

# THE

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# ETHICAL RECORD

Vol. 78, No. 9

OCTOBER 1973

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Published by

## 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, October 7

11.00 a.m.—**Sunday meeting. HARRY STOPES-ROE: A Stance for Living.** Contralto solos: Jean Robertson.

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

6.30 p.m.—**Concert:** Dartington String Quartet. Mozart G K387, Tippett No. 2, Schubert Dmi Op. Posth D.810.

### Tuesday, October 9

7.00 p.m.—**Discussion: Secular Religion or Secular Humanism?** Introduced by Albert Lovecy and Christopher Morey.

### Sunday, October 14

11.00 a.m.—**Sunday meeting. PROF. G. A. WELLS: Christianity Before Paul.** Cello and Piano: Lilly Phillips and Fiona Cameron.

3.00 p.m.—**Humanist Forum: Torture—A Creeping International Infection** with Richard Hauser.

6.00 p.m.—**Bridge Practice.**

6.30 p.m.—**Concert.** Manoug Parikian and Malcolm Binns. Mozart Emi K304, Bfl K454, A K526 Violin and Piano sonatas.

### Tuesday, October 16

7.00 p.m.—**Discussion: Religion and Motivation.**

### Thursday, October 18

6.30 p.m.—**Bridge Drive.**

### Saturday, October 20

3.00-6.00 p.m.—**Country Dancing** (jointly with Progressive League). Heel-less shoes requested.

### Sunday, October 21

11.00 a.m.—**Sunday meeting. BARBARA SMOKER: Are We Living on Christian Capital?** Soprano solos: Jean Aird.

3.00 p.m.—**Sunday Social.**

6.00 p.m.—**Bridge Practice.**

6.30 p.m.—**Concert.** Haffner String Quartet, Kenneth Essex. Mozart D K513, Brahms G Op. 111 String Quintets. Haydn D Op. 76 No. 5 String Quartet.

### Tuesday, October 23

7.00 p.m.—**Discussion: Do We Need Rituals?** With Peter Cadogan.

### Sunday, October 28

11.00 a.m.—**Sunday meeting. PROF. C. E. CARRINGTON: Myth, Tradition and Credulity in History.** Baritone solos: Peter Rice.

3.00 p.m.—**Humanist Forum: The Vatican Billions** with Avro Manhattan.

6.00 p.m.—**Bridge Practice.**

6.30 p.m.—**Concert.** Georgian Quartet. Mozart Bfl. K589, Beethoven Efl. Op. 74, Dvorak F Op. 96.

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# THE ETHICAL RECORD

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

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## EDITORIAL

### Terror in Our Midst

VIOLENCE is one aspect of life to which all sane people are opposed. Yet it has been with mankind throughout history, and will doubtless be so in the future. Today, we see several examples, in various forms, throughout the world, and here in England during the last few weeks we have seen the most unprincipled violent attacks—literally, in many cases, on our own doorsteps.

As always, when violence comes to the surface, it is the uninformed who suffer most. The public figures and the real targets of strategic violent attacks are well protected; not so the man in the street. The ordinary person becomes the subject of hideous outrages, as we have seen in Ulster, where killings and appalling maimings have become commonplace.

And now we in England—in London, Birmingham and elsewhere, have had the full force of direct violence brought home to us.

As when we are in personal difficulties, such as bereavement or accident we can see the true colours of our friends, so in time of national trouble can we see the real stance of public figures.

For instance, while terrorist bombs hit the Stock Exchange and Marble Arch, Billy Graham was capitalising on the Watergate affair, which of course gave him the chance to call the Garden of Eden (sic) the scene of the First Cover-up.

Our own Prime Minister saw fit to threaten the terrorists with pursuance and capture, something the combined forces of the police and the British Army has failed to achieve in the small territory of Ulster.

The churches have, for the most part, kept silent—as, so it seems, has the Humanist movement. The sports commentators at the final Test Match thought it was “a pity” that the game had been disturbed at such an interesting time by a bomb scare, and so on.

Violence presents those of us with a philosophy for living, with a dilemma. Of course we oppose violence—indeed we have been prominent in the peace movement all along, but at the same time we should not stand in political judgment. That would be to assume the same role as the hypocrites like Billy Graham.

The only action we can take is to demonstrate and reassert our attitude to life, and our belief in the dignity, equality and humanness of each other. Even thugs have minds, and can be persuaded by reason. It is no good pitting violence against violence; our only weapon is the philosophy by which we live, and in our history it has been exemplary. It must remain so.

# Freud and Philosophy

BY

PETER CRONIN

IN his work *Imagination Dead Imagine*, Beckett tells of two figures, male and female, lying prone under a convulsive white light, seeming lifeless except for the periodic unblinking exposure of their eyes. Beckett was obsessed by the vision of a pointless, clinical determinism, a hell of exact measurement serving no end:

They are not sleeping. Only murmur ah, no more, in this silence, and at the same instance for the eye of prey the infinitesimal shudder instantaneously suppressed. Leave them there, sweating and icy, there is better elsewhere. No, life ends and no, there is nothing elsewhere, and no question now of ever finding again that white speck lost in whiteness, or see if they still lie still in the stress of that storm, or of a worse storm, or in the black dark for good, or the great whiteness unchanging, and if not what they are doing.

"The knowledge of man is scattered, the meaning of being eludes me", said Beckett. He counters his pessimism, like Freud, by dedicating himself to a precise account of the human soul, cursed to imagine a destiny which ends in nothingness. At best, man makes himself as comfortable as he can: there is nothing more to the human destiny than that.

## Religious Vision

Except that religion is rather a slippery word I could have called this lecture *Freud and Religion* for in doing so I would have pointed to the visionary element in Freud's work—an element which was, of course, unwelcome to any philosopher of the analytical persuasion who wanted precise definitions as in mathematics. Writing to his friend Fliess in 1895, Freud acknowledged a batch of scientific papers, and expressed his "amazement at the existence of someone who was an even greater visionary than I". What Wollheim calls "the soaring quality of Freud's mind" remained with him throughout his lifelong search for clinical precision.

To go beyond the facts, to speculate, and yet to return always to the facts, so far as they can be determined scientifically, i.e. by exact observation and record; this was Freud's enterprise.

In a sense Freud's science was his religion. It was a particular view of science coloured by 19th century determinism—a view he clung to dogmatically all his life. He acquired disciples whom he jealously guarded against contamination, while quarrelling endlessly on doctrinal grounds with some of his followers like Jung and Adler. He believed fervently that he would be vindicated if not by current science, by the revelations still to come.

Although Freud's scientific dedication was quite genuine and his rejection of conventional religion equally so, a paradox was apparent in his doctrine. In his treatment of the Moses legend there was something that could be called religious in form, if not in content. He was obsessed throughout his life by, and suffered an identification with, the legendary religious father figure of Moses. Ernest Jones, his biographer, testified that when Freud had finished his last book, *Moses and Monotheism*, it was as if he had unburdened himself from a long-standing obligation.

Christopher Caudwell, in his essay on Freud in *Studies in a Dying Culture*, wrote that Freud would certainly be remembered and honoured as a pioneer in the field of scientific psychology. Even so, he was a person who could only express empirical fact in a semi-mythological framework. He

symbolises the inner structure through the glamorous Olympian gods of old. Ego, Super Ego, Id, Conscious and Unconscious are the deities who have inherited Olympus. Freud's mind was caught between eternal Eros and eternal Thanatos, the Life and Death instincts, the pleasure and the reality principles—the eternal dualism carried over by Christianity from barbarism, but which Freud, because of his clinical experience with individual bourgeoisie Viennese, saw in terms of a Western bourgeoisie myth.

I called this lecture *Freud and Philosophy* because the vision that inspired him was a philosophical determinism working throughout the universe and within the human psyche itself. This is a vision that can be held quite unemotionally and without enthusiasm as in Jacques Monod's book *Chance and Necessity*. The world is the result of chance mutations, it blindly runs; there was no scientific evidence that life has a purpose no religious or ethical systems to be presupposed for it to begin. There is only the scrupulous recording of events as they pass—an objectivity that connects with science.

Monod dismisses religion, Beckett remembers with nostalgia what it felt like to believe but Freud is fascinated by it, wants to find meaning but sees it only as a limited recourse. Freud was a rationalist, but not an optimist. He thought that reason might prevail but could not finally convince himself that it would. He saw grounds for the pursuit of knowledge, but not for hope.

Monod has attempted a precise account of this "ethic of knowledge". From a universe of essentially random events emerges, quite by accident, a succession of regularities, sequences, and patterns of events, which at the level of consciousness (another accident) can be observed and recorded, giving knowledge, which might be called on this view the recognition of the necessity of accidents. The random events *appear* as accidents (they simply happen), but the connection of one accident with another gives us grounds for knowledge. For Freud, even the most "accidental" psychic event is so connected: there are no random events in the human psyche. For this thesis, random events are seen as law-governed (even in ordinary language we can say that a random movement *causes* an accident). The laws of the psyche have the general character of wish-fulfilment.

### Back to Basics

Freud traced fear and anxiety back even to the moment of birth. Although Freud would perhaps not have put it this way, he saw man's peculiar nature to be the being who misunderstands. The clinical attitude can temper, and even intermittently resolve, this misunderstanding. But there is no final "salvation". Man can aspire to reason but is not in himself rational. The human psyche is perpetually divided against itself, driven as much by unreason as by reason. The only hope—and it is a moderate hope—is to increase the rational component, but never to the exclusion of the other irrational, death-seeking side.

Perhaps, now, it is possible to go more deeply into the scientific outlook, the commitment to truth and the religious commitment. To challenge a scientific truth is to weaken it; very often it has to be abandoned. Religion seems to be a commitment that survives any challenge, is even strengthened by it. The more the act of faith is challenged, the more value is attached to the renewal of the act of faith. Also, it could be argued that science itself could not have arisen without a metaphysical premise—that the universe was a rational order created by a rational God—the idea provided by scholastic theology.

As for Freud's identification with Moses, the symbolic father figure: first of all there is the assumption fundamental to Freud's sociology, that of the primitive horde led by a single male, the jealous father who sends all the males away and keeps the women to himself. When he grew old,

he was tumbled from power, deposed and killed. The father's memory is then celebrated, usually in the image of a bull or other sacred animal which it was forbidden to kill, except once a year when the first killing is re-enacted, an animal is slain and all participate in sharing the guilt. What happened in the time of Moses is part history, part speculation. Moses adopted the Jewish immigrant labourers of Egypt as his people and with them formed the nucleus of the new monotheistic religion he derived from his experience in Egypt (Akhnaten). He had some success in bringing down the Tables and elaborating the Law; but his followers were a quarrelling, disobedient lot and, according to Freud, got angry with Moses and killed him. By killing him they repeated the primal parricide and now had a renewed guilt feeling, in addition to the ancient and universal one. Paul, a Jew, saw Christ assuaging the guilt of the second parricide by being put to death himself. The father had been killed, so appropriately the son was killed, representing the father, forgiving those who killed him. Paul understood, as a great psychologist, how to assuage guilt and offered Christ to the Jews, who rejected him. That remained their curse. The Christians by accepting him, found their release.

Freud's theory goes a long way to account for the peculiar strength of Christianity and Judaism in the Mediterranean countries. It does seem to explain the peculiar emphasis on the father-son relationship and the guilt attached to the killing of the father.

This is not a scientific hypothesis, since it cannot be verified or tested in any controlled way. It seeks to explain a religious commitment by revealing its psychic-historic origins, but is not itself a commitment (though in the last years of his life, as a result of the renewed and terrible persecutions of his race, Freud felt the need to identify himself as a Jew). It arises from a philosophical commitment to a certain mode of enquiry, involving fact (and supposed fact) along with bold and imaginative speculation that appeals to conviction rather than proof. It is more like Hegel's commitment to the postulate: *everything that is real* (as religion is real for so many) *is rational* (that is, can be accounted for by the reasoning intellect in social, psychological, and historic terms).

*(Summary of a lecture given on April 15)*

## The Case for Counselling

BY

H. J. BLACKHAM

THE widespread interest in and practice of counselling in this country is roughly measured by membership of the Standing Conference for the Advancement of Counselling which was set up in 1971. More than 90 national organisations are members, including the BMA, the Law Society, the teachers' associations, universities offering courses in counselling, social work organisations, the Community Relations Commission, the churches, the BHA; members are listed in eleven categories. The Conference was brought into existence to provide a meeting ground, to facilitate co-ordination and co-operation, and to promote interdisciplinary consultation and exchange.

Reasons for this growth in counselling are easy to think of: developments since Freud in psychological understanding and therapeutic methods; the scale of mental ill health—nearly half the total of people undergoing hospital treatment—establishment of new “helping” professions in the social services and changes of outlook in the old “caring” professions,

medicine, teaching, the church, and, most recently, law; stress and bewilderment aggravated by accelerating social change and the uncertainties of the times. Counselling extends in range from psychiatry to neighbour help. The Standing Conference has brought out with the National Book League an annotated book-list which maps the topography of the area and indicates some of the different contexts in which counselling goes on.

If counselling has this range, how can it be identified as a responsible practice? It goes on at different levels, from psychiatry to citizen's advice; different theories of human behaviour and remedial treatment are relied on; different agencies employ counsellors, from the courts in probation work to local marriage guidance councils; different purposes are served, from restoration of mental health to guidance in the choice of a career. All the same, counsellors of various descriptions have the same general responsibilities and have to meet the same social requirements. These common requirements can be listed as certain personal qualities, certain knowledge and skills, certain conditions and standards of practice.

### Self-confidence

The personal qualities required in a counsellor begin with his own integration. None of us is without conflicts and problems, but no one is fit to help others whilst he is himself a prey to his own difficulties, and perhaps anxious to export them. The cup must be full before it can overflow; one must be on top and in charge of oneself before one can help others to stand on their own feet. Secondly, the readiness and ability not merely to sympathise but imaginatively to stand in the other's shoes, to put oneself in his place and still retain one's own identity, this power of "empathy" is essential to the establishment of a relationship which is the medium by which the counsellor can help his client. Thirdly, this bridge between the counsellor and his client is sustained by a manifest acceptance of the client as he is, without judgments of distaste.

The counsellor will need special knowledge relevant to the kind of counselling he has undertaken, say, careers guidance; but he will also need a basic knowledge of developmental psychology, so that he can interpret behaviour and not be misled by the client, and so that he can pick up indications of what is wrong and, if necessary, refer the client to someone qualified to give the help he needs. The basic skill of interviewing is also required of all counsellors.

Every counsellor is responsible for the conduct of the counselling relationship, for the "contract", that is for reasonable expectations on the part of the client and reasonable co-operation, for confidentiality, for being directive and non-directive in appropriate ways, for certain counselling "values", that is ways in which counsellors are expected to put their clients first and deal fairly by them.

These social requirements of personal qualities, basic and relevant knowledge and skills, and standards of practice can be ensured only insofar as counselling is organised in a way that provides for selection, training, and supervision. No one is entitled to undertake counselling on his own. He needs not only enough training to ensure that he has the basic qualities, knowledge and skills, and standards, but also the support of colleagues with whom he regularly consults, so that his conduct of his cases is checked and reinforced, or else the supervision of a more experienced counsellor. This organised control differentiates counselling from neighbour help or support, gives it a "professional" acknowledgment of responsibility. Counselling is different from "befriending", although in some contexts counselling may be able to include befriending.

How useful is counselling? One is familiar with cases in which psychiatric treatment has been expensive and unsuccessful. Inevitably, every

counsellor will have a proportion of failures, for which he may or may not be blameworthy. People will often come for help in a crisis, when their problem has become unbearable. Such a crisis may be prolonged, and is not likely to last longer than six weeks. After that, the person may come out a little better able to come to terms with his condition or problem, or else less able. The counsellor can hope to turn the balance and make the client able to cope better. This he can do by enabling him to make better use of available resources within himself or outside. In ordinary first aid counselling such as the Humanist Counselling Service offers, cases vary from those in which information is needed to those who need support. Between these extremes, help may be given in, say, reconciling an alienated teenager and parents, or enabling both sides to accept and improve the situation.

Objections are frequently made to the idea of counselling. Sometimes it is said that people should learn to stand on their own and look after themselves as others have to: there is too much pampering and hand-holding in the Welfare State. The simple answer is, of course, that counselling is an attempt to enable people to learn to be self-dependent, to help them to be responsible, not to take responsibility from them. Or it is said that counselling is merely commonsense, the onlooker dropping in a wise word, and that the attempt to professionalise it and develop a mystique turns this good neighbourly office into something bogus and harmful. Here the answer is that in some fields of counselling (say, career guidance) special knowledge is needed, and that in general it is all too easy to do real damage (say, aggravating guilt and anxiety or reinforcing retreat into defence or escape mechanisms). The first thing a counsellor needs to know is the limits of his own competence and the resources beyond his own that are available to help.

### **Reform or Reassurance?**

Lastly, it is now fashionable to say that counselling is merely palliative, helping to make endurable what should be denounced as insufferable: counselling stands in the way of political and social action. But no one advocates ignoring injuries in road accidents because most of such accidents should not happen. The best need not be made the enemy of the good. Political and social action to improve conditions and prevent situations in which people are overborne by difficulties not of their own making are desirable and necessary. When all has been done, however, personal inadequacies will remain; and there tends to be a cycle of inadequacy, as well as a cycle of deprivation, which can be broken only by intervention. The problems with which counselling deals are many of them problems which need to be approached on several fronts, and it is silly to deny counselling in favour of some other all-sufficient way.

Amongst the persons and institutions engaged in counselling there is a movement to establish standards and public accountability, with talk of an institute of counselling. An institute is premature and probably inappropriate, but some way of establishing and enforcing standards is most desirable. The Standing Conference for the Advancement of Counselling has set up a working party on the ethics of counselling, and their report will be an essay on standards of practice.

Humanists have for some time past organised a counselling service. In Holland, the Humanists have more than 30 full time counsellors, who work in the armed services and in public institutions as well as amongst members of the Humanist League. The BHA has had a small counselling group for more than ten years, which meets regularly and which has which was set up by a working party sponsored by the Association of Psychotherapists, in which a representative of the BHA took part. participated in training courses run by the Counselling Service Association



A professional core of trained counsellors with some public accountability working in many professional settings and social contexts should work as a leaven in the whole society, improving the general level of skill and thoughtfulness in social and personal relations. Professionalism which protects the public should also educate the public in this most humane of "caring" services.

(Summary of a lecture given on July 8)

## My Fifty-Three Years with the South Place Ethical Society

BY

GEORGE DOWMAN

*George Dowman is today one of the longest-standing and most respected members of South Place. Earlier in the year he gave up the job he has done for many years for the Society, that of arranging our Sunday morning music. Though acknowledged as an accomplished musician and singer, it is seldom realised in how many other ways he has served us. We are glad to publish this fascinating account of his membership, which has spanned more than half a century.*

SINCE 1903 I had been in various Church of England choirs until World War I broke the sequence. Released from the navy in 1919 (to the benefit, no doubt, of both parties), I waited for the emergence of "a land fit for heroes" so generously promised by Lloyd George. I received a letter from the organist of St. Mary's Church, Bryanston Square, asking if I would rejoin his choir. The letter was signed Reginald Foort, a name destined to win fame in the 1920s for his broadcasts from a Hammer-smith cinema, but I had made other arrangements by this time. I had received a letter from a fervent Christian Scientist telling me of a vacancy for a bass in the South Place Sunday morning Quartet.

At the time, I was unaware of the irony of a Christian Scientist recommending me to such a subversive body, for I knew nothing of the aims of that body nor of the manner in which it propagated its ethical principles, as my mind was yet moulded in church doctrines. I had heard that their views were contrary to current opinion. Indeed, a church choirman when I told him of my action said that the church would never allow me to sing for them again. In this he was wrong for several churches have since asked me to sing solos for them and complimented me on the religious flavour I gave to the songs.

It is not generally understood how art transcends religion or that some of the most beautiful Requiem Masses were written by Freethinkers or Agnostics.

During the first year or two at South Place Chapel it might be said, had it been a Scottish Presbyterian Church, that I "sat under" the Rt. Hon. J. M. Robertson, J. A. Hobson, Joseph McCabe, S. K. Ratcliffe and Dr. Delisle Burns, for they constituted the panel of lecturers in this period. One of my first reactions was to say to a member that I thought the lecture by Mr. Robertson on the previous Sunday somewhat pugnacious, only to be told of his fight against the irrationalism of his time.

I was now beginning to learn of the dignity of the Society's views as opposed to the crudities of, say, speakers at Hyde Park Corner. Later I was to come to respect the wide scholarship of this great man who had served England in an Asquith Liberal Government.

Hobson had been active in University Extension before becoming a Publicist. His strong indictment of economic imperialism had exerted a great influence throughout the world. He was looked on as a heretic in some quarters chiefly for his attacks upon the capitalist emphasis on over-saving. The value of his policies was later confirmed by J. M. Keynes. Hobson joined a powerful staff brought together by H. W. Massingham in 1906 when *The Nation* was founded. It was said that his passion for economics was coupled with "a rare gift" for sympathy. He was obviously an ideal speaker for South Place.

When Joseph McCabe had served the Society for 50 years he was presented with a substantial cheque and a brass ink-stand and he wryly commented on the latter that it represented his brassy outlook on life. Commencing his career as a Catholic priest, he left the church in 1896 and later wrote *Twelve Years in a Monastery*. He often made vitriolic attacks on the Roman Church which did not prevent that wily body from claiming his return to the church he had abandoned. Yet he died an honest and sincere man when he was in his 80s. His criticism of Pope Pius XII was notorious and not ill-founded.

Let me speak of S. K. Ratcliffe, whom I will call "S.K." as always did his wife. They were a most united couple. She was a Quaker and often S.K. would speak for the "Friends". In 1948 a crisis occurred at Conway Hall and the editorship of *The Monthly Record* fell vacant. This was a vacancy which had to be filled immediately as the health of the Society was dependent on its continuity, it being the only link between Conway Hall and the outlying membership which spread throughout the world.

#### Enter the Editor

E. J. Fairhall, the then Hon. Treasurer, knew that I had done some writing and asked me if I would undertake the job. Feeling it was beyond my capacity I turned it down. There being no-one else available I asked another member if he would share the job with me but he refused. I was doing a full-time job during the day and was visiting my wife in hospital twice a week. However, after further pressure from Mr. Fairhall and Mr. S. G. Green, the Secretary, and a promise of help from Fred Watts, the publisher, I accepted, possibly having in mind the prospect of a more capable editor later appearing on the scene. When I told S.K. of my decision he replied "Good!" and proceeded to give me his invaluable help. I was greatly cheered—a leading London journalist and one-time Editor of *The Calcutta Statesman* was more than I could have anticipated. Mr. Green had long wanted me to take on the job and with such assistance it seemed a pity I had not the capability to do better than I did. One day, when I was unreasonably depressed, my first wife (who had two brothers who were journalists) consoled me by saying: "As an editor you may not be the cat's whiskers, but I don't know what the Society would do without you at the present time". Anyway, I was re-elected annually for a further 16 years, but when I reached 70 years of age I knew the time had come to ask for a release. New ideas were needed. The Committee asked Dr. Gibson (who was then the Secretary) to inquire if I knew anyone whom I could recommend to succeed me. Barbara Smoker had edited *The Shavian* and I recommended her. Barbara edited *The Ethical Record*, as it was now called, for six years until Eric Willoughby was appointed. I hope he will carry on for many more years as he is such a capable editor.

### Sunday Morning Music

I was first engaged by the Society as a singer and as such I end. Professor Georges Cunelli tells me that I could continue singing adequately for several more years. Is this the end of an era for me? I don't think so, if what the Professor says is true.

It was on a day in late October 1920 that I mounted the few steps into South Place Chapel to be auditioned by that great little man, Alfred Clements.

The Quartet was accompanied by a pipe organ, operated by Mr. H. Smith Webster. He had long wavy white hair and *looked* like a musician. There was an elderly man engaged to blow the organ and there were occasions when he was late or absent and one of the quartet would offer to "blow". When I did so, I would ask Smith Webster meticulously in what key he desired me to blow. We were a happy little band. We sang solos and quartets and duets. Some of the quartets were on a high level, such as Brahms' *Song of Destiny* and a musical setting of Keats' *Ode to a Nightingale*. There were two hymns taken from the Society's Hymn-Book, *Hymns of Modern Thought*. Arguments were continuous about whether we should sing hymns, but when a vote was taken the result was usually about 50-50. Eventually a compromise was made by having only one hymn. I was neutral. But now *that* one has been done away with.

After the old Chapel was demolished I don't know what happened to the organ, but I remember that names had been pencilled on its side rather like a schoolboy's desk. We started to hold our meetings in a Hall in the London Institution. It could be said that the Society was passing through Paradise in transit to the glorious heaven of Conway Hall.

The quartet was disbanded and after a few weeks I received a letter from the General Committee asking if I would consent to continue as a soloist. This was to put a great strain on the extent of my repertoire, yet I managed to cope until the soprano, Hebe Simpson, was engaged to assist me and we sang solos and duets.

### Melba Memories

Mr. Smith Webster played piano accompaniments for a short while after leaving the Chapel when he was given a small pension and William Busch took over as pianist; he was a fine pianist and composer. Being of German parentage, when World War II broke out he moved with his family to Devon and Ella Ivimey was appointed. She was a great accompanist who had been on several tours with Dame Nellie Melba who thought highly of her talents. After playing for Casals, the distinguished cellist, he complimented her saying "You are an *artist*". She could not have had finer praise, coming as it did from probably the world's greatest cellist, and so both the Society and myself were again exceptionally fortunate in their choice of helpers.

Ella and I chose the artists for the Sunday morning meetings, she the instrumentalists and I the vocalists, but in 1952 she died of cancer. During her illness I visited her in a Hampstead Nursing Home and on one occasion, as I was leaving, she caught me by the arm saying pathetically "Don't let them get rid of me, Mr. Dowman". And the only reply I could make was "They are too fond of you to do that, Miss Ivimey".

Now the work of choosing all the musicians devolved on me, but owing to the introductions Miss Ivimey had given me, I found them ready to respond loyally, due to the affection in which they had held her, and also they enjoyed playing for SPES. Frederic Jackson, who died so tragically a few months ago, told those pupils he sent along that they would enjoy playing to the intelligent, attentive audience at Conway Hall.

It has been a happy circumstance that I am able to hand over my

duties to Joyce Langley. What a help she has been for over 20 years! As pianist to the Hornsey Operatic and Dramatic Society and a teacher herself she is in close touch with many fine singers. I have given her the names of instrumentalists who will be happy to serve her and the Society.

G.D.

### **CURRENT SPES PUBLICATIONS**

#### **THE SECULAR RESPONSIBILITY**

Marghanita Laski 10p.

#### **THE ALTERNATIVE SOCIETY**

James Hemming 10p.

#### **THE BREAKDOWN OF GREAT BRITAIN**

Leopold Kohr 10p.

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Laurens van der Post 10p.

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G. K. Young, CB, CMG, MBE 10p.

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G. A. Wells 20p.

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## **For the Record**

BY

### **THE GENERAL SECRETARY**

One takes it that we have all been doing some thinking, some reading, some talking, some travelling or *something* during the two months break! What I wonder, do we have to show for it? If you think it is worth communicating in *South Place* terms I hope you won't keep it to yourself! So here is something from me for a start.

#### **Why Not a Humanist Residential Library?**

I have just spent a second summer at St. Deiniols Residential Library at Hawarden (pronounced Harden) near Chester. Gladstone founded it, with his own collection of books, on the estate of Hawarden Castle. Denis Murray put me on to it. It has 28 bedrooms, dining room, drawing room and library, and is built more or less on the model of the Oxford or Cambridge college. Residents can be solitary or sociable as they please (the general rule is to be both at different times of the day), there is fine walking country close at hand—and it is not expensive.

What baffles me is that there are not dozens of these places all over the country. Hawarden is four hours driving time from London, too much for week-end purposes. Of course the Extra-Mural Departments and the WEA have, or use, any number of stately homes as do the various organisations of the Humanist movement but this is always for courses and

"schools". But a course is one thing and a residential library is another. We don't always want to be organised! Time to relax, time to think, time to read and write, time to breathe some decent air . . .

To start some such enterprise from scratch (within an hour's drive from London) would cost the earth. But the days of memorials are not yet over by any means. There may be someone who, like Gladstone, would leave a library and an endowment for posterity. To have the idea is to be half way there. Will you make a mental note of it? One never knows what might come up.

### Regional SPES Meetings?

One of our members, Mr. J. Berry of St. Helens in Lancashire, suggested that there might be a meeting of SPES members in the North West to discuss matters of *South Place* interest and relate them to their own situation. The General Committee thought it was a good idea. He circulated all our members living in the area and I offered, if invited, to go up to Lancashire for the meeting. As it happened Mr. Berry received only five positive acceptances and thought, on balance, that he would not proceed further with the idea. However he *has* launched an idea and if anyone living in any area would like to take it up in respect of that area I am sure that we shall do all we can from Conway Hall to help.

### Sir Karl Popper Replies

The last issue of the *Ethical Record* carried my article on Sir Karl Popper's views of Utopia and as a matter of courtesy I naturally sent him a copy. He replied and clearly, in fairness to his own case, you should know what he says. After referring to one or two matters of detail he writes:

"The central point is on p. 4. I do not "define this thing" I call Utopianism. I am an opponent of the method of definition, and I never ask "what is Utopianism". This is the central point. (I have dealt with what is questions and definitions very fully in the *Open Society*). I describe a creed—I believe an attractive but dangerous creed—which I *propose to call* "Utopianism" (p. 358). But I never quarrel about words. Call it what you like. This creed I analyse, and I try to show that it is a mistaken form of rationalism. My attitude to the "inspiring vision" of what you call Utopianism is briefly formulated in paragraph 4 on p. 361. I am certainly not opposed to such visions, but I demand that we must not be carried away by them.

Incidentally, this was an address to a conference where the main speakers were communists. There was also a Roman Catholic there and a famous Existentialist. I was the only speaker for rationalism.

I do not think that there is as much disagreement as you suggest".

One comment will have to suffice. The word Utopia was invented by Sir Thomas More and has been used in this country ever since in substantially the same way. We have to take the word as we find it. No-one can undo the usages of 450 years! What Sir Karl is writing about seems to be millenarian fanaticism—quite a different thing. We are in trouble with words again—situation normal! But it is good to make direct contact and clear up some of the problem.

### October's Programme

About half the programme was published in the September *Record* so I won't repeat what I said about Harry Stopes-Roe, Richard Hauser, Dr. Lovecy and Chris Morey's meetings. Professor Wells will be back on the 14th with one of those closely argued, brilliantly documented cases concerning the history of early Christianity. Barbara Smoker makes her Sun-

day morning debut on the 21st. Professor Carrington will be back on the 28th.

There is a rather delightful misprint in the programme as published in the September *Record*. Avro Manhattan's meeting (the Forum fixed for the 28th) is billed as "The Vatican Villains"; it should be the title of his book "The Vatican Billions". Some would say: What's the difference! Actually it is not as simple as it used to be in "the good old days". Over recent years, for example, the Jesuits (of all people!) have been officially committed to a world wide struggle against poverty and persecution and by their deeds have shown they mean business. Avro Manhattan is a brilliant and highly controversial speaker.

When I wrote to Tony Cross, a Unitarian minister, to ask him to speak in our Tuesday series on "Why Religion?" I didn't know that he had just left his Unitarian ministry and the Unitarian Church. He has, and is now a layman in the Anglican Church. I don't know what it all means and it is not the subject of our meeting but it adds some interest to the occasion. His subject on Tuesday 30th will be: *Religion and Community—the Function of a Common Language*. The subject: *Do we need Rituals* will be introduced by the present writer on the 23rd since it is pretty plain that that is one subject I cannot duck. We can also take up the running and related discussion in the columns of current *Records*. The name of the speaker on *Religion and Motivation* is to be confirmed. He is not available at the moment but he is a practising psychiatrist and a member of the Society. The book to read on this subject is Dr. William Sargent's *The Battle for the Mind*, available as a paperback from Penguins.

#### AROUND THE SOCIETY

□ Mrs. Roma Western has had to step down, at least for the time being, from her responsibility for running the Forum teas. She has some slipped disc trouble that has to be well nursed if she is to make a good recovery. There has always been something rather special about our Forum teas, they are a real team enterprise and always done so well and expeditiously. The General Committee has sent its best wishes and thanks to Mrs Western and I am sure you are all with us in that. Mrs. Ray Lovecy takes over and our Forum teas remain in good hands.

□ The Charity Commission has been disappointing. We thought we might have found a way through our troubles without going to the High Court (this was explained at the AGM) but we have not been so fortunate. More news when we know more—legal consultations are proceeding.

□ The tickets for the Conway Memorial Lecture are now being printed. Dr. Jonathan Miller will give it on Tuesday, 20th November at 7.30 p.m. His subject is *The Uses of Pain*. He is, of course, a qualified medical practitioner; it seems necessary to say that because he has so many other qualifications and talents that many people might be unaware of it! He lectures on the history of medicine at a Medical School and is at the present time doing some special research into the history of hypnotism. I shall be taking the Chair, partly at his request and partly because experience recently has shown that the Chairman's job at South Place is much helped if he knows the audience. Can we aim to fill the Large Hall for what should be a most interesting and valuable occasion? Will you make the meeting known to your friends?

□ Another season begins—our 181st. No two seasons are alike. Their nature is not prescribed by fate; *South Place* is the place where teamwork works, that doesn't make it plain sailing by any means, but it does

mean that every member can have a significant influence on the course of the development of some aspect of the Society. The best way to confirm that is to try it and see!

PETER CADOGAN

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## CONWAY DISCUSSION

### The National Health Service

THERE was no confrontation at this meeting; both Dr. D. Stark Murray and Dr. Paul Noone as protagonists of a really free and comprehensive National Health Service were firmly on the same side. There were differences of emphasis and approach.

Dr. Stark Murray gave us a philosophical introduction mellowed by his years of campaigning for the Socialist Medical Association. Dr. Noone of the Royal Free Hospital was more political, more forthright altogether; between them they gave us a fair picture of the state of the N.H.S. today and the changes they would like to see in it.

Both speakers had something good to say about the present system, mainly in contrasting it with that practised in western European countries, which they described as based on the insurance principle rather than on the taxation method—they put the service available in some of the eastern European countries on a much higher plane altogether.

As Dr. Murray said, the N.H.S. was intended to be free, and he did not think we would get a really fair and effective service until this came about. Provision of medical services in the past had always been for specific groups, and not comprehensive and for the whole community. Private practice seemed to be his *bête noir*, and he felt that this limited the facilities available to the rest of the population. Dr. Murray was strongly against consultants combining their private practices with their hospital work and said that all private practice should be outside the N.H.S. (he said this would kill it very quickly because there were virtually no private hospitals or research facilities).

Dr. Noone spoke even more strongly against the fusion of interests and said that consultants used their position in the hospital service to build up their private practices, citing as an extreme example a surgeon who commuted between 'chopping' in London and Bermuda. The speakers agreed on the difficulty of persuading consultants to go to out-of-London teaching hospitals and Dr. Noone said this was because they objected to leaving their lucrative practices in London. Of course the reluctance of able people to leave the London environment is not confined to the medical profession.

The imbalance in the distribution of medical practitioners was also commented on, and the position of industrial areas was contrasted with that of fashionable London suburbs and other middle-class resorts. Dr. Murray said that there had been an improvement since before the war, when, for example, Bournemouth had about eight times the number of doctors (pro rata) than Sheffield. Now the figure was only about twice as many.

In his opening remarks Dr. Noone had said that the government's policy is to encourage private health care. This was because there was a lot of money and high profits for the insurance companies involved. However nobody was going to use private facilities if they could get the same thing for nothing. The general policy of the government, in relation to health, was in line with the rest of their economic policies, i.e. to sell off, "hive off" profitable areas.

The N.H.S. was the largest industry in Britain. Its workers were badly

paid, and their sense of vocation was recognised as the reason why health service employees were willing to work for so little money. I think one might also ask why farm workers and shop assistants are also badly paid, without apparently needing a sense of vocation. Dr. Noone supplied the answer in the case of the hospital workers, they are badly organised in trade unions, (and of course many are also unskilled).

The speakers were critical of the Bill now before parliament to reform the administration of the N.H.S., which they felt would not meet any of the criticisms already mentioned. Dr. Noone wanted greater democratic control of the health service, with doctors and hospital staff taking some part in the process of decision-making.

As usual there were many questions and contributions from the audience, most of them highly relevant. The most interesting questions were about unethical experiments, and on the subject of resuscitation.

JIM ADDINGTON

*(Report of a Tuesday discussion on May 15)*

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## Your Viewpoint

### Religious Humanism

There seems to be a contradiction in Peter Cadogan's argument on religion and the Humanist movement. If the main purpose of S.P.E.S. is the critique of religion, why does he seek to make it or keep it as a pro-religious organisation? The Conway Hall is described as a Humanist Centre, but if the word Humanist does not mean having a primary concern for the well-being of man rather than for the propagation of religious attitudes then it is indeed difficult to know what the word stands for. I willingly support the critique of religion (which now enters the argument for the first time), but this does not imply for me, as it apparently does for Peter Cadogan, an acceptance of religious attitudes and religious terminology. In June we were told that South Place was *proceeding towards* a form of non-denominational religion. In July the case for "secular-religious ideas" was urged upon us. What are they? I suggest—confused verbiage.

To answer the charge against myself, however. I delayed joining S.P.E.S. for many years after I had joined other sections of the rationalist movement, precisely because of the phrase "a rational religious sentiment" which seemed to me a contradiction in terms. I hoped that it would be resolved along rationalist lines. Since however I do not care to be in an ambiguous position myself, I hereby tender my resignation.

MERLE TOLFREE

### Romford

*The General Secretary replies:* It is a great mistake to personalise this matter. My position and my views are quite incidental. South Place has always been a religious society. The words "rational religious sentiment" are inscribed in the entrance of Conway Hall and are to be found in all the official contemporary statements of what we are about.

There has been no break in the history and development of the Society and its ideas since it was founded in 1793 and from when our Trust Deeds were drawn up in 1825. We have certainly changed our interpretation of what we mean by religion but then so have enlightened people everywhere.

If Merle Tolfree does not agree with our declared objects we must accept her resignation.

● In his footnote to Merle Tolfree's letter last month, our General Secretary presses on doggedly with his neo-religious fantasies. "We remain



a religious congregation", he proclaims. Do we, indeed? Personally, I'm certain that I did not abandon one religious congregation only to find myself immersed in another one, especially one masquerading as a humanist society.

"We do not believe in a 'revealed' God", he continues. Very revealing indeed, this phrase. Apparently we believe in "God" (with a capital G), but not in a "revealed" one. So do the Unitarians. So we're back to them again, and I was under the impression that we left them behind a century ago.

Peter carries on with his conception of what "we" mean by religion. He may be trying to make words mean what he wants them to mean, but surely he must agree that this is not religion as the world understands it. Religion, by definition, is irrational; a "rational religion" is a contradiction in terms, and if it is true that the central feature of SPES is the critique of religion, I suggest some research be put in hand smartly to ascertain what place such woolly phrases have at Conway Hall.

Later we have Philip Buttinger expanding his way-out ideas on Yule-tide christmas eve celebrations. It seems to me that we have all the elements here of a three-way schism; (1) on to a really progressive humanism; (2) back to "rational religious sentiment" in gobbledegook-land, and; (3) even further back to pre-christian paganism.

W. H. Brown speaks of South Place as "a place where beginnings are made—however strange they may seem in infancy". He may say that again—with the emphasis on "strange". I watch these developments in a movement I care about with something rather less than enthusiasm. And no, W. H. Brown, I am not chuckling—we can safely leave that to our enemies and detractors.

London N.13

MAX SHELDON

● First of all I wish to applaud Merle Tolfree for speaking up. So few of our members do so, yet this is the very spirit of free thought, opposed to a submissive faith in dogma. As to an imminent upsurge of robust rationalism within churches I also agree with the sceptical view which Max Sheldon expressed so well.

Social justice is an especially crucial subject to test one's concern with practical consequence, creative activity, and the spirit of community, too. This makes Merle Tolfree's letter very relevant to the said "critique of religion" and I think she deserves a better answer than Peter has given.

What the emptying of the churches does show is that people are losing interest in "worship". Of course this is only one aspect of religion, just as creed is another. There is also an expectation that both these subjective elements will have objective results, perceptible in actual conduct, and social justice should be among them.

When that expectation is not sufficiently fulfilled, we rightly speak of hypocrisy. It seems that rationalists, too, have vaguely corresponding obligations of some kind which they should try to live up to, if they are to avoid a similar charge.

We have all heard of a legal fiction to the effect that only "worship" can render a religious body recognisable as such in Court. This amounts to adopting an *unprovable subjective claim* as the essential criterion of a legal decision which has discriminatory consequences. In itself this does not strike me as a model of social or any other justice. Consequently I have never understood why so many good rationalist friends seem to revere this antiquated and irrational doctrine, quoting it with relish!

To my mind, religious persons whose consciences finally rebel against making assertions to which they cannot attach any meaning have simply and solely become more rational. That makes them less superstitious no doubt but in many religious circles that would count for credit. If in other

circles the more truthful are said to be the less religious, it seems hardly worthy of support from rationalists.

London E.4

DR. A. L. LOVECY

● In her letter against religious Humanism, Merle Tolfree writes: "The Humanist centres were set up, I always thought, as an alternative to religion, by and for people who did not want to worship God."

As a religious Humanist, I can go along with her definition except that I would delete the word "to" in between alternative and religion and would put the last part of her definition much stronger. It is not just that I don't want to worship God, I can't. I have never believed that a God exists, I have never worshipped a God, nor prayed to one. I was brought up as a Humanist and have never doubted my beliefs. Belief in God is not a criterion as to whether one is religious or not. If that were so, millions of Buddhists aren't religious.

Recently I received an invitation from the Lincoln Unitarian Church and the Lincolnshire Humanist Group to conduct an Ethical Service along non-theistic lines. I have accepted, and I hope my Three Candle Ceremony to Past, Present and Future generations will have deep religious significance to all those present.

London S.W.17

PHILIP BUTTINGER

### Ritual Party

There is no reason why a party should not be held at any time. "Rational Religious Sentiment"—it is reasonable on such occasions to have some expression of religious sentiment—love, friendship, loyalty, positive thinking, etc. "Free from all theological dogma" I suggest the society will be contravening *this* basic principle if it introduces a fixed "Yuletide ritual geared to the Anglo-Saxon tradition".

East Horsley, Surrey

GEORGE E. SWADE

### Pertinent Questions

In the summary (*Record*, September) of his lecture "Crime or Sickness?", Professor Antony Flew makes the point that, essentially, it is in the uncontrollable compulsiveness of behaviour, on the irresistible nature of inclination that a mania—with one of those Greek names—can be accounted a mental disease. There remains, however, the question of accounting behaviour "uncontrollably compulsive", or inclination "naturally irresistible". Indeed, when can an inclination which is not "resisted" be or not be accounted an "irresistible" inclination? How can any number of "non-resistances" to an inclination show that an inclination is, an "irresistible" one—has never been "resisted", and could not have been "resisted"?

Farnham Common

CHARLES BYASS

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## South Place News

### New Members

We are pleased to welcome the following new members: Janette T. Adams, Potters Bar, Herts.; Ethan Ames, SW6; Jonathan R. Bareham, Potters Bar, Herts.; Caryn L. Becker, N1; Pauline E. Coulter, Enfield, Middx.; Malcolm C. W. Dodwell, Enfield, Middx.; Valerie J. Fisher, Marsh, Yorks.; John A. Green, Birmingham; Richard Hauser, SW1; Anthony N. Heal, Marsh, Yorks.; Bryan Hutton, Quebec, Canada; Liisa A. Juvonen, Bickley, Kent; Mr. J. M. I. Leon, SW9; Mrs. Nora Martinez,

SW4; Brenda S. Palfrey, Birmingham; Mrs. M. Seltman, SW19; Miss A. Sloan, W1; Julia R. Stone, SW6; Dr. Harry Stopes-Roe, Birmingham; James F. Walker, N1; John White, SW17; Mr. P. B. Smith; Andrew Cheyne, W1 and Miss E. M. Meadows White, WC1. Total 24 new members.

### **Obituary**

We regret to report the death of Miss B. E. Smith.

### **Sunday social**

Mrs. Rose Warwick will speak on "First Impressions of the New World" on Sunday, October 21, at 3 p.m. Tea at 4.30 p.m.

### **Conway Memorial Lecture**

The 55th Conway Memorial Lecture is to be given in Conway Hall on Tuesday, November 20, at 7.30 p.m. The speaker is to be Dr. Jonathan Miller. His subject will be The Uses of Pain. Admission 10p.

### **Will the real chairman . . .**

In the list of committees published in last month's record, it was stated that Mr. Barralet is the chairman of the General Committee. In fact the chairman is Mr. Home. The names of Mrs. Barralet and Dr. Brebner should have been shown under Concerts Committee.

### **South Place ramble**

Saturday, October 13. Ramble in Bushey Park to see ducks, ponds and deer. Meet at 2 p.m. at Teddington Station (British Rail or 27 bus). Victoria Road exit. Distance approximately five miles. Leader: Mrs. L. L. Booker (tel. 743-3988).

### **Theatre party**

A visit has been arranged to the Vanbrugh Theatre Club (Malet Street) for Friday, October 19 to see the 7.30 performance of *A Collier's Saturday Night* by D. H. Lawrence. Tickets are 20p from Miss E. Palmer at Conway Hall, Sunday mornings and Tuesday evenings, or from the General Secretary.

### **Bridge Drive**

This month's bridge drive takes place on Thursday, October 18 at 6.30 p.m. Light refreshments are provided at 6 p.m., and new members are welcome to attend.

### **Kindred organisations**

Free copies of its 1972/3 Annual Report are available to SPES members, on application to the **National Secular Society**, 698 Holloway Road, London N19.

**Humanist Holidays** has plans for a non-religious Xmas centre at Brighton.

The cost per person, for four nights and full board, including Xmas meals and wine, is £22 inc. V.A.T. (£24 for single rooms). Those interested should contact Mrs. M. Mephram, 29 Fairview Road, Sutton, Surrey (tel. 642 8796).

The Dinner and Dance of the **Progressive League** is being held at the Waverley Hotel, WC1, on Saturday, October 10. Tickets are £2 from Edna Sorrell, 1 Spencer Mansions, Queen's Club Gardens, W14.

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(Continued from page 2)

### **Tuesday, October 30**

7.00 p.m.—**Discussion: Religion and Community—The Function of a Common Language** with Tony Cross.

### **Tuesday, November 20**

7.30 p.m.—**CONWAY MEMORIAL LECTURE.**

**DR. JONATHAN MILLER** on The Uses of Pain.

# 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 E17 8DD, by the 5th of the preceding month.