

THE



ETHICAL

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SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY

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Coming at Conway Hall

Sunday, May 4

- 11.00 am—**Sunday Meeting: EDWARD GOLDSMITH** on *The Next Civilisation*. Soprano solos: Jackie Moore
6.00 pm—**Bridge and Scrabble** in the Library. Light refreshments

Tuesday, May 6

- 7.00 pm—**Discussion.** First in series "Are We Concerned About Morals". **The Morals of Communication** introduced by Mark Moskowitz

Sunday, May 11

- 11.00 am—**Sunday Meeting: HECTOR HAWTON** on *The Bloomsbury Group*. Tenor solos: Harvey Kesselman
3.00 pm—**Forum: The Ethics and Economics of Henry George—Alternative to Socialism** with John Kemp
6.00 pm—**Bridge and Scrabble**

Tuesday, May 13

- 7.00 pm—**Discussion: A Quaker View of Right and Wrong** introduced by Philip Wragge

Thursday, May 15

- 6.30 pm—**Bridge Drive** in the Library (see South Place News)

Sunday, May 18

- 11.00 pm—**Sunday Meeting: NICOLAS WALTER** and **PETER CADOGAN**. Baritone solos: Neil Simpson
3.00 pm—**Sunday Social** (see South Place News)
6.00 pm—**Bridge and Scrabble**

Tuesday, May 20

- 7.00 pm—**Discussion: Authority and Progress in Morals** introduced by Keith Gilley

Sunday, May 25

(Spring Bank Holiday, no Sunday Meetings)

Tuesday, May 27

- 7.00 pm—**Discussion: What Basis for Morals?** introduced by Lord Longford and Stanley Parkinson

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The views expressed in this journal are not necessarily those of the Society

EDITORIAL

Too much for granted

HOWEVER LATE, summer is coming, and that is but one of all the things we take for granted in our lives.

Only the most long-lived in Britain today can remember real hardship, when good food was rarely come by, when clothes were mostly hand-downs and when housing was crude and cramped.

The majority of us have grown up in comparative affluence, and for the last 20 years or so it has been almost taken for granted that most families include a motor car in the list of possessions.

With the advances in medicine and the development of the National Health Service, health and life itself have largely been taken for granted too. The danger comes when all this is threatened.

And threatened it all is. The world is in turmoil, mostly because of money, and the things we have taken for granted for so long could be scarce again soon.

The reactions of people to the shortages in petrol and sugar we have experienced in the last couple of years were frightening, and should provide enough fodder to keep all the psychologists in Britain going for years. Who can forget the panic-stricken queues of motorists in front of garages, many of the drivers trying to buy the last few drops to fill the mighty tank to the brim? Who can forget the rush to Sainsbury's or some other shop after a lady's shopping bag was seen to contain a packet of sugar, and after she had been under seige to tell where she had bought it?

What threatens us now is, perhaps, that the world is coming to its senses, and that is the most frightening thing of all. Is it really "living" to spend most of one's life striving to make profits for a few overfed people, and then while away the remaining years in comparative poverty?

Is it really "living" to desire all the machinery and glitter turned out by the factories, which use the earth's finite resources to do so?

The irony is that the very thing the industrialised world is fearing just now—a drop in the consumption of manufactured goods—will probably be the best thing ever to happen to that section of society.

But as political groups become larger, in efforts to conserve markets and maximise industrial potential, what will happen when the petrol and sugar panics are translated into international language? There has already been talk about super-powers going to the Middle East to take oil by force.

"Let the buyer beware" is an old British chestnut of advice. Maybe it is too old. Perhaps today "Let the buyer think whether he really needs to buy" would be a better maxim. Plenty of food and crops could be grown on the land freed by demolished factories, and button-pushers and clerks would probably be healthier for it, too.

The Idea of a University

BY

T. F. EVANS

IN A society which, despite centuries of enlightenment and progress, is now becoming increasingly unsure of itself, it is not surprising that universities should be the subject of agitated questioning and re-examination. Much that is said about the universities at the present time—like, alas, much that is said on many other subjects—is rubbish but, unfortunately, it is rubbish that receives a great deal of publicity. Some of it is uttered by people old enough and, if the word may be used without clouding the argument, educated enough, to know better. Some of the comment, and this may not be very surprising, is pernicious and malicious.

In a short space it is impossible to do more than look at a few of the more important features of universities and their purpose but it may be of value to consider some changing ideas that are especially relevant to the country today and to the economic plight in which it finds itself. It would be most satisfactory if a clear and agreed definition of a university could be given at the start. This would involve a certain amount of historical introduction. There is a vast difference between the quiet, cloistered homes of the societies of teachers and students at Oxford and Cambridge when they first came into existence and the giant factories of glass and concrete in, say, Michigan and California. If one goes, even superficially, into historical antecedents, one finds records of the great universities, specialising in particular subjects, such as the medical school at Salerno and the college of law at Bologna as well as the universities, such as the most important university of Paris which provided for study in a wide range of subjects. The question, whether a university is a place in which to study one subject or one in which all knowledge should be, at least, experienced, is a problem which still worries us and to which we have still not found an answer.

Oxbridge Religion

In this country, the early history of university education is largely a record of what happened at Oxford and Cambridge. At these two great centres, the influence of religion has always been strong. An important step was taken in 1828 when a university college was established in London. The range of courses was wide and was to include "languages, mathematics, physics, the mental and moral sciences, together with the laws of England, history and political economy, and the various branches of knowledge which are the objects of medical education". Some supporters of the movement for university education in the capital were nevertheless disturbed at the thought of this being dissociated, as was intended, from the church. There followed, therefore, a few years after, the establishment of King's College as a counter to what was called, although not in an official pronouncement, "the godless hole in Gower Street". The nineteenth century was a great period for the growth of universities and it was in the middle of the century that appeared a work from which the title of these remarks is taken. John Henry Newman, a clergyman and theologian and member of the University of Oxford, who joined the Roman Catholic Church in 1845, delivered in 1852 a course of lectures on the scope and nature of university education. One of the later editions of Newman's lectures on university subjects was given the title of "The Idea of a University". Briefly, it was Newman's purpose to emphasise the need for general and liberal (strange though that word be from a Catholic

source) rather than specialised or vocational education. He asserted that general mental culture was "emphatically useful" and thus a necessary preparation for courses of specialised study in the various professions and other callings required by civilised society.

The fact that Newman felt it necessary to make this assertion so strongly as he did shows that the idea of general liberal education was being called into question. Despite the conventional view of the nineteenth century as a period of complacency and conservatism, it was, in reality, a time of ferment, of doubt and self-questioning. The movements of the end of the century, for greater political, economic and social justice, for the liberation of women, for social services and socialism did not come into being suddenly and with no preparation. In the middle of the ferment, it would have been surprising if the conventional idea of the university had not been called in question. There were plenty to criticise not simply the view of the university which provided a general education to the sprigs of the aristocracy and the ruling classes, until such time as they should succeed naturally to those posts of privilege and authority to which their birth and nurture had entitled them. There were those, associated with the establishment of important new civic universities and other seats of higher education, who questioned also the remote, dilettante, theory of general education. The exchange in the second act of Shaw's *Man and Superman* between Tanner and his Cockney chauffeur, Straker, is well-known. Tanner takes up Straker's reference to the Polytechnic and speaks to his friend, Octavius Robinson:

Tanner: His university, Octavius. Not Oxford, Cambridge, Durham, Dublin or Glasgow. Not even those Nonconformist holes in Wales. No, Tavy. Regent Street! Chelsea! the Borough!—I don't know half their confounded names; these are his universities, not mere shops for selling class limitations like ours. You despise Oxford, Enry, don't you?

Straker: No, I don't. Very nice sort of place, Oxford, I should think, for people that like that sort of place. They teach you to be a gentleman there. In the Polytechnic they teach you to be an engineer or such like. See?

Tanner and Straker drew a contrast between the Polytechnic and Oxford but the observations would have been only a little less forceful if the contrast had been between some of the civic universities and the old foundation. At the end of the century universities came into being in such large centres of population, industry and commerce as Manchester, Birmingham, Liverpool, Leeds and Sheffield. Just as dedicated as were Oxford and Cambridge to the idea of learning for its own sake, they had nevertheless the wider vision of an educational system that would be closer to the life and work of the community. In these universities, the scope of university education was expanded to include new subjects.

Robbins' Recommendations

By a rapid flight over the intervening years, we come to the momentous examination of the entire subject of higher education carried out by a committee under the chairmanship of Lord Robbins from 1961 to 1963. The Robbins committee recommended very great and very costly expansion in university provision for the period up to 1980 and the birth of many new universities in the last decade is adequate testimony to the enthusiasm and speed with which successive governments have put into practice the Robbins recommendations. What may be of more importance to our present concern than an examination of what actually happened is an understanding of the thinking behind the recommendations and the reasons which led the committee to recommend such a great expenditure

of money and effort. The committee appeared to take it as axiomatic that higher education was a good thing, both for the individual and to help the country to maintain "an adequate position in the fiercely competitive world of the future". The committee set out what it considered to be the aims of higher education. These were: first, "instruction in skills suitable to play a part in the general division of labour". Anticipating that to put this first might provoke comment, it added the explanation that "Confucius said in the Analects that it was not easy to find a man who had studied for three years without aiming at pay". Second, it asked that what was taught should be taught in such a way as "to promote the general powers of the mind" and said that "the aim should be to produce not mere specialists but rather cultivated men and women". Third, the committee put the advancement of learning and fourth, something that was difficult to define but "none the less fundamental"—"the transmission of a common culture and common standards of citizenship".

Misunderstood Students

It might be agreed that there is, at present, a certain amount of disillusion on the subject of university education. I discount, almost completely the talk about student unrest. Some students, of course, go to unpardonable lengths, as do many people in all walks of society. Yet, when the picture is seen as a whole, the vast number of students are serious and hard-working. Moreover, it will be a bad thing for the country if students cease to be, to some degree at least, rebellious and unwilling to accept what is thought good for them by those who are assuredly their elders but not necessarily their betters. What has caused the lack of faith in higher education that may now be seen is a general feeling that higher education has failed. It has manifestly not brought the great increase in living standards and the general prosperity that some thought would result from the tremendous investment in higher education that followed the Robbins recommendation. This investment comprised not simply the expansion of existing universities but the foundation of a dozen or so entirely new ones, the advancement to university status of several colleges of technology and a great advance in the polytechnics so that many of them are now universities in all but name. Yet, higher education, if it has failed, may not be the only thing of which this can be said. Religion cannot be said to have conspicuously succeeded in providing remedies for our present discontents. Politics is not held in high esteem. Not so long ago, economics was thought to be the subject that would liberate mankind from all the ills that beset him. Few would say so now. More economic experts have been in control of the world's destinies in the last ten years than ever before. The results of their ministrations are not encouraging.

Optimistic Outlook

To talk like this, however, is to adopt a defeatist attitude. If we give up hope in education, we give up hope in life itself. The alternative to believing that something can be done is to accept that nothing can be done. Mankind is infinitely resilient and I continue to believe that solutions to the world's problems will be found. As an essential contribution to this, I believe that it is in the interests of all countries that those who feel called to, or have shown themselves equipped for (and preferably the two together), a life of study and research should be encouraged to pursue that life. I would suggest guardedly that perhaps we have gone a little too far along the road of technical education. This is still essential but perhaps we need to spend more time and effort on learning how to cope with our knowledge and great technical proficiency. We have atomic power but we are nowhere near knowing how best to use it. Possibly

therefore we might think just a little more carefully along the lines of Newman's "general education". If the pessimists are right, education may not save us. I can think of nothing else that will.

(Summary of a lecture given on January 12)

The Uniqueness of Man

BY

DR JOHN LEWIS

WE CAN no longer assume that all reasonable people believe in the dignity and worth of man. There was a time when though we often failed to live up to our ideals we nevertheless still believed that we ought to. Today the very fundamentals of humanism are openly challenged on every side. I should like to mention some of the ways in which the denigration of man is widely advocated in our time:

1. In the first place the new materialism that reduces man and society to the interaction of ultimate particles or forces to the chemistry and physics of the body, and thought to the electrical disturbances taking place in the cortical neurones of the brain. Everything else is reduced to what is called epiphenomena, the mere effects of these physical events.
2. The theory of evolution has by some popularisers been distorted to the view that man is no more than a "naked ape" and is basically driven by animal instincts of an aggressive nature, making war and the permanent conflict of man against man inevitable.
3. Konrad Lorenz and others lay great stress on the inherent nature of man as aggressive. This Lorenz shows by the analogy of his fighting fish and the habits of the Greylag Geese. Freud too has contributed to the theory of the combative and wholly individualistic nature of man.
4. The behaviourists, working from the standpoint of experimental psychology, have attempted to reduce man to the measurable and manipulatable, very like the laboratory rats on which their experiments are based. Man can thus be graded on the basis of tests and allotted to his correct status in life and given the education suited to that status. This works in two ways: a) by grading people according to class, and b) according to superior and inferior races.
5. Skinner has gone farther and by the method of "operant conditioning", which follows every action that it is desired to establish with a reward, hopes to make people into good citizens without all the bother of arguing and persuading them. Again the conditioning of pigeons and rats provides the model for how men are to be controlled.
6. Finally we are now assured that the brain is no more than a very complex calculating machine or computer, and that all that it has hitherto done can now be done equally well, indeed much better, by machines.

We are very easily persuaded of the truth of these theories because we are convinced that they are the findings of modern science. This is not the case. They are supported by an exceedingly popular pseudo-science that fits very well the generally aggressive and highly competitive character of our society. Any attempt to refute these theories meets with very little response simply because the theories reflect so well the trend of society itself antagonistic to human values. These false theories play a very necessary role in the maintenance of this form of society. Rational

rebuttal falls on deaf ears because these ideas form so substantive a system-maintaining role that it needs more than reasoned argument to shake them.

If these views have no scientific foundation it should be one of our major tasks to refute them, however unpopular that attempt might be. If they have a scientific foundation then our only course will be to abandon our humanism and not play the hypocritical game of believing two contradictory ideas at the same time.

We might very well find that a courageous defense of humanism along these lines would really vindicate our claim to fulfil an important function for our day and age.

(Summary of a lecture given on December 29)

CURRENT SPES PUBLICATIONS

THE SECULAR RESPONSIBILITY	Marghanita Laski	10p
THE ALTERNATIVE SOCIETY	James Hemming	10p
THE BREAKDOWN OF GREAT BRITAIN	Leopold Kohr	10p
MAN AND THE SHADOW	Laurens van der Post	10p
WHAT ARE EUROPEANS?	G. K. Young, CB, CMG, MBE	10p
THE ORIGINS OF CHRISTIANITY FROM PAGAN AND JEWISH BACKGROUNDS	G. A. Wells	20p
HUMANITY AND ANIMALITY	Edmund Leach	10p
THE USES OF PAIN	Jonathan Miller	10p

3½p postage for one—7p for two or more

For the Record

BY

THE GENERAL SECRETARY

IT SEEMS to me that just as the country as a whole will soon have to face its "moment of truth" so will *South Place*. The problem for the country is the failure of the central general assumption of our society, i.e. that the pursuit of self-interest is the proper goal and that somehow it will work out for the benefit of all. This makes the first commandment: Thou shalt grab. It means, in effect, that we see life as an accumulation of quantities rather than qualities.

But it is qualities that count. Are not kindness, truthfulness, friendship, trust, freedom, justice, fulfilment, aspiration and vision (you can make your own list) the things that make life worth living? And how can these

possibly be measured in cash terms? The very idea is ridiculous. And yet our principal instrument of social measurement *is* cash. Our problem is that of translating the immaterial things, such as those listed above, into workable rules.

The place to start is at home and at work, contesting material values, asserting their opposites and finding practical ways of making them feasible. *South Place* has its own share of that responsibility. If we cannot show that we care about human relations, about peace, freedom and justice then we shall have failed the tradition of which we are part. *And this means putting ourselves at risk for what we believe in.* Our practice is the test of our precepts.

Thought-provoking

I have now been General Secretary of the Society for over five years, long enough to do some reading and thinking in depth; and that has been required of me, and of others, by the implacable necessities of our legal situation. That situation has been a dark cloud over us but it has not been without its silver lining. We have been *made* to think. This is always a difficult exercise in empirical England! 'If it works—get on with it' is our national tradition and it usually means that the deeper questions can be allowed to ride. But not with us, not this time.

I'm currently reading Durkheim's extraordinarily important book *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* first published in 1915 and currently enjoying its seventh impression in paperback (Allen and Unwin £2). He asks the key question: What is the irreducible meaning of the phenomenon of religion looked at in all cultures and at all times? And comes up with the answer that *all religions make a clear distinction between the sacred and the profane.*

What then is sacred to *South Place*? This is the ultimate question and from my reading of our history there can, in my view, be no doubt about the answer. Fox laid it down in 1817, building on the tradition established by Winchester and Vidler, when he pledged himself and the Society to civil and religious liberty. This he saw as sacred and the invasion of it as sacrilege. It turns upon a view of the potentialities of human brotherhood—the universalist idea upon which Winchester and Vidler founded the Society.

It is one thing to say this as a matter of historical knowledge verified by the record; it is quite another thing to know it as a matter of insight, experience and faith. Yes, faith, that is what it ultimately comes to.

Any ethical position worth having has to be based ultimately upon faith in one's fellow men. The only other position is that of the authoritarians. And faith in freedom stems from faith in people.

The Welsh Afternoon—23 March

The day that Wales came Williams-wise
To speak its way and sing
Showed us how much we English need
The Muse that Celts can bring.
James spoke the words that Dylan wrote
And sang of Cymru's lore
He made our Bösindorfer sing
As it never had before.
We *tried*; we sang; we clapped our way
Through all that Welsh delight
Yet envied those our neighbours, who,
Can sing, can so recite
In lovely four-part harmonies
That we English ill requite.

Colin Greaves

Some very sad news . . . Colin, our Head Caretaker, who has been with us for something like 25 years has had a terrible accident. While hanging some curtains on the stage he fell from the top of the ladder and sustained multiple fractures to his spine, arms and legs. He lies in a traction bed in hospital and is completely paralysed. Mrs. Greaves keeps us informed about him because for the time being he does not want anyone else to go to see him. He is quite conscious and, extraordinary as it may seem, in good spirits. He is, of course, an indomitable person. We were terribly shocked and days afterwards it is still difficult to believe that it has actually happened; difficult to grasp that he is not about the building somewhere. He has the heartfelt good wishes of us all for his recovery.

May Days

Edward Goldsmith, coming on the 4th, is Editor of *The Ecologist* and was one of the prime movers of the statement 'Blueprint for Survival' that stirred so much furious thinking not so long ago. He is a powerful speaker. Conway Hall is in Bloomsbury and one is continually conscious of its ghosts, Bloomsbury's that is. They are pretty good ghosts and they might be even more helpful to us if we knew a little bit more about them—as I am sure we shall do after hearing Hector Hawton on the 11th. At the Annual Dinner I asked Nicolas Walter if he would speak about Winstanley some time. I have known for years that the famous Digger was near to his heart. He said that he would if I would join him on the platform to talk about the religious side of Winstanley—and that was agreed. John Willmin will take the Chair. That will be on the 18th, and the 25th is the Spring Holiday.

Every now and then the ideas of Henry George come up in our discussion of something else and we never seem to have time to give the attention they may well deserve. We shall correct that at the Forum on the 11th when John Kemp will introduce the subject.

The final Tuesday programme of the Society's season has shaped up in a very interesting fashion. We open with Mark Moskowitz, psychologist, and a favourite speaker amongst us, introducing 'The Morals of Communication'. He will be followed by the Secretary of the Quaker's Education Council, Philip Wragge. Then Keith Gilley (members met him in the Forum on homosexuality) and were suitably impressed. He is the Unitarian Minister at Golders Green and is also a member of *South Place*. Finally Lord Longford will debate with one of our own members, Stanley Parkinson. Stanley met him as the result of their joint interest in prison work, they had lunch together and this meeting is the upshot of their discussion.

AROUND THE SOCIETY

☐ Rose Bush is out of hospital and convalescing down in Kent. Mr. Oliver Warwick is up and about but still mending.

☐ Iris Mills is an ideal Letting Secretary and Hall Manager but we are losing her because of the impossibility of the housing situation in London. She got married last summer and buying a house and making a proper home is just about impossible for newly weds in London. A house that costs £10,000 in London will cost hardly more than £3,000 up North. London is driving its own people out.

☐ I know that some of our members are interested in the Tyingham Naturopathic Clinic and others in The Acupuncture Association so it might be of interest to mention that the two are promoting a joint seminar in

London from May 31 to June 6 led by Prof. Michio Kushi. I have the details if you want them.

☐ Don Baker rang up the other day to suggest that we have a look at the old chapel in Parliament Court where the Society was founded in 1793. John Brown, in charge of rambles, thinks it a good idea and it may happen on a Sunday afternoon in June. A Saturday would not be suitable as the chapel is today used as a synagogue. See the next *Record*.

☐ If members have ideas it is important to let people, especially me, know about them. Very often they can be taken up.

PETER CADOGAN

Appointments

See *For the Record* for the reason for what follows.

(a) Lettings Secretary and Hall Manager for Conway Hall. Salary by negotiation—minimum £1,800 plus LVs. Interesting, varied and responsible work in a small team. Applications to the General Secretary.

(b) Assistant Caretaker for Conway Hall. Pay £30 a week, plus commission, overtime etc. Applications to the General Secretary.

DISCUSSION

Why We Must Develop North Sea Oil?

MR HUGH SHARMAN was one of the pioneer engineers of the North Sea project. He is a Quaker and recently decided to abandon what he came to regard as an unprincipled development in order to become the new director of *Low Impact Technology*.

His title, *Why We Must Develop North Sea Oil?*, was an interesting one, since the general tendency of those who put the ecological case is to assert the contrary. His view was that we have to accept what was inevitable and then turn it to our own purposes in contradistinction to those of the politician and the industrialist who take no heed of the long-term effects of what they are doing. He pointed out that the estimated production of North Sea Oil is reckoned to be 100 million tons a year and the industrialists propose to raise it to 200 million. However, since the total quantity of North Sea Oil is only about 3,600 million tons the whole field could be exhausted, at the proposed rate of exploitation, by the year 2000, a disastrous result.

If, however, a *post-industrial* projection is made of steadying production round about 50 million tons a year then the estimated life of the field will be of the order of 100 years. He made the point that the frantic endeavour for maximum production was designed not to meet human needs, but to get this country out of the red by a disastrous gamble.

He then went on to look at the whole situation from first principles. Our first forebears, the hunter-gatherers, worshipped the animals and the forests. They are the only people who lived symbiotically, i.e. in close accord with nature; and some, of course, are still doing so somewhere in the remoter places of Africa, South America and South-East Asia. Pastoralists did much the same thing and there were early cultures co-existing with industrial cultures until the late 18th century.

From the time of the advent of the steam engine resource-consumption and population have doubled and doubled again in the course of a few decades. At the present rate of change we can only expect collapse; just

as all previous cultures terminated at some point, reaching the natural end of their potentialities, so the same thing is happening to our own industrialised country.

At the end of an era, when a Leviathan is threshing around, its tail can do enormous damage. The Harwell nuclear reactor for instance has recently been concreted in and the wastes of nuclear fission have to be similarly dealt with and left under conditions of ultimate security for up to $\frac{1}{4}$ million years! The experts simply side-step the problem and the process of worsening the situation continues.

North Sea Oil presents a similar kind of danger. Apart from the social dislocation in Scotland the fact is that if one well-head blows out, its neighbours will follow suit and the conditions are such that the blow-out might never be within human control and we'll then be faced with a *daily* disaster of Torrey Canyon proportions. What is it that allows our decision makers to do this kind of thing? We are all users of energy supplies and we are all involved in responsibility for them. How is it, we are entitled to ask, that our culture gives the go-ahead for such awesome developments?

As against fossil fuels we were surrounded by sources of renewable energy from the sun, wind, water and wood and it is to them we need to look in the course of making a long sane study of our future needs and how to meet them. In the past there was always a mixture of cultures, agriculture, pastoralism, industry and commerce. We are today, however, in quite an unbalanced mixture. If oil was cut off our society as we know it would perish since not only our transport but our food production have a chemical and mineral basis. We can never return to the old-style idea of indefinite economic growth. The fact is that we have lost the growth target of our own culture and a real and permanent social breakdown could be just beginning.

In the past we have measured wealth by property, cars, holidays and mod cons; but against it a new post-industrial culture is beginning to emerge, based not on things, but on the quality of living. It is in these things that we now need to redefine what we mean by wealth. Otherwise, the only alternative is a new dictatorship designed to keep the old system going for a few more years until ecological disaster brings us to our knees.

The community should, in future, relate to its surrounding energy capital as provided by nature. From this follows the proposition that we should concentrate anew on being self-sufficient in Britain and stop buying everything willy-nilly from all over the world.

Time Slipping By

North Sea Oil constitutes about $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent of total world reserves and would be enough to keep us going at our present level for about 50 years. If we take intelligent advantage of this opportunity we can create a new culture and economy. In the nature of change in human society this will take some 30 years, so our new oil assets enable us to buy time. The question is whether we do this with foresight to ensure our long-term future or whether we allow the speculators and politicians to wreck our prospects to meet short-sighted imperatives.

Schools and universities, as we know them, have become growth industries and as such will simply have to be abolished. We need to repopulate the land, to devise a new technology for using renewable resources, plant gardens and allotments and encourage movement away from the industrial treadmill.

Our apparent decision-makers are not making decisions at all. They are the slaves of events and as we separate ourselves from them and their

intentions, so we need to do things differently and to create and invent to meet new circumstances. The new politics will come from below. It will not come as a mere reform of the existing system. Both the pound and political confidence are going to collapse. Our task is to conceive and create a new culture and a new economy.

P.C.

(Summary of a discussion held on November 19)

FORUMS

Ireland and the English Conscience

BILL HETHERINGTON pointed out that the recent troubles in Ireland were not a product of the recent past; they went right back to the Middle Ages when the country was first conquered by the English. Ireland was our first colony and possibly our last. Even Gladstone thought one of his prime political goals was to bring peace to Ireland; because of opposition from Liberal Unionists and others he was not really successful.

For a long time Ireland has been the skeleton in the English cupboard. One of the problems is that we see the Irish problem in our own terms; we are reluctant to accept other ways of life and other cultures.

The Irish problem was not basically religious; Catholic and Protestant were labels which cloaked other motives. The Irish problem is not a class struggle. It is more a question of brother fighting brother, and can only be compared to the kind of artificial division which we see in Berlin. Belfast can be compared to Berlin. In this city the life styles of Protestant and Catholic do not differ all that much. But in Belfast we see the formation of attitudes very early in life; children become conscious very early on of their religious background.

In earlier periods the English made use of this division; they followed a policy of divide and rule. Moreover they could be sure that the Unionists would block any real move towards Home Rule.

The Irish had their own Parliament from 1792 to 1802; it was persuaded to end its own existence by pressure from across the water and the Irish had to accept a full union with England. This was followed by the traumatic experience of the Great Famine; while the population of the rest of Europe was rising, Ireland went through a period of depopulation. But it was the stubborn attitude of the Parliament at Westminster which produced the Irish situation as we know it today.

We cannot escape moral responsibility for what is happening in Ulster today; we are, in the last resort, the employers of the army which are occupying the country. But we cannot impose a solution on the people of Ulster; they are the only ones who can solve their own problems.

Union with the south may not be the right solution, but it should always be remembered that the north is an artificial creation. The boundary of Ulster is that of the old county boundaries; in order that a peace treaty could be signed, Ulster was created out of six northern counties, whilst the rest of Ireland was given its independence.

A first step would be the handing over of responsibility for the policing of Ulster to the Irish themselves. Violence will not diminish while the British Army is responsible for security. How many of us really know the effect of internment on the lives of people in Ulster?

The only real solution of the Irish problem was by debate and discussion. We must not pull out to save our interests; it must be phased and

controlled. Otherwise the opposing sides would try to resolve the vacuum by force, which in its turn would lead to new problems.

We must remember that we were now just as much at war as in 1939 to 1945. But this time it was a war on our own doorstep. It was a situation which put the whole British nation on trial.

In the discussion which followed a variety of points were raised. Several people pointed out the lack of any real development in Irish society; in mentality and economic progress it was some 50 years behind England. For this reason the Irish liked to keep up an old fight which had little relevance in modern terms.

One speaker questioned whether an Irish nation existed, or had even existed in history. Full integration with England was quite a valid policy to follow if the bulk of the people in Ireland desired it. In reply Mr. Hetherington reiterated that any majority in Ulster was purely an artificial one.

English and Irish

Others pointed out that there had been a long period of repression in Ireland, both against the Catholics as a body and against the Irish language. Economic domination of Ireland by the English was another point raised. The Irish had long suffered from absentee English landlords, but how far were English businessmen making money from their Irish investments? It seemed that little was known about the extent of English business interests in Ulster and how far they were responsible for our determination to stay there.

Against this point of view it was pointed out that the Republic of Ireland had made strenuous efforts to attract foreign capital and industrial help from Germany and Japan.

One person thought that violence was the result of poverty; bring more jobs and build more houses and that would diminish the violence. Others doubted whether Ireland could still be reckoned to be a poor country; tourists and visitors seemed to see plenty of signs of prosperity.

The importance of the Communist Party and the Catholic Church in the Irish problem was also raised. Mr Hetherington seemed to think Communist influence in Ireland rather doubtful. Many speakers were critical of the role of the Roman Catholic Church. Were many people in Ulster afraid of its influence? On such topics as birth control it took a highly reactionary stance; there was still very difficult questions to resolve such as that of divorce, which the Roman Catholic Church refused to regard as valid. Mr Hetherington thought that humanists had a special role to play in fields such as these.

The question of the Sunningdale agreement was raised and the reasons for its failure. Mr Hetherington pointed out that this was an agreement negotiated over the heads of the Irish people. This was the reason for its lack of success.

One speaker thought we should not denigrate the role of the churches in Ulster; they were trying to build bridges between the various communities. But others felt that the less emphasis on religion and history would bring a quicker and better solution.

(Report of a Forum on February 9)

Britain and the European Community

THE SUNDAY FORUM on January 12 dealt with the EEC. It was introduced by Robert Shaef. A barrister by profession, Mr Shaef is well qualified to talk on the subject. Since 1970 he has worked full time for EEC in London.

He gave a very clear account of the origins of the Common Market. After

the war Europe was in a desolate situation. Not only had there been great destruction, wrought by the bombing and the fighting, but during the war years most of industry transport throughout Europe had become rundown. For example the French railway system had only about a third of its pre-war rolling stock in usable condition.

For the continent of Europe there had to be a new beginning; there could be no return to the old animosities of the previous generation. Because of this break with the past the people of Europe were ready to accept new ideas; it was this readiness to accept new ideas which made the spread of the European idea possible.

The great exception to this feeling was Britain; she stood proud and aloof—the one country in Europe which had not been invaded. She had stood alone in 1940; it would be difficult for her to forget what she had achieved under Churchill's leadership. Many of our present attitudes went back to this period; we were in many ways a highly conservative nation. Mr Shaef remarked that a Frenchman had told him that we had two conservative parties in this country, not just one.

Decline of Empire

The speaker went on to point out that in 1945 we were still a great imperial power, worthy of being ranked alongside the United States and Russia as a world force. We could hardly be aware of the future decline in our Empire and our changed economic position, so there was no great impulse to join up with the rest of Europe.

After the war the Labour government nationalised the coal and steel industries, and it had no wish to hand them over to the newly-founded European Iron and Steel Community. The basis of this Community was not economic; it was a move to prevent the outbreak of future wars in Europe and its prime instigator was Jean Monnet.

There were many doubts about this new creation but it proved to be a success and well able to cope with the declining coal industry and the booming steel industry.

Despite the fact that the Labour government had been replaced by a Conservative administration, Britain made little effort to join in the European movement. Mr Shaef pointed out that, despite the fact that Churchill himself was a pro-European, he felt that the British public was not yet ready for such a move.

At the same time France was going through an internal crisis. The remains of her colonial empire had disappeared and she was engaged in an exhausting war in Algeria. This was a similar crisis to the one Britain was now going through; our own empire was at an end and we were sure of our role in the world.

Then Mr Shaef spoke about Mr Macmillan's attempt to take us into Europe; a move which was blocked by the obstinacy of General de Gaulle. He felt the British Prime Minister had put too much emphasis on the economic aspects of membership; these aspects were important but the important question of sovereignty had been glossed over.

This would undoubtedly be a crucial question in the forthcoming referendum on the Common Market; it would be of greater importance than the question of the price of beef. Mr Shaef was at pains to stress that the EEC was a simple but completely integrated idea. It would give us many advantages but it would involve us in change; many of these changes would clash with our traditional ideas, and in the first few years the immediate disadvantages would often loom larger than the long-term benefits.

It was the function of the Commission in Brussels to make the Community work and to iron out the problems which arose. As free trade within the EEC was a fundamental principle, restrictive regulations by governments

were not permitted. Member countries often introduced restrictions in the guise of safety and health regulations.

One important area where the Common Market had been successful was agriculture. It must be remembered that farmers, or people working on the land, are a bigger proportion of the total population than in Britain. In the continental countries farming was just as much a way of life as an industry. In contrast to this, Britain had been a food-importing country for more than a hundred years. The welfare of our farmers had been sacrificed to the need to import cheap food from abroad.

The value of joint action by the European nations had been shown in the recent oil crisis. There was no doubt that the Arabs could cut off all oil if they so desired, but a common front by the oil-consuming nations of Western Europe had been very useful, despite the fact that the Netherlands had had an oil embargo placed upon them which the other European nations had not dared to break openly.

After Mr Shaef sat down there was a long period of discussion and questioning which showed that the general feeling at the meeting was rather critical of the Common Market. Only one speaker was for the EEC without reserve.

Debit Side

Barbara Smoker voiced a lot of these criticisms in discussion. She thought the idea of continued economic growth within Europe was fallacious and she couldn't think of one good thing which had come out of the Common Market. This last remark was followed up by other speakers who pointed out the many harmful things which had happened since our entry into the Common Market. The price of beef and butter had continued to rise, yet at the same time there had been a glut within the Market. Could this be justified on rational economic grounds?

The question of VAT was raised; it was said that many small shopkeepers were being forced out of business by its complexity. Victor Rose defended the shopkeeper; many things were laid at his door yet the small man was trying to do his best in difficult circumstances. Mr Shaef pointed out that on the continent the small businessman was highly regarded and the government took steps to help him.

Another point which was raised was the absence of democracy within the EEC. It was suggested that the Commission in Brussels was not responsible to the British electorate. In reply Mr Shaef pointed out the Treaty of Rome says that the European Parliament is to be directly elected by the citizens of the member countries; this has not been done so far.

The discussion ranged over a number of points varying from the standard of European justice to relationships with the Eastern European bloc. Mr Shaef answered all these points concisely. The General Secretary closed the meeting by saying that it was the longest forum the society had ever had.

(Report of a Forum on January 12)

Your Viewpoint

Veganism

I, for one, found the letters of Mr Adams and Mr Okell (March) helpful towards an understanding and resolution of what Mr Okell refers to as "the many complex considerations involved in the issue of veganism".

From Mr Okell's letter, I take the crucial points to be as follows: In the light of evidence that the breeding, farming, killing and eating of

animals is not necessary for human health and survival, such practices are incompatible with a reverence for life. In the light of evidence that the killing of "pests" is necessary for human health and survival, such a practice is compatible with a reverence for life in which human life is more revered than "pest" life.

The crucial question would seem to be that of the *evidence* for what is or is not "necessary for human health and survival". And in that question there are surely wide implications!

Farnham Common, Bucks

CHARLES BYASS

Discussions

May I suggest that we do not close down the Tuesday discussions this year, but that we keep them going for *experimental* discussion.

London NW4

R. STUBBS

Free Speech

I had often wondered who was the original of Peter Simple's psychiatrist Dr Heinz Kiosk ("We are all guilty"). He turns out to be a composite being called Ray and Albert Lovecy. And I do not find it at all funny that the good doctor—fictional or composite—should be introduced into the tragedy of the death of a young student in Red Lion Square on June 15 last year.

Dr Heinz-Ray-Albert Kiosk-Lovecy says that he sees no reason to await the Scarman Report. Good! Then let us remarshal such known facts as relate to this death. They are that a group of demonstrators taken over by Communist elements who had secured a Conway Hall meeting room under false pretences, deliberately challenged the constables whose duty is to maintain law and order. The direct outcome was the death of a young man on the threshold of life. The views of the National Front on race or anything else are irrelevant unless we assume the Nazi or Communist doctrines that human beings can be sacrificed to attain political ends and that bourgeois ethics should be exploited to bring down the bourgeoisie.

The Nazi/Communist technique emerges in the use of the expression "army boots". Would Dr Heinz-Lovecy please say who was wearing them on June 15! The OED's widest definition of "ethics" is "the science of human duty in its widest extent". Would not therefore its first premises have to be based on truth? Without this we have only the dogmatic fallacies of Dr Ray-Albert Kiosk.

London W14

G. K. YOUNG

Dr Lovecy replies: Let me give a sober answer to the main point. We say that racialism is intrinsically *unjust*, because none of us can control our own parentage, birthplace, etc. Thus our ethical Objects entail, as a matter of conscience, the duty of specific refusal to let our premises to advocates of such injustice.

We accept some responsibility for what happens in the streets *if it is connected with bookings in Conway Hall*, so Mr Young is incorrect when he speaks of irrelevance.

⑨ SPES is committed to "dissemination of ethical principles" and our memorandum simply expresses *one* such principle (to us a rather basic one).

If on the other hand Mr Buttinger is able to demonstrate that an ethical case *can* be made for the type of discrimination we specify, then we shall all be so much the wiser and free from scruples in taking the NF money.

In fairness to my loving wife, I cannot forgo this mild reproof: if only

Mr Buttinger found time to attend meetings of this congregation other than the "Winter Solstice Orgy", he could hardly refer to her as a *gentleman*—and probably not to me, either!
London E4

DR A. L. LOVECY

☉ Mr Buttinger states that disagreement with a body "does not give us the right to deny him or them the right of freedom of speech or freedom of assembly". Nobody is arguing that it does.

Like Peter Cadogan, Mr Buttinger is confusing two quite separate and different things. I do not wish to deny the National Front freedom of speech or assembly. I would oppose any legislation which would have any such effect. I would uphold their right to propagate their views and oppose anyone who forcibly sought to suppress them.

But I really do not feel under any sort of obligation to go any further and provide them with facilities and assistance in doing so. I am willing to tolerate but unwilling to help.

At the annual meeting of the NF in Conway Hall, held in January, it is reported ("Sunday Telegraph", January 5) that "Uproar broke out when an Anglo-Indian rose to speak to more than 300 members of the National Front . . . against a proposal to ban all people of coloured or mixed race or of non-European ancestry from being members". "Delegates", we were told, "shouted in horror" at this Anglo-Indian, reporters who tried to speak to him "were hustled out of the hall" and there was "scuffling in the entrance hall". All this at the mere sight of a man whose only crime was that he had an Indian grandmother!

This is the ugly and unacceptable face of racialism. Do we really want it in Conway Hall?

Windsor, Berks

J. STEWART COOK

South Place News

New Members

We are pleased to welcome the following new members: Mr G. A. Denver, W5; Mrs B. Eve, NW3; Mrs M. Monk, Surrey; Mrs I. Karmel, W2; Miss J. Mangan, SW5; Mrs K. M. Thurley, Croydon; Mrs B. Greenstein, NW3; Ms J. Sainsbury, N8; Miss S. Hersey, N8; Miss M. Riche, N8; Mr B. Allen, E11; Mr A. Ali, E1; Miss J. Goldsworthy, Kent; Mr C. C. Harris, SW8; Mrs H. Maier, N6; Mr and Mrs R. Hills, N. Wales; Mr G. S. Parkinson, Woking; Ms A. Banerjee, NW11; Mr M. Gordon, W1; Mrs B. Johnston, WC1; Mr G. Hughes, Dorset; Ms L. Popham, NW6; Mr J. E. Wheeler, Warwickshire; Mrs N. Littlejohn, W1; Mrs M. A. Beattie, Dorset; Mr S. Rhead, Stoke-on-Trent; Mr G. Shea, Gwent; Mr G. C. Graffman, SW5; Miss J. Mandeville, SW9; Mr L. H. Fairbank, Midlands; Mr J. H. Robertson, W8; Mr and Mrs A. Elithorn, WC1; Mr and Mrs R. Collins, W2; Mr A. Murray, Stirlingshire; Mrs V. M. Thurlow, Kent; Mr R. C. Dean, E12; Mrs B. A. Lishman, Wilts; Mr T. M. Cobeldick, New Zealand; Mr P. Clark, W5; Mr A. J. Deller, Norfolk and Ms C. Lea, N15.

Obituary

We regret to record the death of: Mr A. Fenton, Mrs A. E. Jacoby and Mr J. Bowmer.

Professor Hyman Levy

Hyman Levy was the son of poor Jewish parents in Scotland. With his red hair and Scottish accent, his uncompromising rationalism and breezy humour, he seemed to have few of the characteristics of his race. Yet emancipation from the faith and its traditions was not easy or painless.

He made his way through school and college by his own ability and dedication to his work. A brilliant mathematician and an exceptionally devoted and able teacher he attained the professorship of Mathematics at Imperial College, London, where he terminated his academic career as Dean of the Faculty.

Always a socialist, in the thirties he joined the Communist Party and became a well-known and popular speaker all over the country and especially in South Wales. He had a salty humour and a pungent, forceful style which put him in a class by himself. He was never merely a party man.

Before the war he devoted more and more of his energy to the Left Book Club and wrote for them the *Philosophy for a Modern Man*. His lectures on this book took him all over the country and aroused more interest than the book itself.

When the Club closed down he devoted a considerable part of his life's savings in an attempt to start another book centre, but lacking the resources of a successful publishing house he failed.

He parted from the Communist Party because of its failure to take up in a public fashion the cause of the Jewish persecution in Russia, but he retained his deep Socialist convictions to the last.

Though he often spoke for the SPES and was deeply concerned with its principles and work, we never saw or heard enough of this brilliant and challenging speaker for the cause of rationalism and humanism.

DR JOHN LEWIS

Saturday, May 10

"Richmond Park and the Isabella Plantation." John Brown (phone 485 4811) will lead a party from Waterloo on 1.59 pm train. Meet at Platform Barrier (book cheap day return). Party will depart from Richmond Station Booking Office at 2.20 pm. Tea en route. Six miles.

Sunday Social

Sunday, May 18, 3 pm. Victor Rose will talk on "Impressions of the Impressionists". He will show slides and Impressionist prints. Tea at 4.30 pm (10p).

Bridge Drive

This month's bridge drive will take place in the Library at 6.30 pm on Thursday, May 15. All are welcome, and light refreshments will be served.

Kindred Organisations

The **National Secular Society** has issued a statement welcoming the recent Home Office decision to consider the abolition of mandatory oath-taking in legal proceedings. Oath-taking is currently the norm, unless the person giving evidence opts out and uses an "affirmation" procedure; this is the course of action most Humanists would take. The NSS points out that Britain "is no longer a Christian country in either legal or social terms". The NSS wants "universal affirmation"—swearing to tell the truth without specific religious trammels, and says that this would give religious freedom to all, whatever their religious beliefs, and that "affirmation does not undermine anyone's religious position".

South Place Ethical Society

FOUNDED in 1793, the Society is a progressive movement which today advocates an ethical humanism, the study and dissemination of ethical principles based on humanism, and the cultivation of a rational religious sentiment free from all theological dogma.

We invite to membership all those who reject supernatural creeds and find themselves in sympathy with our views.

At Conway Hall there are **opportunities for participation** in many kinds of cultural activities, including discussions, lectures, concerts, dances, rambles and socials. A comprehensive reference and lending library is available, and all **Members and Associates** receive the Society's journal, *The Ethical Record*, free. The Sunday Evening Chamber Music Concerts founded in 1887 have achieved international renown.

Services available to members include Naming Ceremony of Welcome to Children, the Solemnisation of Marriage, and Memorial and Funeral Services.

The Story of South Place, by S. K. Ratcliffe, is a history of the Society and its interesting development within liberal thought.

Minimum subscriptions are: Members, £1 p.a.; Life Members, £21 (Life membership is available only to members of at least one year's standing). It is of help to the Society's officers if members pay their subscriptions by Bankers' Order, and it is of further financial benefit to the Society if Deeds of Covenant are entered into. Members are urged to pay more than the minimum subscription whenever possible, as the present amount is not sufficient to cover the cost of this journal.

A suitable form of bequest for those wishing to benefit the Society by their wills is to be found in the Annual Report.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

TO THE HON. REGISTRAR, SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY,
CONWAY HALL HUMANIST CENTRE, RED LION SQUARE, LONDON, WC1R 4RL

Being in sympathy with the aims of South Place Ethical Society, I desire to become a Member and I enclose as my annual subscription the sum of £..... (minimum £1) entitling me (according to the Rules of the Society) to membership for one year from the date of enrolment.

NAME
(BLOCK LETTERS PLEASE)

ADDRESS
.....

OCCUPATION (disclosure optional)

HOW DID YOU HEAR OF THE SOCIETY?

DATE SIGNATURE

The Ethical Record is posted free to members. The annual charge to subscribers is £1. Matter for publication should reach the Editor, Eric Willoughby, 46 Springfield Road, London E17 8DD, by the 5th of the preceding month.
