

X O Y O S

Bulletin of the London Anarchist Christians of Koinonia June edition

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May 4

The London Anarchist Christians meet normally on the second saturday of the month. But in June as in May it is the first saturday in the Month. Last meeting May 2. Next meeting June. 6

Meetings are held at St Paul's Vicarage, Bow Common (Leopold St, E.3 - near Mile End tube station) and are preceded by a short service in the church which adjoins the Vicarage (facing into Burdett road). Service 7.30, meetings 8.00. Normally the meetings adjourn to the Gun in Millwall near the Isle of Dogs after 10.00

LOGOS is published as extended minutes and including notices and debating articles sent for inclusion and not raised at meetings. Francis Simons who is founding a second group in London has promised to sent minutes of his meetings for inclusion, any other group formed is welcome to do the same, and this extends t groups outside London. Francis intends to sand his ready duplicated, and this - though not compulsory for other groups is nevertheless welcome.

LOGOS is sent on demand, or to anyone who has written on christian anarchism, and a few exchange copies. It helps if those who do not want it would let the secretary know. Those who replied to the last questionaire in thhis respect, especially those who offered to do speakers', convenor, organiz-ational work in thei areas, and those who sent cash towards costs. As of now: Nick Teape, Francis Engleheart, Ned Walsh, Dave Mumford & Ian Annett - please accept this as receipt.

Meeting of May 2nd: Attendance: Frs: Gresham
 Kirkby, Andrew King; Valerie Bickers; Emil de Mario & Laurens Otter
 Apologies: Jean Sargeant,
 Dave Poolman, & Francis Simons.

Andrew read a thank you letter from York Anarchist Federation for the loan, and an offer from them to cut electric stencils, or to do printing at very cheap rates.

A collection of 10/- was taken for Peggy Smith's new fraternal hostel.

Valerie read a shortened version of the report on the Christian Peace Conference, included elsewhere herein. In discussion of this Gresham and others of us felt that the working group meetings were seeking issues to discuss for the sake of having a conference rather than seeking to hold a conference specifically for the christian peace movement and its problems. The suggestion that we invite speakers from both sides of major world conflicts, e.g. Arab/Israeli would be all very well at Christian organized reconciliation conferences on such issues but was not what this conference was originally intended to do. We agreed that Valerie should request the next meeting that the conference should start with each group of the Christian Peace Movement - that is each Christian peace organization, not the groups thereof, putting up a speaker to say what his group was doing and why it considered that this was important and how to find a common way, which would include all the various actions now being done, not neglecting any of these to work together.

the next Christian Peace Conference working group meeting - to which anyone wishing to go is I believe welcome - is on the 25th July.

Resumption of discussion of Nick's pamphlet: specifically of the two paragraphs: (foot of page 13 - Anarchy 100 - "God and Church")

"The General Anarchist hatred of religion has declined as the power of the Church has declined & most anarchists would think of it now as a personal matter.

"They would oppose the discouragement of religion by force but they would also oppose the revival of religion by force. They would let anyone believe and do as he wants, so long as it affects only himself; but they would not let the church have any more power.

"In the meantime the history of religion is a model for the history of Government; once it was thought impossible to have a society without God, now God is dead; it is still thought impossible to have a society without the state, now we must destroy the state."

We started with the "so long as it affects only himself" bit, and of course all agreed that it suggested something very authoritarian, though Andrew felt that Nick had not meant what he had said.

Taken at face value the phrase is reminiscent of any reactionary talking of anarchists; of the supporters of the Springbok tour saying "I don't mind these 'nigger loving' wallahs disliking apartheid, providing they keep it to themselves - don't disrupt the cricket and as long as their views affect only themselves." Hardly an example of democratic civil liberty - much less of anarchism.

Andrew presumed that Nick accepts that a Christian must be a propagandist, every bit as much as an anarchist, and that the force mentioned earlier in the paragraph applied as much here as there; and that affecting only themselves just meant as long as they did not force others so to become.

Obviously this would make the passage perfectly reasonable, though somewhat tautologous, as an extension of what went before in the paragraph. Andrew (and the rest of us - assuming Andrew was right in his presumption) regretted that Nick's phrasing was less good than elsewhere in his pamphlet here.

...
Gresham, and again this is qualified by the possibility of Andrew's reading of the paragraph) said: "What would he want anarchists (atheist ones) to do if the church did increase in power? (Assuming that he means not temporal power, but numerical support and general spiritual influence).

(Again let us emphasize that for Christian anarchists the temporal powers of the Church are even more obnoxious than they are for atheist ones - for them there is only the anarchist objection which we share, but for us the temporal powers are blasphemous, heretical, sacrilegious...)

If power is meant in a purely temporal sense, if the church was to attempt to increase its membership - let alone its temporalities - by force; then Nick's "would not let the church have any more power" is altogether inadequate as a promise of opposition. If the real power of the church is meant, then Gresham's question "what would you have the opponents do to prevent it?" goes to the root of the authoritarian implications here.

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What is valid in this paragraph the church said a long time earlier - "Love and do what thou wilt" - that is if one does what one wants in the spirit of love all things work together for love.

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It was held that there was more wit than wisdom in the latter paragraph (though in this issue of LOGOS I have for reasons of space split the penultimate in two, it will be remembered that they are one).

Certainly the history of religion is assuredly a model for the history of the state; but the church was despoiled not for the benefit of society, but that of the state and the ruling class.

The church had to be expropriated to allow the development of capitalism and the mercantile state. The state would need to be abolished - as capitalism - to allow the maturation of society, in any real sense of that word.

So it was generally agreed that the paragraph had much that was superficially true, but little that was fundamentally so. Indeed it contradicts his own earlier arguments, and limiting one's self solely to his model in the light of this section of the pamphlet, the church is tolerated now that it has lost power & Nick can assume that "God is dead"; logically he should then say we hope to preserve a state, from which we have drawn the fangs, an obvious impossibility.

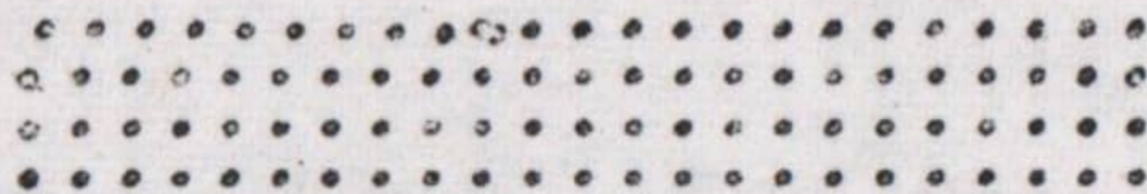
The God that is dead is the erroneous conception of god that man has made in his own image - the Nobadaddy of the polemics -/just^{here} as in the rest of the pamphlet's section on the church and on god, Nick relies on a purely atheist/fundamentalist definition of god, and of the church as a power body - the army of Nobadaddy - and proffers a liberal-seeming compromise, which given the god and the church about whom he is talking errs by being reformist and not overthrowing a power institution completely, - but is irrelevant to God and what the church should be.

If an authoritarian god/church is meant, then destroy it there is no substitute. but this is neither God, nor the Church as he founded it.

Again the Christian anarchist is more deeply concerned here than the atheist, to the secular anarchist the authoritarian pseudo-God and pseudo-church are only evil as temporal evils, as secular authoritarian structures. To us it is this of course, but it is a major sin against the truth, against the Trinity and against the true church the bride of Christ.



The February Catholic Worker is an enlarged edition with obituaries and memorials of that magnificent Christian anarchist - Ammon Hennacy it is suggested that we should have a memorial for him probably as a requiem Mass.



May I recommend Norman Cohn's The pursuit of the millenium - which does not necessarily mean that I think people will like it and admire everything in it, but that reading it is a salutary experience and food for thought



I have just heard from Nicholas, as follows:-

I am mildly surprised that your group has found it worth spending so much time discussing the short passage in my pamphlet relating to religion. I couldn't possibly get along to any of your meetings, unfortunately because you are so far away; & even if I had I think I would have been so far away from you all that I wouldn't have been able to contribute much to your discussion.

The trouble is that for me - &, I think for the great majority of anarchists, - religion is completely alien, in the sense of any kind of belief in God, to say nothing of any kind of church. Your very full and absorbing notes on the arguments at the meetings seem to me like the theological arguments I read when I studied ~~theology~~ at Oxford. I feel no particular hostility to religion in the abstract, but at the same time no sympathy for religion in the concrete. Being brought up an atheist, I have never experienced any religious feelings at all, and the whole business strikes me as an irrelevance at best, an irrational deviation at worst.

The four relevant paragraphs in my pamphlet were meant - like nearly all the pamphlet - to be purely descriptive. I was not trying to argue a case at all, & unlike some of our comrades, I certainly wouldn't deny that religious anarchists are anarchists. But I do feel that belief in god, like belief in witches or ghosts or visitors from outer space or any other kind of transcendental beings for which there is no real evidence, is an abdication of the rational & empirical attitude which for me is the basis of that view of the world which in politics is expressed as anarchism. "Neither God nor Master" certainly seems to sum it up for me.

But even so some of my best friends are theists....

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For my part had Nick in his pamphlet said that there were Christian Anarchists - but he himself considered religion "an irrelevance at best, an irrational deviation at worst". "Belief in god, like belief in witchesis an abdication...." and that he therefore did not pretend to know what they believe and he would do his damndest to fight them I would have felt this reasonable, however much I disagreed with it. But this was not the case, and description of something that you deplore is bound to be coloured and so an impartial guise does no good.

Valerie Bickers reports:- Christian Peace Conference working group meeting, PN,
Saturday, 2 May;-

Present: - Cathie Perry - FoR; Leonard Brinkman - S of Friends; Dave Poolman
& Jim Taylor - CNA; Valerie - C/A

1. The meeting began with Valerie's report on conversations with Fr Austen Williams as to whether the conference could be held in St Martin's in the Fields's crypt. Fr Williams said that he would be very pleased for the conference to be held in his church.

Jim Taylor had also heard from Toynbee Hall, who were willing to hire us, at low rental, their large hall, which seats 120.

The meeting was unanimous in choosing Toynbee Hall, - Valerie stressing that as St Martin's masks its close connections with the Royal Navy behind a facade of social work it was guilty of hypocrisy, - with which the meeting agreed.

2. Dave suggested that a party should be held in the evening (a sober type of party, Valerie and/or David ((shame L.O.)) -) but that we should do our own catering. Jim said he would write to confirm the booking and also ask for the hall for the evening.
3. The meeting turned to a discussion of the actual conference. Dave asked if a chairman was necessary; after discussion the unanimous decision was that the conference should have a coordinator to introduce speakers, etc. Dave suggested having a 'nonentity' (his words) as coordinator. Valerie agreed saying that to have someone like Trevor Huddleston would be to accept the fact that because he was a well known bishop he should have more power and have authority over us.

Themes for Group discussion: -

Dave wanted speakers who would spark off groups.

Jim said that he would like speakers in opposition, so that we could have both sides of the argument, instancing the Middle East conflict and wanting a pro-Israeli speaker to put his case.

Valerie suggested Child Poverty Action as a theme for a group discussion, to bring in the violence of the so-called welfare state against the underprivileged. As a speaker for the opposition she suggested Enoch Powell, but Dave thought Powell got too much publicity already. Jim suggested getting an ordinary working man, but Val thought that it was difficult to find a working man who could articulate such a case. She suggested as speaker on the subject Frank Fields - Director of CPAG, or Alan Jones of her own branch in Southwark, who is also a social worker at Chaucer House

Cathie suggested the military machine and cadet forces. For this Val suggested an army recruiting officer, Jim was frightened he might be converted and have to join up. Dave thought that the threat of conscription made this relevant as a topic.

At this point in the meeting Leonard Brinkman interjected that the Conference should in some way convey the Christian message of hope for "flounders in the world," and how the Christian approach "cut through problems".

Cathy brought up (our original suggestion) "transforming society" (in a novel way) as Valerie got the impression that she mainly wanted to discuss Christian influence in existing industry and trade unions. Jim suggested as a speaker Bruce Kendrick (author of Come out of the wilderness); Leonard suggested Bishop Ted Wickham & Valerie suggested Bishop Simon Phipps.

(May I interject to suggest a worker priest, and specifically John Rowe - L.O. - he would be more concerned with social transformation.)

Dave suggested role play - the dramatization of social conflict and use of this to instruct people in non-violent resistance. Valerie objected that you cannot predict in cold blood what is performed in hot blood; and went into the biological factors connected with the secretion of adrenaline and its amphetamine action. She and Leonard said that if people wanted to do this they would withdraw objection but not participate.

Practical details:-

1. Putting people up:- suggestions: French Church Soho;
2. Expenses - agreed each delegate to be charged 5/- (May I suggest at this stage a pooled fair system whereby London delegates contribute to the fares of those who live further afield.)

Besides members of Christian Peace Movements it was decided to ask:

1. Fr Austen Williams and staff;
2. Fr Eric Abbott (Dean of Westminster;)
3. Msgr Canon Bartlett (Administrator of Westminster Cathedral);

Valerie thinks there were others but does not recall whom.

- Arrangements were made for Jim to contact Toynbee Hall; Val Bishops Phipps and Whickham, Frank Fields and Alan Jones.

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Dave Poolman has written suggesting that I should include in this the manifestos of 18 Liverpool ^PPriests - "The Thirty Eight Articles" which were on pp 2 of the Catholic Herald of the 17th April. If I can get hold of these I will.

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Cohn in his book 'The pursuit of the Millenium' stresses that neither the Utraquist Hussites nor the original and more radical Taborites were opposed to the doctrine of transubstantiation; - they both took the host and the chalice into battle with them, and their insistence on communion of both sorts stemmed from a deep reverence for the sacrament. This can only mean that though Husx is reputed to be a disciple of Wyclif's, it was not so in this sense. That it was the influence of John Ball - not of Wyclif that Husx had adopted.

This would fit a belief that in England the nobility had played Wyclif off against tame social reformers encouraged by the Church, - a wing of whom were by no means tame and were disavowed, of whom Ball was the most famous, - and that there was only a Lollard-Ball alignment when the nobility had disavowed Wyclif.

Cohn also considers the influence of the Waldensians on the Bohemians - precisely those poor and working class unemployed (and excluded from the guilds) who later turned Taborite. Which again fits the fact that ~~the-Repressor~~ was a reply to Wyclif (sorry not the Repressor) was signed Waldensis.

Cohn's book is interesting except when he turns to socialist cults, then his prejudice against justice overwhelms him and where he before had weighed charges, saying so and so can of course be discounted as polemic, he repeats uncritically every attack on the anarcho-communist communities.

Manifesto of 18 Liverpool priests (R.C.):—

Conscious of the urgent need for more communication between all sections of the Catholic Community in this country, we propose that the conference recommend that the Hierarchy of England and Wales this year, establish:

1. A National Council of clergy;
2. A pastoral council of clergy and laity;
3. That a national referendum based on the propositions submitted to the Wood Hall conference be sent to all priests in the form of a questionnaire;
4. That celibacy be optional for all secular clergy;
5. That those who have left the priesthood and married should, in special circumstances and under certain conditions, be allowed to resume the full priestly ministry;
6. That religious priests, who wish to marry, be given the opportunity of joining the secular clergy;
7. That a man need not commit himself to the priesthood for life according to the order of ^{III}Melchisidech, that is that the priesthood need not be a lifetime commitment, e.g. a man may offer 5 or 10 years to the missions;
8. That the early Christian ideal of priesthood, was one of service to people rather than sacrifice at the altar - and that we rediscover this emphasis;
9. That the traditional disqualification of women from the priesthood be removed as having no theological basis;
10. That every clerical student receive a fully recognized vocational training, e.g. teacher, social worker, etc.;
11. That the divinity training of the priest followed a course recognized by the education authorities (at training college or university level);
12. That all junior seminaries be closed, the buildings to be sold or used as training colleges, schools, hospitals, old peoples' homes, etc.;
13. That all appointments to positions of pastoral care be subject to renewal every five years; (eg parochial priests and bishops);
14. That when a parish becomes vacant the clergy be notified. Any priest to be able to apply for the position of parish priest;
15. That the above should apply in the case of any diocesan or national clerical post;
16. That ~~xxx~~ parish priests should be urged to set up parish councils according to Vatican II;

17. That a consultative body/board of clergy & laity (at parochial, diocesan or national level) should consider the applications and make recommendations to an ~~the~~ appointments board;
18. That an appointments board, representative of clergy and laity make the actual appointments;
19. That those priests should not be left in pastoral care who are no longer able adequately to discharge their functions by reason of age, infirmity or a record of unhappy personal relationships;
20. That assistant priests be appointed to a parish under ~~xxxxxxx~~ a proper contract of service, re-salary structure, rights of accomodation, co-responsibility & function;
21. That experimentation regarding clerical dress be recognized as personal & permissible;
22. That in the planning of new areas, the tradional presbyteries be n longer built;
23. That existing large presbyteries be fully utilized, e.g. as rooms for students, homes, for the old aged, etc.;
24. That all diocesan priests working within the diocese should have a fixed & equal salary as long as present structures exist;
25. That Mass-stipends and stole-fees be abolished eventually;
26. To ensure equality of incomes within a diocese all other revenues from hospitals, convents, cemtries, etc., be paid into a central fund;
27. That a priest should never be forced to appear to condone what he conscientiously condemns, e.g. excessive fund-raising by bingo and beer;
28. That all sanctions attached the Sunday Mass obligation be removed;
29. That the parochial clergy be no longer obliged to provide a daily Mass unless members and pastoral need so dictate;
30. That all pact-Masses from clergy benefit funds (cf the Lancashire Infirm Secular clergy fund) be discontinued as untheological;
31. That priests recognize that it is possible to administer the sacraments even to those legally disqualified (cf CR Feb. 1970);
32. That all sanctions attached to the saying of the office be removed;
33. That a method be devised now for consulting all the clergy of the diocese to choose diocesan bishops;
34. That a method be devised now for consulting all the laity of the diocese for the choosing of diocesan bishops;
35. That more thought be given to the planning of multi-purpose buildings;
36. That more thought be given to the sharing of existing churches and the building

- of multi-denominational churches in new areas;
37. That priests should begin to give more than lip service to the priority of the parental role in education;
38. That individual dioceses permit initiative in those matters where agreement is lacking at national or international level.

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Within its context - which appears to me to be the reform of a body which will remain a power institution - this manifesto appears to give a series of more or less admirable reforms (losing the limited R.C. equivalent of the old Anglican Parson's Freehold could well provide an authoritarian hierarchy with a weapon against the left rather than the right.)

But the concept of a temporary priesthood is symptomatic of the fact that the priests' radicalism stops short of realizing that the job of the church is to overcome (revolutionize) the world, and that a priest should be the quintessence of a revolutionary, - and one who starts to become a revolutionary cannot put limits to the time he will work (though he may put limits to the time he will work in one particular way), the only way one can stop short is to sell out and make one's peace with the establishment.

Instead of offering a new revolutionary perspective for the Church, they offer a reform of the existing establishment institution; no doubt intrinsically desirable reforms which would make possible further developments if further pressure for reform materializes, but which could also permit the establishment to reform and be dirigiste in a new way. The short time scale in which they are operating could well be the most hopeful point.

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Valerie Bickers writes:-

The Elephant and Castle Project has been in existence now for nearly a year. During the past few months I have been looking critically at it & asking myself two questions: (a) has it achieved anything? (b) is its existence still justified? In both I feel drawn to answer in the affirmative.

When I wrote in LOGOS - last September - the group had only got a short way through

the tenants' opinion survey which we conducted to discover the needs for play-space & play facilities at the Elephant. The survey showed that the majority who responded wanted better play facilities in the area. On the strength of this survey, the Project applied to the Southwark Planning Dept., for the vacant land in Oswin St., for use as an adventure playground.

After application was made and acknowledged it was obviously tucked away in some obscure office in an even more obscure filing cabinet and forgotten; for that was the last we heard of it. In order to jog their memories, I wrote to the planning dept., asking what progress our planning application was making. This resulted in my being invited up there for a talkchat.

The outcome was that the application was refused on the ground that it would be a waste of money to build a playground on a piece of land which is to be used ~~xxxxx~~ ~~zzzzz~~ for building purposes in ten years time. The planning dept. did however, release one of their official secrets while I was up there in that they told me that the Old Nursery Site in Churchyard Row might be easier for us to obtain for a playground, as it had already been designed to be an open space.

It is therefore the intention of the Project to apply for this site as a playground. To support the application, one of the local shopkeepers is running a petition which the mothers in the area are supporting.

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In addition to fighting for a playground the Project is at present involved in field work for setting up a junior club. On the survey we found that the club facilities in the area are on the whole unsatisfactory, and almost all demand regular church membership. The clubs we found were: -

1. Uniformed organizations - St Jude's Church ;
2. Tuesday Club - St Jude's (compulsory church membership);
3. Pioneers and Young Peoples' club - St George's Cathedral (R.Cs only) ;
4. Salvation Army Youth Club; (I attended about four meetings & discovered that the emphasis was on getting young people 'saved'. Total club attendance on each night I went was two older lads and three young girls, all Salvationists;)

During this week and last volunteers have been visiting mothers and children in their

homes to discuss the types of activity that they want in their club. I sincerely hope that when we open we may find a method of dealing with 'unclubbable' children, and not throw them out of the club. As soon as we find a hall we will open. Unfortunately unlike some new clubs, ours does not stand to inherit the equipment of a previous club & our meagre equipment is very little on which to start a club, while our equipment fund stands at - £0/0/0

To aid the desperate state of the general running expenses, the Project held a Jumble sale in March. (Advertized in LOGOS). Fr. Kendall, Vicar of St Jude's Church, loaned us his hall free of charge. Not only was the jumble sale a means of making some money to prevent our general fund from actually fading out of existence, but it also provided an afternoon of informal chat with 'mums' who came.

In July - the Project will have been in existence a year. The last year has been very hard going, & (in Churchillian tones) the coming year does not look as if it is going to be any easier. The local council, I sometimes feel are offended at our presence, although other community workers in Southwark welcome it.

One thing is certain, however, it will take more than Mr Green, the Youth Officer, & his army of colleagues from Peckham Road, to drive us from the Elephant. It is our intention to promote local democracy in the area & by tackling the problem of children's rights we are already seeing a harvest from the seeds sown. So, sorry, Mr Green, Syd Roper, & all your buddies - we're staying.

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Valerie, since posting this has had an article describing the Project in the Evening News, I did not see it, and do not know if it covered many of the same points.

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As I write this - May 11 - the Springbok tour has not yet been called off; but I will be surprised if it has not been by the time that I post it; - of course they will find a face saving formula and it will not be 'bowing to coercion!'

Just as Nixon's conciliatory attitude to the demonstrators on Cambodia now is solely from his regret at the deaths and not fear that the movement will escalate! Actually the revolution looks rather healthier at the moment. Laurens.