

ICONOCLAST

FOR MILITANT ATHEISM & RATIONALISM

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Home News:

STREETS IN THE AIR

"Streets In the Air" is the title of an article in the April issue of the "Brent Civic Review". We were not as much surprised as perturbed to read in this article that in an area of London where land is at so great a premium that the council is forced to plan in terms of seven story flats with "streets in the air" in order to secure "An approximate net density of 105 rooms per acre", no less than one and a half acres has also been allocated as the site of a Roman Catholic Church!

Church Allocation One and a half acres for a church! Yet "schools (yes in the plural) and halls" are only allocated two acres, a day nursery half an acre, and "shops" one acre. Or, if you like statistics, out of the total land allocated for schools, halls, shops, nurseries, etc. no less than 30 per cent is to be given over to a Roman Catholic Church.

"In the Air" We all know that a great deal of what our local council do these days is "in the air", and for a very long time indeed the workers homes, like his pie, has rested firmly in the sky.

It was the late Mr Chapman Cohen who once observed that a few inches of living space in this world were worth acres in the next, and if the homeless are often enough too busy praying to pay heed to his advice, the churches are too busy praying - on them - to ignore it. Jesus might have offered us a house with "many mansions" in the sky, but he founded his house on rock! In fact it is an unfailing source of wonder to the secularist to remark how pre-occupied with material things, the believers in the supremacy of the spirit are. As Mr F.A. Ridley has so often observed: "Whether or not the church knows anything about the next world, it knows a hell of a lot about this."

Catholics Favoured In the Brent Council's scheme it is the Roman Catholic Church that is being favoured, for there is no mention at all of other religious denominations. Presumably, Protestant Britain prefers Catholicism - or someone, or a group in a position of power somewhere on Brent Council does; we hope that whoever it is, has the mandate of a majority of the voters for this course of action. However if he or they have not got a mandate now, then once the council houses surrounding the Roman Catholic Church are filled by grateful Roman Catholic families, they soon will.

Religious Test? It is this, of course, which is the real and disturbing feature about the whole scheme. We could perhaps overlook land being filched for a church building instead of being used to house the homeless, or for schools, hospitals, youth clubs and so on, but who on Brent Council has decided to fill the surrounding council houses on this new estate with Roman Catholics?

Who has instituted a religious test for the housing scheme? Who believes that when three per cent of the service land has been allocated to a Roman Catholic Church, the council intend to populate the surrounding council houses with Protestants, Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists, Jews, Quakers and Shakers - all churchless on their new estate, whilst the empty edifice of the rival religion rises majestically amidst them? It could probably be used for Bingo, but meanwhile, before the Roman Catholic voters move in and are whipped into political line by their priests, there is still time to see that someone on the Council moves out. It is time that the ordinary voters of Brent took a serious interest in what is happening in their borough in order to prevent special privileges to a religious minority, with all that this implies.

J.A. Millar.

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ICONOCLAST

Editorial: All correspondence and material for publication should be sent to: Editorial Group, Iconoclast, 283, Grays Inn Road, London, W.C.1. Date-line for publication is the 15th of the previous month.

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EDITORIAL:

In our April and May issues, Mr F.A. Ridley opened a policy discussion on the whole future of the secularist and freethought movement in this country, under the title of "Two Secularist Traditions." The first article outlined the origins and development of "bourgeois" secularism and the second, the "proletarian".

It is not without significance that the emergence of the Secular League as an organisation has become necessary because of the inadequacy of the "bourgeois" secular organisations, which have held the field for so many years in this country, and which can no longer meet the needs of the period in which we are living.

But although it is the aim and intention of the Secular League to meet the needs of a "proletarian" secular organisation, it is not yet that. The organisation is small, it has not yet thoroughly discussed in what way it differs from previous secular organisations, it has not yet clarified its own aims and objects sufficiently to be able to lay absolute claim to being the "proletarian" secular organisation. Nevertheless it has this intention.

However, there is much dross to be swept away in our own thinking and in adapting ourselves to the new tasks which such an organisation must undertake, which cannot be done by previous "bourgeois" organisations. They are still part of the historical background out of which we must emerge, in the process of which we must not only find our own new formulations of the case for "proletarian" secularism but also find the ways and means of making it an essential part of the working class movement.

As Mr F.A. Ridley clearly puts the perspectives of the Secular League, and of course this Iconoclast, which has now become the official organ of the Secular League: "henceforth in this 20th century any effective secularist movement must be as

inseparable from the social revolution of the proletariat as its bourgeois predecessor in past centuries was inseparable from the then evolution of the bourgeois revolution itself."

The transition from the "old" to the "new" conception of secularism will, of course, tend to be resisted by those who only see its work for secularism as "mainly intellectual;" the kind of secularism which "confines its criticism almost entirely to the obvious absurdities in most religious beliefs," as Mr F.A. Ridley so cogently put it.

What we have to make plain in the development of our organisation, in our propaganda and other educational activities, is that the "roots of religion lie deep in the defective structure of bourgeois society itself, and spring from the social order invariably characterised by human exploitation, inequality and artificial scarcity; it is surely obvious that it is only by the revolutionary overthrow of the outmoded social order that in this 20th century it is possible to abolish religion?"

So far, our modest start with the Iconoclast - as the first four issues have shown - has been in line with this "new" conception of our current tasks.

Thus, Mr F.A. Ridley's two articles (which surely it would be valuable to publish as a separate pamphlet for wider distribution than Iconoclast has at present) could be the starting point of a discussion amongst ourselves as to how best to develop this "new" type of secularism. No other organisation, at the moment, exists for the purposes we have in mind. The ideas that have been presented are challenging. They are worthy of a far wider audience than we have at the moment. For it is not sufficient for us to convince confirmed secularists of the need for this "new" approach, we have to build our resources and our understanding, so that we can take our ideas and activities into the ranks of all religionists to an extent that has never been attempted before. If we remain a small, select coterie of secularist "intellectuals" isolated from the broad masses who are still imbued with the superstitions of religion, we have failed in our task. To turn outwards must be our constant endeavour. The forces ranged against us are tremendous and inevitably since they are a major prop of the "bourgeois" system of society, are well endowed with financial and other resources. Currently we see many examples of this. We have already pinpointed them. But "history" is on our side. Let us mobilise our resources and help to "turn the wheel of history a little faster."

GERRARD WINSTANLEY (1609 - ?)

(The Iconoclast is the organ of the Secular League, which was officially founded on Easter Monday, 1966, at a conference at Kingston-upon-Thames, presided over by Mr J.W. Barker, for the last generation the leader of Kingston radicalism in both Church and State. Accordingly, I think it would be peculiarly apposite if I devoted this present article to the greatest radical, both in Church and State, who ever lived in Kingston, Gerrard Winstanley, the "Digger". We may surely hope that when English society in general does eventually catch up with the rationalistic and democratic ideals for which the Secular League stands, the then citizens of Kingston will erect a monument upon the banks of the Thames to its greatest citizen.)

Diggers Winstanley was a Lancashire man, probably born in St. Helens about 1608. He worked in the City of London where he became a freeman and was reduced to penury by fraud, an unpleasant experience which probably prompted his bitter reference to "the thieving art of buying and selling" in one of his later pamphlets. When the English Revolution broke out in 1642, he was working at the menial job of a cowherd. During the Civil War, he seems to have served in the Cromwellian Army. But as an individual he only makes three brief appearances on the stage of his contemporary history. In the spring of 1649, after the execution of Charles I. and the definitive victory of the Revolution, a group of men, probably members of the sect of Levellers, occupied a piece of untitled common land upon St. George's Hill near Kingston, and started to dig it up. Whence the soubriquet by which history knows them as "Diggers". They described themselves as "True Levellers".

Land Stolen On Sunday, April 8th, 1649, a group of men appeared at Cobham in the County of Surrey and began to dig some uncultivated land on St. George's Hill in that vicinity. When challenged as to the legality of this proceeding they declared that the land had been stolen from the people at the time of the Conqueror, six centuries earlier, during the Norman Conquest, and they were merely restoring the original common ownership. When taken before General Fairfax, then Commander-in-Chief of the Parliamentary Army, they refused to take off their hats, and offered no resistance to the soldiers, asserting that pacifism and communism went inseparably together (cf my book "Revolutionary Tradition in England").

Communal Ownership The English Revolution of the mid-17th century, whilst it included several radical sects in both church and state, was primarily a bourgeois revolution staged by the then rising capitalist class against royal absolutism and feudal privilege. As such, it had obviously no room for Communism! Consequently the experimental movement of the Diggers in favour of communal ownership proved to be both brief and unfortunate, for after much petty persecution by local landlords the Digger colony was forcibly dissolved by the Army under an Order in

Council, then the presiding authority in the English Commonwealth between 1649 and 1653.

In the course of their arbitrary proceedings, Winstanley made three personal appearances, one in an interview with General Fairfax on St. George's Hill itself, and another before the Council of State, along with Everard who seems to have acted as a spokesman for the Diggers. Winstanley also, along with several other Diggers, made a brief appearance before a court in Kingston on a charge of trespass, but appears to have been dismissed with a caution. Thereafter, Winstanley is only known by his writings between 1649 and 1658, and he seems to have still been alive at the Restoration in 1660, since he figures in a legal case at the Court of Chancery. The actual date of his death is unknown.

"Norman Power" Such meagre details unfortunately represent all that is known of one of the boldest and most original figures thrown up by the English Revolution of the mid-17th century, for unlike most pioneers, his ideas were too far in advance of his own times to make much direct impact upon them. But, "the pen is mightier than the sword" and long outlives it. For after the suppression of the Diggers, and throughout this memorable decade (1649-1659), that witnessed both the successive phases of the English Revolution, the Commonwealth, and its succeeding Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell, Winstanley issued a whole series of revolutionary pamphlets in which he advanced what may perhaps be described as the first comprehensive study of communism that ever appeared in this country. Unquestionably, he ranks among the most remarkable men in what was perhaps the most remarkable epoch in English history. For it was at this time that the ideas of political and religious radicalism first made their dramatic appearance in "Englands green and pleasant land".

(Note: The origins of both modern democracy and modern socialism can ultimately be traced back to the radical sects that stemmed from the Cromwellian Army during the heyday of the English Revolution 1642-1650.

(cont. pg. 4 col. 1.)

Gerard Winstanley (1609 - ?) cont, from pg 3:

Cf. G.H. Sabine: "Introduction to the Works of Gerrard Winstanley").

Winstanley's two most famous pamphlets published during these years bore the grandiloquent titles of "Light Shining from Buckinghamshire" and "The Law of Freedom upon a Platform; or True Magistracy Restored". The latter is a kind of manifesto of the Digger sect. In this pamphlet Winstanley realised (but unfortunately only on paper!) what the Diggers themselves had unsuccessfully sought to realise when they started their ill-fated experiment in agrarian communism at St. George's Hill.

First English Socialist The German socialist historian

Eduard Bernstein summarised Winstanley's ideas as follows: "And in this respect we may say without exaggeration as to Winstanley that, although not armed with the whole of the science of his century, he was as a socialist ahead of his age. He represented the most advanced ideas of his time. In his Utopia you find coalesced all the popular aspirations engendered by the Revolution (Cf. Bernstein, "Cromwell and Communism").

I have myself added this reference to Winstanley's outstanding theory, his analysis of the "Norman Power": "In these pamphlets Winstanley advances a thorough going communism. For the common ownership of land is still predominantly in agrarian England a basic tenet of the Diggers in both practice and theory. For Winstanley was more than a mere academic theoretician of Utopian communism. For he was quite definitely the first theoretician of the class struggle in England. For he had a quite lucid picture of English history as an age old struggle from the Norman Conquest (1066) between the ruling class of its day, whom he correctly identified with the Norman conquerors, and the exploited English masses, the descendants of the conquered Saxons. One is surely entitled to comment that this appears to be a perfectly valid analysis of English history prior to the Industrial Revolution with its new class divisions."

Class Struggle In his own day, this class struggle again in both church and state, had ended with the overthrow of the "Norman Power" represented then by King Charles Stuart and his Cavaliers; who had been overthrown by the victory of the Saxon commons enrolled in Cromwell's ever victorious Ironsides. One could say in fact that Cromwell's victory at Marston Moor and Naseby were the Anglo-Saxon revenge for the Battle of Hastings six centuries earlier! But, argues Winstanley, only communism, the common ownership of the land in a still agrarian England, can finally break this agelong

"Norman Power" by giving the land in perpetuity to the English people from whom this power had been stolen at the time of the Conquest. For, said Winstanley, "if by conquest the landlord calls the earth his and not mine, it must be either by the conquest of the kings over the commoners or the commoners over the kings".

"Cloud Without Rain" Here surely we have the first "Marxist", (long before Marx!) account of English history in terms of class struggle; a description completely valid for the evolution of pre-industrial England. This alone would surely immortalise the great Digger. But this post - 1066 class struggle embraced the church equally with the state. For Winstanley lashes the State Church, the spiritual ally of the Norman Power, of King Charles and Archbishop Laud, with fiercest Biblical invective; for it is the "Filthy dreamer" and "the cloud without rain". For the work of the State Church is "to persuade the multitude of people to let William the Conqueror alone, have possession and government of the earth and to call it his and theirs so as not to rebel against him." "The opium of the people", again long before Marx.

Picking Pockets The clergy, added Winstanley, have discovered anew a highly profitable way of picking pockets; for they picked the pockets of the poor whilst they were gazing up into Heaven waiting for the Son of God to appear. For like "Tom" Paine, a century later, Winstanley seems to have been a Deist rather than an outright Atheist, but he evidently thoroughly understood the past and present political role of the State Church as the spiritual police of the Norman Power from William the Conqueror in 1066 to the then recently defunct monarchy of Charles Stuart.

Winstanley and the Quakers Writing in 1678 long after the Stuart Restoration, an Anglican cleric, Thomas Comber, Dean of Durham, (in his book Christianity no Enthusiasm) described Winstanley, who by then was presumably dead, as "the founder of the Quakers, who, however respectable they were to become in later years, originated as a radical sect savagely persecuted by successive English governments. It is possible Winstanley may have joined them in his later years and that the "Society of Friends" was influenced by the similar ideas of the Diggers? In any case, this originally radical sect also founded by an ex-Cromwellian soldier, George Fox, remains today the only living link between the age of Winstanley and our own age. Gerrard Winstanley was one of the greatest pioneers of English radicalism in both Church & State

Correspondence:Where Shall We Get Married?

I wish our "Freethinker" would lend me his rose-coloured spectacles just for a while; I could sure do with an injection of optimism.

It is true that we have a "modicum of secular civilisation in England" - the emphasis being on the word "modicum". Every small advance is, in Mr Abse's words, won in the teeth of clerical opposition, Pauline doctrine as interpreted by the Archbishop of Canterbury! We still retain our bench of bishops and it is still obligatory for the Lord Chancellor to confess the Anglican faith, but maybe we should thank the powers that be for that mercy - we might still have a bench of cardinals and a Wolsey on the Woolsack.

It is true also that we have our registry offices for the celebration of marriages, one for every vast district, miles apart, while there are churches of every denomination up and down and round the corner - catering for the moronic public. Could we not agitate for a system similar to the French where the registry marriage is compulsory and the religious ceremony a separate event if desired.

Perhaps it is also true that today in England one might win a case of slander against a cleric designating the children of a non-religious marriage as illegitimate; but that is not so today in Italy. Such a case was brought against the Bishop of Prato, it was lost. Yet Italy could boast four happy decades of secular government (while the Pope sulked in the Vatican) with priestcraft expelled from the schools and local government - about 50 years ago! How have the priests mounted the saddle again? There is but one answer, the gullibility of the masses and the need of the ruling class for a credulous servile public. England is being inundated with the products of Roman Catholicism from Ireland, whose influx even the English Catholics dreaded, because of their known ignorant credulity. We shall need more than rose-coloured spectacles to meet this menace.

Eva Ebury, London, N.W.6.

Freethinker comments: My sole intention was to "have a go" at Protestants and some Freethinkers who, entering into "mixed marriages" with R.Cs, agree to a Church wedding and then complain when the R.C. Church expects them to comply with its rules. Why compromise? I am grateful to Eva Ebury for bringing up a wider look at the marriage question. There are more registry offices marriages notwithstanding; and church marriages are almost all "white weddings", i.e. the social snobbery of a "white wedding" is at least as powerful a force as the clinging to religion.

It may be pointed out that Jews, whose religion provides the simplest of all marriage ceremonies (exchange of rings and one blessing; no minister required), have in fact in this country such lavish, wasteful and extravagant weddings, out of sheer middle-class snobbery, that they imagine them to be part of the Mosaic creed.

The Scottish law until recently was far in advance of all marriage laws recognising cohabitation, with neither priest nor registrar needed - the blacksmith at Gretna did not "marry", he only attested to the fact of marriage.

The advance of secularism however is not so much noted by registry office marriages based as they are on the "sanctity" of marriage, but on the growing dissolubility of the marriage tie and the recognition that love does not depend on marriage. If sex life in the universities is compared with only thirty years ago, it will be seen we have made some progress.

Sin of Pride and Self-Seeking

Your correspondent Mr Dace in your correspondence page last month stated that: "The working classes are unsurpassed in their ignorance, apathy and self-seeking".

It is obvious that the higher up you go in class society, the more opportunity, at least, there is for learning, the more time for involvement, and the less need to seek one's interest. I think Stephen Leacock observed that the rich had so much more taste, breeding, elegance - above all else, so much more money.

Mr Dace seeks an individual change of heart "discarding theology" but purifying our attitudes. These derive from our reason, not our hearts, and are influenced by social and economic matters amongst others. I see no need for Christian verbiage or to call for "loving our neighbours" with all the smug hypocrisy that suggests. Enough that we respect each other's pride and seeking our own interest, do not trample on others.

I think Mr Dace really wants a secular god; a Jehovah who is also a paid up Humanist...what William Blake called a "creeping Jesus"! He cannot see one and therefore asks despairingly, why should he not "beneficently withdraw from society". Why not indeed? Has he a particular choice of method? - gas smells and water ruins the clothing.

F.A. Charlesworth, London, N.1.

Correspondence welcomed. Keep it short.

CRISIS IN THE SPANISH PRIESTHOOD

Calling for prayer, the Archbishop of Seville declared that "the Spanish clergy is on the verge of the greatest disaster since Luther". What is the nature of this disaster? It is the fact that the Church turned to General Franco to save it from secularism and the workers' revolution, utilised its victory to establish its power as securely as in the Middle Ages, and now finds itself more hated than ever, identified in the public mind with reaction, and liable to be involved in Franco's downfall when that long-awaited event takes place.

Johnson Is His Prophet There is only one god available for immediate answer to the prayers of the faithful, Uncle Sam, and President Johnson is his prophet. The talks between U.S. Air Force secretary Harold Brown and the chief of the Spanish General Staff, Capt. General Agustin Monoz Grandes, have one object, namely, to increase the striking power of the Spanish Armed Forces, and to provide yet another reserve for U.S. air power. What can Munoz Grandes offer other than territory? His army is in fact useless for external war, since no Spanish fascist dare trust the people. It is to be used to suppress the forces of freedom as ever in the past.

Keeping Face Uncle Sam has the bargaining power, and one of the concessions has been toleration for the Protestant clergy. Franco is soft-peddling on this to avoid offending his reactionary supporters (Seville has declared that he prefers a thousand Communists to ten Protestants). Johnson no longer sees why his Baptist buddies from Texas have to go on supporting the Catholicism in Iberia that they persecute in Alabama. He has Franco in his pocket just as he has Wilson. Why has the proud Britannic Imperial Government to "discuss" Gibraltar? This is another concession to Franco. Let him have some chance to keep face, poor devil! ... let the reactionaries see he is "getting tough" with Britain and rebel priests that he is keeping the national flag flying in his fight on Gibraltar even if he has to haul down the colours of the Inquisition.

Hodging Your Bets This is the "right wing" clerical problem in Spain, which has concerned the hierarchy. The "left wing" problem (which may well have been organised by the hierarchy) is designed to give the Spaniards some assurance that "we were always against fascism" though it comes as somewhat of a deathbed repentance (of which Papists have experience!) During the second week of May, some young priests have "come into the open" (i.e., been heard of for the first time because they never before existed) in opposing the worst excesses of police brutality in Madrid (which are by no means as bad as they were in say 1939/49 when wholesale slaughter was the rule; or 1949/59 when wholesale imprisonment was the rule).

"The Times" (14th May) reports that subsequent to the clashing of Barcelona priests with police in open demonstrations, the Bishop of San Sebastian had to suspend the ordination of theological students and close the seminary, to prevent similar disturbances.

Privileged Students As the "New York Herald Tribune, of 12th May, pointed out, the police face "possible" (surely automatic?) excommunication for assaulting the 100 priests in Barcelona. It was the first clash between priests and police since the Civil War and would have been "unthinkable a few years ago" says the New York Herald Tribune.

It is true that students in Spain are beginning to rebel. And they should not be confused with students elsewhere. In Spain, unlike England, students still come almost solely from a privileged class. They are not the new "proletarian" rebels, but the new bourgeois capitalist rebels, replacing not the working class generation which fought Franco but the middle class generation which directed the republic before the civil war and then went into exile or compromised with Franco. Their grandfathers were Liberals and Freemasons, their fathers right-wing Republicans and acquiescent supporters of Franco. The rebellious priesthood wants to get over to this generation. The Church missed out on the bourgeois "generation of '98" which became anti-clerical, Masonic and Republican. The Catholic nobility is too decadent for the Church's new order. It does not want to miss out on this one; hence the "need for a dialogue". Only co-operation between priesthood and middle-class can prevent the deluge. And surely attending the Cortes in Madrid and spending the summer in San Sebastian "is worth a mass"?

Proletarian Generation "The deluge" is represented by the new proletarian generation, heard of only when it strikes, as bitter as ever in its anti-clericalism and more than ever justified. With a Catholic background, they are not interested in the advance of Protestantism or Masonry, but solely in the end of clericalism.

(cont. pg. 8 col. 1.)

LOVE IN A PLASTIC HEART

Those of us who are not yet convinced that the battle between science and superstition is won, were intrigued to read in the Daily Mirror on May 24th, that a little seven year old girl was puzzled when she heard that a man had been given a plastic "heart". She wrote to the man who carried out the operation, Dr. Michael De Bakey, asking: "Does a plastic heart have love in it?"

Does Have Love In It Dr Michael De Bakey replied: "A plastic heart does have love in it, a very great deal of love. It isn't the kind of love you're thinking of. The love in the plastic heart is the love of many people who love other people and don't want them to die just because their hearts are not strong enough to keep beating. So these people worked all day and often all night to build a heart that will help people to live longer. If you can thank of how much love there would be in these hundreds of people then that is how much love there is in a plastic heart."

Science v. Superstition In that one simple poignant story there is epitomised all that militant atheism really means. The age old conflict between science and superstition. Those who believe in the love of man and those who believe in the love of god. No matter what the "reverent rationalists" may say, however "modern" the views of the Pope, or "advanced" the bishops of England, or even whatever the "image" of the "secular-humanist", science and superstition remain diametrically opposed. You cannot have both science and superstition. The two are irreconcilable. And in the great struggle to free mankind from the shackles forged in the fear of the fires of hell during the cold dank days of the dark ages, we are either for, or we are against, the freedom and enlightenment of mankind. Science or Superstition. You must hurry and make your minds up, for if the one does not emerge victorious, then the other must.

Laws Of Nature If you wish to retain god the creator, then you must discard one of the first laws of physics - the law of conservation of energy - either out of nothing something came, or out of nothing nothing comes. It is significant that not even a Christian would claim that something comes from nothing, since they postulate at least the prior existence of their god! But in order to do this there must come another head-on clash with science because it is necessary to argue against all experience and observation to attempt to surmise even this.

Church v. Reason From the beginning and down through the ages the church has attacked reason. Galileo summoned before the Inquisition proved

at least the arrogance of the priest as much as his ignorance. To place the works of Copernicus upon the "Index" proved that the church knew in the 16th century what some "humanists" have not learned in the 20th. Although it was only after Pope Calixtus III had excommunicated Halley's comet that they began to doubt it themselves.

Demoniacal Possession As for medicine and surgery; since Jesus had taught that illness was due to demoniacal possession, and the Bible told how King Asa died because he trusted physicians instead of the priests of Jahweh, the church considered that man should not interfere with the punishments of God, eventually forbidding the study of medicine and the practise of surgery altogether. We have had to fight every inch of the way, not simply against the ignorance of the priest, but against the apathy of the "reverent humanist" who considers that we should not make too bold a bid to leave the religious wallowing in their supernatural slime while we think for ourselves, lest we should offend those who terrify our children.

Verily I say into you, there is more love in a plastic heart than in a million plaster virgins!

Secular League Membership: Full details of the aims and objects of the Secular League, including application for membership form, can be obtained from Mr J.A. Millar, Hon. Secretary, Secular League, 139, Elm Road, New Malden, Surrey.

The hon. secretary will be pleased to hear from any members or supporters who have any proposals for the development of group activities in any area of the country. He will also be pleased to receive the names and addresses of any likely contacts of prospective members from any area. Your fullest co-operation in extending our field of activities will be greatly welcomed.

Arrangements are being made for the conducting of secular funerals and other services. Details for wills, bequests, etc. can be obtained from the hon. secretary, address as above.

Crisis in the Spanish Priesthood, cont.pg6:

The Workers There were those who argued that the Churches should not have been closed during the Civil War - but surely the policy has been amply justified by the clergy in victory. Craven and whining in defeat, it has arrogantly shown its triumph over the people since 1939. ("A lamb in adversity, a fox in equality, a tiger in supremacy"). Those who cried over the poor nuns and their fate in 1936-39 might try even today visiting a women's prison in Spain and seeing how these gentle holy creatures behave as prison wardresses.

Church Responsibility It is not for nothing that the Spanish resistance holds the Church equally responsible for political imprisonment in Spain as it does the State. Hence the kidnapping in Rome of diplomat-priest Monsignor Marcos Ussia - one of the "brains" of the Church-State duo - by Spanish Anarchists who endeavoured to hold him hostage until the Pope interceded for the release of political prisoners in Spain. Publicity ruined this gesture, it being recognised that the Pope could not openly appear to yield to pressure or no Spanish diplomat would be safe. To show their respect for freedom, Mgr.Ussia's kidnappers let him loose unharmed. We trust that this is not a quixotic gesture that the Anarchists will regret when the diplomat resumes activity.

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Secular League Meetings: Outdoor meetings sponsored by Kingston, North London and Camden groups: Marble Arch, every Sunday from 4.0 pm. Speakers J.W. Barker, L. Ebury, C.E. Wood, J.A. Millar, H. Timmins, and others.

Tower Hill, every Thursday, 12.0-2.0

Indoor Meetings: Kingston and Surbiton group meetings every Friday, 8.0 pm. at the White Hart, Hampton Wick, Middlx.

Secularists living or working in the Borough of Camden, are urged to send for particulars of meetings of the Camden group of the Secular League.

The Secular League can supply speakers to organisations on all aspects of secularism.

During the past month, Secular League lecturers were unusually busy. Unfortunately there was not time to publicise the excellent debate between Albert Meltzer and Simon Goldblatt, prospective Liberal candidate for Twickenham on "Democracy has had its Day", in the course of which we think that Albert Meltzer had the best of the debate.

Mr J.A. Millar gave a short talk to the Working Young Socialists which was much appreciated. Our engagement books are fairly full but if secretaries of interested organisations will contact us, we can still fit a few more in.

Iconoclast Printing Fund: Our thanks to Mr Len Ebury for another "tenner", to Mr Hamilton 3/-, Mr Morgan 5/-, Mr H.S. Michael 5/- and to all those we missed between editions last month.

Literature Fund: Our thanks to Mr G. Stewart for the big box of books left on our doorstep - a welcome surprise, and for those who wish to help in this way, the Secular League will pay carriage and packing charges. Thanks to the many others who have subscribed to this fund. Books wanted for our library: freethought debates on socialism - anything. "Bible Heroes" by G.W. Foote, McCabes "Rationalists Encyclopaedia".

Religious News and Views: On 21st May, the last religious war was waged at Highbury between Mohammed Ali (alias Cassius Clay), convert to Islam and Henry Cooper, convert to the Holy Roman Church. A Jewish promoter and a Protestant referee ensured complete religious impartiality. Poor Cooper however saw so many stars he had to consult astrologers.