three world" theory: world 1, physical; world 2, mental; world 3, well " . . . it is neither merely private and personal nor public in the sense that it can be brought into the

laboratory" (R. Champion, *Freethinker*, April). Thank goodness someone gave us the *lavatory*!

Francis Bacon also spoke of a "third" philosophy, and he even gave a name to it—*superstition*! In *The Four Idols* he says of its adherents they ". . . out of faith and veneration mix their philosophy with theology and tradition (some even go as far) as to seek the origin of the science among spirits and geni".

Is it any wonder that Popper rails so at Bacon? Is it any wonder we can read ". . . science is differentiated from older myths not by being something distinct from a myth . . ." or that "Falsifiability is the criterion of demarcation between science and non-science"? Truth, it seems, must not be identified with science.

I hope this explanation has made clear to Mr. Byass that my criticism was directed not at agnosticism *per se* but at this degenerate, superstitious bilge that disgraces the time-honoured pursuit bequeathed to humanity by the Ancient Greeks: *sophia*—wisdom, *philein*—to love, combined into the word—philosophy.

TREVOR MORGAN.

Fascism in Britain

Mr. E. J. Hamm, secretary of today's Fascists, the Action Party, writes (August) that many of the newspaper sources quoted in Robert Benewick's book about Fascism in Britain in the 1930s are incorrect. I would be surprised if out of 969 references there were none he could fault; at least he does not deny the overall implication.

Fear of unemployment and political catastrophe was real in the 1930s, and exploitation of these fears coupled with anti-Semitic Fascist policies misled the 23 per cent who voted for the British Union of Fascists in the 1937 election at Bethnal Green. "Contempt for the masses", when they were not supporting the B.U.F. was, of course, based on Mosley's own remarks. Enoch Powell's views on immigrants today have similarly misled people; instead of trying to solve the problems arising out of racial prejudice he promotes it. I believe the Action Party are also a catalyst in this situation, though less effective than their pre-war counterparts.

I defer to my friend R. Stuart Montague's judgement that black shirts were worn in 1923 when he joined the Fascists, he was the "contemporary supporter of Fascism" I quoted in my review. I am pleased to see that he usually wears a white shirt nowadays!

DENIS COBELL.

Freethought credentials

Recent autobiographical disclosures in the columns of *The Freethinker* would seem to disprove the theory that in order to be a Freethinker one has only to have been a practising Catholic. If among freethinkers can be numbered former Fascists, there is yet hope for (such as) present Marxists who (seemingly) are only here for the dialectic, and present Socialists—for Clause Four!

CHARLES BYASS.

State subsidies for whom ?

This country employs snoopers to make sure that an unsupported mother is not cohabiting before she is paid enough to feed her children (and also almost any man sleeping in a house with a woman may be presumed to be sleeping with and keeping her—according to those snoopers); we are used to hearing that some men would rather live on the dole than look for work, and that others in council houses do not deserve to be subsidised.

Question, however, the subsidies enjoyed by the Church of England (the third biggest landowner in the country) and watch out for brickbats! Bully for Anglicans who try to collect money voluntarily given instead of relying on their Church's 'Planned Taking' and loot from its long history of 'robbery with violence' of many different kinds. But can they really believe that the Church Commissioners can't afford to pay their own House-of-God-Keeping bills? They don't just have investments (not counting church buildings and other real estate) worth some five hundred million pounds, they have income on those investments *tax-free*; their churches are rate-free. In the 1820s the government gave the Church of England one million pounds specifically for church building; in 1936 it was given seventy million pounds of government stock in compensation for the tithes which were abolished. (And a million pounds was worth how much more in those days?)

This is only a very brief look at the Church's books, but for the Anglican Church to claim poverty is rather like a man who has hired twenty-five servants pleading that he cannot afford to pay for a new roof, and then asking other people to believe he is on the breadline. No, you can't pay a builder with a butler, but you can learn to manage your funds (especially such ill-gotten gains) more honourably.

KIT MOUTAT.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

National Secular Society. Details of membership and inquiries regarding bequests and secular funeral services may be obtained from the General Secretary, 698 Holloway Road, London, N19 3NL (telephone: 01-272 1266). Cheques, etc., should be made payable to the N.S.S.

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.)

Humanist Holidays House Party, Brighton, 23-27 December. Visits, theatre, table games, etc. Total cost £25 including full board, Yuletide fare, gratuities and V.A.T. For full details contact (as soon as possible) Mrs. Marjorie Mephram, 29 Fairview Road, Sutton, Surrey (telephone: 01-642 8796).

National Council for Civil Liberties/Progressive League joint conference, High Leigh, Hoddesdon, Herts. 2-4 November, "Civil Liberties in the 70s". Further details from Kenneth Dobbie, 162 Gunnerbury Avenue, London W3.

Because of the new postage charges, the postal subscription rates of *The Freethinker* have had to be increased. The new rates are given on p. 146. Existing subscriptions will be adjusted.

Hall Manager and Lettings Secretary, Conway Hall. Applications are invited for this position, the appointment to take effect immediately. Details from the General Secretary, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL.

EVENTS

Brighton and Hove Humanist Group, Imperial Centre Hotel, First Avenue, Hove. Sunday, 4 November, 5.30 p.m.: RICHARD HANDYSIDE, "Censorship in Britain". Friday 23 November: Annual Dinner, details from C. W. Millard, 142 Western Road, Hurstpierpoint (telephone: Brighton 833057).

Ealing Humanist Society, The Nelson Room, Ealing Town Hall, London W5. Monday, 29 October, 8 p.m.: Public Meeting on Comprehensive Education.

Harrow Humanist Society, The Library, Gayton Road, Harrow. Wednesday, 14 November, 8 p.m.: HAROLD J. BLACKHAM, "The Role of Humanism in Contemporary Life."

London Young Humanist, 13 Prince of Wales Terrace, London W8. Sunday, 21 October, 7.30 p.m.: PETER HARPER, "Alternative Science and Technology".

Nottingham & Notts Humanist Group, University Adult Centre, 14 Shakespeare Street, Nottingham. Friday, 9 November, 7.30 p.m.: HECTOR HAWTON, "Humanist and Christian Morality".

South Place Ethical Society, Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, London WC1. *Sunday Morning Meetings*, 11 a.m. 21 October: BARBARA SMOKER, "Are We Living on Christian Capital?"; 28 October: Professor C. E. CARRINGTON, "Myth, Tradition and Credulity in History". *Humanist Forum*. Sunday, 28 October, 3 p.m.: AVRO MANHATTAN, "The Vatican Billions". *Tuesday Discussions*, 7 p.m. (admission 10p). 23 October: PETER CADOGAN, "Do We Need Rituals?"; 30 October: TONY CROSS, "Religion and Community—The Function of a Common Language?" *55th Conway Memorial Lecture*. Tuesday, 20 November, 7.30 p.m.: JONATHAN MILLER, "The Uses of Pain" (admission 10p).

Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington. Until 28 October: Marble Halls, an exhibition of models and drawings for Victorian secular buildings.

PUBLICATIONS

| TITLE | AUTHOR | Price | Post |
|--|------------------------------|-------|------|
| The Mask of Anarchy | P. B. Shelley | 20p | 3p |
| Ethics without God | Kai Nielson | 60p | 8p |
| The Origins of Christianity | G. A. Wells | 20p | 3p |
| Did Jesus Christ Exist? | Chapman Cohen | 3p | 3p |
| Materialism Restated | Chapman Cohen | 25p | 10p |
| Thomas Paine | Chapman Cohen | 5p | 4p |
| Morality Without God | Chapman Cohen | 3p | 3p |
| The Case Against Church Schools | Patricia Knight | 20p | 4p |
| Broadcasting Brainwashing | | | |
| Conditioning | David Tribe | 25p | 4p |
| An Introduction to Secular Humanism | Kit Mouat | 45p | 3p |
| The Longford Threat to Freedom | Brigid Brophy | 10p | 3p |
| Nucleoethics: Ethics in Modern Society (paperback) | David Tribe | 90p | 10p |
| Against Censorship | N.C.C.L. | 25p | 4p |
| The Humanist Revolution | Hector Hawton | 60p | 10p |
| Controversy | Hector Hawton | 60p | 10p |
| Club Life and Socialism in Mid-Victorian London | Stan Shipley | 60p | 10p |
| Boys and Sex | W. B. Pomeroy | 25p | 7p |
| Girls and Sex | W. B. Pomeroy | 30p | 7p |
| Life, Death and Immortality | P. B. Shelley and others | 10p | 3p |
| The Freethinker 1972 Bound Volume | Edited by Nigel Sinnot | £2.50 | 27p |
| Religion and Ethics in Schools | David Tribe | 7½p | 3p |
| Religious Education in State Schools | Brigid Brophy | 12½p | 3p |
| Ten Non Commandments | Ronald Fletcher | 12½p | 3p |
| The Cost of Church Schools | David Tribe | 20p | 3p |
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| Freethought and Humanism in Shakespeare | David Tribe | 10p | 3p |
| The Nun Who Lived Again | Phyllis Gráham | 2½p | 3p |
| The Secular Responsibility | Marghanita Laski | 10p | 3p |
| A Humanist Glossary | Robin Odell and Tom Barfield | 20p | 4p |
| Humanist Anthology | Margaret Knight | 60p | 9p |
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| Rights of Man | Thomas Paine | 35p | 9p |
| The Dead Sea Scrolls | John Allegro | 35p | 9p |
| 100 Years of Freethought | David Tribe | £2.50 | 18½p |
| What Humanism is About | Kit Mouat | 52½p | 13p |
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| Authority and the Individual | Bertrand Russell | 35p | 9p |
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| Power | Bertrand Russell | 65p | 9p |
| Legitimacy versus Industrialism | Bertrand Russell | 37½p | 9p |
| Bertrand Russell: A Life | Herbert Gottchalk | 25p | 7p |
| The Bible Handbook | G. W. Foote and W. P. Ball | 65p | 10p |
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