

# THE



# ETHICAL

# RECORD

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APRIL 1973

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## SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY

Conway Hall Humanist Centre  
Red Lion Square, London, WC1R 4RL

# **SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY**

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## **Coming at Conway Hall**

### **Sunday, April 1**

11.00 a.m.—**S.P.E.S. Lecture:** T. F. Evans on Education—the White Paper and the Black

6.00 p.m.—**Bridge Practice** in the Library. Light refreshments

6.30 p.m.—**Concert:** Jupiter String Quartet, Margaret Bateson. Beethoven A Op 18 No 5, Bloch Prelude, Night and Landscapes. Schubert C mi Satz, Franck Piano Quintet

### **Tuesday, April 3**

7.00 p.m.—**Discussion** led by Charles Wintour. Subject: Pressures on the Press

### **Friday, April 6**

6 & 7.00 p.m.—**Yoga classes** with Paul Kamal (two sessions)

### **Sunday, April 8**

11.00 a.m.—**S.P.E.S. Lecture:** PETER CADOGAN on The Hutterians of North America

3.00 p.m.—**Forum.** A Glasgow Gang Observed with James Patrick

6.00 p.m.—**Bridge Practice**

6.30 p.m.—**Concert:** Fitzwilliam String Quartet. Mozart D mi K421, Schumann A mi Op 41 No 1, Shostakovich No 13

### **Tuesday, April 10**

7.00 p.m.—**Discussion** led by Ken Anderson. Subject: What is News?

### **Friday, April 13**

6 & 7.00 p.m.—**Yoga**

### **Saturday, April 14**

3.00 p.m.—**Country Dancing** (jointly with Progressive League)

### **Sunday, April 15**

11.00 a.m.—**S.P.E.S. Lecture:** PETER CRONIN on Freud and Philosophy

3.00 p.m.—**Sunday Social:** Song Recital by Tony Crasner

6.00 p.m.—**Bridge Practice**

6.30 p.m.—**Concert:** Keith Puddy, Keith Harvey, Meralyn Knight. Beethoven B fl Op 11, Brahms A mi Op 114, Clarinet Trios, Joquin Nin Suite Espagnol, Cello and Piano

### **Tuesday, April 17**

7.00 p.m.—**Discussion** led by Barry Fantoni. Subject: Why "Private Eye"?

### **Thursday, April 19**

6.30 p.m.—**Bridge Drive** in the Library. All welcome

**Sunday, April 22 — Easter — No meetings**

*Continued on inside back cover*

# THE ETHICAL RECORD

Vol. 78, No. 4

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

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World in disarray

## EDITORIAL

PICK UP practically any newspaper anywhere in the world today and it is a certain bet that the majority of items will concern bad news in some form or another. It seems that after centuries of "civilisation" man is not able to live comfortably with his fellow.

One of the main problems, of course, is money. That it is the root of all evil may be a little exaggerated, but it is certainly the root of much evil. If B has less than A, he will do his best to catch up, but if, as we often see in Britain today, C has too little even to afford the basic necessities of life—we live today in a ludicrous situation where food prices can escalate, but the capacity of the people to afford those prices is strictly limited—he forgets altogether about A and B and tries to do the best he can. Both A and B invariably ignore C and carry on with their rivalry.

When this principle is interpreted on an international scale, conflicts of enormous proportions are occasioned. We see something like this today in the Middle East, in which incidents like the recent appalling slaughter of three diplomats will continue for a long while to come. The battle of currency, where the greedy money speculators wait in dark bank vaults for a new chance to cheat ordinary citizens, such as those of us who have frequently to travel abroad, suffering the weekly sinking of the value of the pound sterling, will be fought on, and industrial strife can only become worse while the present unfair labour-wage-price system continues.

What may be at the very heart of most of the world's current troubles is the increasing spread of apathy in ordinary life, stemming entirely from a lack of direction and purpose.

Rightly, the long overdue rejection of religions based on fear, superstition and non-rational ideas has been occurring at an enormous rate in the last decade, but so long have such systems been ingrained in the peoples of the world that they still seek a dogma or a simple set of rules to follow, so far have they lost the power to think for themselves.

We are amongst the citizens of the world who believe we have latched on to some purpose in life, even though our ideals and beliefs such as we have are constantly subject to change. It is the continuous search for truth and the improvement of life itself which makes our lives worthwhile.

Our sense of purpose, albeit without a rule book, is the most important single thing which can bring sanity to a crazed and violent world. Those who think in a rational and purposive way are least likely to act rashly. And it is recklessness which is the biggest threat to peace.

# Jesus, Nazareth, and John the Baptist

BY

G. A. WELLS

IF, AS I believe, Jesus never existed, why was he linked with so unlikely a place as Nazareth in Galilee? An association with Bethlehem can be explained away as an inference from Messianic expectations, but not (so it is usually held) an association with Nazareth. However, it is quite wrong to suppose that there was any uniform view of the Messiah among the Jews of the first century AD. As G. F. Moore said long ago: "There was no generally accepted opinion, no organized and consistent teaching, above all no Messianic doctrine possessing the faintest show of authority." Too many books have been written recently on the assumption that the Messiah of Israel must have been regarded in one way only—as a descendant of David who would be born at Bethlehem and act as a war leader against the Romans, or as a pacifist, or as a supernatural personage coming down from the clouds. All these ideas in fact existed side by side, and it is wrong to suppose that traditions which did not give the Messiah one particular set of qualifications would be rejected by all Jews.

The author of the oldest extant gospel (Mark) is today agreed to have assembled his book from shreds and patches of earlier traditions which were circulating as unconnected stories, as sayings or deeds of Jesus which gave no indication where or when he said or did what the story narrated of him. Mark collected these traditions and arranged them into some sort of chronological and geographical order. For instance, almost all commentators agree that the words "by the sea of Galilee" in Mark 1:16 were added by the evangelist, for they are placed ungrammatically in the Greek syntax. So Mark has interpolated a reference to *place* into a report which originally lacked it. And he has also added a reference to *time* by placing this particular story (the call of Simon and Andrew) at the beginning of Jesus' ministry. Both the time and the place, then, are as Professor Nineham says in his valuable commentary, "entirely St. Mark's doing".

Unlike the later evangelists, Mark places Jesus' ministry in Galilee and its environs alone, and makes him go to Jerusalem (seventy miles to the south) only once, at the end of his life. Galilee was an unsophisticated and semi-Hellenized area; it was regarded with disfavour by strict Jewish piety owing to the strong strain of gentile elements in its population, and the consequent infiltration of Greek ideas and ways of life. Jerusalem, on the other hand, was the home of the Pharisees and the priestly orthodoxy. Galilee is thus appropriately made the source of a divine revelation whose ultimate destination is the gentiles—Mark was certainly writing for gentiles—while Jerusalem is the location of its opponents. The theological representatives of Judaism, the scribes, are twice pointedly said (when they argue matters of doctrine with Jesus) to "come down from Jerusalem" (3:22, 7:1).

## City Theories

Lohmeyer has said that, for Mark, Galilee is "the holy land of the gospel", as against Jerusalem, "the city of deadly enmity to Jesus, of sin and death". Some have found this formulation exaggerated, as Jesus is well received when he enters Jerusalem and is not unopposed in Galilee. But Mark does seem to associate Jerusalem with hostility in so far as he thinks of it as the seat of the religious authorities. The geography of the story is thus adapted to the theological needs of underlining Christianity's

break with Judaism, and of showing that the message of salvation is for lowly ones, in the despised Galilee of the gentiles.

Mark's Galilean orientation may well explain his silence about the birth of the Messiah in Bethlehem of Judea. Mark seems to be following another and very different Messianic tradition—and I have stressed how much variety there was in the Jews' Messianic expectations—a tradition which held that the Messiah would appear from some unknown place of concealment. It is an idea well attested in Jewish literature, and of course was likely to have appealed to Mark, who is anxious to show that Jesus was not recognized as Messiah in his lifetime (the so-called "Messianic secret" which Mark has imposed on his material). Thus Mark appropriately makes the unrecognized Messiah appear in the despised "land of the Gentiles", not in the official religious centre. All these considerations would naturally lead him to make Jesus come from an obscure locality in Galilee.

### Problem of Definition

Nazareth, which is never named in any earlier document, is mentioned only once (1:9) in Mark. In four later passages Jesus is given the title Nazarene, and these passages are almost invariably rendered in English Bibles as "Jesus of Nazareth". The English reader will thus, wrongly, suppose that Nazareth is repeatedly mentioned by Mark. The translators have obviously assumed that "Nazarene" must necessarily mean "the man from Nazareth". But the assumption is arbitrary, as theologians are well aware. Kittel's standard *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* informs us that it is difficult to "bridge the gap" linguistically between Nazarene and Nazareth, and that it is likely that Nazarene meant something else before it was interpreted as meaning 'of Nazareth'. Some commentators hold that "Nazarene" derives from a root NSR of a Hebrew word for "observe", and means "observant", "devotee". The term "Nazarenes" could thus have been applied to any Jewish sect that was strict in its interpretation of the religious laws, or which was ascetic. In Acts the hostile Jews describe Paul as a "ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes", and here the word does not mean "people from Nazareth" but "Christians". Theologians have given evidence not only that the term could designate a *sect* rather than a *place*, but also that it originally designated a *pre-Christian* sect out of which Jesus and the Church emerged. In sum: Jesus is said, at the beginning of Mark, to come to John the Baptist "from Nazareth to Galilee". Later he is four times referred to as "Jesus the Nazarene". It looks, then, as if Mark wished us to understand "Nazarene" to mean "from Nazareth". I suggest that Mark has deliberately introduced this as a new interpretation of the term. The earlier meaning of "Nazarene" was, on this argument, "man belonging to the same kind of (ascetic) sect"; but in order to give Jesus an importance of his own, and to raise him above such "Nazarene" movements, Mark has suggested that he is a Nazarene in a different and geographical sense. And the reason why the evangelist retained the old word (and did not simply change "Nazarene" to "of Nazareth") is—according to one theologian (J. S. Kennard, *The Journal of Biblical Literature*, 65 (1946)) that "Nazarene" was an important word in exorcistic formulas. A survival of such a formula may be seen in Peter's ability to perform a cure "in the name of Jesus the Nazarene" (Acts, iii, 6). Mark's one mention of "Nazareth of Galilee" does occur in a gospel which clearly boosts Galilee for theological rather than historical reasons. And so the case for linking Jesus with Nazareth is really no stronger than that in favour of the Bethlehem traditions, for both alike can be explained as inspired by theology.

Ch. 6 of Mark tells a story of Jesus' rejection in his "home town" (Nazareth is not expressly mentioned). The story is commonly regarded as too unedifying to have been invented. But the earliest (the Pauline) refer-

ences to Jesus' life on earth represent it as lived in obscurity, suffering and humiliation: and from such a premiss a tradition could easily arise that he had been rejected even in his home town. A motive for the formation of such a tradition would be the missionary experience of the Christian communities of Mark's day. They had come to regard Jesus as the first, and as the ideal, missionary, and they naturally believed that he had experienced the disappointments and frustrations which they themselves knew went with missionary work. Professor Grässer has pointed to the significant fact that Mark follows Jesus' rejection in his own country with his dispatch of the twelve on missionary work—a dispatch which includes the instruction: "If any place will not receive you and they refuse to hear you, when you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet for a testimony against them." Professors Haenchen and Eduard Schweizer agree that a tradition to the effect that Jesus preached without success in his own country was probably all that was available to Mark, and that the concrete details of the rejection there are the evangelist's own construction.

### John Paves the Way

Mark begins his gospel with an account of the ministry of John the Baptist, and the way in which all the evangelists exploit him for doctrinal purposes indicates the type of motive that inspired their narratives. The historical baptist was a preacher with a following of his own which persisted into the second century, as is evidenced by Christian polemics against it. The Jewish historian Josephus mentions him as a "good man" who exhorted the Jews to "join in baptism", and was put to death by the tetrarch, who feared the seditious effect of his preaching. The evangelists adapt these facts to their own purposes. They make him a prophet, since the revival of capacity to prophesy was expected in Messianic times. To prove that he is a prophet Mark introduces him with a quotation from the Septuagint (the Greek translation) of Isaiah about "the voice of one crying in the wilderness". The passage is available, in the form required by Mark, only in the Septuagint, and not in the Hebrew original.) The "wilderness" is where some of the Jews of this time expected the Messiah to appear. Josephus tells of three Messianic fanatics who led multitudes into the wilderness, and the association of wilderness and Messiah is alluded to in the gospels; for in Matthew (ch. 24) Jesus warns against "false Christs", and against their supporters who say "Lo here is the Christ, . . . Lo, he is in the wilderness". The Baptist, then, is located in the wilderness because his activities denote the imminence of the end of time. Mark appends the historically impossible statement that the whole of Judaea and the total population of Jerusalem went out to him. This is agreed to be not history but eschatology: it emphasizes what was expected to happen at the appearance of the herald of the end of the world. Mark gives John two functions; that of the prophet-preacher of repentance, and that of baptism. These functions require two different locations, the desert and the river. Hence, after saying that "John appeared in the wilderness" preaching a baptism of repentance, the evangelist goes on (in the next verse) to locate his activities on the Jordan. This discrepancy obviously worried Luke, who corrected it by representing John as called to God's service in the wilderness and as only subsequently proceeding to the Jordan to begin baptizing.

Mark and Matthew show how soon they expect the world to end by representing the Baptist as Elijah returned to earth (in accordance with the prophecy of Malachi concerning the last days). Luke, however, writing later, when this expectation had faded, omits the passages in Mark which suggest that the Baptist is to be equated with Elijah. Luke puts the Baptist to quite different use by making him the son of a priest and also of the priestly tribe through his mother, who is "of the daughters of Aaron". The Dead Sea

Scrolls have shown that a priestly Messiah of Aaron's line was among the manifold expectations of that time; and Christian commentators concede that Luke's purpose was to explain to those inclined to overvalue the Baptist that he is not the Messiah of Aaron—that there is to be no Messiah of Aaron; and that the priestly tribe is to make only a modest contribution to Messianic times—the contribution, namely of supplying the Baptist as a forerunner to Jesus, the true Messiah.

It is often supposed, that, in spite of obvious manipulation of details, the fact that Jesus is associated in the gospels with the Baptist, whose historicity is attested by Josephus, does suggest that Jesus too is historical. It is, however, important to note that Josephus (whether his two references to Jesus are genuine or not) does not, in his single mention of the Baptist (in quite another passage) associate the two men, and that the first three gospels have some difficulty in doing so. The passages in them which record John's public preaching make no mention of Jesus. Mark 1:2-8, for instance, forms a narrative about the Baptist which is complete in itself, in a gospel which is admitted to consist of short, isolated and originally independent stories. And many Christian scholars hold not only that the story of the Baptist forms an independent unit, but also that it is pre-Christian, and belonged originally to a document of the sect which venerated the Baptist—a sect which seems to have been a serious rival of the early Church in some areas.

#### **Baptised and Baptist**

Jesus' baptism by John is often included among the gospel details which—it is alleged—so far from betraying why they were invented, seem inconvenient to the evangelists. His submission to baptism is said to constitute an admission of John's superiority which runs counter to the evangelists' theological expectations. If the two traditions (of John's and Jesus' ministries) had been originally connected, this argument would have some force. Mark was able to link them without embarrassment, probably, because he was aware of the Jewish belief that the Messiah would be unknown as such to himself and others until anointed by his forerunner; and also because his attention is centred on the supernatural phenomena accompanying the incident, which enable him at the very beginning of his gospel to make clear Jesus' divine status. And today some theologians concede that the story of the baptism may well have been—I quote the Rev. Professor Evans—"formed in the tradition of the Church, as a result of later reflection upon the person and work of Jesus as a whole". Professor Haenchen regards the story as a legend inspired by the baptismal practices of Christian communities. They believed that baptism imparted the spirit, and so they naturally assumed that Jesus had received the spirit at baptism. Mark's account is thus based "not on an old historical tradition, but on the projection of early Christian experience on to the life of Jesus" (Haenchen).

Later evangelists adapt Mark with considerable freedom. And so we must allow that he will have treated *his* sources (which have not come down to us) with the same lack of respect. Paul, who was converted to Christianity about AD 35, and who wrote his extant epistles between AD 50 and 60, knows nothing of Jesus' association with John the Baptist nor with Nazareth, and never calls him a Nazarene. Other epistle writers of the first century are equally silent. Mark, who is conventionally dated at about AD 70, but who, in my view, wrote much nearer the end of the century, wrote very differently of Jesus. When one considers the immense changes in the life of the Church which occurred between Paul and Mark—changes in its constitutional elements, its geographical extension, and its religious outlook—we cannot be surprised to find that Mark alleges things about Jesus which were unknown to earlier writers. We should be ill-advised to accept them as authentic.

*(Summary of a lecture given of January 7)*

# John Stuart Mill

BY

RICHARD CLEMENTS

THIS GREAT thinker and writer belonged to the humanist tradition. In Britain during his lifetime he became something of an oracle, though he had in those days his critics, and amongst the latter were such eminent scholars as T. H. Green and Sir James Fitzjames. To read those controversies today is a liberal education in the social values of free and courteous discussion of scientific, philosophic, and political questions.

Indeed, it is not too much to say that Mill was foremost amongst the men in his day who strove to establish and maintain high standards in debate and in the conduct of public affairs. But there was more to it than this. He owed his reputation as a publicist, and the influence this enabled him to exercise over his contemporaries, not alone to his intellectual eminence, but to the feeling he inspired in all sections in the community that he stood for a new outlook and spirit abroad in the world.

## "The Saint of Rationalism"

He did his work in the belief that free men had minds, and that their ideas, ideals and actions could (and did) exercise a decisive influence on the evolution of society. Therefore it was desirable to rid men and women of superstition and fear. It would then become possible to achieve the political, social, and ethical objectives of the modern age.

Mill was declared by Gladstone to be "the saint of rationalism"; George Brandes, the Scandinavian culture historian and literary critic, included Mill and Swinburne amongst the eminent personalities studied in his *Creative Spirits of the XIX Century*; Professor Masorh (afterwards the founder president of the Czecho-Slovak Republic), translated certain of Mill's writings and lectured about him from his chair in the University of Prague; and Dmitrie Inerezhkovsky, distinguished Russian author, wrote of Mill as "one of the noblest representatives of European culture". He thus became one of the justly great men of the nineteenth century.

## A True Son

The young Mill had an unusual kind of education and upbringing. Throughout his life he was very much the son of his father, John Mill (1773-1836), the friend of Jeremy Bentham. These two remarkable men founded and directed the Utilitarian School of thought which, in the years between 1832 and 1870, exercised a dominating influence on British economic, political and social thinking.

The idea occurred to John Mill that his son should become, when he reached manhood, the leader of the Utilitarian movement; and Bentham lent his support to the proposal. The boy was to be brought up, says Mr. St. John Packe, "on a definite plan, based upon a psychological theory, intended to make him a machine that reasoned in a radical way".

The plan was by no means a perfect one, for it failed to take into account the inevitable difference of outlook between one generation and another, as well as the influence of an ever-changing climate of opinion upon a sensitive and growing mind. But the fact remains, given the circumstances existing at the time, that there was no alternative. The course that was followed gave the boy an education and training that placed him "a quarter of a century in advance of his contemporaries".

We have only to compare the work he did as a writer on philosophy, political economy, logic and sociology, with that of contemporary authors



and teachers in these subjects to appreciate the thoroughness of Mill's intellectual preparation.

And to the senseless sneers about turning a youth into "a mere logic machine", Alexander Bain in his early biography of our author, made a terse and effective retort: "No calculus", he wrote, "can integrate the innumerable little pulses of knowledge and of thought that he made vibrate in the minds of his generation."

In studying the early life of Mill it is worth while to linger over the changes of his Autobiography: firstly because—with the possible exception of the essay *On Liberty*—it is the best known and most widely read of his writing; and, secondly, because the book unfolds in moving words the story of a man's mind and heart. It is a key work to an understanding of its author's formative years, ideas, characteristics, and the role he played in public life.

### Thinker and Author

An extensive literature, in this country and abroad, now exists about Mill as a thinker and author. There continues to be much discussion about his place in the history of modern thought. Among the questions often asked, for example, are: Has he taken rank amongst the writers of English prose? What is living and what is dead in his philosophy? What significance have his opinions in our times?

Earlier, in the absence of an authoritative estimate of the man and his many-sided labours, only tentative answers could be given to such questions. Today, in the light of Mr. Michael St. John Packe's biography, together such well-documented studies as those of F. A. Hayck, the stature of Mill, as a man, a thinker, a writer, and a social pioneer, emerges. Thoughtful minds in many parts of the world continue to draw instruction and inspiration from his teachings and example.

He is now seen as a catalyst of thought and social action in an Age of Transition. It was characteristic of him that in a flash of self-revelation he once wrote: "Goethe's device 'many-sidedness' was one which I would most willingly have taken for mine." By this many-sided interest in science, philosophy, history, literature and criticism which quickened and enriched mens minds; and thereby decided for some decades the character of naturalistic and empirical thought in the English-speaking world. His influence did not stop there. For, as already indicated, his writing were translated into the European languages and in the intellectual circles of Russia, Germany, France, and Czechoslovakia he had many readers and adherents. He had also his disciples in the United States.

### Opinion Maker

It remains to examine some of the practical contributions Mill made to human and social progress. First there was the part he played in changing public opinion about the rights and duties of working people in a democratic society. His concern about this question is the underlying motive of much of his writing on economic subjects. This is shown on page after page of his *Political Economy*; especially in the chapter on the "Probable Future of the Labouring Classes," which the author believed had exerted greater influence on public opinion than the rest of his book.

As early as 1845, in an article in the *Edinburgh Review* on the "Claims of Labour," he wrote that "to raise the labourers from a receiver of hire—a mere bought instrument in the work of production having no subsidiary interest in the work itself—to the position of being, in some sense, a partner in it."

Then, gradually, his mind moved towards the idea of some form of collectivism which would realise "the union of the greatest liberty of

action with a common ownership of the raw materials of the globe and an equal participation of all in the benefits of combined labour." His was peculiarly British and pragmatic approach to the solution of labour questions. And he never ceased to demand ample time to prepare for its application and for the necessary education of all section in sections.

Secondly, Mill was a pioneer in the advocacy of the claims of women for freedom and equality in legal, political and domestic relations. He published in 1869 his book on the *Subjection of Women*, written after the death of his wife, the former Mrs. Harriet Taylor. The latter was an active member at South Place; and in his *Autobiography* Moncure Conway tells of his friendship with both of his visits to their pleasant home in the country.

During the short time Mill sat in Parliament, as Member for Westminster, he spoke and voted in support of the enfranchisement of women. Roger Fulford in his book *Votes for Women: The Story of a Struggle*, pays tribute to the value of the work alone by Mill and his devotion to the cause (pp. 28-29 and 47/62). The swift changes which have revolutionised the position of women in many countrys in recent years, though the struggle is by no means yet over, have somewhat obscured his pioneer work.

### Liberty and Rights of the Individual

And thirdly, it remains to pay tribute to his advocacy of the freedom and rights of the individual; the phrase sovereignty of the individual was one Mill took over and filled it with content and meaning. His opinions on the subject are set out in his famous essay *On Liberty*. He had sketched and written a short version in 1854. On a visit to Rome early in the following year, as he was mounting the steps of the Capital, the idea occurred to him of expanding it into a short book.

His concern was with civil liberty: "the nature and limits of the power which can be legitimately exercised by society over the individual." This is indeed a living theme! It is one upon which no other writer has expressed himself with deeper insight of more human understanding. He takes his readers to the very heart of many questions that perplex and trouble thoughtful people in present day society in Britain and elsewhere. But he goes further than that. His words fill their minds with courage and steels their wills to face the tasks needed for "the unfinished business and creating a good society. The pioneer thinker casts his light upon present-day needs, opportunities and problems.

(Summary of a lecture given on October 15)

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## For the Record

BY

THE GENERAL SECRETARY

NO "GREAT THOUGHTS" this month—just lots of news and gossip.

The Annual Dinner was a great success. It was one of those occasions when everything was just right. We tried out Margaret's idea of having it in the Library and it made all the difference. Because of limited space we deliberately didn't push the tickets (since fifty was the limit) but they were all taken up. The food, the wine, the drink, the candlelight and the company made a marvellous mixture and Tom Evans was on top of form as

our after-dinner speaker. Bill Home moved the vote of thanks and Colin Barralet proposed the toast of "The Society". Having recently read Conway's first centenary history of the Society I had the pleasure of taking from it the traditional toast of South Place, first moved by Fox in 1817, and proposing it. It reads: "The cause of civil and religious liberty all over world".

When two years ago we revived the Annual Dinner we did it on a buffet basis largely to make it physically possible and financially reasonable but experience has shown that the buffet idea is a good thing in itself. It really makes for conviviality, and further ensures that hot food is piping hot. Also those who wanted "seconds" just got up and got them!

Margaret excelled herself over the menu, the preparation and serving of the food and Tina helped with the sherry. Having thoroughly explored the possibilities of the Library we now know that we can take up to 60 and that will be next year's ceiling.

### **James Patrick comes to South Place**

Some weeks ago *The Observer* serialised James Patrick's book *A Glasgow Gang Observed* and it got a first class reception by the press generally. It is already out of print and reprinting. "James Patrick" is a pseudonym for a young lecturer who joined a Glasgow gang to get the inside picture. The author has to remain anonymous for the sake of the security of his family and himself. Two members of the gang have been murdered since he left it! He has received many invitations to speak but ours is the only one that he has accepted so far. He will be here on Sunday April 8 at 3 p.m. for our Forum of that date.

### **What do YOU think of South Place?**

We reckon to have a Forum about once a year in which members let their hair down about their own Society. We do this, of course, at the AGM as well but then we have to contend with a heavy Agenda and don't really have time to say all we have to say. At the Forum on April 29 we shall have a meeting that is as unstructured as possible. Six members will be asked to use the first hour making prepared contributions of up to eight minutes each and if more than six offer their services we shall take the names out of a hat. Those not chosen can then come in on the discussion that follows. If you would like to be one of the six will you let me have your name before the day? I think members can take it that although there will be no resolutions and votes all the good ideas and criticisms that come up will be taken up and acted upon—so that this will not be a merely academic activity. Being a small Society we can take things up and act very quickly.

### **Black, White, Freudian and the Rest**

If there is one thing that Black Papers and White Papers have in common it is that most of us never get time to read either—so it is a great help when someone we trust does the work for us and puts us in the picture. This Tom Evans will do over "Education" on the 1st.

Over the years I have made a number of passing references to the Hutterians or Hutterites of North America, the extraordinary sect that for over 450 years has shared all things in common and, to my mind, made more discoveries about human nature and social organisation than any other group on earth. They confound all the philosophers and social "scientists" so much that they tend to be a taboo subject. It is only recently that an enterprising American has made a detailed study of them and their history and written a first class book about it all. This will be my subject on the 8th. Interestingly enough the Hutterians and South Place stem from the same sixteenth century Anabaptist roots.

On the 15th Peter Cronin's subject will be *Freud and Philosophy*. It was Freud, above all, who detached psychology from philosophy. They have been very separate subjects ever since with rather disastrous results for both. Now there is the beginning of a new synthesis and if you want to read an excellent book on what happens when the two subjects impinge upon one another may I recommend Liam Hudson's *The Cult of the Fact* and his recent excellent broadcast talks which will doubtless be available in *The Listener*. Peter tells me that they are having some inter-disciplinary discussion in London University and his lecture will be in some way related to that. Interesting things are happening.

### Three Newmans

Did you know that there were *three* Newmans? We all know about the Cardinal, if only by name, but he had two brothers—one was a Unitarian Professor of Theology and the other was a rationalist and freethinker. Sorting that out will be Richard Clements' task and our pleasure on the 29th.

What an extraordinary witness to human resilience, capacity and longevity are Richard Clements, John Lewis and Fenner Brockway! They all seem to act on the assumption that they have *another* 80 years to go! That's the way . . .

### The Responsibility of the Media

This is our Tuesday theme for April. Ken Anderson, News Editor of the *Daily Mirror*, helped at question time by our own Editor, will introduce one discussion (10th), Barry Fantoni of *Private Eye* another (17th) and the publisher John Calder the last one on the 24th when we shall end the series with the usual party. The first speaker, on the 3rd, will be Charles Wintour, editor of London's *Evening Standard*.

### Around the Society

Some time ago the BBC announced its impending series of do-it-yourself late night programmes for voluntary organisations called *Open Door*. The producer responsible is Rowan Ayers of the Community Programme Unit. We put our name in immediately but so, it seems, did several hundred others—so we shall see. A suitable idea for a South Place programme has been drafted and sent to Rowan Ayers.

Tragedy on the landing . . . Mr Perry was lightly dusting the head of Holyoake's bust on the landing outside the Library door when the whole thing, bracket, shelf, bust and all came down on him. He was lucky not to be badly hurt. Years ago someone fixed the bracket with tiny one-inch screws—it is remarkable that they have lasted all this time. The bust broke into 22 pieces and a lot of dust. Margaret stuck them all together again but there is too much missing to complete the job. Is there a sculptor, in the house? Or does anyone know where we might get another bust of Holyoake? It was made of plaster so presumably there are others.

And other changes—we have had an electric action put in the Library clock and we have moved the telephone, the public telephone, into the vestibule. Hidden away in the little room at the side it was twice vandalised and we hope this will settle that problem.

Does anyone have a use for a large slate slab? It might make a good garden table or something. You can have one "for the taking away"—it needs a bit of trimming. It used to be the working surface in our old kitchen.

One of our members, a distinguished academic now 85 but still working, has a large flat in London. His housekeeper died recently and he is looking for someone to live in. There is a large room on the ground floor

which would be available *gratis* and "keep" plus a modest weekly sum. He has already got someone to come in and do things for him so the duties would be modest—a little cleaning, a little cooking, etc, but the main thing is just to *be* there. He is not in good health and does not like being alone in the house. Is there one of our members who would be interested and able to help? If so please contact me.

And may the sun shine for the festival of Eostre, the Anglo-Saxon Goddess of Spring!

PETER CADOGAN

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## HUMANIST FORUMS

### Pornography

DIVID HOLBROOK and Barbara Smoker talked about the subject of pornography at a recent Forum. The occasion was taped and so we are able to present edited excerpts from what they said. Our thanks to Richard Barrett for use of the tape.

David Holbrook said that the subject of pornography took us into the heart of the problem of how we see man in relation to his culture. His concern with pornography was part of his concern with culture as something that fosters human vision, intentionality, the making of our world as we see it. There is a sense in which pornography as "a stealer of dreams" represents a threat to vision and intentionality.

If one looked at contemporary "black" culture where is there a vision of man? Pornography seems to belong to a whole spectrum of cultural nihilism which is damaging vision.

Freud and some of those who followed him seemed to find hate and aggression ineradicable in man, and this, believed Mr. Holbrook, has been totally reversed by a great deal of psycho-analytical thinking since Freud. This has demonstrated that hate is a manifestation of a compensation for weakness. It is the weak who hate. Only the strong can love.

Pornography is one manifestation of schizoid hate, i.e. that compensation for inner existential weakness that takes the form of aggression and a desperate attempt to feel real. It inevitably leads to man's inhumanity to man. It leads to women being humiliated on the stage and it leads to the humiliation of children.

David Boadella wrote about sexual freedom: "the very freedom that has been won is being rapidly eroded by the emergence of what Marcuse has called 'repressive de-sublimation'." "De-sublimation" because the gates are now open to a free flow of pornography by socially permitted sexual expressions which are championed by liberals but which are no nearer to health than the moralistic standards that preceded them. "Repressive" because any social conditioning that imprints and reinforces a sick concept of sexuality must block and impede the development of mature feelings and genuine sexual expression.

Eroticism is not pornography. It is difficult to make distinctions. A dictionary definition of pornography reads: "obscene writing or pictures intended to provoke sexual excitement" but the essence of the kind of pornography Mr. Holbrook was talking about was that which is concerned to provoke sexual excitement of a non-relational, non-personal kind, and which is essentially mental. An important qualification was that it is an attitude of mind that degrades and does contempt to the body.

The speaker's concern could be said to arise from his interest in children and their creative writing. His despair was that despite work towards creativity there was in our culture powerful forces making for false

solutions. We can see this if we look at the work of disturbed children. Children are looking for love, for "the significant other" and pornography does not contribute to their search. One often finds in the writing of aggressive and sexual boys an expression of the way they feel real in terms of aggression. False solutions can become part of their dynamics—expressions of envy for the dead and insane feelings for violence as counters to being taken for figures of no account.

Our society was "already a society of increasingly schizoid people". A dialectical connection has been established between apathy and violence, not only external violence but the inward violence of mental rage that combines with a detachment from others. To live in apathy provokes violence, and violence provokes apathy. In the US it has reached the point where people will sit at their windows and watch a man attack a woman—and do nothing!

Violence is the ultimate destructive substitute that surges in to fill the vacuum when there is no relatedness. When one cannot affect or even generally touch another person, violence flares up as a daemonic necessity for contact, a mad drive forcing touch in the most direct way possible.

To be actively hated is about the same as to be actively loved and this we can see in manifestations of our culture everywhere. In the film version of "Oh! Calcutta" a boy and a girl come on stage, measure each other's genitals and have sexual intercourse. The girl screams: "You're killing me!", the boy will not stop and the girl dies. The boy then picks her up, opens her eyes, fixes a smile on her face, picks up her briefs and marches off singing. There could not be a more direct manipulation of the hatred of women, hatred of sex. Yet people watching it believe that they are taking part in a liberating experience!

In this situation a great deal in pornography represents a situation of people bereft of a sense of meaning in a world in which they are not allowed to have responsibility for action and choice. We have mass conditioning through the film, through magazines like *Penthouse* (circulation: 2,000,000) that is more insidious than the old system that was at least thought of as an enemy while the new threat is thought of as a friend.

### Love and Feeling

The whole question of our being able to throw ourselves imaginatively into the inside of the other (which is the whole basis of civilisation), to feel concern for others, is bound up with the process of love. And it is the pornography of the kind I have discussed that essentially denies the uniqueness and value of "the significant other". The implication of pornography is that any *body* and any *thing* will do.

Yet insofar as you reduce man to a mechanism you deprive him of his spiritual significance—you reduce *care*. This has happened to our thinking throughout the whole industrial era. Man has come to treat himself as a man-made gadget and in pornography a man-made gadget that it is amusing to exploit in terms of quantifiable sensations. He is reduced to the status of one of his own artefacts. Impersonal studies of sexual techniques reduce sex to the status of a dead language dealing with mere gymnastics.

It is marvellous now that we can discuss our sexual problems openly but gymnastics are not a substitute for a deeply felt sexual life. The blue film is a negation of the self and of sexuality itself.

There are in all of us male and female elements. We associate the female elements with sensitivity, intuition, the instinctual life and creativity and the male more with "doing", activity, to the explicit. If negroes and Jews were subjected to humiliation and contempt we would all be up in arms but woman is our old enemy and our old dread. She has been led to expose herself on the stage and we do not cry out against it. We act out the most primitive fantasies of hostility.

Insofar as we tolerate this attack on what Jung called the *anima* we are likely to produce a situation of collective infection. We can move towards a moment when evil things can be done with a clear conscience. Unless we manage to turn humanist liberal opinion towards greater discrimination we shall be the victim of that infection.

Barbara Smoker's case was that we do indeed have a schizoid de-humanised society but one which has been created not by pornography but by sheer weight of numbers, by urbanisation and by the stress of modern living. In this situation there has to be some sort of outlet. She thought that pornography could be positively beneficial in that somebody who needs this sort of stimulus is better getting it from books and pictures than from a real situation. Mr. Holbrook had told of pictures of bestiality whereas cases were known where men had forced their wives to commit bestiality. She would far rather men sat looking at pictures than making their wives do this horrible thing. And if that *is* the choice then pornography is the lesser of two evils.

### For Repeal

Miss Smoker agreed with various things Mr. Holbrook had said, especially his contribution to the Longford Report. Like him, she was opposed to the public display of offensive things, unsolicited mail, and the undesirability of the commercialising of sex, but this could be dealt with in other ways than through the Obscenity Act. "I am for the repeal of that Act altogether", she said.

Children have to be protected from being used for the production of pornographic material, but by the same kind of laws that prevent children being sent down the coal mines, etc.

"When we come to adult actors and actresses I feel that this is a matter of choice. If they want to make their money in this way I think it is up to them. Nobody says in the Longford Report that it can lead to mental illness.

"As to the development of copulation on stage I think that should be governed by the kind of plays that people want rather than by the law of the land. The things that censorship sets out to ban are far less harmful than censorship itself—which just opens the door to repression at all levels including the political. It may start with sex but every kind of censorship ends up by being political. This is also because of the impossibility of pinning things down to precise definitions. It is not insignificant that Hitler was very much against pornography. He stamped it out in Germany with the jackboot and it was all part of the general repression.

### Standard of Outrage

"Mr. Robert Carr wants to put on the statute book laws dealing with public display and I think there is something to be said for this. But the standard will be the outrage of the standards of public decency *not* that it is likely to 'deprave and corrupt' and I think this is obviously a better definition provided it applies only to things and public places that people cannot avoid and to unsolicited mail. If it was restricted to that I would be in favour of it.

"If, however, it was to be applied to the sale of material when asked for and to the existence of plays and so on then I think it becomes very dangerous. Who is going to see a play in the West End by mistake?"

On TV we were in a "borderline area" continued Miss Smoker, and she thought we had to be a little more careful. There *are* standards of taste that people should be encouraged to keep. But it should not be a matter for the law but left to people whose judgement is to be trusted. It also

matters at what time of the day it is and if a suitable warning is given beforehand, she pointed out.

It would be quite wrong to legislate in general terms about the outrage of public decency. Under those conditions Darwin's *Origins of Species* would never have been published! Even under the "deprave and corrupt" law Bradlaugh and Besant were convicted for publishing a pamphlet *Fruits of Philosophy* which advocated family planning. Public taste is a ridiculous criterion if it is interpreted as affecting everybody and everything.

In the Longford Report David Holbrook mentions "curiosity". . . . "I doubt whether many people turn to pornography out of curiosity", Miss Smoker replied. "Perhaps schoolchildren do. But the person who buys pornography as a regular thing, the person who *needs* pornography is not moved by curiosity. On the contrary the more predictable and repetitious it is the better it suits a particular fantasy."

Most people were "slightly schizoid". It was a matter of degree. "If people *need* to fantasize then why should they not have what they need? And what harm does it do? It is probably doing them some good and may deflect them from rape."

A sex shop should be able to indicate that it was a sex shop rather as is done by the licensed betting shops. Offending posters could be dealt with under environmental legislation. Consumer protection Acts might deal with other aspects of the problem and an amendment of the Post Office Acts could deal with unsolicited mail.

David Holbrook was against sex without love and felt that the two should go together. This was the ideal. But was he saying that anyone deprived of love should also be deprived of sex? It was "a bit like fish and chips!" If love were the fish it was nutritious. But if someone is starving do you say that he can't have any chips because he hasn't got any fish? This is how it seemed to Miss Smoker.

"Almost anything under the sun can have an undesirable effect but this is no reason for banning it", she concluded. "Even the Longford Report admits that it is impossible to *prove* that pornography has a harmful effect. On the contrary, most of the Report shows that pornography does *not* have a harmful effect—but then it is still concluded, quite irrationally, that pornography should be banned.

PETER CADOGAN

(Report of a Forum held on November 26)

## The Appalling State of English Architecture

PETER CADOGAN observed that, with the destruction of ecclesiastical buildings and their artistic contents in the Reformation, we had destroyed our visual sensitivity. He then introduced Brian Richardson, an architect working for a London Borough, who explained his views on architecture and illustrated them with slides.

Mr. Richardson advocated a do-it-yourself approach to architecture, mistrusting the efforts of professional architects as he did those of doctors and lawyers. He apologized for the failure of his own profession's efforts and did not see a cure in higher professional standards, higher pay, or more status for architects.

Formerly, architecture reflected a wholesome relationship between man and his environment. Old towns possess a strong visual identity, reflecting



the political identity of their inhabitants. The countryside was able to cope with the gradual growth of man's activities.

Nowadays, however, rapid change has led to dissonance between man and his environment instead of harmony. Alienation is the hazard of the age.

Mr. Richardson saw the answer in re-establishing the ordinary man's involvement in the shaping of his surroundings. Education should enable people to decorate, furnish and equip their own homes, with the architect relegated to the status of consultant, instead of teaching them to assume that they need architects to supply the entire creative effort. Architects, on the other hand, could benefit from more direct contact with the users of architecture.

The speaker quoted Professor Habraken's theory that the housedweller must be brought into a harmonious relationship with his house—a harmony of which the past offered us many undesigned examples—and that this may be achieved by modern mass-production techniques. These techniques need not lead to enforced uniformity, if a range of "detachable units"—space separators, sanitary fittings, cupboards—are produced which the individual can use according to his own needs and desires. We were assured that Professor Habraken had studied this approach in detail, and found it feasible.

### **Ours is a Nice House . . .**

Six types of relationship between the occupant and the dwelling can be identified, according to whether the dwelling is built by the individual or the community, and with the aid of craftsmen, architect, or neither. A seventh, non-relationship arises in the case of mass-produced accommodation designed by architects for whom the occupant is a mere abstraction. These dwellings are non-dwellings. Habraken defined the proletariat as people who are unable to house themselves, and therefore have to rely on accommodation of the seventh type.

Mr. Richardson commended the view of Chermayeff and Alexander, in *Community and Privacy* that any further attempt to design cities without a fundamental rethink will only lead to another set of shapes to contribute to the architectural millinery. No informing principle is in use. A new anatomy of urbanism is needed, based on six realms or zones, with buffer zones in between. Those realms are urban public, urban semi-public, group public, group private, family private and individual private. We are currently suffering particularly from a shortage of group public areas, such as gardens, and individual private areas. Everyone should have a room of his own to which he can retire for privacy, and over which he is in complete control. He should also be able to have privacy out of doors whenever he wants it. Our cities today are unsatisfactory places to live and work, because these six zones have not been kept functionally separate.

Many of the slides shown were taken from *Architecture Without Architects*, by Bernard Rudofsky, and highlighted the contrast between the visual serenity to be found in underdeveloped countries and the blight of architecture here. They also illustrated most of the seven relationships between the user and the building mentioned earlier.

We saw Greek, Italian, Spanish and Caucasian towns, built with local materials and blending well with the surroundings, in which the variety of shapes, sizes and orientations of the houses resulted in a harmonious whole. We saw a Laplander's hut made with a cone of logs, a Scandinavian farmhouse interior, and a strikingly unique-looking Japanese farmhouse built to its owner's design.

In contrast, we saw a South London housing estate.

Several of the slides showed the new dwellings at Thamesmead, and the neighbouring gypsy encampment, for which the Council has begrudged

the small expense of providing hard standings and sanitation. The new development employs some interesting shapes, and does not look ugly, especially from a distance, but it does not really blend with its environment, and Brian Richardson preferred the homely, lived-in appearance of the gypsy site.

In the course of discussion, it was suggested that, in today's fluid society, restraints in the form of planning controls are needed; without them we would get too much rampant individualism, and have no hope of achieving the harmony and unity displayed by the old towns we had seen. Also, people attempting to design their own houses without the aid of an architect would be in danger of being buried in the rubble when the houses collapsed. The speaker disagreed, and thought we could trust people's judgment in both these respects. He had greatly enjoyed using a motor-cycle which he had built himself, and it had never collapsed.

Asked whether we could expect a halt in the construction of tower blocks of flats, Mr. Richardson explained that it has now been realised that high-rise blocks are not the best way of housing a large number of people per acre. They demand a considerable amount of open space around their bases, and the same number of families can be housed in blocks four stories high, built around courtyards. This is being adopted as a more desirable pattern for the future.

One of the reasons why new buildings often jar is that they are not constructed in local materials. This is because local stone is much more expensive than brick or concrete, where it is available at all, and its use is simply not economic except in the few rural areas where it is mandatory.

Altogether, this was an interesting and informative forum, in which the problems facing architecture, and the reasons for its failure to solve them, were clearly presented. The practical solutions, of course, are not quite so clear.

RICHARD HUDSON

(Report of a Humanist Forum held on January 30)

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## BOOK REVIEW

*An Evolutionary Approach.* Karl R. Popper. Oxford University Press. £4.50 Paper, Covers £1.50.

*We are seekers for truth but we are not its possessors.* Not a very original statement for Popper, nor even provocative, and I quote it for other reasons. Firstly, to give prominence to his preoccupation with *truth* above all. "Justification is not an aim; and brilliance and cleverness as such are boring".

Secondly, to recall that he makes use of plain language. "The search for truth is only possible if we speak clearly and simply and avoid unnecessary technicalities . . . Aiming at simplicity and clarity is a moral duty of all intellectuals".

Finally, to comment that simple words do not always convey the significance the author intends, as some of his copious footnotes serve to show. Context helps, of course; for instance, the above quotation gains strength from its accompaniment: "the idea of truth is absolutist, but no claim can be made for absolute certainty". He is travelling with the scientists, not the mystics or the theologians.

Seeking truth, we agree the search is limitless: "the whole truth and nothing but the truth" extends far beyond our reach—and our grasp is limited, too! This reminds us that in practice our main concern is with the "truth *about* something or somebody". That is, we need real-world *know-*

ledge, and we want it to be *true*. Although opinions may conflict as to what *is* true, nobody wishes to be given false information; forms of knowledge least affected by opinion are therefore of special interest.

So we reach the problem of objective knowledge, which has become identified with *scientific knowledge*, "the most important kind and the central problem of any theory of knowledge".

The essays and lectures collected in this book are of exceptional interest as a conspectus, with some reappraisals and new thoughts, of the arduous work by which Karl Popper has clarified and invigorated our comprehension of the particular nature and significance of scientific endeavour, which is by no means confined to the natural sciences.

Basically, a theory (even a single statement) is of a scientific character if we are able to say what kind of event could serve to falsify or refute it. To round this out a bit: science pursues the fullest understanding of real events, so the only theories it can use are those with clear practical implications. Because of those implications, certain events would show a given theory to be false, and *ipso facto* not compatible with the aim of science. (Although refutation was formerly asserted to be "symmetrical" with verification, e.g. by Ayer who subsequently modified his own criteria, it now seems that verification *permits* rather than entails whereas falsification is conclusive.)

### It's For Real

To a commonsense realist like Popper there is little to be gained by doubting whether objects are real, and so forth. Hence we look upon the physical world as actuality, known to us (though not accurately) by our *conscious experience* as participants in it. Nevertheless we must beware of the "bucket theory of the mind", the notion that sensory experiences accumulate, that repeated impressions authenticate prediction and prove causation, etc.

Instead Popper presses on our attention that *expectation*, or preparedness for what may be to come, is the actual response to our experience as conscious beings. An observation, he says, "always presupposes the existence of some system of expectations", i.e. dispositions to react. Again, "we learn only from our hypotheses what kind of observation we ought to make: whereto we ought to direct our attention: wherein to take an interest".

This is the essence of the "searchlight theory of knowledge"; we turn the searchlight on to the area which seems to be worth examining. "Today's science is built upon yesterday's science, and so it is the result of yesterday's searchlight . . . the oldest scientific theories are built on pre-scientific myths and these, in their turn, on still older expectations".

That is one aspect of the evolutionary approach, and the process of selection is another, as he recognised long ago: "The method of science is . . . bold conjectures and ingenious and severe attempts to refute them". But mere change is not progress, and hypotheses must be adaptive if they are to survive: hence "our knowledge of the world owes as much to the *resisting reality* as to our self-produced ideas".

It must be admitted that, despite the use of simple language, Popper's style has certain punctilious qualities which make it more laborious to read than it need be—and that is saying something! However, this is a small price for sharing his profound insights into the nature of empirical knowledge, the security of its foundations and mode of expression, and the ways in which it grows and can be cultivated.

Here is common ground for scientists who regret the isolating tendencies of intensive specialisation, men of letters who see no joy in Two Cultures, and humanists who contemplate anti-rational cults with sorrow rather than anger. If you can't read it now, put it on your Desert Island list, as a foil to the Bible and Shakespeare.

DR. A. L. LOVECY

# Your Viewpoint

## Question answered

In his interesting and thoughtful review of my book *The Marxism of Marx* Dr. Lovecy asks a very proper question of me, and I should like to answer it, for it shows how clearly he has grasped the essence of the book, which is of course a severe criticism of recent dogmatisms in Marxism, which are in complete contradiction to everything that Marx himself taught. The question is: *If all conceptual systems are relative and historical does not this apply to Marxism?*

My reply would be that it would if Marxism were a conceptual system, but the whole purpose of my book was to show that Marx strongly objected to the formation of any conceptual system and most certainly never created one. On the contrary, he was convinced that the time had come to realize philosophy, for the world to become philosophical, that is—rational, and that it was our job to make it rational—a practical task. We need of course to understand what is happening in the world, but that does not mean to explain it metaphysically.

But this being so we do have certain practical insights as to what exactly is happening in the world, which Marx would not want to be called a "conceptual system"—"to hell with systems" was his motto. These attempts to understand what is happening were of course not for ever, because history is on the move, and we must make our own valuation for the contemporary world. If Marxism in that sense doesn't change it will become a dead dogma, which is what certain forms of it have actually become. My book was a criticism of all such dogmatic finality.

JOHN LEWIS

London, N.10

## More discussion wanted

On five Tuesday evenings in January we had notable and enjoyable speakers in a series of meetings on "Inflation—an ethical question?". I would like to express why the very excellence of the series gave me a sense of waste and anticlimax.

In question and discussion there were persons who had, some of them, obviously in their time given much thought to the subject. Yet what they had to say was limited to those fleeting, hands-apping, hurried, snatched, moments of guilt about stopping others having a fair turn if they themselves took too long. Then, at times, a guest speaker would feel constrained to an answer, out of courtesy, if an answer only tipped the time-balance to the rostrum more than ever.

In other words, why were there not twice as many of these meetings spread over twice the time, and with each alternate week allotted to no guest speaker, but just to enable SPES members to talk and discuss, by consensus, and just with some chairman? There is nothing to stop all guest speakers being invited to all the series besides the one they are to speak at, if they want.

R. STUBBS

London, NW4 3HW

The Editor replies: This Society has in the past organised study groups that met most of the conditions instanced by Mr. Stubbs and there is no reason why this should not happen again. It depends upon finding an enthusiastic convener and there being enough demand to make the group a workable proposition. It would not be possible, given our present policy, to have this on Tuesdays. Our Tuesday meetings are highly successful as at present constituted and we would not want to lessen their effec-

tiveness. The fact is that named, reputable speakers, bring people to the Society and this is what we want.

### **Porn poser**

On November 26, 1972 the Society presented a debate on pornography. I asked one of the speakers, David Holbrook, "Why do people buy pornography?"

He gave these following reasons:

1. Infantile sexuality and its preoccupations.
2. A substitute for the sensual handling in childhood.
3. A hunger for sustenance.

The following tape recorded quote is part of his answer that went on for more than five minutes:

"I think that Pornography is probably bought by people to whom the sensual life, the instinctual life, are things that they are yearning towards and want to find in some way. Associated with that need to find are those fantasies that are to do with a hunger for sustenance, which is also a psychic hunger, so that the fantasies are full of a desire to take the goodness out of the inside of the mother, and they become mixed up therefore with the primal scene, with fantasies about parental sex, feelings that it's sadistic, a desire to take part, but then because Mummie and Daddy are eating one another, and this is the only way they can feel about sex."

David Holbrook either did not know, or preferred to hide the fact that the overwhelming reason why men buy exciting pictures of nude women is to make it easier for them to masturbate.

RICHARD BARRETT

*Sidmouth, Devon.*

### **Heady discrimination**

Could one believe one's eyes when the Editorial opened with "Surely one of the basics of rational thought is the notion that all men are equal". Was there no reason before 1776?

This is advocacy—not rationality. When the Goddess of Reason was enthroned in the Champs de Mars in 1789 (or thereabouts) equality could only be enforced by putting all heads in one basket. And if rationality is applied to such a notion could it have been otherwise?

For men are patently unequal as every parent who has more than one child knows. When Europeans did begin to push aside ecclesiastical dogma in the 15th Century it was once again to give free rein to human emulation. The mediaeval theologies had preached equality in the sight of God while the secularization of society turned this into equality before the law. But those who like Condorcet tried to extend this as a general notion of humanity rightly got their heads chopped off too.

And as for discrimination this is the very basic of society. For an indiscriminate society makes no sense. No doubt today we could find other ways of trying to dismiss human striving than by resorting to the guillotine. We could invoke—as do the trendy Lefty Jacobins of today—disadvantage coefficients, indifference curves, divisive differentials, contentment reductions and introduce tyrannical decrees which would turn human beings into a mindless herd. That is what egalitarianism means. Humanism means to excel.

G. K. YOUNG

*London, W.14.*

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The enjoyment of doing good is the only true happiness—*Tolstoy*

# South Place News

## New Members

We are pleased to welcome the following new members: Jane E. Archibald, SW15; Andy Barnes, W12; Mr. C. Blake, New Barnet, Herts; Miss Mary Doherty, NW10; Anna I. Fahlander, WC1; Lyndall Foster, NW1; Kathleen P. Hicks, SW17; Ivan R. Hicks, SW17; Jennifer James, SW8; Valerie Preston, W12 and Jennifer M. Rayner, W1.

## Easter

The annual festival of Easter occurs this month, and there will be no Sunday meetings on April 22. There will, however, be a ramble on Friday, April 20.

The ramble is planned for an area around Sevenoaks, Kent, and the walking distance is about ten miles.

The party will assemble at London Bridge station for the 10.10 a.m. train to Sevenoaks (fare 62p). The route will cover Ide Hill, Toys Hill, Crockham Hill and Squerryes Park. Return to Sevenoaks will be by Green Line bus (20p), and train back to London. The leader will be Mr. B. O. Warwick.

## Invitation

On the same day (Friday, April 20), South Place members within reach of Southampton are invited to spend the evening with Humanist Holidays' members staying at the County Hotel, Hulse Road. The invitation is for a chat, and those able to accept will be welcomed from 7.30 p.m.

## Bridge Drive

This month's bridge drive will be held on Thursday, April 19 at 6.30 p.m. in the Library. All welcome, including beginners.

## Theatre Party

A theatre visit is being arranged for Saturday, April 21, for the 2.30 performance of *Only a Game*, a play at the Shaw Theatre, Euston Road. This is a new play, starring Peter Gilmore. Tickets are 55p, or 27p to pensioners and those under 21. Inquiries to Miss C. Davis, telephone 722 6139.

## Kindred organisations

The annual general meeting of the **National Council for Civil Liberties** is being held on May 5 and 6 in London.

The **National Secular Society** is organising a public meeting "Broadcasting for Democracy" at Caxton Hall, London, on April 5 at 7.30 p.m.

The annual general meeting of the **Independent Adoption Society** is being held on April 14 at the Post-Graduate Centre, Royal Northern Hospital, Holloway Road, London N7. All interested in the society can attend. The session starts at 2.45 p.m.

## Annual General Meeting

Nominations and resolutions for the 1973 AGM are to be in by Tuesday, April 24. The AGM will be on Wednesday, May 30 at 7 p.m.

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## In the wrong spirit

The Spiritualists seem to be disturbed at the practice of "Sister Mary", of London N.W., who describes herself as a "spiritualist healer". This description annoys Spiritualists, whose valiant newspaper gives addresses of "Sister Mary's" ilk to the police! "Sister Mary" claims to have gifts of healing and problem counselling, with guaranteed results. The Spiritualists say they can foresee no solution to the problem of these "fringe" practitioners. Let us hope "Sister Mary" is not spirited away!

*Continued from inside front cover*

**Tuesday, April 24**

7.00 p.m.—Discussion led by **John Calder**. Subject: **As a Publisher Sees It**. (Followed by a Party)

**Friday, April 27**

6.30 p.m.—Evening of Poetry and Music. Charge of 25p inc. wine

**Sunday, April 29**

11.00 a.m.—S.P.E.S. Lecture: **RICHARD CLEMENTS** on **The Three Newmans**

3.00 p.m.—Forum: **South Place, Past, Present and Future** with a panel of members

**Sunday, May 6**

11.00 a.m.—S.P.E.S. Lecture: **DR. JOHN LEWIS** on **Teilhard de Chardin and Secular Religion**

**Wednesday, May 30**

7.00 p.m.—S.P.E.S.—Annual General Meeting. All members invited.

### **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.

3p postage for one — 6p for two or more

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# 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, 75p p.a.; Life Members, £15.75p (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.

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## 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 75p) 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 .....

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*The Ethical Record* is posted free to members. The annual charge to subscribers is 75p. Matter for publication should reach the Editor, Eric Willoughby, 46 Springfield Road, London, E1 8DD, by the 5th of the preceding month.