

# Ethical Record

The Proceedings of the Conway Hall Ethical Society

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## A CONVERSATION ABOUT LIFE AND THE UNIVERSE



*l to r: Vicar Giles Fraser, geneticist Adam Rutherford, Chair Samira Ahmed and bible researcher Francesca Stavrakopoulou, at the London Thinks event, 22 January 2015*

The discussion began with the question whether science and religion were in conflict. Giles Fraser opined that science, via eugenics, was responsible for Nazi atrocities, while Adam Rutherford was sure that in principle, science could know everything – except the future. Francesca Stavrakopoulou was unsure whether there was such a concept as ‘objective truth’; Samira Ahmed was impressed that the Koran apparently had information about the embryo. Readers who wish to follow the debate in detail can see it in full by googling Youtube and then Conway Hall Ethical Society.

Meanwhile, a packed Brockway Room heard about ‘**science and reason in an age of unreason**’, the subject of Professor **Pervez Hoodbhoy**’s address to the London ex-Muslim Meet-up Group. **Roy Brown**, past President of IHEU gave a useful plug for humanism to the audience.

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## CONWAY HALL ETHICAL SOCIETY

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### New Members

We welcome the following to the Society:

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### THE SOCIETY ON THE WEB

For videos of past Conway Hall events: [www.youtube.co.uk](http://www.youtube.co.uk)  
and for Conway Hall images: [www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com)

### CONWAY HALL ETHICAL SOCIETY

Reg. Charity No. 1156033

Founded in 1793, the Society is a progressive movement whose aims are:

**the study and dissemination of ethical principles based on humanism and freethought**  
**the cultivation of a rational and humane way of life, and**  
**the advancement of research and education in relevant fields.**

We invite to membership those who reject supernatural creeds and are in sympathy with our aims. At Conway Hall the programme includes Sunday lectures, discussions, evening courses and the Conway Hall Sunday Concerts of chamber music. The Society maintains a Humanist Library and Archives. The Society's journal, *Ethical Record*, is issued monthly. Memorial meetings may be arranged.

**The annual subscription is £35 (£25 if a full-time student, unwaged or over 65)**

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

## THE JOYS AND PITFALLS OF GAMBLING

Christopher Bratcher

*Lecture to the Ethical Society, 19 January 2015*

Bertrand Russell summed it up – the upside and the downside - in a wonderful Nobel Prize acceptance speech in 1950 :

“The pleasure of gambling consists almost entirely in excitement. Monsieur Huc [a notable C19th missionary in China] describes Chinese traders at the Great Wall in winter, gambling until they have lost all their cash, then proceeding to lose all their merchandise, and at last gambling away their clothes and going out naked to die of cold.” Somehow, the gamble was sufficiently rewarding in itself. The Chinese are still doing it, but nowadays indoors, and the only shirts lost are restaurant takings.

Russell in his speech saw excitement as a key human need. The context was the otherwise puzzling mass enthusiasm for going to war – notably, at the onset of WWI (referred to in my talk in the series on oppositions to it). Enlisting was clearly a bad bet, but droves of young men were tempted by the adventure. Russell felt that it was hopeless to wish for a Quakerish, refashioned, -- dare I say, castrated -- humanity, but that there was crying need to provide an outlet for excitement in urbanised societies, that would discharge the attraction provided by the possibility of risk-taking, derring-do and bravery in conflict – or on the roads. I do not claim that gambling is the panacea that will prevent young men (in the main) from going to war; but I maintain that, in some forms and in a suitable environment, it can safely provide that spice of life that is conspicuously lacking in our ‘watch TV’ and ‘shop ‘til you drop’ society.

What is gambling? At its broadest, it is staking something on the outcome or timing of an event subject to imperfect knowledge or chance. Such a definition would cover deciding to buy or sell your house or some shares in anticipation of a market boom or bust, or taking out an extended guarantee on a washing machine, or a term life insurance. Equally, not taking out that guarantee, or sticking with the asset you have, is, consciously or not, a gamble in the reverse direction. Life is a gamble on top of a lottery. For some, that is a source of dread; for others, it is part of its appeal. The pastime of gambling is an artificial sub-set and distillation of general life conditions.

### **Gambling is Ineradicable**

It’s as old as human society, as far as we can tell from literature and artifacts preserved from antiquity. That it arouses moral passions is nothing new: the Puritans coupled it with all manner of licentiousness and debauchery. Our concern now is the risk to the financial health of the participants, and their possible criminality to support a gambling habit. Yes, gambling can be addictive, like any other activity that produces an adrenaline rush, but need it be a dangerous addiction? The aim of this talk is to get you better acquainted with the principal forms of it, and the safest strategies and places to do it. One category I would not recommend is gambling at long odds.

Long odds are different from poor odds: poor odds result from whoever is taking the bet retaining too much of the ‘pot’ in profit – or in supposed ‘good causes’.

These elements are combined in lottery tickets, ‘scratch cards’ and so-called prize draws. They give gambling proper a bad name.

Undoubtedly the lottery lure is the size of prize; the basis on which it is advertised. However, it would be a mistake to dismiss participation as purely a matter of vulgar greed. It is often lamented that those who can least afford it, participate the most. There is a perverse logic to this. Such people have no chance of buying a house or enjoying the expensive pleasures that those who have won the job or inheritance lottery do. They may be mired in debt that they cannot clear. Their only – appallingly low – chance of attaining any of these things is to participate in the lottery. They may even feel that the money they will, in all likelihood, lose, will contribute to a prize that will enable someone in their situation to win that ‘get-out-of-jail’ card: lotteries have taken on the status of a communal activity. It is easy to be snobbish about this. Sending up a completed prize cryptic crossword or a dead easy newspaper entry comp amounts to the same: you outlay a stamp in the hope of winning a prize when you have no idea how many qualifying entries there will be, and hence the odds against winning. Is that so different from the lure of the lottery?

The actual – and expected - yield from the exercise is the momentary excitement – that word again - of scratching the card or anticipating the roll out of winning numbers. A paltry return, of course. Of course people would be better advised to put their few pounds outlay into a savings account at 1% interest. But harkening after 1% is perhaps a worse form of petty avarice. As with all forms of gambling, there is a clash of moralities, or rather cultures: Protestant wise virgins, the good accumulators of capital via piggy banks, contrasted with supposed cavalier wastrels.

The morality of choosing to participate when you cannot afford to do so, is something the wealthy do not have to face. The morality of Governments promoting lotteries as a method of raising money, or of discharging the unrest that hopeless poverty might otherwise engender, is something else. The lottery is the opium of the people, and Governments peddle it. This is taxation by the back door, levied disproportionately on the poor. It is pernicious – made worse, in my view, by the coupling of expenditure that would otherwise properly be met out of the public purse, or by explicit donation, in the lottery fund, as a sop to make the business ‘respectable’. The poor pay in, and the middle class have the wherewithal to bid to spend the pot.

### **Odds on at the Bookies**

You will be familiar with this sort of line on a football coupon – or fixed odds bet on-line:

Home: Evens; Draw: 2-1; Away: 5-1: Evens (or 1-1) corresponds to a relative probability of  $\frac{1}{2}$  (50%); 2-1 corresponds to a relative probability of  $\frac{1}{3}$ ; 5-1 corresponds to a relative probability of  $\frac{1}{6}$ . By adding the percentages together we get a total ‘book’ of 100% (a *fair* book). You won’t in fact see such odds. The bookmaker will invariably reduce these odds, most simply by a proportional decrease across the board. The bookmaker does not have to have superior knowledge of the horses, etc to the punter.

The bookmaker's art is then to adjust his initial odds according to the amount of money staked on the various outcomes, so that his profit is maintained as described. In practice, he often has to 'lay off' – if he can – the 'excess' bets on a particular outcome, by placing bets on it himself. Clearly, if he gets the probabilities of the various horses, etc, badly wrong at the outset – such that money pours in for a particular result at the odds he has given, particularly at the last minute, he can be stuffed. With the onset of internet gambling, the big off-shore bookmakers, with relatively minimal overheads, and with computer driven adjustment of odds, have trimmed their margins to as little as 2%; enabling skilled and knowledgeable punters in the horseracing fraternity to make a good living gambling. Gambling of that kind, which depends on a deep knowledge of horses, stables, trainers and riders, is outside the scope of this talk.

### **Governments in Two or More Minds**

The attitude of British governments on gambling approaches moral schizophrenia. They cannot make up their minds whether gambling is a desirable thing, or not, and their attitude towards it has, historically at least, been class based.

Criminality has always been associated with betting. Gambling debts were irrecoverable in law, and the level of them was becoming an early Victorian scandal. In 1845, the government enabled cash betting shops as a solution – regarding them as a necessary evil: to prevent punters being fleeced. Dickens, in his *Household Words* magazine article of June 1852, gives a wonderful portrait of the consequence: fly-by-night betting shops, plushly fitted out, rather like banks, in an endeavour to suggest the proprietor's credentials and credit-worthiness, thronged with young city clerks placing bets on the basis of dubious tips (probably the first such use of the word); only to find that the owner, in a time before results were instantly available, had fled overnight with the takings by the time that the winners were published and bets due to be paid out: an all-too-common 'sting'. He called for fresh legislation. Such betting shops (300 or more in London at the time) were suppressed by the 1853 betting act. Necessary regulation of proprietors got admixed with regulation of premises. If the working class must bet, we must make the facilities as sparse and uninviting as possible.

A somewhat similar course was taken on gaming. The plethora of small gaming clubs that mushroomed in the 1960s were removed by strict licensing. At the high – as in high roller, serious London clubland – end, there have always been sufficient outlets: the UK has been permissive, unlike many Continental countries, and one might think that restrictions on new casinos were principally driven by a need not to dilute a lucrative market.

Outside London and the very largest towns, permitted casino locations are skewed towards historic holiday destinations: for example, the only casinos in Kent are in Ramsgate and Margate. No doubt their location was originally determined by the historical market, but I suspect this reflected an underlying moral attitude: casinos for people of modest means were all very well if they can only visit them for an evening's 'flutter' on holiday, as a sort of daring amusement. I will be arguing that the consequences in each case (for betting and

gaming) have been dire, now that Pandora's box has been opened and internet gambling has taken off.

### **Casinos**

To explain why, I must give you a brief run-down on the main games on offer in casinos. They are four: roulette, blackjack, poker and terminals that were better known as one-armed bandits. The Government has blown hot and cold over allowing Las Vegas type 'super casinos', defined by the number of slot machines in relation to table-game facilities. The numbers were cut down to one, originally destined for Liverpool: it was displaced to Manchester (already well provided) and then permission was not given; rightly, from a prudent gambler's point of view, because the fewer 'terminals' the better.

It would take too long to explain how these, to my mind quite soul-destroying devices, operate, and how they are classed for regulatory purposes. (I'd just mention that those that visually mimic an old-style hand-yanked spin of physical symbols, do not offer an equal likelihood of one symbol against another: that disparity is how big and enticing jackpots can be offered.) They are the most profitable source for a casino, with a pay-out sometimes as little as 80%. Dare I simply say, the people who play them are a particular breed, predominantly female and/or usually not in the first flush of youth, and my main concern is with young people and gambling. So, as to the other games:

Poker, at least in modest casinos, is a loss-leader for them, that does not cover the cost of the dealer, cards, tables and facilities: usually in a large side-room. The game is played against other players and not against the 'house', and the casino takes a tiny fee either by playing-time, or as an 'entrance fee' that is then shared between the winners – e.g., the last player left in gets 50%, and the next another percentage, etc. (The casino may offer facilities for backgammon, mah-jong or kaluki as well.) Games are offered on different evenings at various stakes, and often as 'feeders' to more serious national tournaments. I am reminded in some ways of a very friendly mixed ability whist or bridge club. If you want to learn to play poker safely, this is the place to do it; not against unobservable players on-line, fishing for mugs, and often with a computer on hand to calculate their chances. It is the right place to determine your level of ability and hone your understanding of the all-important odds of achieving a top ranking hand, to be learned and calculated from seen and unseen cards, and the bets of other players.

### **On a Roll**

Roulette is a bet on a number, or combinations of them (as in the red or black, or high or low numbers) on a wheel of 36 slots + zero into which a rolled ball may come to rest. Winnings are paid out at 35/1 (or proportionately for a combination bet), rather than the true odds of 36/1: or at 'evens' on red or black: the addition of zero is the house 'edge'. It is an otherwise very boring activity that generates much excitement when played live at a table with others. (This is even more the case with 'Craps', a game with a similarly small 'edge' that is rarely available, and which I therefore don't explain).

Roulette illustrates very well the clash between excitement, and appreciating and

playing to reflect the odds. So often punters will bet their entire stake-money on one or two spins, often on single numbers, perhaps increasing their bets by the amount of an initial win because they feel their luck is 'in', until they have lost it. They console themselves that their luck was not in or ran out; rather than recognizing that they have adopted the reverse of a sensible strategy. That is to wager at one time perhaps no more than 5% of the money they are prepared to gamble, on an even pay-out bet, keep to that stake if they win, and increase it if they lose, to at least cover that loss (and further again, for any successive losses) until they win [a so-called martingale bet], and then revert to their original stake; and to stop after an overall run of wins has accumulated. (To prevent a possible endless sequence of martingale bets, the casino will set a maximum stake as a compound of minimum bets: you can't come with your newly liberated pension pot, intending to start with a fiver). The golden rule is to give chance a chance to come good. It is boring; the reverse of what people consider a gamble should be.

### **The Black Arts of Blackjack**

A similar strategy can work in blackjack: my game. It is, sadly, all too often assumed to be the same as pontoon, with a simple aim of getting nearer to 21 in card value than the bank (court cards counting as 10, and aces as 1 or 11). It is the only regular casino game with player choice. You are dealt two cards to each position, or 'box', that you take, to the 'bank's', one, from a 'shoe', usually of six packs of cards. Your disadvantage is that you may 'bust' in trying to improve your hand by taking further cards, without the dealer needing to draw a card; the 'bank's' disadvantage is that it must, if you have not busted, draw cards until their total exceeds 16 – and then must stop. And if you get an ace + a 10/court card: blackjack, and the dealer does not, you are paid 150%.

Again, *other things being equal*, it pays to come funded, in terms of the multiples of one's basic bet, sufficiently for luck to turn your way. It must be said that if the initial shuffle of the cards produces a 'bad' shoe, there is usually little you can do about it (other than await further players to take 'boxes' and, maybe, alter the fall of the cards). Alas, mug punters will step in, just as they are wont to do at the roulette wheel, and play no more than half a dozen hands, just as if they were placing bets on the horses, without any knowledge of the run of the cards. Casino owners, but not other players, love them. Experience again comes into it in deciding when to leave the table, cutting your losses, or taking your winnings. As with all gambling, it is only sensible to honestly record one's wins and losses, and to try to learn from the results.

Enjoyment of the game can be enhanced by playing it with other players who know what they are doing, and who will share in your satisfaction in achieving a 'coup'; regular players in a small casino will also develop a friendly relationship with the dealers, who depend on tips to augment their earnings, and who therefore are equally delighted when you win, and will explain games. They are commonly gamblers themselves.

More generally, gambling in a casino is usually a pleasant experience, not spoiled by a modest loss that you can accept as the cost of a good evening out. It can be usually augmented by a meal in the in-house restaurant that is cheaper, and often better quality, than can be found elsewhere. Some are now favoured

places for office and hen parties, and provide packages to cater for that market. Of course, casinos are, if well frequented, very profitable, at the expense of their clientele. As are youth-market bars catering to binges: I would rather my children (over 18 in the UK) went to the former; their ages, unlike betting on-line, have to be proven with ID. This is a crucial difference. In short, *where* and *under what conditions* one can gamble (or drink), and a *basic education* in the odds particular to each form of gambling, is crucial in coming to a view of its joys and evils. Which brings me to .....

### **An Often Terminal Experience**

A fixed odds betting terminal (FOBT), as found in betting shops, allows players to bet on the outcome of various games and events, such as simulated horseracing. They were introduced to UK shops in 2001, which are allowed a maximum of four terminals. The most commonly played game is roulette. The maximum bet wagered per spin cannot by law exceed £100, or a payout of £500 (e.g. putting £14.00 at 35/1 on a single number at roulette).

These machines now dominate what goes on in betting shops, and are held accountable for untold misery. Shop staff hate them, because of the quite frequent violence and damage that ensues when angry punters take it out on the machines, which are simply replaced: behavior that would not be tolerated in a casino. From a rational gambler's perspective, the evil is no better or worse than the mathematical advantage to the 'house' in a casino: i.e., the 1/37 edge created by the zero on a roulette wheel, or that on an odd/even bet. So why are FOBTs so much worse?

The maximum bet is simply too high, and too tempting. There is no opportunity for education or observation, or indeed company. People can walk in, on impulse off the street, and are faced with an environment where the only thing to do is to stand or sit at the machine, seemingly demanding to be fed, again and again. It is tailor made for the sad, the desperate and the lonely. Instead of changing one's money into chips in a casino to play table roulette, you need only feed the machine with notes – or a bank card. And this is what people do, not regarding it as something akin to a short odds scratch card, worth a couple of small punts, or playing with graduated stakes for the long haul.

Instead of expanding the number of licenses for small casinos, which would be my safer solution, the government has given into the demands of the bookmaking industry to provide gaming on the cheap and nasty. Betting duty is a huge boost to flagging public finances.

### **Educate the Young in the Realities**

Given the unregulateable access on-line to gambling, with no proper 'health warnings' in the advertising that encourages it as a glamorous activity, when the experience is the reverse, there is an urgent need to educate people – young people in particular – in the realities of gambling, even at the risk of encouraging it. There is no point in preaching its dangers in the abstract – kids are attracted to danger as moths to the flame – but there is every point in teaching the basics of poker and blackjack, and maybe bookmaking, using monopoly money, in school clubs, and having the students record and analyse the results. We have, after a struggle, got

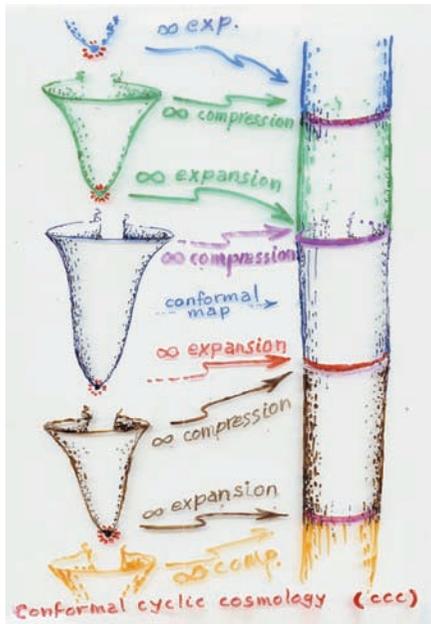
sex education in schools, because of the risks in not providing it. The same logic applies. Will we ever see a GSCE in gambling? And why not?

Humans like playing games, and winning. What does gambling add to that? It provides a very special stimulus, which is evident when a reward element is added to a card or board game, in particular one that either does not require vast skill or knowledge, or is largely dependent on chance. It is about chancing your arm. There is nothing wrong about taking risks with your eyes open: of having a modest ‘flutter’, as an alternative to trying to overturn an ‘edge’, and not confusing the two activities.

It is a great irony, to my mind, that a pervasive ‘health and safety risk-averse culture, in which parents and the State would seemingly try to remove all risk from children’s exploration, prevents them learning to judge risks from experience. If anything, it engenders the urge to gamble, as an outlet for risk-taking that would to some extent be earlier discharged or learned from in adolescence. As a result of trying to ultra-preserve their stake in the future (but without playing with their kids), parents let their little ducks float off, without appropriate swimming lessons, into an internet world of pikes. We cannot ‘lock up our daughters’; we have no choice but to swim with the tide: we have to ensure that the tide, for them, is not a race, and one to the depths of debt and despair.

### ARE WE SEEING SIGNALS FROM BEFORE THE BIG BANG?

CHES has published the text of the 81st Conway Memorial Lecture given by Roger Penrose in 2012. This 56 page booklet includes 24 coloured plates drawn by the author. The text outlines Penrose’s speculative theory that our present universe, which has existed since the ‘big bang’ 13.8 billion years ago, is one of a possibly infinite series of such universes, termed aeons by Roger Penrose. The booklet may be obtained from the retail shop at Conway Hall at £12 per copy (with a discount for CHES members) or tel: 020 7061 6741



Showing the succession of aeons

## VIEWPOINTS

### Defending the *Philosophes*

Nicholas Maxwell castigates the European Enlightenment, and in particular the French *Philosophes* for certain “blunders” in their methods and thinking which, in his opinion, had far reaching consequences (*ER*, January). “Most disastrously of all” they did not apply themselves to “making progress towards a *better world*”, only to a “*better knowledge of social phenomena*” (2nd para p.22). He mentions in particular Voltaire, Diderot and Condorcet.

This accusation strikes me as bizarre. The *philosophes* devoted themselves to dispelling prejudice, superstition, ignorance and irrationality, and to exposing corruption and incompetence. It is true that Diderot dedicated himself, through his Encyclopaedia project, to accumulating knowledge about science, the arts, literature, politics, history and almost everything. Its aim was “to change the way people think”, and it is hard to see how a “better world” could come about without knowledge. Montesquieu (who also contributed to the Encyclopaedia), was scathing in his attack on the privileges of the nobles, the corruption and maladministration of the court, and the stupidities of the old autocratic regime (in his *Lettres Persanes*, for example, 1721).

Many of the *philosophes* were relentless in their exposure of the French judicial system – the scandal of arbitrary imprisonment, the barbarism of torture, and the medieval abominations of the penal code. In response to the *philosophes*’ artillery of satire, argument, learning and wit, the state and church authorities brought out the heavier guns of censorship, imprisonment and exile. Voltaire’s book *Lettres Philosophique*, a cutting attack on the French system of government was of course banned, and a copy of it solemnly burned by the public hangman. He took refuge in England and in Prussia with Frederick the Great. There was hardly a *philosophe* in Paris who was unacquainted with the inside of the Consiagerie or the Bastille.

Condorcet strongly advocated gender equality, including women’s suffrage, and wrote a pamphlet denouncing slavery (*Reflections on Negro Slavery*, 1781). He also tried, as did the others, to expose the evils of the frequent wars of aggression. He died mysteriously, aged 51, in a prison, having tried to flee from the French revolutionary authorities. All the *philosophes* argued for a secular state and an end to the power and privileges of the church. The British writer Tom Paine also had to make his escape to America. Most of his then radical ideas have now become mainstream and common sense.

I don’t know what more these brave writers could have done to help achieve progress towards a better world. A few of them could perhaps be fairly criticised at times for a naïve belief in the fundamental goodness of mankind and the inevitability of progress. But they surely helped, in the long run, to instil into public opinion a hatred of cruelty and injustice in all their forms. They helped free Europe from the stranglehold of religion, and paved the way for a more democratic continent, notwithstanding some terrible aberrations along the way.

Maxwell quotes philosopher John Gray approvingly: “In book after book, article after article, [Gray] has argued that progress is illusory, all our efforts to transform

the human condition inevitably ending in nightmare”. This strikes me as a denial of history. If we take those countries which have taken on board the ideas of the Enlightenment, and compare them with their past, including Germany, the progress is surely obvious, though there is still some way to go.

Maxwell argues, moreover, that this emphasis on the pursuit of knowledge rather than wisdom is a legacy bequeathed also to the social science departments of modern universities. He calls for a new kind of enquiry which he refers to as “wisdom enquiry” rather than the “knowledge enquiry” of the *philosophes*. I can’t speak for other subjects, but as a former A-Level teacher in psychology, I know that the emphasis in universities today is on “applied psychology”, and among the topics studied can be found such headings as relationships, aggression, gender, psychopathology (including depression, eating behaviour, addictive behaviours, phobias and OCD, as well as a range of therapies). The aim is to improve our understanding of human behaviour, and the quality of our lives. This is surely more than a simply “knowledge based” approach.

**David Simmonds – Woking, Surrey**

### **UKIP on Immigration and Multiculturalism**

In response to Anne-Marie Waters’s article, *UKIP Is Ethical* (*ER*, January 2015), I repeat the point I made in reply to Rummy Hasan (*ER* January 2015): that support for immigration controls does not necessarily mean support for the specific (and extreme) controls which UKIP advocates. Whenever poll statistics are quoted, information (if available) must be given on the percentage of polled opinion which explicitly backs UKIP. This point needs to be insisted on by all people who, like myself, do argue for immigration controls, but not the ones which UKIP calls for.

Secondly, on multiculturalism: this phenomenon is far more than the practice of genital mutilation and sharia law. These practices are certainly incompatible with the liberal-democratic way of life we have in Britain and other Western countries. But other aspects of multiculturalism are definitely appropriate to our kind of open society.

For example, there are the benefits of knowing more about the histories, cultural achievements and philosophical outlooks of other peoples. (And, be it remembered, several of these peoples were once colonially-subject to Britain, and were then, through ignorance and misinformation, widely regarded as ‘backward’ and ‘inferior’.) Also, there is the social enrichment produced by the colourful public festivals which other cultures stage. Last but not least, there is the enormous widening of catering facilities which other cultures have brought to what previously was — for most people — a very dull and minimal catering scene.

**Tom Rubens — London , N4**

### **The Eurozone Crisis**

It is somewhat ridiculous for Tom Rubens to point out to me that UKIP is not the only critic of the EU when I have just informed him that I am such a non-UKIP critic of the EU! Moreover, his reply (*ER* Jan 15, p.14) to me does not comment on the Eurozone crisis, but refers vaguely to the EU’s “financial situation”. Nor does he address the EU’s democratic deficit, to which I had also drawn his attention. As his last sentence implies a reformed EU for British

membership to continue, could he please tell us what reforms he advocates and what should happen if they are not achieved?

**Martin Page – East Finchley**

### **UKIP and Multiculturalism**

Anne Marie Waters makes a couple of valid points (*ER* Jan 15 p3), but there are flaws with the structure and logic of her and UKIP's argument. I agree that the notion of 'community rights' is deeply problematic, undemocratic and dangerous. Human rights and responsibilities belong to individuals, not groups.

However, multiculturalism is not just a policy today — it is a fact of life. It is the product of economic forces of globalisation, colonialism and advances in transport technology. The question is not "Should there be multiculturalism?" but rather "How shall we navigate multiculturalism in this new world?"

The barbaric practice of FGM, by the way practised by Muslims and non-Muslims, is rooted in an abhorrent version of patriarchy, ignorance and poverty. I am not saying the practice is not determined by culture and religion as well, simply that the roots are much deeper.

The disingenuous way that Ms Waters describes the Rotherham case is typical of the loaded language used by UKIP, pitting "white English working-class girls" against "Pakistani Muslim men". The conflation of race, religion, and citizenship appears intentional. Were many of these men not British citizens? Is not the plight of the many trafficked women in the UK from eastern Europe and elsewhere just as worthy of our attention as that of the white English "girls" (sic)? The core issue here is the abuse of women, and the institutional flaws in preventing and dealing with such abuse, not the ethnicity of the perpetrators.

All these problems warrant our serious attention. However, the manner in which UKIP attempts to portray every social ill as a product of multiculturalism, Europe, or immigration is ill-conceived, inaccurate, self-serving and ultimately unhelpful.

**Peter Vlachos - London, E16**

### **Defending Multiculturalism**

It is quite wrong of Anne Marie Waters to assert "Multiculturalism kills and it maims and it mutilates" as she does (*ER* Jan 15, p5). Multiculturalism is the belief and practice that the members of different national, ethnic and racial groups within our diverse society should live and work together in a spirit of tolerance of our cultural differences. Multiculturalism does NOT entail failure to condemn abhorrent practices (such as FGM) by members of particular ethnic/national groups. Nor does it entail failure to condemn laxness in the C.P.S. where the issue of prosecuting for particular alleged crimes is concerned.

The spirit of multiculturalism, however, *is* tolerant and dispassionate. It is opposed to exaggerated fears and hysteria in public life whether about particular racial groups or social classes.

**Chris Purnell - Orpington**

## DEBATE: THE DEATH PENALTY SHOULD NOT BE RESTORED

*Opposition address by Barbara Smoker, 11 January 2015*

In preparation for this morning, I borrowed a library book on penology. This mentioned a 1993 book entitled *Hanging in Judgment*\*, which, though written by a committed Christian and published by a Christian organisation, in the main dealt critically with the close historical association between capital punishment and religion. It particularly indicted the author's own church, the C of E, for so long obstructing the abolition of capital punishment in this country.

Though I found that the book was out-of-print, I was told by Waterstone's, to my amazement, that because of digitisation the publishers would print me a copy on demand, for £25; so I ordered it. I will read out its very first sentence: "In 1810 the Archbishop of Canterbury, Charles Manners Sutton, and six other bishops voted in the House of Lords against a Bill which would have abolished the death penalty for stealing five shillings from a shop."

Execution has always demanded, and received, religious sanction, and up to fifty years ago the judicial hanging in Christian Britain was sanctioned by bishops and supervised by chaplains – in earlier times for the most paltry offences.

I am sure that Evan Parker, in advocating the restoration of capital punishment, wouldn't want to include paltry offences for it again, but it is appalling to my mind to want to bring back judicial murder in response to any crime, however heinous. How can a second murder possibly wipe out the first?

Maybe Evan's idea is to reserve it for Islamic terrorists; but most of them actually welcome their own death as a *quid pro quo* for the deaths they cause, since it is believed to count as martyrdom — which, wiping out all of their life's transgressions, will admit them immediately to Paradise, where 72 beautiful virgins await them. Hence the ready supply of suicide bombers. Likewise, the Kouachi brothers in Paris actually said they were prepared to die as martyrs, and they clearly invited it by their actions at the end.

It is not only Islamic terrorists who dismiss the supposed deterrent of personal repercussion for their crimes. It is well established statistically that the accessibility of capital punishment has never succeeded as a deterrent for any kind of crime. So what is the purpose behind it? Nothing but vindictive retribution -- though the modern principle of penology is supposed to be rehabilitation, not retribution.

Vindictive feelings of retribution are quite natural and are understandable enough, but they do not lead to valid moral decisions. These must always reflect their probable consequences, which can only be worked out on the basis of reason, not emotion.

Besides, the psychological question of so-called freewill has to be taken into consideration. Ian Brady, for instance, apparently got his sexual kicks from torturing children to death. Does Evan pride himself on never having given in to that horrific temptation, or is he, like most people, fortunate enough never to have

experienced it? Of course society must always be adequately protected against criminal psychopaths, but capital punishment is not the only protective possibility.

I must admit that probably a majority of people in this country are in favour of bringing back capital punishment — not a big majority, but a majority nevertheless — enough to win a referendum if the Government was so cynical as to hold one on the issue. Majority rule, which we call democracy, is by no means perfect: the best that can be said for it is that it is generally better than autocratic dictatorship. The majority of people, after all, are quite irrational — believing, as they do, in such absurdities as horoscopes and an afterlife.

One of the more reasonable arguments often made on behalf of capital punishment is that if, for instance, Ian Brady had been executed in 1966 for the Moors murders, it would have saved the taxpayer a huge amount of money spent on keeping him alive — as he still is, 49 years later. But Brady has consistently tried to commit suicide by starvation, only to be forcibly fed, and so kept expensively alive.

He has often appealed to be moved back from his hospital for the criminally insane to a maximum security prison, where he would be allowed to starve himself to death — and my response, since that death would be voluntary, is why not allow him to take his own life, whether in hospital or prison? I agree that it is unnecessarily wasteful to keep him alive all these years — and not only wasteful, but cruel, since lifelong incarceration with no hope of parole, is, like the fictitious horror of Hell, actually a worse punishment than annihilation.

Even the most ardent supporters of capital punishment have been uneasy about miscarriages of so-called justice, so the Home Secretary in Churchill's 1951 government, David Maxwell-Fyfe, responded to this public unease with an official pronouncement that it was not possible for an innocent man to be hanged under the British judicial system.

Two years earlier, Timothy Evans had been hanged for the murders of his wife and small daughter, though to the end he protested that the murderer was in fact his landlord, John Christie — who happened to be the chief prosecution witness against him. Had Scotland Yard taken Timothy Evans seriously and investigated his evidence, not only would he have been reprieved, but four subsequent murders committed by John Christie would have been prevented.

When Christie was finally convicted in 1953, the public, remembering Evans, naturally queried the earlier statement of the Home Secretary that it was impossible in Britain for an innocent man to be judicially executed. In order to vindicate himself, Maxwell-Fyfe instigated an inquiry by an amenable QC into the Evans case. In a mere ten days, after interviewing Christie, the QC concluded that there must have been two psychopathic murderers living at the same time in the same house! — 10 Rillington Place. Needless to say, the educated public remained unconvinced. Thirteen years later, Evans was given a free pardon. (What about his judge and jury?)

One of the interesting facts given in the book *Hanging in Judgment* is that Timothy Evans, being a Catholic, asked for a Catholic priest to come to the condemned cell

to hear his confession, and afterwards the priest publicly stated that it was not a confession of murder. Amazingly closely echoing the Evans case is that of James Hanratty, controversially convicted eight years later of the A6 murder. He, likewise a Catholic, also asked for a Catholic priest to come to his condemned cell, and that priest also stated publicly afterwards that he was convinced of the prisoner's innocence. In neither case, however, was there a reprieve.

Another 1953 case, that of Derek Bentley, added to the public disquiet, for it was not Bentley but his associate Chris Craig who had fired the murder gun; but, because Craig was too young to be hanged, his friend was hanged instead — to deter other hoodlums from hiding behind a colleague who was under hanging age.

The execution of Ruth Ellis in 1955 brought a further rise in the demand for abolition — partly because her crime was a crime of passion, but mainly because she was a woman. It seems, however, that she may have chosen to be hanged as a way of committing suicide. Having killed her lover, she refused to put in a plea against the statutory sentence of execution — which, had she done so, would almost certainly have been commuted to imprisonment.

At that date hangings always took place on a Tuesday at 8 am, and somehow the cold-blooded nature of the scheduled time made the practice seem worse. I remember feeling sick on those occasions as I watched the clock approaching 8 o'clock and imagined the scene at the gallows. That was when I began campaigning against capital punishment, and I remember one occasion when I shared the platform with an abolitionist clergyman — probably the only time I ever publicly supported someone wearing a back-to-front collar.

The last executions in Britain took place in 1964, though it was another five years before the parliamentary abolition of capital punishment was finally sanctioned.

In America, several states still retain it, with shocking frequency, and, for all the technological know-how of that country, use of the iconic electric chair is very far from being efficient. It was recently reported that one man had taken 26 minutes to die in the electric chair, whereas the last hangman in Britain, Albert Pierrepoint, had the expertise to bring about death in 25 seconds. Nowadays, even that time could be shortened, by using a modern poison. If the United States were to change from electrocution to an injection of pentobarbital — which is the poison used for physician-assisted suicide in Switzerland — the death throes would be reduced to three or four seconds. But far be it from me to present executioners with even an alleviating suggestion.

Although Pierrepoint saw his job of hangman as a divine vocation at the outset, it is significant that at the end he announced he had become a total abolitionist. So, in fact did his predecessor, John Berry. If Evan Parker had his wish, and capital punishment were indeed restored, I wonder if he would himself accept the job of hangman. Or would he simply do a Pontius Pilate?

\* *Hanging in Judgment* by Harry Potter (1993) SCM Press Ltd.  
[Now donated by Barbara Smoker to the CHES library. {Ed}]

*The Proposition by Evan Parker will be published shortly.*

# THE ETHICAL AND ECONOMIC CASE FOR SOCIALISM

Jerry Jones

*Lecture to the Ethical Society, 1 February 2015*

The following poem by Bertholt Brecht beautifully summarises, I think, the ethical case for socialism (I think of ‘socialism’ and ‘communism’ as being more or less interchangeable\*):

## **In Praise of Communism**

*It's sensible*

*Anyone can understand it*

*It's easy*

*You're not an exploiter*

*So you can grasp it*

*It's a good thing for you*

*Find out more about it*

*The stupid call it stupid*

*The squalid call it squalid*

*It's against squalidity and stupidity*

*The exploiters call it a crime*

*But we know*

*It is the end of crime*

*It is not madness but*

*The end of madness*

*It is not the riddle*

*But the solution*

*It is the simple thing*

*So hard to achieve.*

My aim is to put all that onto a more scientific basis. First, I want to de-mystify the process of economic development; second, explain why some people and some countries have got rich while others got left behind, and why that is unethical; and third, explain why common ownership in various forms – which I identify as the economic basis for socialism – is not only, by its nature, more ethical, but also why an economy based on common ownership would be much more efficient than the current system.

## **Economic development**

Economic development is about expanding the capability of producing and supplying more goods and services in increasing diversity in order to satisfy ever-changing human needs and wants. It is the outcome of the invention and development of new technologies, which either increase the diversity of goods and services that can be made available, or raise the productivity of labour – enabling more to be produced with a smaller workforce – thus releasing labour for diversification into other productive activities.

Before any economic activity can take place, one needs **land**. In economics, this includes the minerals below the ground, the sea and seabed, the electromagnetic spectrum, the moon, outer space – everything that existed before humans walked the earth.

Next, there has to be labour – not just labour, but **surplus labour**. Surplus labour is labour performed over and above that required to satisfy immediate consumption needs and wants. Surplus labour should not be confused with surplus labour power. Even supposedly trained economists quite often use the term ‘surplus labour’ to describe the situation when there are too many people seeking work and not enough jobs available – that is, in the sense of unemployment. This is surplus labour power – the capacity to work. There cannot be surplus labour until labour has been performed!

If one merely performs labour to satisfy one's consumption needs, there cannot be economic development. For example, hunters and gatherers use surplus labour to make tools, to improve the efficiency of their labours. An agricultural community may seek to increase or diversify production, using their leisure time (surplus labour) to build an irrigation scheme. This illustrates the social nature of economic development – or the co-operative element it embodies – whereby each individual adds their labour to that of others. A famous scheme in China in the 1960s, the Red Flag Canal, involved some 30,000 men and women, organised on a rota basis. This gigantic project was financed precisely by people working in what otherwise would have been their leisure time – that is by their surplus labour.

Surplus labour is indeed the origin of all finance, or capital, required for economic development to take place. Economic development does, of course, depend on many other factors. For a start, there would be no point in investing surplus labour to produce more if no one wants the product – or more precisely, wants and has the means to pay for the product. That is, there has to be **economic demand** for the product. To discover who might want the products produced, and what might be available in exchange, there needs to be **markets, merchants** to act as go-betweens, and **money** to facilitate transactions. **Credit** – which is equivalent to surplus labour that has not yet been performed, but which has to be in due course – is useful, because one can make use of the product while performing the surplus labour to pay for it. And surplus labour needs to be invested in **technological development**, and **scientific research** to make that possible.

At an individual level, surplus labour may be thought of as the money left over from one's income after satisfying immediate consumption needs and wants (if one has any left over!). But that may not be all the surplus labour that one has performed. Some of it may be appropriated.

### **How some people benefit at the expense of others**

There are various ways in which surplus labour may be appropriated, which is how some people benefit at the expense of others. One way is through being employed. Consider a worker employed by the owner of a business. The profit of the business, **P**, will be determined by the total revenue, **R**, less the costs of raw materials and other inputs, **Z**, and the wages of the worker employed, **W**, as expressed in the following simple equation:

$$\mathbf{P} = \mathbf{R} - \mathbf{Z} - \mathbf{W}$$

Clearly, other things being equal, if wages (**W**) were lower, profits (**P**) would be higher and vice versa. The extent to which profits were higher or lower would be a measure of the amount of surplus labour appropriated from the worker by the owner of the business – which would depend on the worker's bargaining position (related to the general employment situation, trade unions, and so on). If the worker was in a weak bargaining position, the owner would benefit at the expense of the worker. In big businesses, with many employees, the amount of surplus labour appropriated may be multiplied many times over, some perhaps in the form of dividends going to shareholders who benefit without having to do any work.

## Surplus Labour

Another mechanism by which surplus labour may be appropriated is through trade. Merchants seeking to buy cheap and sell dear appropriate surplus labour by underpaying producers and overcharging customers, giving rise to extra profits over and above the payment for the service they perform. How much surplus labour merchants are able to appropriate (if at all) depends on the relative bargaining positions of producers, merchants, and final consumers. If a merchant is also an employer (for example, a supermarket), surplus labour may be appropriated through both employment and trade.

Surplus labour may also be appropriated through rent – landlords, businesses hiring out equipment, and so on, charging more than the value of the services they provide. Banks appropriate surplus labour by underpaying interest to depositors and overcharging interest to borrowers – again creating profits over and above the services they provide.

Banks also appropriate surplus labour through interest (or seignorage) they earn from their large-scale creation of money ‘out of thin air’. When banks lend money (which it should be emphasised has little relationship to the money their customers have on deposit), it comes straight back to the banking system when the loans are spent, which can then be lent to someone else. This process can be repeated over and over again – at least until the banks run out of people with sufficient collateral to lend to. In the meantime, more and more money that would not otherwise have existed would be entering the economy and spent – and all the time the banks would be earning interest on it. (Note that if the Bank of England had control over this rather than private banks, the public as a whole would benefit from the interest derived.)

Much of the surplus labour appropriated by banks in this way originates from the economic rent derived from rising land values. This is best explained by way of an example. A small house in South London could be had for around £5,000 in 1970. This would be equivalent to approximately £59,000 in today’s money. In fact, that same house today would fetch around £350,000, the difference being the rise in the value of the land on which it stood. If the house were sold at that price for cash, it would realise a capital gain – derived from the accumulation of economic rent since 1970 – of £291,000. However, the rise in land value from which that capital gain had derived would have been created not by the owner of the property but by the economic demand for land in that particular location, reflecting the economic activities of society as a whole. If sold for cash, the capital gain would represent pure, unearned profit derived from other people’s surplus labour.

Mostly, such a property would not be sold for cash, but would go towards paying the inflated price of another property when one moved. But, for the first time buyer seeking a mortgage, it would mean they would have to borrow, say, £250,000, instead of the £50,000 or so that they would have needed to borrow, had the price only increased by inflation. In which case, it would be the banks appropriating surplus labour – at the expense of the rest of society that was responsible for the rise in land value – in the form of the extra profit they would make through interest at inflated rates, thus benefiting bank shareholders.

## **The appropriation of surplus labour through fraud and corruption**

Fraud and corruption has been around since the dawn of capitalism. Today, it is taking place on a vast scale, ranging from straightforward backhanders to politicians and civil servant to secure contracts, to collusion among companies to overcharge customers, all of which extends the extent that surplus labour is appropriated.

For example, last year, banks were found to be colluding to rig the London Inter Bank Offer Rate (LIBOR). This led to millions of people being overcharged interest on loans. Banks were also discovered to be rigging foreign exchange rates, leading to people and businesses being overcharged. And for several years, banks were tricking people into buying Payment Protection Insurance that they did not need. Similar goings-on exist in every other business area, involving big names. For instance, last year, Unilever and L'Oréal were found to be colluding to overcharge customers in France, for which they were fined €951 million. Price-fixing fines last year worldwide, according to the *Financial Times*, hit a record high of \$5.3 billion. These only relate to the price-fixing that is discovered.

On top of that, all the big transnational corporations comprehensively evade tax through various accounting devices (known as 'transfer pricing') that enable them to offload the bulk of their profits into their subsidiaries in offshore tax havens – in effect appropriating surplus labour from the rest of us who have to pay more tax for the provision of public services, or face cuts.

To sum up, the appropriation of surplus labour by all these mechanisms – which is equivalent to money we have earned going into the pockets (or bank accounts) of others, just as if we had had our wallets or purses stolen – is organised theft on an industrial scale. What could be more unethical?

## **How some countries benefit at the expense of others**

When the appropriation of surplus labour through all the mechanisms just described takes place across national boundaries, countries where the appropriators are located benefit. It occurs on a large scale, through international trade, through foreign investment, through interest (on bank loans and economic 'aid'), and through capital flight – that is, the transfer of capital abroad more or less illegally, more often than not derived from fraud and corruption. The West got rich precisely because that is where the bulk of businesses appropriating surplus labour have been located – its wealth multiplied many times over through the investment of that surplus labour. And this is why the rest of the world, whose surplus labour has been appropriated continuously for some four centuries, got left behind.

In fact, today, as implied above, much of the surplus labour appropriated by the big transnational corporations worldwide ends up in offshore tax havens via transfer pricing – which is facilitated by the fact that some 60 per cent of all international trade now takes place within transnational corporations.

## **The cause of the 2008 financial crisis**

The financial crisis that came to a head in 2008 arose basically for the same

reasons that cause all economic crises under capitalism – namely surplus labour being appropriated on such a large scale at the expense of people’s wages that people’s spending power (or economic demand) ends up being insufficient to provide a market for all the goods and services capable of being produced or supplied were all that surplus labour invested in new productive activities.

Some indication of the problem is the accumulation of surplus labour in the form of cash piles of companies, which worldwide are estimated to amount to some \$3 trillion. Apple, alone, is estimated to have upwards of \$160 billion in its cash pile, Microsoft around \$80 billion, and Google \$56 billion – all offshore in order to avoid paying their fair share of tax. Imagine how many jobs could be created if all that money were invested – which, at the same time would create new markets when the workers employed spent their wages.

### **What is Big Business Doing?**

Meanwhile, what is big business, helped by our politicians, doing in response to the crisis they have created? They are shrinking markets even more by squeezing down wages – shifting production as far as possible to cheap labour countries – and for productive activities not amenable to that, importing cheap labour. Result? Even more surplus labour accumulating as surplus capital unable to find suitable investment opportunities.

Then there is the problem of what to do with that surplus capital. One outlet is credit. Credit creates economic demand that would not otherwise exist, so provides new markets. However, there are limits, namely: running out of people or businesses with sufficient collateral to lend to; more and more people involved in repaying loans, which is at the expense of creating economic demand for other things; people having to pay exorbitant amounts of interest on loans so that the economic demand lost as a result exceeds the economic demand created by the loans in the first place. In short, as long as surplus labour is appropriated on a large scale, credit ends up leading to even more surplus labour being appropriated at the expense of economic demand. And how are they trying to resolve that crisis? Expanding credit creation even more!

The only other outlet for the surplus capital is gambling – the buying and selling of various bits of financial paper: you bet the price of an asset will go up, and if enough people believe that, it will go up, thus fulfilling expectations – until someone decides to get off the bandwagon and sell up, collecting their capital gain, soon joined by others seeking to cash in quickly before the price collapses. The winners gain at the expense of those who do not get off the bandwagon in time – who might seek better luck next time. All this, it should be pointed out, is none other than gambling with other people’s surplus labour that has been appropriated.

This huge accumulation of surplus labour as surplus capital unable to find investment opportunities represents a complete waste of the surplus labour that people have performed. It is not invested to produce a new stream of goods or services that people need or want, nor does it contribute to growth of economic demand enabling people to acquire the goods or services that they might need or

want. That is why the current capitalist system, as well as being unethical in the extreme, is also inefficient in the extreme.

### **Common ownership**

Only an economic system based on common ownership can overcome those problems, because it would no longer involve the appropriation of people's surplus labour. People would be in control of their own surplus labour, either individually or collectively, deciding themselves whether to spend it or invest it. If no surplus labour is being appropriated, the problem of surplus labour accumulating at the expense of economic demand does not arise. As labour becomes increasingly productive and more diversified through advances in technology, economic demand expands, thus providing markets for the goods and services capable of being produced and supplied. The cause of economic crises, and their wastefulness, as well as the human misery they give rise to, would be eliminated, resulting in not only a more efficient economic system, but also one that is ethical, because it does not involve the theft of people's surplus labour.

### **What forms of common ownership?**

I discuss this in my paper, 'A Market Economy based on Common Ownership', available at <http://l-r-c.org.uk/files/commonownership.pdf>.

Briefly, I argue that natural monopolies – such as water, gas and electricity grids (but not necessarily generation), roads, and railways – should be state-owned. This would also apply to health services (there is only one health care – the best that is technically possible), and also, for similar reasons, other social services, such as education, pensions and social security. For most other productive activities, I recommend worker-owned cooperatives modelled on the Mondragón cooperatives in the Basque region of Spain. Transnational corporations could be turned into federations of worker-cooperatives, to preserve any symbiotic relationships, otherwise they should be broken up into separate worker-owned cooperatives. For some productive activities, mutuals may be a better option.

### **Markets**

Many progressives worry about markets. I argue that you need markets to find out what people and businesses want, where investment is needed, and so on. People get confused because they see how markets operate under capitalism. Under common ownership, where there is no appropriation of surplus labour, income distribution will be equitable, so you will get truly democratic markets, which genuinely reflect what people need and want. Markets would not be distorted by some getting rich through the appropriation of other people's surplus labour, as now.

But the markets would need to be regulated. It is a myth that free markets depend on no state 'interference'. On the contrary, for markets to work the state does need to 'interfere', otherwise one ends up with various forms of monopoly, such as the strongest cornering the market, or enterprises colluding to keep prices high. Governments need to monitor prices, to judge when there might be market failure, through a process that I call **economic planning using markets**. For

example, if the price of a commodity is going up excessively, this might indicate a shortage in relation to economic demand. This would act as a signal for the state (at local or national level) to invest in a new production unit (which could later be transferred to the workers employed). Conversely, a price declining could indicate the need to help some enterprises to diversify.

### Land value tax

A land value tax would be needed to prevent people and businesses appropriating surplus labour through rising land values. As noted already, land value is created by society as a whole, not by those owning or occupying a piece of land. Rising land values, therefore, should go to society as a whole, and the most effective way to do that is through a land value tax (See Jerry Jones, *Land Value ... for Public Benefit*, Labour Land Campaign, 2008, available as a pamphlet, or at <http://www.labourland.org>).

### How to achieve common ownership?

This could be achieved merely through a change in the law. From such and such a day, all enterprises will be owned by their employees. The government could choose to buy out the current owners, offering them long dated bonds, and allow the workers to become owners through interest free loans, the repayment of which would provide the income to service the bonds. Day One need not be any different from the day before, just like when one firm is taken over by another today. Business could carry on as before. There just would not be any outside shareholders or fat cat owners – who have no genuine interest in the functioning of enterprises – creaming off the surplus labour. If one thinks about it, they are superfluous. In time, no doubt, different, more democratic, ways of managing enterprises will evolve, perhaps drawing lessons from the Mondragón cooperatives.

I am sure it would not be plane sailing like that, but it is something to aim for!

\*The record shows that communist governments soon become one-party states, whereas a socialist government would maintain multi-party elections. {Ed.}

## THE 6<sup>TH</sup> EDITION OF *HUMANISM* (2014)

A new, revised and updated 80-page edition of Barbara Smoker's classic book, now called *HUMANISM for inquiring minds* (for secondary schools and as a general introduction to this important subject), has been published by the Conway Hall Ethical Society.

ISBN 978 0 902368 28 6

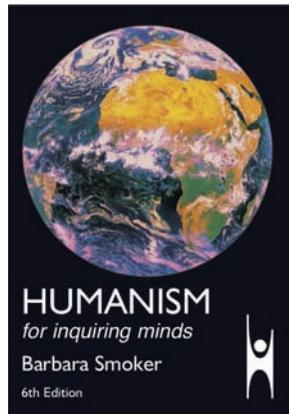
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## Mary & Martin Lincé Memorial Concert

19.30 Thursday 19th February 2015

**Conway Hall**



**Albert Martin Lincé**

22 October 1914 – 6 July 2012

**Mary Louisa Lincé**

15 March 1915 – 26 March 2014

This concert celebrates the lives of two people for whom music was a passion, not only in active choral singing and chamber music but also supporting one of the most well established concert series in London. Mary, an amateur pianist and latterly a viola player, began to attend the concerts at South Place at a very early age and continued to be closely involved after the concerts relocated to Conway Hall in 1929. She and Martin, an amateur violinist who also turned his hand to several other instruments, later joined the concert committee on which they served for more than 60 years and both continued to attend chamber music concerts until just a few months before the end of their lives. Tonight's programme includes three much-loved works and reflects their taste in music.

Mary and Martin did much to further the joy of music for many people and it seems appropriate for the proceeds of this concert to be donated to Help Musicians UK (Reg. Charity no. 228089). This is the leading UK charity for professional musicians of all genres, from starting out through to retirement. It helps them at times of crisis, but also at times of opportunity, giving people the extra support they need at a crucial stage that could make or break their career.

Help Musicians UK is the working name of the  
Musicians Benevolent Fund

*See page 24 for Concert programme*

If you have any suggestions for speakers (their contact details are required) or event ideas, or would like to convene a Sunday afternoon informal, get in touch with Evan Parker at [evan.parker@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:evan.parker@warwick.ac.uk) Tel nos 07403 607 046 (mob) or 0202 565 5016.

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Conway Hall Ethical Society, 25 Red Lion Square, Holborn, WC1R 4RL.

Tel: 020 7405 1818 Website: [www.conwayhall.org.uk](http://www.conwayhall.org.uk)

Admission to Thinking on Sunday events is free for members of CHES and £3 (£2 conc) for non-members. For other events, no charge unless stated.

FEBRUARY 2015

### THINKING ON SUNDAY

- Sunday 15 **ANARCHISM IS RELEVANT**  
1100 Cartoonist **Donald Rooum** illustrates this thesis of his with his famous cartoons
- Sunday 22 **THE TRANSATLANTIC TRADE & INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIP**  
1100 **Chris Bratcher** surveys the pros and cons of this powerful new Treaty, TTIP
- MARCH
- Sunday 1 **J P SARTRE AND THE ANGUISH OF FREEDOM.** **Jane O'Grady**  
1100 examines the 'life sentence' Sartre's demand for authenticity imposes on us
- Sunday 8 **DO YOU WANT TO KNOW YOUR OWN GENOME?**  
1100 asks **Barbara Prainsack** of Kings College London
- Sunday 15 **PUZZLING BODY PHENOMENA** discussed by existential philosopher  
1100 **Filiz Peach**, in the framework of the mind-body problem
- Sunday 22 DEBATE: **BRITAIN'S HEAD OF STATE SHOULD BE ELECTED**  
1100 For: **Jennifer R. Jeynes** (republican). Against: **Paul Carroll** (monarchist)

### MARY AND MARTIN LINCÉ MEMORIAL CONCERT

1930 Thursday 19th February 2015

**Chilingirian Quartet with John York, Piano**

**Haydn** - Piano Trio in C Hob. XV/27

**Ravel** - String Quartet

**Schumann** - Piano Quintet in Eb Op.44

TICKETS: £15

(Full-time students under 25 with valid student card, half price)

ONLINE BOOKING: <http://lincememorialconcert.eventbrite.co.uk>

EMAIL: [lincememorialconcert@virginmedia.com](mailto:lincememorialconcert@virginmedia.com)

TEL: 020 8922 8832 Refreshments will be served in the interval

### CONWAY HALL SUNDAY CONCERTS

Artistic Director: **Simon Callaghan**

Doors open at 1730 Concerts start at 1830 Tickets £9; students £4; under 16 free

Full details on: [www.conwayhallsundayconcerts.org.uk](http://www.conwayhallsundayconcerts.org.uk)

February 15 **Delta Piano Trio:** Mozart, Beethoven, Schoenberg

February 22 **Coull Quartet:** Haydn, Villa-Lobos, Beethoven

March 1 **Odysseus Trio:** Pre-concert talk at 1730  
Beethoven, Martinů, Brahms

March 8 **Badke Quartet:** Pre-concert talk at 17.30  
Haydn, Bruch, Schubert

March 15 **Noûs Quartet:** Haydn, Debussy, Mendelssohn