



STUDY IN LIGHT AND SHADE

# *Is Lombok an omen of a catastrophic future?*

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

for your sad leader writer. "The decline of British power has been one of the most spectacular events of this century" he wrote (*The Australian*, September 3).

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He goes on to say: "Mr Ashbolt must surely appreciate that he has abandoned the one community that is dedicated constitutionally to the redemption and salvation of the human person."

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SIR—Your useful editorial (September 8) on the Lombok Island food crisis stresses an Australian responsibility that will not end with saving the 80,000 islanders now at starvation point.

Fortunately, the Lombok situation is of manageable size. But what needs to be realised is that Lombok is only a foretaste of much worse hunger catastrophes that are impending.

Last November, Dr B. R. Sen, head of the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation, told a 109-nation conference: "For the past seven years there has been no appreciable increase in food production in relation to world population."

And he added that there are now "prospects of serious famines in some of the world's most heavily populated areas in five to ten years."

In fact, large areas of the world could be afflicted by famine at any time — for example, by entering a prolonged cycle of dry weather like the two-year drought in New South Wales.

The effects on, say, Africa and Asia, will be appalling because hundreds of millions of people in these continents are living just above the starvation line at present when conditions are good.

In Australia there is some consciousness of the hunger problem, but it does not get beyond a casual donation to a Freedom from Hunger collection or the comment that the Federal Government should be doing more.

Facing a predictably catastrophic future, one wonders how many Lombok tragedies will be needed before Australian awareness is aroused, individually and nationally, to the point where our well-fed country casts itself in the Good Samaritan role called for by the new Archbishop of Sydney.

Or will our domestic problems of affluence always keep our attention diverted from starvation abroad, however harrowing it may be?—**R. D. WALSH, Central Avenue, Como West, NSW.**

## Report on air show

THE APPRECIATION of the Farnborough Air Show (*The Australian*, September 9) by Stanley Brogden, entitled "Britain in the air," was excellent.

I have worked at many of these shows in the past and the report vividly recaptured the occasion for me.

One section, however, gave me misgivings.

The part referred to read "Gone are the happy-looking designers and the men of genius who crowded Farnborough on opening day of previous shows. Many have packed their bags for the U.S."

It left me asking myself: did I, after all, come to the right country? — **R. J. GLOVER, Clanalpine Street, Mosman, NSW.**

## The work done by Legacy

HAVING READ the letter over the signature of Mrs Brenda Arkista, which appeared in the columns of *The Australian* of September 7, I write on behalf of all members of Legacy to offer a brief explanation of the work of Legacy in Australia.

Legacy is a unique organisation and a practical expression of the comradeship of war.

The members of Legacy, all returned ex-servicemen, work in a voluntary capacity, pledging themselves to serve the families of their comrades of the two world wars and those of Korea, Malaya and Vietnam, who were killed while overseas on war service,

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or subsequently died from any cause whatsoever.

Legacy has been doing this for 43 years and each year is caring for and helping an ever-increasing number of widows of ex-servicemen and their children."

This year as many as 90,000 will be helped throughout Australia, a far cry from the handful helped in 1923, the year in which Legacy was founded.

To carry out this vast community-service programme in caring, in 1966, for all these dependants of deceased ex-servicemen, Legacy will need \$1,500,000.

We trust, as always, that we may count upon the co-operation and support of the generous public.

We must have such support if we are to be successful in raising this amount of money for, as a volunteer organisation, Legacy is not subsidised by the Government.

I trust that the few points I have outlined may contribute to a clearer understanding of Legacy's work.—**R. C. ALLISON, Legatee, chairman, Legacy Co-ordinating Council, C/- Legacy House, Melbourne.**

## An increase in venereal disease

IN THE PAST 10 years the incidence of venereal diseases in Australia has doubled; and promiscuous use of the pill now seems to be greatly increasing the danger of contagion.

The AMA is making a survey, but this will take time; and meanwhile public ignorance is greater now than in the worst days of 19th-century prudery.

Probably some 40,000 persons are infected in New South Wales alone, a third of them being teenagers. The genetic implications are serious.

I have tabled a motion for the Melbourne Anglican synod (October 10 to 13), calling

attention to what could be a major threat to the clean blood of our nation.

Current information from other countries is kindly being supplied by WHO, but here in Australia there is almost no link-up between medicine and sociology, so information is scant.

May I appeal through your columns to medical schools, social workers and the like who could brief me on any aspect of this menace?—**THE REVEREND J. P. STEVENSON, St Silas' Vicarage, Osburn Avenue, North Balwyn, Victoria.**

## A problem of storage

AS THE WIFE of another sufferer from an extreme form of the fungus-type disease referred to by Julie Rigg (I married a human fungus, *The Australian*, September 8), I feel I must register a protest.

Having spent most of my life in a State where it is unusual to find a newspaper article worth keeping for future reference, I now find myself constantly tempted to save *The Australian*, even to the extent of having to buy an extra copy to send to friends overseas.

The most recent example was provided by Alan Ashbolt's stimulating feature (August 27) and some of the ensuing correspondence.

Now, with a strong suspicion that the disease is spreading to me, I must keep Julie Rigg's article, too.

Thank you for your fine paper, even if it means adding to our cupboards! — **J. BUNNEY, Caloroga Street, Wattle Park, SA.**

## Present for leader writer

AS AN AUSTRALIAN who has read a little history, I wish to suggest a Christmas present

for your sad leader writer.

"The decline of British power has been one of the most spectacular events of this century" he wrote (*The Australian*, September 3).

British leaders have been saying that sort of thing for hundreds and hundreds of years — but somehow British guts and nose have always won through.

By British, I mean all in the UK — English, Scots, Welsh, Irish — despite their differences from time to time.

Think of what William Pitt, Earl of Chatham, faced when people moaned: "We are no longer a nation!"

Think of what faced England in the way of terrible reverses when, William Pitt the younger took over!

"The sun of England's glory is set!" cried the patriotic Pitt, once, in despair.

Then he rallied, put the country's dreadful finances in order, and by wise and far-seeing measures saw England great again. That's way back.

As well as a history book for your leader writer, I suggest a gramophone record to cheer him up.

Some of our African friends (and enemies), if they have any sense of humor, humanity and fair play, might care to listen in.

Don't be frightened: I'm not suggesting tunes by the pipes and drums of the British Grenadiers.

I suggest Britannia Rag, by Winifred Atwell. — **MARIE MARSHALL, West Crescent Street, McMahons Point, NSW.**

## 'Hale School was first'

I SHOULD LIKE to bring to your attention an error in a report published in *The Australian* (September 10).

The report stated that a new rowing pool at Carey Baptist School was the only one of its kind in Australia, indeed in the Southern Hemisphere.

However, Hale School has had a similar pool in its grounds for almost a year and the pool was extensively used in the training of prospective oarsmen during our 1965-66 season.—**A. KEVIN R. PRICE, captain of rowing 1966, Hale School, Wembley Downs, WA.**



"... well in my opinion thou art trespassing!"

# A reply from Ashbolt

SIR — Father Kenny's able and sensitive reply (September 10) to my article, "What's wrong with Christianity?" reveals him as one of the new breed of Christians trying to revivify the Church by putting Christianity into practice.

His letter is all the more valuable, I think, because it crystallises the current conflict between the up-to-date thinkers in the Roman Catholic Church and those clergy whom he implicitly condemns as "official spokesmen" and "ecclesiastic conservatives."

But I should explain that my article was not, at least in one important sense, mine.

It was, as you correctly stated when introducing it, extracted by you (very skilfully) from a much longer address made to a consultation of Christian clerics and educators.

The theme of the consultation was "The role of the clergy in a modern humanistic world" and I was speaking on "The needs of people in a secular situation."

So that when Father Kenny accuses me of asking the wrong question—"What's wrong with Christianity?"—I must point out that this was not my question at all.

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He goes on to say: "Mr Ashbolt must surely appreciate that he has abandoned the one community that is dedicated constitutionally to the redemption and salvation of the human person."

But isn't this sort of spiritual arrogance, this complete belief that the Christian Church is "the one community" which can lead us all to salvation, this utter conviction that non-Christians are ipso facto reduced to "cynicism" and "impotence," precisely the problem that Christianity faces in helping to heal the divisions between men?

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Moreover, when I chose, in Father Kenny's phrase, to "contract out" of Christianity it was less because "the churches failed to measure up" to any criteria that I had devised than because I could not, after careful examination, accept a fundamental value in the Church — the so-called divinity of Christ.

As for what I have done or not done in the ABC (or even outside the ABC, in my recent

ties of using one's "position" to "promote fulminations" against the Vietnam war, I suppose I could just as reasonably ask why, in light of what seem to be his strong opinions on the matter, he allows Cardinal Gilroy to appear to represent the attitude of the Catholic Church.

Finally, because it bears on the problem of war and peace, may I comment on a point made in a letter from Mr C. G. C. Olive (September 12)?

Referring to the nazi invasion of Europe, Mr Olive writes: "I do not know whether Mr Ashbolt considered it a waste of effort to have destroyed this evil monstrosity."

"I do know he would be lucky indeed to enjoy his present position of fortune had no one made the effort."

It is true that I am fortunate compared with fellow ex-servicemen who were killed or permanently maimed.

But Mr Olive is leaning towards a rather simplistic interpretation of how this war came about.

If he thinks that nazism was something for which only a few aggressive gangsters were responsible, and that the rest of us only resorted to force in order to defend ourselves against the ambitions of these power-hungry maniacs, I must disagree with him.

We, too, helped to give birth to the "evil monstrosity."

Apart from the political and strategic manoeuvres during the 1920s and 1930s, nazism was an expression, perhaps the most frightful and extreme, of the connection in Western history between ideology and violence.

In nazism, the violence (or the drive to power) virtually became the ideology.

The two things were, probably for the first time, quite obviously merged in a single dynamic.

In my view, nazism made an absurdity out of Western civilisation's long attempts (often with the assistance of the churches) to find a "war morality"—that is, an ethical justification for mass violence.

After the eruption of nazism, it was no longer possible for sane men to rationalise violence; yet today men, claiming to be sane, are still trying to do so.—**ALLAN ASHBOLT, Monteith Street, Turramurra, NSW.**

## Christianity and pacifism

WHAT IS Christianity? Neither Mr Allan Ashbolt nor the Reverend Father Denis Kenny, in my opinion, satisfactorily answer this question.

If Christianity is anything, it surely has something to do with the Sermon on the Mount, for it is here, and here alone, that we can find all the ethical teachings of Jesus.

Yet Christians of all the major denominations virtually ignore this part, concentrating instead on the miracles, the obscurities and — let's be frank — the contradictions of the rest of the gospels.

However, if we look to some of the minority Christian movements (the Quakers, Molokans, Dukhobors, Ahmish, Shakers, etc), we discover something very interesting: nearly all the members of these small organisations practise non-violence, passive resistance and pacifism.

It seems obvious to me, an agnostic, and to many other people who are Humanists, atheists, Quakers and Unitarians, that Jesus did not speak merely as an exercise in

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Jesus was the world's most ideal pacifist, and He instructed His disciples to keep to His example of meekness, non-resistance and love.

Almost every advanced thinker has recognised the pacifism in Jesus' teachings. Ernest Renan (in his *Vie de Jesus*) put it this way: "He (Jesus) predicts persecutions and all kinds of punishments to His disciples but never once does the thought of armed resistance appear."

William Lloyd Garrison said this (Peace Declaration of Boston, 1838): "We would be filled with the spirit of Christ. Following the fundamental rule of not resisting evil by evil, we cannot engage in plots, riots, disturbances, or violence."

And a last quote from Tolstoy (letter to a non-commissioned officer, 1900 approximately): "However little education a man may have, he cannot but know that Christ did not sanction murder, but taught kindness, meekness, forgiveness of injuries, love of one's enemies—and therefore he cannot help seeing that on the basis of Christian teaching he cannot pledge himself in advance to kill all whom he may be ordered to kill."

Real Christianity can only be found in the ethical teachings and aspirations of Jesus.

It can be summed up as non-violence and non-resistance, poverty, sharing, and working toward the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth—"Thy Kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven," or "The Kingdom of God is within you."

That is, you must reform your "inside mind," or personality, according to the ways of love.

And there's nothing mystical about that!—**RAYMOND JOHN GIBSON, Eaton Street, North Sydney, NSW.**

