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# ETHICAL RECORD

Vol. 77, No. 2

FEBRUARY 1972

## CONTENTS

EDITORIAL: E.E.C. INFLUENCES . . . . .	3
THE WELLSIAN VISION . . . . .	4
<i>by Richard Clements</i>	
THE CHALLENGE BEFORE HUMANISM . . . . .	7
<i>by David Tribe</i>	
MAO TSE-TUNG AND HIS CULTURAL REVOLUTION	10
<i>by Dr. John Lewis</i>	
MEET THE MOVEMENT: LORD FENNER BROCKWAY	12
HUMANIST FORUM: THE ETHICS OF INFLATION .	15
<i>by Dr. E. F. Schumacher</i>	
FOR THE RECORD . . . . .	17
<i>by the General Secretary</i>	
YOUR VIEWPOINT . . . . .	19
SOUTH PLACE NEWS . . . . .	21
COMING AT CONWAY HALL . . . . .	2, 23

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

*For more details see "South Place News" and "For the Record."*

### Tuesday, February 1

7 p.m.—Conway Discussion introduced by Harry Knight. Subject: Suggestology—A New, Subliminal, Teaching Method

### Sunday, February 6

11 a.m.—S.P.E.S. Lecture: RICHARD CLEMENTS on Teilhard de Chardin and Modern Humanism. Baritone solos: Peter Wright

6 p.m.—Bridge Practice in the Library, light refreshments

6.30 p.m.—Concert: Tilford Festival Ensemble. Programme: J. S. Bach, The Art of Fugue

### Tuesday, February 8

7 p.m.—Conway Discussion introduced by Christopher Macy. Subject: Psychology and Philosophy

### Friday, February 11

7.30 for 8 p.m.—S.P.E.S. Annual Dinner. Guest Speaker: Lord Willis

### Sunday, February 13

11 a.m.—S.P.E.S. Lecture: RICHARD HAUSER on The Faith of the Non-Believer. Violin and piano: Margot McGibbon and Frederic Jackson

2.30 p.m.—Humanist Forum: The Difference Between a Humanist and a Christian Today with Very Rev. Dr. John Robinson

6 p.m.—Bridge Practice

6.30 p.m.—Concert: Dartington String Quartet. Programme: Haydn B flat op. 64 No. 3, Shostakovich No. 9, op. 117; Thea King. Programme: Mozart Clarinet Quintet

### Tuesday, February 15

7 p.m.—Conway Discussion introduced by David Tribe. Subject: Ethics and Philosophy

### Thursday, February 17

6.30 p.m.—Bridge Drive in the Library. Light refreshments

### Sunday, February 20

11 a.m.—S.P.E.S. Lecture: Dr. D. B. HALPERN on What is Personality? Soprano solos: Jean Aird

3 p.m.—Sunday Social: Brains Trust (See South Place News). Tea served at 3 p.m.

6 p.m.—Bridge Practice

6.30 p.m.—Concert: Ian Partridge, Jennifer Partridge. Programme: Schubert's "Winterreise" song cycle

*Continued on inside back cover*

# THE ETHICAL RECORD

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Vol. 77, No. 2

FEBRUARY 1972

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

## EDITORIAL

### E.E.C. influences

TO ALL intents and purposes, Britain is now a member of the European Economic Community. The political significance of entry without the specific consent of the majority of the British people will be gauged only by time, but there are some important aspects which should be considered by ethical Humanists.

Although the E.E.C. is, as its title says, basically a commercial and economic organisation, the social influences on each other of the member countries is marked. What are the influences which might impinge on Britain? Well, although it is not saying much, with the possible exception of West Germany, Britain is probably the most secularised nation within the E.E.C. In Holland, for example, there is Catholic-Protestant segregation on a wide scale, extending, in some cases, to trade unions, where there are Catholic unions and Protestant unions for the same occupations. The church has a considerable influence, and though there is a lively Humanist movement which is tolerated by the authorities, church influence is only slowly declining. Yet Holland is one of the most progressive countries in Europe, and its youth enjoys a freedom almost as absolute as in Sweden and Denmark.

On the Christian question, much the same can be said of Belgium and France, and Italy. . .

So Britain is likely to find itself under subtle cultural influences from the established churches, if not from Rome itself, and the rationalist movement will therefore find the future a little more challenging.

It might also be worth remembering that, with the possible exception of Luxembourg, no E.E.C. country—Britain included—is outstanding in history for being hesitant to make war. And there have been disturbing reports in the press recently about France's growing interest in nuclear weapons.

On the credit side, the hopes for progress in the field of social reform are extremely good. It should be remembered that Britain, taking an average through the population, has one of the lowest standards of living in Europe, and that the Welfare State, hardly changed since its introduction, has been the model for many Continental systems, all of which have improved upon it beyond all recognition.

But one hope is that Britain may at last be starting to look outward, instead of continuing with its self-destructing introvert attitude, and swallow its pride sufficiently to learn valuable lessons from its new sibling, enjoying, for the most part, better standards of living, cleanliness, social justice and democracy than we know in Britain today.

Our ethics might also begin to base themselves on European ideas and standards rather than the ones we have known. And that may be a change for the better.

# The Wellsian Vision

BY

RICHARD CLEMENTS

THE STORY of the life and work of Herbert George Wells reads like a fairy tale. For it tells of the struggles and aspirations of a talented human being, and how he won a place in the sun as a man of letters, and then, in his mature years, became a seer and a prophet.

He was born at Bromley, Kent, on September 21, 1866; he died in London on August 13, 1946. The England in which he grew was a very different country from that of today. The Kentish scene during his early life was one made up of small market towns and villages, great estates, old-fashioned inns, windmills, churches and parsonages. Much travel was still by horse-drawn vehicles and sailing ships. A closed, class-ridden type of society; the kind of social environment romanticists and the people tired of life, delight in their idle moments to dream about. . .

In his *Experiment in Autobiography*, especially in the first volume, Wells has painted with Rousseau-like courage and sincerity a picture of his home, his parents, his primitive kind of schooling and his grey and forlorn childhood. None can read his description of the family home attached to the little shop in High Street, Bromley, without sensing the sadness and misery of it all. The place was called Atlas House. His parents were domestic servants and small shopkeepers; their opinions were servile and narrow-minded.

Like so many other men and women during his lifetime, especially scientists, writers, poets and artists, Wells was hampered in his formative years by the injustice, cruelty and folly of an acquisitive and class-ridden society. Indeed, throughout his whole career, his spells of irrationalism, his foibles, his "blind spots," his petty bourgeois traits—upon which his critics are never tired of descanting—are traceable to the economic social and psychic conditions of Britain during his lifetime. The genius of the man and his truly protean qualities are revealed in his reactions against that society, his passion for self-education and his concern for science, history and sociology as the guides to the creation of a free, humanist and compassionate Republic of Man.

Of his formal schooling little needs to be said, except to stress that it was of an odd character and mediocre. It is to the credit of his mother that she taught him at an early stage to read and write. Then, at the age of seven, he was sent to a small private school, grandiloquently named Morley College, where he was taken in hand by its proprietor, the boy's first schoolmaster. The "college" consisted of one room upstairs that had been built out over a scullery in Mr. Morley's house. It was in this place, and under such tuition, that the brain of Wells began its long course of expansion and education.

What a strange little boy he must have been in those days! Each morning, with his school satchel tucked under his arm, he left behind his poor home and the dusty little shop in the High Street, and climbed the stairs that brought him to his seat in the classroom. Yet, strange to relate, the undersized, ragged, ill-nourished, nervous little boy (known amongst his classmates as "Bertie") who went in fear of his teacher's abuse and cane, began to be noticed for his eager interest in English composition, the elements of mathematics, his ability to make funny, quick little sketches of people and things about him, and his good memory. So, before long, the schoolmaster was reporting to Joseph Wells that Bertie was "a smart lad".

His formal education went on for some years, and towards its close he took an examination in the subject of book-keeping, organised by the College of Preceptors, and he tied with a fellow pupil and came out first.

Years later, in his autobiography, he tells of his attempts to recall realistically his mental progress in the years 1874 to 1880, and remarks: "Whatever else I had missed, I had certainly the ability to use English with some precision and delicacy, even if the accent was a Cockney one, and I had quite as good a mathematical apparatus as most of the boys at the same age" (i.e. thirteen) "get at a public school nowadays."

On the debit side, he sets the fact that he was taught "no history but English history, hardly any geography" and mentions that school "ruined his Franch for life while old Tommy's" (the nickname by which Mr. Morley was known amongst the pupils) "incompetent tuition had made me 'vowel-shy' in every language". Many pupils in the schools of those days had similar experience.

On leaving school, Wells felt very little of the elation some boys experience when entering the work-a-day world. The reason is not far to seek if the kind of youth he was in his teens is kept before the mind's eye. He was then undersized, in poor health, oddly educated, shy and in conflict with his mother about his work and future. She had for him one aim in life: to see him set up as a respectable retail shopkeeper, and preferably in the drapery trade. She made no impression on her son.

### Idelological Conflicts

He loathed his mother's ideas on this subject, in spite of their affectionate relationship; and there were conflicts between them on religious, political and social questions. At the same time, his "private school" background had awakened in him—in spite of his gaunt and impossible home, his Cockney ebullience and accent, and his chronic poverty—a vague feeling that he was somehow different from, and superior to, "working class people". This obsession took strange forms with him at various stages in his later life, e.g. his concern about money and status. These traits, even when he had conquered a world wide reputation as an author, lent substance to those who described him as "a little bourgeois philistine".

To round off our picture of him and his struggles during his teens, it must in fairness be added that he was "growing up" very rapidly, and that despite the strange medley of ideas and emotions thronging his mind, his intelligence was quickening, his Puck-like fantasy developing, facts and impressions were being registered in his memory; he seized whatever chance he had to write and to draw, his curiosity about nature and life was insatiable, and the glory of books had dawned in his mind. He was very definitely on his way.

But hurdles still remained. The little shop was tottering into bankruptcy and collapse. His parents could not make ends meet and to crown their misfortunes his father fell from a ladder and broke his leg. Driven by bitter need, his mother—the lynch-pin of the family—returned to the service of Miss Featherstonhaugh at Up Park House, where she was appointed housekeeper. Two of her sons were hurried into the drapery trade.

Herbert entered on several false starts; the pitiful story can best be read in his *Experiments in Autobiography* and in the pages of his novels written in the years 1900-10. The latter exhibit his capacity to turn the grim facts of daily life into the magic of art. His artistry in such works as *Love and Mr. Lewisham*, *Kipps* and *Tono Bungay* ensured his place as a novelist with an immense readership at home and abroad.

His progress began in earnest when, after two years of futile effort to turn him into a shop assistant he ran away from a draper to whom he had been apprenticed at Southsea, and thus broke his indentures. Meanwhile, he had attracted the attention of Mr. Byatt, who at that time was headmaster of Midhurst Grammar School, and who found a place for him at the two-roomed grammar school in the town, as an under-master. He was then seventeen years of age.

There he was encouraged to study, to teach and to equip himself for advancement as a student of science. He gave every hour of his free time to textbooks on elementary inorganic chemistry, physics, mathematics and biology. With the result that he secured a surprising number of "A" certificates when he sat for the required examinations. And shortly afterwards, the Department of Education awarded him a place at the Normal School of Science at South Kensington together with a bursary of one guinea a week.

### Scientific Beginnings

Thus in September 1884, when he was eighteen years of age, he entered the world of science as a student. He was fortunate in his first year to be in a class taught by Prof. T. H. Huxley, the brilliant exponent of Darwinism and an eminent controversialist; and at the end of the year he secured a first-class pass. The prize upon which his hopes rested was that of a degree as Bachelor of Science.

The world was then waking up to the talismanic powers of science, and the large army of newspaper readers, then being swollen by successive waves of young people from the schools set up under the provisions of the 1870 Education Act, was eager for every scrap of information on the subject. The Darwinian controversy which raged after the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species* intensified public interest in science. No wonder the young Wells dreamed of being a great scientist. But his bright hopes turned to ashes, when at the end of three years he failed his Finals, and left the college of science without a degree. On the surface, his plight seemed desperate, as he was poverty-stricken and his health precarious. And at one time he came near to dying.

But there were other factors to be taken into account. Wells had not been idle during his student years. He had undertaken "a cleansing course" of Swift and Sterne; he studied Carlyle and Blake and at the library at Up Park House he had read for hours, while on visits to his mother, books by Voltaire and Paine, and dipped into discourses by Plato. He had also acquired a deep interest in ideas and some skill in explaining and writing about them.

In London he began to attend meetings of the Fabian Society and soon he declared himself to be a Socialist and a Freethinker. Soon his associates began to talk about his wit, his personal charm, his fondness for controversy and his capacity for the imaginative handling of ideas about men, women and things. Then, in the July 1891 issue of *The Fortnightly Review*, under Frank Harris's editorship, there appeared an article by Wells on *The Rediscovery of the Unique*. It was his first bow to a wide readership in an influential periodical. He won a place in the world of freelance journalism and soon his articles and sketches became a feature in the newspapers and the journals in the 'nineties.

It was on reading J. M. Barrie's *When a Man's Single* that Wells hit upon—to quote his own words—the true path to successful freelance journalism. He had previously sought for rare and precious topics, and was often shooting above the target. He lowered his sights, and hit the target. Some of his early writing appeared in two books he published in the 'nineties: *Select Conversations With an Uncle* (1895) and *Certain Personal Matters* (1897). Wells was, in his own extraordinary style, a man who worked in the two cultures—science and art. That was of course long before the recent fuss about the schism between the two activities.

Having failed to become a great scientist in his own right, though he succeeded in taking his B.Sc. degree as an external student at London University, he began to write his scientific romances, e.g. *The Time Machine*, *The War of the Worlds*, *In the Days of the Comet*, *The War in the Air* and *The Invisible Man*. The careful reader will note the mingling of the scien-

tific and the social theme, and there is also a hint of the prophet with his foresight of the use of the aeroplane, the tank as a battle weapon and the coming of the atomic bomb.

Wells has been described as an English Jules Verne, both in this country and in the United States, but our author, in a letter to Arnold Bennett, repudiated any such interpretation:

"There's a quality in the worst of my so-called 'pseudo-scientific' (imbecile adjective) stuff which differentiates it from Jules Verne, just as Swift is differentiated from Fantasia, isn't there? There is something other than either story writing or artistic method which has emerged through the series of my books. Something one might regard as a new system of ideas—'thought'. It's in *Anticipations*, especially chapter nine, and it's in my Royal Institution lecture. It's also in *The First Men on the Moon* and *The Invisible Man*, and Chaffery's chapter in *Love and Mr. Lewisham*."

The reputation of Wells the novelist rests upon the works he wrote in the first two decades of this century. The quality of the Wellsian vision in those years conquered and guided the enlightened elements of mankind in many lands. It became a sort of rule of thumb among such people to miss nothing that he wrote.

Among that vast output of superb novels each reader had his own favourites. The books that became household words began with *Love and Mr. Lewisham* (1900), *Kipps* (1905), *Tono-Bungay* (1909), which some believe to be the high water mark of his art, *The History of Mr. Polly* (1910) and *Mr. Britling Sees it Through* (1916), which had so much of the mind and spirit of wartime England and of Wells himself in its pages, that it enthralled a phenomenal readership on both sides of the Atlantic. In many of these novels the discerning readers will be aware that—like Dickens before him—Wells was writing about himself, his struggles, his loves, his ideas and his bright dreams of the old and the new world and the future of the human race.

But there are many books, with their treasure of wit, wisdom and vision that cannot be explored in this summary.

(Summary of a lecture given on June 13)

## The Challenge before Humanism

BY

DAVID TRIBE

A FEW YEARS AGO "The Challenge Before Humanism" might well have been presented offensively, in all the many uses of that word. Today a defensive approach is probably the most appropriate. Then it might have seemed that we were on the verge of a breakthrough. So in a sense we were, though not of the sort that was generally recognised. It was then that the media discovered—under the refurbished name of humanism—secularist, ethical and rationalist movements that had in fact been around for a very long time, that had their established power structures and traditions, that were, whether they liked it or not, in large measure tied to their histories.

Suddenly we found ourselves famous—or notorious. In the more sympathetic presentations we were cast as apostles of the new gospel for the new morality in a new age. In the yellow press we loomed as demons who would

drag the nation and the world back into pre-Christian depravity. The two rôles were equally thrilling, bringing equal, if different, gratification to initiates and attracting, for a time, the usual intake of bandwagon acolytes—people who would join any movement so long as, like a detergent, it was represented as new and improved. But real changes did happen.

Probably no more people stopped going to church, but they said openly they were not going or went somewhere else more ostentatiously. No more people lost their belief in God, but they felt it safer to admit it. No more people defied Christian morality, but they did so with an easier conscience. This process was aided by legislative endorsement, and we saw the dramatic advent to the Statute Book of private members' Bills on such things as abortion, family planning, homosexual activity, minority rights and divorce. Government measures quietly removed the older Sunday observance and blasphemy laws, while in those areas where legislative attempts were unsuccessful—Sunday entertainments, voluntary euthanasia, the obscenity laws and cruel sports—direct action often found ways around the law. Sex education swept into schools, family planning became fashionable, contraception for the unmarried was widely recognised, more people affirmed in law courts without difficulty or embarrassment, and broadcasting networks admitted discussion of social questions that had till recently been tabu. Even causes that seemed to have been lost irretrievably somewhere in the nineteenth century—disestablishment, republicanism, reform of the House of Lords—became talking points again. In all these debates and activities many humanists played a prominent part and, as in a war effort, a certain intolerance, that is something of a feature of contemporary progressivism, was directed at those colleagues who took different views. Many of the reforms achieved were gained at the teeth of opposition from religious organisations, notably the Roman Catholic Church, whose lobbies were suddenly cut down to size where they involved social questions that the population at large—or a sufficiently large number of political activists—felt strongly about. These were notable achievements, but they have left challenges for the future that few predicted at the time.

### Disillusionment

As the swinging sixties swung ever more wildly, those who craved novelty or kicks found that in humanism they had chosen a very slow bandwagon. Those who march only with big battalions soon found that they had been recruited into an army that was both smaller and worse equipped than they had been led to believe. The foaming waves of C.N.D. and the Committee of 100 were on the wane, but a new tide was bringing in flower power, black power, student power, pupil power, Women's Lib., Gay Lib., anti-Vietnamese War demonstrations and infinite other opportunities for demonstrating, sloganeering, badge-wearing, banner-waving and dropping out or dropping into new sensations. If the organised churches were on the decline, the older religions and quasi-religions were making a comeback: Eastern mysticism, emanating from a bewildering number of gurus, black and white magic, witchcraft, Druidism and astrology. Most recently of all Christianity is staging a comeback via the "Jesus Freaks" of California.

For a long time humanists have known and recognised that some people have an obsessive interest in immortality and whatever claims to offer it to them, and that, in times of bereavement and other personal crises, many more seek comfort in religion or *ad hoc* mysticism. But there are other challenges to humanism that are less often acknowledged. Whether or not humanists are rational the movement seeks to be. In the world at large, however, the rational has little appeal. It is the irrational, the wonderful, the mysterious that attracts. Whether or not freethinkers think freely, the movement seeks to foster free thought. In the world at large, however, thought has little attraction and free thought least of all. For better or for



worse, the movement is, and has always been, an intellectual one; and, especially in the Anglo-Saxon world, intellectuals are both disliked and distrusted. The majority seeks sensual rather than mental gratification and, when it turns to ideology, likes to have its opinions ready-formed. But it gives little credit or financial support to those responsible for the formulation. For better or for worse, even intellectuals tend to think reactively and freethinkers like to have something tangible to break free of.

Particularly in Britain, where politics has always been empirical, the type of ideology which has most attracted and repelled is religious. Like it or not—and some humanists clearly do not like it—at every time since Protagoras challenged the authority of the Olympian deities the humanist movement has moved in a religious matrix, i.e. as either a substitute religion, with its own attenuated rituals, or as an antidote to religion. For insofar as it opposes dogma it must oppose the most ancient and pervasive of all sources of dogmatic utterance.

### **Thriving on Competition**

The result is that, while secularisation and humanisation of society tend to rise as religious devotion falls, or vice versa, the organised secular humanist movement does not rise too. On the contrary it tends to fall. Linked as it is to the religious issue, it is of abiding interest only as long as religion is of abiding interest. When people care little about religion one way or the other, substitute religions or alternatives to religion lose their appeal. Today philosophical—as distinct from emotive—religion is in a decline and the humanist movement is declining with it. Emotive religion or quasi-religion is doing good business, but humanism has rarely been able to compete on these terms.

With religious scepticism comes a decline in overt religious persecution. Here again, far from aiding the humanist movement, this tends to undercut it. In a mass movement there is a sense in which nothing succeeds like success. With minority movements, on the other hand, persecution strengthens rather than weakens them. Stimulated by the popular press people respond better to issues that can be personalised than to protest at generalised corrupting influences. Despite their interest in money they do not complain about giving £300 million out of public funds to church schools while it comes out of the general tax, though they would soon rebel if compulsory church rates and tithes were to be reimposed. And unless freethinkers are actually thrown into gaol for blasphemy, public opinion does not worry too much about religious propaganda in schools (which is dismissed with the half-truth that children grow out of it) or on radio and television (when most people switch off). These trends provide problems for the anti-clerical and secular (demanding separation of church and state) elements in the humanist movement.

### **Alternative Approaches**

For tactical, as well as temperamental reasons, some humanists thus claim that the movement should concentrate on “positive” issues that have nothing whatever to do with religion. From an organisational point of view this approach probably involves greater difficulty. Neither is it a new insight. It has been tried more than once in the past and found wanting. The ethical church, which now seems remoter than Druidism, had this inspiration, though it may be said that it failed through its imitation of Christianity. But what of alternative approaches? Moral education? This, like religion, is an interesting study but one in which most people have little interest save from the dogmatic viewpoint. Further, like Christianity it has generally involved giving concern to personal rather than social factors and to vague discussions with teenagers long after their basic attitudes have been formed.

Alternatively it becomes precise and sounds very much like humanist or neo-Christian indoctrination.

The open society? In the way this has been promoted in the movement—as distinct from the presentation in Sir Karl Popper's *Open Society and its Enemies*—this offers small chance of success as either a means of recruitment or a useful undertaking in itself. The movement has always been interested in civil liberties and supports specialist libertarian bodies. If the “open society” is more than this it is either a pipe dream or would create the conditions whereby a “pragmatic” demagogue could seize power in an ideological vacuum. Every stable society is based on ideological presuppositions which are enshrined in its fiscal, foreign and social policies. The very notion of “civil liberties” came about when freethinkers of the Enlightenment and the nineteenth-century radical movement successfully challenged the theocratic authoritarian view of the world. Humanists who hark after such concepts should ask themselves whether, in the light of the immense and growing resources of the churches, the financial anxieties of the humanist movement and the New Counter-Reformation already being organised by the Vatican, they can afford this luxury.

*(Summary of a lecture given on July 11)*

## **Mao Tse-Tung and his Cultural Revolution**

BY

DR. JOHN LEWIS

So, the mountain has come to Mahomet, and Nixon is flying to Peking to establish friendly relations with Chairman Mao! Beyond the immense importance of the relaxation of tension between the two super-powers, this is a startling reversal of attitude to Socialist China and to Mao himself.

Too often derided and totally underestimated, this move would never have been made if China were not recognised as a stable socialist society with considerable achievements to its credit. Achievements not to be attributed to anything like the Marxism of the traditional kind, as to following the path of Russia. On the contrary, while Mao claims to be a Marxist, he has created a new method of achieving it, and a new type of socialist society. And the ideas and ideals, the methods and principles behind it, appear forcefully in Mao's Cultural Revolution. So what is it all about?

Chinese culture has been remarkably stable over many thousands of years; but the impact of western imperialism, the ruthless occupation of the Treaty Ports, and the Opium Wars finally compelled revolutionary change. At first under Sun Yat Sen in 1911 when the Chinese Republic was proclaimed and the Imperial Dynasty of the Manchus came to an end, and then under Chiang Kai-Shek and his bourgeois nationalist party the Kuo Min-Tang, who is still the master of the island of Formosa, claims to represent the whole of China at the United Nations.

Finally, Mao Tse-Tung's Communist China, denied representation there for 22 years, is now moving toward the peaceful co-existence with imperialist America it has up to now totally rejected.

No-one can deny that the new China is unified, firmly established and has got beyond the periodic famines and the continuous exploitation of the peasantry. It makes no claims to be a socialist paradise, but the people are

enthusiastic, industrious and very busy building new industries and establishing a scientific agriculture, of course all on socialist lines.

And one man is responsible for all this—Mao Tse-Tung. Who is he? An educated man—not a worker himself, nor a peasant. Mao emerged in 1920 as a communist and a leading member of the Party when it was founded in 1921. Compelled by Russia to accept the leadership of the bourgeois Kuo Min-Tang, Mao went off into the country and organised revolutionary activities among the peasants. When Chiang turned against his communist allies, Mao began to build up peasant soviets in the interior. Chiang launched campaign after campaign to annihilate them—all in vain.

### Peasant Support

In 1934 Mao led his followers, a huge community of peasants and their families on the Long March to Northern China; from the revolutionary base there at the end of the war he advanced against Chiang Kai-Shek and drove him and his army out of China to Formosa (Taiwan), and proceeded to establish a socialist society, sweeping away first the old landlord class and then the capitalists!

Mao's great gifts of leadership rallied the peasantry around him, though the workers, much less numerous, accepted him too. This was something never anticipated by Marx and Lenin, a *peasant* revolution to establish socialism.

But Mao had his own secret weapon, as well as his military skill as a strategist and a tactician. He produced a modern, socialist alternative to the great Confucian ideological system which had dominated China for centuries. Mao calls it Marxism, though it is better described as "The Thoughts of Mao Tse-Tung".

This is not a philosophy or a creed or a collection of maxims, but a political theory. It is a *culture*, that is to say it is a way of life, a practical guide to action, an ethic and a system of customary behaviour. It is vigorously inculcated among all—children, youth, women, peasants and intellectuals. It launches attack after attack on all remnants of the old ways. It does not believe that after establishing socialism, automatically a new ideology and type of humanity emerges. It must be continually fought for.

### All-embracing

This is the meaning of the Cultural Revolution. It is not concerned as we might think with art, but with every form of conduct, all values, attitudes and ways of living. Basically there emerges a fundamental group of new revolutionary concepts: A—The inferiority of manual and intellectual labour must go. So let the bosses and the artists and the scientists drop their pens and work in fields and factories. B—The idea of material incentives must be abandoned. The only good is the ultimate socialist goal of the whole community. Austerity may last "from five to ten generations"; what of it? C—Endless warfare against every form of the old ideology, all its values, customs and aims.

Finally, this must imbue the masses. It is not a creed, but a passionate faith. And indeed this does appear to be the case. Are we witnessing for the first time in history a *people's socialism* based on mass enthusiasm, devotion and connection?

(Summary of a lecture given on July 18)

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As the French say, there are three sexes—men, women and clergymen.

—Sydney Smith

# Meet the Movement

## Lord Brockway— Rebel With Many Causes

*Interviewed by the Editor*



**Q** Lord Brockway, I always think of you as the rebel against most of the issues that thinking people consider to be abhorrent. The majority of people sit by and let things happen. What has stirred you into action and kept you going?

**A** I suppose heredity and environment. Heredity contributes toward personality as well as to physique. My father was a Radical when he was young, and both he and my mother, as missionaries—though I came to reject their beliefs—were devoted to human service. Environment: childhood with Victorian grandparents, frustrating boarding school, poverty when starting to earn a living, contact with young fellow lodgers seeking life's solution, the emergence of Socialism. I was more than a rebel; I saw the vision of Socialism.

**Q** Clearly you are a man who takes heed of his conscience. Do you see the conscience of the modern young person as more or less of an influence than yours as a young man?

**A** Youth today is like the youth of my time. Perhaps the difference is this: they are often rebels without a constructive vision. They are disillusioned even in Socialism, because of those who call themselves Socialists.

**Q** You are of course a renowned public speaker, but I regard you more, I think, as a man of action. Do you think direct action has more results than the spoken word in the long term?

**A** The spoken word is useless if it does not inspire action. In my day it led to devotion to the Independent Labour Party, the dynamic expression of Socialism. Today, because of disillusionment, often outside a political party, too often there is no action.

**Q** Do you regard the current trend toward demonstration, strike and civil disobedience action as a sign that the young are less articulate than before?

**A** The tendency toward direct action is a reflection of the disillusionment

I have just referred to. It does not mean that youth is less articulate. I welcome their activity, and out of it will come, in time, construction.

**Q** As far as Conway Hall is concerned now, I referred to your speaking prowess earlier, and we enjoy your talks, but I wonder how much importance you place upon them. Do they have a special place in your mind?

**A** I value Conway Hall S.P.E.S. meetings because they deal with fundamentals. I don't pretend they are important in influencing mass action, but they clarify ideas for a few, and—who knows?—the few may become influential. Perhaps sometimes they are more useful to the speaker than to the audience.

**Q** Do you feel in any way that the visions of such men as Conway and Fox, who did so much for the founding of the ethicist and rationalist movement, in this country, are being lived up to?

**A** We are in a transitional stage in thought and philosophy. Only the few know the ideals of Conway and Fox, but many, through their own thinking and experience, come to hold similar principles. We are certainly not living up to them, but out of today's confusion their truths will, one hopes, become clearer, and new human values will be added to them.

**Q** In what way do you feel South Place Ethical Society can best serve the cause of Ethical Humanism?

**A** South Place is already becoming a recognised meeting place for Humanist activities of all kinds—peace, the freedom of peoples, civil liberties, social justice. I should like to see the Society more identified with these, regarding them as part of its work, not merely acting as “landlord”.

**Q** Do you think the nature of Ethical Humanism will change much in the near future, and if so, how?

**A** Ethical Humanism is already changing in its emphasis on Humanism in practice. In this I take great hope. The fact that we do not believe in supernatural intervention in human affairs places upon us a greater responsibility for ourselves contributing to human progress. War, world poverty, disease, persecution, personal inhibitions, intolerance—our devotion to ending these will be our task.

**Q** Your name will always be linked with that of Russell in connection with war refusal. Today we see great international conflicts with terrifying potential. How do you think conscientious objectors would be regarded if there were a general call to arms today?

**A** The refusal of personal participation in war—so far as is possible in our complex society—has been shown in America to be immensely important. Seventy thousand young men have refused military service in Vietnam. It is not enough. In a nuclear war individual refusal would not be of much value. We must root out the causes of war.

**Q** What is the link between conscience and loyalty, or do you regard them as potentially conflicting. I am thinking particularly now of the split in the Labour Party, when Lord Sorensen and yourself went separate ways.

**A** A decision between conscience and loyalty depends upon the depth of conscience and to whom loyalty is felt. One's sense of right and wrong may over-ride everything. To whom is one loyal? Party, nation, humanity? I don't judge the decision of others. To me I hope humanity comes first.

**Q** Is it possible to develop conscience, or do you believe that this comes with greater learning about one's fellow man?

**A** Conscience expresses one's deepest convictions. It may be almost instinctive, but clearly it may develop from expanding knowledge of life and people.

**Q** I mentioned Lord Sorensen, and of course you will always be associated with him. Had he lived, he would have been featured in this series, but in our loss, perhaps you could recall your fondest memory of being associated with him.

**A** Reg Sorensen and I were strangely linked. We joined the I.L.P. together, we belonged to a close group of teenagers, we married two sisters, we both devoted ourselves to peace and the freedom of peoples. My fondest memory of him is the joy which he gave to my grandchildren by his skill as a conjurer and ventriloquist. He was loved by children.

**Q** Going back to your fame for rebellion, how much of the general movement against doctrinaire religion is, in fact, a movement against the Establishment?

**A** My rejection of church theology and acceptance of Humanism was not due consciously to opposition to the Establishment, but it has become part of it.

**Q** Has it been your policy to attack the establishment for the wrong it contains, or to work within it to right those wrongs?

**A** I work both outside and inside the Establishment. I am active in pressure groups such as Liberation (formerly the Movement for Colonial Freedom) but I have also been a Member of Parliament and am now a member of the House of Lords, using it as a platform for my convictions.

**Q** Bearing in mind the relatively small number of Humanists, the difficult plight of many of the bodies within the movement, do you see a bright future for Humanism?

**A** I believe the future is with Humanism, but it is likely to find expression through political and social movements rather than through societies devoted specifically to rationalist thinking. I am continually astonished by the number of my companions prominent in political and social activity who reject orthodox theology. You should see the proportions of Members of the Commons and the Lords who refrain from attending the prayers with which proceedings begin! But they do not belong to ethical societies or the Humanist movement. Such bodies can nevertheless become the dynamic core of Humanism.

**Q** Are you most proud of having been a Humanist, a politician, or is there some other aspect of your life which has given you cause for content?

**A** I am not proud of being a Humanist or politician or anything else. They are just parts of life. I am an Agnostic rather than an Atheist because I do not *know*. I dismiss Christian theology (the virgin birth, miracles, physical resurrection) because it seems to me a too tidy and trivial explanation of the deepest experience of life, which for me is at rare times a sense of identity with an all-embracing creative force. I revere Bertrand Russell's interpretation of life as flowing from a spring to a river and the ocean. This should arouse humility rather than pride.

**Q** What advice would you give to young people in order for them to enjoy as fulfilled a life as you have enjoyed and still are enjoying?

**A** Seek a purpose in life greater than yourself and devote yourself to it!

Lord Brockway, thank you.

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## HUMANIST FORUM

### The Ethics of Inflation

BY

DR. E. F. SCHUMACHER

DR. E. F. SCHUMACHER opened the Forum on this subject by asking the question: "At what level do we discuss the problem?" Do we do it pragmatically, treating the symptoms, or in depth in terms of its causes?

We are suffering, he said, from the depredations of "crack-pot realists". These people spent 14 years closing down the pits on the assumption that there would always be oil—and now we are in trouble. Physical reserves are finite. We need a policy for consuming 5 per cent less fuel every year, but one is thought mad for saying this. It is the same with inflation.

The build-up over inflation began in 1966. What is the problem? A lot of people in this country get a very poor deal. It is true that there has been some improvement and that the nineteenth century conditions of positive degradation are no longer with us, but still there are millions living at mere subsistence level. There used to be enough tame economists around to "prove" that only subsistence wages were possible! Then came the countervailing power of the trade unions and something was done—so much so that in 1970 postmen on strike could live for weeks without pay. But the problem was not solved.

A society based on the idea of freedom goes through a traumatic experience when its power-relations fail. One of the answers, the one we don't want, is fascism—police action to break opposition by force.

Full employment changes the power relationships. It does away with the power of "the reserve army of the unemployed" that could be used against those who have jobs. The White Paper of the war-time Coalition Government spoke of "a high and stable level of employment" and this followed Keynes's rejection of mass unemployment in his 1936 General Theory; but this did not face the fact of the new bargaining power of full employment. Then Galbraith said that it was not necessary to employ everybody and that it was easier to run a free enterprise economy with a few million unemployed and pay them *not* to work. This was double crack-pot realism! The theory of less than full employment requires destitution if it is to work against inflation and destroy bargaining power. Inflation has arisen because of the change in power-relationships. It becomes a problem of justice, yet the word justice is hardly ever mentioned. Some will say that they do not know what justice is! Yet the idea of justice used to be pivotal in all political and economic debates until about 200 years ago. (There is a book on this by Joseph Pieper, published by Faber and Faber). The fact is that justice only recurs when people feel strong enough to assert it.

Dr. Schumacher pointed out that an assembly line worker took home about £20 a week for a job that was unbearably dull. He quoted the attitude to appointments of a good personnel manager: "My job is to dis-

tinguish between stereotyped people and lively ones and make sure I don't get any lively ones!" In Australia they are giving this kind of work to mental patients and employers are asking the hospitals for more! To the crackpot realists this is a great success! It is, of course, an appalling criticism of the system. A journalist by the name of Brennan has written a book about this situation—aptly called: *The Making of a Moron*.

The official argument is that a mind-killing exercise is better than no job. People who have had the educational opportunities associated with middle class status have a chance. Most wage earners have none. They may have good wages but they have no capital and the thing is so organised that they will *never* have any capital. A sum equal to half that expended on education is wasted in persuading people to spend their money and hire-purchase deepens the element of slavery in the system.

Mr. Wilson and Mr. Cousins had an argument in which neither made sense. Mr. Wilson imposed a wages stop, saying that only higher productivity justified higher wages. Mr. Cousins said that this was nonsense, the unions had the bargaining power, they should use it and the rest of society make the necessary adjustments.

The real problem is only to be defined in other terms. Here we have a prosperous society in which the few are very well off and the mass of people are not. By virtue of the fact of ownership the well-off are expected to work least. The others are expected to work hard but the proceeds of growth accrue to the owners. Businesses make profits and much of these are ploughed back in a self-financing exercise. But what is ploughed back belongs to the owners as capital appreciation—the proportion of wages does not change.

#### **All goes to the Few**

Each year £2,000m in profits are put back into their own enterprises. Since the workers have no shares, the shareholders appropriate all of the £2,000m without lifting a finger. The people who made those profits naturally want a share and put up demands for higher wages out of profits. But then it is said quite rightly that it is essential for purposes of depreciation and expansion that the accumulation take place. The result is a checkmated situation. The higher wages out of profits are denied and there is no justice in what happens to the £2,000m. But if we say "Put a ceiling on prices, curtail profits and cut down on new machinery the results will be still inflationary since comparatively speaking, more money will be chasing fewer goods. The result of the Cousins policy is higher *money* wages without higher *real* wages.

But there is an obvious answer, canvassed and even applied on the continent. The principle is to let the little man, who in the past has had only his pay packet, have a proper look-in on the system. Allocate to him an interest in the firm amounting to the sum of the amount ploughed back. Under this system the money earned stays in the firm (as before) and the workers' interest might amount to two-thirds of the capital value of the firm. The shares would not be immediately convertible into cash but there would be special provision made for personal disasters. All shares would be an income earning nest-egg and would inject the essential ingredient of justice into the system.

At the same time the other troubles would have to be met—the dullness of work, the shabbiness of the environment. There is no easy solution—the need is for experiment to find the answers. The cost of this kind of experiment is worth much more than that supersonic aircraft. Industry has to be humanised.

Inflation, Dr. Schumacher concluded, was the overflow of countervailing power. No mere technical solution would solve the long term problem.

P.C.

*(Report of a Humanist Forum held on February 14)*



# For the Record

BY

THE GENERAL SECRETARY

In recent weeks the subject of Humanism and religion has been headlined in both *The Times* and *The Financial Times*. Mr. Oliver Warwick sent me a copy of the article that started the discussion in *The Financial Times* and suggested that I might reply to it. This was done and the letter was published on November 23. The second letter, to *The Times*, was not published but I thought it might be useful to reproduce them both here. The ideas and arguments are, I think, very much in line with what has been emerging in our lectures and discussion over the past two years but, of course, this is comment only—we don't make statements of policy in these matters although it is true that our internal debate on aims and objects now relates to submissions that we shall make to the High Court. We have, therefore, to be more explicit than we have been in the past. Comments, public or private, on the gist of these letters will be welcome.

To the *Financial Times*:

Part of the trouble is the collapse of what used to be our authorities on private and public behaviour. Few people heed the Church any more and even if they do they find the same divisions there as they find elsewhere. Scepticism about politics is now of the same order.

For hundreds of years *conduct* has been the English art form. The other arts have been permitted a peripheral existence only. Constructively the results have been revolutions and empires in church and state, and great successes in science, industry and commerce. But there has always been an alarming limitation built into this situation—the implicit subordination of women and young people. This is fundamental to the whole of puritanism. It is only now that the truth is coming out.

Our family structure, like that of church and state, remains deeply authoritarian and it has been left to the generation that came of age in the 1960s, the first post-war generation, to find this out. Things like the revolution in youth culture and Women's Lib are not mere transient phenomena. They have been gestating for 400 years. The artist, exiled by puritanism, is their prophet. The 'sixties began with Lawrence and ended with Blake.

The forms of puritanism based on the power and freedom of the adult male are now spent. We seem to be feeling our way to a new puritanism in which women, young people and artists share the freedom previously accorded to puritan men only. This is being discovered intuitively and empirically and is bound, like all great innovations, to be a painful process. Blake's most uncomfortable injunction that "the road of excess leads to the palace of freedom" might have been written for the current decade. If he is right then both excess and the contesting of excess are predictable and legitimate. Longford is as necessary as Richard Neville.

The discovery of the new puritanism will be as painful as was the case with the old—and we still have a long way to go.

To *The Times*:

The difference between Christian and Humanist, in theory at least, is that a Christian believes that at the end of the road he finds God while a Humanist believes he finds the potentiality of his fellow men.

The complication is that the theory is not the real test. There are Christians whose practice shows a deep concern for people *sui generis*

and Humanists who have a deeply religious sense of values, positive or negative, sans God. In a sense there is no essential merit in being either Christian or Humanist since it manifestly depends upon what the individual makes of it in each case.

Humanism, however, has some potential advantage in being without any centralised character and in being able to thrive upon latitudinarian protestantism, modern science and the revolts against Catholic and Calvinist authority. Its future depends now not upon its critical achievements, considerable though they have been, but upon its capacity to constitute a creative secular faith and philosophy.

The discussion is confused by the fact that in our culture we tend to equate religion and Christianity. If we can separate the two we might usefully clear our terms for a much more significant argument.

Today we are witnessing a religious revival of an extra-clerical order and this religion is a matter of belief in transcendental qualities like love, friendship, concern, truth, beauty, goodness and the sense of belonging. All religions, it seems, draw on this bank of values. Historically, however, the trouble has been that in the interests of the power of priests and kings (and their various modern equivalents) these authentic values have been transposed into static dogmas and used, on the authority of their inscription in sacred books, as mandates for various kinds of absolutism.

Religions of the priest-king tradition exist to justify their own establishments of church and state, but they have also continued to sustain genuinely religious feelings and objectives (as defined above) as dissent within the system. Today this second and creative feature is less and less evident. We used to look to churches and political parties for our religious and social values. Now this is hardly possible.

Attention has been drawn to last year's Reith Lectures and Dr. Schon's examination of the centre-periphery model and its in-built limitations. One should also draw attention to Dr. Schon's alternative concept—that of the net. It is quite possible for us to believe in religious-humanist values subscribed to and acted upon through the non-hierarchical model of the net. What religious humanists will make of it remains to be seen.

### **The February Platform**

**"Honest-to-God" John Robinson will be with us to lead off in the Forum on February 13.** We shall use the Large Hall. Back in 1970 the R.P.A.<sup>1</sup> organised a big meeting in the Central Hall in honour of the memory and work of Bertrand Russell and collected together a rather remarkable platform of people who had in some way been associated with Lord Russell in his long life. Among them was Dr. Robinson who had just recently left the See of Woolwich in order to become the Dean of Trinity College, Cambridge. I asked him if he would come to "South Place" some time. He said that he would, but not in the current year (when he had a major lecture programme to attend to) and if he could be assured that it would be for a serious discussion i.e. not for a mere point-scoring exercise. *I gave him that assurance* and made a mental note to contact him again.

A couple of weeks ago his latest work appeared, *The Difference in Being a Christian Today* (Fontana Religious Books 25p) and it seemed that this was a good moment to make that contact. He responded favourably and the date was fixed. Please note that the Forum will start at 2.30 p.m. and not at 3.00 p.m. as is usual and it will likewise finish earlier than usual. Dr. Robinson has to get back to Cambridge to fulfil his own responsibilities there that same evening.

On Sunday mornings our Appointed Lecturers have chosen to talk about two of the most controversial figures of our time. Richard Clements on

Teilhard de Chardin on the 6th and Dr. Lewis on Wittgenstein on the 27th. Dr. Halpern will be back with us on the 20th to ask the question: "What is Personality?" On the 13th Richard Hauser the controversial educationist and sociologist makes what I think is his first appearance on the Society's platform—his subject "The Faith of Non-Believers".

On Tuesdays Harry Knight will conclude the series on rethinking schooling on the 1st (see last month's *Record*) and then we start with the theme for March: "The Future of the Philosophy of Humanism". Not everybody knows that Christopher Macy's own special study has been psychology and as Editor of *The Humanist* that makes for an interesting background from which to tackle the difficult subject "Psychology and Philosophy". It is difficult because about 100 years ago psychology spun off from philosophy and, having yet to fully establish its own identity, has problems with its parental relationship. David Tribe's next book, now with the publishers, will be on the subject of ethics but he has not approached it in the usual academic way. What his way is we shall see on the 15th. Dr. Colin Campbell of the University of York has just published a major work on the subject of his lecture on the 22nd. He was one of the speakers at the most recent R.P.A. Conference where he was most stimulating and provocative in the very best sense. Michael Lines is the convener of the B.H.A. study group on Humanism and religion and he like the other speakers is a committed member of the organised Humanist movement as such. This is not an accident. It is part of the concept of the February discussions that they might not only look at things in depth but positively help the Humanist movement as a whole to take its own thinking in relation to itself a stage further. Members and supporters of the B.H.A., N.S.S. and R.P.A. are especially invited to all these meetings.

#### Note

Don't forget our Annual Dinner on the 11th. Tickets £1.50 from Margaret Pearce. 7.30 for 8 p.m. Will vegetarians please notify us in advance?

PETER CADOGAN

## Your Viewpoint

### Women's Lib.

I might expect to irritate Barbara Smoker on the subject of what she calls "the feminist cause" because I regard humanity as one and indivisible. I am in fact sympathetic toward Women's Lib and it was because I was exasperated with the travesty of it presented by its exponents on the occasion I reported that I wrote as acidly as I did.

If Women's Lib is about what I think it is and not just a matter of who changes nappies, it has a great work to do. One sees women being sorely put upon (and not always by men)—a woman struggling to cope with aged relatives, for instance. They seem to suffer from early conditioning and need help. The fact that hospital nurses, like junior doctors, are overworked and underpaid is not basically due to male discrimination; and that we have not yet had a woman Home Secretary is surely due to lack of candidates rather than male prejudice.

As a result of the population explosion it is important that women should no longer devote their lives to rearing children but should take their place side by side with men in less domestic occupations necessary to society. Formerly a woman's job of nurturing the future generation was the most important thing on earth. Now it has been devalued and it is vital for women to find job satisfaction outside the home. The fundamental inequality round

which everything else hinges is that men are responsible in law for the financial upkeep of their wives and families, and women are not. In consequence a man takes his job much more seriously than most women need to, so that there is intense cut-throat competition for job advancement not only between men and women but between men and men. Attitudes are changing rapidly and men are more and more tending to drop out. If men opt out before women opt in we shall be in trouble. More power to Women's Lib if they can do something constructive about this.

PERCY SOWTER

Shenfield, Essex

### South Place and religion

Accepting the timely advice of Stewart Cook to make a realistic and rational appraisal of our position, I begin with the suggestion that *religion as commonly understood* is no longer a useful concept, but simply a popular misconception. Perhaps I can make this clearer by an analogy.

The food preferences of Hindu, Moslem, Bushman, Cannibal, Vegetarian, Jew, etc., are so diverse that the term "nourishment as commonly understood" is not a concept we can use, e.g. to decide whether fish and chips is good for baby. On this practical basis, since we all need nourishment, we find the concept of "nutrition" (as scientists understand it!) is a useful one, and study thus directed has been beneficial. (Incidentally, we may note that scientific familiarity with proteins, carbohydrates and vitamins does not diminish our normal pleasure in dining and wining—and the port can still go round with the sun, for those who so desire!) Similarly with religion: the nature of the human need is what is important, not some beguiling myth of "what is commonly understood."

As far as S.P.E.S. is concerned, it is plainly not true that it had its origin in a negation. On the contrary, it began as a religious body, within the conventions of the period, and has evolved only by discarding what came to be regarded as repugnant to reason and/or ethical judgment (e.g. eternal damnation). Within a deliberately-restricted range, other religious bodies and still more their faithful members as individuals have done the same. Our own members, just like theirs, have moved at their own pace and even now do not hold identical views.

Whether we refer to religion, to science, or to art, we find there is room for *beliefs* as well as what we term knowledge. Like knowledge, beliefs are not final or permanent; but neither do they alter at a stroke—it always takes time and conscious effort. So whilst the S.P.E.S. rationalist (the dreadful "South Place Man" for G. K. Young) has been casting out bits of old belief as no longer credible, he has simultaneously been gaining a different kind of belief (empirically based) as regards his destiny, his capabilities, even his duties small and large.

All through this evolutionary shift of emphasis, the urge to strengthen and advance the moral stature of men has remained our (S.P.E.S.) central purpose. Most of us are aware at some time, and some of us at most times, that *this* is what brings the members together in fellowship. I cannot see what else we could wish to put forward as the true bond uniting us now, and for the future, even if we could disregard our link with the past.

Here endeth the attempt at an appraisal; and the logical conclusion is that this central purpose is *religious*. This does not mean just vestigially religious in the sense that faint signs of ritual practice linger on, nor in the sense little bits of other people's creeds stir a response in us, nor merely that we covet the complacent insensitiveness which dogmas can confer. Instead, the meaning is that we assert the central purpose indicated above *and intend to pursue it* as a body and as individuals; and we accept the view that this *urge* is the one factor most nearly common to all

forms of religion. On this basis we may justly claim to profess a *rationalist religion*. (If readers who may consider this too indefinite will please say what seems amiss, I am willing to deal with it again.)

This letter presents my appraisal of the actual position, not a new gospel of hope; and it seems there are members, fully aware of the same facts, who are not prepared to accept the same conclusion. If this is so, we have an essentially "doctrinal" problem on our hands once again; and the sooner we face up to it, openly and courageously, the better. Perhaps the irrelevant and trendy activities complained of are an escape from the burden of such self-questioning (which the young are too tender to endure, and the old are too guilty to enjoy!). I still believe we need more members to attend the lectures and discussions, and in addition, more letters like those from Lt.-Col. J. W. N. Landor in the January, 1971 issue, Mrs. M. Laws Smith in the March, 1971 issue, P. Sowter in the May, 1971 issue, P. Buttinger in the April, June, 1971 issue, and V. Myhill in the June, October, 1971 issue, and from members who are unable to attend.

Do not despair—Alchemy in time gave way, or evolved, to Chemistry.  
*London, E4.*

A. L. LOVECY

### **Festival of dark?**

Considering the possibility of a repressive backlash, why is there no publicly visible humanist opposition to the Festival of Light? A counter-demonstration would gain us publicity for our own positive views, and almost certainly a good deal of sympathy.

It should be noted, however, that results would not be obtained by clinging to the old forms of "democratic" protest. As has been rightly pointed out, we are greatly outnumbered by Mrs. Whitehouse's supporters, and small quiet demonstrations are not very newsworthy. Playing by the rules means failure—so do we play by the rules?

The optimum strategy would seem therefore to disrupt or noisily hinder our opponents, public activities. Even this would be difficult as a purely humanist activity, so a coalition of groups e.g. Women's Lib, Gay Lib etc., would have to be formed to co-ordinate the effort. That action of this sort can be effective is proved by the success of such action last year at an indoor meeting of the Festival in London. Will such success be repeated, and by whom?

It may be said that nothing need be done, or should be done along such lines; that having made progress socially we will not regress, and that such action is illiberal. I feel sure that pre-war German liberals would and did say the same, but where are they now? And who now would be prepared to be liberal about the suppression of his freedom?

MAURICE V. MURPHY

*Bolton, Lancs.*

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## **South Place News**

### **New Members**

We are pleased to welcome the following new members: Barbara Anne-Marie Britton, N.W.3; O. E. Chapman, Cullompton, Devon; Mrs. Joyce Hargrave, W.C.1; Mr. Ron Hills, N.W.4; Kamal Paul, W.2; R. Rajapaksa, W.4; Mrs. Jessie Ratzker, S.W.15; Edith Rosanis, N.W.1; Eric Albert Smith, Croydon, and John C. Wartman, W.2.

### **A new appointment—applications invited**

The General Committee has decided to make a part-time appointment to two responsibilities preferably undertaken by one person. The first is that of assistant to the General Secretary and is concerned with shorthand, typing and clerical work four afternoons a week. The other is for an assistant concerned with work with young people, the arts and building the Society through its public activity.

Enquiries are invited. Will those interested in these positions, taken together or separately, be good enough to notify the General Secretary by the 15th February.

### **March issue**

Because February is a short month, it will be necessary to go to press early with the March issue of the *Record*. Contributors are asked to send in copy for the March issue as soon as possible, and as much before the 5th (usual copy date) of February as practicable. Copy arriving after February 5 and intended for the March issue, will either be too late, or will delay publication.

### **Sunday Socials**

This month's Sunday social on the 20th takes the form of a "brains trust" in which Dr. Helen Rosenau and Prof. Julius Lewin represent South Place and Margaret McIlroy and Michael Lloyd-Jones represent the National Secular Society. Come armed with questions on topics relevant to the ethical Humanist movement.

For next month, Mrs. Altmann-Gold is bringing slides on gold mining in Austria. The date is March 19, and the time 3 p.m.

### **Kindred organisations**

A lecture programme to commemorate the 50th anniversary of James Joyce's *Ulysses* is being organised by the London district of the **Workers' Educational Association**.

The lecture session is being held at 32 Tavistock Square, London, W.C.1, the W.E.A. headquarters, at 2.45 p.m. on Saturday, February 19. Mr. T. F. Evans and Mrs. J. D. Simmons will give the lectures. Admission costs 15p.

The organisation known as **Q** has published a pamphlet *Survival versus Economics*, a hard-hitting statement on pollution, with some ideas to combat the situation, which may shock many people. The leaflet can be obtained free, preferably with a medium-sized s.a.e. from Q, 65 Artesian Road, London, W.2.

Continuing its series of fortnightly lectures, the **National Secular Society** has two sessions arranged for this month. On Friday, February 4, Philip Hinchcliff and Pat Sloan talk about Marxism, and on February 18, representatives of both the Howard League for Penal Reform and Radical Alternatives to Prison give their views on Imprisonment. Corporal punishment in schools is featured in the first meeting in March, on the 3rd. All meetings are at the Clarence Hotel, Whitehall, at 8 p.m. The N.S.S. Annual Dinner is scheduled for Saturday, March 25. The speakers are Helen Brook, Jill Tweedie, George Melly and Michael Lloyd-Jones. Tickets from 103 Borough High Street, London, S.E.1., price £1.75.

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Religions are many; reason is one—we are all brothers.

—LAO TSE (circa 6th century B.C.)

*Continued from inside front cover*

**Tuesday, February 22**

- 7 p.m.—**Conway Discussion** introduced by **Dr. Colin Campbell**.  
Subject: **The Future of Rationalism in an Irrational Society**

**Saturday, February 26**

- 3 to 6 p.m.—**Country Dancing** (Jointly with Progressive League). Beginners welcome. Instructress: Eda Collins

**Sunday, February 27**

- 11 a.m.—**S.P.E.S. Lecture: DR. JOHN LEWIS on Wittgenstein**. Tenor solos: David Waters  
3 p.m.—**Humanist Forum: Understanding China** with **George Jaeger**  
6 p.m.—**Bridge Practice**  
6.30 p.m.—**Concert: Delme String Quartet, Kenneth Essex**. Programme: Boccherini D op. 24, No. 5 string quartet, Mozart Gmi K516, Brahms G op. 111 string quartets

**Tuesday, February 29**

- 7 p.m.—**Conway Discussion** introduced by **Michael Lines**. Subject: **Relations Between Humanism and Religion**

**Sunday, March 5**

- 11 a.m.—**S.P.E.S. Lecture: RON MASON on The Genesis or Exodus of Today's Writers**  
6 p.m.—**Bridge Practice**  
6.30 p.m.—**Concert** in aid of the Musicians' Benevolent Fund: Georgian String Quartet. Programme: Beethoven F op. 18 No. 1, Ravel; James Walker. Programme: Dvorak Piano Quintet

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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.

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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, E.17, by the 5th of the preceding month.