NOW OUT - THE NEW EDITION OF *HUMANISM*

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The text is considerably improved, updated, and expanded, with more illustrations, including some new cartoons by Donald Rooum (such as the one on the right).

The ISBN is 0 902368 23 0. The cover price is £6.50, **but is £5.00 (post free) to members of SPES!**

The Bible says Moses carried the Ten Commandments down the mountain

'THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS SOCIETY ...'
*based on a talk given to the Ethical Society by **Chris Bratcher** on 6 June 2004*

When I gave this talk, I didn't know that Tom Rubens had given a splendid lecture seven weeks earlier on Emile Durkheim's notion of Society [June 2004 ER]. He concluded: 'Thus we reject absolutely the contention that 'there is no such thing as society'. I argue the opposite, without turning it into a reply as such, as my starting point to a wider complaint.

Ripostes To Mrs Thatcher
Mrs Thatcher's remark that 'there is no such thing as Society' was a gift to many socialists struggling to find a pithy statement of their core beliefs. The existence of Society took on the status of a self-evident and defining truth. Its supporters make a variety of assertions in support. Society is alive, in our faces, and not terribly nice or well; or, is realised in our non-market inter-relations, and is the fount of all morality; or, that it has potential existence [whether as a quasi-Platonic Communitarian Ideal, a Marxist Kingdom of Heaven on Earth, or the Anglicised version of the American Dream of a Great Society]. Depending on the claim, the function of the state is to change, reflect, build upon, or realise what Mrs T was apparently denying. She was variously accused of moral or intellectual blindness, and moral turpitude for making her own statement come true.

The variety of these heart-felt responses, often advanced together despite some being mutually exclusive, indicate an endemic confusion as to what is being claimed in asserting there is such a thing as Society. Is it an ideal, a 'moral fact', or some other sort of thing? Durkheim had this difficulty. Raymond Aron's famous and generally sympathetic book[1] on the founders of sociology, from which Tom Rubens' quotations are taken, says that, although Durkheim proclaimed himself to be a positivist in his investigation of social facts, 'at the same time society is both [for him] the source of the ideal and the true object of moral and religious faith.'

Aron quotes [p92] Durkheim from *Sociology and Philosophy*[2]: 'If a morality exists, society must be a moral body qualitatively distinct from the individual bodies it comprises and from whose synthesis it results. You will see the analogy between this argument and the one used by Kant to prove the existence of God. We must choose between God and Society... The choice leaves me somewhat indifferent, since to me divinity is merely society transfigured and symbolically conceived.' Aron criticises him for 'the belief that the value that we create by our behaviour must be embodied, so to speak, in reality', and 'the assumption that society and divinity can be compared and contrasted as if they were two observable things. There is no such thing as Society; there is no such thing as a society; there are only human groups' [p93]. Was this the origin of Mrs Thatcher's remark? Perhaps we should credit her with a little reading.

Do Families Exist?
Mrs Thatcher went on [and how she went on] to say: 'there are individual men, women and there are families'. This immediately shows that she was not doing philosophy. Why cite just one group of people as co-existing in the same breath as individuals? What is so logically special about a family? The difficulty is obvious. All sorts of groups develop a strong collective identity, akin to that of a family. If

families are to be admitted to the philosophical class of sorts of things that exist, then so should other groups. Mrs Thatcher was not, as such, denying this: she was just being economical with the actualité. If she was implying that blood is necessarily thicker than fellowship, this is plainly open to dispute: and this is the true political divide. She was, of course, choosing to name families, and only families, because she was making a political pitch. But she was, I presume, careful to say that there are families, and not, that there is Family. Her objection to Society applies to the elevation and espousal of The Family and its supposed values, as well: except she was not politically able or willing to disown that too.

Aron is not saying that the concepts of a society, and of relations between its members, are meaningless, or that particular societies or social groupings are non-existent. The notions of common interest and obligation, and the fact that we are social beings, are undeniable. A moral case for advancing the collective condition of our fellows can remain founded on this. You may therefore wonder what the fuss is about. Is this stress on the word 'thing' just a quibble? I say not. The key point is this: that a society of such and such a kind may be a fact of life, does not make it, and in particular, the abstraction from it, 'Society', an entity.

The old philosophical word for an entity is an *ens*, with the property of entelechy, or distinct realised existence. [Both words are taken straight from the Latin and Greek and are preserved in Chambers dictionary.] If something is rated as an entity, it must have a being, a nature and an identity. Immediate questions arise as to its attributes, and their boundary conditions, that in principle should be answerable intelligibly. The problems and absurdities that arise when God is posited as an entity are familiar to us all. Humanists above all should look particularly critically at any such status claim.

Seeing The Wood For The Trees
Let us compare the status of 'a society', and 'a wood'. The comparison reveals much about 'Society' and the urge to posit it. There is no temptation to put up 'Wood' [in this abstract collective sense] in the same way. I do not think this is because of any comparative lack of richness in the concept. Trees in a wood form an ecosystem that conditions their survival and growth. Trees are a woodland species somewhat in the way that humans are social beings. But there is simply no silvan metaphysical entity needed. James Lovelock has posited one for the planet, and called it 'Gaia'. 'Society' is a similar personification, and we should view it with equal suspicion. It is not a distinct something with a nature and life of its own that has to be considered in addition to that of the individuals comprising a particular society.

The same objection may be run against stratified subdivisions of Society: High Society, Middle England, Mondeo Man, White Van Man, and so on down to Low Life. Their greater descriptive content and apparent temporality [Mondeo man and car having gone to the conceptual scrap heap] ought to make them more thing-like than Society, but in fact serve as a reminder that they would be mis-categorised as such.

Mrs Thatcher's policies were taken to be a logical consequence of her claim. For her, no doubt they were linked. Denying there was such a thing as Society gave

4   *Ethical Record, May, 2005*

her an ideological rationale for rolling back that other dubious entity, the nanny State. The political damage to the Conservatives was ultimately such that, after her reign, they have felt the need to purport to rediscover Society, as if it were a lost continent temporarily obscured by jungle, of which Mr Portillo and other adventurous explorers have given report. However, I think that it remains an intellectual Atlantis.

Mrs Thatcher is not the first name that springs to mind as a philosopher-statesman. But, whether she knew it or not, she was making a deep philosophical point. The error is known as Reification. In my view, identifying instances is the major - and perhaps the only - substantial contribution philosophy can make to many fields. It is the sign that they are become fields of rhetoric.

The Sin Of Reification
'Re' comes from the Latin word 'res', a thing. A philosophical encyclopaedia' sees it as the mistake 'of treating an abstraction or relation, or convention, as if it were a natural thing.' As defined, it seems to be something without clear demarcation, as it is not self-evident, at least to a philosopher, what is 'a natural thing', what is so special about it, and what attributes should be its exclusive property. Theoreticians may claim reification is not a crime, or that the mistake does not apply to their pet entity, by claiming it to be either 'a natural thing', or at least not an abstraction or artificial construct; or that their treatment is harmless or warranted.

We cannot answer these questions in the abstract. If there is an error, it should be apparent from example, and then the onus of justification lies with those who wish to extend or port the status and properties of acknowledged things to what appear to be similar abstractions. We should look at what is required of or done with the concept in question [such as Society], and what we are asked to believe in consequence. In preparing this talk, I searched on the internet for 'reification and sociology'. I found it most ironic that this threw up several introductions to university courses in the latter, in which the student was given a health warning about deploying concepts in a manner that reified them, as the cardinal sin of the subject.

Here is one: 'Reification means to make concrete that which is abstract. When you start sentences with phrases such as society thinks, cultures have views, institutions force, you give human qualities to non-human things. Institutions cannot force; only people force. You need to be specific about who does these things. If society makes women feel fat, where does that leave all the people who would not make women feel fat? The question is who or what processes result in women feeling fat.'

However, the authors quite often then blithely talked about Society, and far more abstruse notions, in a manner that seemed to commit the sin in spades, and I could only conclude that the warning was akin to a statutory genuflection on entering a church, and only students need confess! It is a valid objection to sociology, when practitioners stray beyond inference from observation and statistical gathering of individuals' behaviour in groups, to construct a theoretical persona for the significant patterns they observe. I put Durkheim in that category.

Did Occam Give God A Close Shave?

Reifications were rampant in the works of medieval Scholastic philosophers, and arose from their concern to establish purely by reason what sorts of things in reality there were. William of Occam[4] attempted to cut them back on the principle that 'Entities should not be multiplied [posited] more than necessary'; there are, apparently, a variety of formulations in his works. Occam was of course in holy orders, and didn't apply his razor to God, although we would say that He is a prime example, whether or not He is a necessary being. I would say that God had a close shave!

The Yellow Brick Road To God

Occam's particular target was a solution to the problem of Universals. By virtue of what do we pick out yellow things as having just yellow in common? What is yellowness, over and above instances of yellow? Realists [as opposed to Nominalists] felt driven to regard it as a thing in itself. They then have the difficulty of saying what qualities Yellowness has. A hundred years ago, G.E.Moore reified Goodness, by conscious comparison with Yellowness, into a something we know not what, even though his otherwise painstakingly 'common-sense' approach to philosophy founded the revolt against reification in general and Idealism in particular.

Nowadays, Platonic or Moorean Forms of yellowness may be beyond the Pale, but the temptation, or rather requirement, to assert some distinct existence and/or reality for the class of all possible objects of a type, and/or its members, whether actual or not, remains. I cannot go into the pitch of abstruseness reached in the issue, but the following may serve as an indication. Here is a quote from a so-called Modal Realist philosopher[5], who has persuaded OUP to publish his book this year, that I think indicates the nonsense on stilts that can result:

If 'a merely possible table, atom, etc' is to resemble actual objects in colour, shape, etc, it must be 'as concrete and particular as an actual table, atom, etc'.

Yes, really: it would also be nice to encounter by now some other representative actual object than the perennial table, and the highly dubious atom. It is no doubt unfair to rub it in that atoms, if indeed they are a natural kind or unit, are almost the least concrete things one can imagine. Similar urges, generating infinite variety and multiplication, crop up in the practice, and hence, philosophy, of mathematics, where I expect you will be thankful I leave them.

Logic Chopping, And Other Tree-Felling

Occam's razor is also the weapon of reductionism, of cutting down the sorts of things there are to a minimum. Consider again a bunch of trees, and the wood that they collectively make up. An Occamist might say there are only trees, and they are double counted in positing a wood out there - but who is counting, and why?

The urge to specify the sorts of things there are is usually based on the assumption that there can be only one kind for the world to make ultimate, or metaphysical sense. One could say that there are only, really, cells, or atoms, or quarks, or super-strings, or whatever physics posits as the irreducible substance of

things - or, if one were persuaded of a particular philosophical theory of perception - that one need posit only qualia [the name given to the 'sensible bits' that are held to populate one's sensory field].

However, the charge of reification can be applied 'downward' to these posited 'bits' of physics, if they are conceived as more than computational nodes that function in a physics explanation, however 'fundamental' that explanation may be. I would have to divert into the philosophy of science, no doubt in the footsteps of our esteemed member, Ian Buxton, to take that further. And as he has argued at length, the qualia of consciousness may be undeniable, and in that sense fundamental, but they lack some of the properties of things.

But this gets us away from reification as defined. 'Natural things' are defined as the gold standard. We do not have to establish what is true coinage, to note that some abstractions are not of this kind. I just emphasise that the supposed mistake of carrying on talking, say, of tables, and even minds as more than fictions of varying necessity for discourse and reference, is a different one from reification as defined.

Same Other Reifications

It is high time to get back to reifications outside philosophy. Here are some possible other candidates from the field of politics: the Working Class, the People, the Nation - usually followed by the assertion 'won't stand for it'. Alienation, Capital and Labour take on a life of their own. It is commonly recognised in management babble - and psychoanalytic theory, in the Freudian pantheon of Super-ego, Ego and Id.

Although the error is particularly prevalent in the soft sciences, like a virus, it replicates. I have to be careful what I say here: which is really the moral. Errors do not actually reproduce. In my view, Susan Blackmore commits the offence in elevating Richard Dawkins' concept of memes from cultural facts to something more.

I think that if a society such as SPES, as a home and guardian of the secular viewpoint, is to have any common intellectual purpose beyond repeat, and rather tiresome, swipes at the hydra of overt religion, it must be on the lookout for false gods being fashioned, however innocently and harmlessly, in secular clothing.

1   *Main Currents in Sociological Thought,* Vol 2, London, 1968. I quote the hardback pagination. Aron, Professor of Sociology at the University of Paris, was regarded as the leading European sociologist in the sixties.

2   1898: English version by Free Press of Glencoe, 1953

3   *The Concise Encyclopaedia of Western Philosophy & Philosophers* [ed. J.O.Urmson], first edition published 1960

4   William was possibly born in Ockham, Surrey, in 1285.

5   Rodriguez-Pereya, *Resemblance Nominalism,* Oxford 2004, reviewed in the TLS in May, 2004   ❏

JOHN PAUL II - HIS LEGACY
Summary of a Lecture to the Ethical Society, 17 April 2005
Barbara Smoker

The year 1978 was an unusual one in the annals of the Catholic Church: it had three popes - something that had not occurred since the Middle Ages. Paul VI, who had been in the top job for fifteen years, died in July and was succeeded by a smiling, unassuming, pastoral cardinal, conservative in doctrine but politically naive. He chose the name John Paul (the first double-barrelled name in papal history), which indicated that he intended to follow in the footsteps of his last two predecessors - a perplexing intention, since John and Paul were so different. Then he did something else unusual: he died (or, more likely, was murdered) after only 33 days in office - an apparent blunder on the part of the Holy Spirit, who supposedly guides the electon of popes.

The second 1978 conclave, which was a hefty expense for the Vatican, took care to choose a man renowned for his physical fitness. Thus it was that, on the eighth ballot, the compromise choice of Karol Woytyla made him the first Polish pope ever and the first non-Italian for 450 years; but there were murmurings that, aged only 58, he could well remain in office too long - and how right they were! His pontificate of $26^1/_2$ years was the third longest of the supposed 264, blocking many much-needed reforms.

Though his chosen name, John Paul II, gave little indication of his intentions, his immediate predecessor having had no time to make his mark, the second John Paul soon emerged as a hard man, determined to put a brake on 'the runaway church' set in motion by John XXIII. At the same time, his 'charisma' and acting ability endeared him to the laity and ordinary priests (less so to many bishops, whose authority he curtailed) and to millions of non-Catholics around the world.

Why Karol Woytyla Was So Popular
Twelve days after his demise, I visited a local Catholic church to pick up a copy of their weekly newsletter. The editorial begins: 'As he reached his last breath the Holy Father uttered his final word, "Amen", and bowing his head he gave up the spirit.' A miracle, indeed! - for he was by then physically incapable of uttering any word.

The holy spin-doctors hardly needed such obvious fiction when they had on their side the televised fact of millions of pilgrims to the lying-in-state and to the biggest, most celebrity-spangled funeral ever staged.

However, it is instructive to analyse the motives of those millions. Many - perhaps most - were there out of mere curiosity and the urge to be present at a special occasion with such a great gathering of the world's rulers, royals, and religious luminaries. Even those with genuine tears in their eyes (hand-picked by the television cameras) were there out of an emotional veneration for the messenger while generally rejecting his message - for we know, statistically, that very few Western Catholics obey his strictures, on, for instance, contraception.

As for the preponderant Polish mourners, their prime motive was nationalist

rather than religious, since John Paul is seen as having restored their own sovereign country. One of their number, interviewed on TV, denied he was their national hero - he was their national *redeemer*: and the Christ-like terminology was symptomatic of the general emotional confusion.

After half a century of oppression by foreign powers - first the Nazi occupation and then the Soviet 'liberators' - Poland spearheaded the collapse of communism in 1989, and the Pope was credited with its impetus. It is true that his support for the rebellion of trade-unionist Lech Walesa (who was himself present at the papal funeral, and who surely deserves more credit than the Pope) awakened the Catholic chauvinism that galvanised the Polish people to mass defiance of their oppressors; but totalitarian Marxism was on the verge of collapse anyway, throughout eastern Europe, from the internal failures of its fiscal and social regime.

The young Karol Woytyla had been a courageous opponent of both dictatorships, and only escaped imprisonment under the Nazis by becoming a labourer in a stone quarry. In 1942, as an act of rebellion, he joined Cracow's underground seminary, to embark on secret part-time training for the priesthood; and in 1946, equally against the new regime, he was ordained. It is ironic that his staunch opposition to totalitarian regimes was to culminate in himself becoming the world's most pervasive totalitarian despot of all time.

In 1962, now the Archbishop of Cracow, he attended the Second Vatican Council under Pope John XXIII; but was later refused permission to travel to Rome to meet Pope Paul VI - who had invited him, as a supposed expert on sexual matters, to discuss with him the issue of birth-control. He therefore had to send his views on the subject to Rome in writing - and in retrospect this may have been of momentous significance, for his written views were reflected and even quoted in Paul's 1968 prohibitory encyclical, *Humanae Vitae*.

Women Jumped The Gun
By the time that came out, many fertile Catholic women in the developed world, assuming the Pill was about to be sanctioned, had jumped the gun - and few of them were willing to go back to Vatican roulette. This weakened papal authority for good.

The encyclical thus had far-reaching effects, both calamitous and salutary.

Karol Woytyla was a consistent pro-lifer - not only implacably opposed to contraception, abortion, and voluntary euthanasia, but also (unlike many other pro-lifers) to war and capital punishment. Right up to the end, he rebuked Bush and Blair on the war in Iraq, and he opposed the retention of the death penalty in some American states. Other enlightened strands of his papacy included his goodwill gestures towards other religions and his castigation of capitalist greed and Third World debt - though he berated the Liberation Theology movement in Latin America as being too Marxist.

However, he proved ineffectual on the more liberal of his policies, while all too effectual, especially in the developing world, on sexual issues and, most

perniciously, his ban on the use of condoms to help prevent the spread of Aids. Also ecclesiastically, on the celibacy of priests and the exclusion of women from the priesthood.

Postscript (Added Later)
What now? The newly elected Pope Benedict XVI (erstwhile Cardinal Ratzinger) is no less conservative, so his reign is unlikely to feature many radical reforms. 'Collegiality' (democratic consultation and decentralisation), ushered in by the Second Vatican Council, only to be eroded by John Paul II, will be further eroded by his successor.

However, he will probably make priestly celibacy optional, because of the practical problem of too few 'vocations' to the priesthood in most countries - not to mention the scandal of paedophilia among sex-starved priests; but he is unlikely to sanction the ordination of women, even to relieve the critical shortage of priests.

Faced with the appalling escalation of Aids in Africa, he could well allow condoms to be used for therapeutic purposes, but the liberalisation of other sexual and social proscriptions (contraception, abortion, IVF, gay sex, divorce, and voluntary euthanasia) is extremely doubtful during his pontificate. He will find it difficult to stem the present flouting of them by Catholics in developed countries, which is bound to spread to poorer areas of the world, and authoritarian attempts to discipline them could mean wholesale defections from the Church.

On the positive side, his choice of the name Benedict indicates that he intends to oppose war, as did the last pope of that name in 1914 — though, in view of the intransigence of powerful political rulers, with no greater success. ❏

CONWAY HALL JAZZ APPRECIATION GROUP
Peter Vlachos

The Conway Hall Jazz Appreciation Group met again on the 12 April. We were delighted to see a number of new faces in the audience. The evening featured swing and big band music from the 1920s to the 1950s. We heard tunes by American greats such as Benny Goodman and British Dance bands led by the likes of Henry Hall and Ray Noble. Indeed, the earliest known recording made at Conway Hall was by the Henry Hall Dance Orchestra in May 1931!

Musical excerpts included tunes from top London artistes of the day: Ken 'Snakehips' Johnson and his West Indian Dance Band, Bert Ambrose, Ken Johnson's Rhythm Section, and Cyril Blake & his Jigs Club Band.

An enjoyable evening was had by all and many people said they looked forward to the next gathering on 10 May, which focused on blues music and its impact on the development of jazz. For further details contact Don Liversedge or Peter Vlachos. ❏

MY 'TWO FLAG' SOLUTION FOR ISRAEL - PALESTINE
Robert Pringle
Lecture to the Ethical Society, 10 April 2005

The Israel-Palestine conflict has been with us for decades. The Palestinian people have suffered and they still suffer a grave injustice. Although there have been numerous attempts to try to resolve the conflict none have succeeded. The most recent peace proposal, announced in 2003, is the 'Road Map' for Peace. Under the proposal Russia, the EU the UN and the US ("the Quartet") will oversee negotiations to 'reach a two-state vision of an independent, viable, sovereign Palestinian state living in peace and security with Israel.'

Many Israelis live in a state of denial over the Palestinian issue and see themselves, not the Palestinians, as the real victims in the conflict. This state of denial can only change once a majority of Israeli Jews address two fundamental moral questions:-

1) Why should Palestinians be condemned to live in political, social and economic conditions, a direct consequence of Israeli action, that the average Jewish Israeli, or we in the West, would never contemplate, let alone tolerate?

2) Why should Israel expect to secure long term peace and security whilst it continues to treat the Palestinians in a way it would never treat Israeli Jews?

At the same time, a majority of Palestinians and those who support the Palestinian cause, must begin, in the overall context of the Middle East, to question the extent of the Israel's pariah status, and ask themselves whether it is fully justified. The straight answer is no. Here are some reasons why.

Suicide bombing campaigns in the 1990s were carried out essentially to undermine and destroy the Oslo peace process. No democratically elected Government, Israeli or otherwise, could have survived without responding to this campaign with military force.

Human rights abuses elsewhere in the Middle East attract far less attention. For example, there are plenty that take place by Palestinians against Palestinians in the occupied territories: extra-judicial killing by armed groups and Palestinian internal security services of suspected collaborators; revenge killings and the hanging by the Palestine Authority of Palestinians for selling land to Jews. Palestinians have suffered human rights abuses in Lebanon for decades and still do.

And how might things have been different had there never been an Israel, with no country for the Arabs and Palestinians to blame for all their ills?

Whilst Israel could treat its Arab citizens better, they could be treated considerably worse and in overall terms they are certainly better off than most other Arabs in terms of quality of life. Certainly Israeli Arabs have shown little desire to move to Gaza or the West Bank in any significant numbers.

The 'Two State solution' under the label of the 'Road Map' to peace, is

doomed to failure. Here are some reasons why I consider this to be so.

(i) Jerusalem. No Israeli Government (nor Israeli public opinion) would countenance the re-division of Jerusalem.
(ii) West bank settlements and Jewish extremist resistance. For these two reasons alone, no Israeli Government will ever withdraw in any meaningful sense from the West Bank. Israel will just keep the land (covering about 80% of the settlements, as well as the land for the roads to and from the other 20%).
(iii) Defensible borders. Despite a peace treaty with Jordan, nuclear weapons, military power and relationship with US, Israel will insist it can only exist within 'defensible borders'. This will mean permanent Israeli military occupation of a significant area of Palestinian land.
(iv) Border control. Israel will continue to control Palestinian borders, thus controlling all trade and immigration. It would also maintain full control over Palestinian water resources and airspace.

In essence the 'Two State' solution would fail because the real needs of the Palestinians would not be addressed. These are needs that could never be satisfied by nationalist aspirations alone because ultimately their needs are no different from our own. They are the need for human dignity. This means the right:
not to have to endure the humiliation of checkpoint after checkpoint, day after day, week upon week, year after year;
to an uninterrupted education and to a decent, secure job;
not to be trapped forever as a refugee in a squalid slum;
not to be shot at and killed by Israeli soldiers or helicopter-launched missiles for being in the 'wrong' place;
not to have your home demolished or your 500 year old olive orchard uprooted in front of your eyes;
to a passport and to be able to travel abroad and to return;
as a Palestinian, to live once more on the shores of the Mediterranean as their grandparents might have done more than half a century ago;
to live in a place without corruption, censorship, state authoritarianism and violence.

Until this lack of rights is addressed, the right of Israel to security, peace and an end to its pariah status will not be addressed either.

What is more, time is running out. The vast numbers of Palestinian children in the territories today will soon become angry youth of tomorrow and the conflict will be passed on to the next generation. More resistance, more violence and more recruits for terrorist groups.

So who is to blame? Nobody. We are where we are. Attributing blame cannot and will not bring peace.

The 'Two Flag' Solution
So how can peace be achieved? What is the alternative? Is there an alternative? I would argue there is. And that is the 'Two Flag' solution. Two Flags would be the product of the mutually agreed annexation by Israel of the occupied territories, with the new entity applying for full EU membership within an agreed number of

years thereafter. How would this work?

1. By mutual agreement of a significant majority in simultaneous referenda held within Israel and the occupied territories, Palestinians in the territories would join the one million Israeli Arabs to become citizens of Israel.

2. The sovereignty of the Jewish State and the right of Jewish return would be guaranteed within the terms of any mutual referendum, further protected by ensuring that any amendment would require, say, a minimum vote of 85% of the membership of the Knesset. This would be to discourage Palestinians who might regard population increase as the way to eventual political dominance.

3. National elections would follow. Those Palestinians who were elected (as 'independents' or representing Palestinian political parties) would become newly democratically elected members of the Knesset. A possible issue for discussion by the new Knesset might be some form of devolved government for Gaza and West Bank within the State of Israel.
      The Knesset would also be the place where other important issues such as weapons disposal, prisoner release, Palestinian immigration, housing policy, national security, the status of Jerusalem and many others would be argued for and voted upon.
4. It would be legal under the terms of the referendum to display the Palestinian flag anywhere in Israel. This would be the sole concession to Palestinian nationalism. The national flag would not change. It would remain the Star of David. One country. Two flags. The advantages of such a move would be as follows:

Advantages of One State, Two Flags
1. Simplicity. No roads, walls, borders, maps, sectors or zones, checkpoints, tunnels, buildings or hilltops nor the route of the inevitable kilometres of razor wire, to be contested or fought over for years to come.

2. The legal distinction between Jew and Arab would disappear and with it two of the main obstacles to peace, namely defensible borders and Jewish settlers in 'West Bank' settlements.

3. Palestinians would be released from their enforced confinement. As citizens of Israel and no longer 'stateless' they could at last work, travel, and live permanently anywhere in the place they know as Palestine or be free to travel abroad and to return.

4. Political and legal accountability, free movement of goods, workers and services would ensure vastly improved economic conditions and reduced corruption within the former occupied territories. New development finance from the EU and US could, and would, be vigorously monitored and accounted for.

5. The State of Israel would be guaranteed and its international pariah status would end. Its current relationship with the EU under the EU Israel Association Agreement, (a free trade agreement and enabling ongoing dialogue and co operation between Israel and the EU in a wide number of fields in force since June

2000) could, after a given period, and subject to human rights, economic criteria etc, result in application for full EU membership. (The EU is already Israel's major trading partner. About 40% of Israeli imports come from the EU, and about 30% of Israeli exports are directed to the EU.)

This would eventually move it from the US to the EU sphere of influence, reducing tension and antagonism throughout the Muslim world. It would also allay Israel's 'security concerns' and enable it to conclude its peace negotiations with Syria.

6. The new Knesset and local government/councils could be the forum for making future policy on the governance of municipal Jerusalem and its holy sites. Policy could be settled on the basis of religious needs without the complication of wider national issues as under 'Two States.'

7. Based on the new demography, Palestinian political parties under a PR system would have a significant, but far from dominating presence in the Knesset with around 45 MKs out of a total of 120.

8. There would be less bureaucracy with a single and centralised government.
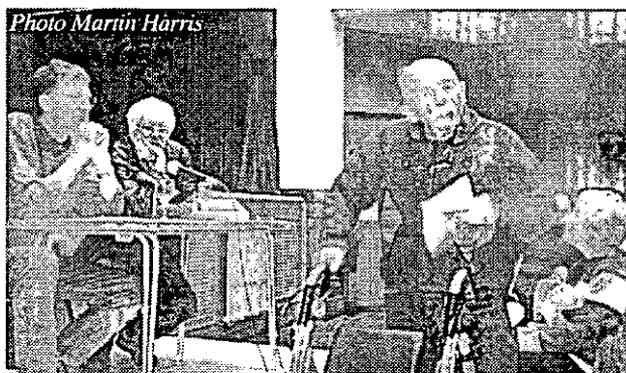
Robert Pringle (l) and Chris Bratcher (Chair) listen to a point made by Ben Roston at the lecture, held in the main hall.

The disadvantages would be that a minority of Palestinians might (and hardliners will) consider annexation to be a defeat and will resist. However this resistance would be considerably reduced, in my view, by the fact that a majority of Palestinians had voted for such a proposal. At the same time many Jewish Israelis would have to have their fears allayed over the issues of Palestinian assimilation, demographics and maintaining the Jewish character of Israel.

As to assimilation, with around one million Palestinians already Israeli citizens, the concept of Palestinians as Israeli citizens is hardly breaking new ground. What would be different is the numbers, for added to these would be a further three and half million citizens. Whilst this might fill some Jewish Israelis with dread, the Jewish population, currently at around five and a half million would still be in the majority.

In respect of possible Jewish Israeli fears it should be stressed that in political terms although Palestinian Israelis would hold around 45 Knesset seats they would represent a diverse range of political parties and views amongst elected Palestinians under a PR system, so the power of this 'bloc' vote is likely to be severely eroded in over time as racial interests gave way to economic or religious ones.

Secondly I believe that real peace and security for Israel and an end to its pariah status would not only bring vast economic benefits but also renewed and more sustained Jewish immigration (including a return of some two hundred thousand Jews who have left Israel in the past three years to escape economic downturn and ethnic violence.) Jewish immigration might well increase considerably once Israel became a full EU member. In short if any country is a pleasant, peaceful and rewarding place to live, people (in this case Jews from the wider Diaspora) will want to live there.

Furthermore, some Palestinians currently 'trapped' in the West Bank and Gaza might leave to better their lives abroad, secure in the knowledge that as Israeli citizens they finally have identity and the right of return. (And should Israel become a member of the EU, such numbers may well be even greater.)

Some Palestinians with family or historical ties might well permanently relocate to Israel from Gaza and West Bank but this would only be at a pace that new housing and infrastructure development allowed. Most Palestinians are likely to prefer to improve their current economic well-being in their immediate environment (where they have family and other ties) rather than relocate. So it is likely that more West Bank 'settlements' would be built alongside those already in existence, and of course, as Israeli citizens, Palestinians would be entitled to live in either.

The Palestinian Diaspora
Beyond the occupied territories there are currently believed to be a further four million Palestinians living in the wider Diaspora, and their right or not to return has been a bitter and longstanding issue. Israel could not be responsible for all of them, even if it wished to. Resources and land space are just far too limited.

This issue would ultimately be matter for debate in the Knesset but the number of Palestinian refugees allowed to return or be compensated would need, in my view, to be sufficient to neutralise the issue. And to further help allay Israeli Jewish fears of 'becoming a minority in their own country' it might be necessary to distinguish between a 'right of residence' and full citizenship. Citizenship, and with it the right to vote, would not come as automatic right but would be applied for and granted only on the satisfying of certain conditions.

One return and compensation 'option' could be firstly to offer the right of return to those 167,500 Palestinian refugees, as well as the immediate descendants of those refugees, who, between 9 and 17 August 1967 formally applied to Israel under an International Red Cross scheme for the right to return to their homes on the West Bank from Jordan. Israel allowed only 3824 refugees to return after deliberately failing to process the remaining applications it held, so blocking the return of 160,000 Palestinians who wanted to return home.

Secondly it could allow the return of three hundred and fifty thousand Palestinians living in refugee camps in Lebanon, denied fundamental human rights by the Lebanese Government for decades. In return Israel could rightly expect a full peace treaty with Lebanon and to be able to negotiate on such issues as security, water resources and trade.

Perhaps a further fifty thousand Palestinians could be permitted to return based on factors such as age, proven former family ties, former property documentation or pure humanitarian grounds. The number could be dependent upon the overall level of the Jewish population in the country.

Compensation only could be awarded to Palestinians not eligible for right of return under the above but who could prove previous ownership of property still standing in some form, whether since occupied or not. Extra compensation could be awarded to those eligible to return but who decide to formally decline the offer. Should these numbers be shown to be sorely inadequate and Israel attain full EU membership, it may well be incumbent upon the EU (particularly France, Britain and Germany) and the US, Australia, and Canada to either allow entry of sufficient numbers into their countries or to provide a level of compensation necessary to ensure the Palestinian issue is resolved once and for all. Indeed some EU countries with aging populations might come to see such immigration as vital. And whilst some Diaspora Palestinians would use this as a 'back door' into Israel, most would likely return disappointed to their host country, with the realisation that the country of their memories had in reality changed out of all recognition in the intervening years.

Great Courage Required
In my conclusion, it must be stressed that to implement 'Two Flags' would require great courage from Jews and Palestinians alike:-

1. From those on both sides who have lost family and friends they dearly loved to resist the urge for brutal revenge;
2. From hard line Israeli Jews to accept that they cannot live beside vast prisons of oppressed people living in third world squalor and expect peace and security;
3. From those Jewish Israelis who continue to seek comfort in denial;
4. From all Israelis, both Jewish and Arab, to share their infrastructure, their 'first world' standard of living, their way of life and their democracy with perhaps up to five and a half million more citizens;
5. From Palestinians to see that 'Two flags' would not be an act of final humiliation and defeat and that Israelis have far more political, economic and social freedom to offer them than they could ever find in any country in the Arab world, including an 'Independent' Palestine;
6. From Israelis each time they hear their country being called Palestine;
7. From Palestinians each time they hear their country being called Israel.

Two Flags is not about taking away the dignity of the Israelis and giving it to the Palestinians. Nor is it about reducing Israel to a universal level of misery and deprivation to be suffered by Israelis and Palestinians alike. Both peoples have far too much determination, talent, ingenuity, industriousness and flair to allow that to happen.

With peace, economic stability and respect for human rights under 'Two Flags', a revitalised Israel could become the economic powerhouse of the Middle East and a potential full member of the European Union, itself the solution to decades of war and human misery.

The dynamic of the Middle East would be totally transformed by such a dramatic development, because with justice at last for the Palestinians, the end of this conflict would dry up the pools of bitterness, anger and resentment towards Israel and the West that has existed from Morocco to Iran and beyond for decades.

The last sixty years should have taught us here in Europe that democracy, equality and economic prosperity never come from war but through consensus. That is why a German can live in France today as an act of peace, not an act of war. Two Flags is a way that Jews and Palestinians could at last reach that very same conclusion.   ❏

BOOK REVIEW - THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT

The Postcharismatic Fate of a Religious Transplant, Edwin Bryant and Maria Ekstrand (eds), Columbia University Press 2004, (0 231 12256 X) 448, \$49.50
Gerald Vinten

There has been less high street visibility of the saffron coloured, chanting Hare Krishna (HK), drum beating devotees. The reason is the product of the high profile sex and child abuse cases, plus various acts of fraud and deception perpetrated on the general public. It seemed prudent for this cult to adopt a much lower profile. The book documents what went on in this troubled cult which found its immediate home in the USA, albeit as a transplant from India. It provides a rare glimpse into the initial 40 years of such a religious group, as well as permitting examination of what happened under its charismatic founder, and then after the watershed of his death in November 1977, when the leadership was contested.

This comprehensive study includes over twenty contributions from members, ex-members, and academics who have followed the Hare Krishna movement for years. Since the death of its founder, Bhaktivedanta Swami (BS), the movement, also known as the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), has experienced debates over the roles of authority, heresy, and dissent, which have led to the development of several splinter movements. There is a growing women's rights movement and highly publicized child abuse scandals. Providing a privileged look at the people and issues shaping ISKCON, this volume also offers insight into the complex factors surrounding the emergence of religious traditions, including early Christianity, as well as a glimpse of the original seeds and the germinating stages of a religious tradition putting down roots in foreign soil. The origins and development of any new religious movement may not be as idyllic as one is led to believe.

Bhaktivedanta Swami (BS) had considered that HK was for the educated and intelligent class of men, but was rapidly disappointed in the intellectual calibre of the people he was attracting. They were most likely to be from the hippy generation. Literalism and fundamentalism have been the norms, and the problem remains of formulating symbolic and non-literal modes of interpretation that may be more compelling to the intelligentsia that has never become much engaged with HK. It has also proved difficult to maintain a stable membership base, with considerable turnover. The standards demanded have proved far too high, except

in the short term, for the majority of members. This led to covert exoduses during the night of those ashamed or embarrassed that HK was not for them, and unwilling to be subjected to group censure. Sometimes such members would reappear for temple events, and became known at the time as 'fringies', often being shunned or rudely treated, even though it might have been more sensible to try to incorporate them within a less demanding part of HK. Only by the late 1980s was this achieved.

The Founder's View Of Women
The attitude of BS to women speaks for itself from his writings:
'Women are generally not very intelligent'
'Women in general should not be trusted'
'Generally when a woman is attacked by a man – whether her husband or some other man – she enjoys the attack, being too lusty'
'It may be said that the understanding of a woman is always inferior to the understanding of a man.'

He called a woman given freedom a prostitute, which has yet to make it into the Oxford Dictionary. Hence former Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi qualified as a prostitute. The personal story of a woman ex adherent indicates that BS, despite his views, did show some consideration to women members, but that this regard was undermined by male members. In a way reminiscent of the way nuns have sometimes been treated as lackeys to men in the Catholic and Orthodox traditions of the Christian Church, women were humiliated, and one was even taught to shoplift to adorn the deities: divine theft. No doubt Marx would have had all his worst views of religion confirmed by this.

Even if adherents could swallow this view of women as saintly hero breeding wombs (p.379), the child abuse scandals were simply impossible to condone. The location for this was the gurukula, the house of the guru where the education of young people took place. The first opened in Dallas, Texas in 1971. The only survey ever undertaken in 1998 suggests half of the sample were subjected to humiliation, and around a quarter experienced various other types of disturbing abuse. If these types of abuse are spread across the entire sample, which is not, unhelpfully indicated, then there would be something like 100% coverage. The author of the relevant chapter tries to establish that there was more physical abuse than in the general population, but sexual abuse was about the same. I doubt his views on sexual abuse. The ambience and setting of these boarding schools provided opportunism with theological rationalization much greater and with concentrated focus than one would expect to find in 'secular' society. Investigatory action had to be taken as evidence emerged, and codes and procedures developed, assisted by the co-editor, Maria Ekstrand. Gurukulas were shut down and parents now prefer to educate their children within the state system. There has been some limited incidence within congregations, but there is awareness now rather than the original denial and hiding behind sanctimony.

Even before BS's death there has been what he called 'fratricidal war' between married householder temple presidents and the powerful associations of travelling renunciates, and this reflected the ambivalence towards sexuality and its role and impact on spirituality. Following BS's death, a fallout was taking place

among the succeeding gurus. These were all sannyasis, that is, those who had taken vows of celibacy and renunciation, and the attrition from this group was amounting to 90 percent. To add to the woes, there were also problems of strife and tension of a corporate governance nature – a term that would not have been ever envisaged during the time of the charismatic founder. There were two authority structures, the Governing Body Commission and the gurus, and this was a recipe for turmoil. This represented modern management principles versus the post-charismatic. It was not assisted by the ambiguity in the Sanskrit term acharya, which was broadly synonymous with 'guru', but could indicate a position of supremacy as well as one of servitude. The current multiguru system came under violent challenge in 2001 from a reforming group who attacked the HK temple in Calcutta and attempted to take it over, until repelled and arrested with the arrival of a large police presence. A group dedicated to peace soon turned to violence, although the violence was with the reformers, not the sitting tenants.

The chapter on sources of fundraising in public places and airports is particularly intriguing. The use of covert, manipulative and illegitimate tactics eventually led to public outrage, state court decisions and then the ultimate US Supreme Court decision in 1981 which banned such activity and led to financial crisis as well as mass defections since members had been less than happy at the deceptions being practiced. The cumulative effect of all the scandals and abuse has been less public visibility for HK, and the move to a traditional nuclear family, and a more congregational form of devotion, hence demonstrating central tendency gyration. ❏

PRODUCING PHILOSOPHY OUT OF BOREDOM
Dr Stephen Szanto
Lecture to the Ethical Society, 17 April 2005

The inspiration to my title is from a fascinating book by a Norwegian professor of philosophy, Lars Swendsen. Its conclusion is that boredom spurred people into a new outlook and even new action more often then any other mental state. In classical Greek philosophy boredom was called *akedia*, translated into English often as 'accidie'. The Greeks defined it as a state that inhibits pleasure and prompts the rejection of life. To make all this more tangible, may I illustrate it by an episode from my own past.

A few years ago I was hit by a cerebral hemorrhage on the last but one night of a foreign holiday in the country of my birth, Hungary. Instead of agreeing to be taken to hospital there, with the help of some friends I was transported to the airport and got myself admitted to the hospital where I used to work, straight from Heathrow. After investigations, I became anxious to get out as soon as I could but fell to the ground after my initial attempts to walk a few steps. As a result the nurses got panicky and I was ordered to stay put in my bedside armchair. Whenever I tried otherwise, even by stealth, I was gently but firmly pushed back into my 'proper place'. As a result I got intensely bored and frustrated. 'Bloody nurses,' I muttered to myself, 'they are taking their revenge on a helpless medic.' I became rude and short-tempered with them, which is not really my true style.

Philosophy Came To My Aid

Then, as so often at times of trouble, philosophy came to my aid. Out of the gloom I suddenly remembered the formula of the 'fallacy of quantifier shifts.' Please do not get 'bored' with me if you never heard of it - it's extremely simple to grasp and it might come in handy whenever you come across a more specialized form of philosophical writing. It was designed by the Italian philosopher and mathematician Giuseppe Peano (1858-1932) and used by Russell and Whitehead amongst many others.

If the inverted A symbol $\forall$ means 'all' or 'every' or 'everybody' etc., and the mirror image E symbol $\exists$ stands for 'one' or 'some' or 'somebody' etc., then the formula

$$(\forall\chi) \ (\exists\gamma) \ (\chi \text{ hates } \gamma)$$

means 'everybody hates me'. $\forall$ and $\exists$ are called 'quantifiers', $\forall$ the universal quantifier and $\exists$ the existential quantifier. Let's now change the order of the quantifiers and we get:

$$(\exists\chi) \ (\forall\gamma) \ (\chi \text{ hates } \gamma)$$

meaning 'I hate everybody'. It was a 'eureka moment' as I realized that I fell victim of this common fallacy.

It was also around this time that I happened to pick up a copy of *The Times* and began to read about a fraudulent businessman, who cheated a large number of his investors, many of them old age pensioners. This man's memories about his father's last words to him were: 'Life is hell. Most people are bastards. Everything is bullshit.' First, I could not help agreeing. By nature I was inclined to scepticism and also to a mild degree disliking everybody, except myself. 'Look after number one' was my motto and coming to a 'me me me' society from Stalin's pseudo communism did not help. But now I began to wonder what I was left with? Sheer egoism. A dissatisfied customer of Darwinian evolution.

But a strange new urge began to emerge when I remembered that even Richard Dawkins agreed that we can and should say 'no' to our selfish genes. I think it was then that the idea of a conversion to a more ethical lifestyle emerged in my mind. I wrote about its logical justification more in a previous article in the *Ethical Record* (Jan/Feb 2004) but just now let me tell you how I tried to deal with the sceptical suspicion that the whole thing was due only to the disorder in my damaged brain.

William James, Charles Peirce And The Proof Of Ethical Humanism

I had ample time to brood about all this while sitting in that wretched armchair next to my bed and to remember William James' famous article on *The Will to Believe*. Yes, but then I could also recall how James' very good and lifelong friend, Charles Peirce wrote to him: 'How could you, as a doctor and a psychiatrist, suggest that we can 'will' our belief. Belief is a process, which we cannot force.' 'Yes we can,' was James' answer. 'All you have to prove is that it works for you. What works is true. Call it Pragmatism'.

Peirce's fury changed to indignation. 'You stole that from me! From now on I will have to call it 'Pragmaticism', ugly enough to protect it from kidnappers. And besides, 'what works is true' is a fallacious proposition. It should be 'what's true will work'. 'True' and 'works' are not biconditionals. They can only be read correctly one way.' 'Works' might be a necessary but not a sufficient and necessary condition for truth.

Before this well documented debate, Peirce described a process which in his view changed the human mind from hedonistic egoism by gradual evolution into an 'agapeistic' (*agape* meaning non-erotic love in Greek) form of altruism. He called the process 'Evolutionary Agapism' and claimed that among other things, it resulted in the evolution of law and ethics.

I was convinced. Ethical Humanism is true. Hence it will work for me. At least until something or somebody proves that my reasoning is wrong. Then I will have to keep on searching for something that is more possibly 'true'. As a former scientist, Peirce allowed for this also and variously called it 'Possibilism' or 'Fallibilism'. ☐

RELIGION CANNOT AND SHOULD NOT BE OPPOSED BY STATE SUPPRESSION
Edmund McArthur
Proposition to the Ethical Society, 6 February 2005 for Ethical Dilemma Debate

My contention is that opposing religion and other forms of superstition by state suppression is wrong morally, unnecessary and is ultimately ineffective in countering the spread of such belief systems.

I speak from the extreme libertarian position. I do not accept the right of the state to abridge the liberty of the individual other than to protect the equal liberty of others (JS Mill) and I see "religious freedom" as the outcome of free speech, free association etc.

It is important here to make the distinction between the STATE and CIVIL SOCIETY. As a member of civil society, I reserve the right to be as rude and offensive as I choose re religion. That does not abridge the religionists' liberty. I also have the right to deny them access to any space over which I have control (which of course is very limited). If SPES decides that religious groups cannot meet at Conway Hall, they are still able to meet elsewhere; in a pluralistic society they will always be able to find a space if they need it. It is quite different when the state tells them they cannot meet or seeks to regulate them, for example by forcing them to register or tells SPES they cannot meet at Conway Hall.

Now if you are going to support brutally suppressing religion as in the Soviet Union and China (with particular ref to Tibet) or restrict it selectively as in France, you don't have a case against the medieval church and *its* acts of brutality because what you are saying is that might is right — the church once had the power to stifle

all dissent and so did; the Soviet state was all-powerful and did as it liked. (It is arguable that it did not object to religion on moral or intellectual grounds but simply sought to suppress it as a rival belief system, and as part of its general drive to abolish civil society.)

Those who would enlist the state in their battle with religion must answer the following question: Why did you object when the church of old used the might of the state against dissenters? Was it because you were in sympathy with those dissenters or was it empathy with victims of repression? If your answer is the former, you are likely to be less sympathetic to my position.

If we look at Russia today we see that after over 70 years of brutal repression (which continues to a lesser extent), religion and religious sentiment is even stronger than in the West. In the Soviet era, the Orthodox Church's Metropolitan and Patriachs were appointed by the state, making it defacto an established church.

The communist party held a role similar to the church in medieval Europe (see the lecture by Robin Blick given to SPES on 6 Feb 2000) but with the aid of modern technology was far more successful at stamping on dissenters both within and without.

In France the ban on religious symbols in schools is the most recent in a long catalogue of shameful racist episodes but more to the point it has not eroded religion one iota nor does it in any way protect Muslim girls from their families. The net result is that Muslims will become more insular and extremists will gain at the expense of moderates.

Some secularist or so-called secularists seem not to understand the meaning of the word SECULAR. It does not mean ANTI-RELIGIOUS but rather NON-RELIGIOUS, an important distinction (I speak as one who considers myself anti-religious).

We should aim to fight religion through propaganda and education, and what we should be seeking is not a secular state, but a secular state of civil society. ❑

VIEWPOINTS

Mental Violence
Joy Wood (Viewpoints, *ER* April 2005) is right. It is not true that "mental violence never hurt anybody", and I was wrong to use that expression. But of course I did not intend it as a generality. I was replying to Ben Roston's condemnation, as "mental violence", of the delightful cartoons which Martin Rowson showed at the Conway Hall 75th anniversary celebration.

What I intended, and ought to have put more clearly, was that Martin Rowson's cartoons never hurt anybody. Apologies for the misunderstanding.
Donald Rooum - London E

A Humanist Political Agenda ?

I was most interested to read the paper by Sue Lord on this subject (*ER* March 05) and the response from John Rayner (*ER* April 05). Could I add comments from a different perspective? The 'Left Liberal' Agenda described by Sue is almost the same agenda that brought New Labour to Power. An ethical foreign policy, a redistribution of wealth, the elimination of discrimination, a meritocracy and so on. The leaders of New Labour quickly learned the facts of life and what it really means to run a country and be part of the International Community. No such agenda has any merit if these facts of life are not identified and addressed. Wishful thinking is simply not good enough.

The UK has a population of over 64 million. It has net immigration of over 400,000 per annum and, in the last census, births outnumbered deaths by 388,000. To pay for the services required to support this level of population we have a PSNCR of £520 billions. Increasing corporate and personal taxes to feed this insatiable machine is self defeating. The UK faces major challenges in the years ahead as our population grows apace, North Sea oil is exhausted, people's expectations grow and we become increasingly dependent on others for our basic needs and manufactured goods. We are a consumer society, a throw away society and the Chancellor relies on retail sales to boost his coffers.

"Public cynicism is undermining our democracy"? The public are cynical because the Party system is bankrupt. Our politicians lie and are incompetent. In diplo speak they are "economic with the truth" but on all subjects they simply misuse data and ignore facts that are inconvenient. They have reduced politics to spin and marketing. It's akin to selling any other commodity, and yes, cynicism and apathy will be a major factor in the May election.

On a global scale, Sue Lord must address the problems of population growth. In 1900 the global population was 1.6 billion and today we have over 6.2. In 40 years time there will be over 9 billion. In 50 years all major oil fields will be depleted. There is no alternative power source, other than nuclear, that can satisfy the demands of this capitalist, consumer world. In many of the "developing" countries that I have worked in there is an inadequate supply of water for today's needs and yet their populations will double in the next 20 / 25 years.

I agree that there *should* be a secular humanist political agenda. However, a document that does not include facts, figures and solutions is an irrelevance. All Socialist, Marxist, Communist, Green Parties (and others) would claim to be committed to the agenda that Sue Lord proposed but not one has been able to square the circle of creating this egalitarian utopia whilst encouraging the entrepreneurship that creates the wealth that pays for it all.

Paul Rhodes - London SW19

PROGRAMME OF EVENTS AT THE ETHICAL SOCIETY
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MAY 2005

(On 22 May, Shawn Joynson spoke on 'UNCLE SAM AND SCOUTING FOR ALL'. This talk will be printed in the ER.)

Sunday 29 MAY SPRING BANK HOLIDAY WEEKEND No meetings

JUNE

Saturday 4 UCL BIOCHEMISTRY LECTURE THEATRE (Darwin basement)

1130 **ROBERT GRANT, LAMARCK's THEORY AND CHARLES DARWIN**
Donald Rooum

Sunday 5

1100 **PREJUDICE AND REASON Richard Baron** says of course we should reject prejudice and adopt reason in our thinking but asks how far this is really possible.

1500 **EAST MIDLANDS INSIDE OUT**
A video on conscientious objectors

Sunday 12

1100 **CAN PHILOSOPHY HELP US UNDERSTAND RUSSIA?**
Lesley Chamberlain, author of *Motherland: a philosophical history of Russia*.

1500 **MULTICULTURALISM AND SECULARISM:**
Bridging the false divide. **Peter Vlachos**

Tuesday 14

1830 **CONWAY HALL JAZZ CLUB**

Sunday 19

1100 **'THE EARTH IS ROUND; 2 + 2 = 4'. Kevin McDermid** discusses Quine's view that *both* these statements are questionable.

1500 **BLETCHLEY PARK** (video)

JULY

Sunday 3

1100 **ARE HUMAN BEINGS FREE?** asks **Prof. Raymond Tallis**

1500 **THE PROGRESS OF THE RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS BAN IN FRANCE**
Video. (Postponed from 15 May)

Sunday 26 June SPES ANNUAL OUTING 2005 -
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Leaves Red Lion Square at 0930
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