

Free Inquiry

Announcing a New Magazine

This is the premier issue of FREE INQUIRY. The task of this new magazine will be to define and defend the positions of freedom and secularism in the contemporary world.

In recent years the world has witnessed a massive resurgence of fanatical dogmas and doctrines. The fundamental premises of the modern world and the Enlightenment are either being forgotten or completely ignored. The commitment to scientific evidence and reason as a method of knowing, belief in the value of individual freedom and dignity, and the view that superstition can be eradicated by increased education and affluence — all of these have been replaced by positions which are often blatantly irrational.

Evidence demonstrating the extent of this intellectual myopia can be found in the rapid growth and popularity of Christian fundamentalism, faith healers, and charismatics in the United States, Islamic sects, the growth of Asian cults, and the new fascination with bizarre paranormal beliefs.

In addition to a resurgence of extremism in theology there has been the prominence of virulent ideological movements in the 20th century: various forms of Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism and Naziism, which function as state religions. Often these secular movements defend authoritarian obedience and the use of terrorism to fulfill some utopian end.

Unfortunately, there does not exist on the current intellectual scene a magazine devoted to the sophisticated analysis of religious inconsistencies and their social consequences. Nor is there a magazine expressing a thoroughgoing and consciously secular-humanist point

(Continued on Back Cover)

A Secular Humanist Declaration

Excerpts (for full text see page 3)

The first principle of democratic secular humanism is its commitment to free inquiry. . . . This applies not only to science and to everyday life, but to politics, economics, morality and religion. . .

Countless millions of thoughtful persons have espoused secular humanist ideals . . . and have contributed to the building of a more humane and democratic world. . . .

Secular humanism is now under unwarranted and intemperate attack from various quarters. . . . We deplore the growth of intolerant sectarian creeds that foster hatred. . . .

The media . . . are inordinately dominated by a pro-religious bias. The views of preachers, faith healers, and religious hucksters go largely unchallenged. . . .

We do not believe that any one church should impose its views on moral virtue and sin, sexual conduct, marriage, divorce, birth control, or abortion, or legislate them for the rest of society. . . .

We deplore the efforts by fundamentalists . . . to invade the science classrooms, requiring that creationist theory be taught to students. . . .

It is possible for human beings to lead meaningful and wholesome lives . . . without the need of religious commandments or the benefit of clergy. . . .

Secular humanism places trust in human intelligence rather than in divine guidance. . . .

Endorsed by 58 leaders of thought, including Isaac Asimov, Sir A.J. Ayer, Sir Francis Crick, Milovan Djilas, Albert Ellis, Joseph Fletcher, Sidney Hook, Walter Kaufmann, Paul Kurtz, Robert Rimmer, B.F. Skinner, Barbara Wootton, and others.

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About This Issue

This first issue of FREE INQUIRY is devoted primarily to a defense of democratic secular humanism.

The Fundamentalist Right is gaining ground in the United States — which is symptomatic of the worldwide growth of fundamentalist and doctrinaire thinking — and its scapegoat is secular humanism.

The fundamentalists have attacked the basis of the democratic state, the principle of separation of church and state, and humanist views on ethics, religion, science, evolution, and education.

Since there has not yet been an adequate response, we are devoting virtually this entire issue of FREE INQUIRY to answer these attacks. We have invited some of the leading secular humanists to deal with these questions.

Future issues will be on diverse themes and will touch on a wide range of issues—Ed.

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A Secular Humanist Declaration

Secular humanism is a vital force in the contemporary world. It is now under unwarranted and intemperate attack from various quarters. This declaration defends only that form of secular humanism which is explicitly committed to democracy. It is opposed to all varieties of belief that seek supernatural sanction for their values or espouse rule by dictatorship.

Democratic secular humanism has been a powerful force in world culture. Its ideals can be traced to the philosophers, scientists, and poets of classical Greece and Rome, to ancient Chinese Confucian society, to the Carvaka movement of India, and to other distinguished intellectual and moral traditions. Secularism and humanism were eclipsed in Europe during the Dark Ages, when religious piety eroded humankind's confidence in its own powers to solve human problems. They reappeared in force during the Renaissance with the reassertion of secular and humanist values in literature and the arts, again in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries with the development of modern science and a naturalistic view of the universe, and their influence can be found in the eighteenth century in the Age of Reason and the Enlightenment. Democratic secular humanism has creatively flowered in modern times with the growth of freedom and democracy.

Countless millions of thoughtful persons have espoused secular humanist ideals, have lived significant lives, and have contributed to the building of a more humane and democratic world. The modern secular humanist outlook has led to the application of science and technology to the improvement of the human condition. This has had a positive effect on reducing poverty, suffering, and disease in various parts of the world, in extending longevity, on improving transportation and communication, and in making the good life possible for more and more people. It has led to the emancipation of hundreds of millions of people from the exercise of blind faith and fears of superstition and has contributed to their education and the enrichment of their lives. Secular humanism has provided an

impetus for humans to solve their problems with intelligence and perseverance, to conquer geographic and social frontiers, and to extend the range of human exploration and adventure.

Regrettably, we are today faced with a variety of anti-secularist trends: the reappearance of dogmatic authoritarian religions; fundamentalist, literalist, and doctrinaire Christianity; a rapidly growing and uncompromising Moslem clericalism in the Middle East and Asia; the reassertion of orthodox authority by the Roman Catholic papal hierarchy; nationalistic religious Judaism; and the reversion to obscurantist religions in Asia. New cults of unreason as well as bizarre paranormal and occult beliefs, such as belief in astrology, reincarnation, and the mysterious power of alleged psychics, are growing in many Western societies. These disturbing developments follow in the wake of the emergence in the earlier part of the twentieth century of intolerant messianic and totalitarian quasi-religious movements, such as fascism and communism. These religious activists not only are responsible for much of the terror and violence in the world today but stand in the way of solutions to the world's most serious problems.

Paradoxically, some of the critics of secular humanism maintain that it is a dangerous philosophy. Some assert that it is "morally corrupting" because it is committed to individual freedom, others that it condones "injustice" because it defends democratic due process. We who support democratic secular humanism deny such charges, which are based upon misunderstanding and misinterpretation, and we seek to outline a set of principles that most of us share. Secular humanism is not a dogma or a creed. There are wide differences of opinion among secular humanists on many issues. Nevertheless, there is a loose consensus with respect to several propositions. We are apprehensive that modern civilization is threatened by forces antithetical to reason, democracy, and freedom. Many religious believers will no doubt share with us a belief in many secular humanist and democratic values, and we welcome their

joining with us in the defense of these ideals.

1. *Free Inquiry.* The first principle of democratic secular humanism is its commitment to free inquiry. We oppose any tyranny over the mind of man, any efforts by ecclesiastical, political, ideological, or social institutions to shackle free thought. In the past, such tyrannies have been directed by churches and states attempting to enforce the edicts of religious bigots. In the long struggle in the history of ideas, established institutions, both public and private, have attempted to censor inquiry, to impose orthodoxy on beliefs and values, and to excommunicate heretics and extirpate unbelievers. Today, the struggle for free inquiry has assumed new forms. Sectarian ideologies have become the new theologies that use political parties and governments in their mission to crush dissident opinion.

Free inquiry entails recognition of civil liberties as integral to its pursuit, that is, a free press, freedom of communication, the right to organize opposition parties and to join voluntary associations, and freedom to cultivate and publish the fruits of scientific, philosophical, artistic, literary, moral and religious freedom. Free inquiry requires that we tolerate diversity of opinion and that we respect the right of individuals to express their beliefs, however unpopular they may be, without social or legal prohibition or fear of sanctions. Though we may tolerate contrasting points of view, this does not mean that they are immune to critical scrutiny. The guiding premise of those who believe in free inquiry is that truth is more likely to be discovered if the opportunity exists for the free exchange of opposing opinions; the process of interchange is frequently as important as the result. This applies not only to science and to everyday life, but to politics, economics, morality, and religion.

2. *Separation of Church and State.* Because of their commitment to freedom, secular humanists believe in the principle of the separation of church and state. The lessons of history are clear: wherever one religion or ideology is established and given a dominant position in the state, minority opinions are in jeopardy. A pluralistic, open democratic society allows all points of view to be heard. Any effort to impose an exclusive conception of Truth, Piety, Virtue, or Justice upon the whole of society is a violation of free inquiry. Clerical authorities should not be permitted to legislate their own parochial views—whether moral, philosophical, political, educational, or social—for the rest of society.

Nor should tax revenues be exacted for the benefit or support of sectarian religious institutions. Individuals and voluntary associations should be free to accept or not to accept any belief and to support these convictions with whatever resources they may have, without being compelled by taxation to contribute to those religious faiths with which they do not agree. Similarly, church properties should share in the burden of public revenues and should not be exempt from taxation. Compulsory religious oaths and prayers in public institutions (political or educational) are also a violation of the separation

principle.

Today, nontheistic as well as theistic religions compete for attention. Regrettably, in communist countries, the power of the state is being used to impose an ideological doctrine on the society, without tolerating the expression of dissenting or heretical views. Here we see a modern secular version of the violation of the separation principle.

3. *The Ideal of Freedom.* There are many forms of totalitarianism in the modern world—secular and nonsecular—all of which we vigorously oppose. As democratic secularists, we consistently defend the ideal of freedom, not only freedom of conscience and belief from those ecclesiastical, political, and economic interests that seek to repress them, but genuine political liberty, democratic decision-making based upon majority rule, and respect for minority rights and the rule of law. We stand not only for freedom from religious control but for freedom from jingoistic government control as well. We are for the defense of basic human rights, including the right to protect life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. In our view, a free society should also encourage some measure of economic freedom, subject only to such restrictions as are necessary in the public interest. This means that individuals and groups should be able to compete in the marketplace, organize free trade unions, and carry on their occupations and careers without undue interference by centralized political control. The right to private property is a human right without which other rights are nugatory. Where it is necessary to limit any of these rights in a democracy, the limitation should be justified in terms of its consequences in strengthening the entire structure of human rights.

4. *Ethics Based on Critical Intelligence.* The moral views of secular humanism have been subjected to criticism by religious fundamentalist theists. The secular humanist recognizes the central role of morality in human life. Indeed, ethics was developed as a branch of human knowledge long before religionists proclaimed their moral systems based upon divine authority. The field of ethics has had a distinguished list of thinkers contributing to its development: from Socrates, Democritus, Aristotle, Epicurus, and Epictetus, to Spinoza, Erasmus, Hume, Voltaire, Kant, Bentham, Mill, G.E. Moore, Bertrand Russell, John Dewey, and others. There is an influential philosophical tradition that maintains that ethics is an autonomous field of inquiry, that ethical judgments can be formulated independently of revealed religion, and that human beings can cultivate practical reason and wisdom and, by its application, achieve lives of virtue and excellence. Moreover, philosophers have emphasized the need to cultivate an appreciation for the requirements of social justice and for an individual's obligations and responsibilities toward others. Thus secularists deny that morality needs to be deduced from religious belief or that those who do not espouse a religious doctrine are immoral.

For secular humanists, ethical conduct is, or should be judged by critical reason, and their goal is to develop autonomous and responsible individuals, capable of making their own

choices in life based upon an understanding of human behavior. Morality that is not God-based need not be antisocial, subjective, or promiscuous, nor need it lead to the breakdown of moral standards. Although we believe in tolerating diverse lifestyles and social manners, we do not think they are immune to criticism. Nor do we believe that any one church should impose its views of moral virtue and sin, sexual conduct, marriage, divorce, birth control, or abortion, or legislate them for the rest of society.

As secular humanists we believe in the central importance of the value of human happiness here and now. We are opposed to Absolutist morality, yet we maintain that objective standards emerge, and ethical values and principles may be discovered, in the course of ethical deliberation.

Secular humanist ethics maintains that it is possible for human beings to lead meaningful and wholesome lives for themselves and in service to their fellow human beings without the need of religious commandments or the benefit of clergy. There have been any number of distinguished secularists and humanists who have demonstrated moral principles in their personal lives and works: Protagoras, Lucretius, Epicurus, Spinoza, Hume, Thomas Paine, Diderot, Mark Twain, George Eliot, John Stuart Mill, Ernest Renan, Charles Darwin, Thomas Edison, Clarence Darrow, Robert Ingersoll, Gilbert Murray, Albert Schweitzer, Albert Einstein, Max Born, Margaret Sanger, and Bertrand Russell, among others.

5. *Moral Education.* We believe that moral development should be cultivated in children and young adults. We do not believe that any particular sect can claim important values as their exclusive property; hence it is the duty of public education to deal with these values. Accordingly, we support moral education in the schools that is designed to develop an appreciation for moral virtues, intelligence, and the building of character. We wish to encourage wherever possible the growth of moral awareness and the capacity for free choice and an understanding of the consequences thereof. We do not think it is moral to baptize infants, to confirm adolescents, or to impose a religious creed on young people before they are able to consent. Although children should learn about the history of religious moral practices, these young minds should not be indoctrinated in a faith before they are mature enough to evaluate the merits for themselves. It should be noted that secular humanism is not so much a specific morality as it is a method for the explanation and discovery of rational moral principles.

6. *Religious Skepticism.* As secular humanists, we are generally skeptical about supernatural claims. We recognize the importance of religious experience: that experience that redirects and gives meaning to the lives of human beings. We deny, however, that such experiences have anything to do with the supernatural. We are doubtful of traditional views of God and divinity. Symbolic and mythological interpretations of religion often serve as rationalizations for a sophisticated minority, leaving the bulk of mankind to flounder in theological confusion. We consider the universe to be a dynamic scene of natural forces that are most effectively un-

derstood by scientific inquiry. We are always open to the discovery of new possibilities and phenomena in nature. However, we find that traditional views of the existence of God either are meaningless, have not yet been demonstrated to be true, or are tyrannically exploitative. Secular humanists may be agnostics, atheists, rationalists, or skeptics, but they find insufficient evidence for the claim that some divine purpose exists for the universe. They reject the idea that God has intervened miraculously in history or revealed himself to a chosen few, or that he can save or redeem sinners. They believe that men and women are free and are responsible for their own destinies and that they cannot look toward some transcendent Being for salvation. We reject the divinity of Jesus, the divine mission of Moses, Mohammed, and other latter-day prophets and saints of the various sects and denominations. We do not accept as true the literal interpretation of the Old and New Testaments, the Koran, or other allegedly sacred religious documents, however important they may be as literature. Religions are pervasive sociological phenomena, and religious myths have long persisted in human history. In spite of the fact that human beings have found religions to be uplifting and a source of solace, we do not find their theological claims to be true. Religions have made negative as well as positive contributions toward the development of human civilization. Although they have helped to build hospitals and schools and, at their best, have encouraged the spirit of love and charity, many have also caused human suffering by being intolerant of those who did not accept their dogmas or creeds. Some religions have been fanatical and repressive, narrowing human hopes, limiting aspirations, and precipitating religious wars and violence. While religions have no doubt offered comfort to the bereaved and dying by holding forth the promise of an immortal life, they have also aroused morbid fear and dread. We have found no convincing evidence that there is a separable "soul" or that it exists before birth or survives death. We must therefore conclude that the ethical life can be lived without the illusions of immortality or reincarnation. Human beings *can* develop the self-confidence necessary to ameliorate the human condition and to lead meaningful, productive lives.

7. *Reason.* We view with concern the current attack by non-secularists on reason and science. We are committed to the use of the rational methods of inquiry, logic, and evidence in developing knowledge and testing claims to truth. Since human beings are prone to err, we are open to the modification of all principles, including those governing inquiry, believing that they may be in need of constant correction. Although not so naive as to believe that reason and science can easily solve all human problems, we nonetheless contend that they can make a major contribution to human knowledge and can be of benefit to humankind. We know of no better substitute for the cultivation of human intelligence.

8. *Science and Technology.* We believe the scientific method, though imperfect, is still the most reliable way of understanding the world. Hence, we look to the natural, biological, social, and behavioral sciences for knowledge of the universe

and man's place within it. Modern astronomy and physics have opened up exciting new dimensions of the universe: they have enabled humankind to explore the universe by means of space travel. Biology and the social and behavioral sciences have expanded our understanding of human behavior. We are thus opposed in principle to any efforts to censor or limit scientific research without an overriding reason to do so.

While we are aware of, and oppose, the abuses of misapplied technology and its possible harmful consequences for the natural ecology of the human environment, we urge resistance to unthinking efforts to limit technological or scientific advances. We appreciate the great benefits that science and technology (especially basic and applied research) can bring to humankind, but we also recognize the need to balance scientific and technological advances with cultural explorations in art, music, and literature.

9. *Evolution.* Today the theory of evolution is again under heavy attack by religious fundamentalists. Although the theory of evolution cannot be said to have reached its final formulation, or to be an infallible principle of science, it is nonetheless supported impressively by the findings of many sciences. There may be some significant differences among scientists concerning the mechanics of evolution; yet the evolution of the species is supported so strongly by the weight of evidence that it is difficult to reject it. Accordingly, we deplore the efforts by fundamentalists (especially in the United States) to invade the science classrooms, requiring that creationist theory be taught to students and requiring that it be included in biology textbooks. This is a serious threat both to academic freedom and to the integrity of the educational process. We believe that creationists surely should have the freedom to express their viewpoint in society. Moreover, we do not deny the value of examining theories of creation in educational courses on religion and the history of ideas; but it is a sham to mask an article of religious faith as a scientific truth and to inflict that doctrine on the scientific curriculum. If successful, creationists may seriously undermine the credibility of science itself.

10. *Education.* In our view, education should be the essential method of building humane, free, and democratic societies. The aims of education are many: the transmission of knowledge; training for occupations, careers, and democratic citizenship; and the encouragement of moral growth. Among its vital purposes should also be an attempt to develop the capacity for critical intelligence in both the individual and the community. Unfortunately, the schools are today being increasingly replaced by the mass media as the primary institutions of public information and education. Although the electronic media provide unparalleled opportunities for extending cultural enrichment and enjoyment, and powerful learning opportunities, there has been a serious misdirection of their purposes. In totalitarian societies, the media serve as the vehicle of propaganda and indoctrination. In democratic societies television, radio, films, and mass publishing too often cater to the lowest common denominator and have become banal

wastelands. There is a pressing need to elevate standards of taste and appreciation. Of special concern to secularists is the fact that the media (particularly in the United States) are inordinately dominated by a pro-religious bias. The views of preachers, faith healers, and religious hucksters go largely unchallenged, and the secular outlook is not given an opportunity for a fair hearing. We believe that television directors and producers have an obligation to redress the balance and revise their programming.

Indeed, there is a broader task that all those who believe in democratic secular humanist values will recognize, namely, the need to embark upon a long-term program of public education and enlightenment concerning the relevance of the secular outlook to the human condition.

Conclusion

Democratic secular humanism is too important for human civilization to abandon. Reasonable persons will surely recognize its profound contributions to human welfare. We are nevertheless surrounded by doomsday prophets of disaster, always wishing to turn the clock back—they are anti-science, anti-freedom, anti-human. In contrast, the secular humanistic outlook is basically melioristic, looking forward with hope rather than backward with despair. We are committed to extending the ideals of reason, freedom, individual and collective opportunity, and democracy throughout the world community. The problems that humankind will face in the future, as in the past, will no doubt be complex and difficult. However, if it is to prevail, it can only do so by enlisting resourcefulness and courage. Secular humanism places trust in human intelligence rather than in divine guidance. Skeptical of theories of redemption, damnation, and reincarnation, secular humanists attempt to approach the human situation in realistic terms: human beings are responsible for their own destinies.

We believe that it is possible to bring about a more humane world, one based upon the methods of reason and the principles of tolerance, compromise, and the negotiations of difference. We recognize the need for intellectual modesty and the willingness to revise beliefs in the light of criticism. Thus consensus is sometimes attainable. While emotions are important, we need not resort to the panaceas of salvation, to escape through illusion, or to some desperate leap toward passion and violence. We deplore the growth of intolerant sectarian creeds that foster hatred. In a world engulfed by obscurantism and irrationalism it is vital that the ideals of the secular city not be lost.

A Secular Humanist Declaration was drafted by Paul Kurtz, Editor, FREE INQUIRY.

A Secular Humanist Declaration has been endorsed by the following individuals:

Although we who endorse this declaration may not agree with all its specific provisions, we nevertheless support its general purposes and direction and believe that it is important that they be enunciated and implemented. We call upon all men and women of good will who agree with us to join in helping to keep alive the commitment to the principles of free inquiry and the secular humanist outlook. We submit that the decline of these values could have ominous implications for the future of civilization on this planet.

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Khoren Arisian, *minister, First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis*

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*Since deceased.

(Other names being added. Institutions are for identification only)

The Ground We Stand On: Democratic Humanism

Sidney Hook

That the forces and institutions of intelligence are on the defensive throughout the world can be demonstrated by the headlines and news stories of the daily press. They were never in the ascendancy in any country. But there was some legitimate basis for hope that, with the defeat of fascism after World War II, efforts would be made to establish genuine welfare states throughout the world, based on the recognition of the inviolability of human rights. Unfortunately, because World War II was fought, not on the basis of the four freedoms proclaimed by the leading statesmen of the West, but from the point of view of a narrow military perspective, those who put freedom first confronted on a global scale the threats of aggressive Communist totalitarianism, terroristic nationalism, and militant religious fanaticism—all contemptuous of democratic processes, the values of a rational humanism, and the integrity of free inquiry.

Despite all the limitations of its current foreign and domestic policies, the United States still remains the bastion of a free society. Not the U.N. as it is presently organized, but the preservation and extension of its philosophy of human rights and welfare is the last best hope of mankind. Integral to that philosophy is the commitment to free inquiry and reliance upon the methods and resources of scientific intelligence.

These methods and resources are under attack by recent developments on the American scene. Although manifestations of religious fundamentalism are a recurrent phenomenon in American life, during the last few years a union of powerful evangelical movements has emerged as a strong political force. Its obscurantist philosophy is based upon outspoken hostility to scientific inquiry and its denial that the findings of such inquiry are in any way relevant to the resolution of problems of life and death. Although of an entirely different order, there has been a revival of religious faith in certain sophisticated intellectual quarters. It is argued by some that in the last analysis — as if there ever is a last analysis! — all fundamental explanatory paradigms, whether scientific, metaphysical or theological, are of equal validity; a rigorously consistent set of superstitions is thought to be as intellectually acceptable as any critically tested scientific hypothesis.

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Of greater relevance to the concerns of rational humanists is the contention that without commitment to transcendent religious beliefs or values no programs of social reform can be justified or implemented. Even some neo-conservative thinkers who are resolute in their defense of human freedom hold this view. Let us examine it and its various ramifications.

By religion I mean faith in the existence of some supernatural power which governs human destiny and serves as a cosmic support of human ideals. Insofar as religion functions purely as a consolation to the individual for the irremediable evils and tragedies of existence, it is too personal a matter to be anyone else's concern, and I shall not discuss it further. But the consolatory function of religious beliefs must not be proclaimed as valid evidence for their truth, since it is obvious that myths as well as truths may be consoling.

In recent years many large claims have been made for religious faith. It has been celebrated as the taproot of democracy, indeed of all morality. Its revival has been hailed as the best ground for reasonable hope of an enduring world peace. It has been urged as a specific for industrial strife, crime, poverty, and all other impediments to a just society. It has been widely asserted that we must choose between a renewed faith in religion and a faith in some totalitarian ideology which is certain to blossom wherever religion withers. A whole chorus of voices insists that the crisis of our age must ultimately be defined in these terms.

I believe all of these claims are false. The validity of democracy as a moral and political ideal does not rest upon religious doctrines. Despite the resurgence of religion during the past decade, the world is not noticeably a better place to live in. In many respects it is worse. The alternative to religion is not necessarily the brutalitarian nihilism of Hitlerism or the dictatorial, secret-police state of Stalinism or any other variety of totalitarianism. Insofar as civilization has a future, it is contingent upon the growth of the ideals of a universal democratic humanism which embraces what is morally best in religion, fortified by reliance not on supernatural dogmas but on the instruments of enlightened, scientific intelligence. Religion has had thousands of years to unify the world into a semblance of a just and cooperative world order. It has failed. Democratic humanism may fail, too. That depends, in part, upon whether the ardor and devotion that have been expended on transcendental objects of faith can be transferred to the democratic heritage as a pattern for the reconstruction of

social life.

It is an open question whether the revival of religious beliefs and institutions may not lead to the exacerbation of differences among men. For most religions make claims to being the exclusive repositories of God's truth, acceptance of which is a necessary condition of salvation. Were these claims to be abandoned, the justification for *separate* religious organizations would largely disappear. But to a militant believer religion means *the* religion — his own. When he looks to the future of religion to liberate mankind from its burden of evils, he looks primarily to his own church and its teachings.

It is hard to find a doctrine common to all religious faiths and of sufficient importance to override doctrinal differences. Belief in the Brotherhood of Man under the Fatherhood of God comes closest perhaps to being the common article of faith of all religious groups in the Western and Near Eastern worlds. It is this belief, we are told, on which the democratic philosophy rests. To accept the latter and reject the former is to be guilty of inconsistency, of sentimental and unintelligent belief in democracy.

Logically, the derivation of democracy from this belief is a complete *non sequitur*. The proposition that all men are brothers, whether taken theologically or biologically, does not entail any proposition essential to the democratic faith. No matter what the origin of man is, supernatural or natural, we cannot legitimately infer from his equality in supernatural status or natural fact that men should enjoy equality of opportunity or equality of citizenship. These democratic beliefs are compatible with many different alleged "presuppositions." Our reasons for accepting democracy rather than its ethical and political alternatives are not only independent of our reasons for accepting the theological or biological brotherhood of man; they are far more warranted in the light of experience. This is true for any moral ideal. Our grounds for belief in honesty and kindness do not depend upon belief in supernatural dogma or other "presuppositions." We would be horrified by anyone who told us that, if he surrendered his belief in the existence of God or the second law of thermodynamics or whatnot, he would no longer regard dishonesty and cruelty as morally wrong. The same logic holds for the belief in the democratic ideal. It is in terms of its fruits and consequences in human experience that we accept or reject it, not in terms of supernatural belief, whether taken literally or metaphorically.

Historically, there is little warrant for the assertion that religious dogmas are the prime source of modern democracy. The most religious countries are notoriously not the most democratic ones. The historical record shows that organized religion has accommodated itself to all social systems and forms of government, no matter how tyrannical, which have tolerated its existence. In some countries it has actively supported social iniquities. Undeniably there have been religious movements, and still more often great religious personalities, that have aided the cause of freedom. What moved them in the main were moral insights and a complex of historical interests, shared by secular movements, too, and not special theological dogmas. For these dogmas served as identical premises in the thinking of those who opposed progressive movements. We

know that Judaism countenanced slavery, while Christianity never condemned it in principle. Organized religion was one of the mainstays of feudalism. In Spain it supported Franco. In Russia it supported Stalin — when he let it.

The organizational structure of institutions based on supernatural dogmas and of the social systems they actively support tends toward theocracy, not democracy. Recognition of the rights of individual conscience, toleration of religious minorities, freedom of scientific inquiry, abolition of child labor, birth control, the use of anesthetics, secular education, separation of church and state, and other liberal and humane practices have made their way in the face of opposition of organized religion.

It is sometimes maintained that nonreligious protagonists for a better world have drawn their inspiration and fire from the dying embers of a religious faith which, despite their denials, still glow within them. This is obviously question-begging, for it assumes that no validation of moral ideals is possible except in terms of supernatural belief — precisely the point at issue. It would be truer to say that religious believers who have supported the cause of social justice have been moved by the evidence of experience and not by the compelling force of theological doctrine. The evidence that men share a common lot and destiny in a world of atomic power is far stronger than the evidence that they share a common origin, and a supernatural one at that.

Those who see promise in the revival of religion overlook the significance of the fact that supernatural faith is marked by the sharpest dualism in its conception of the place of man in nature. This dualism is the root source of ambiguity in the application of religious dogmas. It denies that man is a child of nature. It endows him with an immortal soul which is essentially independent of his body and his culture. Man's soul is the most precious thing about him. He can and must keep it pure, no matter what the world, his transitory home, is like. It is as immortal souls that all men are equal before God. And this equality is essentially unaffected by any kind of social and political inequality. Consequently, it is always possible to square supernatural dogmas with societies in which democracy is absent — or present. It is never clear on religious grounds alone how its dogmas are being applied. That is why they are compatible with social policies that are mutually contradictory to each other. More important still, it is impossible within the framework of religious thought to find a *method* which will enable us to judge and negotiate conflicting interests in empirical situations. A common supernatural faith therefore provides no principle of direction for the intelligent control of social change.

Religion is sometimes understood, not as involving belief in the supernatural or acceptance of doctrine, but as an attitude of ultimate concern or, in William James's phrase, "a man's total reaction upon life." In this sense everyone who is passionately alive to something exciting in the world, or to some possibility struggling to be born, is religious; the irreligious, apparently, are those who are dead but still unburied. We possess a number of perfectly good words to designate this activity of vital emotional interest, and I prefer not to be converted to religion by definition. But if we use the

term in this sense, there is a certain danger in equating religion with any large faith and then welcoming a general revival of religion. For it underestimates, when it does not ignore, the quality, content, and fruits of faith, which should be of infinitely greater concern to us than the bare act of faith, no matter how intense. Better a man of little faith in good than of great faith in evil.

Many years ago it was quite fashionable to speak of fascism as a great faith which integrated the personality of its believers, elicited a passionate devotion to objects greater than themselves, and brought a firm discipline into their emotional life. The fruits of that faith were evident even in the past to all who wished to know the truth. But in the moment of its triumph, many bowed down in vulgar worship of power, blinded by its nimbus of glory. Similarly, there are today some who believe that the Communist faith is the only basis upon which the civilized tradition can be rebuilt. Its total reign of terror, which has grown in intensity over the years, is callously written off as a part of the costs of "progress," although the costs of Christianity, the industrial revolution, capitalism, and democracy are computed with great care and indignation. In the case of both fascism and communism, we observe a sharp dissociation between ends and means, and a substitution of unlimited faith in the future for the exercise of intelligence and humanity in the present. These faiths should be judged, not by the intensity with which they are held, but by their consequences on the lives of the human beings who accept them, on the lives of their victims, and on the lives of those on whom they are *imposed*. For in countries where such faiths are official, they are not freely selected among alternatives. In short, religious faith cannot be separated from doctrines, and from the practices to which doctrines lead or which they justify.

Some who deplore totalitarian faiths because of their degrading effects express the wish that the fanaticism with which their adherents are imbued could be harnessed to faith in democracy. This disregards the ways in which what is most typical in totalitarian faith is indissolubly bound up with its creed and practices — a union that is happily no longer true in present-day religion. A democrat cannot be fanatical in the same way as a fascist or communist, for whom an unanalyzed end justifies the use of *any* means. But it does not follow that because he is humane and intelligent a democrat cannot be passionate and active in his faith, that he must be a political Hamlet, irresolute before the combination of toughness and chicanery with which his totalitarian opponents confront him.

Instead of a revival of religious faith in general, we should work specifically toward a revival, or a new birth, of faith in democracy. Such a faith is the only one that can unify society without imposing uniformity upon it. It is a faith that can embrace believers and nonbelievers in a vast number of different "presuppositions" — theological, metaphysical, naturalistic. For these are all compatible with democracy. Required of those who profess them is only that they sincerely accept the democratic practices by which equality of concern for all individuals, collective participation, and freely given consent of the governed — the cardinal doctrine of democratic faith — are implemented. It excludes none but avowed totalitarians and the secret totalitarians who redefine democracy to make it

synonymous with its opposite. Such a democratic faith has many fronts on which to fight: race relations, education, social, political, and economic organization. It does not fear to use power; otherwise it is at the mercy of nondemocratic faiths. It seeks to tame power by making it intelligent and responsible; that is, it is designed to achieve morally inclusive ends through institutions that provide for wide participation and open criticism.

As a social philosophy, the democratic faith accepts that measure of social control which would liberate the productive forces of modern technology without curtailing the freedoms enshrined in the Bill of Rights, which would remove the blight of poverty and the threat of insecurity without making a fetish of efficiency and centralization, which would provide, as far as possible, those objective conditions of social and cultural life in whose absence "equality of opportunity for all" is a hollow phrase. It may be a tautology to say that such a form of social democracy can exist only where political democracy exists. But a tautology is important when contraposed to an absurdity — such as the view that a humanist society can be achieved by the political dictatorship of a minority party.

The democratic faith is not only a social philosophy but a personal philosophy as well. It calls for a mode of behavior in our daily interchanges with each other that makes the inescapable occasions of differences and dispute opportunities for cooperative discussion in which all interests receive a fair hearing. It recognizes that no profound social change is possible which does not involve a change in institutions, in the impersonal relationships which govern men. But it also recognizes that institutions are even less capable than machines of running according to blueprints and plans alone. No matter how generous the declared purposes of an institution may be, unless it is operated by men and women dedicated in their own lives to these purposes, it can easily be transformed into an agency of human oppression.

There is nothing promised by a revival of religious faith, considered in terms of doctrine, which is not promised by a new growth of faith in democracy. But there are some things threatened by the revival of the first which are not threatened by the growth of the second.

How to inspire, extend, and strengthen faith in democracy, and build a mass movement of men and women personally dedicated to it, is the great issue of our time. But it is clear that, although devotees of the democratic faith may be found the world over, the most practical opportunities exist where democratic traditions have until now, despite all their imperfections, been strongest. In countries in which political democracy still exists, we have something to go on, a certain pattern of democratic life, and an area of freedom in which it can be enriched and deepened. If the destinies of these countries can be linked together in a common resolve not merely to preserve political democracy but to build democracy as a way of life into the very fabric of their social institutions, they will conquer the world not by force of arms but by force of example. For democracy is like love in this: It cannot be brought to life in others by command. Shared experience, sympathetic understanding, and good works are ultimately the best nourishment for democratic convictions. •

Humanism: Secular or Religious

Paul Beattie

Joseph Wood Krutch denies that modern literature can portray the "tragic" dimension of human experience, while Herbert J. Muller insists that an age which has invented the atom bomb can understand tragedy and that modern writers "have written drama worthy of being dignified by this name." Ayn Rand defends capitalism as passionately as Karl Marx attacked it. Carl Rogers rejects the determinism of B.F. Skinner. Freud developed a psychology based on a limited quanta of energy, while Maslow portrays the human mind as having almost limitless energy as basic needs are satisfied. The philosopher Sidney Hook defends American involvement in Vietnam, while Corliss Lamont criticizes our nation's actions. On almost every major issue, whether intellectual, social, economic, or political, humanists find themselves in disagreement. Humanism is not a fixed set of doctrines but a frame of orientation for integrating what can and cannot be known by human beings on any question or subject. There is a growing body of information which is accepted as genuine knowledge, not just opinion; however, the more of nature's secrets we discover, the more precisely we realize what we do not know, and the more complex becomes the process of applying knowledge to social and political decisions. As long as intelligent life on this planet continues, there will be steady gains in human knowledge to be integrated into thought and action. Much of the crucial discussion about the human future is likely to occur within the humanistic frame of orientation, because humanism comprehends the forces which have created the modern world.

Diversity among humanists tempts them to identify themselves by creating hyphenated varieties of humanism. Some of the most familiar of these hyphenated humanisms are: democratic-humanism, religious-humanism, ethical-humanism, scientific-humanism, evolutionary-humanism and secular-humanism. This penchant for the hyphen stems, in

part, from the desire not to be misunderstood. The democratic-humanist wants to define himself in opposition to Marxism or various kinds of elitism, while a secular-humanist may wish to disassociate himself from all aspects of religion. However, the main reason for a hyphenated humanism lies in the fact that a person's academic discipline or passion is apt to provide the central core of insights around which he constructs his humanist vision. A biologist is likely to place evolutionary theory at the center of his thought and thus refers to evolutionary-humanism; a physicist is tempted to talk about scientific-humanism, which he sees as being quite different from the literary forms of humanism. These different humanist labels are harmless; they are often useful because they add clarity to philosophical discourse. As humanism becomes increasingly a worldwide phenomenon, such specificity will be ever more important. For example, I do not want my humanism confused with that of the totalitarian Soviet state, which Russian theoreticians continue to describe as a humanistic political experiment. As with any other philosophy, humanism must constantly refine its conceptual apparatus, its application to the world, and its definition of itself.

Labels are not enough; it is only through an intelligent dialogue that humanists can make themselves understood, and sometimes labels hinder more than they help such discourse. One of the most perplexing controversies between hyphenated humanisms is that between "religious-humanism" and "secular-humanism." Some people get quite exercised about the difference between the two; I do not find the differences between them to be great or very important. Secular and religious humanists joined in signing both the 1933 and the 1973 Humanist Manifestos. Both religious and secular humanists applaud the secular revolution which has radically transformed the world, bringing incredible human breakthroughs in society and technology, along with an ever greater range of choice for the individual. Although I have never heard religious humanists say that secularism is a bad thing, some secular humanists resent the linking of humanism to religion in any way.

Secular and religious humanists have three areas of dis-

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agreement: they differ on the definition of the word "religion"; they differ on the worth of a particular institutional form; and they assign a different value to the study of religious traditions. Their initial disagreement is semantic: what does the word "religion" mean and can it be a part of the humanist orientation? Endless definitions of "religion" have been concocted, none satisfies everyone and none exists which is fair to all historical manifestations of religion. I define religion as a person's whole response to all of life; for me, having a religion is the same as having a philosophy of life. While such a definition involves loose word-usage and is so characterized by the second edition of Webster's unabridged dictionary, it is, however, acceptable usage: religion is: "3. (a) any specific system of belief, worship, conduct, etc., often involving a code of ethics and a philosophy; as, the Christian *religion*, the Buddhist *religion*, etc.; (b) loosely, any system of beliefs, practices, ethical values, etc., resembling, suggestive of, or likened to such a system; as, 'humanism is his *religion*.'" While the reader may be amused by the *double-entendre* engendered in this context by Webster's loose use of the word *humanism* (he probably means humanistic studies), I hope my case for a loose definition of religion is not lost in mirth. While I continue to use the word "religion," I am not disturbed if some of my humanist friends eschew it. My religion, my whole response to all of life, is composed of the best discoveries and innovations of secular culture, so I have no argument with the secular humanist. However, we both have to be discriminating with regard to what is utilized from secular culture, just as I have to be discriminating about what I borrow from religious tradition.

A second difference between secular and religious humanists crystallizes around the value of the institutional form called the church. The church grew out of the Jewish synagogue. The synagogue was a successful institutional innovation as it allowed the Hebrew religious community to survive even in Diaspora. The Jewish religion was not overwhelmed by the temple in Jerusalem was utterly destroyed, Judaism survived. The Jewish organizational form was borrowed by an emerging sect of Jewish-Christians who turned it into the Christian church. Since that time the church has been, like the synagogue, a haven for countless individuals and families. The religious humanist values such an organizational form as a counterpoint to the anonymity and fragmentation of today's urban, highly mobile, industrialized society. Early in the American experience the frontier church became a social center, irrespective of the intellectual merit of its doctrines, and today churches still provide a sense of belonging to perhaps 79 percent of the population. The first great experiment in separation of church and state was pioneered in America, with the result that the church flourished and so did the commonweal. Today religious humanists, while rejecting Jewish or Christian beliefs, value the primary group relationships that religious institutions provide. Three organizations in America have coopted the organizational form of the church or synagogue while encouraging the spread of humanism and humanistic ideas: Unitarian-Universalist churches and fellowships, Ethical Societies, and Societies of Humanistic Judaism. Not every humanist in these groups would use the word "religion" to describe his orientation, but many would, and most religious

humanists participate in religious institutions when they can find a religious community sympathetic to the humanist perspective. Humanist celebrations can intensify and deepen humanist commitments in the same way that worship and ritual acts aid the participants in traditional religions.

A tactical question debated among humanists is whether or not they should try to qualify for the advantages and exemptions granted by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service to religious groups. As a practical matter humanists have found it necessary to do so. Why should a humanist not receive the same sort of tax deduction for contributing to a humanist organization that a Roman Catholic gets for sending his pence to the Pope? Why should a pacifist who is a humanist not receive the same draft exemption that the Muslim Muhammad Ali received? On the other hand, it can be argued that, as humanism has become visible as a religious option, such recognition has led to an escalation of attacks against it. If humanism is a religion (at least for some humanists), then, perhaps, the charges that the public schools have been penetrated by the humanist religion or philosophy are true! The response to this charge should not be a denial of the right of some humanists to claim that their point of view constitutes a religious option; instead, the response should be that the curriculum of a school is bound to reflect secular and humanist values since secularism has created many of the achievements of the modern world. The abandonment of these values would presage a regression into barbarism; for science, medicine, astronomy, physics, and technology have all developed out of the same forces which made secularism and humanism possible.

The third difference between the secular and religious humanist involves the attitude each has toward religious traditions. The religious humanist sees a greater value in the history of religions and in comparative studies of religion. All religions have some value for the religious humanist, and particularly the humanistic religions of Confucianism and Buddhism. As the Roman poet Terence put it, "Nothing human is foreign to me"; the traditions of the living world religions, and even of religions known only by means of historical reconstruction, contain many different insights for the living of life and allow us to study the human psyche. The religious humanist thinks that the religious dimension of human experience is worthy of study, the secular humanist does not. While somewhat dated, studies like Ludwig Andreas Feuerbach's *The Essence of Christianity*, J.A.C. Fagginger Auer's *The Case for Humanism*, and A. Eustace Haydon's *The Quest of Ages*, provide constructive interpretations and appreciations of the traditional religious dimension of human life. In our own time similar appreciations of the insights which can be gleaned from traditional religion are found in the writings of Julian Huxley (*Religion Without Revelation*) and Erich Fromm (*Psychoanalysis and Religion* and *Ye Shall Be As Gods*). Humanists must remember, says the religious humanist, that most religions or philosophies progress by grafting themselves upon the preceding religious systems. Humanism may make greater progress in the world if, along with its secular forms, it seeks to leaven Christianity, Taoism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Confucianism, Islam, and other existing religions.

religious label, I hasten to add that some religious humanists take religious studies more seriously than I do. Some believe that the religious tradition carries within it insights, ideals, and practices which *alone* can sustain and direct human life. This I doubt. While we can learn from religious traditions, I think that what we can learn from them is quite limited. I suspect that religion has been largely an epiphenomenon of culture and is ineffective in directing the human venture. Consider the half-crazed prophets of the Old Testament, how little they modified their own society, despite all their moral pronouncements. What was most important in ancient Egypt, the myth that Pharaoh was God and the building of the pyramids, or the technologies of irrigation, surveying, pottery, manufacture, metallurgy, and writing? While it is true that Egyptian culture was an organic whole, only its technological discoveries became the common property of the Mediterranean world. Religious ideas do not pass easily between different cultures. As a species, human beings have benefited and advanced dramatically by secularizing knowledge and technology in

ways that allow it to ignore religious boundaries. The invention of writing and its use by traders throughout the Mediterranean world was more important in the development of civilization than its use by religious scribes to record "divine revelations" (which often played a regressive and destructive role in human affairs). While the religious humanist is interested in religious studies and while some would go further than others in such appreciation, most religious humanists recognize that, ultimately, reason, science, and the democratic process can alone adequately sustain and direct the human venture. The religious and secular humanists have much in common and the differences which separate them do not prevent them from working side by side in the humanist cause. Perhaps the question is not "Is humanism secular or religious?" but, instead, "What are the criteria which humanists use in selecting from and appropriating all that is available to them in the modern secular world, along with that which comes to them from the human past and even from the traditions and experiences of religion?" •

Freethought: Past and Present

Gordon Stein

The colorful history of freethought (atheism, rationalism, humanism, secularism, and skepticism) is not widely known. Although there have been a number of books written on the subject, none has been widely read by the educated public, and a knowledge of the history of freethought has been restricted to a few specialists.¹ Freethought has been defined in a number of different ways. In the present case, I am using the term as a world outlook which rejects the appeal to authority of any dogmas, especially religious dogmas. Freethought is thought which is free of the assumptions of religious dogmas. The freethought movement had several historical peaks in popularity (as measured by activities and membership), and also went through periods of virtual dormancy and decline. The purpose of this article is to highlight the historical facts, and to explore some of the possible reasons for the decline in the movement, a decline which extends into the present.

Although there were atheistic schools of philosophy among

the ancient Indians (Cārvāka) and atheism was far from unknown in ancient Greece, we can identify the first organized (or rather concerted) attempt at a freethought movement — the publication of Anthony Collins's *A Discourse of Free Thought* in 1713. This book was one of the most popular influences in facilitating the spread of deism. Deism, a precursor of freethought, may be defined as "atheism *with* God." By that it is meant that, although the deists believed that a god had created the universe, they held that he then had no further contact with it, so that for all practical purposes there was no God in men's lives. It was only later, with the growth of the science of astronomy, that the need for a god in the creation of the universe was no longer felt. Deism flourished from about 1700 to 1750 in England, and from about 1730 to 1800 in the United States. It went into a swift decline in both places, probably because there was nothing left to say about its doctrines that had not already been said.

The book that revived the freethought movement in both the United States and England was, strangely enough, written as a deist work. I am referring to Thomas Paine's *The Age of Reason*, first published in 1794-96 in two parts. Paine states quite clearly in this book that he believes in God, yet it was condemned as atheistic from the very beginning. Rather, the book was the first work critical of the Bible which was written

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Thomas Paine

G. Vigrass

simply enough to be read by the average workingman. As such, it had an enormous influence upon the hold that religion had on the workingman's life. Most of the freethought movements of the later part of the nineteenth century looked upon the artisan and the informed workman as the major source of their support. *The Age of Reason* was responsible for making more people into "infidels" than any other book except the Bible.

In France, unbelief was greatly aided by Voltaire, who can be called a deist in his outlook, and by such outright atheists as D'Holbach and Diderot. The publication of the *Encyclopédie* in the late 1700s was a milestone in the development of the use of reason to explain the world.

Organized freethought developed slowly. Richard Carlile helped spread the idea of unorthodoxy by bravely republishing all of Paine's works, along with those of most of the earlier freethinkers, in spite of a government prohibition against doing so. Carlile spent more than nine years in jail upon conviction for blasphemy and several other offenses related to his religious and political opinions.

The first actual freethought organizations, which went back to Carlile's day, were the Zetetic Societies. They were found largely in Scotland. During the 1840s, there were other freethought societies in existence, such as the Anti-Persecution Union, the London Atheistical Society, and the Halls of Science. The latter were originally a part of Robert Owen's Socialist movement, but eventually were associated with the freethinkers. In the United States, the first freethought groups were called the Free Enquirers. Frances Wright and Robert Dale Owen were their original organizers. A short-lived group of Thomas Paine admirers had preceded this. They were called the Theophilanthropists. In the 1830s, attempts at national organization of freethinkers were made in the United States. They were not very successful. In 1845, there was a meeting held in New York City at which the Infidel Society for the Promotion of Mental Liberty was formed. It was also not very successful. The Infidel Association of the United States was formed at a meeting in Philadelphia in 1857. Again, the group only lasted a short while.

Freethought reached one of its peaks of popularity and notoriety in the 1842-43 period. At that time, most of the important figures then active in a leadership role in England were being prosecuted for blasphemy. George Jacob Holyoake (who coined the word "secularism"), Charles Southwell (publisher of the first openly atheistic magazine in England, *The Oracle of Reason*) and Henry Hetherington (an early freethought publisher) were all prosecuted, convicted, and jailed. In the United States, the blasphemy trial of Abner Kneeland (the founder of the rationalist paper *The Boston Investigator*) ran through the 1836-38 period, including the appeals. Kneeland also served time in jail upon his conviction.

The next peak of freethought activity, in both England and the United States, was the 1865-1900 period which has been called "the golden age of freethought." Charles Bradlaugh began his career in the British freethought cause at about this time, while in the United States, D. M. Bennett started his freethought magazine, *The Truth Seeker*, in 1873, and Robert G. Ingersoll began lecturing on freethought subjects in the early 1870s. Ingersoll's later immense popularity as a lecturer was largely responsible for the development of the "golden age" of freethought in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Bradlaugh can share in the responsibility for helping produce a "golden age" of freethought in England at the same time by means of his lecturing, writing, and parliamentary struggles.

From this time until about 1900 in the United States, and until about 1915 in the United Kingdom, freethought was at its all time peak. Freethought periodicals, such as *The Freethinker* and *The National Reformer* in England and *The Freethinker's Magazine* in the United States, were founded and prospered by today's standards. Charles Bradlaugh was joined in the leadership of the British freethought movement by Annie Besant, George W. Foote, Charles Watts, George Jacob Holyoake, and "Saladin" (W. S. Ross). Although there was a rivalry among these leaders, most of the time they were on speaking terms. Occasionally, an issue such as birth control would bitterly divide the leadership and the movement itself. In the United States, the main leaders besides Ingersoll and Bennett at this time were J.R. Monroe, Charles C. Moore, Eugene Macdonald, Samuel P. Putnam, B.F. Underwood, and H.L. Green. Ingersoll became the best-known orator in the United States and was friendly with virtually everyone of importance. His lectures were widely reported in the regular press and were presented to large and enthusiastic audiences.

Annie Besant defected to Theosophy in 1890. Bradlaugh died in 1891 and Ingersoll in 1899. Watts and Holyoake died in 1906. After 1906, freethought was on the decline. G.W. Foote carried on until his death in 1915. Although Chapman Cohen in England was able to hold together the remnants of the movement through the Second World War, there was no similar leader in the United States who could single-handedly maintain the movement. Charles Smith tried for a while during the late 1920s and 1930s, but the "Great Depression" dealt a financial death blow to his highly publicized American Association for the Advancement of Atheism.

In the twentieth century, we have seen the development of the humanist movement. The same sort of people who may have joined the secularists or rationalists in the late 1800s, now

find the humanist groups more accessible to them. The rhetoric of these groups has been toned down considerably from its outspokenness of the pre-1900 period. Humanism has become almost "respectable."

In England, the Rationalist Press Association reached its peak in membership at the time of the Second World War. After that, it showed some rises and falls in membership, but the overall trend was downwards. The National Secular Society also had an overall downward trend in membership after World War II.

The reasons for the fall in membership and interest in freethought organizations in the last 50 years are rather complex. Basically, it can be stated without too much fear of contradiction that the more repressive a society is seen to be (with regard to religious liberty), the stronger will be the organizing ability and the larger the membership of freethought groups. However if belonging to a freethought group is illegal and dangerous, many people will not join, but the number of freethinkers in the populace will be high in such a society.

Modern Western society has seen an increasing amount of secularization occur. This has removed, to an extent, the immediate pressure for rebellion against the inequities of religion. When religion is weak, not too much reason to oppose it is seen. Examples of this peculiar relationship between the pervasiveness of religion in a society and the strength of organized freethought in that society can best be seen in Spain and Italy. There, freethought has always existed in modern times, but it has increased (along with the anti-clerical elements) at times of particular piety.

Freethought has always had three strikes against it. It could not obtain newspaper or magazine space in which to advertise or publish things which the public would see. It was denied access to fund-raising methods open to religion. Finally, because of this lack of finances, the freethought movement was unable to publicize itself and unable to produce much impact on society with its own limited periodicals and speakers. Therefore, the movement has always been receptive to the presence of a charismatic leader. When such a leader arose, the freethought movement usually revived and entered a period of rapid growth. On the other hand, the deaths of these leaders rapidly reduced freethought to a state of dormancy.

We are now seeing in the United States a growth of the so-called "pentecostal" types of Christianity. Unfortunately, history has shown that these groups are the very ones which have the least respect for the religious liberty of any group other than themselves. They yell and scream very loudly when any infringement of *their* religious liberty occurs, or is perceived to occur. An example is the millions of letters to the Federal Communications Commission which were received when the totally erroneous idea was spread in fundamentalist publications that Madalyn Murray O'Hair had started a suit which would have forced religious programs off the air. In fact, there was never any such suit. At the same time, many members of these fundamentalist groups are also supporters of conservative political movements. They use these movements to make their religious feelings known to the government and to the public.

All of this relates rather directly to the future of the

freethought movement in the United States in the following way: As the strength of pentecostal or evangelical Christianity grows, history would tell us that the reaction to this growth will also produce a growth in the freethought movement. Of course, there really is only an increased *potential* for the growth of freethought. If new leaders do not arise, with the dedication to advance the freethought cause, the potential may not be realized. It is a sad commentary that there must be a growth in organized superstition and mental tyranny, in the form of evangelical Christianity, with its loss of mental liberty, in order for freethought to be strengthened, but that may well be the current state of affairs.

¹Such as John M. Robertson's *History of Freethought in the Nineteenth Century*, and his *History of Freethought, Ancient and Modern, to the Period of the French Revolution*. There is also Edward Royle's *Victorian Infidels* and his *Radicals, Secularists and Republicans*, as well as Marshall Brown and Gordon Stein's *Freethought in the United States*, and Sidney Warren's *American Freethought, 1860-1914*. David Tribe's *100 Years of Freethought* is also worth consulting. Most of the other, more difficult to obtain freethought histories are mentioned in these books.

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The Fundamentalist Right Its Attack on Secular Humanism

William Ryan

In 1935, the Nobel Prize-winning author Sinclair Lewis wrote an alarming novel — most of his books were alarming — and a year later, he reshaped it as a play. The title, *It Can't Happen Here*, crowned the outrageous irony of a depressed America, so put upon and anguished by domestic troubles that it failed to see the gathering shadows of fascist oppression, the threat to personal freedom, the wiles and snares of a cosmetically attractive tyranny, and slavery.

World War II surgically hacked away all that was visible in the near-prophetic fictional world Lewis had only half-created. Hitler fell, as did his portly lap dog, Mussolini. Most dictators vanished. The planet — and the U.S. of A. — once again looked safe for democracy.

Forty years later, the world was inhabited by more dictators, bellicose shock troops, and terrorists than were ever recorded in history. Tell you what — *it can* happen here. *It is* happening here. A great threat to individual rights and freedoms, as guaranteed by the Constitution, exists in America today.

Swing too far to the Left and there's a pack of political bullies and potential tyrants. But amble slowly to the Right and the neighborhood gets flakey with more fanatics, do-or-diers, pseudo-intellectual criminals, and self-righteous lunatics than there is room for in the nightmares of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky. It is the Fun-

damentalist Right — that radical, cross-bearing, flag-waving, Bible-hoisting wing — which stands tall on your front lawn and often in your living room. It's trying to talk you out of your rights, seduce you away from the freedom to think and feel and conduct yourself in a truly moral manner. This Fundamentalist Right bears examination.

Organizations working in the public interest are frantically compiling lists of right wing groups and their sundry tabloid hate papers and newsletters. On these pages we'll look at the biggest and most dangerous of the lot, and very shortly. But what should be recognized at once are the attitudes and the instruments held in common by all the right-wing frontiers.

Patriotism. The Fundamentalist Right maintains its red-cheeked, fair-haired assurance that the United States is not only the greatest country in the world, but that it can do no wrong in its foreign policy or its treatment of the economically deprived or socially oppressed at home — except, that is, when certain liberal humanists exercise power bestowed upon them by — whom else? — the electorate. The United States is, indeed, the greatest country in the world, by reason of its Constitution and Bill of Rights. Those instruments permit equal opportunity — under law, at least — for every human being on this ground, regardless of race, gender, or religious preference. That the United States can do no wrong is argued daily in the nation's capitol, in the state houses, around the TV sets, and over barstools in the neighborhood taverns. The Fundamentalist Right scoffs at that elementary function of argumentation and face-to-face discourse. Only the Fundamentalist Right seems to know the truth and how to use it.

Muscular Christianity. The Fundamen-

talist Right calls the Holy Bible its sword. Every word therein is literally true, it says. It wants prayer reinstated in all public schools. It wants Genesis taught as science. It buys TV and radio time to spread the "Good News" about Jesus Christ and the world today. That "Good News" has a way of generating enormous anxiety among the gullible and among people who have always been really, truly religious. Many Fundamentalist Right leaders are Evangelists — "Old Time Religion"-style preachers and clergy who relish the Scripture's proliferation of doomsday predictions, personalized indictments of sin and damnation, and its prescriptions for wholesome, healthy living. These pulpit pounders can make Scripture mean anything. Somewhere they'll find the date and the hour and the location of the Mount St. Helens eruption in the Good Book, alongside God's announced wrath. These holy bullies dangle carrots to their flock in the form of such slogans as "Jesus Will Make You Rich" during these economically hopeless times. First, you must make the preachers rich with your donations. And they get rich. Very rich.

Paranoia. The Fundamentalist Right maintains its paper mill of fabricated news and guilt-by-association. It's the old "Know Your Enemy" game played with different pieces and a few of the old ones polished up. The scores of right-wing tabloids rave on and on about the alleged schemes of "liberals" to effect "World Government, World Law, World Dictatorship." The fundamentalists have always been against the United Nations, but the U.N. gets threadbare on their dart boards. They speak relentlessly about the Council on Foreign Relations, the Trilateral Commission, the Bilderberg Conferences, the Rockefellers, and whatnot. Today, the right claims that

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there is a world conspiracy to obliterate Christianity, free enterprise, middle-class family values, and everything else we hold dear. Some right-wing organizations — notably the John Birch Society and the Liberty Lobby — have a name for this conspiracy. Anything that goes wrong on the planet Earth can be blamed on the “Illuminati,” that centuries-old cult to which the world’s leaders supposedly bow and scrape and before which they tremble. But pay no attention to the man behind the curtain—

Hypocritical Loathing of Human Sexuality. The Evangelical Right-Wing has nothing at all on the Puritanism of Karl Marx, Lenin, Stalin, or Chairman Mao. All totalitarians fear sexuality. Today, the Bible Bigots are using the same instruments of confusion and terror. As much as they fear sex, they are forever talking of its influence on young and old. They equate sex with smut and all that is dirty. The federal statutes on what can be sold and mailed, in the way of printed matter, were based long ago on this self-righteous notion. Publishers and authors the world over have gone to jail for writing and selling the literature of love and sex. What the public has never realized is that so-called “obscenity and pornography” indictments and convictions in our courts are a clever subterfuge for political liquidations of another sort entirely. The literary history of this century is aromatic with case after case of how this “obscenity” ploy has been used. Its object has always been clear to those who can think clearly. *If you can control what people read or see or hear, you can control their minds.* So—let us do away with girlie magazines and X-rated movies. Let us burn works of fiction that include explicit eroticism, whether they bespeak something noble in the human spirit or not. And let us ban and destroy sex education. It will tell us too much about ourselves and the things that make us genuinely sick. The Fundamentalist Right will save our minds.

The history of books and magazines dealing with love and sex in a frank, open manner is rife with outrageous accounts of persecution. In this century, the record shows that so-called “pornographers” served jail terms on the basis of obscenity charges, when the true motives of the plaintiffs, complainants, or prosecutors were political. The late Samuel Roth was imprisoned six times for publishing erotic literature, most of which is now available in public libraries and college bookstores. The motive behind his legal problems was a cruel vengeance by certain powers for his fierce printed attacks on President Hoover, and

later for publishing a book exposing Walter Winchell. More recently, Ralph Ginzburg was sentenced to Lewisburg Penitentiary in 1970 for his lavish magazine, *Eros*. By 1970, anything lurid in *Eros* had been far surpassed by *Playboy* and other, cheaper periodicals. Ginzburg really went to the slammer because certain conservative right-wing politicians were upset about his earlier magazine, *Fact* — a socio-political gadfly.

Today, the American public need only scan the daily headlines or watch the 11 P.M. news on TV to hear about the legal problems of Larry Flynt’s *Hustler* or Al Goldstein’s *Screw* or Bob Guccione’s *Penthouse*. But the public only gets the scraps and filler stuff about the nationwide fight for sex education in the public schools. The press hasn’t been able to discuss it accurately or in depth. The only mass-distributed newspaper coverage about sex education and the schools is published by — you guessed it — the Fundamentalist Right, and it is written in the most distorted manner imaginable.

JERRY FALWELL

The Reverend Dr. Falwell of Lynchburg, Virginia, is an institution unto himself. His robust, Bible-waving figure made the pages of the new *Life* magazine last June. His country good-looks adorned several pages: hand-pumping with archconservatives; standing in his rubber robe and all set to baptize a herd of born-again by total immersion; and kneeling in prayer on his carpeted basement floor. *Life* reported that Falwell’s organization — some 1,200 staffers — has reaped some \$56 million in an evangelical campaign which translates prayer and moral outrage into bank checks and big bucks and is “growing explosively.” Falwell, like Brother Al Wyrick and other counterparts in the prayer business, will send you all sorts of inducements to the Christian life, “Jesus” collar pins, prayer coupons, fancy religious gew-gaws, placards, and buttons. His TV broadcasts of “The Old Time Gospel Hour” are viewed nationwide. Depending on where you live, a local network affiliate might be carrying Falwell’s folderol from the Thomas Road Baptist Church; if not, one of the UHF channels in your town has probably accepted his program a few times a week. After he tells you the latest scoop on his missions to feed the starving children of Cambodia, he puts on a guest speaker to spread out his usual dogma about pornography, abortion, and “secular humanism.”

In the 1970s, Pat Robertson’s “700 Club” was doing his job from Virginia Beach, Virginia. But the Reverend Pat has unbeatable competition in Jerry Falwell — the



Jerry Falwell

heat has gotten so intense that Robertson has gone amok with gloom and doom predictions for sinful America — which he’ll detail for anyone who sends a donation. Nobody in the Gospel game seems up to outselling Reverend Falwell. He is unquestionably the electronic Elmer Gantry. What the flock out there in Televisionland seems quite blind to is just how militant and politically volatile Jerry Falwell really is. Unquestionably, Falwell has the clout to do a great deal of good for America, and his efforts in behalf of the orphaned and displaced peoples of Southeast Asia are admirable and splendid. What is perennially dubious and chilling is how he applies that clout to all levels of government in the United States.

The Falwell organization has a lobby for practically every state house in the country. Jerry’s lobbyists are very visible in Richmond, and Virginia legislators have murmured to the press that the Falwell workers are inescapable. He wants prayer reinstated in every public school in every jurisdiction in the country. But he doesn’t stop there. As Falwell told *Life* magazine, “The moral issues have become political issues. In the next five years, that’s where we are going to have to fight . . . We have got the job now to be revolutionaries.”

Early this year, Falwell issued a printed *Declaration of War*, “a Holy War, not a war with guns and bullets, but a war fought with the Bible, prayer, and Christian involvement.” The foes are cited on this rococo-bordered Declaration, suitable for framing:

- . . . legalized abortion — the murder of innocent babies
- . . . secular humanism
- . . . pornography
- . . . homosexuality
- . . . the deterioration of the home and

family.

And the war is being fought — not only in state houses, but in the nation's capitol.

Jerry Falwell sponsors or bullhorns many lobbying bunkers on Capitol Hill in Washington. Among them are the Free Congress Research and Education Foundation; the Moral Majority, Inc.; and Jerry advertises the works and deeds of The Christian Voice, yet another right-wing pocket on Capitol Hill. We'll get to them later. It is noteworthy in this place that all these walk-ups and walk-downs in the renovated row-houses of Capitol Hill are within shouting distance of one another, and adjacent to the Liberty Lobby of Washington, D.C. The LL publishes a weekly tabloid, *The National Spotlight*, a scandal sheet to rival *The National Enquirer* with the added features of wild-eyed exposes of the "Illuminati" in America.

In Falwell's own Lynchburg neighborhood he operates the Liberty Baptist College, with its Institute of Applied Politics, "designed to prepare professionals and laymen to become actively involved in the political and governmental process of our nation." So reads Falwell's *Clean Up America Hotline Report*, May 1980, page 4. From Lynchburg is written and edited Falwell's twice-monthly, 16-page tabloid, *Moral Majority Report*. The May 1, 1980, issue coddles those Jews who have found Jesus Christ in their theosophical meanderings and have been thus born again; and the front-page story is a sycophantic tribute to Israel's Menachem Begin upon his recent visit to Washington, where he allegedly declared that the Bible is "not old stuff." Unlike the violence-prone anti-Semites on the Old Right, the evangelists on the Right have tended, since the 1970s, to patronize and curry favor with Jewish people who are vocally supportive of Israel and have put money up front in support of that nation.

Falwell is better at cranking the Bible money machine and twisting political arms than any of the other TV evangelists. He uses many names for the fundraising campaign to "Clean Up America." There is a Liberty Missionary Society, with a mailing address in Ontario, Canada, the "I Love America Club," "Faith Partners" and the "15,000 Club." Norman Pratt, of Falwell's Correspondence Department, assured this reporter by letter dated April 14, 1980, that these programs are all separate but equally involved in Brother Jerry's "Clean Up America" campaign. How do you get in on all this clean, upright fun? I did! Here's how!

One night I caught Jerry's act on the "Old Time Gospel Hour." That evening he hosted

one of the bitterest foes of some friends of mine — Dr. Charles Keating, Jr., President of the Ohio-based Citizens for Decency Through Law, a pack of censorship champs who published the bi-monthly *National Decency Reporter*. In one of Falwell's taped commercial messages, he told TV viewers that, for a \$12 donation, anyone could join his "I Love America Club," receive the monthly *Hotline* letter, which would report the Club's political plans and progress and many other things not to be spoken of during his TV show. And in addition — the most precious, durable gift of all — donees would receive Falwell's own authorized Bicentennial Bible.

Falwell's *Hotline* is a monthly fold-up of four pages, nicely printed on slick paper. He ticks off the occasional book bannings around the country — and the muscular Christian attempts and near-victories. Item: the 450 faithfuls of Fair Oaks Baptist Church, Concord, California, managed the temporary removal of the "semi-pornographic" *Ms.* magazine from Ygnacio Valley High School's library. The Christian petitioners haven't won all the way yet but they intend to. So reported the May *Hotline*. The little bulletin is peppered with attacks on homosexuals and political figures who endorse the gay movement. And there are always the calls to rallies and forums on the steps of state capitol, the mass demonstrations that turn into revival tent shows with the laying on of hands and the pelvic shakes and speaking in tongues.

But you also get the *Moral Majority Report* for your money, and therein you can read about the closing of adult book shops, the pronouncements of Coach Tom Landry of the Dallas Cowboys, William Loeb of the Manchester, N.H., *Union Leader*, Eldridge Cleaver, and a legion of others endowed with the golden keys of the higher moral life, as the Scarecrow earned his brain from the man behind the curtain. There are, as well, sermons against that smelly red herring "secular humanism," and at last an explanation of the "Family Protection Act," offered to Congress by U.S. Senator Paul Laxalt (R-Nevada) to protect the children from gay teachers in the public schools.

Once you're on Falwell's mailing list you get mail from his corporation every two or three days, much of it postmarked Boston, (MA), indicating a Falwell fulfillment house. Recently I was offered a Faith Partners Crusader's Passport, entitling me to a V.I.P. tour of Liberty Baptist College on "Liberty Mountain," a reserved seat in "our sanctuary" in Lynchburg, presumably the Thomas Road Baptist Church, and a special toll-free number to call, day or night,

for my personal hang-ups and prayer requests.

Even more recently, Falwell's outfit offered the Reverend's 1980 Survival Kit, consisting of:

1. a beautiful "Old Glory" lapel pin,
2. an inspirational Prayer Wheel to use during the rough days ahead,
3. a beautiful flag decal to display on your car or somewhere in your home, so that each time you pass it you will be reminded of what we are fighting for,
4. a survival "Prayer for America" that is suitable for framing,
5. a step-by-step booklet telling how you can help save America. This booklet summarizes the state our nation is in, lists the steps of action you can take to help, and gives Scriptural references to support the fight.

The best thing that Jerry Falwell sent me, I guess, was his Bicentennial Bible. The postal carrier brought it in a thick cardboard box. Bound in something resembling calfskin, it is twelve inches tall, nine inches across, and weighs close to ten pounds.

This volume is entitled *Holy Bible, American Bicentennial Second Edition*, all of that stamped on the front and spine in gold with the Liberty Bell in bold relief, complete with the crank. Across the lower front border is inscribed, in gold, "... where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty." II Cor. 3:17. The printed text numbers 1,102 pages, followed by a lavish color photo section and a map index. But the Bible itself — the King James version — begins with the Bible Concordance after some 152 pages of right-wing patriotism and propaganda, plus a kind of teacher's guide, numbered pages iii-xvi, for use by teachers and laymen for special interpretations. The publishing imprint for the colossal volume is Jerry Falwell Ministries, Lynchburg, Virginia.

Jerry Falwell told Zofia Smardz, of the *Washington Star*, "I believe in separation of church and state . . . but I don't believe in separation of God and state.

"Since Christians who believe in Biblical morality make up 84 percent of the nation, I think it's time we had our chance at running the government."

BILLY JAMES HARGIS

From out of the Ozarks thundered the Reverend Billy James Hargis, whose Christian Crusade dates from 1948. At 55 the ro-tund, well-dressed minister has probably already seen his finest hour. But he became such a paragon of the successful evangelist, playing the Fundamentalist Right paranoia and propaganda games with flag and cross and amassing a fortune in donations and

"gifts"—that he unwittingly taught them younger fellers back east.

Hargis still operates from Tulsa, with a homestead in Neosho, Missouri, called the Rose of Sharon Farm. Hargis continues to publish an array of vitriolic propaganda aimed at liberal statesmen, the U.N., and sex education. Sex educators, in fact, were probably prime targets as early as 1968. That was the year he published a now-famous pamphlet, *Is the School House the Proper Place to Teach Raw Sex?* by the elusive Dr. Gordon V. Drake. This document targets Mary Calderone, the late Isadore Rubin (who was still alive in '68 — the text has never been altered, however), William Masters, Albert Ellis, Joseph F. Fletcher, and others.

In 1977 Hargis co-authored, with "Dean" Dan Lyons, a slender anti-abortion paperback, *Thou Shalt Not Kill . . . My Babies*. In 1978 came *Disaster File*, a triad of attacks on American foreign policy and the news media, the latter accorded a special place on the Hargis dart board in probable retribution for newspaper exposés of the Reverend in the previous ten years. This bothersome book is a Hargis collaboration with Dr. José Hernandez, who regularly writes for *Christian Crusade*.

In a letter to me, April 1, 1980, Hargis explained: "In the very next issue of our Christian Crusade Newspaper (April issue), the feature section is on Secular Humanism, written for the middle class mentality. We do not write our articles from a research standpoint; neither do we present them as historical. We try to put them in the language of the common man, whose donations pay our bills; keep us on national radio and television."

The March number published an article about Mary Calderone, written by "Dean" Lyons and entitled "Mother of School Sex Education." Dr. Calderone is razed as "Dr. Hargis' 'Best Enemy.'" A fine compliment!

THE CHRISTIAN VOICE

In the past twelve months there has been spawned, on Capitol Hill, a new and vigorous Fundamentalist Right evangelical cadre known as the Christian Voice. It is a registered lobbying group, seeking to elect born-again Christians to public office and, most important, to Congress. Many of the right-wing forces in the D.C. area can take credit for this new arm of muscular Christianity — Sen. Orrin G. Hatch (R-Utah), a conservative Mormon, and fundamentalist fund-raiser Richard A. Viguerie, to name a couple.

Executive director of the Christian Voice is Gary Jarmin, once active with the "Moonie" Unification Church and the



Pat Robertson

G. Vigrass

American Conservative Union.

Recently I had a phone chat with Gary Jarmin, who sounds like a very savvy chap indeed. "Right now we are pushing for school prayer," he said. "This is really something, when there are limits about what you can or can't do on the federal level. We want to get citizens to apply pressure on school boards — parental consent to prayer in the classrooms."

The Christian Voice has lobbied for months against the deletion of an amendment to the revised Federal Criminal Code — a paper fight waged in the House and Senate Judiciary Committees since the early 1970s. The amendment would have barred from interstate transport certain kinds of mail — films, magazines, books — which the Christian Voice and its sibling organizations regard as pornographic. As of last March, the amendment only retained the ban on child pornography and foreign imports of certain books, magazines, and films.

"We violently oppose that change," Jarmin told me. "It is too difficult to enforce this on the local level, as the proposed amendment provides. On the House side it's a difficult story. They didn't take out the interstate transport portion but they re-defined obscenity from the Supreme Court's Miller decision. The Miller decision, aside from asserting 'community standards,' said that if a work lacks substantial value it could still be pornographic. The key word in the House committee is 'utterly' — if works 'utterly lack social or literary values,' they are obscene. We have lobbied against this interpretation."

THE HERITAGE FOUNDATION

Just up the street from the Christian Voice is the home of the Heritage Foundation. This puzzling group is a nonprofit public policy

research organization, very far to the right on the American socio-political scene. Its brochure reads: "Dedicated to the ideals of free enterprise, individual liberty, and limited government, the Heritage Foundation works to preserve these and other traditional American values." Moreover, the brochure states, "Heritage is closely involved with parents who want to regain control of their schools." For this task they used to have a Parent Action program. Today, they claim no such thing. When there was one — in 1977 — the director of its educational section was Larry Uzzell (no longer with Heritage). Uzzell told me then that private contributions support the foundation. Heritage has no federal funding.

Dr. Onalee McGraw fits right in with the well-meaning pursuits of the Heritage Foundation. In 1976 it published her 29-page yellow-covered pamphlet, *Secular Humanism and the Schools: The Issue Whose Time Has Come*. The monograph is, in the main, a broadside against MACOS (*Man: A Course of Study*) and related programs of "humanistic education" and "values-clarification." It seems to have been prompted by the defeat of the Conlan Amendment in September, and quotes extensively from Conlan's Congressional invective.

Speaking for the Heritage Foundation, and echoing its brochure, Larry Uzzell told me: "We don't endorse or oppose legislation." Fact is, if they did, they would lose tax-exempt status. But I now quote from Dr. Onalee McGraw's pamphlet, published by the Foundation:

Passage of the Conlan amendment by the House of Representatives established the fact that government support for the religion of secular humanism is a viable political issue. It demonstrated that a majority in Congress, when given an opportunity to do so, will support an even-handed nondiscriminatory administration of the constitutional doctrine of separation of church and state and First Amendment freedoms. [p. 9]

Once again, from pages 19-20:

Parents, teachers, and citizens across the nation, concerned with the drift in the tax-supported schools toward humanistic education and academic decline, are confronting the question in their local communities, in the Courts, and in the halls of Congress. The public is growing more aware of the inequity of using tax dollars for the support of nontheistic religion. Secular Humanism in the schools is indeed an issue whose time has come.

An honest legislator, a shrewd tax lawyer, or

a clever semanticist would have fun, in light of these published paragraphs, with the question of whether or not the Heritage Foundation endorses or opposes legislation. The fact that the Senate had already sacked the Conlan Amendment by the time Heritage had published Onalee McGraw's tract seems immaterial while MACOS is still in court in New York State and Dr. McGraw herself persists in lobbying against MACOS, from the covens of her other organizations, on local, state, and federal levels.

More than three years ago I spoke with Onalee McGraw, who said: "The Education Development Center (developer of MACOS) got its whole existence from the National Science Foundation. Our tax dollars paid for secretaries, overhead, travel. . . . No one would buy the products. At best they were trash, at worst they were manipulative, and EDC was ripping off the taxpayers for years with *Man: A Course of Study*. As taxpayers we should not have to subsidize life-styles not wanted by most people. The latest Gallup Poll shows that 54% of the people said, there's not enough basic education. 'I will worry about my child's feelings!'

"Psycho-social, value-laden programs started with John Dewey's progressive education theory: how can we develop this child for the useful order we deem proper? Child development was secondary to basic learning skill. These philosophers have their own idea of how the child fits in the scheme of things, a philosophy of social engineering. The child has a certain mental make-up, certain needs; we will meet them with a certain development. Basic education is out the window. Children are considered more like a resource. It's a manipulative view of the child, a means to an end. You can subject them to role-playing, for values-clarification.

"In the Christian view, the value is a reflection of an absolute good. Instead of questioning, 'Why are we here?' the basic education people say we don't know why we're here. The Christian child would say he is here to save a soul. Parents have a right to teach that.

"The theory is, a value is defined by the process through which you profess and clarify your values. *We* have the basis that value formation is born in the home. But the community does not agree on basic values. There is no climate of agreement. Now, people say that for the quality of life, murder is all right in some instances. The only thing in the Ten Commandments where there may not be any dispute is the one regarding stealing."

In her pamphlet, Dr. McGraw attacked the teachings of "humanist" educators, listed with John Dewey at the top. When I spoke to her she singled out Sidney Simon of the Center for Humanistic Education, who "takes his road show all over the country and has kids stand up and proclaim their value. There is no way in a pluralistic society where you can get involved in moral problems in school. Sidney Simon and others say that there is no Lawgiver — God — and so you make up your own rules. If constitutionally you cannot teach in school that there is a Lawgiver, you cannot give a humanistic, anti-God system with solutions to moral problems in the classroom. Every time there's a moral problem, they make a course to meet it."

Onalee McGraw has been in the employ of the Heritage Foundation as a part-time educational consultant for a number of years. She also has spearheaded the National Coalition for Children, which, in her own words, "worked on cutting off funds for *Man: A Course of Study*." In this capacity she was successful, even appearing before "Bad John" Conlan's committee at the right time. She has been the Virginia state representative for the National Congress for Educational Excellence, which shares credit with her for preventing the appearance of any MACOS materials on the Virginia state textbook list. Of great help in this assault was Judy Almquist, also of Heritage.

Onalee has friends around the country, all working in unison to combat the evils of "secular humanism." In Cleveland is Keating's Club, the grand old Citizens for Decency Through Law. In Longview, Texas, Mel and Norma Gabler continue to fight MACOS and the D.C. Heath "Communicating Series" with their 15-year-old Educational Research Analysts. Another Texan, Joanne McAuley, served on the panel appointed by Olin Teague to review MACOS implementation funding. A member of the National Congress for Educational Excellence, Ms. McAuley wrote the dissenting opinion in the report to the Committee on Science and Technology in November, 1975.

In the unique town of Ellicott City, Maryland, Onalee has another vigilante named Barbara M. Morris, whom Dr. McGraw cites as "a national expert on the subject" of "humanistic education." Ms. Morris sells, for \$1, *A Parent's Guide to Understanding and Recognizing the Religion of Humanism in Public Schools*, written by herself. There's also a *Barbara Morris Report*.

Onalee writes material for *Moral Majori-*

ty Report. Falwell published her picture, and some kind words, in the May 26, 1980 issue.

EDUCATOR PUBLICATIONS, INC.

For eleven years a monthly tabloid, *The National Educator*, has been published from Fullerton, California. Its editor has always been James H. Townsend, who also has the distinction of being its publisher. Currently it has taken on a "divide and conquer" stance as regards public school systems. The overall belief of Townsend et al. seems to be that public school districts should be broken up and individual schools made independent and accountable to the wishes of parents; if that cannot happen, there should be serious consideration of abolishing the public school in favor of traditional back-to-basics, private Christian schools.

In his mimeographed promotional flyer, Townsend claims that his paper is "the number one monthly conservative newspaper in the U.S." The claim is repeated on the inside pages of *The National Educator*, where Townsend adds that the number-one weekly is *The National Spotlight*, that sheet from the Liberty Lobby in Washington. Certainly the contents of those papers are similar: anti-Semitism, a bit of racism here and there, dark hints and scoops on the world conspiracy of the Trilaterals, the Bilderbergers and other "Illuminati" for world government and world law. The Fundamentalist Right hates the National Education Association with a fury. Suitably, Townsend claims that NEA has named him and his publishing organization "public enemy number three." No wonder: each issue of the paper is fondly dedicated to one enemy of liberal education or another. The April number was ascribed "to Jerry Falwell and his 'Clean-up America Crusade.'" For May it was "to the Mel Gablers of Longview, Texas, for trying to clean up education." Page three of that issue carries a large portrait photo of Dr. Mary Calderone, captioned "The Woman Who Won't Go Away — Like a haunt, the sex legacy of Mary Calderone lingers like a malevolent odor around California schools. She is head of SIECUS (pronounced 'seek us') that 20 years ago launched the textbook-selling, sex-instruction racket." A story follows on page four, headed "'Educators' advocate courses in perverse lifestyles."

Townsend also has a book publishing unit, Educator Publications, Inc., at the same Fullerton address. The only one of theirs we've examined closely is *The Child Seducers* by John Steinbacher, first printed in December, 1970. This excoriation of sex

educators — with special attention to SIECUS and its distinguished directors, living and dead — is a noxious blast. You can still buy this book through *The National Educator*. Steinbacher, a long-time right-wing columnist for the Anaheim (CA) *Bulletin*, went out of his way to compile hate lists of sex educators and organizations all over the country, with a kind of vigilante vengeance.

The fourth printing (April, 1971) of *The Child Seducers* contains several appendices. The third of these is the statement of James M. Parsons, M.D., concerning the report of the Commission on Obscenity and Pornography — the report requested and summarily renounced by former President Nixon. The Parsons statement was written on behalf of the Sex Information and Education Council of Physicians (SIECOP), formed by Parsons and some other conservative doctors as an alter-ego club to Dr. Calderone's SIECUS. It was organized for self-publishing purposes but didn't generate enough interest to survive. No one has heard from anything called SIECOP in several years.

But Dr. James Parsons, a practicing psychiatrist, carries on the fray with sex educators. In 1978 he published his own book, *The Assault on the Family*, which he claims is now in its fifth edition. The imprint is Pro-Media, which Dr. Parsons calls "a tax-exempt foundation." Parsons is its chairman. Pro-Media has also produced a videotape with the same title, *The Assault on the Family*. One of the main targets of the book and the movie version is, in Dr. Parsons's words, "Sol Gordon and some of his tricks."

He described Dr. Gordon as "a secular humanist" and "guru of sex education." Dr. Parsons believes that sex education is part of an international humanist conspiracy to "educate in favor of atheism." He dubs both Sol Gordon and Mary Calderone as humanists who are working toward a world order with no national boundaries, and defines "secular humanism" as "a modern-day religion" and "an international movement tied in with the U.N."

THE COUNCIL FOR NATIONAL RIGHTEOUSNESS

The International Forum for Public Righteousness was founded by the Reverend Ron Marr, editor and publisher of yet another Fundamentalist Right tabloid, *Christian Inquirer*. This particular Canadian-based coven of the Fundamentalist Right has a mail drop on the U.S. side of the border: Buffalo, New York.

I called the Reverend Marr to ask about the so-called "International Forum" and the

possible endorsement of Malcolm Muggeridge. My other concern was about a pair of pamphlets issued by Marr's organization: *Read It And Weep!* by Betty Eagles and *The Unbelievable Truth About Your Public Schools*, which Ron Marr claims he wrote himself.

"Malcolm Muggeridge only lent us his name for the International Forum," Marr told me. "I think Muggeridge's perspective on education might be very different from mine."

The Unbelievable Truth About Your Public Schools dates from 1976 and is peppered with misquotes from Sol Gordon's *Facts About Sex for Today's Youth*. Dr. Gordon has indicated that some are "out of context" and others are just plain "made-up."

"I will probably publish it again," Ron Marr said about his *Unbelievable Truth* pamphlet, "but some things I must authenticate or delete."

When I pointed out to Reverend Marr that some of the cited passages from Dr. Gordon's book were items I was unable to find in that book, he commented: "This is the material I have been concerned about. Someone supplied those quotes."

Who? Well—Ron Marr didn't identify that bookish person.

"I am totally opposed to sex education," Reverend Marr said. "It has been perpetrated on the public and the teachers, away from the biblical Ten Commandments. By the late '60s it was pervasive throughout curricula. Maybe as early as 1908 the essential base of education was moved, away from the Godly base to a humanist base. I consider humanism to be a religion of sinister purpose. It hides its true colors — are we talking about patriotism or world government? We are fighting for the moral base of education."

A POSTSCRIPT ON THE FUNDAMENTALIST RIGHT DIALECTICS

What is "secular humanism"? "Secular" means "not specifically pertaining to religion or a religious body." "Humanism" is "a philosophy or attitude that is concerned with human beings, their achievements and interests, rather than with the abstract beings and problems of theology." If the adjective and the noun have like meanings, then it follows that the terminology here is a monument to prolixity. When "secular humanism" is considered a "religion" that "believes man is God and rejects biblical standards of living," the definition flies in the face of simple logic. *It does not follow* that a humanist necessarily believes that man is God, simply because he



or she has little attachment to religion or a religious body. Moreover, if a humanist is someone who is concerned with the achievements and interests of human beings, he or she might well admire and revere biblical standards of living. The Bible, after all, was written down by human beings. Christians must accept that, whether they believe Holy Writ was *inspired by God* or not. "Secular humanism" is a bugaboo of the Fundamentalist Right's dialectic. Every revolution has a dialectic. The Fundamentalist Right is a revolutionary conspiracy.

The Fundamentalist Right loves obfuscation, obscurantism, disorientation, and buncombe. It practices the wizardry of that man behind the curtain. In the Emerald City of Oz, the Wizard who would give a brain to the Scarecrow, a heart to the Tin Man, courage to the Lion, and a return trip home to Dorothy and Toto, was an utter fraud. "Pay no attention to the man behind the curtain!" he panicked, once discovered.

Well—he's at it again. His lies and intimidation will fool you and befuddle you into surrendering your freedoms and shutting your mouth forever. His hokum and magic shows are cosmetic and his promises of health and wealth in Jesus' name are shallow to anyone but himself.

When you try to bundle up the key leaders and disciples of the Fundamentalist Right, some innocents inevitably get caught in the traps. And no matter what you do to shield yourself, chances are you'll get bitten or clawed for your trouble.

But this is a good battle. Let 'em come, we're ready. Once the curtain is completely pulled down, the false wizard has no defense and no escape at all. He can't stand the light of day.

The Odd I See

The Moral Majority

Sol Gordon

I didn't think I was that important until I began to read about myself in the press.

From Nipomo, California:

All anyone needs to know about this workshop is that Sol Gordon is the most notorious of all sex instructors of children and the bane of good parents everywhere. [Central Coast Chapter, Citizen's Committee of California, January 15, 1980]

From Christian Family Renewal (a nonprofit organization):

Gordon's books were banned in a N.Y. Fair as obscene and his books have been removed from some schools because parents felt the promotion of bestiality and homosexuality was not proper for their children. [*Sex Education and Mental Health*, Fourth Quarter 1979, vol. 9, no. 9]

In an article entitled "Garden State Public Schools to Begin Sexual Instruction in Kindergarten":

Another influence resented by pro-family groups is that of Sol Gordon . . . Gordon provided a statement to the state board which said that any approach they might take should include an appreciation for the whole range of sexuality, that sexual expression is not limited to heterosexual, genital intercourse and that sexual expression goes beyond reproduction. . . [*Moral Majority*, July 30, 1980]

It is apparent that Sol Gordon as a leading secular Humanist proponent of the "new morality" and the "new sexuality" can only be understood in the context of the current rejection of the Judeo-Christian moral code by certain fashionable intellectual circles whose influence has penetrated educational milieus within the Catholic Church as well as other churches. [*Social Justice Review*, May 1975, vol. 68, no. 2, James Likondis (member of Catholics United for the Faith)]

On the eve of my departure for Rome, I was sent a copy of Zing Comix entitled "Ten Heavy Facts About Sex," distributed to the public high schools in the Kansas City District.

I knew that such literature was available on stands selling pornographic literature, but that evil minded persons

Sol Gordon is professor of child and family studies, Syracuse University. He is author of The Sexual Adolescent, Sex and the Family, and other books.

intent on the destruction of traditional Christian morality would utilize the Public School System for their purposes never occurred to me. [Most Reverend Charles H. Helmsing, D.D., Bishop of Kansas City-St. Joseph, *Catholic Key*, July 14, 1974]

It also never occurred to the bishop, it seems, that the comic book was not distributed to the pupils in the schools. It was not — apart from the fact that the comic book is a moral book!

I could go on and on, but just a few facts about me. I am a Ph.D., psychologist, sex educator. I am a humanist and I'm also religious. I believe in God. I am married and a parent. I am proud to be associated with humanists who are devoted to promoting social justice and concentrate on a personal commitment to change in the social order rather than divine providence. I believe this as a religious person who accepts the existence of God. I don't think teenagers should engage in sexual relationships. (They are too young, too vulnerable, too readily available for exploitation.) My books are designed to promote responsible sexuality. They encourage egalitarian, nonexploitative relationships. They are antisexist, against the double standard, and unashamedly and unequivocally supportive of the women's liberation movement, gay rights, and stable family life. I'm conservative, pro-life, pro-morality, but most of all pro the First Amendment.

So why me?

Because I'm an effective, articulate spokesperson for choice, for gay rights, for religious freedom and its separation from the state.

But I'm very worried. In the last couple of years, ten scheduled talks of mine have been cancelled. No scheduled talk of mine has ever been cancelled before in the twenty-five years I've been lecturing. A National Council of Teachers of English survey has found that over the last ten years, there has been a jump of 20 to 30 percent in the number of teachers reporting challenges over books, magazines and films used in their classrooms. The *Washington Post* reports that more than 200 organizations nationwide have arisen as self-appointed censors and critics of textbooks. On February 15, 1979, Bill Baird's clinic in Hempstead, New York, was firebombed and gutted by an anti-abortionist. Some thirty other clinics have also been firebombed.

It used to be that the "enemy" would quote me out of context — now they blatantly compose their own statements. For

example, a talk I was supposed to give in Fort Walton Beach, Florida, in May of 1980 was cancelled at the last minute because of the withdrawal of support from the Board of Education there. A "citizens" group distributed an incredible document entitled "The Unbelievable Truth About Your Public Schools" printed by the Council for National Righteousness, Box 248 Ellicott Station, Buffalo, New York 14205. Apart from gross lies about prominent people such as Mary Calderone, the following statements were attributed to me, supposedly taken from my book *Facts About Sex for Today's Youth*:

1. "All that is good and commendable now existing would continue to exist if all marriage laws were repealed tomorrow. I have an inalienable constitutional and natural right to love whom I may, to love as long or as short a period as I can, to change that love every day if I please."
2. "... has descriptive pictures of children making love in various positions."
3. "... tells how a girl will feel her genital is too small for her father's penis and the boy feels his penis is too small for his mother's genital!!"

Statement number 1 appears nowhere in my book, nor do the pictures exist anywhere in my book as stated in number 2. The "facts" as stated in number 3 also do not exist in the book.

Now about humanism:

The most dangerous religion in the world is taught in the public schools from kindergarten through graduate school at taxpayer's expense. It is called "Humanism". [Dr. Tim LaHaye in *Education Time Bomb* by Ron Marr]

Humanists believe in free sex, including homosexuality, fornication, adultery — and pornography. [Christian Family Renewal, *Sex Education and Mental Health Report*, Fourth Quarter 1979, vol. 9, no. 9]

We have just begun to realize how dangerous these attacks are, especially when we ourselves know that there is not one public school in the whole country where a humanist curriculum is being taught.

Good colleagues of mine say to me, "You must love these attacks because it's good publicity." In fact it's their way of saying to me that they don't have to get involved. But now I am asking them, "How would you like to receive in the mail these letters?":

"Jew — Your time has come."

or

WHY YOU FILTHY LIAR ... IT'S SEX EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS THAT IS CAUSING THE PREGNANCIES. YOU JEWS STARTED ALL THIS FILTH ABOUT SEX 30 YEARS AGO & YOU'RE STILL AT IT. IT'S TO DESTROY THE WHITE GENTILES, THE UNITED STATES AND CIVILIZATION ... SO THE JEWS WILL RULE THE WORLD. THEY'LL RULE THE WORLD ... BUT THAT WORLD WILL BE A JUNGLE.

The Bible Bigots are the greatest threat to American democracy since the McCarthy purges. Best represented by such powerful personalities as Reverend Jerry Falwell and Reverend Billie James Hargis, they operate in the same tradi-

tion as those who, in the past, used the Bible to kill Jews, to justify slavery, treat women as chattel, and to condone corporal punishment of children.

One can use the Bible for any evil purpose one can imagine. But as a religious person myself, I say that God's message to us is Love Thy Neighbor As Thyself. Anything less is a distortion of an ethical religion.

Yes, I'm a signer of the *Humanist Manifesto II*. I'm proud to be known as a humanist, but I'm also religious and deeply troubled by people who call themselves religious, preach hatred of women, homosexuals, humanists, and think nothing of violating our basic freedoms as embodied by the First Amendment of the Bill of Rights. They want to impose their religious convictions based on hate, bigotry, and prejudice on all of us. They have so intimidated large sections of the American public with their pro-family, morality, God, flag, compulsory pregnancy semantics, that they have virtually captured the Republican party and represent a grave threat to the survival of American democracy.

Part of the responsibility lies with ourselves. A recent Gallup poll (1979) indicated that 3 out of 4 Americans cannot identify or describe the First Amendment.

What needs to be done? National organizations that are natural allies, as represented by the old civil rights coalition, are so involved with their own special interests that they no longer symbolize the special vision this country needs. Current leadership projects little hope. What is needed are coalitions to develop at the local level, organized and united behind our most significant issues.

This country desperately needs advocates who will spark the struggle for a reaffirmation of the First Amendment of the Bill of Rights. This is in sharp contrast to those who wish to return to what they see as our Christian heritage as envisioned by our Founding Fathers. Our forefathers believed in slavery. Shall we return to that because it co-existed with other golden principles that we still hold dear today? History can teach multitudinous lessons, some of them wrong, others marvelous and inspirational.

We need to unite to save America from the John Birch Society, the American Nazi Party, censorship, the Ku Klux Klan, book burners, the so-called "Moral Majority," the compulsory pregnancy zealots, Bible Bigots, and violations of the First Amendment. We need to unite to save America for democracy, freedom of speech, press, assembly, religious worship, and "Choice." The heart of the matter:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition the government for a redress of grievances. [First Amendment to the Bill of Rights of the U.S. Constitution — passed December 15, 1791]

We need to get back to basics. Let's start by declaring December 15 National Bill of Rights Day and work for the USA.*

*A group of us are considering the possibility of forming an organization to support the Bill of Rights called USA (United to Save America). Write to me c/o P.O. Box 85, University Station, Syracuse, New York 13210.

The Creation/Evolution Controversy

H. James Birx

Once again the scientific theory of biological evolution has come under scathing criticisms by the special creationists, especially the fundamentalist movement. Even after the Huxley-Wilberforce debate (1860) and the John Scopes trial (1925), the evolution framework continues to be challenged or rejected by orthodox religions and philosophies.

Given the strong differences today in commitments to religious faith or science, the ongoing controversy between the Bible and evolution is perhaps unavoidable. A critical examination of the arguments given to refute the claims of the evolution viewpoint is required. Such a serious investigation shows the creationist/fundamentalist position to be untenable as a scientific theory.

Proponents claim that the creationist theory is scientific, but they actually disregard any facts that contradict their religious viewpoint. More alarming, they are even insisting that special creationism be taught on an equal basis with the evolution theory in science courses in public schools (especially in biology classes). Creationists have introduced bills in at least fifteen states to force school board committees to choose textbooks that include the biblical story of creation along with the theory of evolution. So far, none of these bills has been passed.

This movement is primarily the result of efforts from the Institute for Creation Research, in San Diego. It is made up of chemists and engineers, but few if any biologists. Seven staff scientists all have doctoral degrees and spend most of their time promoting creationism on college campuses and writing books advocating their position (the texts are published by the Creation-Life Publishers, also in San Diego).

What is the case for evolutionism?

Influenced by Lyell and Malthus, both Darwin and Wallace argued for biological evolution by means of natural selection or the "survival of the fittest". In *On the Origin of Species* (1859) and *The Descent of Man* (1871), Darwin presented a naturalistic-mechanistic explanation for organic evolution

which still remains the essential foundation of modern evolution theory. As a science, modern evolution biology is a complex system of ideas that explains similarities and differences among organisms within space and throughout earth history.

The evolutionist holds that new species of plants and animals have risen from earlier, different forms over vast periods of time. As a result of selective forces (especially the major explanatory principle of natural selection) and the chance appearance and accumulation of favorable slight variations or major mutations, some individuals in a population have an adaptive and survival advantage and therefore a reproductive advantage over others. These individuals are favored in the struggle to exist in a changing environment.

Appealing to biblical chronology, the Ussher-Lightfoot calculations held that God created the world in 4004 B.C. on October 23 at 9:00 A.M. Many fundamentalists still believe this account of creation to be true. They claim the earth is less than 6,000 years old and that every kind of plant and animal is fixed in an ordered nature (although they do acknowledge varieties within these fixed types).

These fundamentalists now refer to their religious view as "scientific creationism," while rejecting the tenets of organic evolution. Despite the separation of church and state, they demand that biology textbooks give equal attention to both the story of divine creation as presented in Genesis and the modern synthetic theory of biological evolution grounded in natural selection and genetic variability.

Nevertheless, the evidence to support organic evolution is sufficient to convince any open-minded intelligent thinker. Admittedly incomplete at this time, the fossil record is the single most important body of evidence to support the doctrine of organic evolution. Continuous discoveries in paleontology are filling up the gaps in the fossil record. They support the evolution model rather than the alleged worldwide Noachian Deluge account as presented in Genesis. (Although rare, intermediate or transitional forms do exist in the known paleontological evidence.)

Both taxonomy and comparative studies, from biochemistry and embryology to anatomy and physiology, support the implications of the evolution theory. Likewise, genetic research demonstrates the historical continuity and essential unity of all

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life on this planet (especially in terms of the DNA molecule).

Like does not beget like, and kind does not beget kind. All populations are variable and subject to evolution forces. In fact, no two plants or animals even in the same population are ever absolutely identical. The biological evolutionist argues that over long periods of time the accumulation of genetic changes in a population interacting with a changing environment may result in the variety becoming a new species.

Biogeography demonstrates the explanatory principle of natural selection. The distribution of organisms and their physical/behavioral adaptations to different environments clearly support the survival of the fittest. There is a direct and ongoing relationship between living things and their habitats. This is especially illustrated among the plant and animal forms throughout the Galapagos Islands (e.g., the differing species of finches, iguanas, and tortoises inhabiting their own unique environments within the archipelago).

Finally, the story of evolution does not violate the second law of thermodynamics or entropy. The earth is not a closed system, for energy from the sun is always available for the creative process of organic evolution to occur.

Taken together, all of this evidence provides sufficient ground for accepting the scientific theory of organic evolution. However, fundamentalists believe in the literal truth of the biblical account of creation. They hold to a scriptural explanation for the origin of living forms within a fixed and ordered view of nature.

Yet, the Bible is not a valid scientific document. Special creationism is theology and not an empirical-logical explanation for the origin and history of life on this planet. As a religious view, it appeals to the supernatural and the authority of the Bible (not to mention that it is biased in excluding all other creation stories except the Judeo-Christian account).

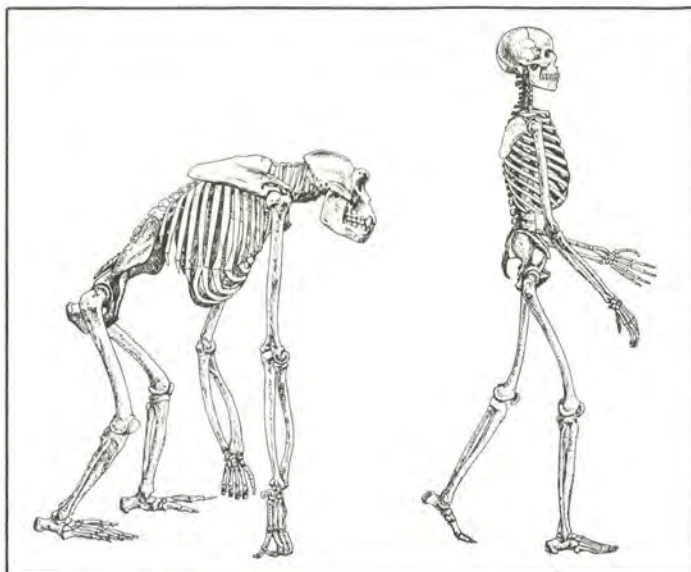
Creationism is neither falsifiable nor verifiable in principle. It ignores the established facts of the evolutionary sciences (e.g., the evidence from historical geology, comparative paleontology, and prehistoric archaeology, as well as the recent advances in genetic research and the use of absolute dating techniques). Creationism consistently misrepresents the evolution theory and ultimately breaks down under rigorous logical scrutiny.

Special creationism is irrational in principle and, therefore, not admissible as a scientific doctrine. To suggest that scientific investigation and explanation for the rock and fossil and artifact records support a literal interpretation of Genesis is ludicrous; such a view ignores both facts and logic in favor of biblical authority and religious assumptions.

In sharp contrast, the evolution model has not been refuted by either empirical tests or the principle of falsifiability. Evolution remains a meaningful theory, in its explanation of evidence and prediction of events in modern biology and physical anthropology.

Most Western religions do, in fact, accept the evolution theory as the creative process throughout natural history. God remains as the First Cause of the universe, if not also the Creator of only the common source or first forms of all life.

There is a crucial distinction between the scientific fact of evolution and the various interpretations of this natural



The gorilla and man: Comparative studies in anatomy as well as other scientific evidence clearly support the evolution theory, with man and the great apes sharing a common prehistoric ancestry. (Scientific American.)

process in the literature. Bold attempts to reconcile scientific evolution with religious beliefs have failed, being poor compromises grounded in obscurantism. The natural and supernatural are not compatible in terms of facts and logic. Such undertakings by Bergson and Teilhard resulted in giving preference to an intuitive metaphysics (*Creative Evolution*, 1907) and theistic mysticism (*The Phenomenon of Man*, 1940), respectively.

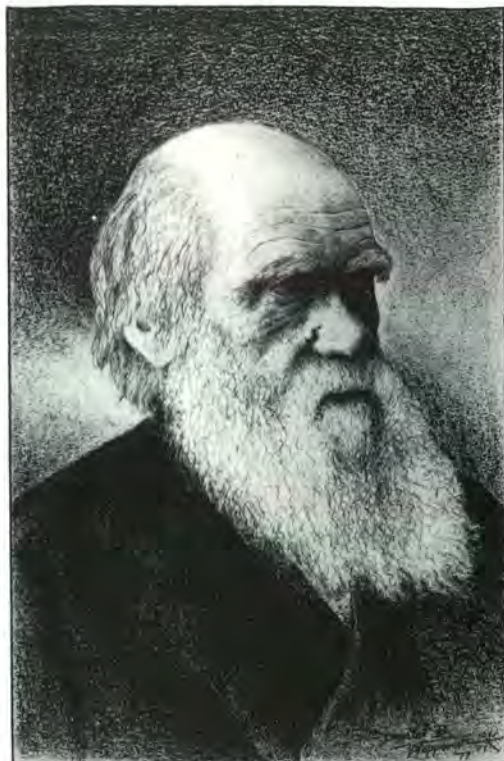
Does God design harmful mutations, allow the spread of fatal diseases, destroy countless plant and animal species from time to time, and deliberately confuse believers with the age and sequence of rocks and fossils and artifacts? If one believes in a personal Supreme Being, could not Darwin and Mendel have been divinely inspired to understand organic evolution in order to appreciate His creative powers?

Darwin's importance in intellectual history is enormous, and his theory remains as powerful as ever. It does explain a great deal. No alternative to organic evolution gives an equally comprehensive and satisfactory explanation of the facts and relationships in modern biology and physical anthropology.

The modern synthetic theory of biological evolution is grounded primarily in the explanatory concept of natural selection (Darwin) and genetic variability (Mendel). Organic evolution is profound genetic change in populations throughout the history of life, resulting at times in the appearance of new species. It does not necessarily result in progress, nor is such progress excluded. Evolution supports neither the necessity of increasing complexity or perfection nor a pre-established purpose, direction, or goal within natural history. The guiding principle is simply survival by adaptation to the environment.

Although Darwinian natural selection still remains an important aspect of modern biology, science has not as yet exhausted an understanding of the evolution mechanisms or forces (especially in the areas of genetics and group behavior). There is even a possibility that some Lamarckian element does play a role in biological inheritance.

However, present uncertainty or incompleteness in science



Drawing by Daniel B. Wopperer

does not warrant turning to the fundamentalist view. There may be a psychological need to believe in the supernatural that is itself subject to scientific investigation.

One might argue that the biblical creation story may be taught in a history class, but to compel its teaching in a biology course is clearly not appropriate (just as astrology and faith-healing are no substitute for astronomy and medicine, respectively). As dogmatic religion, the fundamentalist view is a danger to science itself and its teaching in the classroom — especially if it discourages free empirical inquiry in the special sciences.

Special creationism ignores the overwhelming scientific evidence which now supports the evolution theory. As such, it actually threatens the advancement of science and free human inquiry.

Science, as such, does not acknowledge the supernatural and requires free inquiry into natural history and human existence. Scientific inquiry is a liberation from religious dogmatism, blind faith, vacuous myths, and human emotions. In fact, all scientific explanations, as such, are naturalistic.

Evolution theory is a natural process; a scientific framework supported by facts, experience, and reason. It is open to modifications and interpretations in light of new empirical evidence, rigorous reflection, and logical procedure.

Unlike the special creationist or fundamentalist, the evolutionist as naturalist and humanist accepts the far-reaching implications of the evolutionary sciences. The planet Earth is not the center of reality, not does man occupy a privileged position within natural history or the universe.

Although questions remain to be answered at this time, evolutionists continue to make progress through the ongoing and self-correcting method of scientific investigation. What is clearly needed is more science; the continued free inquiry into the origin and history of life on the earth. •

Moral Education:

Robert Hall

In academic discussion as well as in public debate, the subject of moral education impels one to be open about his own commitments. I am a Christian Humanist; this puts me at odds both with fellow Christians who are anti-humanist and with fellow humanists who are anti-Christian. My own credo is that the spirit of the historical Jesus is at one with the spirit of the universe and that this same spirit continues to animate people today toward progressive human fulfillment. (Were my audience primarily a Christian one I could express this credo in terms of incarnation, divinity, sanctification, salvation, and eschatology — although I prefer the nontraditional terminology.) I can subscribe to most of the positive statements of the “Secular Humanist Declaration,” although I find its negativism both unwarranted (Christians have neither a better nor a worse record historically than humanists) and unhelpful (since it establishes unnecessary barriers to the discovery of common ground). I am still happy to call myself a fellow traveler with secular humanists, however, because I believe that the spirit to which I am committed animates good folk outside as well as within the Christian fellowship. My traditional faith may seem naive to many humanists, but my proclamation of a spirit that transcends our differences is also a scandal to some of my Christian friends whose love I cherish, but who (regrettably) do not see the spirit they worship as truly active outside their own communities.

This personal statement really has a great deal to do with the question of moral education in public schools because the problem of moral education at present is one of forging an effective public policy among people of different faiths.

The first point I should make here is that people of very different ultimate commitments are really all in the same boat in this matter whether we like it or not. In order to hang together, a society — our society — must have a certain measure of consensus on basic values. Since we are a religiously pluralistic society, however, there is no way that this necessary consensus is likely to be developed, promoted or maintained if not through public education (a point Emile Durkheim emphasized at the turn of the century). The moral consensus which has prevailed in America, exclusive as it was

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Toward Consensus in Public Policy

of racial, ethnic, and religious minorities, was a creation of the WASP public schools. In the effort to avoid exclusivism, however, educators moved away from avowing and promoting any values at all. This “hands-off” policy has not worked; in fact it seems to have led to a deterioration of the moral consensus. Now, Christians, fundamentalists, conservatives, liberals, and, of course, humanists have each in their own way been calling for moral education. *The question is not whether we need it, but on what grounds can we agree to do it.* We are really in the same boat, and the sooner we realize this the sooner we can make progress. Our present task is one of developing a mutually acceptable public policy. The danger we really face is that people of good will may be so blinded by their differences (and I do not say these are petty) that they will be unable to acknowledge and build upon their agreements.

My second point is that there really *is* enough agreement to build upon, enough common ground to support an adequate public policy. To those moralists, philosophers, and preachers of every persuasion who debate the crucial moral issues of our age it may seem that there is so much disagreement that we could never settle upon a common core of values as the basis for public moral education. Right-to-Life advocates tend to believe that anyone who condones abortion cannot possibly hold any moral beliefs at all; and freedom-of-choice advocates are fearful of indoctrination if they entrust the task of moral education to anyone who opposes abortion. We see only the major disputes and do not recognize the common ground. Moral education is not a matter of teaching about abortion; it is rather a matter of teaching about honesty, integrity, liberty, justice, respect, etc. When one actually gets down to the question of the values moral education should promote at the level of public education, there is more common ground than a program of moral education can deal with. An adequate public policy would be easier to forge if those who debate moral education would stick to the level of education that the schools must actually address. The debate one can read in the pamphlets of the crusaders is entirely misplaced. Get people of good will to sit down with the teachers to discuss what can and should be done and we will find more than enough common ground.

If we are able to forge a consensus among reasonable people on a public policy for moral education, however, there will still be those extremists — right and left — who will attack the

“If a society lacks unity based upon the commitment of its peoples’ wills to a common objective, then it is no more than a pile of sand which the least jolt or the slightest puff will scatter. In the present situation, it is above all faith in a common ideal that we must seek to elicit. Today the most pressing goal of moral education is to unravel the notions of justice and solidarity, to bring children to cherish them without eliciting resentment against ideas and practices bequeathed to us by the past which are the sources of our current predicament.”

Emile Durkheim, circa 1902
(*L’Education Morale*, Paris, 1974, p. 87)

program. Religious fundamentalists will continue to confuse moral education with sex education and evolutionary biology and will complain that we are not teaching the Bible as GOD’S TRUTH. And militant atheists, on the other extreme, will attempt to make moral education serve their own purposes by turning it into another opportunity to root out religious mythology. I suspect, however, that the vocal minorities at either extreme are only able to attract a following because the rest of us (us reasonable folk in the middle) have not yet got a strong enough vision of our common task and enough answers about how to accomplish it to withstand the rhetoric of the extremists and put them in their place. The truth is that the vast majority of Christians are not creationists because they take the Bible to be a religious book, and not a scientific text. And I know that a great many secular humanists are turned-on to mythical expressions of their own ultimate concerns. If we are able to develop a coherent central approach around a public policy, however, we will be the more able to avoid the rhetoric of the extremes. Christians may then become more aware of the non-Christians in their midst and be willing to stand up to those who want to use the public schools for the purposes of fundamentalist indoctrination. And secular humanists may also become more open to the fact that, for a great number of Americans, values and ideals *are* founded upon religious beliefs and they may be more willing to stand up to those in their own ranks who feel compelled to use public education to denigrate the traditional faiths. The task of moral education, as I see it now, is to develop enough respect for the religious and non-religious faiths of others, to stop debating the religious and humanistic context of value commitments long enough to get on with the business of promoting those values which we already agree upon as the core of our culture.

Developing an effective public policy for moral education does not require the settlement of age old disputes about religion. If we can agree to disagree on the metaphysical or ontological questions to which value commitments are usually related, i.e., if we can agree that our society is indeed pluralistic, we can very probably develop a program for moral education which will meet the obvious needs of our society. As far as the public schools are concerned, we could then tell those evangelists of religion or irreligion to peddle their doctrines elsewhere — which is, after all, only what our Constitution says. •

Can one be moral yet not believe in God? If so, what are the consequences of this to the moral life? Two humanist thinkers discuss their views. — Editor

Morality Without Religion

Marvin Kohl

Secular humanists and their opponents are fond of debating the vague question, Can one be moral and not believe in God? The question is vague because it is glaringly unclear. As a rule, it leads to senseless dispute. If the question is interpreted (as secular humanists would be inclined to interpret it) to mean "Is it possible for a person to follow, in general, the principles or precepts of justice, veracity, beneficence, and not believe in a theist-type god?" then the answer, based on evidence of the behavior of some agnostics and atheists, is in the affirmative. On the other hand, if the question is interpreted to mean (as most theists are likely to interpret it) "Is it possible for a person to be moral (i.e., to believe in God and generally follow his commandments) and, at the same time, not believe in God?" then the answer, for reasons of logic, is in the negative.

There are, I agree, a few intellectuals who would be content with this kind of standoff. But many would not. The secularist probably would reject the identification of morality with belief in God and following his commandments. He would insist that, even if one admitted that God exists and commands only what is good, one has to know independently what is good in order to know what God commands. The theist, on the other hand, probably would insist, and I think correctly so, that one of the basic issues here is not what exceptional persons can or cannot do but whether or not ordinary men and women can be moral without belief in God. He argues that the exception does not make the rule. The fact that some men can run the four-minute mile or can be moral without an explicit commitment to God does not mean that men generally can do either of these things.

The secularist, of course, rejects the latter move and quickly takes up the gauntlet. He argues that ordinary people can be taught morality and that this in no way entails religious belief. He maintains that with proper education, especially in early childhood, men can be trained to be moral and that this can be accomplished without any appeal to religious belief. "Early religious teaching," writes Mill, "has owed its power over mankind rather to its being early than its being religious."¹

When . . . any rule of life and duty, whether grounded or not on religion, has conspicuously received the general assent, it obtains a hold on the belief of every individual, stronger than it would have even if he had arrived at it by the inherent force of his own understanding. . . . And, as it cannot be imagined that the commands of God are

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to young children anything more than the commands of their parents, it is reasonable to think that any system of social duty which mankind might adopt, even though divorced from religion, would have the same advantage of being inculcated from childhood. . . .²

Indeed, it is tempting to conclude that Mill and the secular humanists are right. For if the original question is interpreted to mean "Can ordinary men and women be educated to believe in and generally follow the principles of justice, veracity, and beneficence and not believe in God?" then it would appear that the available evidence clearly supports the secular-humanist contention. Given a kindly environment and proper moral training at an early age, it seems to be true that individuals so educated generally will behave in a moral manner.

I have two worries. The first, the lesser one, is that this conclusion is only likely to appeal to those who advocate soft theism, that is, those who believe that, although God exists and is the source of morality, morality can be learned and effectively practiced without commitment to a deity. It is improbable that it will appeal to, or in any significant way alter, the beliefs of the advocates of hard theism, that is, those who claim that in order to be moral a person must explicitly believe in God and follow his commandments. Contrary to what the secular humanist often likes to believe, the hard theist maintains, first, that both the goodness and justice of God can be derived from his existence and, second, that morality therefore demands a commitment to his existence. In other words, the claim is that God's existence entails his goodness, that morality thereby requires a commitment to Him (and not merely a belief that He exists), and that this is known to be true. My point is a simple one. I am not suggesting that what the theist claims is known to be true or that the teleological argument is viable. Quite the contrary. I believe that a formidable case can be made for atheism (the claim that we know that we have no knowledge about God) and against the teleological argument. What I wish to suggest is that if the purpose of raising the God-morality question is to convince the hard theist, and if there is no common ground for doing so, as appears to be the case, then the undertaking has little point.

My second worry raises a complex and difficult question, one that has been relatively neglected in the literature. The question is, Can ordinary people be moral without an enforcement factor and is belief in God a sufficient enforcement factor?"³ Any general answer to this question is likely to be too simple; but I suspect that one reason people are inclined to identify morality with belief in God is that they reject the notion that holding people to be praiseworthy, or blameworthy,

is sufficient, sufficient to prevent self-interest, in moments of serious conflict, from overruling the commands of morality. They maintain that, without an enforcement factor (in this case the threat of God's judgment and punishment), people will behave morally only when it is convenient. In short, the claim is that, while morality can be taught, the effectiveness of this teaching is roughly proportionate to the power of those beliefs or their correlates to control behavior and that a deep commitment to God is effective because it does accomplish that control; that without God, without an effective enforcement factor, moral etiquette may be taught, but not morality per se.

It may be objected that the history of religion has not been exactly the history of morality; but if this is to be taken to imply that the history of religion has been a history of a deep commitment to God, I think that it is false. What may be true is that we have failed to make ordinary men and women, as well as common clergy, truly religious. But since this is an end that there is no sufficient reason to regard as being generally obtainable, and which, when attempted, nurtures a sinister form of totalitarianism, it should be rejected by all who are guided by knowledge and inspired by a genuine love for mankind.

There is another objection, which seems to strike closer to the mark. What if the theist charges that humanist morality—a morality largely based upon the sentiments of praise and blame being the only moral sanction—is, and probably must be, *less effective* than a theist morality based upon the ideal of being truly religious? And what if such an ideal is limited to classical ethical Judaism or the ethics of the Sermon on the Mount? Now it is the fashion in secular circles to mock religious claims. But these questions give rise not to a religious or metaphysical claim but to an empirical one. The general claim is that religion may be morally useful without being otherwise intellectually sustainable. The specific claim is that morality (in contrast to moral etiquette) requires an effective enforcement factor and that, with proper limits, the traditional theist grounding of morality provides a *better* enforcement factor than humanist theories.

As for myself, I share the conviction that morality, if it is to be effective, must have an adequate enforcement factor; that theories in which the sentiments of praise and blame are the sole factor are, in this respect, inadequate; and that, because of the necessity of having to couple adequate moral principles and precepts with an enforcement factor, some theist theories may be better than some humanist ones. However, I would also maintain that humanist theories need not have timid enforcement factors and, therefore, need not become extensionally equivalent with egoism. Where basic human rights are consistent with social justice and are conceived of as claims (or their like), there is no need to surrender oneself to the authority of reactionary humanism or to the illusions of religion.

Notes

1. J. S. Mill, "Utility of Religion," in *Three Essays on Religion* (New York: Henry Holt, 1874), p. 83.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 79-81.
3. An enforcement factor may be partially defined as something in, or intimately associated with, a theory or moral code that has the power of causing men to act morally when they would have acted otherwise. •

Joseph Fletcher

Once upon a time I looked for the basis of morality and found it, I thought, in religion. There had to be some source and sanction for a standard of right and wrong, it seemed, and I concluded that it lay in the will of God. That is to say, we ought to be moral because God commanded it. Without the divine will to back up the human will, to act morally, Nietzsche's cry was correct — that if God is dead, everything goes, ethically. (It took me a while to see that this was not a logical inference from atheism, this Dostoevskian grief and despair; it was only Nietzsche's way of sneaking the "superman" into the ethical forum.)

In short, I thought morality depended on a *commandment* ethic. Some believers might obey the divine will because they wanted to, of course, but, in any case, willingly or unwillingly, they were commanded to obey — their obedience being backed up by various eschatological sanctions, as promises of salvation. This was the ethical position, for example, of the Five Big Bs: Buber, Barth, Brunner, Bultmann, Bonhoeffer, plus the Americanized Niebuhrs (Richard and Reinhold).

Then I began to wonder. Did I accept the commandments because of the commander, or the commander because of the commandments? I decided that the commandments are decisive. I would have to repudiate the commander if the commandments, however revealed or discovered, called for pain or indifference instead of happiness and loving concern. This meant, to use an old saw, that theology stands at the bar of ethics, that doctrine has to measure up to moral values, that religion depends on morality *and not vice versa*. This upset the theological claim that ethics needs a religious basis. Kai Nielsen's *Ethics Without God* was correct; morality had escaped the *odium theologicum*.

We have to validate happiness and moral concern humanly, not theistically. There are good gods and bad gods and we have to choose among them according to whether they pass our moral tests. We approve or disapprove of any particular divine command by a prereligious criterion. The ancient maxim was true, *conscientia semper sequenda est*, but it is *our* conscience, not God's.

The perennial problem of evil in theology arises precisely because of the inconsistencies between God's putative will and the facts of experience under his putative dominion; as even Saint Augustine saw it, God either is all-powerful but not all-good or is all-good but not all-powerful. Medieval "realists" such as Aquinas took the right road when they decided that God wills a thing because it is right, not that it is right because God wills it. They were unable, of course, to accept fully what was implied, but at least they said it plainly: morality has an antecedent status, so that even God would be subject to it.

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Freedom Is Frightening

Roy P. Fairfield

The voices of freedom have sounded in many tones and tongues through the centuries. Westerners tend to treat as metaphors such crucial landmarks as Pericles' *Funeral Oration*, the *Magna Carta*, John Milton's *Areopagitica*, the *Declaration of Independence*, and bills of human rights. Slogans, too, have been important. The last three centuries have produced such cries as Patrick Henry's "Give me liberty or give me death," Emerson's "Truth crushed to earth will rise again," and Martin Luther King's "I have a dream. . .". Thomas Jefferson and his spiritual descendants fought for separation of church and state. Supreme Court justices such as Holmes, Brandeis, and Douglas have struggled to achieve the shape and integrity of due process, as have such institutions as the American Civil Liberties Union, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and many others. More mundane but no less symbolic, New Hampshire license plates carry the motto: Live Free or Die.

The central themes of these cries and struggles are summed up in the American Bill of Rights and other manifestos, but might well be stated as freedom *from* encroachments of government and private endeavors upon individual and community choosing, as well as freedom *to*, and the responsibility *for* choosing what is best for the health of body and mind. In our society such freedoms are ultimately testable in courts of law; yet, in the interstices between the forces of government or a private institution's or a neighbor's might, there is the assumption that one is free until challenged. And, of course, such revolutions in technology as the development of "the pill" or the computer keep the frontier of struggle before us. Who, for instance, could have predicted in 1920, the year women gained the franchise, that a major struggle during the last quarter of the century would be a woman's freedom to determine how she may use her body? or predicted in 1960 that we'd need a whole new code of ethics concerning the uses and abuses of computers? In short, the struggles for the right to choose, responsibility in decision making, the nature of public informa-

tion, are offensive and defensive — a concept well summed up in the 18th-century maxim, "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty." Stated otherwise, preserving freedom is hard work.

Yet, here we are, approaching the year 2000 with many dreams of human freedom unachieved. So, it seems appropriate to ask why freedom is so elusive.

Obviously there is no simple answer. Throughout history, of course, the struggle has been a tiny stream in a mighty ocean of tyrants of every variety: emperors, kings, queens, dictators, fascists, prime ministers, presidents; yes, even fathers, mothers, aunts, uncles, brothers, and sisters. The depiction of their destruction of others, even as they attempted to enhance themselves, is well delineated in history. And, interestingly enough, dissenters such as Socrates, Miranda, and Soviet dissidents are remembered even as the sheep of society fade into the twilight.

But it's one thing to focus on the opponents of human freedom, on those who would destroy another's effort to develop his or her potential; it is quite another to understand the more subtle contemporary forces that erode such freedoms. It is relatively easy, for instance, to drift into the "newspeak" of 1984, or get caught in the tentacles of mindless television, or trapped into a meaningless job or unsatisfying marriage. Also, political events such as Watergate seem to stun or disgust us. Twenty-five years after Aldous Huxley wrote *Brave New World*, he admitted that the dire effect that he'd predicted would require two-plus millenia had occurred in a piece of one century! And for years social, political, and economic observers have noted that 1984 has been here for a long time.

Erich Fromm's analysis of Hitler's Germany, *Escape From Freedom*, is a kind of landmark in understanding why freedom is frightening; it is also a type of blueprint for tracing group anxieties. Researchers in the fields of psychology, anthropology, and ethnology have so delineated human nature that we can perhaps better understand why, for many, "the enemy is within." As Pogo once remarked, "We have met the enemy and they is us." Dramatists have focused on human attributes which magnify fear and impotence into nightmare. In America today many cults and movements also reflect the psychological need to escape from freedom, whether the ultraconservative evangelicals of the American right (N.Y.

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Times, Aug. 17, 1980) or true believers of the far left. By putting one's money, time, and faith into such causes, one can escape the ultimate choice of choosing, so characteristic of the existential posture. One may also use Ernest Becker's "denial of death" as a metaphor and apply it widely to the kind of living which is daily dying.

Experiential Insights

My own insights into this phenomenon grow out of a lifetime of studying both classics and sociological literature. Equally important is my involvement in several experimental institutions, designed at their beginning to enhance human freedom that gradually deteriorated into dehumanizing bureaucracies. The Peace Corps, for instance, began as an exciting idea encouraging invention of socially viable processes via people-to-people projects; volunteers could try almost anything within reason to transform rhetoric into vital action. Today, it seems like a tired old member of the federal bureaucracy. This and several educational enterprises in which I've been involved seem to fulfill Max Weber's insight that institutions frequently begin with charismatic persons but evolve into bureaucracies.

Let me reflect for a moment about an institution with which I've been associated during the past decade, The Union for Experimenting Colleges & Universities. It began with elan, spawning external undergraduate and doctoral degree programs in the tradition of Rousseau, Pestalozzi, John Dewey, Carl Rogers, and Abraham Maslow. We designed the programs to enhance the individual's ability to choose what he or she wished to study and the arena in which to apply knowledge without the encumbrances of walls, limited faculty choices, narrow disciplinary focus, centralized decision-making, and other traditional modalities of learning. Working with several hundred adults (average age: 37) in the Union Graduate School (UGS), I learned that this self-selected group could throw off their chains, take maximum advantage of being encouraged to develop their own learning contracts, then fulfill them. But I also learned that learning to be free as "one's own person," despite all the vaunted rhetoric about "search for identity," is no easy task in a society where most people spend most of their lives doing somebody else's bidding. Many UGS learners kept "waiting for the other shoe to drop," well aware that accreditation needs, traditional professors, and peer critics who were sometimes "the enemy within" all made it frightening to choose. And these UGS students, were persons one would expect to find most courageous, most innovative, most creative.

Frequently, I have asked students, "Why is it so difficult to be free to choose?" And the answers have come back, "It's frightening"; "I've had no preparation for it"; "The society doesn't really encourage but gives only lip service to it"; "What will others say?"; "I'm fearful of the consequences." Even those with self-concepts of being dissenters, some of whom were part of the civil rights and student movements of the sixties, admit that it was difficult to transform ideals into action. And nobody can deny the repressive forces that make it dangerous to emulate hero-myths such as Socrates, Tom Paine, and Galileo.

My conclusion from this experience: teachers, parents, and

others in charge can move those who want to learn how to be free, *if* they develop their own "courage to (let) be." Granted, the "how" must be set in the context of other values, but freedom to choose is hardly freedom if you are willing to entrust it to yourself alone!

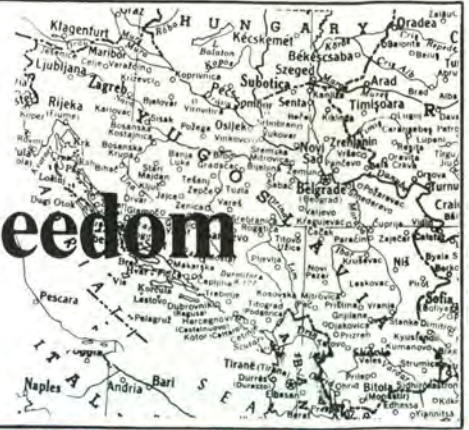
At the institutional level: the dream of the Union Graduate School was to decentralize academic decision making, putting it into the hands and minds of an academic committee with checks and balances reminiscent of those described in James Madison's brilliant "Federalist Paper No. 10." That we occasionally got ripped off when some students confused license and freedom, nobody could deny; yet the preponderant number of persons earning bachelors and doctoral degrees did so in such a way that they had their minds blown by the potential of such a system. Few denied that the process itself was frequently more important than the products. Tragically enough, as I've predicted repeatedly (cf. *Person-Centered Graduate Education*, Buffalo: Prometheus, 1977), those running the Union today have returned to centralized decision making, and the institution has moved from charisma to bureaucracy. As one student-wag recently observed, "We're galloping full speed toward 1884 academically and 1984 administratively," and doing it ostensibly in the name of alleged quality control and accreditation. Ironically, if accreditation comes during this escape from freedom, it will hardly be of the Union Graduate School, from which more than 1000 students have received their degrees. It is tragic because those who believe in person-centered learning can cite the lost opportunities and freedoms.

In conclusion: with urbanization, technocrization, industrialization, and bureaucratization of our society at full momentum; with it increasingly difficult to deal with the welter of choices that are available; with the media clearly having an impact on our lives; with all of this happening to us, is it any wonder that so many people find it frightening to choose? Is it any wonder that the very institutionalizing of an idea in a complex world makes the concept of bureaucracy so credible? Is it any wonder, too, that professionalism, credential-seeking, and status-seeking lead almost inevitably to mediocrity, since most of these checking processes are superficial at best and absurd at worst? Human history and the story of contemporary psychology teach us that it is not easy to overcome the repressive forces that cast an aura of fright around decision making. And today, the smallest decision, for instance, whether to choose one kind of cereal in a supermarket or another, seems to be fraught with monumental implications. As one wag remarked, "Living may be dangerous to your health." Perhaps the "return to community" and other such counterforces in our society reflect the human need to deal with manageable contexts, where the implications and consequences of choosing give more meaning to life.

In his *Third Wave*, Alvin Toffler presents an optimistic view of the future of freedom, especially as the computer, paradoxically enough, makes "the electronic cottage" possible. In short, persons will be able to run their lives and their work from the computer console. One hopes that this vision of the future will, perhaps, maximize human freedom and the quality of life. But I would repeat: we'll have to work like hell to achieve it!

FREE INQUIRY is interested in the status of freedom in all parts of the world. We expect to highlight the issue of human rights. Here is the first report of the situation in Yugoslavia. — Editor

There Is a Road to Freedom



Mihajlo Mihajlov

Western policy toward postwar Yugoslavia is similar to the British policy during the 19th century toward the Balkan countries in connection with Russia. The British idea was to keep Russia out of the Balkans and, in order to do so, Britain did everything possible, from humiliation to debacle, to help the Turkish empire — against the freedom of Balkan countries. But the law of history was and is without pity; the Ottoman empire had to die and did so. All British efforts to support Turkish interests in the Balkans were fruitless.

The same can be said of the regimes in Yugoslavia from 1918 to 1941 between the two world wars. The British policy was formally one of noncommitment, but in practice it was a policy of preserving the established regimes. How naive and senseless that policy was can be shown by one document in the British Foreign Offices. After the coup d'état in Belgrade on 27 March 1941, when Prince Paul was forced to abdicate because of his pro-German policy, one British diplomat who still believed in the Prince's pro-British attitude wrote: "We have lost the best informer in the Balkans."

A similar story has been repeated during the last thirty years. Because one wants to resist aggression from outside and to prevent conspiracy inside the country, one does everything possible so that the present regime is not only kept in power but is given all the moral and economic support it needs in the hope of presenting it to the masses as "super-democratic" and "super-socialist."

Yugoslavia existed before Tito and it will exist after him. Yugoslavia resisted the Soviet Union before the war, without Tito, and it will continue to resist the Soviets after Tito. But with Tito dead, Yugoslavia will be unable to resist, if there is no consensus of the broad mass of the people. The League of the Communists of Yugoslavia will not be strong enough, but with a liberalizing regime (with support of democratic non-Party forces) it will be able to defend the country against invasion and against internal subversion.

Mihajlov Mihajlov, noted Yugoslavian dissident and prolific author, is co-chairman of the Committee to Aid Democratic Dissidents in Yugoslavia.

This is why I think it is vital for Western democratic forces to do everything possible to assist in the liberalization of Yugoslavia, and to provide even more support now than during Tito's reign. I think that among the leaders of the democratic opposition in Zagreb and Belgrade, together with some supporters in the regime and Party, there is a consensus for a transitional period: to open the road to a new democratic socialist regime. A transitional period (of at least three years) must include the following measures: (1) maintain a strong defense of the community of peoples of Yugoslavia; (2) reaffirm the non-aligned position of Yugoslavia; (3) exercise, after the transitional period, the right of self-determination; (4) grant total amnesty for political, religious, and similar prisoners; (5) guarantee the independence of the press including the right of a united democratic opposition to express itself through free newspapers and magazines; (6) transform the Socialist Union, the present "front-organization," into a central focus of discussion, consultation, and agreement of the Party in power, on one side, and the united democratic opposition, on the other; (7) during the transitional period, there should be no institutional or constitutional changes, except the abolition of the political police; (8) recognition of freedom of movement, including the right to travel abroad; (9) freedom of indoor meetings; (10) no elections during the transitional period; (11) the Socialist Union should form two bodies: one for questions concerning the democratization of the country, and the other for discussion about the relations between the peoples of Yugoslavia (the national question); (12) the federal system of the state must be liberalized: the republics must exercise their rights, truly and fully, on the grounds of the constitution.

The Western powers, especially the United States, greatly assisted Yugoslavia to defend itself from the Soviet Union; but at the same time it helped the regime to stay in power. The time has come for the Western democracies to help the Yugoslav people to open the road to democratization of the present regime, not to retreat to a capitalist monarchist form of society, but to a new form of social-democracy.

The Yugoslav Communist Party has never had its "20th Congress." The Stalinists are still in power as they were before and after both 1948 and 1955. Stalin and Khrushchev are gone,

but Titoism is not; and this fact is partly a product of moral and financial support by the Western powers.

We should not overlook the fact that the Yugoslav League of Communists has always contained liberal elements who lack outside support: Djilas in 1953/4, the so-called Croatian nationalists, and the so-called Serbian liberals between 1966 and 1972. These liberal trends can continue to develop. There are signs indicating that many of these liberal elements in the Party wish to unite with a social-democratic opposition in order: (a) to save the Yugoslav community of peoples, (b) defend itself from outside pressure, and (c) institute substantial changes in the state apparatus, the Party, and the broader society.

Yugoslavia is perhaps the only country in Eastern Europe that can develop genuine democratization within the framework of the present regime. The transition period, and the period thereafter, cannot be imagined without a role for the League of Communists; and this League can have a new truly liberal leadership.

Unfortunately, the Western media have entertained only two alternatives for Yugoslavia: either the occupation by a foreign power or a protracted form of post-Titoist dictatorship. But there is another road for Yugoslavian freedom, a road which points to genuine socialism and nonalignment and without a bloody civil war. It is a road which offers a new spiritual vision of the future: true democratization and freedom. •

Renewed Repression in Yugoslavia

The Praxis Group

There was a widespread expectation that Tito's death would result in a process of liberalization in Yugoslavia. That would indeed have been the most rational policy. After the purge of liberals in 1972 there was a rather long period of political repression, social stagnation, total inertia in cultural life, and an ominous erosion of the official ideology. After twenty years of democratization, no matter how slow and inconsistent, it was and remains difficult for Yugoslavs, especially the younger generation, to adjust to the revival of some old Stalinist practices. It seemed that a new period of liberalization was very probable for at least two reasons: First, the absence of a strong center of authority comparable to Tito; second, the need for inner strengthening of the country in the face of a foreign threat. Traditionally, Yugoslav defence capability depended more on strong moral motivation than on weaponry. Well aware of that, Yugoslav leadership responded to Stalin's threat in 1948

The Praxis Group (sometimes called the "Belgrade 8") includes the following Yugoslavian philosophers: Mihailo Markovic, Ljubomir Tadic, Miladin Zivotic, Zagorka Golubovic, Svetozar Stojanovic, Dragoljub Micunovic, Triva Indjic, and Nebojsa Popov. Their cause has aroused democratic world opinion in their behalf. They were involved in the editing of Praxis, a liberal Marxist journal devoted to the ideals of democratic socialism and humanism. The journal has been suppressed in Yugoslavia, the professors suspended from teaching at their universities, and banned from lecturing or writing in Yugoslavia. Now they are threatened with still further repressive measures. The article above describes the current situation. — Editor

by opening the road to democratization and self-government. This time the response is different, at least in the largest Republic of Serbia.

It was decided to close the case of seven "Praxis" university professors (who were unconstitutionally suspended from teaching in 1975), not by allowing them to return to their normal duties, but by firing them from the University altogether.

On June 5, 1980, the law on the Universities was changed (for the fifth time during the last six years) in the Assembly of the Republic of Serbia. It further elaborated article 98, which was introduced in 1975 and which opened up the possibility of suspension of university professors who "damage social interests." On the basis of such a vaguely-formulated article, eight professors of the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade, active collaborators and editors of the journal *Praxis*, were suspended — although defended for seven years (1968-1975) by their colleagues in the University, by the students of all Yugoslav universities, by many leading Yugoslav intellectuals, and in spite of numerous protests from the international academic community. These eight are: Mihailo Markovic, Ljubomir Tadic, Miladin Zivotic, Zagorka Golubovic, Svetozar Stojanovic, Dragoljub Micunovic, Triva Indjic and Nebojsa Popov. Suspension meant that they were forbidden to teach, to be elected for any self-governing functions, or to take part in any decision-making. They were also not able to publish or give any public lectures. But they did not lose the status of employees: they were able to receive a (reduced) salary and get free health service.

The new law established that the state of suspension may last only for two years. If a suspended professor does not find

another job outside the university during that time he loses the status of employee, and all resulting rights. Article 104A refers to the specific situation of the seven "Praxis" professors (one of the original eight, Triva Indjic, found work in a sociological institute in Belgrade). Those who have already been suspended for more than two years lose all of their rights within six months unless they find another job outside the University ("in another working organization").

This is, in fact, an administrative decision to fire seven University professors within six months. It is incompatible with existing Yugoslav law in more than one respect:

(1) Article 13 of the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia (as well as the Federal Constitution) affirms the principle of self-management, which, in the first place, consists of the right of each working organization (and each employee in it) to decide on all personnel issues (allocation of work, election, promotion, dismissal). There are only exceptional cases of mismanagement when a higher-level political body (including the Assembly of a Republic) has the right to intervene. Article 143, which regulates such cases, enumerates several types of intervention. They are all concerned with *management* rights, but not with the rights to *work*. For example, the Assembly can dissolve a worker's council, or the management, or can reduce the use of self-management rights. But the Constitution does not give it the right to decide on employing and firing: those who lose their managing functions cannot lose their right to work by any such political intervention — except by the decision of the working organization itself. More specifically, Article 317 of the Constitution of Serbia enumerates nineteen specific functions of the Assembly of the Republic. Meddling in decision making on the questions of work and personnel of the University, or other working organizations, is not among them.

(2) The Assembly, as the legislative body, should not at the same time act as an executive organ and take specific decisions about individual citizens. Article 104A of the new University law refers to seven definite persons, and in fact constitutes a decision to terminate their employment status within six months. The form of the law — which by its very nature should have a *general* character has been abused in order to solve *ad hoc* a concrete case. Furthermore, this decision is irreversible, and does not involve the right of appeal to ordinary courts. This is incompatible with Article 203 of the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia, which guarantees to each citizen the right to equal protection of his rights and the right to appeal against decisions of the courts and of state organs. But, in this case there is no legal remedy against the decision of the Assembly. Consequently, this is an act of flagrant discrimination against University professors who, according to Articles 98 and 104A of the new University law, cannot — in contrast to other employees — appeal to any court and protect their rights as guaranteed by the Constitution.

(3) The new law contradicts Articles 190 and 193 of the Constitution of Serbia, which guarantee freedom of thought and freedom of scientific research. One cannot freely think and inquire if the results of his research can be declared (without even any specified objective procedure) damaging to social interests, and have as a consequence suspension and dismissal

from the University.

(4) The new University law is also in conflict with the *Federal Law of Associated Labor* of 1976. Articles 197 and 216 of that law enumerate a number of reasons for which an employee can be fired from work. These are: disruption of work, absenteeism for at least five consecutive working days, incapacity for work, age for retirement, arrest for more than six months and others. None of these include such a nebulous clause as "damaging social interests," or provide for subsequent suspension for two years.

(5) The institution of suspension for political reasons is also in contradiction with the international legal obligations of Yugoslavia undertaken by signing the *Universal Declaration on Human Rights*, the *1975 Helsinki Covenant on Security and Cooperation in Europe*, and the *Covenant of the International Confederation of Labor No. 111*.

Article 2 of the *Declaration* establishes that all the rights and liberties affirmed in it belong to each person without any discrimination as to faith, politics, or other opinion. Article 19 guarantees to each individual a right to freedom of thought, which involves the right not to be harassed because of one's thought.

Article 1 of the *Covenant of the International Confederation of Labor No. 111* defines discrimination in employment as "making any distinction, exclusion or favoring based on . . . faith (or) political opinion . . . which tends to destroy or disrupt the equality of possibility of employment." Article 2 of the *Recommendation of International Confederation of Labor No. 111* requires that every state pursue a policy that fosters equality of opportunity and of "procedures in employment in order to remove any discrimination."

If political institutions have the legitimate right to consider the "total conduct" of a university professor (Article 81 of the new law), to discriminate among them on the basis of whether they promote or damage "social interests," to suspend and eventually fire them, then clearly this destroys equality of conditions for employment and staying employed. This arbitrary interference and discrimination constitutes not only an act of harassment, but also imperils the very conditions of the existence of a scholar.

The revised University law was published in the *Official Bulletin of the Socialist Republic of Serbia* on June 7, 1980. On June 26, the seven concerned university professors: Mihailo Markovic, Ljubomir Tadic, Zagorka Golubovic, Svetozar Stojanovic, Miladin Zivotic, Dragoljub Micunovic and Nebojsa Popov appealed, through their lawyer Srdja Popovic, to the Constitutional Court of Serbia, requesting that the Court declare Articles 87, 98, and 104A of the revised University law unconstitutional.

They are also ready to appeal to all those international organizations which are concerned about freedom of thought and scientific research, and equal rights to employment without any political or ideological discrimination.

They ask for support and a renewed expression of solidarity from the international academic community in this long uneven struggle for the defense of intellectual integrity and human dignity of scholars in a world dominated by mindless power.

Is TV Programming Ungodly or Godly?

Cable Neuhaus

The self-appointed guardians of our national morality, a group that has grown explicably larger and more vocal in recent years, has lately taken to their pulpits to denounce various prime-time television programs as prurient, vacuous, and idolatrous. In other words, ungodly.

It's hard to quarrel with people who take the position that most of our television programming is moronic and dull. It certainly is that. Often it is misanthropic as well. Only seldom does it lapse into good taste.

But *ungodly*? Unfortunately not. To the contrary, our national communications medium has in fact become so godly that it today poses a genuine threat—perhaps *the* major threat—to the honorable notion of a religiously pluralistic America.

The public airwaves are currently bristling with the redundant, and largely right-wing, messages of several dozen evangelical Christian preachers, preachers who have shamelessly used television to build wealthy churches of which they are the centerpiece. If there is idolatry in our prime-time fare, it is tame stuff in comparison with what one sees in the extravagant ministries of the so-called electronic church.

The nascent power of these ministries is frightening to behold. A dozen years ago only one evangelist had managed to co-opt television (and, to a lesser extent, radio) for his narrowly perceived view of a world right by God. His name was Billy Graham, and he eventually parlayed his considerable oratorical skills into a quasi-political career as counselor to U.S. presidents (Republican) and world statesmen (hard-

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liners, especially). Today the Reverend Graham is no longer an aberration. He has been joined—indeed, surpassed—by evangelists who are more media savvy, more aggressive, more openly political, and seemingly less tolerant of those who do not share their views.

All of this has been made possible by the fast-developing satellite technology of the past decade. Christian broadcasters were the first to recognize and take advantage of the new hardware. By renting the use of satellites, which have been financed variously by the U.S. government and private investors, and by installing transmission and reception equipment near their studios, the plug-in church has made itself accessible to almost all Americans and millions of others abroad.

It is estimated that at least fifty Christian television channels are currently in use in the United States. The largest of the new ministries (which include those presided over by Reverends Falwell, Schuller, Robertson, Bakker, Robison, and others) produce more than \$600 million in revenue annually. Ostensibly all this money, much of it shaken loose from the hands of the poor, goes to the work of God. Sometimes, however, God gets shortchanged. When Jim Bakker, the boyish-looking host of the widely seen "PTL (Praise the Lord, or Pass the Loot, depending on one's perspective) Club" TV show, somehow misplaced \$13 million in donations a few years ago, he soberly explained to his adoring audience that Satan was to blame. Even the IRS, which normally steers clear of TV ministries because of their tax-exempt status, could not abide that alibi. For a time, Bakker was in jeopardy of losing all that he had built in glory to himself.

One can hardly regard that prospect as a loss. The Bakker show, like most of the other slick evangelical come-ons, is a testament to greed. It portrays all too vividly the corrupt ideas to which TV can be put. To wit: Bakker's wife, a chirpy blonde, regularly regales her followers with tales of how

deep prayer earned her (surprise!) glimmering gems that thrust her from the bowels of depression. Celebrities who visit these shows tell us how to record gold records, win Academy Awards, and star in blockbuster theatrical productions: it's all as simple as being born again. For the grace of God—and, as it happens, a few coins.

A certain high sense of arrogance has, of course, suffused the airy world of the telegenic evangelists. This was more or less inevitable. They are, after all, stars. They sit atop holy empires. Their words are instantly conveyed around the world. Even Billy Graham has warned of the danger in such megalomania, but evidently with little effect. Word has it that the superstars of the electronic church neither cooperate nor communicate with each other. A couple of years ago, when David Susskind, following a magazine article I had written, invited the "700 Club" 's Pat Robertson to appear on his panel, Robertson answered that he might do it on the condition that he be the *only* pastor on the program.

Fascinating as one might find the labyrinthian internal politics of the electronic church, there is scarcely any hope that it may soon crumble in upon itself. Rather, all indications are that it will continue to expand, feeding off its acolytes and, significantly, its mortal friends in high places.

Despite Federal Communications Commission policies, known as the Fairness Doctrine, which forbid the use of the government-assigned broadcast frequencies for blatantly partisan issue-taking on matters of public contention, there has been no sign that the government is willing to engage Christian telegenicals on this matter. Clearly, many of the new preachers have staked out a far-right position on questions of national and international concern, and they have hardly been shy about letting their viewers know which office-seekers are God-fearing Christians and which others are scandalously allied with the beliefs of secular humanism. Single-issue bloc voting, which the born-again TV programs are encouraging with their demands that "morality candidates" be voted in, has this year obviously influenced the rhetoric of the three major presidential contenders, who curiously enough are themselves all acknowledged evangelical Christians.

Secular humanists, consequently, are due for some stock-taking—and action, simply as a matter of self-defense. Though portrayed effectively by born-again as a pervasive menace, one sadly suspects that our

numbers are, if anything, diminishing, thanks in part to the government's hands-off policy with respect to Christian broadcasters. The evangelicals' lobby in Washington is a model of perseverance and organization. Their representatives have persuaded elected officials at all levels of the bureaucracy that the purchase, operation, and/or use of TV stations for the propagation of a so-called Christian message not only is within the law but is actually a service to a nation in need of moral shoring up.

There are no easy means by which to subvert the progress being made by the electronic church. Their head start is so profound that Catholic and mainstream Protestant denominations are visibly nervous about the erosion of their own constituencies. A prominent Catholic priest in Pittsburgh, where Christian broadcasting got its start in 1921, told me recently: "We ought to go after them. All those TV preachers have to offer is fakery. They're exploiting people. It is hard to see where the money goes, but they build monuments to themselves one way or another. It's nut-

teness." Not long ago the head of the broadcast division of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Hartford went on record as opposing the plug-in church. "After ten years of working in radio and TV," he confessed, "I find very few religious programs are truly Christian-like."

The broad secular world has at last taken note of the rise of the Pat Robertsons and the Jim Bakkers, if only with an arched eyebrow. Several national magazines and at least one network TV program ("60 Minutes") have brought to the attention of their audiences the dangers inherent in mixing twentieth-century technology with promises of good health and eternal salvation in trade for just a few dollars a week.

There is a need now to be vigilant, to ensure, at the very least, that the transgressions we have already seen do not escalate. Local television and radio programming directors must be urged to take cognizance of humanistic points of view in their community. Discussions of religious topics should therefore not merely include traditionally articulated opinions of Christians and Jews but should express the

views of secular humanists as well. Even "Devotional Moments," the perfunctory prayers spoken by local clergymen at the conclusion of TV stations' broadcast days, ought not to be exclusively a venue for ministers' expatiating on the blessings of a beneficent God.

True, few people stay up late enough to watch these nightly prayers, and perhaps fewer still give them any thought, but *somewhere* there must be public recognition of minority views regarding the conventional concept of deity.

If the effort isn't made to persuade broadcasters and the federal government of the value of such an accounting, we may live to see a sealing of the space that has always separated (if sometimes uneasily) our government from our religions.

When a small-fry TV preacher from Philadelphia boasted to me last year, "I'm gonna leave my scar on the face of the world," I had the unnerving feeling he might be right. He and his brethren in the floodlights have the potential to carve a jagged scar on our national landscape if we do not mobilize quickly. •

FILM

Inhumanists: Dressed to Kill

Hal Crowther

You can detest a certain filmmaker for years, analyze everything he does to the best of your ability, and never really understand why you were prejudiced against him in the first place. Brian De Palma is my best example. It always infuriates me to hear this camera-juggler discussed with respect. De Palma is all style and no content. But it doesn't account for animosity. The same is sometimes true of Robert Altman, and I've

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rooted for Altman through some of his most spectacular miscarriages.

The unforgivable truth about Brian De Palma was revealed to me during the scene following the false conclusion of his latest thriller, another Alfred Hitchcock "memorial," called *Dressed to Kill*. This scene is the stock anticlimax, the gathering over coffee after the last bullet has been fired and the strains of Wagner drained from the soundtrack. The surviving good guys — a cop, a hooker, and a teenage Thomas Edison — are comparing notes. It's a scene Hitchcock might have used for one of those macabre revelations that changed our whole perception of the plot. For De Palma it's only a necessary comma or semicolon between the climactic twist and post-

climactic sucker punch that he used for a signature (see *Carrie*). But during that moment's respite he gives himself away.

The dialogue is as wooden as a local commercial. It circles around and repeats itself blatantly. The actual exposition doesn't take up a third of the time allotted, and the actors just hang there on the screen toying with their props. It's a throwaway.

"God, he doesn't give a damn about these characters," I thought. "Four minutes of dialogue bores De Palma like four minutes of standing in line."

De Palma knew the audience needed a breather before he hit them with another round of razzle-dazzle, and he probably had it timed to the second from one of his favorite Hitchcocks. But he was so eager to get back to his funny lenses and filters he didn't bother to write the scene, or direct it. He just tossed some dialogue into the gap like a chuck of newsreel or a few old stock shots of waves breaking on the beach. I felt sorry for the characters — not the actors but the characters. He was their daddy, their creator, and he didn't love them any more than that.

A director who doesn't care about the people he created himself doesn't care about people at all. The scene in *Dressed to Kill* that has drawn the most comment and praise is a long sequence in the Metropolitan Museum of Art with no dialogue at all. It's elegant and intriguing but ultimately a bit

confusing, because De Palma never condescends to tell a story. He offers a montage, an arrangement of images that may lead you in a certain direction if you're alert enough to pick up all the clues. If you lose your way, as you may, following Angie Dickinson through that maze of galleries, you're not worth going back for. Just as Angie's body is only one visual element in the montage, her character is one factor in the simple equation of De Palma's plot. His



G. Vigrass

characters are less than types, they're dolls. If he allowed one of them to breathe, it might become obstreperous and spoil the whole arrangement. Nothing in a De Palma film grows or changes. It just moves forward. His work is as organic as a marble slab.

De Palma's formal inhumanism is the predictable end product of a generation of filmmakers who take their text from other films instead of life and literature.

If you asked me to choose the best background for a serious film director, I'd rate beer commercials, stag films, and wedding photography over the film-school cliques of UCLA and NYU. When you learn to see through the lenses of a dozen over-examined directors of another era, the image you receive is what Xerox would call a fourth-generation copy. A record of a reflection of a reflection. Besides plagiarizing Hitchcock's style (it's called homage, when you admit it), De Palma puns continually on specific scenes in Hitchcock's films. I get some of them, and I miss others. Now and then I get a pleasurable flash of recognition, but I don't see what it has to do with making films. Where I see people and possibilities, this director sees allusions, in-jokes, familiar motifs. There's a layer of film between Brian De Palma and reality. It's the Celluloid Curtain, and nothing human gets through.

For the opposite approach to murder mystery, review Altman's *The Long Good-bye* or Robert Benton's *The Late Show*. Under the loving care of these older, more literate directors, the characters grow and

sprawl out all over the screen. You'll remember Bill Macy's role in *Late Show* long after you've forgotten the plot, which really wasn't much.

De Palma is an extreme, such a creature of the sound stage and the screening room that his intelligence is almost extraterrestrial. Even his sex and violence aren't Freudian, like the pitiful self-exposures of a Paul Schrader. It just happens that sex and violence are very visual. Nothing personal. De Palma isn't a sicko, he's a cyborg — an expensive camera with legs, who wears a beard.

Some of his most successful contemporaries have weaker alibis. George Lucas and Steven Spielberg have made strong human-centered films with fine characters — Lucas' *American Graffiti*, Spielberg's *Sugarland Express* — but now they make space epics with characters who range from passive observers to cartoon cutouts. Of all the boy geniuses of the seventies, only Francis Ford Coppola still seems to give his actors as much time as his special effects. But a close analysis of *Apocalypse Now* might convince you that Coppola too is starting to run with the pack.

That's only at the "art" end of the motion picture industry. At the volume end are cut-rate special effects, armies of stunt men and the ghost of Mack Sennett with a hillbilly accent directing an endless chase down an endless highway. Actors have become extensions of cars and trucks, barbells for gorillas and comic-strip giants. The original point of disaster films was to show the human being under extraordinary stress, but now the humans are just there to put the spectacle in scale, like the Mt. Rushmore climber balanced on Roosevelt's nose.

The inhumanist heresy is vulnerable at both ends, it seems to me. When it comes to art and critics, I'm not uncomfortable with an analogy from the fine arts. Once in my newspaper days I filled in for the art critic and was exposed to an exhibition of paintings by a ranking "minimalist" named Robert Mangold. The canvases contained nothing but rectangles of various colors — precious little variation and precious few rectangles. They were as sexy and mysterious as a T-square. I saw nothing that the average interior decorator couldn't have knocked off on his lunch break.

Ordinarily I'm cautious and respectful when I'm out of my field, but these paintings offended me. I wrote that they were the most vapid, heartless things I'd seen hanging on a wall since they took down Nixon's picture at the post office. When Mr. Mangold came to town to discuss his work and accept the obeisance of the local art community, he

was very gracious about my article. He checked my credentials as an art critic and implied tactfully that they spoke for themselves. He wasn't about to engage in a debate with an aborigine. *Artnews* loved him, and Hilton Kramer, too, for all I know.

Mangold is in the same position as Brian De Palma when the critics tell Brian that his visual ingenuity more than compensates for his vulgarity and inhumanity. He has allowed the approval of his peers, and the modest commercial success that goes with it, to seduce him into pursuing his art down a blind alley eons beyond any significant human response. Why shouldn't he be sure of himself when the best authorities encourage him? But the most penetrating criticism of any discipline rarely comes from deep inside its establishment. History will verify that these Mangold canvases are aberrant junk, and meanwhile no one uninoculated by *Artnews* would dream of having one at home.

The reigning self-delusion at the commercial end of the film industry is that films are only giving jaded audiences what they demand, as determined by the box office. Producer Robert Evans told me that films have to be ever bigger in concept, at the expense of characterization, to drag an audience away from its TV.

I think Evans is confusing the problem of promoting a motion picture with the problem of getting people to respond to it once they're in the theater.

Promotion is about 50 percent of the battle in a competitive film market, and it's certainly easier to hard-sell the raising of the Titanic than a story about old women coping with arthritis. But that doesn't mean it'll play better once it's on the screen. I think an audience reaction against the depersonalized spectacle has already set in. It would account for the success of *Breaking Away* and the great success of Benton's *Kramer vs. Kramer*, two modest, almost homely films that rely entirely on characterization and sentiment. On a lower level, it accounts for a TV audience that embraces the ersatz naturalism of "Alice" and decisively rejects "Battlestar Galactica" and "Buck Rogers."

At the lowest level, it may account for the public's immersion in soap opera and the popularity of those new "live action" TV shows — one of them titled "Real People" — that give ordinary citizens a chance to embarrass themselves on camera.

I'm not a great believer in the taste of the masses, but there's no sentient life form that nourishes itself on celluloid and sleight-of-hand. The poor misled audience is looking for its soul even though it hasn't the faintest idea where it was misled. •

BOOKS

Moral Fundamentals Humanized

Beryl Levy

Humanist Ethics: Dialogue on Basics, edited by Morris B. Storer, Buffalo, New York, Prometheus Books, 1980, 303 pages, \$17.95.

How could anyone interested in free inquiry fail to be allured by a book which promises a dialogue on the most basic of subjects: how to live — and without benefit of clergy? It would have to be a “dialogue” because it is humanist ethics and a humanist is by definition nondogmatic. Not that “humanism” is a term free of ambiguity. But a number of pioneering thinkers have grown accustomed to thinking of humanism as the Renaissance focus on man and nature followed by acquiescence in modernity, which means an assimilation of the scientific mode of thinking.

I will focus in this review on what the book is all about, without going into substantive criticism, so that it can be accessible to that hardy perennial, the general reader. In the brief space and time allotted I could do nothing more. Even if I had more leeway, I would not have the chutzpah to sit in judgement upon this rich array of ideas so carefully presented by such a group of eminent philosophers.

Morris B. Storer, professor emeritus of philosophy and humanities at the University of Florida, has demonstrated the irrelevance of professional retirement by organizing this ambitious symposium. Since Storer is a scholar in the humanities as well as in philosophy the reader does not have to fear a discussion which is highly technical and purely linguistic. He will be encouraged to learn that besides the professional philosophers he will encounter a professor of family life, a judge from India, a “situationalist” who is a professor of pastoral theology, and a historian who is a

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humanizer of academic scholarship.

Unless a humanist is to cop out he must surely face up to the challenge of forging a liberated ethics. Jean-Paul Sartre, an existential humanist as he described himself, did cop out and welched on his promise to work out an ethics for his brand of atheism. He settled instead on an idiosyncratic version of Marxism. The contributors to this volume, by contrast, have avoided any systematic nostrums and are searching their way by the tentative, experimental, self-corrective, and progressing way of thinking which is not confined to scientists in a scientific age.

The tone for the book is set in an introductory essay by Will Durant. “As long as poverty, suffering, or grief exists,” he writes, “the unfortunate will seek supernatural aid. We should not begrudge them these consolations; and we should not attack such creeds unless they attack our own freedom of belief. Moreover, we shall find it no easy task to mold a natural ethic strong enough to maintain moral restraint and social order without the support of supernatural consolations, hopes, and fears. Nor should we let our critics suppose that we worship man; we know that our species has soiled itself with a thousand absurdities, enmities, crimes, and even with massacre and genocide. Our aim is to protect our freedom to work for the *improvement* of man — for men brave enough to stand with their feet on the earth rather than in the sky; and for the multiplication of such men and women into a more humane society, state, and international order.”

Theirs: consolation! Ours: enhancement! Besides maintaining social order and moral restraint, how about stimulating good cheer and good humor and, as Kurtz has urged in his most recent book, exuberance?

With an evident energy which mocks senior-citizen status, Professor Storer has tackled the challenge in the only feasible way for independent-minded men; by soliciting contributions from among outstanding philosophers (most of them

professors of philosophy), followed by critical comments from other philosophers, usually with replies by the protagonists. Storer invited their attention to five questions:

The Meaning and Sources of Morality
Responsibility and Freedom
Justice and Workability
Justice and Duties
Situationalism and Principles

It is in the nature of the problem that no questions could be satisfactory and no answers sharply pointed. The issues posed are not pellucid and the responses are not always addressed to the issues as framed. The result is an embarrassment of riches which defy coordination. How could it be otherwise with so many mature thinkers engaged in a multilogue on a subject so basic — all struggling with the indistinct boundaries of a humanist outlook.

Under each of his five proposed questions Storer has noted sub-questions from which I have selected those which strike me as most centrally pertinent:

The Meaning and Sources of Morality: What is the rock-bottom concern of morality?

Freedom and Responsibility: Is there a middle ground between determinism and free will?

Justice and Workability: Do ends justify means?

Rights and Duties: What is the place of obligation in a humanist ethic?

Situationalism and Principles: How to decide upon the right course?

Some are not so gracious as Durant and would echo Voltaire's cry “Ecrasez l'infame.” They might feel saddened, like Freud, that the masses of men should be addicted to an infantile fantasy but, unlike Durant and Freud, would make no room for consolations. Others wish to enlarge a humanistic component in the traditional religions which are hard beset by rational critique but show no disposition to fold their tents and silently steal away. The nagging question is: Should humanist ethics be framed for the educated sophisticate or should it also take account of institutional realities?

In any case, no contributor thinks of humanism as a cult or a religion imposing uniform beliefs or practices. Free inquiry and pluralism (but not arbitrary relativism) are of the essence. In a way, this volume may be regarded as an effort to provide an ethical rationale for the very process of education as mankind climbs from crag to crag without medieval encumbrances.

A book of this kind gives the lie to those critics who have mounted an attack upon our schools as conveyors of “humanism” as

a new "religion." These critics want biology textbooks to include the myth of creation (as related in one of the world's scriptures) along with the well-established hypothesis of evolution. Aside from confusing myth with hypothesis, these critics are being invidious toward the various myths of creation in other scriptures than the Hebraic one. It is doubtful whether these critics of humanism will be able to read this book anyway.

I must confess that I do not wholly blame them. No one can read this book. It is a cornucopia: a horn of plenty overflowing with sagacity and cogencies. Besides the profundity which makes the discussions rough sledding, they have the stigmata of those who ply the trade of moral philosopher. They do the opposite of what Jacques Barzun declares to be essential for good writing which is simple and direct; "Prefer the short word to the long; the concrete to the abstract; and the familiar to the unfamiliar." If philosophers were to try to follow this counsel they would have to give up the ghost. Camus wrote a long essay to establish the point that the only philosophical question left is whether to commit suicide and never once quoted the best formulation of this philosophical dilemma ever written: "To be or not to be." Nevertheless, this book would direct any intelligent person to many cues for working out his own thought in a way that any liberated person must do in the transitions of our day. I guess no one should tackle it who has not at least wet his toes in philosophy — or is ready to do so.

The participants were afforded the opportunity to dwell on themes which they regarded as of major interest. Some notion of the range of themes can be gathered from this selection: responsibility and relativism, morality as an art, globalism versus pluralism, humanist consensus, mutual accommodation, suffering, political humanism, factual inquiry into morality, and obligation.

My copy of this book will go on my shelf alongside *Moral Problems in Contemporary*

Society, the anthology which preceded this one and which my ethics students found a welcome complement to more abstract approaches. For the time being I am keeping my copy of this book off the shelf, hoping to digest it before the year is up so as to qualify for entry into the multilogue. I believe that other subscribers to this journal will also feel stirred to enter the multilogue.

You will want to know who the contributors are and their affiliations. Here they are in alphabetical order, all of them professors of philosophy except Durant, Fletcher, Kirkendall, Simpson, and Tarkunde: John Anton (Emory), Archie J. Bahm (New Mexico), Kurt Erich Baier (Pittsburgh), Will Durant (author), Joseph Fletcher (Episcopal theologian), Alastair Hannay (Trondheim, Norway), Max Hocutt (Alabama), Lester A. Kirkendall (Oregon State), Konstantin Kolenda (Rice), Marvin Kohl (SUNY, Fredonia), Paul Kurtz (SUNY, Buffalo), Mihailo Markovic (Serbian Institute), Kai Nielsen (Calgary, Canada), Lee Nisbet (Medaille), Howard Radest (Ramapo College), Herbert W. Schneider (Carleton), James R. Simpson (Florida), Morris B. Storer (Florida), V.M. Tarkunde (attorney, India), Marvin Zimmerman (SUNY, Buffalo).

I should like to see this book and the earlier one, *Moral Problems in Contemporary Society* (ed. by Paul Kurtz), fall into a sequence followed by a third book which would put their salient thoughts into myths and fables, proverbs and epigrams, anecdotes and novelettes, and especially photographs and paintings, so as to reach a wider constituency. You cannot fight an incumbent myth with no myth. We are not Greeks or Renaissance men and, while the myth of Prometheus will serve for the time being to stave off Camus' *Myth of Sisyphus*, we await the poet-genius who will put our prospects and perplexities into video radiance. To do so is not to mimic the patterns of traditional religions but to welcome the natural artistic expression of a spreading ethos.

(Continued from Page 29)

Joseph Fletcher

By definition religious beliefs are non-rational and subjective (intuitive). So, indeed, for that matter, are moral values. If, as they say, theology is a rational reflection on the non-rational, ethics too is a rational reflection on the nonrational. In both cases the reflection is in the interest of tidiness and coherence. But the main point here is that the primary datum is moral, not religious; right and wrong are humanly perceived, not religiously revealed. In a word, ethics is humanist.

Teleological ethics (in which rightness comes from aiming at good consequences, as opposed to "deontological" ethics which finds rightness in obedience to normative principles) is typical of humanists. The mainstreams of Christianity, however, have never managed to pull loose from legalism and the absurd contradictions arising between universalized moral rules. Such rules or "moral laws" as "theft is always wrong" or "abortion is always wrong" are attributed by religionists to the divine will — a will which is universal, eternal, final, whether known directly, as in Protestant biblical ethics, or indirectly, as in Catholic natural-law ethics. And since this authority is sacred and absolute, it is easy to absolutize moral rules, twisting what may often be wise generalizations into rigid and unrealistic "laws" of morality.

Situation ethics offered them a way out of rule ethics and its dilemmas, both theoretical and practical. It posited that the divine will is indeed that humans act out of loving concern, but it then contended that this is God's *only* moral imperative — leaving it up to human beings as moral agents (individually and corporately) to determine what the most loving thing would be in every situation, unencumbered by prejudicial rules.

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(Continued from Front Cover)

of view, critical of the assumptions and practices of ideological dogmas, yet committed to the uncompromising defense of the free, open, pluralistic, and democratic society.

Regretfully, most secularists (humanists, atheists, agnostics, rationalists, and skeptics) have been identified with the Left because they advocate positions which are radical relative to the mainstream of public opinion. Within the last decade the terms "Left" and "Right" have lost all clearly identifiable meaning, thus making the radical nature of secularism more difficult to locate along the traditional political spectrum. Large numbers of secularists have abandoned the prevailing moral premises found in ritualistic egalitarian liberalism and totalitarian socialism.

Neo-liberals, neo-conservatives, libertarians, and social democrats, all share the need to defend the free society: they recognize that in order to achieve it we need to be committed to both political democracy and economic freedom. Many democrats now appreciate the fact that where there is a monopoly of state power there is neither political nor economic freedom. To what extent the free market should be regulated and democratic capitalism should be defended is of course a key point for debate and analysis among secularists who are both humanists and democrats.

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