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## **HUMANIST KINDS**

To those who attended the National Secular Society's annual dinner, Maureen Duffy (as you report in the April "Freethinker") addressed these words: "You and I are atheists. . . " I for one reflected then that atheism requires from its believers as much dogmatism as Christianity, though there is far less evidence in its support. No evidence in fact.

I resented Ms Duffy's ready assumption that we shared her faith. Others later told me that they had experienced similar resentment. Like me, they had no faith of their own. They felt unequal to it. They were agnostics.

While expressing resentment at Ms Duffy, may I say that I also resented the antics at the dinner of her friend Brigid Brophy in burning her NSS membership card. Like Ms Duffy's assumption that we were all atheists, it was gratuitous and impertinent. Whatever the NSS rules may say, animals have nothing whatever to do with secularism or humanism. It is perfectly possible to be a humanist without also being a vegetarian. I myself am that sort of humanist. It is perfectly possible to be a humanist without also condemning vivisection carried out in aid of medical progress. I myself am that sort of humanist. It is perfectly possible to be a humanist without also feeling disquiet at the experiments (found so objectionable by Brigid Brophy) which were conducted in good faith by Amnesty International. I myself am that sort of humanist.

A movement with so many opponents should be single-minded. As Goethe said, to accomplish anything it is necessary to limit oneself. The NSS seeks emancipation from religious dogma and persecution. Let it limit itself to that noble, difficult objective. Above all, let us who are its members not be bigoted and intolerant in our turn.

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