

X O Y O S

Christian Anarchist Bulletin
35 Natal road, Thornton Heath CR4.8QH
December 69 the 15th

The Christian anarchist group meets at St Paul's Vicarage, Bow Common, E.3. other things being equal on the second saturday in the month. The last meeting was on December the 13th, the next will be on January the 10th. The nearest tube is Mile End. Meetings are from 8.00 to 10.00 (P.M.) before which there is a service in the Church - the vicarage then being empty so early comers are advised to come into the church between 7.30 and 8.00. The service starts with vespers and then has time for silent meditation and worship.

Repeat next meeting on the 10th January. Topic:- Powellism What Next? There will we hope be a C.P. docker there to talk about the spread of racialism in the docks - perhaps also a non-C.P. left docker; but it is not intended that the meeting should be solely concerned with Powell - there are Amery, Sandys, Rippon, Wall, Bell, Leather, Desmond Donnelly, George Brown as well as the open fascists to worry about; nor is it intended to be limited to dock manifestations of racism.

Again apologies that I have not used the woodcut heading, nowr have I got round to printing the Joannine statement, and getting an hard cover for this. I am still somewhat broke with building repairs to my house and have not been able to lash out for the extras yet; though I have ordered the type for the statement and may have started printing before you receive this.

May I recommend the extracts from John Robinson (former Bishop of Woolwich) 's articles-book in yesterday's Sunday Times. It is not often I find something to praise in South Bank thought. Apropos eroticism he makes the point I have 'till now only seen made in Peace News (John Ball) and Freedom (Arthur Uloth) that a permissive society presupposes an accepted authority and therefore is only better in degree than an authoritarian one and that we must pass beyond it to a mature society.

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Attendance: Frs Andrew King & Gresham Kirkby; Jean Sargeant, Michael Mobbs, Ian Lewis, Laurens Otter

the collection at the last meeting - given to STST-SanRoc amounted to aprox. 15/- (Jean Sargeant who took it has forgotten the exact sum.)

at this meeting - to one guinea; it was agreed that it should go to famine relief-war on want; and after discussion of the failings of OXFAM, and remembering that Dave Mumford is an organizer at Christian Aid it will go to the latter.

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Andrew drew attention to the Vicar of Hungerford's attack on the teachers at a school of which he is a governor and resignation as such - because teachers are no worse paid than old age pensioners and it detracts from their human dignity to strike. (It wouldn't apparently to live on a pittance). Andrew will write.

Andrew also raised the actions of the villagers of Pemburybraey in resisting the despoliation of their coastline by the army trying to turn it into a firing range. Acting through aesthetic rather than anti-militarist reasons they nevertheless adopted non-violent resistance as a technique of struggle and achieved a very high degree of village solidarity in their action - though inevitably met with the military calling them fringe elements.

This caused Michael to put in a caveat. The aim is intrinsically desirable, the motives though laudable are not our motives - or not our primary motives,

(obviously we must preserve what beauty class society has left unpolluted,) and the method is one of which we approve; but given the fact there is no wish for a better society ought we to rush to congratulate the action. (It was agreed should also write to the Vicar there.)

Could not non-violence be used for intrinsically undesirable ends and could not the precedent of congratulating people who were not pacifist for their opposition to a military base be embarrassing later.

It was agreed that non-violence can be used for bad ends and that Ghandi's first use of it was to preserve Indian priveleges asx against Africans; th t other cases existed of this. But it was insisted that non-violence's use forces the users to think more deeply, with a beneficial effect.

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Jean's report on the Twickenham demonstration was of necessity curtailed, as no large number of volunteers for the demonstration mentioned in the last LOGOS had come forward.

Though out of it - and of the letters we sent in advance - links had been built with Fr Michael Scott and Bishop Huddleston, and this will be good for the future. David Sheppard - now +Woolwich on the other hand was hostile though he had previously been very nice to Jean.

The Young Liberals had obviously not understood the meaning of non-violence as they had advised against as "only very agile and athletic people would be able to get in the wire" and "it wouldn't be easy". Though we had agreed not to discuss the matter - as it was already past, and there was no point in pulling out the bones I fear I was unable to resist ~~xxxxxxx~~ saying that neither had rocket base designers remembered to design the perimeter fence so as to facilitate the entry of demonstrators and that we didn't go in for gymnastics on those occasions.

Jean reported that Uganda and other Commonwealth African countries had - in their press reported the anti-apartheid demonstrations, and also it was reported in French African ones.

There was discussion of Patrick Wall's defence of the Springboks, his perversion of Roman theology, his financial holdings in Africa. Jean saw him as a menace who ought to be answered as a preacher of racialism. I saw him as a crook whose views will change if ever African power is such as to menace his money if it doesn't change.

From where we went to Powellism and the topic for next month. - I had not remembered then but have since that we had more or less promised a different topic that Dav Poolman wanted. Sorry. It was also said that we ought to have a talk on constitutionalism and direct action in opposing racialism.

Trevor Huddleston's radio encounter with Powell was then introduced and Ian made the point that at this point the distinction between christian and secular anarchism is raised as we have a far better answer to racialism than the other anarchists "We talk in history they talk in theoretical abstractions".

Apropos of this last came the AFB. For reasons of Freedom space it has been agreed that Freedom should only publish the anarchist address list once a month and the AFB is bringing out AFBIB - Anarchist Federation of Britain information bulletin. We were not included in the Freedom list because of the objections of Vero Riccioni; but now it is suggested that we should be in AFBIB; this would mean affiliation to the Federation.

We said when we were founded that in no circumstances would we become a rival to the secular anarchist movement - that that would be a reactionary thing to do, so in principle if the AFB wants us we ought to be in it. However as many AFB members would strongly object to our entry it might well be more divisive to go in than not and I have been deliberately hesitant to accept an invitation to consider it or to send a delegate to the last AFB Conference, when friends have made tentative approaches without consulting the AFB generally for fear of precipitating bad feeling.

Also the N.W. Federation is moving - or was moving - at the conference held yesterday and the evening before the acceptance of a statement one clause of which would commit anarchists:

to "support all national liberation struggles against

imperialism, as a step towards social revolution".

Which would commit us to support for power-oriented petit-bourgeois politicians many stalinists, many - in the Baltic states for instance - right-wing type fascists. No doubt the proposers would in fact say these latter - if not the former - were not in fact anti-imperialist but words either mean something or they do not, and if the statement has to be reinterpreted on all occasions then it would be better not to have it as a permanent basis of action.

There are various other points in the statement that an anarchist might well consider insufficiently radical - more omissions than commissions. So that the statement as an whole is an inadequate statement of anarchist aims, but nevertheless on the whole except for this point the statement would make it a body anarchists would want to support as a minimum basis for a broad libertarian-socialist unity movement; - indeed that is to wrong it, it is better than that.

But I had felt, and it was generally agreed that we could not support a federation with that paragraph. I had written stating that I had not consulted the group saying that I would not wish to be a member of the federation if it went through - (my wife is secretary of the Croydon Libertarians, until now an affiliated group,) and that I thought there would be general agreement in both the C/A group and among my local group.

I had also said: "I am secretary of a functioning group of Christian anarchists which meets in the East End of London, but whose contact address is mine, which has about 80 members people on the mailing list and a monthly (more or less internal) journal. (As such it is no doubt larger than almost any affiliate of the AFB ((in fact Swansea has 200)) - our activity is channelled through CNA and local anarchist groups and while a group of activists we are not an activist group but a group interested in the theoretic relationship of christianity and anarchism."

This was in a personal letter and I had not expected it to be reproduced in AFBIB, it might have been worded more carefully if I had, anyway I apologize to those many people on the mailing list who while active in many ways are not active in either of those contexts.

Icon has written saying it intends to reproduce matter from LOGOS. It really is an excellent paper. I have asked for a bundle to be sent to us c/o Fr Gresham and just as Andrew distributes the Catholic Worker we will also have ICON if it's wanted

Reverting to the matter of the AFB statement - though I write this on Thursday the 18th, I still do not know how Conference voted but I should like to contrast the N.W. Anarchist Federation position with that of the American left-Trot Spartacist League; whose position is here what I would consider a fortiori should be the anarchist position.

"The SL supports the right of nations to self-determination, following Lenin's method on the National Question. Like Lenin, our reason for supporting self-determination for oppressed national groupings is in order to get ethnic antagonisms off the agenda and replaced by class issues.

Therefore we at no time abdicate our responsibility to our class by tail-ending petit bourgeois nationalist movements, but instead fight for proletarian hegemony. Thus for instance the SL x supports the right of the Ibo nation to self-determination but we separate ourselves absolutely from the Biafran regime political regime, pointing out that national independence without~~xx~~ the expropriation of the ruling class is very far from socialism, as the Algerian example has shewn.

I am not of course saying that this is perfect, far less that we would choose this wording. Non-violence is not considered obviously by the writers of this passage, and even non-pacifists among anarchists would consider non-violence's relevance, and there is no comment on the state as such. But these points would but reinforce the case the Spartacists make on purely economic grounds.

Next meeting January 10 - Powell, What next?

best

Laurens