



Bulletin of London Anarchist Christians - of Koinonia
July edition (June 7th started)

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meetings held care of:-

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Logos is sent to anyone who asks for it and a few who haven't but who have publicly expressed interest in the ideas of christian anarchism. Anyone who now receives it and does not so wish to do, please please write and say this.

The London Christian Anarchists meet generally but by no means invariably on the second Saturday in the month. The June meeting however was yesterday - the ~~sixth~~ and the July one will be on the fourth.

Meetings are held at 8.00 in the Vicarage of St Paul's Bow Common, preceded by a service in the church. The next one will discuss tactics following the election in the new or old repeat situation.

LOGOS comprises minutes, discussion papers sent by members who cannot reach meetings, notices, and is intended to provide a link with out

of London contacts.

Please note Dave Poolman is ill and in Mile End Hospital (Ward B.3 - an isolation one) and would welcome visitors. (it is very infectious & I suppose I ought to mention this as warning to parents of children, etc.) He asks me to say that C.N.A. are planning anti-army cadet campaigns at two church schools one of which is St Aloysius in Highgate; but details of this school are needed & would be gratefully received by Dave; (address when not in hospital - 10 Rabitts Rd., E. 12).

Meeting of the 6th of June: Present: Valerie Bickers, Barbara Dempsey, & Jo. Phillips; Frs Gresham Kirkby & Andrew King; Desmond Hunter, Douglas Goboy, Patrick Donnelly, Emil de Mario & Laurens Otter.

The Secretary and everyone else who had one had forgotten to bring copies of the Anarchy 100 reprint pamphlet, so we did not as we had intended discuss the rest of this and deferred this.

Andrew reported that he had had a letter of thanks from Cesar Chavez, another from Peggy Smith, and that the York Anarchist Federation had returned the loan so this was added to the money for Peggy. YAF had also sent Andrew & I copies of their anti-election leaflets which were on the table, asking for orders & these with one of mine were also on the table. (YAF's are printed - but obviously they have to charge.)

Valerie said that Dave McLellan had told her that the McGees have written to him at P.N. asking friends of Peggy Smith to raise £8 to pay her return fare to Cornwall so that she can have an holiday there. (For anyone who does not know ^Peggy she is somewhat elderly and not a potential hitch-hiker.)

We had agreed this time to send the money to Close Nancekukwe Now but as sending Peggy Smith to stay on Nancekukwe's doorstep, where CNN is being organized however much the intention may be an holiday is tantamount to sending a voluntary worker down, there did not seem to be much conflict - 16/6 was raised.

Valerie also had a complaint about the last LOGOS - I had not been able to decide from her notes whether she or Dave Poolman had stressed that the Christian Peace Conference party should be a sedate one - Valerie wishes to emphasize that she suggested a lecherous orgy, and is neither a puritan nor an inverted puritan.

As I have said we did not have copies of Nick Walter's pamphlet and so did not discuss this. We had more new people than usual - even though of these only came for the last quarter of an hour or less - and having two non-Christian anarchists present, and one non-anarchist Christian-radical-pacifist the meeting was for the most part spent with Gresham, Andrew, Emil, Valerie and myself (a) explaining anarchism, & (b) explaining the relation of our group's relation to the rest of the anarchist movement, & to the Christian Peace movement (and its to the rest of the Peace Movement).

Curiously we did not talk much about the specifically Christian arguments for anarchism, the normal stuff of LOGOS, and as it was not mentioned during the meeting that Jo and Barbara are atheists - indeed netheists - there was no theological discussion.

In defining anarchism, discussing the different forms & so forth - & given the imminence of an electoral charade - discussion was made of the relative demerits of the various candidates and parties.

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(Doug Kepper has moved - he was last heard of at Simonswell Farm, if anyone know his address would they let me know to correct files - sorry this came up in discussion.)

Discussing the election it was generally agreed (with some dissent from Emil - on the grounds that it was totally irrelevant) that in the unlikely event of a Tory win, our position would be altered, as a number of the Black Dwarf - Trot-Maoist et al. punch-up left would join the Labour Party and leave the anarchists isolated (in many ways good riddance no doubt - but..) and so we decided to hold our next meeting on this.

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Gresham reported very briefly on his talk to the Young Libertarians, a right-wing, old-fashioned laissez-faire ultra-liberal-capitalist group (not unconnected with the Society for Individual Freedom - so ultra-liberal is not liberal in the sense of having liberal-humanist attitudes to social problems but as anti-etatist capitalism; and this with also his reply to Steve Hayes' letter - qv - is reproduced later.

Mentioning IKON, I had a letter from John Aitchison, recently rel-

eased after 5 years restriction; he had joined IKON's editors and taken over part of the business side from his wife - all within three weeks of release; good hard revolutionary that!

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The first clause in the Liberal Manifesto is that free speech is endangered by anarchist hooligans ~~x~~ - not long ago the Liberals were saying which Twin is the tory of the other two parties, and in answer to questions from young Liberals in Oxford Grimmond said that he did not mind being described as an anarchist, if they insisted that the term Syndicalist he had chosen for himself was synonymous with anarchist - now not only are they rushing to join the Law and Order mob, they leave Frank Byers to answer the questions at the official press conferences, and their spokesman on the wireless on Friday night in a party speech talked of the extremist and dogmatic parties confronting each other in industry, and the Liberals being needed to supply a via media. Fill the gap between the tories-twins!

No wonder that David Spreckley - an ex-editor of Freedom - and Ann Sheldon Williams are in revolt, though turning to the Labour Party does not seem to be a very constructive revolt. There are honest radicals among the Liberals not only among the YLs (where there are several LOGOS readers) & Emlyn Warren (a ditto) but also peace movement names like Verdun Pearl, Alan Litherland.. it ought to be possible for us to say to these (not the anarchist ones who are basically entrists within the Liberals, but those who persist in believing in the possibility of a radical Liberal government) that they really ought to think more deeply, to understand that a party that can so easily switch its policies; (as it did in 51, when after an election on the basis that there was nothing to choose between Tory and Labour, - Clement Davies swung over to pledge support for Churchill, - and as it has done now;) can hardly be internally democratic let alone liberal, and is hardly likely to bring liberal social reforms.

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When I published - a few weeks ago, Tony Fleming's arguments against the existence of free will I mentioned that he is an ex-Seminarian, that he would be writing an attack on Christianity - specifically Christian Anarchism, which as it would be an informed attack I would run.

Tony Fleming.... Critique of Christianity

The first problem is the philosophical one of the nature of God, - we may assume for the moment the possibility that some first mover etc. does exist. The Christian sees God in terms of omniscience, all-powerfulness, Love and Justice & the Creator.

The Judaeo-Christian thesis tells us that God created a harmonious universe, that man was given free will, the possibility of choosing between happy conformism and self-assertion. But the evidence strongly indicates that man is the (so far) end product of a process of evolution stretching back into the mists of pre-history. Throughout this process, at least during the recent period when we can talk of life having evolved, we have the spectacle of animals living off both other animals & off plants. There is no qualitative difference, since the consumption of both involve the advancement of the one at the expense of the other. We have to the fact that, directly or indirectly, the survival of some species has led to the extinction of others.

It is true that cooperation also plays an important part in evolution, particularly intra-special cooperation. But it is competition that has been the deciding factor. Even on the level of sub-atomic matter, harmony is the result of a balance being achieved by positive and negative particles. We can explain man's 'shortcomings' in terms of fallen-ness, but, in spite of Aldous Huxley's efforts it is surely anthropomorphizing, and a few other things besides, to talk of animal species choosing unthinking finitely (finitely? affinity? L.O.) to free will and the possibility of eternal damnation.

The Gospels talk of turning the other cheek, of radical non-resistance. This, at least, is the creed they ossified into at a particular stage of development of the oral tradition. Scholars have reached widely varying conclusions about what might have been the original content (even if we ignore the hallucinogenic fantasies of Allegro, who I seem to remember got hung up on the idea of Jesus being an Essene, when the Dead Sea Scrolls were first discovered.) Each of us has I believe, to attempt to understand what Jesus means - & in a field with so much information and with so little concrete facts, any decision is necessarily existential & subjective.

My particular reading & experience of what is authentic in the Gospels is not anybody else's per se, though it may coincide with how others read it. This is not in any case a critique of the Gospels, but an attempt to draw the radical contradiction between the Christian ideology as expressed in the Gospels & the reality of pre-human existence.

The problem can be solved theoretically by posing a gnostic concept of creation & life. But Austin Ferrer has drawn out the logical contradictions of this position. If we view, as the gnostics did, God and Satan as two equal forces one representing harmony, love beauty, etc., and the other chaos, hatred and ugliness then we are left with the expectation of, not an integrated universe, but what he called a crazy-paving universe, with areas of good and areas of evil. We could go beyond this & see matter as inherently evil, each of us having a soul with which we have the possibility of breaking loose from separateness.

We verge here on Eastern theology, but the idea is compatible with the mystic concept, put over also by Tillich, of each of us having a spark of divinity within us, the ground-of-our-being, with which we must become one. This would be at the expense of God's omnipotence; & it would seem to call for a turning away from the world rather than acting within it & meeting hatred with love.

I think the arguments on free will in men are very relevant to a critique of Christianity, but we have covered these already.

We could summarize so far by saying that a God who is Love could be expected to create an universe either static or evolving in mutual cooperativism. Reality evolves through competition & contradiction. The conclusion is that God is not love. If in fact God exists, we must see him/it as responsible for creating an integrated universe, and therefore amoral. If this is the case, we could ask, where does the concept of morality come from.

In our own individual lives, morality is basically a question of what is enforced (reinforced) by approval & love is good & acceptable, and what is invalidated by condemnation & anger is bad. Morality is the internalized value of the Other, modified by the individual's interaction with them. On a cultural level, morality is the product of the need for a class society to provide reasons for individuals not following their instincts. Nietzsche was not all that far wrong when he saw Christianity as the ideology of the slave - a belief in Love justifies the degradation of submitting. As it grew beyond the religion of the oppressed & became absorbed by the ruling classes of the Empire, it 'forgot' its belief in Love, even to the extent of persecuting those who had persecuted it, & its dissidents.

Pacifism is the reaction of the person who has been horrified by the reality of violence or is appalled by the prospect of it. It leads, as a mass movement, if carried beyond the Gospel's non-resistance to passive resistance, to the Gandhian movement, successful because national, but a movement that virtually ceased to

exist with the death of Ghandi.

Catholicism has produced the theory of the Just War, which says more for its belief in justice than its belief in love. Like many scholastic arguments about morality it is a case of pure rationalization.

If in fact there is no morality, we come against the problem of the purpose of existence. If we accept, as I do, a radical determinism, then there is no problem. We just exist. We are how we are because (assuming the existence of God) God could create us no other way. If there is free will then we are left with an ability to choose how to make the most of ultimate meaninglessness.

Why then can Frankl & others point to the problem of meaninglessness as being the main psychological problem of our time? Precisely because we are distorted by cultural & other psychological conditioning. We are not full human beings; if we were, we would experience our lives as enough in themselves.

We come now to the relationship between Christianity and Anarchism. We have two forms of allegiance to Jesus. One is intellectual decision, as argued for by Bultmann, following logically from his belief that the importance of Jesus is his teachings. The other is the essentially emotional repentance leading to the surrender of self to the will of God.

The former involves the internalization of Christianity into the superego & the conscious attempt to conform to the resultant standard of values. The latter involves a total repudiation of selfhood, the displacement of one's values by those of Christianity in the superego, & the passive following of those precepts - allowing the spirit to control one so that "I live, yet it is not I who live, but Christ lives in me". Perhaps the psychological difference is that in the latter the Christian values do not involve just the superego, they also involve the ego.

The Pauline conversion, the total surrender of selfhood, to the will, or the being of God, in fact is a more radical rejection of the possibility of becoming human, or real, undistorted, individuation, than the intellectual decision for Christ. We become as Anne Vogel puts it slaves of Christ.

This is as much a flight from freedom as the totalistic conformism of fascism or pseudo-Marxist-Leninism. We choose to regress to a very early phase, at which we were simply plasticine in the hands of the mother. In fact, it is very unlikely this phase ever occurred. Perhaps therefore a Pauline conversion involves partly reparation for guilt feelings about not having filled in with the will of the mother.

The mystical experience itself is a flight back into the emotional experience of the womb - so-called psychedelic mysticism is the reliving of the womb situation misunderstood as a mystical experience.

An anarchist chooses freedom, regardless of the consequences, He makes a choice to work towards a situation where he can become what he should have been at the beginning had he not been distorted. The decision must, one suspects, be conscious at the beginning, consciousness is only anyway the selective awareness of the workings of the unconscious. His choice of freedom involves a rejection of anything that apposes his evolution towards being-fully-human.

A recent book has identified a preference for black as signifying a rebellion against Fate. If God does exist, then surely in fact the anarchist must be an anti-theist (surely netheist-L.O.). Because anything outside the individual that restricts him is inherently authoritarian.

In any case, if God is amoral, he becomes irrelevant.

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This should spark off some interesting controversy. I only received Tony's letter today (8 June) so I have not had time to get a reply from this issue from anyone else and will have to rely on what is sent in; I cannot refrain from making some points, but will attempt a little humility and self-effacement leaving the bulk of the reply to others, since many will be better than I on theological and psychological points.

I am a bit worried about how I am going to finish this LOGOS - in theory at least I shall be on strike for the rest of the week (I think in fact my union will chicken out tomorrow, the rank and file have not been consulted at all I am an FoC ((print shop steward)) & cannot find out who I am supposed to call out & when tomorrow, and who are essential services who are to stay on); so I may not have access to a typewriter other than Andrew's old one, which caused protests when I used it before that it was not legible. Like a fool I forgot to collect Gresh's answer to Steve, or his report of his talk to the Young Libertarians, and , and so..

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Given this I cannot refrain from saying about Tony's piece:

- a. he has altogether overrated the importance of the belief in the omnipotence of God, it doesn't mean that God can do things which are contrary to Love, and Love by definition includes justice (or the yearning for justice) and freedom;

(b) if he is going to talk about the gnostic belief then he should at least allow for the dialectic; (gnosticism is I believe the greatest enemy Christianity has ever faced - far more so than than atheism; so I am hardly defending them;) given a dialectical view one does not get the crazy paving of his aunt sally.

(c) But dismissing the dialectical-cum-gnostic approach, his concept is only meaningful as he says in the context of his rejection of free will, which in Christian terms goes with his over-emphasis on omnipotence and omnipuissance. God even in terms of power to cannot in the terms of the old school boy catch build a mass so large that he cannot move it - of if he could would not be able to move it. In terms of power over he cannot interfere with human free will.

(d) Kropotkin - no Christian - did not agree that competition rather than cooperation within species was the major factor in evolution. Aquinas's proofs of the existence of God presuppose that for him at least a form of evolution was assumed so just as the Jews did not interpret Genesis literally for most of their history nor did the mediaeval Church; and evolution has always been reconciled with an allegorical conception of what is meant by Genesis, as Einstein interpreted it in our own day as the finest potted science ever written.

(e) Tony is a communist anarchist, but one might not realize this from his last paragraph but one, for that penultimate is positively Stirnerite if it means anything. Is an anarchist not to take in the interests of the revolution chances that may land him in prison? Prison certainly does not contribute to the growth of the individual. I would assume that the falanga, the garotte, or a firing squad was also somewhat of a detraction from one's completion in the sense that Tony uses the term; - yet a revolutionary may have to encounter these and certainly cannot avoid them at all costs.

Even for a Stirnerite there are many things that his commitment to anarchism precludes him doing, for a communist far more.

But again wholeness is a curious thing and one can hardly say in advance that any event will add or detract from one's wholeness (the word Holy has been avoided as a synonym) & it may be that precisely those things - yes like prison - which at face value one would say detract & fitting Tony's prescription should not be experienced may add.

(f) from experience a mystical experience is

the very reverse of a return to the confines of the womb;- I am not in a position to comment on the Pauline conversion, I am not sure that I have ever undergone it, and as presumably it leaves no room for doubt, I haven't; - but the knowledge that one is talking directly to God and hearing him directly, the knowledge that in and through one divine power is being manifested that I have known; it does not conform very closely with the atmosphere associated with the term mysticism, it's not so very private, and it certainly isn't - or rather needn't be - cosy, comfortable, padded - womblike.

(g) this raises Tony's definition of free will as a choice between happy conformism and self-assertion. I am not quite certain which he thinks the devout Christian is trying to do, for while one tries to curtail the self in the egoistical sense one surely asserts the self in many another sense; and conformism is hardly what was expected of the apostles.

(h) the cross was not non-resistance but non-violent resistance.

Bhoodan, Dolci, Luther King, Mahatma Gandhi, Luthuli, Chavez.

The doctrine of the Just Struggle marked a division between those who interpreted literally "if a man compel thee to go with him one mile, go with him twain" and those who interpreted the cross & the cleansing of the Temple and the rest of the Gospel as a struggle, generally - if not invariably - by non-violent means in favour "of the widow and the fatherless (for social justice).

Non-Violent resistance (and not only non-violence) was used by the Early Church long before Nicaea resolved on the Just Struggle; - the difference between this doctrine and all other conciliar doctrines being that it was acknowledged that there were two Christian beliefs, that the minority's position of total non-resistance was orthodox;

Non-Violent resistance survived as a Christian belief right through, usually certainly only propounded by Orders within the Church, or Sects outside it; so it is nonsense to father it on Gandhi who was anyway influenced by Tolstoi and Thoreau; and to the extent that Gandhi incorporated nationalism into his struggles to that extent he also incorporated hierarchical organization and lost non-violence

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over to others.
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Larry Law writes:-

Rev. George Nicholson

Rev. G. Nicholson has been rector of Burghfield, near Reading, since 1938. He is well known locally for his anti-black and anti-semitic writings. He makes no secret of the fact that he is a member of the National Front or that he supports apartheid and the Smith regime in Rhodesia.

As part of our Stop the Seventies' Tour campaign the Tomorrow Club organized a teach-in on apartheid. An anti-apartheid speaker, Mr Abdul a South African Asian came from the AAM but at the last minute South Africa House declined to send a speaker, who "might be subjected to physical and mental injury". We never discovered what they meant by "mental" injury.

Rev. Nicholson was quick to accept the part as pro-apartheid speaker. He delivered a speech on apartheid, racialism and God from a fundamentalist point of view & sat down to await questions. Asked what he would do if Christ arrived on his doorstep, Christ being a dark-skinned Palestinian, he was brought sharply to his feet again, exclaiming "Jesus was white".

He expressed the view that God ordained the various races & that it was a sin to inter-marry. He had no adequate explanation, however, as to the existence of a white Adam & Eve, a black Adam & Eve; etc.

The moment of greatest mirth came in his answer to a question on Sharpeville. He replied "the police at Sharpeville were only upholding Law and Order all I can say is that you are nothing but an anarchist".

There is of course, one point in Nicholson's favour, In coming to speak he had a lot more guts than the people he supports.

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Larry is now at the Berkshire College of Education, and one of the lecturers there - Yugoslav born - having written a book on Ferrier's educational theories & another being sympathetic Larry, is being able to make some progress.

Aprópos Gresham's talk, Steve Hayes writes from South Africa:-

I was interested to read the bit about the Temple withering away. I disagree with most of it, but the dynamics of the thing seemed right - it was looking in the right places, even though I think it drew the wrong conclusions.

I regard the Church, the Christian Community, the people of God, the Body of Christ, or whatever you call it, as the sacrament of the new humanity. The church as the body of christ is the first-fruits, - it has acknowledged the Messiah, and recognized the coming of the Kingdom, of the new humanity. The building where the church worships is also not without significance (the temple).

Because it is used for the Eucharist, it belongs to the new creation, it is carried forward to the end. Thus the Orthodox refer to the church buildings as 'Heaven on Earth'. But in the apocalyptic vision of the end, there is no need of a Temple, Christ fills all and is all. The Church as a separate (i.e. holy) community disappears because the Kingdom fills all things. The sign is no longer needed when what it signifies is fully realized.

And the Kingdom is true anarchy, as St Paul indicates in Romans XV - at the end all rule, authority & power is destroyed. The State, political power, authority & those who wield this authority must be recognized. Authority cannot be abolished by wishing it away, not by pretending that we can get along without it. On the other hand we should not worship it, & allow it to dominate us. We must work, in every way we can, towards its abolition, but the process may take time, and in the process we have to use authority. I am aware that most anarchists in the past have avoided this line - they have wanted direct revolution, and an avoidance of all political methods. I don't think this can work. We must use any methods available, providing they are not utterly self-defeating.

Thus.... I would be glad if Harold gets his exousia back in June - not because I think he is the best person to hold it, or that anyone ought to hold it at all. But the point is that someone is going to hold it & rather him than Ted Heath....

((Whereas for us - or most - this is self-defeating utterly. L.O.))

Tel. 01-622-3540

Adrian Howe,
87 Briarwood Road,
London S.W.4.

Dear Comrade,

It has been obvious for some time that liason within the anarchist movement is too general for specific campaigns. We anarchists have organized and taken part in demonstrations at embassies and elsewhere, but these have tended to be sporadic and ill-prepared. If we are to campaign seriously we need specific organizations working within the A.F.B. on particular issues.

Nowhere is the need felt more clearly than in the field of opposition to 'communism', and we therefore feel that there should be a permanent group within the A.F.B. dealing with this issue, with its own contacts and information bulletin.

Both for ideological reasons and the severely practical one that communists will attempt to brand us as agents of the C.I.A. such a group should be limited to people who also oppose capitalism. For this reason we propose that a statement be drafted and produced by the group which all participants should be asked to endorse in broad terms, and which should be reproduced on all pamphlets and leaflets published by the group so as to allow for no possibility of doubt as to our position. We suggest as a basis of this statement something on the lines of the 'What We Stand For' of the old Libertarian League of New York (reproduced overleaf).

It would be a good idea if the group had a name that is both short and memorable. Any suggestions would be welcome.

It is proposed that a meeting be held in Freedom Hall, 84b Whitechapel High St., London E.1. on Sat. June 27th at 8 p.m., and any criticisms or ideas would be gratefully received beforehand in order that we have something to discuss on the day. So please get in touch and let us have your opinions.

Fraternally,

Keith Nathan.
Adrian Howe.
Laurens Otter.
Bernard Miles.

WHAT WE STAND FOR

The 'free' world is not free; the 'communist' world is not communist; we reject both; one is becoming totalitarian; the other is already so.

Their current power struggle leads inexorably to nuclear war and the probable destruction of the human race.

We charge that both systems engender servitude. Pseudo-freedom based on economic slavery is no better than pseudo-freedom based on political slavery.

The monopoly of power which is the state must be eliminated. Government itself, as well as its underlying institutions, perpetuates war, oppression, corruption, exploitation, and misery.

We advocate a world-wide society of communities and councils based on cooperation and free agreement from the bottom (federalism) instead of coercion and domination from the top (centralism). Regimentation of people must be replaced by regulation of things.

Freedom without socialism is chaotic, but socialism without freedom is despotic. Libertarianism is free socialism.

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