

Journal of the Fourth World RESURGENCE

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FEED BACK

Cathar Controversy

Dear Resurgence, I hope that you will never again publish unhistorical drivel like the article on the Cathars [Vol.5,no.1].

I would like to know where Meadows found the story about Richard the Lion Heart. It is a little difficult to reconcile with the fact that Richard, from his return from the Crusade and from captivity in Germany, in 1194, until his death in 1199, continued the struggles with the French monarchy and his own nobility which his father had waged before him and his brother John was to wage after him. The siege at which he was killed was by no means untypical either.

His tale about the Templars is equally bizarre. He is right in saying that the Cathars did not approve of Crusades but this makes it most unlikely that they should be admirers of one of the principal orders of crusading knights. Also the initiative for the Templars' destruction came not so much from the Papacy as from the king, Philip IV of France.

Finally it is a remarkable achievement on Meadows' part to write an article on the Cathars which leaves out what little is known about their beliefs. It was not their austerity which distinguished them from the Catholics (the Albigensian Crusade after all took place in the lifetimes of Saint Francis and of Saint Dominic) but their belief that the world was created by the Devil and that the soul was doomed to constant reincarnation until it escaped by living a pure life. It is a doctrine alien both to orthodox Christianity and to Islam and has more in common with Buddhism.

So please, if you want to be taken seriously, stop encouraging sleazy cults based on bogus history and shoddy mysticism whose proliferation among the 'Alternative Society' sometimes makes me wonder whether we need a revival of the Inquisition.

Yours, Stephen Horne, Marlpost,
Chaddleworth, Nr. Newbury. 10.3.74

Ethics of Conservation

Dear Editor, I can certainly see the need for alternatives to the way we 'live' at present, and would particularly like to see alternatives available in health treatment — partly because I am appalled at the large-scale vivisection of animals at the rate of ten a minute in this country, and also because of the widespread drug abuse which seems to be creating more illness.

With regard to animals, this is not, of course, the only example of our abuse of them, and I hope any alternative society will take truly ethical views and not merely follow the lead of some conservationists who appear to advocate conserving species so that we may continue to exploit them, often inflicting great suffering in the process; or the Wildlifers who turn up to grand occasions wearing real fur; or for that matter those who are concerned about the starving millions in the rest of the world but who continue to eat meat — the costliest form of protein entailing the import of over 126,000 tons of oilseed protein from India in 1973 to feed our tormented animals in their prison pens.

Yours, Margaret Heard, 160 Glen Albyn Road, Wimbledon, London SW19 6HG.
19.3.74

The Cool Critic

Sir, I read the notice of my book, *The Arthuriad* [Vol.4,no.6].

Three points I wish the writer had thought it worthwhile to pass judgement on are these: about half of *The Arthuriad* deals with techniques to build up power, as it were, in personal mysticism. It is a lot to pass by.

Readers might also have been interested in *The Arthuriad's* strong advocacy of the neighbourhood and/or constituency communion: a concept historically linked to, though not the same as, the commune. Similarly, *The Arthuriad* advocates socio-cultural enclaves in order to preserve individuality and cultural heritage.

Finally, believers in the small society might well have liked *The Arthuriad's* invention of the Counter-State: an institution intended to limit the growth of all things working against the quality of personal life: from vast and costly State bureaucracies to business based upon demand stimulated by advertising more than need.

It is an odd thing to be so much at the mercy of reviewers of a different persuasion. Just when you get to think the screaming-ideological madman is the hardest to take, along comes the cool critic who gracefully ignores the guts of what you had to say.

Faithfully, John Badger, Pendragon House,
220 University Ave., Palo Alto, California
94301, USA. 21.3.74

Thrift, May it Thrive

Thrift is a virtue though whether much of the saving and investing that occurs is thrift depends upon the 'innocence', the 'consciousness level' of the could-be thrifter. The concepts of virtue and vice are irrelevant where actions are objective, ruthlessly expedient; in a word, modern Thrift is a nice concept: may it thrive.

Concerning the second point of Charles Davey's letter [Vol.4, no.6], it is again a sort of innocence that enables insurance policy-holders to believe themselves to be Christians. Is Mr. Davey one of the New Intellectual Fascists (motto 'Get it Right') dedicated to stamping out the inconsistencies or contradictions in people's stances, ruthlessly applying a logic to poor Christians? There are, I would suggest, a few inconsistencies in *Resurgence*, if not in any given editorial. Great!

Can I ask a few rhetorical questions, then?

Does a person with true friends (and no inconsistencies etc. in his personal philosophy) need any insurance policies? (An idea for a new social game — living without insurance).

Christianity — is it a virtue?

Questions — must they all be answered?

Advice — is it so unfashionable? ('Take no thought for the morrow'.)

The New Testament — should it fit in a logical framework? ("I don't see how ...") etc.

Yours, Paul Singleton, 59 Blakehall Road,
Carshalton, Surrey. 1.4.74

Poets' Careers

Oh dear, dear, you really ought to give your poetry editor 50 lines; talk about poets at the beginnings of their careers [Vol.5,no.1] ('careers'! Most poets would die of fright at the idea.) Adrian Mitchell is at the heart of the poetry establishment now, in his 40's, and well accepted. Even Tina has been writing for quite some years. And as for Kazantzakis — well I believe he's well dead — of old age!!!!
Love, Guy Dauncey, Gulls Rest, Solva, Pembrokeshire. 17.4.74