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COURT ALLOWS RELIGIOUS FANATICS TO EVICT WILTSHIRE FARMER

The Sun Moon Myung Foundation has been allowed to evict a farmer from his home. Mr Desmond Jeeves, whose family has lived in the Wiltshire farm for almost a century, will have to leave. A court decision has given a possession order for North Farm in Stanton Fitzwarren, Wiltshire, to the Sun Moon Foundation.

This religious sect, led by the Reverend Sun Myung Moon, has been strongly criticised for its brain-washing techniques and for causing family divisions. It is a nasty mixture of Christian fundamentalism and Right-wing politics. Mr Moon claims to be God's answer to the failure of Judaism and the papacy to live up to their world responsibilities.

Mr Jeeves' brother-in-law, Mr Henry Masters, has donated his 600-acre estate to the Foundation. Mr Masters, a former churchwarden and local parish council chairman, was converted to the Unification Church—another of the various names for the sect—in 1975. When Mr Jeeves was told to leave the farm-house last year, after his father had died, he was offered a much smaller terraced cottage. But he refused to move. After the case he is reported as saying: "They can stick their cottage. I shall not move into it. None of the large farm-house furniture which has been collected by generations of my family will fit into it."

Judge T. Elder-Jones said that Mr Jeeves had grounds for thinking that he was being got rid of because he did not share the sect's beliefs. This would be a crime, he commented, if it were discrimination on the grounds of race or sex. But the judge was bound according to the law to grant possession to the sect because Mr Jeeves had been offered alternative accommodation.

The Sun Moon Foundation at Stanton Fitzwarren owns four farms, nine cottages, the Old School House, and the Post Office. Mr Moon has been described as a millionaire, though he has denied this.

The financial aspect of his organisation has been much criticised. Street collecting by members of the sect has apparently raised large sums of money throughout the world. The sale of candles and of ginseng tea—for which extravagant claims of health-giving qualities have been made—is highly profitable. The sect has charitable status.

Paul Rose, MP, in the House of Commons on 22 October 1975 referred to "bogus and bizarre bodies which purport to be religious cults." He criticised the Unification Church in detail, describing its sales gimmicks, political connections and indoctrination techniques. Members are forbidden contact outside the sect, especially with parents, because they are regarded as agents of Satan. Constant bombardment with preaching and keeping members in a state of sleeplessness are indoctrination techniques used. (An interview in *The Freethinker*, September 1976, with a woman who had escaped from the Moonies, showed the bizarre experiences members undergo.)

"Moon is a CIA Goon"

The political side of the organisation was seen at a vast rally in Washington, USA, last September. About 50,000 listened to Mr Moon's rantings. He attacked the Communist bloc as "Satan's representative". The rally was enormously expensive, a free chicken dinner and cheap coach travel providing an incentive to boost the crowd. Links between Mr Moon and the South Korean intelligence organisation and the CIA have been suggested. (This was discussed in greater detail by Alastair Segerdal in his article "The Secret Service and Religious Cults" in *The Freethinker*, March 1977.) Some scuffles took place at the rally when a band of hippies waved a banner saying "Moon is a CIA goon".

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Opposition to Mr Benyon's Abortion Bill

Mr William Benyon, MP, is attempting to hasten his Abortion (Amendment) Act swiftly through its committee stages, in order to have it returned to Parliament before this session ends, despite the reluctance of the government to give the Bill Parliamentary time. Arguments against changing the 1967 Abortion Act become stronger all the time. The vociferous support of Mr Benyon's Amendment, particularly from the Catholic lobby, is also increasing.

Doctors Defend 1967 Act

More than 2,000 doctors have written to Mr David Ennals, Secretary for Social Services, to express their concern about the Amendment and to ask for information about how the 1967 Act is working. The doctors are led by the distinguished gynaecologist Dame Josephine Barnes and have formed a group called Doctors in Defence of the 1967 Abortion Act. They wrote in a letter to Mr Ennals: "As doctors we are particularly concerned lest restrictive measures be passed by Parliament without full knowledge of the real issues and facts. It seems to most of us who have practical experience of the working of the Act that much of the recent discussion, both in Parliament and outside, has been based on unsubstantiated allegations of abuse of the provisions of the Act without evidence being offered on the current situation."

Mr Benyon and his supporters have rested their case for amendment of the 1967 Act very much upon the existence of abuses. This is seen by many as a "softly, softly" approach disguising an attempt to make abortion altogether more difficult. One of the effects of the Abortion (Amendment) Act would be to cripple the work of the abortion charities. There is also concern that it will infringe civil liberties by the clause allowing non-National Health Service medical files to be open to police. Mr Ennals has firmly expressed his opposition to the Abortion (Amendment) Bill saying that what is needed is time to assess the effects of the 1967 Act.

The majority of organisations consulted by the Department of Health are opposed to Mr Benyon's Bill. Out of 244 organisations which replied, 127 were generally opposed to the Bill and 50 had no general view. All the doctors' organisations and five out of seven of the nursing groups were opposed to the Bill. The police sources consulted favoured Mr Benyon's Bill, though they felt the existing Act was working reasonably well and that there was no strong evidence of continuing abuse.

When the standing committee opened on 22 June, Mr Benyon began by proposing that the all-party committee should sit three times a week. It was clear that the minority on the committee opposed

to Mr Benyon's Bill were going to attempt to delay the progress of the committee by filibustering. Sir George Sinclair, MP for Dorking, and Mrs Renee Short, made unexpected but entertaining partners in this time-consuming game. It was touching to see Mrs Short's concern that Mr Benyon still have time to pursue his farming activities.

The extra-Parliamentary opposition to abortion is mustering its forces. The Society for the Protection of Unborn Children (SPUC) arranged a demonstration outside the British Medical Association. Apparently the briefing notes for this demo included suggestions about slogans—for instance "Hey, hey, BMA, how many kids did you kill today?". It was also thought that school children should show their individuality by not wearing school uniforms. Would this also disguise the fact that coachloads of kids from Catholic Schools might be there?

The Catholic Press has been urging its readers to write to their MPs asking them to sign an Early Day Motion. Such a motion has been launched, with six Labour MPs as leading signatories. This is hoped to put further pressure on the government to give the Benyon Bill time to complete all its stages in this session of Parliament.

Myths Destroyed by Symposium

A recent symposium held by the Co-ordinating Committee in Defence of the 1967 Abortion Act punctured a number of current myths being propagated by the anti-abortion pressure groups. Attempts to change the law to prevent so-called abuses would in fact merely encourage them, according to Dr Malcolm Potts, Consultant to the International Planned Parenthood Federation. Amendments to counter abuses are also likely to cause delays which make abortion more dangerous, more distressing and more expensive. The role of non-profit-making agencies in providing low-cost services at the highest professional standards was necessary because of the unevenness of the effectiveness of the NHS service, according to Professor Francis Lafitte. It was pointed out by Diane Munday, of the British Pregnancy Advisory Bureau, that the "smear" about the vast earnings of those working in the charitable sector was a complete myth, by giving figures of earnings.

It is interesting to speculate why, of the many social reforms which took place in the 1960s, the Abortion Act has come so strongly under attack. No doubt the Catholic Church, faced with its adherents thinking for themselves on social issues such as contraception, finds abortion a cohesive focus, a rallying cry for action, and a diversion from its own inner disarray.

Religion and Broadcasting—The Annan Report Considered

DAVID TRIBE

The section (20) on Religious Broadcasting in the Annan Report was seen as deeply disappointing by "The Freethinker" (April 1977). The organisations which had submitted evidence to the committee have been invited to comment on the report, and these observations will form the basis of comments from the National Secular Society. David Tribe, who forcefully expressed his view of "Auntie's" progress in his pamphlet "Broadcasting, Brainwashing, Conditioning" covering this field, here makes specific criticisms of the report. He particularly refers to the ambiguous definitions of words such as "religion" and "believer", and the place of the Central Religious Advisory Committee (CRAC).

The section on Religious Broadcasting in the Annan Report is a careless and muddled piece of work. In its relatively short section of "Religious Broadcasting" it manages to confuse "foregoing" and "forgoing" (20.7), omits the "First . . . Seventh" before "Church of Christ, Scientist" (20.8), misspells "Nicolas" Walter's name (20.9), speaks of "humanists and atheists" as if they were separate categories (20.14) and introduces in its "Introduction" (20.1) a statement which should—if true—have been one of its conclusions: "The days are long past when unbelievers had to plead with the BBC for the right to express their views." (This sentence reads like the bogus interpolation about Christ in Josephus and is unrelated to the paragraph's general thesis on secularisation, not secularism.)

At no time is there given a definition of religion. Here one can perhaps sympathise with the Annan Committee because of the conflicting definitions clearly employed by CRAC itself. But the Report shouldn't give apparent endorsement to confused statements like that attributed to "one member of CRAC" (20.6), while its own pious assertion that religion's role is "reminding the moralists of spiritual values, and the social scientists of the inevitability of individual moral choice" (20.18) is (a) partly philosophical claptrap; (b) partly cliché; (c) wholly unsatisfactory as implying that moralists and social scientists need religionists to teach them their jobs. The Report neatly confounds Christian modernists and reverent agnostics by pointing out that Christianity "enjoins its adherents first to love God and discover their relation to him" (20.19), but in 20.2 quotes a Cupitt analysis which makes nonsense of traditional Christianity by showing that only about half the people who "hold some belief in God" believe in an after-life (a central plank of Christianity

as distinct from Judaism). Because of its ambiguity and confusions over the nature of "belief", the Report is therefore ambiguous and confused about "unbelievers". Clearly the "unbelievers" who get on to the BBC so easily (20.1) are really reverent agnostics.

CRAC's old and new guidelines show an evolving recognition that there are non-Christian religions in the UK, but as far as unbelievers are concerned represent a distinction without a difference. Guideline (iii) (20.11)—meeting "the religious interests, concerns and needs" of those outside the Churches—merely spells out in more detail the old third "objective" (20.10) of trying "to reach those outside the churches or only loosely attached to them." In spelling this out it introduces the impertinent assumption that people outside the Churches have "religious interests, concerns and needs." Equally impertinent is guideline (ii) (20.11) in its assumption that there is a substantial body of "beliefs, ideas, issues and experiences in the contemporary world" which is "evidently related to a religious interpretation or dimension of life." Worse, the Report seems to draw a major conclusion on the relevance of Christianity to the modern world from the circumstance that "of all the witnesses who gave evidence to us the fiercest in commitment was a practising Christian" (20.2). I wonder if it would have drawn humanist conclusions if its "fiercest" witness had been a tub-thumping atheist. A further example of the Report's impertinence is its expectation that Religious Advisory Committees of the various Authorities should "consider how the religious interests of both believers and non-believers could best be served" (20.22). What precisely are the religious interests of non-believers?

Religion Under Another Name

The Report has some valid things to say about the competition of various sects to get representatives on CRAC, but gives no precise justification of its desire to fragment CRAC other than its unsubstantiated assertion that the "responsibilities and interests" (20.22) of the IBA and the BBC are different. While CRAC exists, it is undoubtedly better for its members to be appointed by the broadcasting Authorities than by the Churches themselves. In terms of CRAC, there would be some marginal theoretical improvement if an expanded Central Social Morality Advisory Council were set up as the BHA suggests (20.23). In practice, however, this would be just as objectionable as the BHA's similar proposal for "social morality" syllabuses in

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Women and Birth Control 100 Years Ago

PAT KNIGHT

The Secularist movement has always been in the vanguard of publicising birth control methods and rights. Annie Besant's fight for the right to publish cheap, easily obtainable information about contraception in "The Fruits of Philosophy Trial" is regarded as a landmark in the history of women's rights. The centenary of this event is being celebrated this month by the National Secular Society with a public meeting concerning "Pioneers of Family Planning". In this article Pat Knight highlights some crucial developments in the early stages of this 100 years struggle.

In 1977, as attempts are made to restrict access to abortion, women are still fighting for the right to choose whether or not to have children. 100 years ago in 1877 they were beginning to struggle for the right to use any form of birth control at all.

This year is the anniversary of a landmark in birth control history, the trial of Charles Bradlaugh and Annie Besant for publishing *Fruits of Philosophy*, a book which gave information on birth control methods. Bradlaugh, the President of the National Secular Society had for many years advocated contraception in the pages of the *National Reformer*, and indeed birth control in the mid-nineteenth-century was such a taboo subject that only Secularists were prepared to reject conventional Christian morality in supporting it. Annie Besant was a leading secularist speaker and writer, a feminist, (her first public speech was on women's rights and she assisted the match girls strike in 1888) and later a Socialist.

Fruits of Philosophy written in 1832 by an American, Charles Knowlton, (a Freethinker who used to play the fiddle at his window on Sunday mornings to the annoyance of passing church-goers), had been sold unobtrusively in England since 1834, but suddenly came to the attention of the authorities and was prosecuted as "filthy, bawdy and obscene . . . and likely to corrupt the morals of youth". Bradlaugh and Besant defied the law by organising two public sales of the book in March 1877, 125,000 copies of which were sold in three months; they were dogged by detectives one of whom in search of evidence hopefully bought a copy of Bradlaugh's *Man, whence and How?* only to discover that it dealt with Genesis, not physiology.

The trial took place in June 1877 and it was clear that, as with abortion today, the opposition to birth control came from the churches and sections of the medical profession who contended that it would lead to immorality, promiscuity, undermine the family and regrettably lead to women becoming more independent. Restrictions on birth con-

trol, like those on abortion, especially penalised the poor; *Fruits of Philosophy* was opposed on the grounds that it was too cheap. At sixpence per copy it might actually fall into the hands of the working class.

The verdict was that the book was calculated to deprave public morals, but that the defendants' motives in publishing it were not corrupt. Bradlaugh and Besant narrowly escaped being sent to prison for six months each. This sentence was postponed, and in 1878 quashed by the Appeal Court on a legal technicality.

But in spite of the ambiguity of the verdict, the trial was a victory for birth controllers. Contraception, hitherto shrouded in secrecy, was brought into the open, since the case was widely, though not often favourably, publicised in the press; further cheap books were published, including Annie Besant's *Law of Population*; and a Malthusian League was started to change the law and expound the case for birth control. The trial coincided with the onset of the Great Depression of the 1870's which threatened middle class standards of living and resulted in heavier unemployment, leading to a fall in average family size from six in the mid-nineteenth century to less than four by 1914.

Birth Control and Women's Rights

Freely available contraception and abortion is today one of the central demands of the woman's movement. But in the nineteenth century the official feminist organisations steered clear of birth control, partly because they were mainly concerned to provide education, jobs and the vote for single "redundant" women who had failed to find husbands, and for whom birth control was assumed to be irrelevant; and partly because they associated birth control with unsavoury subjects such as free love and prostitution, and aimed to end the double standard of morality by obliging men to conform to the same high sexual standards as women: "Votes for women and chastity for men" as Christabel Pankhurst put it. At the same time, the Malthusian League emphasised economic rather than feminist arguments for birth control, advocating a policy of population limitation which would eradicate poverty and unemployment.

Nevertheless in many ways, birth control before 1914 was just as much a women's rights issue as it is today. Annie Besant said in court that "numerous women wrote to her, thanking her for showing them how to escape from the veritable hell in which they lived." She was well aware that without birth control women could never achieve equality, asking "Is a woman to be regarded only as a wife and

mother, a nurse and housekeeper? Is she never to be thought of as an individual but always in relation to someone else? Has a woman no right as an independent human being?"

For Annie the trial had a sad postscript. In 1878 she lost custody of her daughter Mabel to her clergyman husband from whom she was separated. It was alleged that she was not a fit mother since not only had she published an obscene pamphlet, but also refused to bring the child up as a Christian.

The Vote and Birth Control

The Drysdale family who founded and ran the Malthusian League, were all keen feminists. Alice Vickery Drysdale, was one of the first women doctors, with a practice among poor women in South London, and she gave evidence for Bradlaugh and Besant in 1877, when more conventional feminists such as Millicent Fawcett refused. She and her daughter-in-law Bessie Drysdale belonged to the Womens' Freedom League, a suffragette organisation. Bessie was arrested in one of the earliest Suffragette demonstrations in 1907, when women marching down Victoria Street to present a petition to Parliament were attacked by mounted police, and served 14 days in prison. The Drysdales realised that without birth control women would not be able to be economically independent. They supported womens right to equal education and to jobs, and opposed the nineteenth-century marriage laws which "led to the practical negation of the wife as an individual after marriage." They insisted that women must control their own fertility—"science must put it in the power of woman to decide for herself whether she will or will not become a mother." In this, they had a much more modern view than their contemporaries, and correctly regarded the Suffragette's sole pre-occupation with the vote as too narrow.

It was indeed, very difficult for women in the nineteenth-century to control their own fertility. Female methods of birth control, such as pessaries, syringes and diaphragms were expensive, unreliable and complicated. Reliability could not be guaranteed unless two methods were used together, and women had to make their own spermicidal solutions, using quinine and sulphate of zinc and alum in a process resembling a chemical experiment. (The ultimate in do-it-yourself contraception was a recipe for contraceptive powder which involved mixing 35 parts powered starch, 15 parts boric acid, 10 parts gum arabic, 2½ parts of tannic acid and 2½ parts of citric acid.) The minimum cost of female appliances was 5s to 6s at a time when women if they worked, were lucky to earn 15s per week, and one third of all families lived below the poverty line of 21s per week.

Not surprisingly many working class women resorted to abortion, usually by taking drugs or chemicals such as white lead. Then, as now, estab-

lishment opinion was very hostile to abortion and many of the arguments are familiar. Abortion was "a sinful attempt to destroy life", the result of selfishness and self-indulgence, "resorted to in a light-hearted manner in order to seek pleasure and avoid responsibilities". But then as now, ordinary women did not share these attitudes and doctors were constantly surprised and annoyed by womens' refusal to agree that abortion was wrong or that the foetus had an independent existence; "they say 'it can't be alive yet, it is only so many weeks'." Abortion was generally regarded as a normal and inevitable part of working class life, only regretted if it failed or if the women became ill or died. Abortionists were members of the local community, protected by a conspiracy of silence. Where womens' views were recorded, they agreed with the women who told an interviewer in 1911, "I'd rather swallow the druggists shop and the man in't than have another kid!"

Woman's Supreme Destiny

Working class women were well aware that the official view of motherhood, which saw it as womens' supreme destiny, was far removed from reality. The male establishment liked to imagine that "there is no higher or holier office than that of mother", or that "it is as natural for a woman to bear children as for an apple tree to bear apples." But this idealised picture was effectively contradicted by the woman with six children who wrote "my life is spent in weary dread of again becoming a mother", and sharply demolished by the women who told the Co-operative Womens Guild in 1914, "All the beautiful in motherhood is all very well if one has plenty to bring up a family on, but what real mother is going to bring a life into the world to be thrust into drudgery at the earliest possible moment?" Reality was a never-ending struggle to make ends meet, with hard work during and immediately after pregnancy, and "bending over the wash tub an hour or two before the baby was born" was not an uncommon experience. Not surprisingly birth control was seen as a means of escape from the trap of unwanted motherhood, and a number of working class women, answering a questionnaire from the Co-operative Guild on Maternity in 1914, advocated it.

The arguments used by the Malthusian League, which tended to be anti-trade union and patronising, were often rejected by working class organisations, but many women involved in the labour movement supported birth control. Julia Dawson who wrote the woman's column in the *Clarion*, a popular labour weekly edited by Robert Blatchford, in 1895 in addition to campaigning for higher wages for women and local authority day nurseries, advocated birth control to her readers, offering cut price Malthusian books—an offer eagerly taken up.

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Save Our Children from Bigotry

JOHN LAURITSEN

An organisation Save Our Children, Inc, has campaigned successfully against homosexual rights in the USA recently. Anita Bryant, a Christian fundamentalist, has led the campaign from a bigoted, evangelical viewpoint. Civil liberties may be at risk in the face of what has been predicted as "a profound religious revival" in America. John Lauritsen, who sends this account of the campaign and its implications, is the author of the booklet "Religious Roots of the Taboo on Homosexuality".

In Miami, Florida, homosexual rights suffered a crushing defeat on June 7, as voters in Dade County, Florida voted overwhelmingly to repeal a recently enacted gay rights bill.

Many cities in the United States now have, as part of their "human rights" codes, legislation which typically outlaws discrimination in housing, public accommodations, and employment on the basis of religion, race, colour, sex etc. Under pressure from the gay liberation movement, several cities have now added "sexual orientation" or "sexual preference" to the list, as did Miami in January.

Shortly thereafter, opponents of the bill formed a coalition, Save Our Children, Inc, to oppose the ordinance, and began collecting signatures to force a referendum. They presented the Miami Metro Commission with 66,000 names, over six times the required number and the Commission voted in March to hold a referendum on the issue.

Spearheading the drive against gay rights in Miami was Anita Bryant—Christian fundamentalist; wealthy singer and public relations entrepreneur; ex-"sweater girl", and one-time "Miss Oklahoma" and second runner-up in the "Miss America" contest. Mrs Bryant has been thrust into public prominence over her activities: she appeared on the front cover of the 6 June *Newsweek*, with the headlines: "Battle Over Gay Rights: Anita Bryant v. The Homosexuals". Above the lead article is a photograph of Anita Bryant, her husband Bob, and their four children kneeling in prayer at the altar in their \$300,000 Spanish style house in Miami Beach (in the courtyard of which a sign proclaims: Christ is the Head of this House. The Unseen Host of Every Meal. The Silent Listener to Every Conversation). "The Lord is on our side", says Anita Bryant, "We know that homosexuality is an abomination". While claiming, with true Christian hypocrisy, to hate the sinner rather than the sin, Bryant, in her more candid moments refers to homosexuals as "human garbage", and she has even attributed the drought in California to the prevalence of homosexuality in that state.

In the evening of 7 June, Anita Bryant danced a jig at a victory party in her house—which inevitably recalls the prostitutes who were said to have danced in the streets of London following the conviction of Oscar Wilde. The next day, however, she was shaken and in tears when several hundred demonstrators booed her and then walked out of a religious crusade at which she appeared in Norfolk, Virginia.

Anita Bryant's group, Save Our Children, Inc, is a truly ecumenical coalition comprising the Greater Miami Rabbinical Council, the Roman Catholic Archdiocese, various Christian fundamentalists, and sundry other Yahoos.

As absurd as the claims of Save Our Children, Inc, are to any informed and civilised person, their advertising campaign is nevertheless sophisticated and effective, and backed by apparently unlimited money. Day after day before the referendum, full page advertisements appeared in the Miami newspapers with banner headlines proclaiming: "The Civil Rights Of Parents: To Save Their Children From Homosexual Influence". The propaganda of SOC, Inc, is as brilliant as it is false, and affords a classic example of turning the victim into the aggressor. The theme running throughout is that if homosexuals are granted even minimal civil liberties, even minimal respite from intolerance, that then the rights of the "Normal Majority" will be in jeopardy. To people like Anita Bryant, advocating homosexual rights is not constitutionally guaranteed free speech, but rather an "invitation to recruit our children"; it is the "right to tell all society especially our youth, that homosexuality isn't wrong, just 'different' . . . and, of course, 'gay'." The spectre of "child molestation" is shamelessly raised, even though the available evidence indicates that "child molestation" is almost entirely a heterosexual phenomenon, e.g., in the records of the New York Public School System, going back over a century, there are numerous instances of alleged heterosexual "child molestation" involving male teachers and female students, but there is not a single recorded case of homosexual "molestation".

Sexual Fascism on the March

Sexual fascism is on the march in the United States. And its primary target is homosexual men. In Dade County, bumper stickers have appeared which urge: "Kill A Queer for Christ"—they are entirely in earnest. One homosexual man in Miami has committed suicide as a result of the intensified bigotry there. In Los Angeles, a group called the National American Party for Manhood has distributed leaflets which demand capital punishment for homosexuals.

Before the referendum, a naive optimism had prevailed in the gay movement, based on the populist delusion that the great American masses support civil rights for homosexuals. At one point, the Dade County Gay Coalition considered calling for a nationwide campaign to underwrite the \$400,000 cost of the referendum. And when news of the Florida defeat reached New York City, the "Gay Synagogue" was in the process of holding a victory celebration!

Now, gay liberationists are shocked and angry. New coalitions are being formed, and rallies of thousands are being held across the country. Anita Bryant is no longer seen as a joke, but as a formidable enemy—she, and the forces behind her, are taking their crusade against homosexuality nationwide, and the prospect is ominous.

Just recently, the pollster, George Gallup, predicted that the United States may be in the "early stage of a profound religious revival", which he attributed largely to the evangelicals, who have "energised" the movement. If such a religious revival should occur, we may be sure that homosexuals will be among its major victims.

I cannot forget that only a generation ago, untold tens of thousands of homosexual men—the "men with the pink triangle"—were exterminated by the Nazis; that the "final solution" was applied to homosexual men before it was to anyone else; that in 1933, outlawing Germany's homosexual rights organisations and rounding up the leaders of the sexual reform movement were among the very first acts of the Nazis when they came to power.

A letter in the *New York Times* commented: "Thank goodness the Bill of Rights was not also on the ballot in Dade County yesterday."

Yes—it's a sad business when civil rights can be abrogated by majority vote. Except that homosexual men in Christendom have never really had rights—indeed, for most of the Christian era, the Church and State have not even recognised our right to be alive, let alone to have jobs and housing. At this time, sodomy laws are still in effect in 32 of the 50 states: it is a serious crime for two grown men, alone by themselves, to bring their bodies into contact with each other!

Now more than ever we must fight for a rational, secular morality. The Anita Bryants of this world must be stopped.

RELIGIOUS ROOTS OF THE TABOO ON HOMOSEXUALITY

JOHN LAURITSEN

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Two years ago Mr Moon told his followers in a pamphlet entitled *Answer to Watergate*: "It is your duty to love Richard Nixon. God has chosen Richard Nixon to be President of the United States." (A bit of a divine slip-up, there.)

A body called FAIR (Family Action Information and Rescue) was set up last year to combat the influence of such organisations and particularly to help parents whose children have become involved in the sect.

After the recent case forcing the eviction of Mr Jeeves, his brother-in-law, Mr Masters, so heavily involved in the sect, was questioned about allegations of brainwashing. He apparently commented that they simply had lectures, discussions and prayers like any other church. A woman living in the area is said to have commented that the Moonies are an evil lot.

The Reverend Sun Myung Moon's words are quoted in a leaflet "One World Crusade" (another name for the sect): "To restore the world, let us go forth in the shoes of a servant, with the father's heart, shedding sweat for earth, tears for man, and blood for heaven." His organisation's chief effect seems more concerned with increasing the sweat, blood and tears of human distress.

Women and Birth Control

And Hannah Mitchell, a suffragette and member of the Independent Labour Party, in 1897, after a painful labour, resolved not to have any more children. She knew that child-care and housework, "the tyranny of cooking, preparing and clearing away four meals a day", could completely monopolise a woman's time and exclude her from any political activities or from public life.

Working women also realised that if they were to be successful they must initiate action themselves. A woman writing to *Reynolds News* on birth control in 1914 asserted, "It is useless for us women to look to men to improve matters. We must up and fight for ourselves."

These sentiments are as relevant today as they were before the First World War, and indicate that birth control, even in its early years, was always seen by many women as an integral part of the general battle for womens' equal rights.

Two men who were buried alive in a landslide when they were trying to remove a religious object from an endangered shrine at Morioka, Northern Japan, died before rescuers could free them.

DRUIDS AT DAWN: FLOURISHING HOCUS-POCUS

"Druidism, the ancient religion of Celtic Britain and Gaul, was finally stamped out by the Romans about 58 AD." Not so, it seems. A romantic renaissance of Druidism brought about a revival still current.

Some people may have had doubts about whether the sun was going to put in an appearance at all this summer. No such doubts could be entertained by the Order of Druids, for whom sunrise at the summer solstice is an important moment of annual celebration at Stonehenge. At this point in the calendar, and also at the spring and autumn equinoxes, the sun as it rises divides into three bars of light when seen from the altar stone—if seen at all. The ceremonial trumpet this year was blown on a grey, bleak, dawn by a white-robed William Roache, leading 60 other members of the Ancient Order of Druids.

The event's entertainment value was emphasised by the fact that Mr Roache is better known as a TV star in *Coronation Street*, and by the presence of a large crowd observing the ceremony, many of whom were also attending a nearby pop festival. The first pop festival usually comes later in the season than the first cuckoo, but it is just as likely to be on the edge of cloud-cuckoo-land. That the strummers and strollers should assemble on Salisbury Plain, after an initiation in which police search for the unholy weed of marijuana, demonstrates a peculiar alliance of mysticism and mummery not uncommon today. Leylines and ancient barrows, the smell of wood and scent of ecological theories, numerology and "good vibes" all jingle happily together at Stonehenge. (It was a similar collection of half-baked groups, the sense and nonsense almost indistinguishably intermingled, which provided the Jubilee Exhibition of Life at Olympia earlier this year.)

Not a great deal is known about Druidism as an early primitive religion. According to the Order today, life is good and finds its origins in good, not in original sin. Much emphasis is placed on inner light and gradations of self-knowledge. There are Outer and Inner Orders and various grades. The highest grade is that of Ovate Og, "ovate" meaning sapling and "og" meaning raw, giving the idea of a young shoot growing in life's "great search". Fortunately, the idea of human sacrifice, which was probably part of the early religion, has not been revived.

The cultivation of hocus-pocus as the side-show for a pop festival is in the tradition of the fair-ground and the mountebank. But some people seem to take Druidism seriously. As organised religion declines, dis-organised semi-religion flourishes.

NEWS

HUMANIST ATTACKED

A new committee of inquiry is to study the workings of obscenity and indecency laws. Here is a maze of confusion, which will need very clear-headed unravelling. But before the committee has even formed and begun to examine these sensitive areas, controversy has arisen over the appointment of Professor Bernard Williams, Professor of Philosophy at Cambridge, as chairman. There has been objection to Professor Williams' known humanist outlook.

An all-party delegation to the Home Secretary has expressed misgivings over the appointment, since Professor Williams' "detachment from religious commitment is very far from being representative of the broad mass of feeling in the country." They wanted the committee to "reflect the values of the established religion in Britain." Raymond Johnston, Director of the Festival of Light, predictably has also expressed a hope that the committee will not forget issues such as family life, chastity, and faithfulness in marriage.

Apart from the nerve of assuming that chairing such a committee requires religious commitment rather than clarity of mind, it is a colossal presumption to suggest that religious doctrines are any longer of major importance in the country.

A letter to the Home Secretary has been sent on behalf of the National Secular Society:

The Right Hon Merlyn Rees, MP
Secretary of State for the Home Department
The Home Office, London SW1

29 June 1977

It is reported that you received a Christian parliamentary deputation, led by Mr Michael Alison, MP, who was protesting against your appointment of Professor Bernard Williams as chairman of the government inquiry into the working of laws on obscenity and indecency.

It appears that their objection was not prompted by Professor Williams' lack of qualifications or ability but simply because they would prefer a chairman "orientated towards the Christian religion." How long will it be before ardent Christians recognise the fact that their religion is now no more than a minority cult in this country? They are no longer in a position (except for the survival of historical privilege) to force legislation in the mould

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of Christian morality. In any case, what is the point of an official investigation, if the investigating body is to be packed at the outset with known crusaders?

Barbara Smoker,
President of the National Secular Society

INDIAN ATHEIST

Hamid Dalwai vigorously challenged religious orthodoxy among Muslims in India. His death, reported in the June issue of *The Freethinker*, was marked by a memorial meeting at the India Club, Strand, London, on 29 May. Mr Govind N. Deodhekar, Treasurer of the National Secular Society, took the chair. In his speech he focussed his attention on the unique contribution Hamid Dalwai made to the betterment of the condition of Muslims in India.

"Previous leaders of the Muslim Community", he emphasised, "were concerned only to protect and organise the Muslims in their relationship with the majority Hindu community . . . None of them called upon the Muslims to examine the dogmas of their religion in the light of modern science or to consider changes in their social customs to suit the modern times."

Muslims had been called to play a part in United India by Nationalist leaders, or to fight for a separate homeland by Separatist leaders. Communists, who were usually atheists, had failed to be critical of religion, and concentrated on the class-struggle. "Hamid Dalwai was the first Muslim leader who dared to challenge religious and social orthodoxy when he founded the Muslim Truthseekers Society in 1970. Particularly valuable has been his work among Muslim women who are liable to much hardship under the present one-sided Muslim Law of Divorce."

It was suggested at this meeting, attended by a number of those who knew Hamid Dalwai and the Press Secretary of the High Commission of India, that the highest tribute to this thinker and campaigner, would be to study his writings and support the causes he pursued. (A small informal committee was set up for this purpose. This would be the greatest memorial to his life.) Contrary to Muslim practice, Hamid Dalwai had been cremated. It would be a travesty of his teachings if a grave could have ended up as the shrine of another Muslim Saint, to be visited by pious Muslims (and Hindus) asking for favours.

Freethinker Fund

This fund helps substantially to keep the price of *The Freethinker* as low as possible. The total of £47.40 during the last month from 21 May to 20 June continued to show a decline. It is hoped that this worrying trend, at a time when cost are unavoidably increasing, will soon be reversed.

Thanks are expressed to S. Axenfield, £1.70; Mrs V. M. Beardmore, 75p; P. Brown, £1.00; J. H. Budd, £1.50; I. Campbell, £8.25; J. H. Charles, £10.00; P. Crommelin, £3.25; G. J. Davies, £2.25; L. Fluckiger, £1.25; A. Garrison, £1.25; J. Gibson, 75p; E. Greaves, £5.00; L. Hanger, 50p; G. Heathcote, £1.00; F. Howard, 25p; E. J. Hughes, £1.00; B. Khan, £5.00; Mrs E. H. Martin, 50p; P. J. McCormick, 20p; C. G. Newton, 25p; A. R. J. Pitcher, 75p; S. B. Wynbourne, £1.00.

OBITUARIES

MR J. ALMOND

Joseph Almond died last month at his home in Hove, Sussex, a few weeks before his ninetieth birthday. Mr Almond was born in Poland but lived for most of his life in Britain. He was a member of the National Secular Society and a reader of *The Freethinker* for over 50 years.

There was a secular committal ceremony at The Downs Crematorium, Brighton, on 13 June.

MR H. BROMLEY

Harold Bromley, who has died at the age of 64, was active in public life for many years. He was a leading member of the Labour Party in the Ruislip area and served on the former Ruislip-Northwood Urban District Council. He was actively involved in establishing a home for young offenders in the area.

Mr Bromley had no religious beliefs. There was a secular committal ceremony at the Breakspear Crematorium, Ruislip, on 16 June. In addition to the family mourners there was a large assembly of friends and representatives of local organisations, led by the Mayor of Hillingdon.

MR R. CRAWSHAY-WILLIAMS AND MRS E. CRAWSHAY-WILLIAMS

Rupert and Elizabeth Crawshay-Williams have died. Mr Crawshay-Williams was interested in areas where philosophy, linguistics and psychology met, and his philosophical works included *Comforts of Unreason* (1947). They were good friends of their neighbour Bertrand Russell, and Mr Crawshay-Williams' memoir *Russell Remembered* has been widely praised. He was a dedicated and outspoken humanist, and a member of the board of the Rationalist Press Association.

BOOKS

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO SEX by Mary Whitehouse.
Wayland, £4.95.

Mrs Whitehouse would be unimportant if she had not made herself the mouthpiece of a considerable faction. Her polemical book shows what liberals, humanists and others desiring a free society have to meet and overcome. She and her supporters are preservationists. They represent one side only of the two-sided human spirit—the side that desires certainty, a settled order, clear answers to eschatological puzzles and moral dilemmas, the comfort of an all-pervasive Father. On the other side are the innovators, who recognise the need to explore, to develop, to find truth and be satisfied with nothing less, to perceive and accept the diversity of human attributes.

I remember as a child singing with the congregation of our Anglican Parish Church the hymn that includes this verse:

The rich man in his castle
The poor man at his gate
God made them high and lowly
And ordered their estate

No doubt Mrs Whitehouse remembers singing it too. It is not sung nowadays because innovators, to constant protest from preservationists, did their work. And the odd thing is that preservationists now accept what they have done; for that is the nature of the preservationist. If she had lived a hundred years ago Mrs Whitehouse would have brought a private prosecution against Besant and Bradlaugh for publishing the birth control book *Fruits of Philosophy*. Today she demurely acknowledges that contraception should be widely known and available, adding "It is not contraceptives that are immoral, but the exploitation of people in the cause of profit, which is."

In her preservationist role, Mrs Whitehouse attacks in this book every target remotely connected with sex. The innovators, under the label of the counter-culture, suffer the main onslaught.

"One wonders sometimes how many people have realised the significance of the actual meaning of the term 'counter-culture'. Is it simply a handy phrase to designate a group of people who are just being awkward and perhaps, in our view, childish? No. It is far more than that. Its aims, as Dr John A. Howard, President of Rockford College, Illinois, makes it clear, are: to defy all the judgments and habits of conduct of the dominant culture. If the accepted practice is for men to wear short hair, then it must be long. If modesty is good, be immodest. If it is assumed women's dress should be different from men's provide identical clothes. It patriotism is held to be a virtue, scorn and mock it. If neatness is

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prized, be slovenly. If premarital chastity and marital fidelity are advocated, opt for sexual freedom. And so on throughout the whole range of the prevailing expectations of society. The counter-culture thrust is, in fact, a systematic rejection of the moral values of the society'."

Predictable gibes are hurled at every aspect of the counter-culture. Unisex is rejected because, says Mrs Whitehouse, male and female roles must remain distinct if the human race is to survive. Women's liberation is out too.

"We set a disaster course if, as the 'liberationists' do, we aim to eradicate the physical, psychological and emotional differences between men and women. Men and women *are* different and our world has no future if this basic fact is twisted and ignored. The woman is essentially the mate, the home-maker and the mother. What happens to her, how she sees her role, will determine the happiness, stability and creativity of society. Without a woman who is prepared to *be* a woman, to fulfil her role as child-bearer, a man can see no human fulfilment of his sexuality—he might as well be impotent."

It follows that Mrs Whitehouse rejects gay liberation. It is "evil". Its doctrine is an example of how abnormality has to justify itself by the denigration of normality, of how evil feeds on the body of crucified good. Inevitably she here quotes St Paul, with his talk of "shameful passions". People, she says, feel a "natural repugnance" when homosexuality is even mentioned—though she ticks them off when this not unnaturally leads to an unchristian response. Clearly it is homosexuals' own fault for being that way. Says Mrs Whitehouse, quoting as usual no authority: "In medical circles it is thought of as some probable hormone deficiency which delays the normal development between puberty and adult life, but psychiatric literature does record a 60 per cent rate of cure by one method or another."

In the Whitehouse pages the counter-culture bears a nasty look because it is lumbered with almost every questionable feature of our modern society. It confronts innocent children with a nude pregnant woman in the name of sex education, even on occasion getting them to assess her weekly growth with a tape-measure. It makes the erstwhile dutiful husband thumb through piles of pornographic magazines while the neglected wife sobs in the spare room (in a grimmer setting it turns decent citizens like Brady and Hyndley into child murderers simply by letting them get hold of porno-

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graphy). It robs people of "their immemorial rights to private repression and personal frustrations." By its manipulation of the media it offends decent citizens through bad language, blasphemy, sexual innuendo and indecency. It degrades sex and extols violence. It undermines marriage and the family. And so on.

Who is responsible for all this? Why liberals, humanists, atheists, left-wingers, trendy priests, media barons (especially within the BBC) and others who form what Mrs Whitehouse likes to call the permissive lobby. Her wrath is slung at any who dare to stand in their company. She rails at the "total self-absorption" of the permissive lobby, and its "predatory emotional and intellectual clutches."

"In the name of 'compassion' it is cruel—but does not even know it! In the name of 'liberation' it despoils; in the name of its own 'freedom' it shackles other people. Humbug is its name. And blind unreality."

Worse is to come. Mrs Whitehouse calls libertarian orthodoxy the most heartless and aggressive philosophy since Fascism. She adopts the abuse uttered by her natural ally Ronald Butt, who gives liberals no credit and no mercy. Speaking of pornographic pictures originating in Asia and showing small children in degrading poses he asks "Do our gallant and flippant upholders of freedom sleep easier when they defend such cases because they know that those who provide the material for such pornography live a long way off?" The charge against liberals gets more unrestrained (one is tempted to say hysterical) as the book proceeds. Their integrity has been totally destroyed. They no longer believe in right and wrong, purity or impurity, evil and good. They think there should be no standards of morality and integrity in personal and public life. They act for no reason but personal justification, political advantage or hard cash. They have created a "value-free society". Their gods are those same pieces of silver which betrayed Christ.

She is no less harsh to humanists. There are outcries from them against religious indoctrination in schools "but nothing, not anything, from them expressing concern about the indoctrination carried out by the contraceptive lobby." Humanists tear off one Christian value after another (but all their best brains have failed to produce a substitute). Society is unlikely to allow the humanist experiment much more time.

This is a bad book for reasons almost too numer-

ous to list here. It is uncritical and unscholarly, giving scarcely any authority for its statements yet criticising others on this very ground. How on earth does Bent Claesson know, she asks, that more than half of all men have at some time during their teens or early twenties taken part in communal masturbation with other boys or young men? "No reference to research to support such a claim, but such invalid and sweeping generalisations have been the stock-in-trade of the permissive lobby." It is vague, and wanting in argument. A sex education instructor holds up a sheath for the children to see—"Heaven help us—and them!" It is inconsistent. In one place Dr James Hemming is rebuked for saying truthfully that the only alternative to premarital relationships is very early marriage or years of fantasy and masturbation, both being undesirable; while elsewhere she complains that explicitness is a stealer of dreams, robbing the child of needed erotic fantasies. It is obscure. "The so-called liberal response to laws, moral or otherwise, is surely the most reflex of any this side of the way your knee jerks when the doctor hits it with his little hammer!" It is abusive. Statements disagreed with are "blather"; liberationists are "tyrants" and "fascists". It distorts facts about what it attacks, e.g. on sex education: "A boy who has failed to relate to his father or who has become over-dependent on his mother is not going to be helped to develop his masculinity by knowledge of how to master sexual techniques"—one might as well argue that a boy who wants to learn French is not going to be helped by algebra lessons. It exaggerates, e.g. John Calder having been quoted as allegedly saying that books do not affect behaviour: "Strange that, as a publisher, he had not apparently heard of the Bible, *Meinkampf* or *Das Kapital*. It is cliché-ridden, e.g. a reply from Sir Michael Swann "raises more questions than answers."

There are more serious grounds for complaint. In several places Mrs Whitehouse gets the law wrong. For example, she says that if the GLC had accepted Enid Wistrich's proposal to cease censoring films for adults "this would mean that any film, whatever its nature, would be free from control in the Greater London area." This is quite untrue, and Mrs Whitehouse knows it is untrue. She is well aware that the common law rules punishing exhibitions outraging public decency apply to all public cinemas, whatever the GLC may or may not do. When in 1975 the film *More About the Language of Love* was successfully prosecuted under these common law rules despite having received a GLC certificate she expressed herself delighted (*Guardian*, 11 June 1975). Another piece of dishonesty is revealed over the letter of complaint sent to Mrs Whitehouse by the Albany Trust at the end of 1976. In *The Freethinker* for May 1977 she clearly implies that she never received the letter. Yet her book equally clearly shows that she did receive it, and quotes verbatim from it.

Bad though the book is, it is not wholly without merit. Clearly Mrs Whitehouse is sincere, and feels deeply about what she describes in such extreme and confused terms. Occasionally there is a gleam of insight. I ticked two statements I agreed with. Sex education should ideally be given at a time and in a way which is dictated by the needs of the individual child and not by the demands of the timetable. Parents and teachers should be aware of what children are being shown and told by sex educators, so that they can sensitively "follow up" and be able to spot the child who might have been disturbed by it. (But what of the child disturbed by playground tales or dormitory initiation?) The book parades before us many unpleasant features of our culture, though they are concerned more with violence than sex. There are brutalising trends in our society, and it would be foolish to deny it. The question is what to do about it. The preservationist way is to impose strict controls by use of the criminal law. This may be effective. Mrs Whitehouse tells us that in Japan sex crimes have been reduced of late.

"How? The Japanese police authorities point to their very strict enforcement of the laws against pornography, which is quickly collected and burned, while any public display of indecency on posters and such like is immediately painted out. They have no doubt that their policy has been very effective in the fight against sex crimes."

One can always reduce crime, and indeed other undesirable features of modern life, by banning and repression. There would be less criminal damage if teenage boys were banned from football matches. There would be fewer deaths and injuries on the road if a universal 25 mph speed limit were rigorously enforced. There would be less disease if cigarettes were made unlawful. The list of such possibilities is endless. A benevolent dictatorship might on balance enhance human happiness, but one could never be sure. The missing factor is freedom.

Mrs Whitehouse's biggest offence is that in her haste to deny her opponents any integrity, unselfishness, or idealism, to twist their motives and to blacken their characters she overlooks important truths. Truth is indeed the biggest casualty of her campaign. The truth is that it is not, as she is so fond of proclaiming, pornography that does dirt on sex but the Judaeo-Christian religion itself. As E. M. Forster remarked, those who base their lives upon what they *are* rather than upon what someone thinks they *ought* to be always must throw that religion over in the end. It does dirt on sex by doing dirt on whole areas and aspects of human beings and human nature. People are entitled to lead their lives in accordance with their bodies and natures as they actually are, subject only to the right of others to enjoy their freedom too. The attempt to confine sexuality to what Reich called lifelong compulsory monogamous marriage is an impudent and insufferable interference with human

freedom. For the millions who for one reason or another never marry it is a lifelong denial of a fundamental right. For the rest it is a waste of years of beauty and potency while the sensible age of marriage is impatiently awaited.

Whatever happened to sex? asks Mary Whitehouse. The answer is that nothing happened to it. It is there, waiting to give happiness to every human being who welcomes it, respects it, gives it fulfilment and does not fear it. When the sex-haters have passed on, it will come into its own.

FRANCIS BENNION

THE QUEEN—An Anthology of essays. Penguin Special, paperback, 75p.

The Queen is an anthology of essays on the British monarchy by writers who are mostly in favour of that institution. The Queen is a symbol of British nationalism and her power and influence are discussed in the opening essay. The general conclusion is that "the Queen is the guardian of constitutional legitimacy in the broadest sense of the words"—whatever this is: as I understand it this means that the institution of monarchy acts basically as a conservative social device to prevent the occurrence of what is regarded by the British wealthy as "over-progressive" social change.

The second essay confirms my hypothesis by citing the case of Gough Whitlam in Australia—dismissed by the Governor-General, the Queen's representative, for being too socialistic, in other words acting against the British business interests.

I found the essay on personal styles in monarchy rather boring and also irritating because of its vagueness. For example George VI's reign is described with typical lack of clarity as "dedicated to stabilising the country and the throne." And what about this beautiful "nationalist myth" (by which I mean unscientific generalisation about a nation): George VI "was a model of what most Englishmen would like to be: athletic, quietly amusing, ready to learn, modest, and selfless". Is this really a model for most Englishmen?

The "style" of the present Queen is discussed without clearly stating what the goals of her "style" are—though we get a glimmer of light when it is revealed that Prince Philip has stated " 'It seems to me that anything which gives people the opportunity to achieve these ambitions' (to make some useful contribution to the success of their country) 'is an incentive'." Notice the author's explanation in brackets: what does the phrase "success of their country" mean? does it mean the success of the business interests of the wealthy? I find the whole "patriotic" tone morally obscene, as a committed internationally-minded humanist. The Queen's moral conservatism is well illustrated by her publicly denouncing as obnoxious what Elizabeth Longford, the author of this essay, describes as "a foreign

proposal to make in this country a sick film on the sex life of Christ."

I find the use of the word "blood" instead of "genes" very irritating and showing scientific illiteracy in one essay which starts off by talking of the "intermingling of royal blood" that was prominent in Europe before the first world war. However, I found this essay generally interesting—a detailed account of the varied fortunes of European monarchs in our century.

After a rather boring essay on "royal residences" there follow an essay on the Queen's succession, which I found rather incomprehensible, and an essay on royal occasions. This latter I found full of untruth, for example the statement that "the crown is above and outside politics", nauseating royalist sentiment, and dubious facts, rather than objectivity.

An essay on the Queen's horses (a grand money-making institution!) precedes an excellent essay by Willie Hamilton on "the case against the monarchy", which succinctly analyses the "business of monarchy". This includes the monarchy's numerous tax privileges, though not all has been revealed about them, for "monarchy does not like public scrutiny. It prefers the cloak of secrecy, which helps to ensure its survival." Arguments against the continued existence of the monarchy are well summarised though the author has not shed much light on "British nationalist mentality"; for example he refers to "the tens of millions of our people who have to go through life suffering and struggling socially and economically" instead of broadening the argument to refer to the hundreds of millions of mankind who do likewise. However, lucid logic is applied to show that the British monarchy is a "big con"—presented to the public as democratic, freedom-loving, whereas in reality it acts as a barrier to the liberalisation of British society and safeguards the interests of wealthy reactionaries, such as the landed aristocracy.

The last essay, by Peregrine Worsthorne, on "the case for the monarchy", presents some astounding-ly illogical arguments for monarchic retention, for example "the monarchy is, and always has been, an egalitarian institution . . . since in its presence all classes are equally compelled to bow their head and bend their knee"! Assertions are made without evidence of any kind to support them—"The great majority of ordinary people would give their eye teeth to take a day off work and travel up to see the Queen at Balmoral"—obviously the author does not believe in scientific social surveys in order to ascertain current social facts. Traditionalist sentiment pervades the whole essay, for example "the royal family has . . . the ability to renew itself and secure its future in a manner at once original and reassuring, imaginative and traditional and, most important of all, uniquely, unmistakably British." No progressive internationalism here! However, there is realism in the discussion of "the looming

threat of a conflict between the state and the trade unions" and the possible role of the monarchy in that conflict.

Altogether *The Queen* is an interesting book but lacks a lucid, concise account of the evolution and social functions of monarchies in general—in other words there is little in the book that can be called "sociology of monarchy". This is not surprising for, if it is true that monarchies generally act as "wealth preservation devices" for rich élites, then they will not view with equanimity the prospect of "open societies" which may lead to their gradual dissolution. Therefore, the development of a clear "sociology of monarchy" will be a long, hard struggle.

R. MORRIS

PEARS ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF MYTHS AND LEGENDS: NORTHERN EUROPE, SOUTHERN AND CENTRAL AFRICA by Sheila Savill. Pelham Books, £5.50.

The makers of Pears Soap used to be noted for the originality of their sales promotion methods. It was they who purchased the painting "Bubbles" from Sir John Millais and had a representation of a cake of their soap added by an unknown hand, to the fury of the artist. Another bright idea was the issuing of Pears Cyclopaedia, described as Twenty-three Complete Works of Reference in one Volume. It was remarkably comprehensive for its size, though marred by the intrusion of incongruous advertising material. I have a copy of the 1949 edition; its coverage ranges from subjects as diverse as The Colours of Academic Hoods to the more useful How to Correct Printers' Proofs, the latter based on a eulogy of Pears Soap whose compositor would never have been employed even by *The Guardian*.

Pears once had a section on Classical Mythology (subtitled "Pears—The Pure Soap—A Classic Favourite"). This has now been expanded out of all recognition to form a complete World Mythology and issued separately in four volumes, of which the one under review is the second to appear. Each is stated to be complete in itself, since it covers a specific geographical area. The advisory editor of the series is Geoffrey Parrinder, Professor of the Comparative Study of Religion, King's College, London.

In the introduction to the present volume it is stated that, while there are many references to them, no specific chapter is devoted to Jewish and Christian myths and legends, mainly because these are "already very easily available in that best-selling work *The Bible*"(!). This is a very different attitude from that of the 1949 Pears, with its naive "Birth of Christ" as an historical event sandwiched between two Roman invasions of Germany. Of course, as the introduction says, while the influence upon our culture of Greek and Roman mythology has long been acknowledged, critical consideration

of Jewish and Christian myths was taboo until comparatively recent times.

Of the book's general contents it is only necessary to say that the treatment is more thorough than one expects in an encyclopaedia of its size. It is beautifully produced with many remarkable illustrations—and mercifully not a single mention of soap. There is a useful system of cross-references from which we learn, for example, that the Holy Grail derives not from historical fact but from the magical dish or cauldron of Celtic tradition. Many references are to the volumes yet to be published. While this book is recommended, it is rather daunting to realise that the full set will cost £22.

R. J. CONDON

EXHIBITION

A PEOPLE'S HISTORY OF CLERKENWELL. Marx Memorial Library, 37a Clerkenwell Green, London. To 15 July.

Clerkenwell is an area of London which has religious and radical traditions, like many inner city areas. The traditions of the area are seen clearly in this small, but informative, exhibition. The place's origins lie in a clerk's well or holy well, beside which were built a monastery and a nunnery. (A few early medieval relics are on display.)

The radical associations began when the monastery was burnt down in 1387 by some peasants, taking part in the uprising led by Wat Tyler, who camped on the green. A small victory of the Radical Workmen's London Patriotic Club, which existed in the area during the latter part of the nineteenth century, was to get rid of the "tyrannical order of St Luke's vestry prohibiting street markets."

Among the personalities to which the exhibition refers are Thomas Paine and Charles Bradlaugh. An early edition of Paine's *Rights of Man* is on display, since its composition was begun in the Old Red Lion Inn, Clerkenwell. Charles Bradlaugh was the main speaker at a large meeting on the green in 1872 to protest against the persecution of orators at a Hyde Park demonstration demanding amnesty for Fenian prisoners. Among some curious coins and medallions displayed, is one commemorating the decision of the coroner's jurors after an inquest into the death of a policeman at a famous Clerkenwell riot in 1832—their verdict was "justifiable homicide" since the conduct of the police was "ferocious, brutal and unprovoked by the people."

The exhibition lays emphasis on work and entertainment. Printing, watchmaking and distilling gin using the natural waters of the well were important trades. Sadlers Wells nearby has a record of a variety of entertainments, aquatic and dramatic, and some old posters are shown. A less reputable

leisure pursuit is seen in the Poor Whore Petition to Lady Castlemaine in March 1668, one of the signatures being that of Madam Creswell, 30 years a brothel keeper.

The future is glimpsed as well as the past. Plans to involve the local community in projects for regeneration are shown, and they include a community park, the rehabilitation of old property and a recycling depot. It is amusing for those who breathe the foul exhaust fumes outside *The Freethinker* office in Holloway Road to see in a copy of the *Clerkenwell Chronicle*, 1884, advertisements for "Health for all" with Holloway Pills and Holloway Ointment.

JIM HERRICK

LETTERS

After Harold Blackham's handsome apology to "Freethinker" readers for some omissions in his work on "Humanism", I regret feeling the need to comment further. For the record, however, I would like to set one or two things right.

As an author I fully appreciate "the exigencies of publishing", but in my review of April I called the book a revision rather than a reprint because this is how the blurb itself described it. With the exception of my allusion to "Biafra", the various points I detailed in the second part of my last paragraph were derived from what Mr Blackham "really said", though they may not indicate what he now thinks. These points covered "fiddling sour old tunes" (p.166), "full-blooded humanism" (p.21), Periclean Athens (pp.103-4, 146-7), "the open society" (pp.45-64, 80, 103-4, 126, 166), "border warfare" (p.3, in the newly written "Introduction"), lists of samples of undesirable conduct (p.58), "the ultimate enemy" (p.168) and the "free world" (p.186).

In his reply Harold Blackham makes a new assertion which is a clear error of fact and not merely of opinion or balance: "At the time I was writing the Pelican, 'Humanism' was a word contemptuously rejected by the NSS . . ." Presumably this statement is intended to justify his virtual exclusion of the secularist contribution to humanism on the alleged grounds that the NSS eschewed the label. The facts are: (i) the book (rightly) includes a lot of philosophical traditions which never described themselves as "humanist"; (ii) throughout the time Mr Blackham may be assumed to have been writing his Pelican, the NSS consistently embraced "humanism", though it often added "secular" or "scientific" to distinguish it from Christian or Marxist humanism. Now, it is no secret that some members of the NSS, including myself, have always had mixed feelings about a word that almost everyone seems able to lay claim to. About the time Mr Blackham was writing, the BHA was advertising humanism as being "for human beings", as if in opposition to imagined organisations misguided and crazy enough to advertise themselves as being "against" human beings. Despite these mixed feelings, when I took over the editorship of "The Freethinker" in January 1966, I added the sub-title "Freethought and Humanism Weekly" to the paper, and in my "100 Years of Freethought" (1967) I said the term "humanism" has "proved very serviceable" (p.46). During the 1960s NSS Annual Reports con-

sistently endorsed humanism and named NSS affiliation to humanist bodies or involvement in humanist events like "Freethought and Humanism in Shakespeare" (1964). In 1953 and again in 1959 the NSS became a member of a Humanist Council—until each body of this name was wound up (in 1957 and 1963) at the instigation of Harold Blackham.

Also for the record, in my review there appeared two lists of humanist writers, the first unduly promoted, the second ignored in "Humanism". In both "Carlyle" appeared. The second reference was a misprint for "Carliile".

DAVID TRIBE

RELIGION AND SEX

In his article "Religion and Sex" George Jaeger praises Wilhelm Reich for showing us "that sex can be a truly liberating factor in life." Personally I think this was known already and that all Reich and those like him in recent years have done is to distract attention from really serious matters such as the economic problem. I think Reich and Co have done nothing to "show that sex can be a liberating factor in life" that hasn't already been done by others e.g. H. G. Wells and D. H. Lawrence. Reich and Co have been fighting battles that were already won, and preventing people from fighting battles that need winning. It is not much use having permissivism if supplies of essential raw materials, such as oil, run out.

Also—it seems to me that Reich and those like him make inaccurate statements. For instance he said that if there had been free love in Germany before 1933 there would have been no Nazi dictatorship. It seems the truth is that there was more free love in Germany under the Weimar Republic than in any other country in Europe.

Freethinkers should note that a film made about five years ago and based on Reich's ideas ended up with the hero singing an impassioned hymn to God.

I. S. LOW

I thoroughly enjoyed Mr Jaeger's article, "Religion and Sex", which appeared in the June "Freethinker". Unfortunately—probably due to limitations of space—he omitted to mention the resistance to puritanism manifested down through the centuries by heretical and "underground" Christian groups.

To start with, there were the various antinomian Gnostics in the Roman Empire—whilst the Gnostics condemned procreation, seeing it as serving the God of this world (the malevolent "Demiurge"), they often saw nothing wrong with sexual satisfaction *per se*, even condoning homosexuality and heterosexual sodomy. Whilst there is relatively little evidence of opposition to Christian prudery during the early centuries of the Middle Ages, we see the rebirth of a more enlightened attitude towards sex with sects like the Cathars (from approximately the eleventh till the thirteenth century). Whilst condemning marriage and procreation (as consistent Gnostics), they did not object to non-reproductive sex, even declaring that fornication and adultery were acceptable, because they flouted the moral requirements of a tyrannical and corrupt church. We also have the "Brethren of the Free Spirit", who seem to have derived from the teaching of Almaric, a medieval theologian. He was a pantheist, arguing that, since the human will comes from and returns to God, every man participates in the divine autonomy and the divine perfection. Ergo, the true Christian is liberated from the shackles of conformity to moral law, and simply relates to the world through love and spontaneous displays of affection. This sect practised sexual communism, and the pre-

dictable accusations of sodomy and satanism were levelled against them. It is probable, of course, that an age lacking in reliable artificial methods of contraception would resort to anal sex.

Thus despite the understandable identification of Christianity with inhibition and repression, there have been groups calling themselves "Christian" who have courageously defied the power of the Church to preach sexual freedom. In Hinduism, also, there were several Pantheistic movements which taught that sexual intercourse was the supremely effective means of experiencing one's identity with God! Since God was androgynous, one worshipped him/her most appropriately by engaging in "maithuna" (intercourse as a sacrament). At the same time, conception should be prevented, since love must be complete in itself, without reference to progeny. Mention could also be made of the Troubadours and the cult of "Courtly Love".

GEOFFREY WEBSTER

WHITEHOUSE TRUTH

Mary Whitehouse's letter published in your May issue looks curiouser and curiouser in the light of her book "Whatever Happened to Sex?" on page 60 of which she states that shortly after her speech attacking the Albany Trust, "a letter was sent to me from Harold Haywood, OBE, Chairman of the Trust." She then proceeds to quote from the letter—the very same one which she denied in your columns that she had received! Quite apart from the fact that Mrs Whitehouse goes on to misconstrue totally the letter's contents, one can only ask "whatever happened to truth?".

ANTONY GREY

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"In the final analysis, crime is a 'spiritual' problem. Human nature, the Bible reveals is a 'criminal' nature since it is 'not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be' (Rom 8 : 7). The solution to crime lies in the 'conversion' of a carnal, lustful, resentful, spiteful, hateful human heart—'changing' the nature of selfishness, lust and hatred into one of giving, loving, sharing and serving . . . Whether legislators like to admit it or not, God's powerful method of deterrent for crime is capital punishment! ('The wages of sin is 'death' Romans 6 : 23.)"— From "The Plain Truth" (A Magazine of Understanding), May 1977.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

MEMBERSHIP ENQUIRIES to the General Secretary,
702 Holloway Road, London N19 3NL

Religion and Broadcasting

schools. Either such a council would establish—or try to establish—a moral imperialism more related to the needs of the representatives (old and conventional, one might suppose) on the council rather than of the community at large, or “social morality” would simply turn out to be religion under another name, since the majority of representatives would be likely to come from the Churches. If, alternatively, the religious broadcasting departments were disbanded (20.18) there would be no objection to transferring such competent staff as they now employ to other departments; but it is objectionable to assert that they would be expected to export their religion as well as their technical skills to these departments.

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The infant son of a lay-preacher had a miracle escape recently. The baby, Kevin King, was put in its cot on the parents' car-roof after a pentecostal church meeting. Unfortunately, the preacher and his wife forgot to move the cot before driving off home. After driving 200 yards they realised that the baby was missing and rushed back through busy traffic, praying all the while. The baby was snatched out of the road and sent to hospital by a policeman. Soon the baby returned home from hospital recovered, after a fractured skull. Mr King is reported as saying: “This was a miracle there's no doubt. I've seen miracles in my work—the sick being healed—and I regard this escape in the same light.”

THE FREETHINKER

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EVENTS

Brighton and Hove Humanist Group. Imperial Hotel, First Avenue, Hove. Sunday, 3 July, 5.30 pm. S. V. Sandground: “Nothing But an Ape With a Few Extra Tricks”.

Humanist Holidays. Summer Holiday at Ross-on-Wye (small hotel and camping site). No single rooms. Details: Mrs M. Mephram, 27 Fairview Road, Sutton, Surrey. Telephone: (01) 642 8796.

London Secular Group (outdoor meetings). Thursdays, 12.30 pm at Tower Hill; Sundays, 3-7 pm at Marble Arch. (“The Freethinker” and other literature on sale.)

The Progressive League. Beatrice Webb House, Pasture Wood, Holmbury St Mary, Dorking, Surrey. 13-27 August: Summer Holiday Conference. Details from Ernest Seeley, 38 Primrose Gardens, London NW3.

West Glamorgan Humanist Group. Details of summer activities from W. B. Grainger, 24 Glanrafon Gardens, Sketty, Swansea.

After seven years' deep sleep the Oxford Humanist Society will awaken in October 1977. Further details from George Miles, The Queen's College, Oxford. Meetings to be announced in September.

SPEAKERS' CORNER—AN ANTHOLOGY

Edited by JIM HUGGON

The book is a useful backcloth for everyone interested in the history of all radical, revolutionary and other protest movements that have held demonstrations in the past century—The Freethinker

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