

NEWS SHEET
of the
AUXILIARY CHRISTIAN LEFT
July 1st, 1936
TOWARDS A CHRISTIAN LEFT

'There is amongst Christians in this country a considerable amount of earnest discussion on the problem of bringing religion to bear upon the political and social situation in the world. A good deal of it tends to realize the connection between this and the achievement of Socialism through political effort. Some of it has advanced sufficiently far to recognize the closeness of the relation between Communism and Christianity in respect of the form of human society which they desire to see established. But usually the problem is envisaged as one of combining their Christianity with one or other of the existing political agencies. It is important, therefore, to point out that the condition of all this is a transformation—even a revolution—in the religious field itself. The synthesis of Communism and Christianity is only to be achieved by the reformation of Christianity through a thoroughgoing attack upon all the perverted forms of Christianity itself. The social and political action that may be necessary would flow immediately from the accomplishment of this primary religious task. The task itself, it must be remembered, is a practical, not a merely theoretical one.'

JOHN MACMURRAY, *Creative Society*, Chap. VIII.

TOWARDS A CHRISTIAN LEFT

This is the first News Sheet of the Auxiliary Christian Left. It gives an account of the main events in our movement since the Policy Conference of the Auxiliary Movement in December last.

Members of the Auxiliary Movement are aware that the General Committee of the Auxiliary Movement decided on March 7th and 8th that it 'would welcome the formation within the Auxiliary of a Socialist Christian Group'. We to whom this invitation was addressed have chosen, provisionally, the name of Auxiliary Christian Left. Our group will from the start arrange for co-operation with such individuals as are in agreement with our basic outlook without wishing to join the 'Aux.'

Historically, the Auxiliary Christian Left, to the regular constitution of which this News Sheet prepares the way, is for all practical purposes identical with that movement which, starting with the 'Q' Camp Conference of August 1935, and declaring its nature and aims in the Camp Conference Report, and at the Policy Conference of the 'Aux.', has since been working towards the establishment of a Christian Left.

The documents which are set out below sum up this development.

I

At the Policy Conference of the 'Aux.' in December last, Socialism was raised by us as a religious issue. The prophetic interpretation of the world-crisis and the Socialist task of the Christian in that crisis were established as part of our Christian convictions. At the Conference a cleavage of opinion was revealed as between those for whom 'Christianity has nothing to do with politics' and who objected to our 'crisis-mentality' (with the consequent refusal to see in our attitude in politics more than a matter of 'tactics'), and ourselves, for whom it is a matter of religious conviction that Christianity must express itself in Socialist politics in our time. The right wing of the Auxiliary challenged the religious nature of our convictions. In reply the following document* was sent to the Editor of the Auxiliary section of the *'Student Movement'*:

THE CHRISTIAN TASK

Those members of the Auxiliary whose names appear below prefer to send a joint letter about the issues before our fellowship. While there are, doubtless, many details about which the writers of this letter would differ among themselves, they agree on fundamentals.

Before proceeding to those convictions in which we differ, possibly, from the main body of Auxiliary members, we should like to reaffirm those Christian convictions which we and they hold in common with other Christians.

We believe in the transcendent existence of the God who is immanent in the world He created. We believe that He is real, and personal, the Creator of the world and the Father of all men.

We can share with other Christians the normal activities of religion which concern the communion of men with God, in prayer and worship. We believe in the need for personal redemption, in the reality of sin, and the need for forgiveness. We believe in the redemption of the world through the life and death of Jesus. We hold the Christian doctrine of the incarnation of God in Christ.

* Signatories of The Christian Task:

Helen Cam, Barbara Cass-Beggs, David Cass-Beggs, Mary Ewen, Donald Grant, Irene Grant, Winifred Jacobi, Hugh Lister, Kenneth Muir, Gladys Painter, Karl Polanyi, Margaret Ridley, Norman Ridyard, Betty Russell, Kathleen Saw, Leonard Schiff, Grace Stephen, Fanny Street, Ray South, Roy Tregenza, Mary Whitehead, Avrille Williams, Alice Wrigley, Mrs. Young, Elsa Young, Marjorie Young.

We are aware of no positive doctrine of the Christian religion which the position we have felt bound to take up and try to state below leads us to deny or which we feel we can dispense with. What we state is the reassertion of the doctrines which we share with all Christians, with the addition that they must, if taken seriously, refer to all the facts and aspects of human life in the world to-day.

Religion, we believe, is our attitude to reality as a whole, and therefore to every aspect of the whole, including bread and butter, politics and economics.

As Christians we believe that reality as a whole is personal; that our relation to this reality is, in general terms, our relation to God, and, in particular terms, to all persons without exception. Our direct experience of this reality is our experience of community with those we love. Christianity is, in fact, 'primarily concerned with the communion of persons'. We cannot love God except as we love and live in community with our fellows. 'He who loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?'

Man does not live by bread alone; he lives by love and fellowship. But man cannot live without bread; and our love is unreal if it does not intend to express itself in co-operation for the supply of bread to all. 'Whosoever seeth his brother in need and shutteth up his compassion for him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?' This planning and sharing the supply of bread is not 'the material side' of our life; it is the 'not-bread-alone' aspect of it. For according to how we plan, make and distribute the supply of bread we shall affirm and enjoy or desecrate and deny our common life, our brotherhood, our relation to God.

There are no problems of human life which are not religious problems, which are not problems of the relationship of persons, and therefore of their relation to God. We believe, as Christians, that the way we behave in our relations to one another is the focus of all the problems of our common humanity. The particular questions of our political and economic life are also in every case problems of the relationships of persons to one another.

If, therefore, an attempt be made to solve economic or political problems without considering them as religious problems they cannot possibly be solved. This is the relevance of Christianity to life in society.

In our day the socialist movement has everywhere asserted that this universal brotherhood is the only solution of the actual political and economic problems of the world. We believe as Christians that they are right. Russian Communism is carrying out this task in practical politics. We believe that it has discovered the *true* political task; we also believe that it cannot complete and maintain this work if it rejects Christianity.

Since those who are doing, or trying to do, this task have come into the struggle for the Kingdom of God on our side, we cannot, as Christians, oppose them. Rather we must recognise and support them. The next step in the extension of community is being taken; we must recognise it. Here the awakened consciousness that the bounds of our human community must again be extended is finding its appropriate expression. This expression, this *intention* thus to extend community is the very content of religious experience in our day; the very garment in which God presents himself to our generation.

The task of the Christian community is not to save itself; it is to save the world, to establish in the actual life of mankind the universal brotherhood of men. It must welcome in this task all those who fight its battle, even if their vision of the means for its accomplishment is dangerously limited.

Incidentally, it was in the course of the correspondence on the Policy Conference at the beginning of January that the term Christian Left was used for the first time by our group.

II

By Christian Left we meant from the beginning, the expression of that religious move which in the present period makes Christianity an active force in the transformation of society towards Socialism. This move is felt in the theological field; in the sphere of personal and group life; inside the Churches; in politics. Both practical and theoretical problems of an entirely new kind have to be faced. Here again it is the prophetic interpretation of the nature of our times and the recognition of the active task of the Christian in this crisis which proves the solid basis of all efforts at clarification. The following notes give an indication of this.

NOTES ON THE PLAN FOR A DISCUSSION ON THE CHRISTIAN LEFT

March 24th, 1936

1. *Our purpose in these discussions.* The purpose of these discussions is to clear up some theoretical points for the sake of more effectiveness in action.

2. *The basis of the discussions.* The signs of the times call the Christian to a special task in the present world transformation.

Either in the form of war or of the profound changes in society necessary to avoid war, a great crisis is coming upon us.

In that crisis the decision will fall between Socialism and Fascism.

Our task as Christians is to work for the triumph of the former.

3. *Outlook on Politics and Economics.* This diagnosis implies that the next step towards the realisation of universal community lies, in our time, in the economic field.

That the main instrument of the transformation of economic life is, at present, political.

That the functions of political parties cannot be taken over by other groups or bodies, nor ought religious groups as such aim at political power.

The limitations under which political parties stand in the pursuit of power, are, however, recognized.

Thus our task cannot be solved either by keeping away from political parties, nor by restricting our activities to working inside them.

4. *The Concrete Issues.* The practical difficulties with which we are faced in our efforts at common action arise in the main, out of our divergencies in our attitude towards the issues of:

(a) War and its prevention (Pacifism).

(b) The State, the use of force, coercion (force and persuasion);

(c) Theological or non-theological approach (faith or creed);

(d) The Church (working inside or outside of it);

(e) Political parties (working mainly inside or outside of them).

5. *A suggestion on method.* Let us try to formulate the ideas and concepts which lead us in our actual behaviour when taking positive action on these issues.

Thus we shall discover the actual theoretical difficulties both in our own position as well as in relation to the positions of those with whom we wish to co-operate.

In this manner we can hope to avoid academic issues and discover the real nature of the problems which we have to face.

A discussion group founded on these lines (in which we joined with others) was of real assistance to us in maintaining the continuity of our work at this stage.

III

The welcome extended by General Committee in March (see p. 2) to a 'Socialist Christian Group' eventually to be formed, had asked for a 'statement of its position, basis and proposed lines of work'.

In response the following statement—subsequently revised—was made at General Committee on May 8th by our group:

CHRISTIAN LEFT GROUP REPLY TO GENERAL COMMITTEE

May 8th, 1936

Three resolutions were adopted by the last meeting of the General Committee with the object of giving a lead to the Annual General Meeting and were published in the April magazine. The first and third of these call for comment or reply.

No. 1. 'That the General Committee of the Auxiliary Movement, having received the report of the Policy Conference, desires to record its conviction that any change in the character of the Movement which would give it a particular political objective is undesirable.'

We feel that if the movement is a Christian movement it has inevitably a political objective in our time. It may be desirable to avoid the use of political terms associated with present-day party politics, because they are not really understood, but adequate alternative terms have not yet emerged; it may be part of our job to produce them. Of the terms available we feel that socialism most nearly describes the nature of the political objective inherent in Christianity in our time.

While we desire an open membership we feel that any attempt to induce or to allow people to join the Movement on the assumption that it is a fellowship of so-called Christian people whose religion has nothing to do with politics, and need not therefore condition their political outlook, would be false to our religious convictions. While a Conservative may join the Auxiliary, he must do so knowing that for all of us Christianity means democracy, and that for some of us democracy to-day involves Socialism and he must be prepared to face this challenge.

This position has already been stated by us in 'The Christian Task', and it will be noticed that the two points referred to in the Editorial of the May magazine (in italics) as the outcome of the Easter conference on the Church of the Future follow closely on these lines.

The third resolution reads: 'That this committee would welcome the formation within the Auxiliary of a Socialist Christian Group and invites a statement of its position, basis and proposed lines of work'.

We are at present a Socialist Christian Group and we are members of the Auxiliary Movement; no further formation or constitution is required. We regard ourselves as members of a larger movement, the Christian Left as a whole. The crisis of our times has produced a renaissance of Christian Socialism in England and we believe that in this movement lies the seed from which the true society can grow. We believe that it is the re-emergence in our time of the vital stream of Christianity which has been subdivided and covered up for many years. This movement is not due to any one individual or group, it is a 'Moving of the Spirit'.

The Christian Left has been emerging spontaneously at many points. For example:

- (1) The Barnsbury Group of Christians and Communists, run by Leonard Schiff, an Aux. member, with whom we are in close co-operation.
- (2) The Socialist Christian League, of which Mary Gillett (an Aux. member) is chairman. She attended our meeting at Watford at Easter, and fifteen of our group attended the Annual General Meeting of their London branch, in April 1936.
- (3) Developments in the Catholic Crusade.
- (4) Kenneth Ingram's study group in London, on which we are represented.
- (5) The forming of a group of Socialist Christian students in Cambridge University.
- (6) Hugh Lister's Trade Unionists' Club, in East London.
- (7) Rev. Cresswell Webb's proposal for a political campaign in rural areas, outside the organised churches. We are meeting him in June to hear more of this.
- (8) The Camp Conference group, of last summer, meeting at Watford at Easter, made quite clear their Christian Left position. An addendum has been added to their first report confirming this.
- (9) The Swanwick Conference on the Church of the Future (Easter, 1936) appears to have gone some way in this direction.
- (10) There are also signs of a Socialist Christian emergence in the Irish Christian Fellowship.

Our proposed lines of work involve:

- (a) Seeking to co-operate with parties and groups in the political Left.
- (b) Study, with a view to the formulation of the theological position of the Christian Left.
- (c) Keeping in touch with the Christian Left outside the Auxiliary Movement and working towards a united front of left-wing Christians.

We have been working under (a) and (c) as already mentioned, establishing contact with left-wing Christians, and on May 1st we sent representatives to walk in the Communist procession, co-operating with the Socialist Christian League, the Catholic Crusade, and the Barnsbury Group. We walked under banners such as 'We stand for socialism in the name of Christ', and 'For God and the Workers' Commonwealth'. This was repeated on Sunday May 3rd, when the same contingents joined the Labour Party procession. When the banners were placed on Communist platforms they were received with great acclamation. The contingent of priests, two of them carrying the banner, evoked applause from the crowd.

Under (b), 'The Christian Task' forms the start. We shall proceed having the co-operation of John Macmurray and others.

A good Christian Left magazine is urgently required. A number of small magazines exist but are in difficulties, mainly financial. A proposal has been made to form a united magazine for the Christian Left having, among others, the following functions: (a) Formulation and clarification of the Christian Left position; (b) Comment on the present situation; (c) Provision for each group to give its own news and reports.

We seem to be in a good position to take considerable responsibility for such a production, and a committee representative of several groups has been nominated. If the Auxiliary were to come out clearly on the Christian Left its magazine might fulfil this function.

We feel that a positive line for the Auxiliary Movement would involve a restatement of its position in unmistakable terms which would place it:

(a) On the side of a democracy which includes the possibility of socialism, involving the communal ownership of the means of production.

(b) On the side of a peace system, organised and upheld by the democratic and socialist countries.

This to be followed by an examination of the whole of its policy, projects, organisation and constitution with a view to making them consistent with its stated position.

This reply to General Committee was meant to point out the nature of the changes in the Auxiliary Movement, which would allow us to regard it as a home.

IV

A further clarification of the nature of the political task of the Christian Left was achieved when the Rev. Cresswell Webb asked for our comments on his plans for a political campaign on Christian Socialist lines. The following document must be read partly as an answer to his suggestions, to which we could not quite agree. On the one hand they contained no definite message as to the nature of our times (e.g. on the significance of the U.S.S.R.), while on the other they advocated the formation of groups with a new kind of religious ritual.

THE POLITICAL TASK OF THE CHRISTIAN LEFT

May 27th, 1936

The crisis of our time is the expression of a vast process of change. Nationally, our present society is being superseded by a socialist community founded on the communal ownership of the means of production. Internationally, we have entered upon the socialist era of human history in the emergence of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics.

The conscious recognition of the nature of this process and of the part that Christianity has to play in it, is the basis of the political task of the Christian Left.

A united front of all Christians, whether inside or outside the Churches, must strive for those ends which they have in common with the socialist working class movement.

To serve these ends the Christian Left is working towards a political campaign to release the forces of the Christian dynamic latent in this country.

This campaign should result neither in a political movement apart from the existing working class movement, nor in a new political party or body, nor (on the other hand) in new religious organisations nor even in the use of new religious forms of organisation—but in such a manifestation of the relation of Christianity to politics in our time as will bring the common people into the ranks of the politically conscious working class.

The constituent groups carrying on this campaign should embrace those who are ready to devote to this task all their energy above that required to provide for their every-day existence.

The campaign itself must make its appeal to the much larger body of those susceptible to its Christian approach.

It is by their task that these groups will be created and held together. They will be a community in virtue of their continuing co-operation in that task.

The discipline and schooling, the training and technique deriving from such a task will re-form the consciousness of the individual and build up the personality of the revolutionary Christian.

Our political means and methods must be conditioned by our aims, but we cannot share in the illusion that these can be ultimately achieved by concealing our basic convictions.

The importance of the born preacher or orator for the success of such a campaign should not be overestimated; we must, however, look to a special training to fit us for the work we have to do.

'The Political Task of the Christian Left' carries us some way towards the discovery of the true nature of the groups needed to perform that task.

* * *

These documents were born out of the necessities of concrete situations. Inevitably, there is some overlapping. Also the tasks of the Christian Left in other spheres of life and thought, apart from politics proper, and the method of co-ordinating these tasks so as to make them ultimately as effective as possible in the sphere of politics, has still to find its adequate definition. Yet in all these documents the same principle is evident. It is the principle of practical action—the effort to unite those Christians who are committed to the belief that the will of God is revealed in the world crisis as the creation of a new Socialist civilization.

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING IN DURHAM

July 31st to August 7th, 1936

The emergence of a consciously Socialist movement inside the Auxiliary was, broadly speaking, inevitable. In fact, for many Auxiliary members it is but a more responsible reassertion of our original Affirmations—a definiteness and concreteness forced upon us by the challenge of our time.

Again, it was perhaps inevitable that the Auxiliary Christian Left which was formed inside and on the fringes of the movement, should have had to establish itself partly in opposition to the official policy.

Still, the decisive fact is that the Christian Left group has come into existence. There is no doubt that it will increase in numbers. It may well have an important role to play in the future.

The question for the annual meeting to decide is this:—Is the Auxiliary prepared to be a home for the Christian Left group and to adopt its work—not as one more of a number of projects to be 'administered' but as a new purpose which claims a definite mandate to carry its message inside and outside the 'Aux.' to all who can be persuaded to listen?

Should it seem desirable a further news sheet will be issued just before the Annual Conference. This would contain the text of resolutions to be submitted to the Conference and an elaboration of points necessarily curtailed or omitted in this first historical survey.

Correspondence will be welcomed, as will requests for further copies, price 3d. including postage.

Please address letters

Auxiliary Christian Left News Sheet,
Annandale, North End Road, London N.W.11.

and mark "please forward."

News Sheet of the Auxiliary Christian Left

August 1, 1936 No. 2

THE INTERNATIONAL OUTLOOK AND THE
CHRISTIAN LEFT

REINHOLD NIEBUHR:

CHRISTIANITY AND SOCIALISM

THE DURHAM CONFERENCE: ISSUES

KENNETH MUIR: POEM

THE INTERNATIONAL OUTLOOK AND THE CHRISTIAN LEFT

Since the beginning of this year the two main features of the present condition of humanity have emerged with increasing clarity: the inevitability of a world war unless Socialism can be established in time, and the religious nature of the crisis. It is a clash between opposed philosophies: Fascism on the one hand, Democracy and Socialism on the other. The latter express to-day the law of life as Christianity has revealed it to us. Fascism is the effort to annul it.

The ultimate cause of our failure in Abyssinia is that the British ruling class is losing faith in democracy. They preferred, if unconsciously, the continuance of Fascism to Socialist democracy in Italy. Thus they hesitated to crush Mussolini by applying oil sanctions, although this could have been done at the time, probably without any serious danger of war. As to the readiness of the U.S.A. to take part in sanctions, the British public was certainly as thoroughly misled by Eden in the case of Italy as it was by Sir John Simon in the case of Manchukuo. The Conservative hope of keeping the African situation in hand without having to risk the collapse of Fascism in Italy proved an illusion, as it was bound to do. England's terrible humiliation was the result. In the religious war between Fascism and Democracy the countries representing Democracy must lose, unless their governments believe in the ultimate values they profess to stand for. No democratic state can hope to win through in this struggle, under the leadership of a ruling class which is prepared to abandon democracy, if its retention should involve Socialism.

This truth was borne out also in another manner. The friends of Italy were the enemies of Russia. Obviously, the key to an effective working of the League lay in co-operation with the U.S.S.R. While England depended in Geneva upon France alone, League policy meant, for her, dependence upon France — a position as undesirable as it was ineffectual. But the British ruling class did not desire co-operation with Soviet Russia. They would rather abandon democracy and demolish the League machinery for collective security than side with the protagonist of Socialism. Here again the basic character of the antagonism between Fascism and Democracy asserts itself. Democracy must perish in this struggle unless its adherents are prepared to go forward to socialist internationalism in order to protect it.

Stripped of all pretences the alternatives with which English policy is faced to-day are these: either to solve the international problems — which spring from German, Italian and Japanese Fascism — at the expense of Soviet Russia and European democracy, or to stand with Russia and the democratic states to establish a League power strong enough to set up a new world order of peace.

The Christian Left must strive with all determination for the democratic and socialist alternative. Whether in their Churches, or in their working-class parties or other organizations — religious or cultural — members of the Christian Left must proclaim the urgency of this choice, and point day by day to the happenings which confirm its inevitability.

CHRISTIANITY AND SOCIALISM

REINHOLD NIEBUHR

I have been asked to give my conception of the relation of Christianity to Socialism in very brief outline. Within the limits of your News Sheet space I can do no more than offer my convictions in a series of more or less dogmatic propositions. They are:

For a large minority within the Christian church Socialism has become the necessary expression of their Christian conscience. They believe that only through the social ownership of the means of production can a basis for brotherhood be laid in a modern technical society. Conversely, they believe that the disproportions of social power inherent in the private ownership of the social process is the most basic cause of social injustice to-day. They feel themselves called upon to defend these socialist convictions not only against Christians who hold more conservative social convictions but also against those who think that the mechanisms of society are unimportant and that Christianity must concern itself with the generating of moral goodwill and not with the reorganization of the structure of society. They regard the latter opinion as a baneful inheritance from dualistic idealisms which do not understand the relation of body to spirit and of material circumstances to spiritual health.

As Christians, radical Christians cannot share the conviction of many non-Christian socialists that Capitalism is the only root of social anarchy. They know too much about the reality of sin on any level of life to hold to a view of social evil which Socialism really inherited from eighteenth-century optimism.

Christian socialists are therefore bound to stand for their own religious convictions within the socialist community and not capitulate too easily to cultural and moral confusions to which socialist culture is prone. But this necessary tension between Christian socialists and the socialist movement must not tempt the former to independent political action. The socialist movement requires unity, and religious convictions must not divide Socialism on the political front.

It is important for Christian socialists to work actively for the socialist cause in trade unions and other economic and political organizations. Their political work is important not only in the ranks of labour but in middle-class circles, particularly since it has become apparent how strategic the middle classes are in the present social struggle and how predisposed to various forms of Fascism.

Christian socialists ought neither to try to force their religious organizations as such to espouse the socialist cause officially nor to separate themselves from their churches because they fail to do so. As Marxians they ought to know enough about the force of economic determinism and as Christians about the finiteness of all human spirituality to know that an inclusive religious institution cannot be persuaded by moral idealism to espouse a political cause without reservation, if it runs counter to the natural political interests and instincts of many of its members. The relativities of nature and sin continue to operate even among very consecrated Christians. Any church in which there is a genuine spirit of contrition may continue to be a spiritual home for social radicals, even if many members disagree with us on social issues.

Christian socialist organizations ought therefore to be upon a voluntary basis. They ought not to seek the support of funds from the organized church. This leads to

unnecessary friction and frequently to compromises which ought not to be made. It is naturally a tremendous advantage to have some congregations in which Christian faith can be related organically to socialist convictions. This is possible in some congregations in working-class districts but practically impossible in more mixed parishes. It is, however, possible to win and organize groups with common socialist convictions in such parishes and to win for them the right to act, not in the name of the parish but as members of it.

The widely held conviction among many radical Christians, that pacifism is a necessary qualification which the Christian must place upon the socialist strategy he is willing to support, is based upon false presuppositions, particularly the presupposition that the law of love is a directly applicable social norm. Love is the fulfilment of all law and can therefore not be another law. Politics deals with justice, first of all. All political justice stands under the judgment of the law of love; but the justice of the political order is achieved by assertion and counter-assertion, by the attack and defence of interests and by pressure and counter-pressure. While it is highly desirable on pragmatic grounds to prevent the conflicts of politics from issuing in violence, it is not possible to introduce the one absolute of non-violence into the relativities of politics. There is a place for pacifists in the Christian Church, as symbols of the law of love which all history violates, but they ought not to assume political responsibility or pretend to offer political alternatives to the necessary strategies of justice. The logic which supports their pacifism is one which drives to asceticism and asceticism must be politically irresponsible. Christians who choose to work for justice in the political order (and most of us make this choice) must be ready to accept the relativities of politics.

THE ISSUES BEFORE THE CONFERENCE

The question to be decided by the Annual Meeting was described in our first News Sheet thus:

'Is the Auxiliary prepared to be a home for the Christian Left group, and to adopt its work—not as one of a number of projects to be "administered", but as a new purpose which claims a definite mandate to carry its message inside and outside the "Aux." to all who can be persuaded to listen?'

The significance of this decision is to be gauged in the light of the discussions of the Policy Conference of December last. The line of division which became apparent there was between those for whom it is a matter of religious conviction that Christianity must express itself in Socialist politics in our time and those who refuse to share such a conviction.

There is some complaint about the manner in which we presented the case in our last News Sheet. While there seems to be no objection to the statement that the basic divergence was between those who raised Socialism as a religious issue in the 'Aux.' and those who refused to accept such a position, our reference to the various reasons given by the 'right wing' was criticized as inaccurate. In so far as the complaint is justified, we deplore the fact. Apart from the wish to be meticulously fair to our fellow-

members, it is our duty to all concerned to do what we can to avoid any ambiguity or lack of accuracy in the presentation of the issues involved.* Let us restate the position.

We wrote:

'At the Policy Conference of the "Aux." in December last Socialism was raised by us as a religious issue. The prophetic interpretation of the world crisis and the Socialist task of the Christian in that crisis were established as part of our Christian convictions. At the Conference a cleavage of opinion was revealed as between those for whom "Christianity has nothing to do with politics" and those who objected to our "crisis-mentality" (with the consequent refusal to see in our attitude in politics more than a matter of tactics), and ourselves for whom it is a matter of religious conviction that Christianity must express itself in Socialist politics in our time.'

We ought, perhaps, to have made clear that the three views quoted in this paragraph did not necessarily belong to the same person or persons. That 'Christianity has nothing to do with politics', that our 'crisis-mentality' was unjustified, and that, finally, a Socialist profession was not, in this case, a matter of religious conviction but merely of the right 'tactics' — these were positions held, in the main, by different persons. It is not only fair, but substantially important to take note of this.

The attitude popularly expressed by the formula 'Christianity has nothing to do with politics' corresponds to a religious position which is finding increasing acceptance among people who would prefer to use a more exact phrase. Actually it was said that the 'Aux.' should not go into politics, or, as put more precisely later that the Auxiliary Movement should not be given a particular political objective. But, in this connection, there is no difference whatever between particular and non-particular objectives; a religious movement entering politics must have an objective which is of necessity particular, or else so general as to be no objective at all. And what political objective could be deemed general, if Socialism be regarded as particular? We believe, more definitely than ever, that the simple phrase 'Christianity has nothing to do with politics' describes a basic theological position, and that it is, in our time, the one and only reasoned position from which the religious claim of a group of Christians to work for a particular political objective can be challenged.

The objection to what was called our 'crisis-mentality' had a different background. The division was here between those who believe in the immediacy of the crisis in a sense that is relevant to the religious conscience, and those who do not share in such a belief.

Finally, as to the appreciation of our differences as merely 'tactical'. Granted that Christians to-day ought to stand for Socialism (ran this argument), it may still be expedient to work for this aim in the ranks of a politically neutral organization instead of a declaredly Socialist one. That such a line of thought is deliberately opposed to the 'Christianity has nothing to do with politics' approach, is obvious. On this point our summary presentation needs some correction.

The official policy of the 'Aux.' (with which we are dealing here) has always discouraged an other-worldly attitude and tried to develop an active line in the political field. Its weakness lies in its apparent inability to state in positive terms the relation of Christianity to politics in our time. While the Christian Left has been striving all along to state its

* In our last issue we wrote that should it seem desirable a further News Sheet would be issued just before the Annual Conference containing an elaboration of points necessarily curtailed or omitted in the first historical survey.

basis in a reasoned manner, no such effort, either critical or positive, has been made by the other side.

This weakness cannot be overcome by an arbitrary emphasis upon the distinction between politics and party politics. The difference, of which so much is made, is irrelevant to the issue.

Firstly, because the Christian cannot set aside at will the actual form of the political organization of his time. To-day this form, in democratic countries, is the party system. Our politics, therefore, *are* party politics. The limitation of politics to non-party politics is a piece of idealism, which, as can easily be shown, works, if unconsciously, in favour of the interests of the owning classes and the political parties supporting them.

Secondly, because it confines the political activities of 'Aux.' members mainly to study. But politics, for the member of a Christian body means responsible political decision as a member of that body. Here again the true distinction is not between party and non-party politics, but between the reality of political activity, and the illusion of it.

The spirit in which we approach the Annual Meeting is that spirit which unites us with our fellow-members in the Auxiliary Movement in a collective effort to make real in our time our common faith.

The Christian Left cannot cease to proclaim the convictions for which it stands. We shall continue to wish that all members of the Auxiliary Movement should share them. We do not, however, strive for a majority vote on questions on which no minority can or should be coerced.

We ask the Annual Meeting to state the position of the Auxiliary Movement in relation to politics in such unambiguous terms as will prove that the Movement is a home for the Christian Left.

CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS

The constitution of the Auxiliary Movement makes it necessary that resolutions should be framed at least two weeks in advance of the meeting, the decisions of which they are designed to express. Hence these resolutions, covering directly or by amendment the decisions that the Conference may wish to make.

1. This conference welcomes the development of the Christian Left within the Auxiliary Movement, and assures the Auxiliary Christian Left Group of support in carrying out its work within the Movement and outside.
2. This conference instructs the General Committee to re-draft the 'Implications', the 'Brief Statement' and the 'Grey Book' in such a way as to place the Movement unmistakably on the side of:
 - (a) A democracy which includes the possibility of Socialism, involving the communal ownership of the means of production.
 - (b) A peace system organized and upheld by the Democratic and Socialist countries.
3. This conference instructs the General Committee to terminate the existing agreement with the S.C.M. regarding the 'Student Movement' and to plan for a separate magazine.
4. This conference requests the General Committee to investigate the possibilities of a more democratic form of organization for the Auxiliary Movement and to initiate any necessary constitutional changes.

Extracts from correspondence:

POLITICAL OR RELIGIOUS

To discuss whether the issue is political *or* religious is a waste of time. It is both political and religious; for politics are, in the contemporary situation, the focus of the religious issue. In each age the religious issue is focused on some problem which may appear, superficially, to be unconnected with religion. In the Garden of Eden, for example, the question of the apple was the religious issue, though it could be represented as a question of diet. At the time of Isaiah, the religious issue was expressible primarily in political terms: should the Jews ally themselves with Egypt or Assyria. At times the religious issue is expressed in terms of scientific controversy. Men had to choose between Galileo and the Church, and between Darwin and the Church. In the seventeenth century, the religious choice was a political one between Cavaliers and Roundheads; and at the beginning of the nineteenth century when most Christians opposed the French Revolution and the atheists and poets supported it, the choice again was religious. Though a religious issue may often be expressed in theological terms, it is always in practice a choice before the human spirit between going on and standing still. It is unfortunately true that the Church has usually been on the wrong side.

STERILIZATION OF THE FIT

The deepest fault of the churches is that they canalize the ideals of the young to fertilize crops that are comparatively unimportant. Similarly the Oxford Groups boast that they have converted people from Communism to Christianity. If we are merely entitled to hold left-wing opinions in a strictly neutral organization, we should, in effect, be sterilized.

NEWS FROM THE CHRISTIAN LEFT

Reports on the development of the Christian Left have been given to several groups. Of these, three — Merseyside, Manchester and Petersfield — are 'Aux.' groups. The fourth, a group of unemployed men in Dowlais, South Wales, is not affiliated to the 'Aux.'. About fifty men were present in Dowlais at a meeting at which Irene Grant spoke. Some twelve of these, under the leadership of Jeannie McConnell are forming a Christian Left group. Jeannie McConnell writes: 'Demonstrations about the Means Test are being held on Sunday. I should be there with the Christian Left group. I am talking to them and others on Thursday about the present position in Austria . . . It is a most vital time with the people here.'

The group of Socialist Christian students in Cambridge with whom we are in touch through George Sage hope to share with us a plan for study, during next year, on Christianity and Marxism, and related subjects.

The group for discussion started by Kenneth Ingram, and now known as the 'Christianity and Social Revolution Discussion Group' had the opportunity recently of meeting Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr. Dr. Niebuhr is the leading Christian Socialist of America. He holds the chair of Ethics at Union Theological Seminary, New York, and is the author of a number of books including *Moral Man and Immoral Society*.

At the discussion group Dr. Niebuhr stated his position in regard to the pacifist question, its relation to revolution in the order of society, and to politics generally. The subject will be further and closely discussed by the group.

In an interview with Dr. Niebuhr he informed us of the recent growth of Christian Socialism in the United States inside the religious organizations and the Churches. Incidentally, the great difference between the organization of religious life in America and in Britain became clear to us.

Howard Kester, an American Christian Socialist with whom members of the 'Aux.' Christian Left are in touch, is secretary of the Committee on Economic and Racial Justice. He is organizing the revolt of the sharecroppers in the cotton areas of the United States, and playing an important part in the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union. This is the first organization in the United States, apart from the I.W.W., which includes both white and coloured workers. The story of the revolt is told in Kester's book, *Revolt Among the Sharecroppers* (Covici Friede, New York. 50c.). Dr. Niebuhr writes the Preface.

On June 17th the Socialist Christian League called a conference, under the chairmanship of Mr. Theodore Harris, of representatives of various Socialist Christian groups and organizations. They invited, in addition, a number of persons interested in the purpose of the conference. This was to discuss the following two propositions:

1. 'That this Conference recommends the formation of a Council of Representative Christian Organizations working for Peace, Democracy and Social Justice.'
2. 'That this Conference recommends the formation of a Council representative of Organizations prepared to co-operate in the establishment of a "Christian Popular Front" with a full Socialist basis.'

After long discussion these two resolutions were rejected. The following resolution, proposed by a member of the 'Aux.' Christian Left, was accepted by a vote of fourteen to twelve:

'That this meeting urges the formation of a committee of action of Christian groups ready to work for peace and the full Socialist programme on the basis of the United Front of the working-class movement.'

The Socialist Christian League undertook to pass on this resolution to the organizations represented and to ask for their views in regard to it.

Otto Bauer, the leader of the Austrian Religious Socialists up to the time of their prohibition by the Dollfuss Government in 1934, was arrested in Vienna on April 16th. No definite charge has yet been preferred against him. Members of the Christian Left and others are making efforts to help in this situation. The *New Statesman* published on July 11th a letter from Donald and Irene Grant in which attention was called to Otto Bauer's importance as a consistent spokesman and representative of the People's Front in Austria. Continued efforts are being made to provide for legal defence, and to support, together with working-class organizations, the demand for the release of Otto Bauer and for an amnesty for all members of the underground Socialist Movement in Austria who are now suffering imprisonment. It is hoped that all who can help in this matter by moving religious and other organizations to pass resolutions of protest will do so. These should be sent to the Austrian Freedom Committee, House of Commons.

Money for legal defence and relief purposes is also urgently needed. Please send to Irene Grant, 25, Pyecombe Corner, London, N.12. (£5 was recently remitted: most of this was drawn from the 'Aux.' Austrian Fund.)

From *ALBION AGONISTES*

KENNETH MUIR

Albion beheld
some who were not corrupted by the age,
or, being wounded, had the strength to endure,
who went about their daily tasks with courage,
knowing the future unsure,
but cognizant that neither hate nor rage
nor talk nor resolution can avail
to avert the path of history; unknowing
that in Berlin and Vienna another tale
would have been told, progress would be growing
and not a withered husk, if men like these
had doffed their stoical virtue, the easy pride
of indifference, and cried:
It is not our duty with fatalistic calm
to accept what rule is given; the master-keys
of government are in the hands of all;
this shall not be; this crime is not our will,
and we will resist it while our lungs have breath.
Such resolution would have been a charm
to topple down the tall
castle of tyranny, to strip the mask
from the uniformed horror with the face of death,
and plug the holes in freedom's riddled cask.
The concentration camp, all evil, all
oppression that ever like a leprosy
blotched a nation's face,
sprang from the acquiescence of the race
which has forgotten it is free.
Duty is not enough. We must prepare
for the day of decision, lest in our land too
liberty suffers at the hands of law,
lest we learn the bitter ethics of despair,
And Christ is crucified anew.

* * *

Albion said:
Why sought I the living among the dead?
I will turn away my eyes
from the old dispensation, the unwise
upholders of the past, who dare not seize
that single chance on which the future hangs,
who speak in a dead language a hollow truth,
who shun the pangs
of rebirth, and shrink from the living fire of youth,
as phantoms from the touch of those not dead.

I will turn instead
to all whose ears are attuned, to those who wait
for words not barbed with venom, tipped with hate,
to those who fear
more than their own hearts, the quick drum-beat of fear,
to those still capable of laughter,
to all whom grief made wise,
to a generation that comes after
with free hearts and clear eyes,
to all with courage and a generous hand . . .
I turn to any that will understand.

Correspondence will be welcomed, as will requests for further copies, price 3d.
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Auxiliary Christian Left News Sheet,
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NEWS SHEET of the AUXILIARY CHRISTIAN LEFT

October 5, 1936. No. 3

CHRISTIANITY AND THE SPANISH LEFT

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THE CHURCHES

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CHRISTIANITY AND THE SPANISH LEFT

Western Civilization is the outcome of the Christian movement in history. The Crusades, the Reformation, the English, the American, the French, the Russian revolutions were successive stages in a development towards the inherent goal of a universal order, of equality in human relations, of a community co-extensive with mankind. Each step was achieved at the price of bloodshed, tragic blunders and almost intolerable moral sacrifice.

At almost every stage the established Churches of the day failed. While the Christian dynamic was pressing humanity towards forms of social existence more appropriate to the developing potentialities of the race, the Churches themselves were found on the side of vested interests, entrenched behind the powers of fear and greed.

The world-wide cleavage between Democracy and Fascism also is a religious war—a conflict between the Christian force seeking, in Socialism, creative expression under modern industrial conditions, and the futile and yet disastrous attempt to save a decaying economic order by destroying this force for ever.

To-day again the Churches fail. In Soviet Russia and in Austria the Catholic Church, Orthodox and Roman, is the mainstay of political counter-revolution and economic serfdom, though with opposite results. In Germany the Protestant Church itself is split. The German Christians give their support to Nazi Fascism; the Confessional Church stands against totalitarian autocracy and for racial universalism, but in the sphere of the Church only. The Roman Church is less definite both in her support and in her disapproval of Fascism in Germany; at present she is tending again towards a compromise with Teuton Neo-Paganism. The impact of the Christian movement in history was effective mainly against the resistance of the established Church order, in the ranks of those who risked their lives in the cause of Democracy and Socialism, and frequently underwent inhuman persecution at the hands of the Totalitarian State with the full approval of an apostate Church.

So also in Spain we have Fascism and Democracy engaged in a struggle of life and death; the Christian truth on the side of the Socialist, Anarchist and Communist; the Roman Church screening the ammunition dumps of the assassins of Democracy and Freedom. Here again the true Christians are not those who are supporting the Churches, but those who are fighting it in the name of Democracy and Freedom. Every militiaman killed in action in Irun or massacred by Moors or Foreign Legionaries in the human hecatombs of Badajoz is a martyr to that cause. No Christian ought to be misled into the defence of the Roman Church in Spain. Its crimes against the people are as numerous and as black as were those of the Orthodox Church in Tsarist Russia. Only complete ignorance of Spanish history or an inborn reactionary class instinct can explain the misguided efforts of those who attempt to induce Christians in this country to sympathize with the insurgents as the alleged defenders of Christianity against the Bolshevist Infidel.

But the crisis of our times is not national—it is international. The cause of Democracy is one and indivisible. The failure of the British Government to keep to the rules of international law in its dealings with the Spanish Government must inevitably weaken the position of Democracy in all countries—including Great Britain herself. The question is not that of intervention versus non-intervention. We do not suggest that the British Government should send troops to Spain or order the fleet to prepare for action. The question is merely whether international law should be observed in the case of the Spanish Government as it has invariably been in the past in the case of other duly constituted and recognized Governments of friendly countries. According to international law 'there is no doubt that a foreign state commits an *international delinquency* by assisting the insurgents in spite of being at peace with the legitimate government' (Oppenheim's *International Law*, Vol. II, pp. 475-88). Germany and Italy are proved to have assisted the insurgents by supplying them with arms. No protest whatever against these acts of 'international delinquency' was made on the part of the British Government. Instead the Government, as is known, put pressure on the French Government in order that they should not adhere

to the line of strict international law which forbids the setting up of an arms embargo against the legitimate Government of a country in peace time. Even now the British Government ought to conform to international law and allow the export of arms of all kinds to the Spanish Government, while prohibiting their export to the insurgents. Not only is every other course contrary to law, but is also in the circumstances a positive inducement to Fascist countries to disregard international law, if and when this suits their purposes. Whether Soviet Russia follows the same policy or not should not concern Great Britain in the present case. The immediate danger of war from Germany which, rightly or wrongly, may influence Russia's attitude, does not apply to this country. If we fail now, the last chance of upholding Democracy against a conspiracy of international law-breakers may have disappeared.

Members of the Christian Left—organize within your Churches! Demand that your Church protest against the widespread recognition of the Spanish rebels as the defenders of Christianity.

Send what help you can afford to the British Medical Aid Committee, Trade Union Club, New Oxford Street, London, W.C.1.

Wire or write immediately to your Member of Parliament, pressing the Government to comply with the rules of international law by lifting the illegal embargo on the export of arms to the Spanish Government.

CHRISTIANITY AND THE CHURCHES

JOHN MACMURRAY

We of the Christian Left stand for Christianity. By Christianity we mean something actual, objective and independent of anyone's private beliefs. We mean a real power working in human society for its transformation, whose origin is the life and teaching of Jesus.

It seems to me quite impossible to identify this with the Churches, either in their contemporary forms or in their historic development. Each Church, in virtue of its historic origin, stands in opposition to all the others. Each claims to be the true expression of Christianity and that the others are misrepresentations. If all of them together are Christianity then none of them can be its true expression, and whatever it is that makes us call them all Christian must be something different from any of them. May it not be that the Churches are properly the various religions of Western civilization; that they represent phases in the historic development of Western society under the dynamic of the Christian gospel, and express the religious life of various sections of its composite population? In that case they are all the effects of Christianity. They are the various reactions of Western society, at different levels and stages, to the impact of Christianity.

Christianity itself is the Christian movement in history, the total and progressive effect of the life and teaching of Jesus upon human society. Jesus discovered the nature of human life. He discovered that human life is personal. Such a discovery defines the objective of human development and creates the motive for its deliberate achievement. More than this, its truth is a guarantee that the achievement is not merely possible but necessary.

Christianity is the historic effort to reach this objective under the pressure of the motive thus created. It is most simply defined by its objective. To say that human life is personal is to define true human society as the relation of men and women on the basis of their common humanity. Jesus expressed this with the clarity of genius in the parable of the Good Samaritan. This defines the objective of human development and of Christianity (the two are synonymous) as the realization of a universal community in the world. It further defines the relations by which such a community can and must be constituted as relations of freedom and equality. Thus Christianity is the struggle in human history which

was originated by Jesus (as a matter of historical fact) for the achievement of a universal society on a basis of universal equality and freedom.

The opposition to Christianity is the opposition to this movement. It takes the form, necessarily, of the effort to limit human community to some less universal basis, as for example, the effort to make race or nationality the basis of social relationship, or the effort to maintain inequality between human groups. This opposition necessarily operates in all fields of human relationship and changes its character at different stages of the development of Christianity. The successive forms of Western society since the coming of Christianity are determined by the relative strength of the Christian movement and of the opposition to it at different stages of historic development. The Churches are the religious expression of this. They represent, both in their institutional forms and theological positions, limitations of Christianity which are resultants of two opposite forces—the Christian movement and the opposition to it—at different stages of the total development of society. It is a commonplace of history that the Christian Church has often been found in strong opposition to the development of Christianity. Indeed this has always been claimed by new Churches, at the time of their formation, with respect to the old Church from which they broke away. To anyone for whom Christianity has meant a real and unitary historic movement, it has always been clear that the Churches were partly for Christianity and partly in opposition to it.

To stand for Christianity in our own day is, therefore, to stand for the movement which is struggling to advance towards a universal human society based on equality and freedom. This is undoubtedly the Socialist movement, whether within or without the Churches. A struggle means an effort to overcome real opposition. To stand for Christianity in our day is, therefore, to join in the struggle to overcome the opposition to Socialism. The organized form of this opposition is Fascism, and its clearest shape is to be found in Germany. It is clearest because its leader is an emotional genius, and possesses the capacity to seize instinctively upon the effective symbols which mobilize the emotional resistance to the further development of Christianity. His passionate resentment of the Jew and all that is Jewish in European civilization is the perfect symbol of this opposition. It is the Jewish contribution to Western civilization which he wishes to erase, and the Jewish contribution *par excellence* is Christianity. He opposes it because it is a threat to a racial or national conception of human community. To stand for Christianity is now to take part in the struggle against Fascism. The question of the Churches is a subordinate one. We must recognize gladly that they represent historic milestones in the progress of Christianity. But we cannot afford to be benevolent historians. We are fighting for the future. So far as the Churches or any of them or any parts of them are prepared to join the struggle for the further advance of the Christian movement, we stand with them gladly. So far as they offer resistance to a new advance of the movement which created them we must sadly recognize them as part of the opposition to Christianity which we must attack and overthrow.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF DURHAM

KENNETH MUIR

[We print below the text of an editorial, written by Kenneth Muir, on the significance of the Durham Conference. The other two members of the editorial board appointed at Durham by the new General Committee of the Auxiliary (Miss Hudson and Mr. Hunter) announced their disagreement with the editorial, indicated that they thought discussion of possible changes would be useless, and proposed to print the editorial with a disclaimer. The editor of the *Student Movement*, being unwilling to print an editorial and a disclaimer, used his powers of veto. The editorial, therefore, could not be published in the pages of the Auxiliary magazine.]

The outstanding event for the Auxiliary Movement since the last number of the Magazine has been the Annual Conference at Durham, which raised important issues both in the conference itself and in the annual general meeting:

(1) The worth of each individual personality—belief in which is one of the prime tests of Christianity—was seen to be also the main concern of Democracy. In the world at present the Democratic countries stand for human personality, the Fascist countries deny it. In the latter, the individual is subordinated to the state; they have given up the attempt to integrate men in a community at a high level of consciousness as being too difficult, but they have succeeded in forming a community at a pre-human level, that is to say below the level of human personality and consciousness. That is the primary significance of Fascism: and it springs from fear and a neurotic desire for security. The democratic countries—and the U.S.S.R.—stand for the Christian tradition of freedom and of the worth of the individual, and it is both natural and right for the Christian to support them against the menace of Fascism.

(2) Bertram Lucia in his closing address stressed the importance of education in this conflict. The Fascist countries adopt an education which aims at the suppression of individuality and freedom and so strengthens the hold of Fascism on the generation which is growing up. We must do all we can to ensure that our education will foster the free growth of personality rather than attempt to mould the children into a particular pattern—however admirable.

(3) Fascism arises from the fear of equality (and the material loss to themselves involved by it) felt by the Upper and Middle Classes, and from the desire for security felt by all classes. So long as we have unemployment and poverty side by side with wealth and luxury in our society, we have the necessary conditions for the growth of Fascism, and, more immediately, we are denying to many of our fellow-men the possibility of achieving fine personalities. A mature personality does not live by bread alone; but without sufficient bread, he cannot live at all. It was made quite clear at Durham that Unemployment would never be eliminated under Capitalism.

(4) The World Situation is becoming increasingly serious; and more and more clearly it is being defined as a conflict between Fascism and Democracy. Our duty as Christians is to do all in our power to prevent England from becoming virtually Fascist (by a gradual intensification of National Government) and to prevent England from supporting the Fascist countries, even when they do not appear to be obviously attacking democracy. It became clear at Durham that every Christian must take part in politics, and that on certain issues any attempt to reach a 'Christian compromise' meant in effect the support of Fascism.

(5) The position of the Christian Left in the Auxiliary is now defined. It has freedom to publish its own News Sheet, and to carry on its work of 'conversion' both within and without the Auxiliary—though by so doing it does not commit the Auxiliary to its policy. There was much discussion as to whether this mandate to the Auxiliary Christian Left—permitting them to take part in politics as a group—and the resolutions passed (some particulars of which will be found in the account of the Annual General Meeting) would narrow the fellowship of the Movement. It was claimed that some would leave and others would be deterred from entering by the changes which had been made; on the other hand it was pointed out that the changes were in reality little more than clarifications and protections against Fascism, and that through them and the activities of the Auxiliary Christian Left, the fellowship would be widened rather than narrowed. The question of fellowship is of such importance that we propose to discuss it later.

(6) In the letter which Zoë Fairfield wrote to members of the conference, she stated that there were four issues which should be faced at Durham. Of these, three were not considered adequately. We have not yet defined our attitude to peace, and it is unlikely that we shall ever come to full agreement on it. We did not discuss the function and nature of the Church, and only by implication the nature of our Christian convictions. As members of different Churches we differ, no doubt, on many points; but there is a necessity for us to discuss and clarify those convictions on which we are united. The Annual Conference, though it did not deal with this issue directly, undoubtedly helped in the process of clarification. We are all agreed, at least, on the Christian belief in the unique value of human personality.

CHRISTIANITY AND CURRENT POLITICS

DWIGHT BRADLEY

[Professor Dwight Bradley is a Professor of Theology at Andover Newton Theological School, U.S.A. He was present at the Durham Conference, and we asked him to send us an article about one of the main issues raised by the Conference as he saw it.]

To contend that Christianity should have nothing directly to do with politics, implies a belief that Christianity should have nothing specifically to do with making men perform those acts which must be performed if society is not to break up in chaotic anarchy. This again means that Christianity should keep aloof from all organized attempts to maintain civilization by force if necessary against the elements of disorder and decay. Christianity has never stood, actually, upon any such platform. So what individuals *really* mean when they say that Christianity should have nothing directly to do with politics, is that Christianity should do nothing directly to assist the relevancy of Christian principles to political action when or if Christian principles run obviously counter to the commonly accepted principles of political action in contemporary life. This means that Christianity should always be politically conservative and never radical.

It is quite true, of course, that the method of Christianity is ideally the method of persuasion. But this being so, it is pure intellectual abstraction, coupled perhaps with ethical timidity, to say that when force becomes necessary Christianity must leave the field. What should be said is that Christianity must apply itself patiently and consistently to the task of persuasion, while at the same time giving its complete if regretful sanction and its full support, to the use of force when persuasion is palpably failing.

The issue, accordingly, is not between Christianity and politics, nor between persuasion and coercion, but rather between the principles of Christianity and those that are sub-Christian or anti-Christian.

Granted that Christian principles can never be fully applied except as their application is accompanied by general consent, it is equally true that the partial application of those principles can be accomplished more often than not by measures that are definitely coercive. Coercion is sometimes more persuasive in its effect than exhortation. For this reason, to postpone the partial application of Christian principles until they can be perfectly applied through exhortation, is like putting off the arrest and detention of a criminal until he can be induced by friendly counsel to give himself up and take his punishment with good grace.

At the present time the issue is being sharply drawn between those who would apply Christian principles to economic organization and those who regard Christian principles as economically irrelevant. But the issue is not simply between those of one or the other economic view. It is between those who would apply Christian principles through a certain kind of political action and those who would oppose their application by another kind of political action. That is to say, the economic issue has become inevitably a political issue. It is not only between Socialism and Capitalism as two different theories and systems of economic production and distribution; it is far more a struggle between political democracy as the effective instrument of a socialized society, and Fascism as the political instrument of a decaying capitalistic society. When, therefore, it is said that Christianity should have nothing to do directly with politics, what is meant is that Christianity should not take sides in the struggle between Democracy and Fascism.

Those who take this view are, perhaps unwittingly, the advocates of Christian neutrality in the warfare between Christian and non-Christian principles on this world's stage. For while it may be claimed that, *in theory*, democracy is no more Christian than Fascism, the very setting forth of such a claim betokens a failure to understand the concrete issues of our time. The question is not debatable in practice, however debatable it may seem in theoretical discussion. Nor is it a question as to whether Democracy or Fascism is the more favourable to the Church as it is now organized and led. The question is whether Democracy or Fascism is the more favourable to the practical application of those principles for which

the Church *presumably* stands. If the Church has abandoned those principles, then the Church ought to fall. But whether the Church stands or falls, the principles must be struggled for even though in the struggle the Church goes down. And the principle of political democracy, contended for so long and on so many battle fronts, represents the nearest approach yet made by civilized man to the application of justice and mercy to concrete human affairs.

Neutrality in such a struggle, therefore, is tantamount to rejection of Christianity as a pattern and way of life in civilized communities. It is an evidence of profound scepticism as to the relevancy of Christian principles to social relations, and a sign of complete abstraction from the actualities of existence. If the support of Fascism in any form amounts to a cynical disregard and defiance of Christian principles in action, the failure to fight against Fascism amounts to giving aid and comfort to an enemy.

What, then, is the part which Christianity as a force, and Christians as embodiments of that force, should now be playing? Realistically and simply, to support with every power and means available that political philosophy and those political parties and movements that are definitely committed to the defence and extension of democracy.

This is not a time for abstract discussion. It is a time for direct action. In so far as persuasion can be made effective, Christians should endeavour to persuade. But when persuasion has failed it becomes the duty of Christians to fight and to be found fighting on the *right side*. Failing this, it is inevitable that Christianity as such should cease to have any meaning in our time, and that the principles of Christianity should be struggled for and applied by those to whom the very word 'Christian' has become anathema.

Cambridge, England, August 25th, 1936.

NEWS FROM THE CHRISTIAN LEFT

We report with great pleasure that our comrade, Otto Bauer, of the Austrian Religious Socialists, has been released from prison. Though many other Socialists also were released under the amnesty, there are still many in prison, and fresh arrests have recently been made. We are still collecting and forwarding any sums that come in: the total so far is £12, but more will be needed for support and defence purposes. Please send anything you feel you can afford to Irene Grant, 25 Pyecombe Corner, London, N.12.

The Barnsbury Group, under the leadership of Leonard Schiff, meets every Tuesday evening at 8 o'clock. They intend this autumn to study John Macmurray's *Creative Society*. The Group meets in the Occupational Centre, at 445 Liverpool Road (near Highbury Corner, Caledonian Road Station, and Holloway Road Station).

On September 22nd and 23rd the Socialist Christian League held meetings in Friends' Institute, Commercial Road, to appeal for the British Medical Unit in Spain. The meetings were addressed by a number of speakers, including Dr. Somerville Hastings, Miss Monica Whateley, and Father Groser, and left no doubt as to the desire of the audiences to support the Spanish Government in its fight for democracy.

On November 8th the 'Hunger Marchers' will arrive in London. They will be coming in from all parts of the country. The Auxiliary Christian Left has a special interest in the group marching from Dowlais, where Jeannie McConnell is working with others, making preparations. Members of the Christian Left should make all efforts to help in this protest against the Means Test. It will cost £5 to send each man—families must be supported and other help given to the men. Money can be sent direct to Jeannie McConnell at Trewern House, Dowlais, South Wales. These who can help in receiving contingents en route, or on their arrival in London, should communicate with the Rev. Leonard Schiff, 24 Arundel Square, Barnsbury, N.7.

Correspondence will be welcomed, as will requests for further copies, price 3d. including postage.

Please address letters to : Auxiliary Christian Left News Sheet,
Annandale, North End Road, London, N.W.11.
and mark 'please forward'.

We have to announce as we go to press the resignation from the Auxiliary General Committee of seven members of the Left Group, and of Donald Grant from the staff of the movement. Details will be given in the November issue.

THE DURHAM CONFERENCE: RESULTS

If Fascism in this country, or indeed in Europe, is to be defeated it must be taken seriously. Fascist leaders themselves know, and have stated, that they are engaged in a conflict against an opposing conception of life. They are right, and their strength lies in their recognition of this conflict.

We, as Christians, have tried in the Auxiliary Christian Left to take our stand during the last year upon the same conviction—our conflict with advancing Fascism is not a conflict primarily of social, political or economic forms; it is a conflict between differing conceptions of the nature of human life, mutually exclusive of one another. Where Christianity would extend the frontiers of human community till they include all mankind, Fascism would restrict the area of community, and accept the conflicts between communities which is involved. Where Christianity asserts that the individual is of primary value; that he can be fully an individual only in a society of equals, and that the experience of human community is of the essence of reality, Fascism denies fundamentally the value of the individual and the equality of human beings. Fascism has taken steps which express, in the forms of life, its basic conception. Christianity will reveal itself in so far as it finds, and takes, the next step necessary for the realization of that human brotherhood in which, Christians believe, reality is to be experienced. The achievement of Socialism will provide the conditions in which such a brotherhood can live and function. A group of people in the 'Aux', feeling increasingly that the position of the Movement, as a Christian organization, should be clearly defined on this issue, tried, at the Durham Conference (more fully described in the previous article and in the October issue of the 'Aux' pages in the *Student Movement*) to indicate the lines of such a re-definition. They felt that only so could they continue to regard the Auxiliary as a home in which they could stay and work. Two resolutions expressed this position. They were:

1. This meeting welcomes the development of the Christian Left within the Auxiliary Movement, and assures the Auxiliary Christian Left Group of support in carrying out its work within the Movement and outside.

2. This meeting instructs the General Committee to re-draft the 'Implications', the 'Brief Statement' and the 'Grey Book' in such a way as to place the Movement unmistakably on the side of:

- (a) A democracy which includes the possibility of Socialism, involving the communal ownership of the means of production.

- (b) A peace system organized and upheld by the Democratic and Socialist countries.

The resolutions were not intended to define the full position of the Christian Left group; they were intended as minimum safeguards against a possible Fascist development. The Christian Left, in putting the resolutions, had expressed its own general political position in the following terms: 'The Christian Left stands on the Socialist side, together with the working class, in the oncoming crisis, nationally and internationally.' They added that they recognized differences of opinion among them on the question of the use of force, and accepted personal reservations in this matter.

Long discussions on these resolutions ended in their acceptance by a majority of the Annual General Meeting of the Auxiliary,¹ and the Christian Left hoped that the 'Aux', though set a difficult task and given a special role by these decisions, would prove itself able to meet the demands thus made upon it.

¹ An amendment was proposed to 2a, and accepted, so that 2a now reads: 'democracy, even though it should lead to Socialism, involving . . .'

NEWS SHEET of the AUXILIARY CHRISTIAN LEFT

November 14, 1936. No. 4

Kenneth Ingram

THE NEW AND THE OLD

Fr. E. O. Iredell

CHURCH AND PEOPLE IN SPAIN

'TERRE NOUVELLE'

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NEWS FROM THE CHRISTIAN LEFT

THE NEW AND THE OLD

KENNETH INGRAM

In the last six months a perceptible development has taken place in public opinion. There is a more general sense that the world has entered upon an abnormal period, that the threat of extended war and the widespread unrest in Europe are not the result of mere political intrigue, but must be traced to fundamental causes. Middle opinion has as yet no clear conception as to these causes. Most average Englishmen still believe that the unsettlement is a symptom of continental madness and that the people of this island are too sane to be dragged either in a Right or Left direction. But they are less complacent than they were a year ago.

In the religious world there is probably a more vivid consciousness of approaching crisis. Meetings of the clergy of all denominations to discuss the international situation are becoming an increasingly frequent feature of the ecclesiastical programme. But here there is considerable disunity. Some Christians admit that, though they do not regard the extreme Right as wholly reputable, they believe Fascism to be the ultimate bulwark against an atheistical attack on religion. Some feel that pacifism is the governing issue. The more favourite conclusion is that both Right and Left are preaching false doctrine and that Christianity offers a third alternative of a more benevolent and democratic character.

To the mind of the political Left there is no doubt as to the true diagnosis of the present troubles. The cause is economic. Capitalist civilization has by an inevitable process reached the stage of acute nationalist competition, the outcome of which must be war or universal collapse. Few of us will disagree with the soundness of this verdict, so far as it goes. Capital accumulated from profit must continually seek an outlet for investment and new sources of profit. The new sources of profit must in the main consist of undeveloped territory which can be industrialized with quick returns. This involves imperialist expansion. And yet, though there can be no halt in the capitalist race, the area of the world is not unlimited. It follows that, even if the temper of industrialized countries were sympathetic to international trade agreements, such a policy would delay, but could not avoid, the eventual crash. Political and economic co-operation between the Powers can only be of an opportunist nature, so long as the economic structure of our civilization is competitive.

But to admit the economic nature of the problem only raises a further question. Why should a competitive, profit-making, private-ownership system be imperfect? Why should it set in motion a process which leads to war? The answer at once carries us into the religious field. If a system produces evil results the presumption is that the principles on which it rests are tainted with evil. Any Christian indictment of capitalism arises from the realization that capitalism is built on a design which repudiates Christ's conception of society. A system which places a large part of the community in dependence on an owning class, which functions through competitive warfare and which divides the human race into a number of rival national sovereignties is pagan, not Christian. From the religious perspective the world crisis therefore takes on a deeper significance. The capitalist order is failing because it does not accord with the divine will. The new forces which are struggling to create a classless, international society are seen to be the medium which God is using to lay the foundations of a civilization formed on the Christian model.

That the Bethlehem of this nativity is professedly an anti-religious environment should not surprise us. If the architecture of the existing civilization is essentially pagan, Christianity has failed in its task by making terms with it. When the Chosen People are blind it is the Gentiles to whom the opportunity passes. Yet, even now, it is not too late. As the new forces gather strength the old civilization must summon all its resources to resist the challenge, and in this Fascist phase its pagan nature becomes far more emphasized. There is still a short time left for the Christian conscience to awaken.

A conflict between a pagan civilization and the new forces which are seeking to construct an order on the Christian design is a religious conflict. It is a struggle which extends into the intellectual and cultural spheres. Those who identify Christianity with the traditions and the moral conceptions of the old orthodoxies, and who do not believe that religion can or ought to take new forms, will see in the philosophy of the Left a revolt against all that they hold sacred. At root this is the explanation of the drift of the younger generation from organized Christianity. The Church is thinking in a mental language which belongs to the old culture and which is foreign to the modern man and woman. Her future depends on her ability to adapt herself to the mentality of a new civilization.

Yet that is not enough. Christianity is not in the position of a neutral onlooker preparing to accommodate itself to a socialist order, in case that new order should happen to be triumphant. If the new order is no less than the manifestation of the divine force, if the capitalist system is essentially un-Christian, the conflict is between Christ and paganism. The task of the Christian Left becomes accordingly that of revealing the significance of the crisis and of acting in the light of that knowledge. To the Christian we must bring home the duty of working for the cause of Christ: insist that this means coming into the political field, since the conflict is itself religious: and recognize that many Christians will, because of a genuine faith, range themselves on the Fascist side in defence of the old order, even as the orthodox Jews crucified Christ for the best of motives. To the political secularist of the Left we must point out the fuller meaning of the cause which he is promoting, and we must help to arouse the consciousness of the working classes who are destined to be the vanguard of the new forces. In my own view, the comparative failure of the Left to convince the general public is a failure which can only be rectified through the religious medium. It is religion which must resolve the suspicions of the middle classes and turn the lukewarmness of the working classes to inspiration.

THE CHURCH AND THE PEOPLE IN SPAIN

FATHER IREDELL

There can be little doubt but that the prominence given in the Press to atrocity stories mainly centred round nuns and priests in Spain (all of which, it would appear, are being carried out under the approval of the Government) has intensified the general opinion in England that the fairest course to pursue is that of neutrality. In other words, the political implications of the religious issue in Spain have been used to the fullest possible extent on behalf of the Fascist cause.

It was in order that I might get a better perspective of the situation that I determined to go to Spain and see for myself what are the actual facts. As shortly as possible I will try to put my conclusions before you. My space is limited, so I shall not attempt to deal with the astonishing contrast that exists between life in Spain to-day and life in any other European country, with the exception of the U.S.S.R. Frank Pitcairn's little book, *Reporter in Spain*, gives an admirable portrait of existing conditions there now, and should be read by all who really wish to know the facts.

When I reached Barcelona I had my first insight into the Government's attitude to one side of the religious issue. It was the festival of the Jewish New Year, and for the first time all Jews had been granted two days' holiday, so that they might observe the feast and keep the usual religious ceremonies connected with it. So apparently in Catalonia the Jewish religion was not being persecuted. As a set-off against this attitude, when the rebellion broke out, in a small town near Gibraltar the Communist Party placed an armed guard over the church so that the congregation might hear mass on that Sunday morning without fear of interruption. That same afternoon Franco's Moors entered the village, burned four Masonic lodges, and put all Jews and Masons to the sword.

In Madrid I found that the Communist Party had actually proposed opening some of the

churches so that those who desired to do so might have liberty of worship and access to the sacraments. This course was opposed by the loyal Catholic clergy, on the ground that such a step would provide the Fascists with further facilities for seditious propaganda and intrigue. The churches would become once more what they had been in the past—nests of rebellion.

There is one church in Madrid, a Protestant church belonging to the Reformed Church of Spain (a body in communion with the Church of England), which has never been closed; but is open regularly for weekly worship. All its members are loyally supporting the Government; only four churches have been destroyed in Madrid. All the others, including convent and monastic chapels, have been closed and are protected by armed guards to preserve them and their treasures from mob violence. I have photographs showing the interiors of some of these untouched churches.

Also it is well known that the Basque clergy and people are fighting on the side of the 'Popular Front', and their churches are open and religion protected. The Bishop of Vittoria is in a Fascist prison (one report says he has been shot) for advising his people to vote for the 'Popular Front' in the last election.

So one could go on—piling up the evidence in support of the Liberal attitude of the Government to religion, and instancing the terror exercised by the Fascists. It is treachery, sedition, pillage and disloyalty that are punished by the Government, whether committed by Christian, atheist or Jew; never the particular religious belief, whatever it may be. There is no possible doubt about this.

There are just two points to emphasize in conclusion:

(1) If these atrocity stories are true, then it reveals just one thing and one thing only—that after 1900 years of Catholicism the Spanish Church has earned the universal detestation of the people to whom she should have ministered, and has in their eyes identified herself with the capitalists, the landlords and the military bullies, the aristocracy of Spain, who have 'ground the faces of the poor'. So that when they rise in righteous indignation against an unprovoked assault by their oppressors, the Church is the most obvious and universal target. I do not deny that the people do shoot and have shot their clergy, but that is only because those clergy have earned the reputation of being on the side of the rebels, and have in many cases actually fired on the workers from their churches.

(2) The Roman Church as a whole has openly embraced the cause of rebellion against the elected Government of the people and has joined hands with International Fascism in an attempt to gain by force, horror, terrorism and bloodshed what had been lost by the ballot box. We know now quite definitely that the Roman Church is on the side of the enemies of the workers, and that she will not hesitate to use any means to maintain the present social and economic system in which she is so deeply involved.

THE MANIFESTO OF 'NEW EARTH'

[We print below the manifesto of a French Christian Left Group. They describe themselves as Christian Communists.

Their Magazine, 'Terre Nouvelle', has a monthly circulation of 15,000 copies.]

I. BECAUSE WE ARE CHRISTIANS

we line ourselves up against the capitalist order, enemy of the common good

—Against the order which allows the enslavement and exploitation of the workers by a privileged minority, against the order of class war, we set our will to construct a brotherly and classless society, in which 'the free development of each will be the condition for the free development of all';

—Against the order of the selfish and competitive drive for profit, we set our will to build a world in which the individual and collective activities shall have for spiritual support and motive the idea of social service; the necessity of satisfying their personal needs constituting the 'interested motive' of the least developed of men;

—Against the order of unemployment and criminal profit, of unsold stock, insulting the wretchedness of the workless, we set our will to substitute a truly human economic order;
 —Against the order of freedom 'to produce anything anyhow', i.e., to throw economic life into disorder at the expense of the common good, against the order of bloody individualist competition, we set our will to organize production and work for the needs of all;
 —Against the order which divorces work from ownership, through concentrating economic and financial power in the hands of a few we set our will to reunite work and ownership in the same hands, by securing the collective appropriation of the means of production and exchange and entrusting their management to the workers organized in their trades unions and co-operatives;
 —Against the order of domination by economic and money power, we set our will to seize from the hands of these inhuman forces the direction of public affairs in order to place it in those of the politically organized workers;
 —Against the order which glorifies wealth and despises the worker who has created it, we set our will to build up a social order that recognizes 'the supreme worth of the human personality' and to give all work that they may be allowed to realize their spiritual destiny;
 —Against an order which makes the machine and scientific progress the rival and foe of the workers, we set our will to free the machine and science from the stranglehold of capitalism, thus making progress subject to man in order to lessen his toil and to increase his leisure;
 —Against the materialist order in which economic forces lord it over human personality, we set our will to tame and bring under control the relation of production and exchange that, by disciplining them, man may be enabled to escape the heavy yoke of economic determinism and pass from the reign of necessity to that of freedom.

II. BECAUSE WE ARE CHRISTIANS

we fight capitalism, the fomenter of war

—Against the system of the war to end war, which delivers stock to the army and the unemployed to barbed-wire, we set our will to be no more dupes; no longer to let patriotism be confounded with the interests of merchants and captains of industry;
 —Against the system of war which creates wealth, we set our will to health, a will pitiless towards the 'merchants of cannon' and others who speculate in charnel houses;
 —Against the system of imperialism and colonial exploitation, we set our will for peace and international brotherhood, for co-operation and human freedom.

III. BECAUSE WE ARE CHRISTIANS

We want to free the Churches from the grip of money

In the spiritual order the capitalist system is the most dangerous enemy of the Churches. While it paganizes society, it strives by being outwardly altogether respectful and generous to gain their good graces and to use them for its own end, for power and social exploitation. Only too often the Churches yield to its insistence and thereby make themselves unintentional allies of those who claim in their very principles that religion is the opium of the people. Furthermore, under the influence of the present social order, and in their desire to reconcile the precepts of Christ with its pagan demands, the official theologians unconsciously and insensibly have now placed themselves in a position of moral compromise which can only cause scandal to consciences awakened and just.

At the present hour, as none can deny, the Churches have constituted themselves agents for preserving capitalist society; do we not see, for instance, only too many of their representatives united in word and deed with these wideawake advocates of capitalism who commend a corporative organization and the destruction of working-class rights, in order to prolong the life of an order condemned alike by morality and the economic facts themselves? There is here a sign of a serious spiritual bankruptcy and a culpable abdication from the necessary independence of the Churches.

We want to put an end to this painful situation by freeing the Churches from the grip of money-power and its materialist rule. But we believe that this grip will only be released when the capitalist rule itself comes to an end. This is one more reason, and not the least important, why we should be revolutionary.

IV. BECAUSE WE ARE CHRISTIANS

we want to fight for peace and brotherhood in justice

To-day, two 'blocks' confront one another, embodying two expressions of a mutually antagonistic temper: on the one side, the *bourgeois* capitalist oligarchy with its hired troops and dupes; on the other the working classes, both artisans and peasants, to which must be united the great mass of the middle classes as well as those beyond class interests, who aspire to justice and peace.

One must needs take sides in a vast conflict in which the spiritual and social future of a world is at stake; one must needs be either on the side of sacred selfishness in the name of property or on that of brotherhood, of the defenders of capitalism or the builders of socialism.

We for our part refuse to sit on the fence, we intend to take up our position on the side of those who wish to destroy this iniquitous system in order to substitute for it a system of order and justice and by doing so to accomplish, whether consciously or not, the divine will.

It is for this reason that we shall struggle with revolutionary workers to the day of their victory, for it will be not only the victory of an oppressed class but also of the Holy Spirit.

ON THE MARCH

One of the protest marchers from Dowlais, South Wales, member of a group with which we are associated, wrote, while on the march, a series of letters. We publish a few short extracts 'Good reception at Newport. . . Greeted with "Good old Merthyr!" or the silent but determined salute of the clenched fist. Many a woman was wiping her eyes. Nothing to be heard but the sound of tramping feet: most impressive.

'That night 350 of us slept in one hall; just imagine it. We were shapes that would puzzle any modern artist.

'Monday, with the weather against us, we started for Bristol. We did the fourteen miles in record time. Some are now footsore, but everyone determined to reach London. . . .

'We've reached Swindon — everyone feeling O.K., and optimistic of reaching our goal. Thousands turned out in Bath to see us march in. We gave the conservative-minded Bath people something to think about. At Bath interference from the Blackshirts was expected, but not one showed up. . . .

'Dusk was upon us when we entered Swindon, banners flying. "International" and "Red Flag" sung with gusto. What an impressive sight! . . . This is a real united march . . . Red Front! The March goes on!

THE AUXILIARY MOVEMENT: POST-DURHAM

We published in the October issue of the NEWS SHEET a notice of the resignation from the General Committee of the Auxiliary Movement of seven Christian Left members. Donald Grant resigned, at the same time, from his position as Travelling Secretary of the Movement. Members of the Auxiliary can see the letters of resignation in the November issue of the Auxiliary pages of the *Student Movement*. In addition, a fuller statement in letter form has gone out to each Auxiliary member. It is therefore unnecessary to go into these details again here. For those readers who are not members of the Auxiliary, however, we should explain that an announcement was made, early in September, that all members of the staff, except Donald Grant, would resign — as a result of the Durham resolutions — when General Committee met in October. It was further announced at the same time that a letter, with which these members of the staff were associated, had been sent out to certain Auxiliary

members. This letter, repudiating the Durham resolutions, initiated a new Movement, and asked for signatures and subscriptions. The resignation of the Christian Left members from the Committee was intended as an effort to prevent a split under threat. If the support of the membership at large, even though expressed through a constitutional general meeting, was not yet sufficiently clear, then further clarification must take place. The resigning members remain members of the Auxiliary Movement, with the same convictions as before. The whole matter must now be referred back to the membership. (Please see Numbers 1, 2, and 3 of this NEWS SHEET.)

NEWS FROM THE CHRISTIAN LEFT

The great march on London by unemployed men and women protesting against the iniquities of the Means Test ended, as far as the actual march was concerned, in Hyde Park on Sunday, November 8th. The enormous crowd was variously estimated. It was probably something like 100,000.

The women marchers coming in from the north were met on Saturday by Father Iredell, of St. Clement's, Barnsbury, with other members of the Christian Left. After the official welcome in Islington they were entertained and housed by the St. Clement's congregation.

On Sunday the Christian Left representatives joined the march in two contingents—one group marching with the North London section, and one with the comrades from East London. After the demonstration, many Christian Left members joined a service led by Father Iredell and Father Schiff at St. Clement's, Barnsbury, at which prayers were offered for the marchers, and Father Schiff explained how the Means Test is degrading human life in the stricken areas of this country.

A fortnight before, a similar service had been held to pray for the workers of Spain in their struggle against the rebels, against reaction and Fascism.

Father Iredell has now arranged to hold such a service, devoted to some urgent contemporary question, on the first Sunday in every month, at 8.15 p.m. (Caledonian Road Tube Station, Holloway Road Tube Station, or Highbury Corner by tram.)

On October 17th some members of the Auxiliary Left, along with representatives of other Christian Left groups, met to discuss what further steps should now be taken towards unity of Christian Left groups in action, and to further the task of formulating and teaching the Christian answer to Fascism.

At that meeting a list was drawn up of Christian Left groups with which we had contact. A letter, signed by Donald Grant, Mary Gillett, and David Cass-Beggs, was sent out to each of these suggesting that the time had come for more co-operation between those Christians whose religious convictions lead them to active sympathy with the Socialist Movement. Groups were asked to send a representative to a Committee which met on November 7th. Fourteen people were present, representing the Socialist Christian League, the Auxiliary Christian Left, Friends for Action, the Barnsbury Group, and others. Jeannie McConnell represented the Dowlais group of unemployed men with whom we are in touch, and Kenneth Ingram represented the Christianity and Social Revolution group. Professor John Macmurray was also present. The Committee issued the following memorandum:

November 9th, 1935

25 Pyecombe Corner,
London, N.12.

Dear Friend,

At a meeting of representatives of Left Wing Groups on Saturday last, at 43 Denning Road, the following recommendations were made:

(1) That there is an urgent need felt by those Christians and groups of Christians whose religious convictions compel them into active co-operation with the Socialist Movement, to provide a centre in London through which their convictions and efforts can be linked together and made more definite and effective than they are at present.

(2) That the primary functions of such a centre should be:—

(a) To provide for liaison between groups and individuals who are engaged in this common task, in this country and internationally.

(b) To take charge of the publication of a magazine and such other publications as may be found necessary, both to provide a means of intercommunication in regard to group activities and as a means of propaganda: also for the formulation of common policy.

(c) To provide for the training of speakers and others in the principles of the Christian Left and in their presentation.

(d) To further common investigation of the following subjects in particular:—

- i. Christian criticism of the existing Social Structure.
- ii. Religious criticism of contemporary religion.
- iii. The inherent contradiction between Christianity and Fascism.
- iv. The relationship of Christianity to Communism.

(e) To facilitate arrangements for common action.

(3) That the first step to this end should be to purchase or lease a house in London which will provide for:—

- i. A general office where correspondence can be conducted and editorial work carried on.
- ii. A resident secretary.
- iii. Some residential accommodation.
- iv. A room in which meetings can be held.

A sub-committee is elaborating and researching on these proposals, and further developments will shortly be notified. In the meanwhile will you please consider and discuss within your groups, sending to me your immediate reactions, and preparing yourselves to send later your considered and responsible opinion as to what support you can give, and what you would be ready to undertake.

Yours fraternally,

IRENE GRANT.

Correspondent to Sub-committee.

All those who consider themselves to be members of the Auxiliary Christian Left are asked to meet in London on December 5th, at 2.30 p.m., at the Youth House, 250 Camden Road, London (Camden Town Tube Station, and any bus along Camden Road), to discuss this memorandum and other matters. Please reply to Irene Grant, 25 Pyecombe Corner, stating (1) whether you are coming; (2) whether you need hospitality for the night; (3) whether, if you cannot be present, there are any points you particularly want to raise.

Those who plan to visit the Christmas Sale at 'Annandale' could do so easily from Camden Town.

Inquiries about the NEWS SHEET should be addressed to Mrs. Muir, Nunthorpe Hall, Philadelphia Terrace, York. Copies cost 3d. post free to those who can afford it, and free to those who cannot.

NEWS SHEET of the AUXILIARY CHRISTIAN LEFT

January 4, 1937. No. 5

Kenneth Muir

DIVES AND LAZARUS GO TO SCHOOL

John Lewis

THE CHURCHES
AND THE
UNITED FRONT

HELP SPAIN!

NEWS FROM THE CHRISTIAN LEFT

DIVES AND LAZARUS GO TO SCHOOL

KENNETH MUIR

It is unreal to consider educational policy apart from the political situation, for until the advent of a real Socialist Government, only minor reforms can be achieved.

Our fundamental aim should be a classless education. For many reasons:

(1) You cannot have a genuine Christian education based on class distinction. A real Christian society, a real democratic society, must give equality of opportunity to all its members, and especially to all its children. Improvement in Scripture teaching, which may reasonably be achieved by the Institute of Christian Education, though necessary and desirable, is unlikely to lead to a Christian Society so long as it is merely an improvement within the present system, based on class and privilege.

(2) Class education prevents the establishment of a classless society. Now it is arguable that the public schools do not give a better education than the ordinary secondary schools; and it is probable that a boy is better educated in an elementary than in the average preparatory school: but it is easily demonstrable that the vast majority of successful politicians come from five or six of the leading public schools—especially from Eton and Harrow; while in all the professions, it is usually the public school product who gets the plums. No less than seventy-five per cent of Bishops, Deans, Judges, Magistrates, Civil Servants with over £1000 a year, Governors of Dominions, and Directors of Railways and Banks—as far as statistics are available—were educated at public schools. This is partly due to the financial backing which gives them a good start; partly to the influence of relatives; partly to the self-confidence they acquire by their training; but most of all perhaps to the market-value of the public school voice, manner and tie. What is given by the public schools is not primarily a better education, but the accent, the manners, and the prejudices of a class, which in turn beget self-confidence, enabling the possessor to secure a better job than his abilities would warrant.

(3) An education which gives privilege to wealth or birth not only perpetuates the divisions of class, it also lends a snobbery-value to culture. The 'successful' Socialist, determining that his children shall have what he himself missed, sends them to a school which gives them not only the culture, but also the prejudices of the ruling-classes. Our culture is almost exclusively the culture of the upper classes. The have-nots covet it; and if they obtain it, since culture and outlook are closely related, they often absorb unconsciously the prejudices of the ruling class. The pitiful spectacle of labour leaders turning conservative is a direct result of class education. Another result is that culture, coming to have a primarily extrinsic value, becomes corrupted.

(4) Public school education has many features which, if not Fascist in themselves, are certainly conducive to its rise. The kind of idealism which devotes itself to house, school or team and which worships king or flag, is one which can easily be perverted by any demagogue who utters the right incantations to follow a cause which is Fascism in disguise. More dangerous is the stress on character rather than on intellect, and the assumption of many teachers that they have a right and a duty to form character and inculcate their own ideas. The moulding of character is a Fascist ideal. The ideal of an anti-Fascist education—of a Christian education—is rather to allow each personality to grow according to the laws of its own nature. Most dangerous of all is the discipline employed in many English schools (regimentation of classes, lack of freedom, prefectorial system) which cannot train pupils to be good citizens of a democracy. They are trained to command and to obey; they are conditioned to believe in the existing class society; and only a few manage to free themselves. The public school product, though he professes to abhor Fascism as un-English, and though he would deplore its brutality, could find nothing to dislike in the kind of Fascism represented by Mr. Duff Cooper: for it is merely the continuation of the system of government to which he was accustomed as a boy.

It is unnecessary to abolish the public schools. But they must be radically reformed.

From a consideration of such a school as Christ's Hospital, to which there is much less objection, the main remedy is obvious. Christ's Hospital has a large proportion of pupils from the ordinary elementary school. If a strong Socialist Government passed a law making it illegal to run a school for profit, the private and preparatory schools would be eliminated, children of the upper and middle classes would be compelled to attend the ordinary elementary school, and the public schools, forced to recruit their numbers from the same source as the secondary schools, would lose their most objectionable features. This would lead to vast improvements in the elementary school: classes would be reduced in size and buildings would be improved. The agitation for a three-year (instead of a two-year) course in training colleges would meet with little opposition.

This is not likely to happen within the next ten years. The Christian Left can meanwhile support the gradual raising of the school-leaving age; it can support the reduction of the size of classes; it can press for a three-year course in training-colleges; it can agitate for increased scholarship facilities at the university and secondary school; and it can help to educate people in the need—both Christian and democratic—for a classless education.

THE CHURCHES AND THE UNITED FRONT

JOHN LEWIS

The Churches have been very hesitant to identify themselves with the political Labour Movement or, indeed, with Socialism in any form. They have felt that in doing so they might seriously compromise themselves and drive away many members who were either not interested in politics at all, or whose politics were moderate or even Conservative. Furthermore, the Churches have regarded with considerable uneasiness certain characteristics of the Socialist Movement, which they did not at all like and which they imagined would seriously compromise the Church if it were to identify itself at all closely with the more extreme varieties of Socialism. For instance, Labour people have been regarded as being mainly workers, whereas the Church does not wish itself to be regarded as plebeian; its attitude to the poor being rather that of patron. Secondly, the Socialist Movement is equalitarian and republican, and this seems to undermine the whole principle of hierarchical government and authority. Thirdly, the Socialist Movement seems to have designs on private property and, worse still, it sometimes appears that it is not prepared to stick at violence in its endeavour to raid the hen roosts. Finally, Socialism has been suspect in the eyes of many Christians because it seems deliberately to stir up strife between classes.

There is no doubt whatever that Socialism, if it is real Socialism, does imply something very like all these unfortunate things, and that a Christian cannot hope to evade responsibility for this kind of attitude. Of course, as we shall see later, this is by no means the whole story: nevertheless, it is indubitably part of the story and there is no sense in pretending that it is not. Furthermore, the Church will get itself into trouble if it gets mixed up with a movement of this sort. It will get itself into very serious trouble. It will lose a lot of support. It will become extremely unpopular. It will be bitterly attacked. Its bishops will be hooted in the street and regarded as no better than the leaders of unemployed marchers and such riff-raff. In fact if *per impossibile* the Church were to go Red, it would become almost as unpopular as Jesus Christ and His apostles.

But is it so certain that the other road is more safe? Fleeing from contamination by the Reds, the Church may deliver itself into the clutches of a still more dangerous enemy. It may be actually safer to go without the camp and endure the shame than to play for 'safety first'. If it becomes increasingly apparent that to keep on the right side of the powers that be will require the whittling down of Christianity to smaller and smaller dimensions; it will mean a retreat into more and more foggy mysticism and other worldliness; it will mean still greater casuistical contortions and theological hair splitting. The sacrifices which Mammon demands of the Church are indeed enormous and, moreover, are we ever sure that we can satisfy its ultimate demands and continue to exist at all?

After the Church has taken the edge off the Sermon on the Mount and turned its back upon poverty and suffering; after it has surrendered wholly to pride of place and power; after it has made a vague spirituality the substitute for the reality of the sacredness of human life, will it be left even the bare name of Christ? I think not. When the Reaction has bought its body and soul for its own ends and paid for it with a contemptuous tolerance, its final reward will be a still more contemptuous dismissal and extermination.

Its conscience and vision lulled by years of spiritual dishonesty and cowardly acquiescence, the Church fails to realize the depths into which the Reaction is daily sinking deeper. It pretends not to notice the brutal adulation of war, the gross material pride, the brutal savagery of the Fascist gangs, the swollen fortunes of the rich derived from the increasing poverty of the workers, the cynical disregard for treaty rights, and the wanton aggression which overruns backward and defenceless territories. Of all these horrors the Church is quite oblivious. It does not sense the sharp contrast between this and everything for which Jesus of Nazareth stood. There is, of course, a very cogent reason for all this. These evils have to be overlooked, if not excused, because the Reaction has one redeeming feature which outweighs all its crimes and deficiencies: it is anti-Communist and its anti-Communism is of far greater importance to Christianity than its anti-Christianism. The Church has resolved that the arch-foe of civilization and Christianity, by which they mean the existing Capitalist system with its privileged classes and the sanctity with which that privilege was invested, is Communism. Therefore any ally, however lacking in Christian character, however false to Christian principles, must be tolerated, since by this strange alliance alone can the essentials of Christianity be preserved. In other words, forced to choose between Communism and Fascism, the Church believes that Fascism is the lesser evil.

Why is this? We have already mentioned some of the reasons for the Church's suspicion. There are other and more fundamental reasons. The fundamental aim of Socialism seems materialistic to some people, mainly, one is forced to admit, to those whose material circumstances are already moderately secure and comfortable and who can, therefore, afford to be spiritually minded. Secondly, as we suggested above, because it preaches the class war and attacks private property. Let us look a little more closely into these alleged reasons for condemning Communism as anti-Christian.

(1) The materialistic aim of Socialism is a minimum standard of subsistence for every man, woman and child, and a serious attempt to utilize all the forces of modern science in bringing health to the diseased. Is Christianity materialistic when the first thing it does on the Mission Field is to erect hospitals? Is it materialistic when the Society of Friends organizes famine relief in Central Europe? Is it materialistic when Jesus Christ says that it is blessed to offer a little child a cup of cold water in His name; or says to His disciples, pointing to the hungry multitudes, 'Give ye them to eat'? Neither Christ, nor the missionaries, nor the Socialists believe that man should live by bread alone, but they all know perfectly well that he cannot live at all without bread, and that an adequately nourished life is the minimum basis upon which the things of the mind and spirit can be cared for. They know that it is an insufficiency of bread and health which causes the preoccupation with material things and that it is a sufficiency that removes this preoccupation and alone makes it possible for the mind to rise above the material. Neither is the struggle to provide a minimum of subsistence entirely unspiritual from the standpoint of what it seeks to persuade men to yield. It asks them to give up the monopoly of excessive riches in order that everyone may have enough; it calls men to unite as brothers to succour the hungry; it seeks to rebuild society on the principle of the family in which the aged and the young and the ailing are nourished from the common store. Is this endeavour wholly unspiritual?

And now what about this question of class war? That there is a class war few would deny, but Socialism does not approve it. On the contrary, it so urgently desires that it shall cease that it is prepared to make the sacrifices and to engage in the struggle which alone can bring it to an end. For the class war is not the war of the poor against the rich,

it is the war that has been waged for centuries by the rich on the poor, although the poor have only too seldom had the courage and the sense to defend themselves.

So long as the worker is only employed in order to make profits for the private owner, there must be an antagonism of interests between wage earner and profit taker. In times of economic crisis, when profits vanish altogether unless wages are cut to the bone, the attack on the working classes becomes more fierce than ever. This is the class war. There is only one way to end it. If all the owners are workers and all the workers are owners, there can be no clash of interests and peace becomes for the first time possible. The aim of Socialism is to bring about such economic conditions as will make that class war cease and never break out again.

The third objection to Communism was its opposition to private property. But ever since the Communist Manifesto it has been made clear again and again that Communism only supplants such private ownership of the means of production as makes inevitable the exploitation of man by man. When private individuals have a monopoly of all the apparatus of production and will only suffer its employment on the terms which they dictate, they are in a position to hold up a whole community both as employees and consumers. Furthermore, if under these circumstances it should not be profitable to produce, then production will cease no matter how much the product is needed. For such private ownership Communism substitutes co-operative ownership in order that the maximum production of utilities may be secured and their maximum distribution in the form of consumable private property. Thus, private capital means a minimum of private property to be enjoyed by the masses. Social capital means a maximum of private property. What is there un-Christian in this?

It is clear that there is nothing in the Communist programme but what is the clear expression of Christian idealism. There is only one thing the matter with it—it has had the temerity to attempt to put Christianity into practice. What is the matter with Communism is not that it is unchristian, but that it is much too Christian for a pagan world. To bring Christianity out of the skies and on to earth is the most insufferable of all Bolshevik atrocities.

But is not Communism bitterly opposed to Christian Theology and Philosophy? It is true that the philosophical basis of Marxism is anti-theistic, but it is freely open to any Communist to base that system on a Christian philosophy, if he chooses so to do, and it is open to him, holding that Christian philosophy, to join the Communist party. It has always been held by the Church that even a non-Christian state has a divine authority of its own, and that the law and order it stands for is sacred in the secular sphere. For this reason the Church was prepared to uphold the authority of the Roman Empire and, later, the secular authority of medieval Christendom. In the same way in so far as the Communist state maintains a just social order, it is by all the canons of the Church divinely sanctioned.

On the other hand, not only is the Reaction contemptuous of all Christian values and the real origin of all civil strife, but it finds itself driven by economic necessity and the mass indignation of the people into measures of ever more wanton illegality and violence. The greater the pressure of Democracy in the direction of constitutional and peaceful advance, the more necessary is it to Capitalism to destroy every vestige of self-government, and even to overrun those countries where Democracy is victorious and eradicate it lest its success there spread back into the Reactionary countries themselves. Under these conditions it is becoming increasingly impossible for anyone sincerely devoted to the cause and name of Christ to hold silence. Acquiescence in the blatant denial of everything Christian gives consent and such consent is manifest apostasy. The Reaction, therefore, must be opposed by Christians everywhere, or everything that Christianity has ever stood for will be swept away. What this really means is that even Christian philanthropists and supporters of mission hospitals and the spread of Christian education, even those whose sole aim is, by spreading a Christian atmosphere, peacefully to encourage methods of gradual social reform will find their humanitarian intentions checked and their benevolent

efforts thwarted. To preserve even the mildest form of Christian charity and the most peaceful forms of progress is impossible under the aegis of Fascism.

Nor will the same contemptuous tolerance of a Christian theology and mysticism which keeps itself entirely aloof from life and morals persist for very long. Toleration of Christianity by Fascism will only last as long as the tacit Christian endorsement of Reaction is useful, only so long as the Church can hold back idealists from becoming Communists. When Fascism can do without the Church as a suborned ally, it will break it and throw it contemptuously aside lest its idealism and mysticism weaken the Fascist spirit.

It is, therefore, not only Socialism and social reform that is in danger to-day, but Christianity itself and the whole ecclesiastical organization, even that ecclesiasticism which keeps itself separated from the world and has been careful to identify itself with the powers that be. If any part of what is generally known to be Christianity is to be preserved, it will only be in so far as it has united itself with those movements which are standing heroically for the sacredness of humanity rather than the sacredness of private property, and which are striving to destroy privilege and exploitation as the only way in which social unity can be attained. The Church must form a United Front with the Progressives and Democrats, the Socialists and Communists, who are at any rate agreed on the necessity of two fundamental Christian things: self-government and the sacredness of humanity. By so committing itself, the Church can lose nothing unless the Reaction ultimately triumphs. They can gain much. Not only can they add much needed reinforcement to the cause of justice and humanity, but they can regain their lost honour; they can regain the lost love and loyalty of the masses of the people and, when the new social order has been created, they will have the approval and the friendship of that new society. If, on the contrary, the Church survives at all in the triumph of Fascism, it will only be to go down at last when that Fascism is in its turn defeated and destroyed.

Why should we, as Christians, hesitate? Is it because among such allies the name of Christ is seldom used? That is a strange reason to come from those who follow One who paid small regard to those who called him Lord, Lord and yet did not the things that He said, but found greater faith outside Israel than within it, and whose constant message was that faith is not verbal acknowledgment of the existence of the Deity or of His own divinity, but the recognition of the sacred in all the demands of mercy and love.

APPEAL OF THE SPANISH TRADE UNIONS

TO TRADE UNIONISTS, SOCIALISTS AND ANTI-FASCIST INTELLECTUALS
THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

Since the rebellion of July, Spain has been invaded by international Fascists, who have carried out one of the most appalling crimes recorded in history. More than two hundred thousand persons have been tortured and shot. Women, children and old people have been slaughtered. Italian and German aeroplanes have bombed schools, murdering hundreds of children—a crime which has horrified the world. The bombing of Madrid is one more proof of the cowardice and impotence of Fascism, which cannot conquer the Spanish people on their own soil. The workers of anti-fascist Spain have written the most heroic pages in the history of mankind, fighting with such resources as they had against German, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish Fascism. There was no safety anywhere for the civil population; even the hospitals became targets for the criminal enemy airmen.

The U.G.T. (General Union of Spanish Workers) denounces this brutality before the whole world. It calls upon all the workers of the world, organized in the Labour and Socialist International, the Communist International, the International Federation of Trade Unions, the Red International of Labour Unions, the American Federation of Labour, etc., as well as on all unorganized and non-party workers and peasants, to bring pressure on their

governments to allow the Spanish people to defend themselves from the Fascists who are murdering them.

The whole world must rise in protest against the monstrous crimes which Fascism is committing against the working people of our country.

Workers of the whole world, anti-fascist intellectuals: if you wish to save civilization, which the Fascists are striving to overwhelm with blood, COME TO OUR AID! End the non-intervention agreement! Take action in defence of liberty and democracy throughout the world!

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, U.G.T.

(General Union of Spanish Workers).

HELP SPAIN!

Madrid still holds out. In spite of the continued support of the Fascist powers, Franco is further from his objective than he was six weeks ago. The fate of Europe is now being decided. Those who are fighting for the Spanish Government in the International Brigade realize that if Fascism is defeated in Spain, it may be checked in the rest of Europe.

A large ambulance unit has been equipped and sent to the British section of the International Brigade by the *Daily Worker*. A member of our own group, Dr. Douglas Jolly, has joined this unit as its surgeon. On leaving, he sent the following message to the Auxiliary Christian Left:

'I believe deeply that the conflict between Fascism and Democracy in Spain may decide the fate of Europe and of the world for many years to come. It is no longer a Spanish "domestic" war; in this conflict are ranged the forces contending for the shaping of the future of mankind. It is a war of religions, between two conceptions of the nature of man. And so, because I am a Christian, and because I believe that true Christianity must be on the side of those who struggle to extend the brotherhood of man, I must do something about it, when and where the need is.'

This message was read to a meeting of the Auxiliary Christian Left on December 5th, and the meeting agreed to 'support the work of the Ambulance in every way open to the Group'. Over seven pounds has already been received and we urgently appeal to all readers to help the International Brigade in its struggle against Fascism by supporting the ambulance unit, and to regard it as a special responsibility. Contributions may be sent to Irene Grant, 25 Pyecombe Corner, London, N.12, and earmarked SPAIN.

THE AUXILIARY LEFT

So many letters have come in during the last few weeks that it is impossible to answer each one. They almost all raise fundamental questions about the religious position of the Christian Left, and especially of the Auxiliary Left.

It has been agreed that we should try, during a week-end, to talk these questions out among us. As many 'Aux.' Left members are also members of the Left Book Club, and will want to be in London on February 7th we suggest that the 'Aux.' Left should meet for a short week-end Conference. Plans are therefore being made for that week-end. All members of the 'Aux.' Left who can possibly be in town are asked to come. We shall meet on Friday evening, February 5th, at 7.30 p.m., for a preliminary discussion. On Saturday, February 6th, we shall meet from 10 to 12.30 and from 2.30 to 9 o'clock; and again on Sunday morning from 10 till 12.30.

Please write immediately to Irene Grant, 25 Pyecombe Corner, London, N.12, saying (1) whether you can come, (2) whether you need hospitality; (3) whether a pool for expenses would make a difference to your decision about coming.

The conference will probably be held in the Fred Tallent Hall, 145 Drummond Street, N.W.1; but those who can come will receive exact information later.

NEWS FROM THE CHRISTIAN LEFT

Detailed reports of the Auxiliary Christian Left meeting on December 5th, and of the Joint Christian Left Committee on December 12th will be given at the 'Aux.' Left week-end. Here it can only be reported that about forty people were present on December 5th. They agreed (1) That teaching on the nature of Fascism and the nature of the Christian answer to it was the most important work before the Christian Left.

(2) That a centre for the Christian Left was needed, and that the Joint Christian Left Committee should be asked to go ahead with plans.

(3) That the 'Aux.' Left would welcome the foundation of a Christian Left magazine; would guarantee, if the price were kept down to 2d. or 3d., to sell three hundred copies to begin with; and would be willing to merge the 'Aux.' Left NEWS SHEET into such a magazine provided the editorial board and its policy were acceptable to the 'Aux.' Left.

On December 12th the Joint Christian Left Committee (see NEWS SHEET No. 4) met again. It became clear that neither in the question of the common centre nor in the question of the joint magazine were the various groups yet ready or able to take the next steps. All however were agreed that the question of teaching was urgent. Kenneth Ingram was asked to call together a panel of six or eight people who have expressed their readiness to help. It is hoped, as a result of this effort, to hold a series of six to eight lectures on the nature of Fascism and the task of Christianity—those attending these lectures would be expected to regard them as a training, which would help them to do their share in the teaching task of the Christian Left.

Details about this course will be issued as soon as they are available. Those who think they could attend such a course in London during six or eight consecutive weeks beginning about the middle of February should communicate with Irene Grant, 25 Pyecombe Corner, London, N.12. Similar courses might be planned elsewhere later.

At a meeting of London members of the Socialist Christian League held on December 11th it was decided to inaugurate three new groups—Chelsea and District, Hampstead and Hornsey. These with those already in existence—London Central, Charlton, Enfield, Ilford and Stepney—will bring the number of Groups in the London area up to eight. (There are in addition a number of associated bodies, the Brotherhood Church, the Walthamstow Free Christian Church, the Christian Arts Left Group, the Dew Drop Christian Socialists and the Kingsley Hall Shock Troop.) A vote on affiliation to the London Labour Party was taken at the meeting. There was a large majority in favour.

The Stepney Group has done much work in East London on the Spanish question. It has organized a public meeting, issued leaflets and arranged a stream of letters in the local Press. The group is also joining in the work of the Factory Bill Campaign. One meeting has already been held and steps are being taken to establish a local committee.

The Charlton Group is holding a public meeting with George Lansbury as principal speaker, on February 26th at Greenwich Town Hall.

The Christian Arts Left Group organized a meeting on December 2nd whose subject was 'Art and the Revolution'. The speakers were Eric Gill, Herbert Read and Alick West. Despite the fact that this meeting was held in East London the attendance was so large that a move had to be made to a larger hall. This Group has arranged a course of instruction in the production of banners, posters, slogans, etc., for the various Christian Left Groups. The course will commence on January 13th. The meetings will be held at Christchurch, Watney Street, at 7.30 p.m., on every Wednesday evening for a period of about fifteen weeks.

Enquiries about the NEWS SHEET should be addressed to Mrs. Muir, Nunthorpe Hall, Philadelphia Terrace, York. Copies cost 3d. post free to those who can afford it, and free to those who cannot.

THE CHRISTIAN LEFT
News Sheet of the Auxiliary Christian Left

February 28, 1937. No. 6

THE COMMITTED PERSONALITY

Kenneth Muir

FASCISM AND COMMUNITY

PERFECTIONISTS
AND THE
MOSCOW TRIALS

SEGREGATION OF CLASSES IN ENGLAND

Douglas Jolly: A LETTER FROM SPAIN

NO 'CHRISTIAN ALTERNATIVE'

NEWS FROM THE CHRISTIAN LEFT

PERFECTIONISTS AND THE MOSCOW TRIALS

Orthodox Christianity is rightly suspect to the Socialist. He cannot help regarding it as the ideological defence of a Church, the economic and financial structure of which makes it dependent upon the vested interests of property.

But still more perhaps than the orthodox creeds, it is their idealist interpretation in current Christian thought that binds organized Christianity to the existing social order. Of all the spiritual allies of Capitalism, the perfectionist interpretation of Christian ethics is the most dangerous foe of the working-class movement to-day. If being a Christian means the acceptance of an obligation to be perfect as our heavenly Father, not merely in the sense of a directive in the light of which we can comprehend the true nature of man and his community, but as the definition of our actual duty in society here and now, then two attitudes only are possible to the Christian in this imperfect world: either to retire from this sinful world into *pietism*, or to resign himself to the sinfulness of this world in a spirit of *quietism*. The results are the same in either case. For both he who shrinks from contact with the coarseness of his surroundings, and he who trains himself to passive indifference towards its revolting realities, equally sacrifice action in an imperfect world to the ideal of absolute perfection. No third alternative is open to the Christian perfectionist. To try to stay in an imperfect world, while struggling to overthrow it by the instrument of perfection, is mere self-delusion. State and society are imperfect by their nature. He who would resolve to restrict his attempts at revolutionizing them to the use of such methods as would allow him to remain perfect himself could achieve nothing better than a delusion as to the worth of his own activities. In trying to evade the Scylla of moral complacency he would risk being shattered on the Charybdis of despairing futility. Christianity thus emasculated is no longer a force that can re-shape the world; it is simply an instrument of class-rule, blocking the road to radical change, while sanctifying existing evils through a perversion of the doctrine of original sin. It is Christian ethics ridiculing itself. For even the use of force and violence is held to be justified as long as it serves to maintain an evil order; while even the rescue of the innocent victims of torture and debasement from the hands of their tormentors would not, in this view, justify the use of means other than those which must, in the nature of things, be unavailing against the oppressor.

This social perfectionism, nurtured by the Methodist revival, 'saved England from a revolution'. The British working class was the victim of a perfectionist ethic which exalted the virtues of passivity and suffering into the highway of salvation. During the first decades of that most barbarous of revolutions called the Industrial Revolution the Capitalist class could safely rely on a people indoctrinated by their ministers with the idealist conception that nothing was worth troubling about but perfection. As long as such poisonous teaching was not expunged from the consciousness of the workers, the domination of an inhuman and un-Christian system of economic autocracy could neither be challenged nor overthrown. The working-class movement itself was doomed to oscillate helplessly between a sound but necessarily limited Trades Unionism and a vague Utopian Socialism.

Not even the tremendous experience of triumphant Russian realism was able to shake British Labour out of its perfectionist day-dreams. Witness the confusing reactions to the Moscow trials in England. Here again the pseudo-Christian ethics that have almost become part of the fabric of British Labour (Socialism) have played their fateful role.

For the Christian Left these Trials could never have assumed a decisive importance in judging the religious significance of Soviet Russia in the present period of history. There is a fundamental difference between the personal sphere of *community*, in which religion has its existence, and *society* which is the sphere of functional organizations. No society can be perfect. In our conviction Socialism will abolish the immediate economic obstacle to a more complete fulfilment of community to-day. Industry in Russia is based on the national ownership of the means of production. This is an objective truth. This fact in itself raises

Russia to a higher plane of social existence, introducing the Socialist epoch in the history of the world. For the sake of this next step we must take upon ourselves freely our share in the collective sin inseparable from human existence in society. We must not refuse to take this step—towards the realization of the eternal meaning of life in community—on account of the imperfections attached to all social embodiments of such a life. Or in terms of the working-class movement just as we must reject the reformist deviation which would have us tinker with the partial and disconnected problems of a society to which we as Christians are not, nor ever can be, committed, so we must also resist the opposite temptation which would debar us from a creative transformation of society as a whole on account of the sin inherent in all society. No realization of the faults or mistakes committed by the Socialist Government of Soviet Russia can make us deviate an inch from our recognition of the final significance of this first embodiment in our time of a higher social existence of mankind. As Christians we know ourselves safe from the danger of idolizing the state or society. But as Christians we answer the call to community, though this must involve us in the risk of having to share in the responsibility for blunder, suffering and crime. If there had been blunder or crime on the part of the Russian authorities we would acknowledge it freely without any attempt at justification, while continuing to struggle to the utmost to help Russia to overcome her material weakness and moral blemishes.

Having said that we can state simply that there was neither blunder nor crime; that the ruthless judgments in the Moscow trials were a protective reaction against the most reckless political conspiracy that was ever directed against the lives and existence of a whole people; that at no previous stage in history could the treasonous act of idealists have struck as deadly a blow to a vast population, for nowhere had political and industrial power been concentrated in one centre before; that this conviction of ours is the outcome of the second Moscow Trial, while the first left us bewildered and saddened by our utter inability to comprehend the motives both of judges and the accused; that Trotzkyism has to be eradicated from the body politic at whatever cost, once it had degenerated from a divergence of opinion about the line of Soviet policy to an active secret co-operation with German and Japanese authorities to blow up the power stations, the bridges and railway centres in case of war, and to strike panic into the heart of the people by assassinating their leaders and destroying the gigantic chemical and metallurgical plants behind the front.

This latter charge sounded so incredible as almost to remove the trial into the realm of criminal fiction. The men against whom it was levelled had belonged to the elite of revolutionary Russia.

But precisely herein lies the explanation of all the apparent contradictions and inconsistencies of these trials. These revolutionaries had never accepted the possibility of Socialism in one country. They had rejected Stalin's thesis of the inevitability of attempting to establish Socialism in Russia. To attempt this was not only to embark on a, theoretically and practically, impossible task but was tantamount to a betrayal of Socialism. Socialism was international by definition; it could never be established in one country, partly on account of economic interdependence, partly on account of the inevitable clash between the Capitalist powers and the isolated Socialist country. In this unequal struggle, the Socialist country must succumb, unless it can rely on the help supplied by the working-class movements of the Capitalist States in deliberately undermining the military strength of their own countries. In this old-time Marxian view, the power of the working-class in Russia could be saved by a successful world revolution only; but any attempt at establishing Socialism in Russia would necessarily divert the attention of the Russian Bolsheviks from this supreme task, if not abolish it as a task altogether. For in more than one manner (so they reasoned) the aim of achieving Socialism in Russia must interfere with the propaganda for world revolution. This group of revolutionaries

could not for one moment admit that Stalin's contention of the possibility of Socialism in one country was anything but the ruin of the revolution.

This being so, they did not hesitate to do what in duty they were bound to do, *if they had been right*. They resolved to remove Stalin and his supporters from power in order to change the policy of Russia, stop industrialization and collective farms, reverse the development towards democracy in Russia both internally and externally. As the masses could not be won over to this fantastic policy of self-destruction, they had to be manoeuvred into supporting the conspirators. In a country where the government was responsible for the planning and running of industrial production, the apparently fortuitous destruction of industrial plant was bound to undermine confidence in the government. These wrecking activities of the Trotzkyites ran parallel to the endeavours of the German and Japanese secret agents. The temptation to make use of them was great. It became irresistible after Leon Trotzky, the creator of the Red Army, had got into touch with the German and Japanese authorities in view of an eventual war.

Thus the incredible came to pass. For the Trotzkyite thesis left no other alternative than the defeat of Russia in case of war. In order to save the cadres of the revolution, it was imperative that defeated Russia should remain under the sway of the revolutionaries. Some territorial sacrifices and a measure of retreat from the Socialist position was inevitable. But Socialism being impossible in one country Capitalism would have to be restored to some degree in Russia, anyway. So, step by step, the conspirators were driven on to more and more extreme conclusions. They did not shrink from drawing them. Yet only a few of them were committed to the responsibility for the series of railway and colliery disasters that had been engineered by the conspirators in high office. An even fewer number had actually been in touch with the German Embassy in Moscow, confirming personally the mandate of Leon Trotzky to negotiate in the name of the conspirators in Russia with the German and Japanese governments. The manly speech of Radek, in which he finally revealed the tragedy of the conspirators as well as their utter moral failure, has cleared up this background of the trials. The Russian people in their wonderful effort at constructing a new world had been stalked by a deadly enemy within their own ranks. While they were suffering from lack of shelter and clothing, while powerful enemies were preparing to invade their country, their food had been destroyed, their defences had been sapped by a group of determined foes hiding masked as trusted friends. No wonder that in the newspapers and books in which Trotzky defended his thesis he never so much as breathed a word of the ghastly work of death and destruction his agents were wreaking in Russia. He has denied to the last his lunatic attempts to save Socialism by delivering Soviet-Russia to the mercies of Hitler.

We rejoice with the Russian people in their deliverance from deadly peril.

In the face of the epic of the Russian people the outcry of our Labour perfectionists against the alleged horrors of the Moscow trials comes as a pitiable anti-climax. Unconsciously, they sympathize with the Trotzkyite idealist who is prepared to destroy Socialist reality for the sake of his perfectionist phantasies.

For both the Reformist and the ultra-revolutionary are at heart perfectionist. They both shrink from the consequences of the inevitable alternatives of social reality, only in different ways:—The Reformist tries to evade the risk and responsibility of radical social change by resigning himself to Capitalism; the ultra-revolutionary flies from the actual realization of Socialism on account of the imperfection of reality. Both hate Soviet-Russia because it is not perfect. But while the Labour reformist inveighs against the 'cruelty' of the Soviet tribunals in words, the Trotzkyite is more consistent. He proceeds to blow this imperfect embodiment of Socialism out of existence.

The Moscow trials commit us to strike at the perfectionist fallacy, in what ever form it presents itself.

THE COMMITTED PERSONALITY

'NORTH AMERICAN'

People venturing out into any new field have many inner doubts as to the relevance and value of what they are striving to create. Especially is this so in the field of religion to-day. It may therefore be with some relevancy, and certainly with great temerity, that a North American writes an account of developing movements, similar to yours, across the water.

In Canada there are graduate S.C.M. groups scattered across our 4,000 miles of country. Most of our people have come through a vigorous S.C.M. and have been introduced to a study of the records relating to the teachings of Jesus, by the scientific method of documentary research. As a result, we have in many cities, a nucleus of people who have begun to achieve that living objectivity for which Jesus had the formula.¹ With this equipment we are making headway in understanding the problems concerning the relations of the individuals making up present-day society. We are not obliged to struggle with the impossible task of trying to superimpose fanciful and idealistic concepts on immutable, hard facts. We do not try hysterically to arrive at a preconceived answer or to achieve a goal dictated by wish-thinking or by spontaneous 'guidance'.

We want no more speculative systems of philosophy referred to another world. We hold that there is no objectivity apart from the truly religious attitude, and that Jesus taught one way to such an attitude. We believe we must apply ourselves diligently to a study of this world in which we live, to discover the nature of actual reality, to find out the forces at work in the world, and to see where we can join in history's on-going process.

Part of our work has been in the sphere of the psychological approach to the realization of personality. In this we have something in common with the new 'Personalist' movement in France. We believe that it is only possible to achieve the fullest practical expression of the spirit of mutuality and community underlying human society, when the individuals seeking it are well integrated and internally-frictionless personalities. By an unreserved and unremitting commitment to the most meaningful action possible through our lives, we have begun to approach these requirements. Through periodic meeting together for worship, to celebrate our commitment, we have sought to maintain our basic community of spirit and action.

Without a commitment such as that upon which we have based our lives, we would present the typical picture of human animals with no inner security. We should be living lives of barren and apprehensive misery, striving for a superabundance of material possessions and privileges. We would doubtless be respectable, and would acquiesce in the law of the jungle dominating the present 'system' of predatory monopoly capitalism. We would deny the troublesome lower class the right of access to machine work, if only to show them their proper place in a machine age. We would countenance territorial brigandy and native conscription in the name of civilization, and the slow torture of 'brazen' intellectuals as the only means of saving Western culture from the vultures. We would tell financially remunerative fairy tales to the oppressed 'heathens' of the far corners of the earth, that they might learn a code of respectable submission, and achieve that true role for which a loving heavenly father created them.

These things we would do if we were not committed persons. But we revolt against such a life, and 'with Hell are we *not* in agreement'.

In a study of the teachings of Marx and of Jesus, many of us are attempting to proceed from a telling analysis of society's history *to date*, to a vital synthesis of a society based on the intrinsic nature of man.

¹ As I write, a conference is being held in Montreal to set up a National Graduate Christian Movement, to be composed of adult persons who will contribute at least one per cent of their incomes to support a comprehensive programme for Canada.

FASCISM AND COMMUNITY

KENNETH MUIR

To underrate Fascism is a grave tactical mistake; to conquer it we must understand it. It is inadequate to describe it in purely economic terms; for though it is natural for the upper classes to take drastic measures to avert the breakdown of capitalism, it is not so clear why the lower middle class and even some of the working-class should give support to Fascism. The worst danger of Fascism lies in the fact that it is a perversion of the truth. It succeeds because it is a satanic abuse of human needs. We can conquer it only by understanding the needs and satisfying them.

The people of Germany had lost all sense of purpose, and all sense of community. They did not belong. Hitler made them belong. He gave them a purpose; he restored to them a sense of community; he enabled them to recover their self-respect from the pooled self-esteem of chauvinistic patriotism. To a lesser extent, we can see the same thing in England. Mosley's recruits are chiefly those who had lost all purpose in life. Some whose lives virtually ended during the Great War discovered that they were wanted for something, by someone. Others, who had lived drab and futile lives, out of touch with their fellow men, were enabled to regain community. All are provided with an object of hate to blame for the mess they have made of their lives.

This loss of community is the natural end of individualism, the natural end of capitalism. Man cannot live alone. The life of the individual in isolation leads to disintegration and death. Any leader at such a time of disintegration who can give men their lost sense of community is certain of an enthusiastic following, however absurd his creed.

The Fascist philosophers declare that civilization is a tragic mistake, because it inevitably leads to a disintegration of community. Man with a highly developed consciousness, they say, loses touch with his fellow men. Civilization, being the glorification of the individual, destroys community. When a man *thinks*, he ceases to belong. They point to the various forms of modern art which show that the artist is out of touch with all save a few of his fellows. They go on to argue that since community is essential to happiness, we must create one on a lower level of consciousness—on a pre-civilized, even on a sub-human level. It is better to be one of a pack and happy, than a miserable civilized man. And since packs need a prey, a scapegoat has to be found—either the Jews, or some foreign enemy.

The Christian may well agree with the Fascists that man needs to be in community. But he can accept no community narrower than the whole of humanity. Community must be regained, not on a lower, but on a higher level, of consciousness. We must not, through despair, seek for happiness in a herd; we must rather find re-integration by increasing our range of consciousness. The most potent cause of our present lack of community was not civilization, but the injustice of the present system. It is only possible to have community with equals; and the condition for its restoration is universal equality. We can achieve community not by destroying democracy, but by fulfilling it.

The Fascists recognize and abuse a real need in so far as they lay stress on the importance of community, for it is the essence of religion. Fascism was made possible by the decay of religion. But there are good and bad religions. As Blake declared a century ago: 'Man must and will have some Religion: if he has not the Religion of Jesus, he will have the Religion of Satan, calling the Prince of this World, God, and destroying all who do not worship Satan under the Name of God.' That, ultimately, is the choice before us. In political terms, we have to choose between Fascism and a fulfilled Democracy.

SEGREGATION OF CLASSES IN ENGLAND

COMMENTS FROM A CONTINENTAL OBSERVER

'In the matter of change and stability English and American social structures are manifestly poles apart. America of to-day is the outcome of one long sustained surge of change, and since it did not look to the State to shape its social destiny, it was necessary to evolve some educative process to do this. Hence, Americans have acquired a unique knowledge of the manifold correlations involved in social change. English society, which continues to embody the principles of feudal social organization more completely than any other society of Western industrial civilization, has become a society of stability and security—a security, however, based upon the acceptance of social inequality.

'Education for politics' in such a society is the education of a privileged class for the task of leadership, responsibility and rule, supplemented by the corresponding education of the other classes to be led and ruled. Only through the grant of a scholarship to a higher educational institution can the offspring of the common people in England escape a socially degrading form of aphasia. In such cases, however, the privileged child must join a higher strata for good and all. For if later in life his children were to consort with their less fortunate cousins, they would be in danger of picking up an 'accent' and thus losing caste. In England, distinctions of speech have almost the rigidity of a colour bar. A rigid segregation of the children of the poor is the consequence. The English have become so accustomed to segregation of social classes that the political unity of the nation, instead of being endangered, has been, at least in the past, definitely strengthened by this system. The Labour Party as a whole, like the English working-class itself, shares the national outlook and refuses seriously to challenge the dual system of education. This explains the continued rule of the upper class in England whatever the complexion of Parliament happens to be.

It is doubtful whether England will be able to hold her own in the international field under her present system of education. The outlook of the upper class in world politics is practical and realistic. Public schools like Eton, Harrow, Rugby or Winchester; the old universities of Oxford and Cambridge; an admirable tradition of conferences, debates, summer schools and carefully prepared discussions, help to keep the upper classes up to the mark. The outlook of the working-classes, on the other hand, is sentimental and idealist in the sense of being out of touch with reality. This fact may be of serious consequence for Great Britain's national policy in the near future. During the Ethiopian crisis the failure of the Labour Party to face the realities of the situation was due to absence of any political education of an active and positive kind in the masses. The efforts which the educational organizations of the working-classes, especially the Workers' Educational Association, are making to supplement this need, seem at present hardly adequate to the task.'

A LETTER FROM SPAIN

DOUGLAS JOLLY

I wonder more and more whether Britain will wake up to the reality of her position in the European political conflict—whether she will see before the last moment that her destiny *must* be linked with France and Russia. It seems the war in Spain is being made the central point of a new process of unification of the working-class movement in England. It's only on specific issues and not on ideologies that the English working-class can unite. Ideological interpretation has always, apparently, the opposite effect. . . .

I have read the reports of the memorial meeting in Friends' House for Ralph Fox. I remember his saying to me in Albacete that the best way to arouse interest in the Spanish problem in England was for some well-known Englishman to be killed in Spain. His death must have such an effect. I was deeply impressed by my short contact with him.

In this country as a whole it is as in Russia from 1918-20. The armed opposition has crystallized and strengthened revolutionary sympathy as did the capitalist-aided raids of the White Russians. I can echo truly what Professor Haldane wrote of the morale of the Madrilenos. It is unbelievable—the courageous contempt shown for the Fascist bombs and bombardment is epic. Far from creating panic in the city (as must be the intention, for there is no other sane reason) these air raids and artillery bombardments seem only to strengthen the purpose of the people. . . .

A thing that has impressed me here is the deep hatred of Fascism, but not of Fascists. The conflict is, if a conflict can be, on this side impersonal. Reports of the shooting of prisoners may or may not be true, but I know that wounded Moors have been brought to this hospital by the Spanish ambulances. I have operated on them. If men are shot I do believe that in most cases such shooting is in the nature of necessity in a situation forced on the people and not of their choosing. This is a broad generalization that must, in the animosities of war have many exceptions—especially in the days when the Fascist advances were so rapid and the organization of the Government forces was many headed and still immature.

' . . . This civilian heroism has two sources. The people of Madrid are united, as only a democracy can be united. For the first time in history it is governing itself, and the sense of unity is so strong that even a foreigner who is privileged to be a temporary citizen of Madrid ceases to take his individual life or death too seriously.'

'But that is not all. The Spaniards enjoy life so intensely that they enjoy death, too. The central feature in their religion has been the belief that Christ died for them, and this idea persists in men and women who have completely broken with the Church. It is not too much to say that half the Atheists in Spain are Christian Atheists.'

Prof. J. B. S. HALDANE in *Reynolds News*, January 24th, 1937.

NO 'CHRISTIAN ALTERNATIVE'

A few members of the Auxiliary Christian Left met for an all-day discussion on Sunday, January 18th. Other readers will be glad of the following summary of the afternoon discussion.

There is a growing tendency to-day to centre the discussion of world affairs on the alternative Fascism versus Communism. Hitler is taking the lead in applying this to the field of foreign policy. In religion and philosophy an increasing number of people, reactionaries as well as old-type liberals, are repeating this formula. An appalling amount of confusion is thus being created.

The real alternative to-day is Fascism or Democracy—a fundamental religious issue which reappears in various forms in the basic social problems of our time.

The confusion is created by the arbitrary fashion in which Socialism and Communism are linked up with this antithesis. We should put the terms right.

Socialism is an economic system; its present-day alternative is Capitalism.

Fascism is a form of society; its alternative is Democracy. Under modern industrial conditions Democracy can continue to exist in none other than a socialist economy. This is denied only by those who, consciously or unconsciously, want to perpetuate the capitalist system.

Communism as distinct from Socialism means in practice simply the Soviet Union. Those who draw Communism into the debate wish, in reality, to oppose the Soviet Union. As a form of Socialism, Soviet Communism is certainly not an issue in any country of Western Europe. It was the outcome of unique conditions—mass illiteracy, lack of

industries, and absence of democratic traditions. Under conditions such as those the Socialist Economy necessarily took the form found in Russia. The success of the work of socialist construction in Russia in the face of those conditions enhances its universal significance for the future of mankind.

To assert, therefore, that Communism is the alternative to Fascism is to obscure the issue in favour of the Fascist position. Not Fascism and Communism but Fascism and Democracy are the alternatives with which humanity is faced to-day politically and socially. To religious people this ought to be clearer than to others. The religious conflict of our time is between the Christian forces underlying Democracy and the anti-Christian forces embodied in Fascism. The search for a 'third alternative', a so-called Christian solution which should be 'neither Fascism nor Communism' is a mystification. Democracy is the only Christian alternative even though to-day it necessarily involves Socialism. But it is precisely because it implies Socialism that many people are trying to cut loose from Democracy. They would be ashamed to do this openly. By dragging the red herring of Communism across the trail they hope to get away with it.

NEWS FROM THE CHRISTIAN LEFT

ZOË FAIRFIELD

The 'Aux' Left Week-end was our first since Zoë Fairfield's death.

Many of us have lost in her a determined opponent and a dear friend. She profoundly disagreed with our own interpretation of the religious and social purposes implied in the Christian Left position.

Unconsciously she was unable to imagine this country under any lead than that of the historically leading classes, for she was convinced that no other people would be magnanimous enough to be liberal or purposeful enough to be tolerant towards those whom they led.

She was entirely free from that snobbishness which is unable not to differentiate between well off and needy friends.

No human judgment is adequate in the face of death: we can only pay our own tribute.

Zoë opened up new avenues and she seemed, but for the fatality of English class education predestined to become a great leader in the renaissance of historical Christianity as the lever of radical social change.

She was a courageous fighter, realist and steadfast. In this she remains an example to us.

SUSPENDING CONSTITUTIONS?

The Student Movement published in its December issue the text of a proposal of General Committee to the Annual General Meeting which runs as follows:

'That the Constitution of the Auxiliary Movement be now suspended.'

It was decided at the week-end discussion that whatever the precise import of this suggestion may be, we wish to record our formal protest against any attempt to alter the Constitution of the Movement except by democratic procedure in accordance with the Constitution.

The Auxiliary Left week-end discussions took place from February 5th—7th. In our next issue we shall publish an article by John Macmurray which will give members who were not able to be present an outline of his talk on the religious task of the Christian Left.

On March 13th, there will be another day's discussion. All Auxiliary Left members who can come are asked to be present. The main items on the agenda left over from February 7th will be further preparation for the Cambridge Conference and discussion on the letter sent by the Petersfield Group on their pacifist position. The meeting place is to be c/o Hugh Cuthbertson, 3 Somerset Terrace, London, W.C.1 (by St. Pancras Church). Time: 2.30—evening.

Douglas Jolly, whose most recent letter we print above, is still serving with the International Column as a surgeon. We have already received £35 for the work of Ambulance Unit. We want to double this sum by Easter. Please help! It was suggested at the 'Aux.' Left week-end that every reader of the NEWS SHEET should be asked to send a regular monthly contribution to the fund. If from each one we received one shilling each month we could send in £15 monthly. In districts where there are groups of readers one person might be made responsible for collecting and sending in the contributions. Cheques and Postal Orders should now be sent to our Treasurer, Miss Margaret Morrison, 30 Ashfield Road, London, W.3. Contributions may be earmarked for the Ambulance Unit, or for the general support of the International Column.

An intensive course of study on the role of Christianity in the present crisis was discussed during the 'Aux.' Left week-end. A small group of people was chosen for the initial study under the direction of John Macmurray, Kenneth Ingram and Karl Polanyi. These people will later undertake the leadership of further study groups.

Christianity and the World Crisis. The Joint Committee of left-wing Christian groups and organizations has now arranged a series of lectures under the above title. The last paragraph in the statement 'No "Christian Alternative"' will form the general basis of these lectures. Those who wish to attend them will be asked to accept in principle the position indicated. They will also be asked to commit themselves to attend not less than three of the lectures, and to be ready to co-operate in the organization and planning of one or more public lectures on the same lines later.

Details are as follows:

- March 5th. The Birth of a New Society. Father Groser.
- March 12th. The Church and the United Front. Dr. John Lewis.
- March 19th. The Church in a Decaying Order. D. R. Davies.
- April 2nd. The Christian and the Economic Crisis. Dr. Karl Polanyi.
- April 9th. The World Outlook, 1937. Kenneth Ingram.
- April 16th. The Rediscovery of Christianity. Professor John Macmurray.

The lectures will be held in the hall of St. Pancras Church, W.C.1, at 8 p.m. Registrations should be sent to Irene Grant, 25 Pyecombe Corner, London, N.12.

C. H. Edwards has agreed to keep a register of people able and willing to speak for the Christian Left. His address is The Gables, Abington Park Crescent, Northampton. Those who need speakers, as well as those who know of capable speakers, should communicate with him.

THE CHRISTIAN LEFT
News Sheet of the Auxiliary Christian Left

March 20, 1937. No. 7

CAMBRIDGE CONFERENCE
Easter, 1937

FACING A DECISION

John Macmurray

THE RELIGIOUS TASK
OF THE CHRISTIAN LEFT

TEXT OF THE RESOLUTIONS
to be submitted to the Annual General Meeting

FACING A DECISION

As the Auxiliary Christian Left meets with its fellow members of the Auxiliary Movement to share the decision about the future of the Movement, there are certain things that we ought to remember and to hold fast.

In the Auxiliary Movement we are at home. We are in the Christian fellowship to which we belong, and to which, under God, we owe the religious experience which binds us together. For many years the Auxiliary Movement has sought, in conference after conference, to discover the social and political action to which its Christian discipleship commits it in the contemporary situation. Out of that long travail of spirit the Christian Left was born. We are simply those members of the Auxiliary who feel that for us the long discussion has revealed its decision, and who are committed, by our loyalty to the Christian fellowship of the Auxiliary, to accept that decision and to act upon it.

This decision, so far from dividing us from the rest of the Auxiliary Movement, makes us more than ever members of it. We cannot but feel that our decision had to be taken for the Auxiliary as a whole. We cannot but wish passionately to win all the members of the Movement to the decision which we have been compelled to accept as the answer to its continual questioning, and to see the day when the Auxiliary Movement as a whole will take our decision for its own. But we know that there can be no forcing this; and we have no desire to commit anyone beyond the limits of his own religious experience.

At the Durham Conference we asked the Movement to pass certain resolutions which we felt were the necessary outcome of our new position as part of the Auxiliary. A majority of the members present at the Annual General Meeting agreed. The actual form of these resolutions is not of special significance. They were essentially a request to confirm us as an integral part of the Auxiliary Movement. We could not abstain from this, because we were aware, at least partially, that we were committed to activities which were new, and that in carrying them on as part of the Movement we were committing all the members to being associated with these new activities. This we could not properly do without their express approval.

The events which followed, however, revealed clearly that this approval was not unanimous. In particular, the General Committee, by a majority, refused to accept the Durham resolutions, and our members on the Committee, finding themselves in a false position, had to resign. In the controversies which followed there was much misunderstanding, and tempers were roused on both sides. Things were said and done which were not consistent with the spirit of Christ. So far as we were responsible for this we sincerely regret it, and seek forgiveness as we would be forgiven; knowing that confession and forgiveness is the first law of Christian Community. It is our hope that this is at an end, and that it has served to clarify the real issues and to sift out the essential from the unimportant.

We have now to appeal again to the membership of the Auxiliary to confirm us as an integral part of the Movement. The implications of doing so are now much clearer, and it is important that they should be recognized by everyone concerned. It will be conceded by all that any group of Christians must affirm and act upon its conception of Christian discipleship, even if by doing so they incur persecution and the disapproval of individuals and of society. We have to ask the members of the Auxiliary whether they are willing to stand by us, in Christian fellowship, in our effort to do so. To refuse us this is automatically

to exclude us from the Auxiliary fellowship. If it must be so, we must accept the decision; but it will not have been of our seeking, and we must leave with sorrow and regret, but without bitterness or recrimination.

The request we make does not imply that we ask the Auxiliary to accept and endorse our position. The basis of membership should not be limited so as to exclude anyone who honestly wishes to accept and act upon the obligations of Christian discipleship as he sees them. We would compel no man's conscience. It does imply that we ask the Movement to recognize our right, as an integral part of it, to do with all our might what we are convinced that it is our duty as Christians to do. It implies that the policy and administration of the Movement shall be such as to safeguard this right and not to put obstacles in its way. It implies a willingness on the part of the whole Movement to be publicly associated with the work of the Christian Left.

We recognize that to accept this request may mean difficulties for the Movement. We would not wish to minimize the seriousness of this; nor do we wish to do anything which would increase them unnecessarily. One justification for asking the Auxiliary to accept them must be that we belong to the Movement, we have found our task in it, and that we believe that they are inevitable if the Movement is to stand firm by its own basis.

In conclusion, we must remember always that we are not a political group, existing to achieve an immediate social end. Our basis is religion; we are part of the continuity of the Christian effort to establish the Kingdom of God on earth. We do not seek power, but the elimination of the desire for power. Any action we take must be the expression, not of our opinions, which are liable to error like any others, but of our own Christian community, and our loyalty to Christ. We are convinced that we have to stand fearlessly against Fascism, because it is the organized form of the contemporary resistance to the gospel of Christ; and for Socialism, because it is the next step in social obedience to the demands of Christ. But it is the spirit of Fascism which we have to conquer, in ourselves as well as elsewhere; in ourselves before we can succeed in conquering it elsewhere. This spirit is the desire for power, which has its roots in fear; and we know that only love can overcome fear. Our trust is not in ourselves, nor in man, but in God.

THE RELIGIOUS TASK OF THE CHRISTIAN LEFT

JOHN MACMURRAY

The Auxiliary Christian Left was born when a group of members of the Auxiliary Movement, who had been seeking, along with all the others, to discover how to relate their religious convictions to the political field, made a discovery which they expressed by saying: 'We are not interested in politics any longer, we are interested only in religion.' This discovery was a revolution in our religious life, and in our understanding of what religion is. The task of the Christian Left is to work out the implications of this discovery in practice and in theory.

The attitude of mind which disappeared in this transformation was the one which distinguishes between two aspects of life—a spiritual and a material—and which conceives religion to be concerned with the spiritual aspect and politics with the material. From this point of view God stands outside the world, as it were, and in religion we relate ourselves to God, and in politics—the sphere of material life—we relate ourselves to the world. It is only from this point of view that the question can arise: 'How can I relate my religion to

politics?' What our discovery meant was that this question does not arise; that it is inherently meaningless; that it only seems to arise if we have already dissociated religion from life. We saw that the answer to this question must be: 'By ceasing to keep religion and politics separate.'

When we succeed in doing this, God and the world no longer confront one another as alien essences. We see God in the world and we see the world in God. In the transformation we discover that we have escaped from a falsification into a solid reality of experience. Religion is no longer a rainbow bridge between two worlds. It is the life of the world in God. It is the life of God in the world. So the old isolated religion of separation disappears in the reality of a life which is religious. We have overcome the fear that makes us long to escape from a world which is infected with suffering and sin. We are able at last to stay with God in the world he has made and which he is still creating. But, equally, politics disappear as a separated activity; just as religion ceases to be something that happens in churches, so politics ceases to be something that happens in polling booths or party meetings or Parliaments. It becomes part of that creative activity in which we are all continuously involved with God, whether we like it or not, for the transformation of human relationships and the establishment of the kingdom of Heaven on earth. Nothing is any longer common or unclean, nothing is merely sacred and nothing merely secular. In this we are merely recovering the true nature of religion as it was revealed in the historic experience of the Hebrew people and universalized in the life and teaching of Jesus.

The religious task of the Christian Left is to realize the full meaning of this primary religious discovery and to embody it in its life and activity as a community. Its business is to overcome dualism by recreating essential Christianity. It will find itself opposed by all those persons and forces which live in terms of dualism and accept it. It will be opposed by the traditionally minded people both on the religious and on the political side, and by the forces of social inertia which they express. This is a negative opposition, for it represents merely the resistance to change, and the mere necessity of change will deal with it quickly. But it will have to meet a more important, because more positive, opposition, both from the political and the religious side. This opposition will come from those who want change either in the political or the religious field without healing the dualism between the religious and the secular fields. There are forces which would seek to solve the problem in the secular field without worrying about religion. There are forces which would seek to solve the religious problem without interfering in the secular field. Both of these seek to act as if the distinction between religion and politics could be maintained. It is the task of the Christian Left to show that this is impossible. The distinction between secular and sacred is an illusion. The attempt to act upon it must be a failure. The secular forces will find that they will have to attempt the religious task, by denying that it is a religious task, and they will be incapable of doing it. The religious forces which cut themselves off from the political task will find that the religious task which they undertake has no substance and no effect. Their action will be words which find no response. They will discover that all they have succeeded in doing is to compel the world to do its best to get on without religion.

We shall expect therefore to find ourselves between two fires. The religious forces of contemporary Christianity will feel that we have no religion, and will attack us on that ground. The political forces will feel that we have nothing but religion and that we merely introduce an element of sentimental illusion into the field of practical activity. Yet, to the political movements we have to say that the only reason we have for co-operating with them is our religion, since they are not interested in a politics which is not religion while to the religious people who think we have no religion we have to insist that the only meaning which religion can have involves a practical effort to transform the structure of the secular world, and that politics really is religious whether people deny it or not. We must not be discouraged as we find ourselves rejected by both parties whom we would seek to reconcile. That is indeed the best evidence that we are on the right track.

Our plea to the left wing movements in politics is not that they ought to find a place for

religion in their social schemes and social efforts, but that by failing to see their task as a religious task they condemn themselves to futility and failure. We do not merely believe that the communist attitude to religion is a mistake. We believe that it is suicidal. For religion is the only means by which the emotional life of large groups of men can be integrated and directed upon creative purposes. It is the only means by which fear and inertia can be overcome in a situation which is inherently terrifying. Where religion has been effectively negated in the masses, mass action will be at the worst reactionary and at the best defensive, yet what is called for is creative mass activity.

Yet to the organized forms of religion, we have to say that the Communist attack on religion is justified by the conception of Christianity which they embody. Marx's reasons for seeking the destruction of religion are their reasons for perpetuating it. Their conception of religion is, in fact, the same as that of the Communist. It is the church that is responsible for maintaining the distinction between religion and secular life, and by maintaining that distinction it throws upon the secular community the burden of the transformation of society. It is the Church which is responsible for the secularization of social life. It is the Church that is forcing the State to accept the totalitarian form. For by its withdrawal of religion from the secular field, it forces the State to undertake the religious task of the unification of the inner life of society. In the situation, committed to a struggle on two fronts, we must never lose sight of the fact that our task is the task of reconciliation. It is a religious task, not an intellectual one. It will need all our capacities of thought and understanding. But these will only be effective, even within their own limits, in so far as they are an expression of the spirit of unity which can create unity. Only by achieving a religious community amongst ourselves which expresses itself in the desire to draw others into community with us can we hope to achieve success. People cannot be coerced into community, they cannot be argued into community. They can only be loved into community. We must understand and sympathize even where we are compelled to resist.

RESOLUTIONS submitted by the Auxiliary Christian Left to the Annual General Meeting at Cambridge, Easter, 1937

The resolutions proposed by the Auxiliary Christian Left are the outcome of the position stated in our editorial 'Facing Decision'. Their order and sequence is designed to centre the discussion on principles and policy rather than on the technicalities of the Constitution.

In the last issue of our News Sheet (No. 6) we registered our protest 'against any attempt to alter the Constitution of the Movement except by democratic procedure in accordance with the Constitution'. We note that the original proposal of General Committee which suggested 'That the Constitution of the Auxiliary Movement be now suspended' has been dropped (March issue of the Student Movement). Resolutions numbers 4 and 5 provide for the revision of the Constitution by democratic procedure after adequate discussion.

Resolutions numbers 2 and 3 do not represent the programme of work of the Christian Left Group itself, but a programme such as this group would like to see adopted by the Auxiliary Movement. Both the religious basis of policy and the practical measures by which it could be made effective are outlined from the point of view of the Auxiliary Movement as a whole.

RESOLUTION 1.

That the standing order on voting be amended to read:

The Movement accepts decision by majority vote as the democratic method. It affirms the right of the minority to state its position freely.

75/49 7/5/37

that the essence of all forms of the Christian community is the extension of human community

RESOLUTION 2.

That the following be the policy of the Auxiliary Movement:

The current policy of the Movement arises out of its acknowledgment of the religious nature of the present critical stage in the transformation of society.

The immediate task of the Movement is to secure wider recognition of this fact.

The general task is to work for the extension of human community. To-day this involves active co-operation with those movements which make for the extension of democracy, nationally and internationally.

We believe

- (i) that to-day the main forces making for this goal are in the Socialist working-class movement;
- (ii) that the main resistance comes from those forces embodied in Fascism which are the negation of Christianity and which can therefore only be finally defeated in the religious field.

RESOLUTION 3.

That the following be adopted as the programme of work of the Auxiliary Movement:

- (1) Intensive study courses to produce an informed membership from which will come speakers who can carry the responsibility of a campaign.
- (2) A magazine in which the aims of the Movement would be set forth and clarified according to the tasks of the day.
- (3) The publication of other literature such as talks, pamphlets, study programmes and findings.
- (4) Experiencing community through such means as the Camp Conference.
- (5) A campaign on the Christian answer to Fascism using local branches of the Movement as centres of organization, and members of the Movement as speakers: the campaign to be launched at an annual conference devoted to the subject.
- (6) Co-operation with those forces within the churches making for democracy and the renewal of the vitality of the Church.
- (7) Other activities should be carried out as a part of the whole task of the Movement, such activities to include:
 - (a) stimulation of interest in local government, community centres, housing and town planning;
 - (b) progressive and classless education, nursery schools, etc.;
 - (c) work in relation to youth movements;
 - (d) development of contacts with similar movements in other lands.

RESOLUTION 4.

That the following draft of changes in the constitution be now discussed with a view to their adoption by a special general meeting to be called not later than October 30th, 1937.

- I The name of the Movement shall be 'Christian Community Movement'.
- II Basis. The Movement is a fellowship of men and women whose purpose is to understand the Christian faith and to live the Christian life. They commit themselves to God and one another in common effort to bring into being a new social order which seeks to express the will of God and in which the true development of every personality can be realized.
- III Delete.
- IV Any person who accepts this basis is eligible for membership of the Movement.
- V & VI Remain
- VII & VIII Any association of people with the same basis and objects may be registered by the General Committee as a branch of the Movement, and every member of a branch shall be deemed to be a full member of the Movement.

Legal letter

- IX There shall be an Annual General Meeting of the Movement. The date of each A.G.M. shall be fixed by the preceding A.G.M. The ultimate authority of the Movement is in the hands of the A.G.M.
- X On the instructions of the General Committee or at the request of twenty members of the movement the General Secretary shall call a Special General Meeting after giving one months notice of the date. A Special General Meeting shall have all the powers of an A.G.M. Seventy-five shall constitute a quorum for such a meeting.
- XI Only members of the Movement shall be entitled to vote at the A.G.M. or Special General Meeting. A General Meeting or the General Committee of the Movement shall be entitled to invite such others as they deem fit to attend a General Meeting, but such persons so invited shall not be entitled to vote at the General Meeting.
- XII Branches shall be organized on a basis of geographical areas, and any member of the Movement living in an area covered by a particular branch shall be automatically a member of that branch. With the consent of the A.G.M., special purpose branches may be established on other than a geographical basis. Each branch shall elect its own committee and appoint representatives to the General Committee in accordance with clause XIV.
- XIII General Committee shall act subject to the authority of the A.G.M. Any decisions taken by General Committee may in no case affect the substance of such instructions, but only the form and method of execution.
- XIV Half the elected members of General Committee shall be elected at the A.G.M. and half elected by the areas as their representatives. The total number of General Committee members shall not be more than thirty and not less than twenty. The actual number and distribution of seats to be fixed by the retiring General Committee with reference to clause XII. The General Committee may co-opt not more than four members to secure representation of parallel movements.

The composition of General Committee shall be as follows:

	(subject to above)
By election at the A.G.M.	8
" from areas	8
By co-option	4
Elected representatives of Urdd and I.C.F.	2
" representative of S.C.M.	1

Officers of the Movement shall be non-voting members of General Committee.

- XV Branch nominations shall be carried out in accordance with the rules of the branch. Nominations for members to be elected at the A.G.M. may be made by any member of the Movement. The consent of the nominee must be obtained before a nomination is made.
- XVI Delete.
- XVII Remain
- XVIII As now, deleting *c*.
- XIX Remain.
- XX The Executive shall consist of:
The Chairman of General Committee and 5 members elected from General Committee from among its elected members. Such officers of the Movement as General Committee shall determine shall be non-voting members of the Executive.
- XXI The duties of the Executive shall be:
- (a) To prepare the agenda for General Committee and to carry out business delegated to it by the General Committee;
 - (b) To call a Special Meeting of General Committee if in their view need arises;

(c) To deal with an emergency situation which may arise. Minutes of the Executive meeting to be circulated at once to all members of General Committee.

XXII Remain.

XXIII The A.G.M. shall have power to make such by-laws or standing orders as are not inconsistent with this constitution.

XXIV (If possible, omit; if new Movement needs it.) The General Committee shall, subject to the instructions of the A.G.M., maintain a relationship of co-operation with the S.C.M. as it shall deem fit.

XXV Add: (c) Approved for submission to the Special General Meeting by the Annual General Meeting.

XXVI The constitution may be amended clause by clause at any General Meeting, provided that three months notice has been given of the substance of the proposed amendment. If the proposed amendment receives a two-thirds vote of General Committee a two months notice shall suffice.

An affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members present and voting shall be required to carry the amendment.

XXVII This constitution cannot be suspended in whole or in part.

RESOLUTION 5.

That the following be adopted as a standing order on procedure:

The General Committee shall be elected at the end of the Annual General Meeting after the policy for the year has been determined, and members accepting office do so on the understanding that they are prepared to carry into effect the instructions of the A.G.M. and will initiate no policy contrary to such instructions. Should the Committee at any time find itself unable to carry out the policy laid down by the A.G.M. a Special General Meeting must be called in accordance with the constitution.

NEWS AND NOTICES

The following are the last three lectures of the course on Christianity and the World Crisis:

April 2nd. The Christian and the Economic Crisis. Dr. Karl Polanyi.

April 9th. The World Outlook, 1937. Kenneth Ingram.

April 16th. The Rediscovery of Christianity. Professor John Macmurray.

The lectures will be held in the School Hall, Lancing Street, N.W.1 (Euston Underground Station), at 7.30 p.m. Registrations should be sent to Irene Grant, 25 Pyecombe Corner, London, N.12.

On March 13th a group of the Auxiliary Christian Left met in London in order to discuss the Pacifist issue. Members from different parts of the country attended. Kenneth Barnes introduced the subject in the name of the Petersfield group. He dealt not only with the Pacifist issue proper but also with the question of the use of force and violence, including the use of non-violent non-co-operation. A very valuable discussion followed. Kenneth Barnes' talk and points raised in the discussion will be published in the next issue.

We would like to report that while a considerable number of donations to our funds have been received, the financial position is such that some twenty-five pounds must still be raised if we are to cover the expenditure for which we budgeted at Christmas. Please send donations to Miss Margaret Morrison, 30 Ashfield Road, London, W.3.

April 17th and 18th has been fixed provisionally as the date of the next meeting of the Christian Left at which a report on the Cambridge Conference will be given and future policy will be discussed.

Please send enquiries, orders or money for the News Sheet to Mrs. Muir, Nunthorpe Hall, Philadelphia Terrace, York.

THE CHRISTIAN LEFT

April 24, 1937. No. 8

SHELLEY ON SPAIN, 1820

THE RENEWED AUXILIARY

THE CAMBRIDGE CONFERENCE

THE PACIFIST ISSUE

NEWS OF THE CHRISTIAN LEFT

THE RENEWED AUXILIARY

The Annual General Meeting of the Auxiliary has reaffirmed the mandate of the Christian Left to work in and outside the Movement in the light of its own convictions about the nature of the religious task of our generation. A campaign entitled the 'Christian Answer to Fascism' will be authorized and helped by General Committee, and a conference of the Auxiliary will be held on this subject.

At the same time, the Movement has endorsed the plans of the Church of the Future group, and entrusted the new General Committee with the work of putting them into practice.

These two decisions were taken after a straightforward exposition of the issues involved. John Macmurray's and Moira Neill's addresses as well as a vigorous discussion helped the Conference to focus their attention on the crucial question: could and should the work of the Church of the Future and of the Christian Left be carried on within and through the Auxiliary? If so, what were the religious implications of such a position for the Movement as a whole?

Many of those at the Conference, regardless of their inclinations, frankly doubted the possibility of a fruitful co-operation. This was not so much on account of political differences (the number of reactionaries was surprisingly small, though vocal) as of the deep religious divergences which were revealed. The interpretation of Christianity which inspired John Macmurray's and Kenneth Ingram's speeches was as foreign to orthodox Church members as their equally absorbing convictions seemed to us to be out of harmony with the essence of living Christianity. Moreover, both religious groups in the Conference were more distrustful than hopeful of that spirit of easygoing compromise which often mistakes the forms of fellowship for its substance, and prefers the semblance of unity to a reality that divides.

Under stress and pain, bogged by a difficult constitutional debate, the Conference plodded on. Gradually the conviction of a common need uniting all Christians to-day, grew. However differing, indeed almost opposed, the actual work of the Christian Left and the Church of the Future group in the Auxiliary must be, the Movement as a whole could not fail to be increasingly conscious that its mission was to prepare the minds of the people for the coming social crisis in a spirit that the Conference with one accord recognized to be that of democracy.

Almost unanimously the Conference accepted the following resolutions:

'That the current policy of the Movement arises out of its acknowledgment of the religious nature of the present critical stage in the transformation of society.

The immediate task of the Movement is to secure wider recognition of this fact in order to make Christianity the determining force in this transformation.

The general task is to work for the extension of Christian community. To-day this involves active co-operation with those movements which make for the extension of democracy, nationally and internationally.'

The first sentence is of the utmost importance. It presents in a concise form the affirmations for which the Christian Left has been contending ever since its formation: that our society is in a process of transformation and that in this process a critical stage has been

reached; that the acknowledgment of the religious nature of this crisis must be the foundation of the policy of a Christian body.

The second sentence sums up our mission. Before our very eyes an un-Christian world is being destroyed. The religious understanding of what we are witnessing will make Christianity a creative force in the rebuilding of the world.

The third sentence united the Conference in the conviction that the extension of community, whether it be called human or 'Christian', involves to-day active co-operation in the political field with those who in that sphere are striving towards the same end.

No amendment that qualified or made ineffective these propositions was accepted.¹

The Cambridge Conference may prove to have been the growing-point of a new and deeper religious consciousness in and around the Auxiliary. Our world is under judgment. The Christian Left carries a prophetic message. The whole body of the Auxiliary has given a hearing to it. Even those who still reject the message cannot refuse to acknowledge its religious reality. We must proceed determinedly with our teaching work inside our ranks and outside.

THE CAMBRIDGE CONFERENCE

The main interest of the Easter Conference was centred on the decisions of the Annual General Meeting, particularly as most of the addresses were only incidentally concerned with the relation of the Christian to World Affairs.

It was clear from the start that the policies put forward by the Christian Left Group and the Church of the Future Group were extremely different, if they were not opposed to each other. The question that had to be answered was this: is there a common task for the Auxiliary, or are the rival policies which are put before the Movement so different that either the Christian Left or the Church of the Future group must retire?

However earnestly the movement as a whole might desire to include both groups, it might well be that such a unity would be fictitious, and that the policy of one would hamper, if it did not prevent, the work of the other. Robert Mackie frankly admitted that he thought it was impossible to find a policy which would suit both groups. Faced with this situation the Christian Left put forward what they thought could be a common basis: 'We differ profoundly on the nature of Christianity, on questions of theology, and on the duty of Christians in the world to-day; but we are agreed on one thing at least—we are all, as Christians, opposed to Fascism. The common basis can therefore be *The Christian Answer to Fascism*.'

This common basis was discussed and generally accepted. It does not mean that every member of the Auxiliary Movement is expected to take an active part in our campaign against Fascism. Those who are primarily interested in Reunion, or Missions, or the Church of the Future, will continue to be so. But as a Movement they are committed to a positive stand against Fascism, and they are committed also to the material support of the Christian Left in their work.

The basis having been decided, it was necessary to combine in some way the resolutions of the Auxiliary Christian Left with the Plan of Action put forward by G.C. Our first resolution was passed, making it possible to take decisions by majority vote after adequate discussion. Resolution 5, with our consent, was not voted on. Resolution 4, relating to changes in the Constitution, was rendered void by the suspension of clauses 1 to 4 and 14 to 16 of the Constitution.

¹ The exclusive formulae which were passed, as to the nature of the Church, were such as to make it impossible for many of us to subscribe to them in good conscience, and we must at a future meeting press for a fuller and less hurried discussion upon them.

The Church of the Future group proposed amendments to our Resolution 2, which concerned policy. All these amendments were passed, with one important change which is mentioned below. Resolution 2, as passed by the meeting reads as follows:

'The current policy of the Movement arises out of its acknowledgment of the religious nature of the present critical stage in the transformation of society.

'The immediate task of the movement is to secure wider recognition of this fact, in order to make Christianity the determining force in this transformation.

'The general task is to work for the extension of Christian community. To-day this involves active co-operation with those movements which make for the extension of democracy, both nationally and internationally.

'The Movement recognizes:

- (i) that the Church exists by the will of God as the instrument through which His purpose of the redemption of the world is achieved. The objective we seek in working through the Churches is the worship of God, the work of reconciliation, and the extension of Christian community.
- (ii) that we must work for a society which is classless, democratic and personal.
- (iii) that to-day we must co-operate with other movements in so far as they are working for this end.
- (iv) that the main resistance to this movement comes from those forces which, by exalting State or Race, deny the kingship of Christ, and which can therefore only be finally defeated in the religious field.'

We strongly disagreed with the first of these four riders, for several reasons. First, it eliminates our reference to the Socialist movement; second, *Church* is ambiguous; if it is used as a synonym for *the churches*, it excludes those of us who are outside the organized churches; if it means merely all those who are doing the will of God, the statement is tautological.

The fourth clause originally ran: '... those forces which, in exalting class, empire, state or race deny the kingship of Christ. ...'

We pressed for the omission of the words *class* and *empire* for two reasons:

- (1) The inclusion of the words by making the statement more general made it more vague, so that it could be taken to refer to other things than Fascism. The exclusion of the words, taken in conjunction with the agreed basis, made the reference to Fascism explicit.
- (2) The words could be—and in fact were, by some—interpreted to mean an attack on those parties who recognized the existence of the class struggle.

These two words, therefore, would not only have concealed the anti-Fascist basis behind phrases which could have been interpreted in a very different sense, they would also have prejudiced our co-operation with a 'movement working for the extension of democracy', the Socialist working-class movement. We were therefore prepared to resign from the movement, if the words were left in, for we knew that the common basis would then have been illusory.

The elimination of the word 'class' was vital for us also for another reason. We think of ourselves as of the *religious* allies of *political* Socialism. This movement is represented to-day by the Left wing working-class parties, including the Communist Party. We did not wish to leave any doubt about our solidarity with these parties in the political field.

So much time had been wasted in discussing questions of procedure, that it was quite impossible to express the true nature of our differences, or even to make clear to the Conference why we were putting forward different policies. We opposed the suggestion that the synthesis of the Plan of Action and Resolution 3 should be undertaken by the new general committee, for we knew that on the nature of this synthesis depended whether we

could remain within the movement or not. It was, however, impossible to discuss the two plans in detail, and we agreed to waive most of Resolution 3, provided sections 1 and 5 were discussed:

- '(1) Intensive study courses to produce an informed membership from which will come speakers who can carry the responsibility of a campaign.
- '(5) A campaign on the Christian answer to Fascism, using local branches of the Movement as centres of organization, and members of the Movement as speakers: the campaign to be launched at an annual conference devoted to the subject.'

The discussion on these two clauses made us fear that the compromise which had been reached was an illusion, and that it depended on ambiguity of interpretation. We found that some of those who agreed to a campaign interpreted its substance to be not the Christian answer to Fascism but the Plan of Action.

There was considerable opposition to a resolution to the Government on the subject of Claude Cockburn; and we were not allowed to use the name of the Movement in the May Day procession. We were unwilling to remain in the Movement on an illusory basis, and when the last session of the Annual General Meeting began, we determined to resign if we failed to obtain the support we required to implement our part of the programme.

We explained to the meeting that we did not expect the whole Movement to take part in the campaign on the Christian answer to Fascism, but that we did ask that the whole Movement should support us in our work, though a large part of its energies was directed elsewhere. A resolution was proposed 'That a campaign on the Christian answer to Fascism be authorized and helped by the administration.' This was passed, almost unanimously, after Hilda Hudson had made a strong speech in its support. It was also resolved 'that a conference on the Christian answer to Fascism be held'—not necessarily the next annual conference.

Apart from the Annual General Meeting the most valuable part of the conference was Kenneth Ingram's 'Call to Laymen', an excellent statement of our position, which we hope to publish in a later issue.

THE PACIFIST ISSUE'

The defence of pacifism is not a happy task to those who face the present conflicts in their reality. There is no sense of spiritual exaltation to help us to ignore the insistent demand that we shall avoid bolt-holes and accept the responsibility of political action. There are some who are pacifists out of habit, and some from fear and squeamishness disguised as humanitarian sentiment. It is difficult for anyone to know exactly what factors have led him to take up the pacifist position, but there are at least some who, after repeated self-analysis, cannot help feeling that the destruction of life and the surrender of our responsibility to the orders of a military machine, even if it were in the service of a Socialist state, are actions which it is simply not in our nature to do. It is not a matter of saving our souls, but it is just that the concept of life which we have learnt, rightly or wrongly, from Jesus, has become incompatible with violent action either in offence or defence.

This is not a doctrine of perfectionism; we do not blink the fact that we are all dependent on an industrial system which is no less destructive of personality than is war. We believe that no one can consistently be a pacifist and at the same time accept capitalism. But we do not feel that because we are unwillingly involved in un-Christian economic relations we should therefore be consistently un-Christian in all our behaviour.

Pacifism is thus primarily a matter of personal conviction and faith, and for many it is so strong that it would be held in face of the most insistent 'practical' considerations. But no pacifist who is in the least objectively sensitive could allow his conviction to extend to the condemnation of others who, far more seriously menaced by Fascism and oppression than

¹A statement made by Kenneth Barnes on behalf of our Petersfield Group, at a meeting of the Auxiliary Christian Left in London, March 13th, 1937.

is anyone in England, have taken up arms to defend the liberties of the common man. Are there pacifists so complacent in their belief as not to have found it disturbed by the events in Vienna in 1933 and in Spain now? A pacifism that is never shaken is a pacifism that rests not on human sympathy and imagination but on self-regard and spiritual pride. He who is fully sensitive to the sufferings of the peoples of the world cannot help but be torn by conflicting impulses that make havoc of his equanimity.

There is some support for the pacifist position even from the realist standpoint. There is a grave risk that now, although democracy is endangered in a more real sense than in 1914, men will be moved to enlist their idealism under national powers that have neither the intention nor the ability to defend democracy and freedom. Whatever its stated purpose, the arms of the British Government will necessarily be used in defence of imperial interests, privilege and property. The more support it receives the more it approximates to Fascism. The Labour movement, appealed to through democratic and anti-fascist sentiment, may soon find itself a corporative part of a fascist government. But a pacifist movement that is politically educated can keep us aware of certain underlying realities such as this.

There are some who dream of a pacifist solution immediately applicable to present conflicts. It is easy to indulge this hope in a country that still enjoys prosperity and comfort, and easy to forget that the privileged position that fosters these hopes rests upon economic power and imperial possessions. The grim thought has to be faced that there may be no pacifist solution possible. Things may have gone too far. Democracy, freedom and truth may have to suffer a black-out. But the pacifists who, having faced the realities of the political struggle in Europe, remain true to their personal convictions, will perhaps carry into the darkness a light that will survive it.

There is a great and much-needed demand for realism in political thought, to counter the futile illusionism of much post-war peace propaganda which assumed that a pacifist national policy could go hand-in-hand with a capitalist economy. But realism often runs close to opportunism. There are more than one 'realist' interpretations of events, so that some must eventually prove to be illusory. Calculations as to the future of Europe and of the results of any particular action must be largely speculative. In view of all this it is well that there should be at least a few in the community who try to unite, even if vainly, their personal conviction with their political advocacy. Otherwise a large element of reality might be lost to view.

This may seem a low estimate of the part to be played by pacifists in the present and coming struggles. What about the size of the Peace Pledge Union, it may be asked? One might take more encouragement from that if it were arising in Italy or Germany or Spain. The fact that it is not being born in tribulation but in relative comfort and security makes one doubt its strength. It may be to some extent escapist in its motive, but one cannot know until it has been tested. In the meantime we can join it and help to strengthen the hands of those in it who see the war problem and the economic problem as one, and who demand a united front not only against war, but also against profit-seeking industry.

In industry the pacifist certainly has an important function to perform: not in bringing employer and employed together in 'honourable co-operation' (and thus stabbing justice in the back) but in developing a new technique among those who work for a wholly socialist solution. What is wanted is a technique of resistance which is neither inflammatory, nor recriminatory, nor vengeful, yet uncompromising in its demand for what is true and just.

It is emphatically *not* the function of the pacifist to remain neutral, to indulge in the illusion that he can avoid taking sides in the conflict. Truth comes before everything and must be followed wherever it leads. It is in the matter of method that the pacifist has reason to differ from many who aim at the same objectives as himself. In the realm of politics it is still true that Satan cannot cast out Satan and that ultimately a true community must be founded on love. Even a Fascist under his black shirt is human and is better seduced by friendship than driven into deeper opposition by abuse.

Discussion. The following points were raised in discussion. They are *not* to be taken as the agreed findings of the meeting, but as individual expressions of viewpoint.

We are concerned, not with the pacifist issue only but with the whole question of the use of violence—violence being defined as such force as could damage another personality.

Politics is concerned with the organization of society by coercive means. But at what stage does coercion become violence, and is it then necessarily un-Christian?

For some of us the answer to the latter question is yes; others feel that at times violence may become necessary, but even so, it is always bad. It is here that the Christian differs from the Communist—he knows that, since he lives in an imperfect world he cannot himself remain perfect, but at the same time he must always be conscious of his own imperfections.

Acknowledging that the use of violence is bad, we must reject it as a means to our own ends. But a moral distinction of great importance must be drawn between the use of violence as a means to achieve an end and its use to defend against aggression a position already achieved. In a democratic society the first usually implies the forcing of the will of a minority on the majority; the second involves the upholding of the will of the majority against the attack of a minority. In our present society violence will almost certainly be used by a reactionary minority in deciding the issues which will inevitably arise in our time. Such violence may possibly be overcome by non-violent methods, and part of the Christian task is the discovery of these and their use. But the disastrous effect of the refusal to use violence by those who believe in it is shown by the demoralization of the democratic movements in England following their passive attitude in the Manchurian and Abyssinian conflicts.

A Christian movement active in politics ought, more than others, to be aware of what *cannot* be achieved by violent means. Hatred is always wrong, the use of hatred even worse. Even if we accept the fact that violence may sometimes be necessary we must show that we do not associate it with the feeling of hatred, and even less with the desire for revenge.

It is here that the Christian Left has a special part to play in the achievement of a classless society, which will end and eliminate the class war which has so characterized the history of our present society.

It was suggested that if we believe in the use of armed force we must prepare for it systematically and efficiently, a process involving a vast amount of time and energy. It was stated that preparation for war led to domestic Fascism, but the contrary opinion was expressed, that a democracy could equip itself more efficiently for defence than could a fascized people, and without abrogating the liberty of the people.

It was asked whether killing a man was the worst thing in war. Some thought that a much worse thing was the surrender of conscience and responsibility to authority. Others emphasized the fact that we are always involved in a social war which offers only a slow death and a tortured personality, and which is reflected in the international sphere, where, incidentally, the *declaration* of even the most violent hostilities is now dispensed with.

Several individuals felt that pacifists who stated dogmatically that their position was such and such, and that they would never change it, were taking an absolutist position here, which they would condemn in other fields.

Many people did not wish to be branded as 'anti-pacifists', for they reserved the right to take up a pacifist or a non-pacifist attitude in a particular situation. They were therefore anxious that the means of arriving at a decision should not be destroyed by any narrow insistence on an immovable position.

The pacifist and non-pacifist members were agreed on one important matter: that no authority should have the right to demand that a man should act against his moral feeling and his conscience. It was shown that it was more difficult to object to a specific war, while not objecting to war as such, than to be a 'C.O.'. The conscientious objector's position has been recognized, while the former position would bring the individual into a direct clash with the government.

It was felt by everyone, whether pacifist or not, that the positive line to take was to discover how far we could all agree on those things which cannot be achieved by violence.

It was generally acknowledged that the presentation of the issue in this meeting had been of real educational value, and had made the subject accessible to open minds.

SHELLEY ON SPAIN

'In Spain and in the dependencies of Spain, good and evil in the forms of Despair and Tyranny are struggling face to face. That great people have been delivered bound hand and foot to be trampled upon and insulted by a traitorous and sanguinary tyrant. . . . The tyrant . . . found natural allies in all the priests and military chiefs and a few of the most dishonourable of that devoted country. And the consequences of military despotism and the black, stagnant, venomous hatred, which priests in common with eunuchs seek every opportunity to wreak upon the portion of mankind exempt from their own unmanly disqualifications, is slavery. And what is slavery—in its mildest form hideous, and, so long as one amiable or great attribute survives in its victims, rankling and intolerable, but in its darkest shape as it now exhibits itself in Spain it is the essence of all and more than all the evil, for the sake of an exemption from which mankind submits to the mighty calamity of government. It is . . . prostration of conscience and understanding, it is famine heaped upon the greater number and contumely heaped upon all; defended by unspeakable tortures employed not merely as punishments but as precautions, by want, death and captivity, and the application to political purposes of the execrated and enormous instruments of religious cruelty. . . . Armed insurgents occupy all the defensible mountains of the country. . . . Spain, having passed through an ordeal severe in proportion to the wrongs and errors which it is kindled to erase must of necessity be renovated. Spain produced Calderon and Cervantes, what else did it but breathe, thro the tumult of the despotism and superstition which invested them, the prophecy of a glorious consummation?'

A Philosophical View of Reform, 1820.

NEWS OF THE CHRISTIAN LEFT

MAY DAY. This year the May First demonstration is to be on a broader basis than ever before. There will be a special section for religious groups, and it is hoped that big contingents will turn out. The religious section assembles at 2.15 p.m. on Victoria Embankment under Waterloo Bridge.

In order that as many of the Christian Left as possible shall be able to join in this demonstration, and in the Labour Demonstration on Sunday May 2nd, the next week-end meeting of the Christian Left will take place on Saturday, May 1st and Sunday, May 2nd, at 32 Russell Square, W.C.1, on May 1st, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.; and at No. 1 Weymouth House, Hallam Street, W.1., on May 1st, 6.30 p.m. to 10 p.m.; and May 2nd, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. The agenda of the meeting will include a report of the Auxiliary Conference at Cambridge, the election of a committee to act for the forthcoming year, and a discussion on finance. Please register with Marjorie Young, 9 Greenhurst Road, S.E.27, if you can come.

Since the notices of the Christian Left week-end were sent out, it has been found possible to hold the lecture which Kenneth Ingram would have given earlier this month except for his absence in Spain. He will speak on 'The Meaning of the Kingdom of Heaven', and on his observations in Spain, Friday April 30th, at 7.45 p.m., in the School Hall, Lancing Street, N.W.1 (Euston Underground Station). The meeting announced for Russell Square on the same evening will therefore not be held.

At the Auxiliary conference at Cambridge at Easter a collection of just over £47 was taken in order to send further equipment to Dr. Jolly at his field hospital near Madrid. This was made up to £50 from money in the Christian Left Spanish Fund, and the equipment, which included some special brain instruments, left for Spain on April 7th.

Dr. Jolly is working under very great pressure, and it is hoped that some one may soon be found who will relieve him for two or three weeks.

Irene Grant has sailed for two months lecturing in the United States and Canada, and will not be back until the end of May. During her absence correspondence should be sent to Marjorie Young, 9 Greenhurst Road, London, S.E.27, or to David Cass-Beggs, 15 Museum Road, Oxford.

We are advised that the Left Book Club is planning a conference for religious leaders, full details of which will appear in the May issue of the 'News' of that organization.

THE CHRISTIAN LEFT

July 15, 1937. No. 9

THE NEW MAGAZINE

OCTOBER, 1937

CHRISTIAN LEFT DOCUMENTS

THE CHRISTIAN LEFT:
DRAFT BASIS

CROSS, HAMMER AND SICKLE

THE SUMMER CONFERENCE

A NEW STAGE

This is the last issue of *The Christian Left News Sheet* in its old form. It has fulfilled its function. The appearance of the Magazine, *THE CHRISTIAN LEFT*, next October marks a new stage in the development of our Movement. The need for such a venture requires but scant explanation. A point has been reached where we must convey the message of the Christian Left to the outside world. We have become aware of the peculiar task we have to fulfil in relation to the religious consciousness of our time. We need a militant organ of teaching, comment and discussion.

Mr. Kenneth Ingram has agreed to undertake editorial responsibility for the Magazine in consultation with a board consisting of Professor John Macmurray, Dr. Karl Polanyi, Miss Fanny Street, and Mr. Kenneth Muir. Our present readers are asked to take their share in this work by helping to build up a large circulation. A short prospectus of the magazine will be sent shortly to all readers; those who will undertake to distribute copies are asked to communicate with Kenneth Ingram, 38 Onslow Gardens, S.W.7.

We should like to receive offers for a further place on the editorial board from someone who will make the business side of the magazine his special responsibility. While a knowledge of the publishing and printing trades would be very useful, his main job would be looking after the accounts, costing, and circulation business. Will anyone who can give these services please get in touch with Kenneth Ingram?

ESSENTIAL PASSAGES FROM CHRISTIAN LEFT DOCUMENTS¹

Religion, we believe, is our attitude to reality as a whole, and therefore to every aspect of the whole, including bread and butter, politics and economics.

As Christians we believe that reality as a whole is personal; that our relation to this reality is, in general terms, our relation to God, and, in particular terms, to all persons without exception. Our direct experience of this reality is our experience of community with those we love. Christianity is, in fact, 'primarily concerned with the communion of persons'. We cannot love God except as we love and live in community with our fellows. 'He who loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?'

Man does not live by bread alone; he lives by love and fellowship. But man cannot live without bread; and our love is unreal if it does not intend to express itself in co-operation for the supply of bread to all. 'Whosoever seeth his brother in need and shutteth up his compassion for him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?' This planning and sharing the supply of bread is not 'the material side' of our life; it is the 'not-bread-alone' aspect of it. For according to how we plan, make and distribute the supply of bread we shall affirm and enjoy or desecrate and deny our common life, our brotherhood, our relation to God.

There are no problems of human life which are not religious problems, which are not problems of the relationship of persons, and therefore of their relation to God. We believe, as Christians, that the way we behave in our relations to one another is the focus of all the problems of our common humanity. The particular questions of our political and economic life are also in every case problems of the relationships of persons to one another.

If, therefore, an attempt be made to solve economic or political problems without considering them as religious problems they cannot possibly be solved. This is the relevance of Christianity to life in society.

¹ NOTE. Demands for a reprint of Christian Left documents made it advisable to print essential passages in this form.

In our day the socialist movement has everywhere asserted that this universal brotherhood is the only solution of the actual political and economic problems of the world. We believe as Christians that they are right. Russian Communism is carrying out this task in practical politics. We believe that it has discovered the *true* political task; we also believe that it cannot complete and maintain this work if it rejects Christianity.

Since those who are doing, or trying to do, this task have come into the struggle for the Kingdom of God on our side, we cannot, as Christians, oppose them. Rather we must recognize and support them. The next step in the extension of community is being taken; we must recognize it. Here the awakened consciousness that the bounds of our human community must again be extended is finding its appropriate expression. This expression, this *intention* thus to extend community, is the very content of religious experience in our day; the very garment in which God presents himself to our generation.

The task of the Christian community is not to save itself; it is to save the world, to establish in the actual life of mankind the universal brotherhood of men. It must welcome in this task all those who fight its battle, even if their vision of the means for its accomplishment is dangerously limited.

(*The Christian Task: No. 1. July 1st, 1936*)

By Christian Left we meant from the beginning, the expression of that religious move which in the present period makes Christianity an active force in the transformation of society towards Socialism. This move is felt in the theological field; in the sphere of personal and group life; inside the Churches; in politics. Both practical and theoretical problems of an entirely new kind have to be faced. Here again it is the prophetic interpretation of the nature of our times and the recognition of the active task of the Christian in this crisis which proves the solid basis of all efforts at clarification.

(*No. 1. July 1st, 1936*)

The basis of the discussions. The signs of the times call the Christian to a special task in the present world transformation.

Either in the form of war or of the profound changes in society necessary to avoid war, a great crisis is coming upon us.

In that crisis the decision will fall between Socialism and Fascism.

Our task as Christians is to work for the triumph of the former.

Outlook on Politics and Economics. This diagnosis implies that the next step towards the realization of universal community lies, in our time, in the economic field.

That the main instrument of the transformation of economic life is, at present, political.

That the functions of political parties cannot be taken over by other groups or bodies, nor ought religious groups as such to aim at political power.

The limitations under which political parties stand in the pursuit of power are, however, recognized.

Thus our task cannot be solved either by keeping away from political parties, nor by restricting our activities to working inside them.

(*Plan for a Discussion. No. 1. March 24th, 1936*)

THE POLITICAL TASK OF THE CHRISTIAN LEFT

The crisis of our time is the expression of a vast process of change. Nationally, our present society is being superseded by a socialist community founded on the communal ownership of the means of production. Internationally, we have entered upon the socialist era of human history in the emergence of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics.

The conscious recognition of the nature of this process and of the part that Christianity has to play in it, is the basis of the political task of the Christian Left.

A united front of all Christians, whether inside or outside the Churches, must strive for those ends which they have in common with the socialist working class movement.

To serve these ends the Christian Left is working towards a political campaign to release the forces of the Christian dynamic latent in this country.

This campaign should result neither in a political movement apart from the existing working class movement, nor in a new political party or body, nor (on the other hand) in new religious organizations nor even in the use of new religious forms of organization—but in such a manifestation of the relation of Christianity to politics in our time as will bring the common people into the ranks of the politically conscious working class.

The constituent groups carrying on this campaign should embrace those who are ready to devote to this task all their energy above that required to provide for their every-day existence.

The campaign itself must make its appeal to the much larger body of those susceptible to its Christian approach.

It is by their task that these groups will be created and held together. They will be a community in virtue of their continuing co-operation in that task.

The discipline and schooling, the training and technique deriving from such a task will reform the consciousness of the individual and build up the personality of the revolutionary Christian.

Our political means and methods must be conditioned by our aims, but we cannot share in the illusion that these can be ultimately achieved by concealing our basic convictions.

The importance of the born preacher or orator for the success of such a campaign should not be overestimated; we must, however, look to a special training to fit us for the work we have to do.

(No. 1. May 27th, 1936)

The official policy of the 'Aux.' has always discouraged an other-worldly attitude and tried to develop an active line in the political field. Its weakness lies in its apparent inability to state in positive terms the relation of Christianity to politics in our time. The Christian cannot set aside at will the actual form of the political organization of his time. To-day this form, in democratic countries, is the party system. Our politics, therefore, are party politics. The limitation of politics to non-party politics is a piece of idealism, which, as can easily be shown, works, if unconsciously, in favour of the interests of the owning classes and the political parties supporting them . . . Politics, for the member of a Christian body, means responsible political decision as a member of that body. Here again the true distinction is not between party and non-party politics, but between the reality of political activity, and the illusion of it.

(The Durham Conference: Issues. No. 2. Aug. 1st, 1936)

We, as Christians, have tried in the Auxiliary Christian Left to take our stand during the last year upon the same conviction—our conflict with advancing Fascism is not a conflict primarily of social, political or economic forms; it is a conflict between differing conceptions of the nature of human life, mutually exclusive of one another. Where Christianity would extend the frontiers of human community till they include all mankind, Fascism would restrict the area of community, and accept the conflicts between communities which is involved. Where Christianity asserts that the individual is of primary value; that he can be fully an individual only in a society of equals, and that the experience of human community is of the essence of reality, Fascism denies fundamentally the value of the individual and the equality of human beings. Fascism has taken steps which express, in the forms of life, its basic conception. Christianity will reveal itself in so far as it finds, and takes, the next step necessary for the realization of that human brotherhood in which, Christians believe, reality is to be experienced. The achievement of Socialism will provide the conditions in which such a brotherhood can live and function.

(The Durham Conference: Results. No. 3. Oct. 5th, 1936)

To stand for Christianity in our own day is to stand for the movement which is struggling to advance towards a universal human society based on equality and freedom. This is undoubtedly the Socialist movement, whether within or without the Churches. A struggle means an effort to overcome real opposition. To stand for Christianity in our day is,

therefore, to join in the struggle to overcome the opposition to Socialism. The organized form of this opposition is Fascism, and its clearest shape is to be found in Germany. It is clearest because its leader is an emotional genius, and possesses the capacity to seize instinctively upon the effective symbols which mobilize the emotional resistance to the further development of Christianity. His passionate resentment of the Jew and all that is Jewish in European civilization is the perfect symbol of this opposition. It is the Jewish contribution to Western civilization which he wishes to erase, and the Jewish contribution *par excellence* is Christianity. He opposes it because it is a threat to a racial or national conception of human community. To stand for Christianity is now to take part in the struggle against Fascism. The question of the Churches is a subordinate one. We must recognize gladly that they represent historic milestones in the progress of Christianity. But we cannot afford to be benevolent historians. We are fighting for the future. So far as the Churches or any of them or any parts of them are prepared to join the struggle for the further advance of the Christian movement, we stand with them gladly. So far as they offer resistance to a new advance of the movement which created them we must sadly recognize them as part of the opposition to Christianity which we must attack and overthrow.

(John Macmurray: *'Christianity and the Churches'*. No. 3. Oct. 5th, 1936)

Christianity is not in the position of a neutral onlooker preparing to accommodate itself to a socialist order, in case that new order should happen to be triumphant. If the new order is no less than the manifestation of the divine force, if the capitalist system is essentially un-Christian, the conflict is between Christ and paganism. The task of the Christian Left becomes accordingly that of revealing the significance of the crisis and of acting in the light of that knowledge. To the Christian we must bring home the duty of working for the cause of Christ: insist that this means coming into the political field, since the conflict is itself religious: and recognize that many Christians will, because of a genuine faith, range themselves on the Fascist side in defence of the old order, even as the orthodox Jews crucified Christ for the best of motives. To the political secularist of the Left we must point out the fuller meaning of the cause which he is promoting, and we must help to arouse the consciousness of the working classes who are destined to be the vanguard of the new forces.

(Kenneth Ingram: *'The New and the Old.'* No. 4. Nov. 14, 1936)

The Christian may well agree with the Fascists that man needs to be in community. But he can accept no community narrower than the whole of humanity. Community must be regained, not on a lower, but on a higher level, of consciousness. We must not, through despair, seek for happiness in a herd; we must rather find re-integration by increasing our range of consciousness. We can achieve community not by destroying democracy, but by fulfilling it.

(Kenneth Muir: *'Fascism and Community.'* No. 6. Feb. 28, 1937)

There is a growing tendency to-day to centre the discussion of world affairs on the alternative Fascism versus Communism. Hitler is taking the lead in applying this to the field of foreign policy. In religion and philosophy an increasing number of people, reactionaries as well as old-type liberals, are repeating this formula. An appalling amount of confusion is thus being created.

The real alternative to-day is Fascism or Democracy—a fundamental religious issue which reappears in various forms in the basic social problems of our time.

The confusion is created by the arbitrary fashion in which Socialism and Communism are linked up with this antithesis. We should put the terms right.

Socialism is an economic system; its present-day alternative is Capitalism.

Fascism is a form of society; its alternative is Democracy. Under modern industrial conditions Democracy can continue to exist in none other than a socialist economy. This is denied only by those who, consciously or unconsciously, want to perpetuate the capitalist system.

Communism as distinct from Socialism means in practice simply the Soviet Union. Those who draw Communism into the debate wish, in reality, to oppose the Soviet Union. As a form of Socialism, Soviet Communism is certainly not an issue in any country of Western Europe. It was the outcome of unique conditions—mass illiteracy, lack of industries, and absence of democratic traditions. Under conditions such as those the Socialist Economy necessarily took the form found in Russia. The success of the work of socialist construction in Russia in the face of those conditions enhances its universal significance for the future of mankind.

To assert, therefore, that Communism is the alternative to Fascism is to obscure the issue in favour of the Fascist position. Not Fascism and Communism but Fascism and Democracy are the alternatives with which humanity is faced to-day politically and socially. To religious people this ought to be clearer than to others. The religious conflict of our time is between the Christian forces underlying Democracy and the anti-Christian forces embodied in Fascism. The search for a 'third alternative', a so-called Christian solution which should be 'neither Fascism nor Communism' is a mystification. Democracy is the only Christian alternative even though to-day it necessarily involves Socialism. But it is precisely because it implies Socialism that many people are trying to cut loose from Democracy. They would be ashamed to do this openly. By dragging the red herring of Communism across the trail they hope to get away with it.

(No Christian Alternative.' No. 6. Feb. 28th, 1937)

Orthodox Christianity is rightly suspect to the socialist. He cannot help regarding it as the ideological defence of a Church, the economic and financial structure of which makes it dependent upon the vested interests of property.

But still more perhaps than the orthodox creeds, it is their idealist interpretation in current Christian thought that binds organized Christianity to the existing social order. Of all the spiritual allies of Capitalism, the perfectionist interpretation of Christian ethics is the most dangerous foe of the working-class movement to-day. . . .

Both he who shrinks from contact with the coarseness of his surroundings, and he who trains himself to passive indifference towards its revolting realities, equally sacrifices action in an imperfect world to the ideal of absolute perfection. No third alternative is open to the Christian perfectionist. To try to stay in an imperfect world, while struggling to overthrow it by the instrument of perfection, is mere self-delusion. State and society are imperfect by their nature. He who would resolve to restrict his attempts at revolutionizing them to the use of such methods as would allow him to remain perfect himself could achieve nothing better than a delusion as to the worth of his own activities. In trying to evade the Scylla of moral complacency he would risk being shattered on the Charybdis of despairing futility. Christianity thus emasculated is no longer a force that can re-shape the world; it is simply an instrument of class-rule, blocking the road to radical change, while sanctifying existing evils through a perversion of the doctrine of original sin. . . .

This social perfectionism, nurtured by the Methodist revival, 'saved England from a revolution'. The British working class was the victim of a perfectionist ethic which exalted the virtues of passivity and suffering into the highway of salvation. During the first decades of that most barbarous of revolutions called the Industrial Revolution the Capitalist class could safely rely on a people indoctrinated by their ministers with the idealist conception that nothing was worth troubling about but perfection. As long as such poisonous teaching was not expunged from the consciousness of the workers, the domination of an inhuman and un-Christian system of economic autocracy could neither be challenged nor overthrown. The working-class movement itself was doomed to oscillate helplessly between a sound but necessarily limited Trades Unionism and a vague Utopian Socialism.

Not even the tremendous experience of triumphant Russian realism was able to shake British Labour out of its perfectionist day-dreams. . . .

(The Moscow Trials. No. 6. Feb. 28th, 1937)

RESOLUTIONS SUBMITTED TO THE AUXILIARY MOVEMENT

1. This Conference instructs the General Committee to re-draft the 'Implications', the 'Brief Statement', and the 'Grey Book' in such a way as to place the Movement unmistakably on the side of:

- (i) A democracy which includes the possibility of Socialism, involving the communal ownership of the means of production.
- (ii) A peace system organized and upheld by the Democratic and Socialist countries.

Submitted at Durham, August 1936 (No. 2. Aug. 1st, 1936)

2. That the following be the policy of the Auxiliary Movement:

The current policy of the Movement arises out of its acknowledgment of the religious nature of the present critical stage in the transformation of society. The immediate task of the Movement is to secure wider recognition of this fact, in order to make Christianity the determining force in this transformation.

The general task is to work for the extension of human community. To-day this involves active co-operation with those movements which make for the extension of democracy, nationally and internationally.

We believe:

- (i) that to-day the main forces making for this goal are in the socialist working-class movement;
- (ii) that the main resistance comes from those forces embodied in Fascism which are the negation of Christianity and which can therefore only be finally defeated in the religious field.

(Submitted at Cambridge, March 1937. No. 7. March 20th, 1937)

(The first part of the resolution (No. 2) was accepted with the substitution of Christian Community for human community, but the following were substituted for our riders (i) and (ii))

The Movement recognizes:

- (i) that the Church exists by the will of God as the instrument through which His purpose of the redemption of the world is achieved. The objective we seek in working through the Churches is the worship of God, the work of reconciliation, and the extension of Christian community.
- (ii) that we must work for a society which is classless, democratic and personal.
- (iii) that to-day we must co-operate with other movements in so far as they are working for this end.
- (iv) that the main resistance to this movement comes from those forces which, by exalting State or Race, deny the kingship of Christ, and which can therefore only be finally defeated in the religious field.

We strongly disagreed with the first of these four riders, for several reasons. First, it eliminates our reference to the Socialist movement; second, *Church* is ambiguous; if it is used as a synonym for *the churches*, it excludes those of us who are outside the organized churches; if it means merely all those who are doing the will of God, the statement is tautological.

The fourth clause originally ran: '... those forces which, in exalting class, empire, state or race deny the kingship of Christ...'

We pressed for the omission of the words *class* and *empire* for two reasons:

- (1) The inclusion of the words by making the statement more general made it more vague, so that it could be taken to refer to other things than Fascism. The exclusion of the words, taken in conjunction with the agreed basis, made the reference to Fascism explicit.
- (2) The words could be—and in fact were, by some—interpreted to mean an attack on those parties who recognized the existence of the class struggle.

These two words, therefore, would not only have concealed the anti-Fascist basis behind phrases which could have been interpreted in a very different sense, they would also have prejudiced our co-operation with a 'movement working for the extension of democracy', the Socialist working-class movement. We were therefore prepared to resign from the movement, if the words were left in, for we knew that the common basis would then have been illusory.

The elimination of the word 'class' was vital for us also for another reason. We think of ourselves as of the *religious* allies of *political* Socialism. This movement is represented to-day by the Left wing working-class parties, including the Communist Party. We did not wish to leave any doubt about our solidarity with these parties in the political field.

(No. 8, April 24th, 1937)

WHAT IS THE CHRISTIAN LEFT?

[A draft basis, agreed to in outline at the May 1st Meeting and completed by a Sub-committee.]

The Christian Left has arisen out of the recognition of the religious nature of the present critical stage in the transformation of society. It stands for a fundamental restatement of Christianity in terms which express its meaning for our times.

Religion, we believe, is our attitude to reality as a whole and to nothing less than the whole; our attitude to this reality is in universal terms, our relation to God, and in particular terms, our relation to all persons without exception.

We believe that the truth about human life, discovered by Jesus, is that man finds his true nature in communion with his fellows; that this communion is affirmed or denied by the manner in which the material means of life are produced and made available.

We believe that the refusal to extend the boundaries of community, both nationally and internationally, lies at the root of the present world crisis. We believe that the true nature of man is asserting itself in our time in the demand for a change in the organization of society, that will abolish the private ownership of the means of production and establish production for use in the place of production for profit. It is asserting itself in the desire for an organization of human life on earth which will abolish political frontiers and establish a universal commonwealth of peoples.

We believe that with the emergence of Soviet Russia, mankind has entered upon a new phase of its development in which the refusal to go on to the next step in the transformation of society is the denial of human equality and freedom and of the urge to human universality and progress. Fascism which has its immediate source in this denial, has its ultimate source in the denial of the truth about human life discovered by Jesus. Because this truth is active in our time, our present society is under judgment.

It is the political mission of the working-class to lead the way to socialist transformation. We regard ourselves as their allies in the religious field.

In proclaiming our prophetic message; in denouncing the apostasy of the churches; in pointing to the signs of the times; in revealing the inevitability of the transformation; in preparing the minds of men for its oncoming, we fulfil our religious task.

COMMITMENTS OF MEMBERSHIP

Members accept the basis of the Christian Left and undertake to make it more widely understood.

Sir William Davison, Sir Edmund Findlay, Colonel John Gretton, Sir Patrick Hannon, Sir Nicholas Grattan-Doyle, Sir John Haslam, Mr. H. Holdsworth, Sir John Jarvis, Major-General Sir Alfred Knox, Mr. D. G. Logan, Mr. J. Tinker, and Lord Wolmer.

The memorial from those outside the House of Commons bore the signatures of many peers, canons, and clergy of the Church of England, naval and military officers, and leading members of many professions, among whom were:—

The Duke of Marlborough, Lord Cholmondeley, Lord Albemarle, Lord Cork and Orrery, Lord Denbigh and Desmond, Lord Glasgow, Lord Ilchester, Lord Selborne, Lord Shrewsbury, Lord Stair, Lord Chaplin, Lord Fitzalan of Derwent, Lord Tredegar, Lord Kinnaird, Lord Lamington, Lord Lugard, Lord Methuen, Lord Milne, Lord Poltimore, Lord Radstock, the Bishop of Worcester, the Assistant Bishop of Carlisle, the Archbishop of Westminster, Lady Melville, the Dowager Lady Saltoun, and Violet Lady Melchett.

The following were among recent additional signatories:—Lord Hill, Lord Aberdare, Lord Abinger, Lord Armstrong, Lord Desborough, Lord Derwent, Lord Fairfax of Cameron, Lord Gisborough, Lord Iliffe, Lord Leigh, Lord Lugard, Lord Sandhurst, Lord Seaton, Lord Sempill, Vice-Admiral Lord Stafford, Lord Vestey of Kingswood.

The complaint of the notables probably refers to a poster which, according to newspaper reports, was placarded in the East End of London a few months ago. If we remember aright the subject was raised in the House of Commons at the time—an M.P. described the poster as a Communist provocation. We have no other information about this placard, to which, for all we know, exception may have been justly taken.

What we are concerned with is this: an emblem that could be described almost (though not exactly) in the terms of the complaint is the emblem of the Auxiliary Christian Left. It was displayed on a banner in the May Day processions, and was carried by members of the group. It is the expression of a religious conviction.

The meaning of the emblem is obvious: Cross, Hammer and Sickle are joined together. To-day the socialist working-class movement, represented by hammer and sickle, is the vehicle of the Christian force in history. That it should choose a channel of which the notables of Church and State do not approve may appear to them to be blasphemous. None the less, that channel may indeed be chosen. Not for the first time in history are the weak things of the world chosen to confound the mighty.

The deserved eclipse of the Church in Russia is being made use of to obscure the fact that, in spite of error and tribulation, in that country to-day the every-day life of the community is being founded on economic justice. From the self-estrangement suffered under Capitalism man is returning to his true self. Far from blasphemous, the emblem exalts God beyond the understanding of those blinded by narrow class prejudice to the triumph of Jesus in history. 'A stone over which men stumble and a rock of offence; they stumble over it in their disobedience to God's word. Such is their appointed doom.'

Further copies of this News Sheet (and a limited number of some previous issues) can be obtained, price 3d. post free, from Mary Muir, Nunthorpe Hall, Philadelphia Terrace, York.

THE CHRISTIAN LEFT

No. 10

February 1938

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Editorial

OUR first duty is to offer an apology and some explanation for the long delay which has occurred since the last issue of *The Christian Left*. If our readers will turn to the account of the General Meeting they will learn to some extent why the delay was inevitable and what developments have taken place since the summer camp. It may be desirable, however, to amplify this information so that those members who were present neither at the Camp Conference nor at the General Meeting may be more fully acquainted with the present situation.

It will be remembered that in the summer of last year it was decided to substitute for the news-sheet a monthly magazine which would be addressed not only to Christian Left members but to a more general public. For this purpose an editor and an editorial board were elected, and it was hoped to produce the first number early in the autumn. At a meeting held after camp, however, the editorial board were faced with the resignation of one of their number. Not only did they appreciate that the non-co-operation of this member would prove a serious editorial handicap, but they became aware that this resignation reflected a difference of opinion within the Christian Left which was subsequently ventilated at the General Meeting on November 13th. In a later issue we hope to include a full statement of the discussion which has taken place between the Committee and a group of members. At the moment we will attempt no more than briefly to summarize this divergence of view.

This group emphasizes that the *raison d'être* of the Christian Left is the consciousness of its

personnel that the crisis in which we live concerns the nature and meaning of human life, and that Christianity, as the discovery of this meaning, is both causing the crisis and showing the way to its solution: that this consciousness is an experience, a conviction and a message: that for those to whom it is a valid experience it involves a commitment: that the Christian Left is a community only so far as that commitment is shared: and that only those who fully understand the commitment and are prepared to undertake it, should be responsible for the decisions of the Christian Left. This group holds that there has been a departure from this principle in the recent past, with disintegrating results: and that the Christian Left should accordingly be reformed, this reformation to be carried out by the original founders and not by the Christian Left as at present constituted.

The Committee has expressed its agreement with the claim that only those who are fully committed members must be responsible for decisions of the Christian Left. The Committee, however, emphasizes that this responsibility should be shared by all committed members, and that care must be taken to develop no kind of hierarchy of initiators and late-comers. Accordingly the Committee, while agreeing that the basis of membership should be thus strengthened, holds that these proposals must be laid before and decided by a general meeting of the present membership. The Committee, in fact, agrees with the proposals of this group, differing from them only in so far as it holds that the historic continuity of the Christian Left should be maintained, and therefore that any

decisions affecting the future of the Christian Left must be made by the existing members.

We trust that even though this summary may not adequately describe the standpoint and the conception of the Christian Left as represented by either of the two standpoints, it will afford some indication of the position which has developed since camp. Meanwhile, some regular

publication is needed—if only to provide a record of the activities of the various groups. It is intended therefore to issue this paper regularly each month, except during the summer holiday period. There will be nine issues a year, and besides Christian Left news and correspondence, articles and other features of general and topical interest will be included.

The General Meeting London, November 1937

The General Meeting of the Christian Left was held at the Institute of Christian Education, London, on November 20th-21st. The main business was to discuss the area reports of the Draft Basis etc. published after the Camp Conference in August, and to consider the future development of the Christian Left.

It became obvious early in the course of the proceedings that many of the members present were not fully informed as to developments which had arisen during the past few months. It was found necessary, therefore, to explain in summary some of the more recent history of the Christian Left.

During the summer of 1937 Irene Grant, who had hitherto carried out the secretarial work, was in U.S.A. The arrangements for the Camp Conference were left in the hands of a provisional committee. Although in the first instance the Camp Conference was planned for Christian Left members who had already attended a special course or who had been in contact with the movement for a considerable time, the actual personnel of the camp included a certain number of those who were interested in rather than familiar with the Christian Left position. For this reason many of the discussions were concerned with issues which would not have arisen had the Conference been confined entirely to members. Similarly, future plans, discussion as to the meaning and commitment of the Christian Left Message and similar subjects, which would have probably formed the exclusive agenda of a conference confined to members, gave way to subjects of more general interest: and it was not found possible to hold the business meeting, when the future programme was considered, until the last day, when the camp was already beginning to break up.

An interim committee had been appointed at

the Camp Conference to represent areas, to arrange for area meetings at which the Draft Basis would be discussed, and to organize a general meeting to consider the area recommendations. No other terms of reference were given.

The Editorial Board, which had been appointed in May, was instructed at camp to proceed with the publication of a magazine. When the Board met after camp, however, they were faced with the resignation of one of the contributing members. Partly on account of this, and partly because they believed that the movement showed signs of not having as yet acquired sufficient unity in its interpretation of the Christian Left position, the Board came to the conclusion that it would be premature to embark on the kind of magazine which had originally been envisaged. The Board reported their decision to the interim committee, but as there were no further meetings of that committee and it was not considered necessary to call a special meeting, the membership were not informed.

This summary of recent history having been presented, a general discussion took place on the various issues involved. Several members expressed the fear that the Christian Left religious message and purpose would be hindered by the inclusion of persons not fully committed to the basis and commitments. This group made the following statement:

"The Christian Left was born out of the inner necessity of recognizing a religious experience. The content of this experience is in the conviction that Socialism in our epoch is the expression of the Christian force at work in the world. It is the establishment of a Socialist society that will release essential personal living. Such life is possible to-day only by directly relating our lives to the bringing in of Socialism.

'Thus we find ourselves sure of Christianity and not

anxious for its future. Our sole concern is with the birth and future of the working class movement, the chief instrument of the transformation.

'Our existence is rooted in the certainty of the significance of life committed to Socialism.

'The Christian Left is the vehicle of this message. Through it we commit our time, means and energy, beyond the necessities of life, to the fulfilment of this message.'

The meeting then considered this statement and in the discussion which followed, the question was raised as to how the choice of membership was to be made—whether by individuals accepting the basis and stated commitments, or by the decision of the already fully committed members or their representatives.

It was agreed to regard the revised form of the Draft Basis as a Provisional Basis for one year, during which time it should be further studied and discussed, and to circulate it with a commentary to explain the significance of certain phrases in the light of our discussions during the week-end. John Macmurray and Irene Grant were asked to write the commentary. Ultimately it was decided that for the present, members should be asked to accept the Provisional Basis (in principle) and the Commitments.

A Committee was appointed, consisting of secretary and treasurer and ten members to carry out essential routine business. The Com-

mittee was instructed to nominate a sub-committee which the General Committee of the Auxiliary Movement should be asked to appoint as a standing committee for Christian Left business within the Auxiliary Movement. Questions of Christian Left policy and general business were to be decided at general meetings to be held at least three times a year in different parts of the country. Irene Grant was asked to give a statement to the Committee stating the position of the group whose statement she had presented. The Committee was also empowered to deal with urgent questions raised by the Auxiliary Movement. The meeting appointed Marjorie Young as the Christian Left representative on the Auxiliary Easter Conference Committee. The Christian Left had been asked to prepare memoranda for this conference and it was agreed to undertake this, and also to make arrangements for sending regular contributions to the Auxiliary publication, *Community*. It was also agreed to take responsibility for the Auxiliary Summer Conference, the subject of which will be 'The Christian Answer to Fascism'.

Owing to the foregoing discussions, it was not possible to consider the form of organization which had already been studied by the Area conferences, and apart from the appointment of a committee and a resolution to hold at least three general meetings a year, no further decisions were taken.

The Provisional Basis of The Christian Left With a Commentary by John Macmurray and Irene Grant

General Considerations

1. This is a *provisional* basis only. The Christian Left rests not on documents but on a living experience of community. Formulation is important, but secondary. Its purpose is to clarify and express, for ourselves and others, the meaning of our experience. Since living experience is a process of development, no formulation can be final. But also because our powers of understanding and expression are limited, our attempts at formulation are necessarily inadequate. All those involved in the effort to produce this formulation are conscious of its inadequacy. The Christian Left must look upon it as a first effort, the best we have been able to do up till now, but far from satisfactory. The main

purpose must be to provide a solid ground for criticism and restatement.

2. The first task of the document is to define our new experience of Christianity. For us it is not an ideal, nor a code of precepts, not a theology, nor a Church. It is a living process in human history of which we are a part. This process begins with the life and death of Jesus — itself a historic fact. We take our stand on the *Truth* of His understanding of the nature of human life; and on the *Rightness* of the life-work which embodied it. As a consequence we claim that the process of transformation in human society which He initiated is the movement of Christianity in history. The troubled and often unsavoury history of the Churches of Europe

and other parts of the world is only part of that history. The Churches are effects of the work of Jesus on the religious aspect of the world's life. The work itself is the transformation of human life in the world, of which the transformation of the religious relationships of men is an essential part, but only a part.

3. The second task is to express our experience of how we are related to the Christian process in world-history. Our claim to be a Christian community rests upon our personal commitment to the process in the circumstances of our own time. We recognize the historical progress of our civilization as the act of God in Christ reconciling the world to Himself. Therefore we recognize the revolution of social life in our own time as the contemporary expression of Christian revolution. In Socialism we see the positive movement of the world in the Christian direction, under the pressure of Christianity. In Fascism we see the organized opposition to Christianity, which Christianity must and will overcome. We express our Christian faith by committing ourselves consciously and deliberately to the service of this transformation of human life. We are members of the Christian Left because we so commit ourselves to the task of human redemption in its contemporary manifestation. We stand with Jesus in saying 'My Father worketh hitherto and I work'.

All this the provisional basis attempts to express.

The Provisional Basis

1. The Christian Left has arisen out of the recognition of the religious nature of the present critical stage in the transformation of society. This recognition shows us that religion is about human community; that a conception of God which is not a conception of human community is meaningless; and that a religion which does not effectively transform human relations in every sphere of life is an illusion.

2. Jesus proclaimed the truth about human life that man cannot fulfil his true nature except in communion with his fellows. The acceptance or rejection of this truth is expressed in the manner in which the material means of life are produced and made available. The effort to deny this truth lies at the root of the present world crisis. Consequently our society is under judgment, as is shown by the collapse of the social and international order.

3. The true nature of man is asserting itself in the demand for a change in the organization of society which will abolish the private ownership of the means of production, and establish production for use in the place of production for profit. It is asserting itself in the desire for an

organization of human life that will abolish political and racial domination and establish a universal commonwealth of peoples.

4. The emergence of Socialism in the U.S.S.R. has brought mankind to a new phase of its development. The refusal elsewhere to proceed to a Socialist stage is a deliberate denial of equality and freedom, and thwarts progress towards a universal community.

5. Fascism has its immediate source in this refusal and is the organized form of it. It suppresses the spiritual nature of man and exalts race and nationality. It is a false religion, the negation of Christianity, not because it attacks Christian doctrine and the organized Church, but because it opposes the creative process of Christianity in the world.

6. It is the religious task of the working-class to bring about the Socialist transformation. We there identify ourselves with the political struggle of the Socialist working-class movement.

7. The task of the Christian community is not to save itself but to save the world. We must transform society so that the lives and relationships of men can express the true nature of humanity, as revealed in Jesus. In our time, the Christian forms of life can only be maintained and extended through the transformation of political and economic relationships, which are at once part, and the material basis of, the structure of personal life. This is the ground of our acceptance of a part in the political and economic struggle of our times. What is at stake in the struggle is the acceptance or rejection of Christianity.

We recognize that the task of the Christian Left is the true task of the Church. The fact of our existence points to the failure of the Churches.

In proclaiming our message; in insisting that the Churches have failed; in pointing to the signs of the times which show the inevitability of the transformation; and in preparing the minds of men for its oncoming by putting our lives at the service of the working-class movement, we see our religious task.

Commitments

1. Members accept the Basis and undertake to make it more widely known.

2. Members are committed to working in co-operation with the Socialist movement and to being members of one of the Socialist political parties, except where the means of livelihood make this impossible.

3. Members will undertake to subscribe regularly to *The Christian Left*.*

* Consideration of further commitments was adjourned by the General Meeting.

Particular attention is drawn to the following points in the provisional basis, mainly because they are felt to stand in need of special criticism and possible modification.

Para. 1. (a) 'in every sphere of life'. This means in political, economic, international and inter-racial spheres as well as in the 'personal' field.

(b) *'an illusion'* perhaps 'an imaginary religion' would express this meaning better. We mean that a religion which consists in ideas and feelings and the expression of ideas and feelings is purely sentimental, and works only in human imagination. Religion is real only when it intends to transform and actually transforms the structure of human life and so the course of history.

Para. 2. 'our society is under judgment'. This phrase was objected to by a number of members of the delegation which drafted the basis. It has associations of a traditional kind which some wish to avoid. But no other phrase could be found which would express our meaning. The Greek New Testament phrase so translated is literally 'in crisis'. We must not allow too much weight to the natural reaction against traditional terminology. It is a real difficulty. But if we drop all terms with 'religious' associations, we may find that we have thrown out the baby with the bath-water. We have to combat not merely the sentimentality of religion by the 'religious' but also the anti-religious attitude of mind which is the natural reaction from it.

'This judgment' referred to is the judgment of God. But our position is that the judgment of God works in history, in men, by making man's denial of his true nature and destiny produce catastrophe. Only the Christian transformation of human life could avert these catastrophes; since it would mean that men were living in a way that corresponds to the real nature of the world.

Para. 4. 'The emergence of Socialism in the U.S.S.R.' The original draft had 'the existence of a Socialist society'. But this goes too far. We are not committed to a defence of everything Russian, but we are committed to recognizing that a Socialist economy has emerged in Russia, and that this is the positive governing factor in the transformation of human life by the process of Christianity in our time. Russia represents the first realization of Socialism *in fact*; so that Socialism is no longer a future goal but a present fact; an existing form of human society, interacting with the other (and lower)

forms. But the *limitations* of Socialism in Russia are also our concern; for they centre in the denial of religion, and this prevents the *development* of Socialist society in Russia and partly accounts for the strength of Fascism in the rest of the world. It would be well to discuss what the effect on Russia and the rest of the world would be if Russia were to accept the Christian Left position.

Para. 6. 'the religious task of the working-class'. This phrase met with a good deal of opposition and was accepted rather doubtfully. The original draft spoke of 'the mission of the working-class'. We should not worry too much about *words* here, but try to get our own meaning clear. It is not a question of social theory or analysis of society here; but of the simple fact that the people whose labour provides for the needs of society by making things are to-day, because of their place in the structure of society, the only ones who *represent* society as a whole. It is they whose humanity is denied by the structure of capitalist society. Others can only play their part in the Christian transformation of society by identifying themselves with the needs, claims and aspirations of the workers. The task is a religious one because the real demand is for recognition of their personal rights as human beings. The opposite of this view we are trying to express would be the view that 'society' ought to do something for the working-class. Such a view distinguishes 'society' from the workers, and so excludes the workers from society. We insist that the workers are society and that they have to do something which will transform society. In a capitalist society all who are not workers live on the labours of the workers, not by choice but by necessity. Therefore it requires in them a definite act of choice to revise this position. We can only actually revise it by changing the structure of society, i.e. by helping the workers to produce a society in which all non-workers are the servants of the workers and live not on them but for them.

Para. 7. This whole paragraph was considered unsatisfactory, and the members who were instructed to write this commentary were asked to suggest new wording. We suggest the following:

'The task of the Christian community is not to save Christianity but to save the world. If it seeks to save its own life it will lose it. The life of a Christian community is one of freedom, equality and brotherhood. These are mere words unless they are embodied in the structure of human life, and their extension and realiza-

tion over the whole field of human life is the purpose of Christianity. The economic and political relations of men are not merely the basis of personal life, they are an inherent part of it and the criterion of its reality. In our day the economic integration of humanity determines in large measure what forms of personal life are possible. As a result it is no longer possible to maintain or extend the personal life that Christianity demands of us without a transformation of the existing political and economic structure of human life as a whole. It is because we realize that the acceptance or rejection of Christianity is at stake in it that we commit ourselves to an active part in the struggle for Socialism.'

N.B. This commentary is in no sense definitive. It has been written with one intention only; to draw attention to points in the Provisional Basis which need study and elucidation; and so to focus criticism by helping members of the Christian Left to make up their minds whether or not the Provisional Basis does

or does not really express what they themselves stand for.

We have received the following criticism on the foregoing commentary from certain members of the committee:

Russia and the Christian Left (para. 4)

The Liberal's approach to history is to open a credit and debit account for every event: list the 'good' on one side, and the 'bad' on the other side, then balance the accounts and decide whether, for example, the French Revolution did more harm than good, or whether Socialism in Russia has more advantages or disadvantages than capitalist democracies. We hope the Christian Left will be saved from such eclecticism. To understand Russian Socialism we must see it in relation to Russian historical experience. If we criticize it, let us do so in terms of what is historically possible. Then we may be saved from the religious brand of 'leftism'. Those of us who want too much from Russia to-day may find ourselves unwittingly in the camp of those who would destroy what Russia has achieved.

The limitations of Socialism in Russia centre in an attempt to deny religion. If this were to succeed beyond the suppression of the organized forms of religion identified with the pre-Socialist stage, it would be serious, for it would prevent the development of Socialist society in Russia.

God in History

... And yet behind the everlasting flux,
 History's vortex, spirally ascending,
 behind the process of renewing Time,
 God is, shaping to significance
 the formless stuff of history; behind
 the slow persistent shift of continents,
 erosion of the huge, unhasting sea,
 the ape that after aeons stood erect,
 movements of people to a Promised Land,
 civilizations' flowering and decay,
 built on the monstrous toil of passive slaves,
 Man denying his nature, afraid of freedom,
 on the rack of society tortured, crucified
 on a cross of gold; and yet perpetually
 climbing and struggling, and dying that he may live.
 Each age travailing in agony to bring
 the next to birth; striving in vain to link
 ideal to reality, desire and fact,
 the dream and the act, the vision and achievement.
 Behind these events, these struggles, guesses at God,
 wars, agonies, renewals, behind all these,
 behind the veil of history, the mask
 of Time, the Mover of History, the Meaning
 of Time, the Un-moved, the Timeless, God
 waits ...
 waits for the Kingdom which is his fulfilment,

waits for man to become man, for humanity
 to be glorified by becoming itself.
 Man in seeking security transformed
 the earth to hell, and in the bottomless pit
 discovers that he has blasphemed against life; but now
 the Patient and All-merciful is destroying through man
 the terrible negation; all around us
 totter the towers, crumble the temples of illusion;
 man's pride is revealed as the pitiful façade
 of fear; his security a mock; and the pattern
 of his life an idiotic labyrinth
 at whose grim centre lurks the Minotaur—
 the obscene Mammon with the vacant eyes.
 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands
 of the living God, and we who think to discern
 in the total disintegration of our world
 the work of God, know our souls will perish
 unless we submit them wholly to the new life
 shattering the old death; unless we offer up
 our lives to the advent of the Kingdom; unless
 we consecrate our hearts and minds to this
 we perish, weighed in the scales and found wanting.
 But though hopes are syrens luring to damnation,
 though our faith is hemmed with a fog of doubt,
 and though our only certainty is love,
 yet with that love we forge a sword of faith,
 and with that faith we triumph though we fail . . .
 He that endures to the end, the same is saved.

KENNETH MUIR

The Committee of the Christian Left

At the General Meeting in November, the following were appointed to the committee:

David Balsillie (Scotland)	Alice Lloyd-Williams (London)
Barbara Cass-Beggs (Oxford)	H. A. Phillips (Manchester)
David Cass-Beggs (Oxford)	Gregory Vlastos (London)
C. H. Edwards (Northampton)	Avrille Williams (Bath)
Kenneth Ingram (London)	Dorothy Wise (London)

Kathleen Saw (Treasurer), 99 Cranbrook Road, Handsworth, Birmingham.

Janet Jordan (Secretary), 172 Russell Court, Woburn Place, W.C.1.

Week-end Conference at Oxford

We hope to include in our next number a report of the week-end conference which was held in Oxford by the Oxford Study-Group of the Christian Left from January 21st-23rd.

The subject of the conference was Fascism and Christianity. Rudolph Olden, author of *Hitler, the Pawn*, and Enrique Moreno, Lecturer on Spanish Literature at Oxford, were both to have spoken on 'Fascism Abroad', but the latter was prevented by illness from attending. Kenneth Muir spoke on 'Fascist Trends in Education', C. Day Lewis addressed the conference on

'Communism—a Personal Necessity', John Macmurray on 'Valuations in Fascist and Communist Societies', Kingsley Martin, editor of *The New Statesman*, on 'Fascist Tendencies in England', Kenneth Ingram on 'Fascist Trends in Religion', and Gregory Vlastos on 'Fascism and the Christian Ethic'. The talks were followed by questions and discussions.

The conference was limited to members and associates of the Christian Left and a few specially invited non-members. The conference took place in the Oxford Youth Hostel.

The Editor is anxious to receive information as to recent and future activities of all Christian Left groups. Reports and notices should be clearly written, on one side of the paper only, and should be sent him as early as possible.

The Editor will be glad to consider MSS. which are likely to be of general interest to readers of THE CHRISTIAN LEFT. He will also be glad to receive letters for publication, provided that they also are concerned with issues likely to be of interest to readers. No MSS. can be returned, if rejected, unless accompanied by a stamped and addressed envelope.

In view of the limited space available in this magazine all contributions should be as brief as possible.

All communications intended for the Editor should be addressed to:

THE EDITOR,
 'THE CHRISTIAN LEFT'
 172 RUSSELL COURT
 WOBURN PLACE
 LONDON, W.C.1.

POST CARD

*Halfpenny
Stamp*

Miss J. M. Jordan,
172 Russell Court,
Woburn Place,
London, W.C.1

THE CHRISTIAN LEFT

IN this issue of the News Sheet you will find the Provisional Basis as formulated at the General Meeting in November. Full consideration of the Commitments was adjourned until the next General Meeting (early in 1938). Certain commitments were accepted, but it will, no doubt, be realized that further commitments will be required.

Members are defined as those who accept the Provisional Basis and Commitments.

Those who are in sympathy with the Christian Left and wish to learn more about it but do not regard themselves as committed members, should be regarded as Associates.

Will you please state on the enclosed post card whether you regard yourself as a committed member, an associate or neither?

The estimated cost of the News Sheet is 2s. 6d. a year, post free (single copies 3d. each). It will be sent to members and associates on receipt of the post card and the cost will be deducted from subscriptions sent to the general funds of the Christian Left.

If you wish to receive the News Sheet regularly and are not on our list as members or associates, or if you want extra copies, please order from:

MISS ELSA YOUNG,
16 Highbury Grove Court,
LONDON, N.5.

I wish to be a committed member of the Christian Left

I wish to be an associate of the Christian Left

I wish to resign

[Please delete where necessary]

Name (Mr., Mrs. or Miss)

Address

.....

THE CHRISTIAN LEFT

No. 11

March 1938

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Our Immediate Tasks

IN our last number we were mainly concerned with the recent history of the Christian Left.

At the general meeting in November the Provisional Basis and Commitments were adopted as the standard to which our movement pledges itself, and the process of consolidating Christian Left membership by drawing up a list of those who are prepared to accept the Commitments and join as full members or associates has already begun. A list is also being formed of those who, though not ready to offer themselves for membership, are sufficiently sympathetic and interested to wish to keep in touch with the movement by becoming regular subscribers to this monthly publication. Those who have not yet filled in and returned the card enclosed with the last number are urgently requested to do so.

The question which now arises—whether the reconstructed membership turns out to be numerically large or small—is the direction which our immediate activities should take. With this question the forthcoming general meeting will be mainly concerned. Meanwhile, some important plans have already been made. An invitation was received from the Auxiliary Movement, asking the Christian Left to undertake preparations for a conference on the Christian answer to Fascism, to be held at St. Asaph next August. At the last general meeting this invitation was accepted, and the Committee feels that it is the duty of the Christian Left to devote its energies to assist this and any subsequent campaign which may be planned as a result of the conference. This particular work is important, not only because it was the Christian

Left members of the Auxiliary who first suggested the conference, but also because it is essential to arouse that body of Christian opinion which has not arrived at Socialist conviction to the need of wholehearted resistance to the spread of Fascist influence: it is equally essential to spread information as to what the Fascist menace entails. Nor is such work merely defensive in character. For in studying the nature of Fascism and why it must be opposed, the constructive case of the Christian Left standpoint becomes vitally relevant.

The Auxiliary Movement is holding a conference at York during the Easter week-end, when the work of that organization will be considered. It is important that members of the Christian Left who are members of the Auxiliary should, if possible, attend this conference. Particulars both as to this conference and as to the conference in August will be found on another page.

The decision to undertake responsibility for the summer conference means that the Christian Left cannot hold a camp of its own next August. And this raises another issue. Not only is it true that the Christian Left contains a number of members who do not belong to the Auxiliary, but it is obvious that there is a vast field entirely outside the kind of territory covered by the Auxiliary, where the standpoint of the Christian Left needs to be explained. The conference arranged last month by the group at Oxford is one indication of that fact. Our experience is that wherever the Christian Left message is presented it at once arouses an intense interest, a

demand for further information, and frequently an immediate expression of sympathy, particularly among those who have drifted away from or who have always repudiated formal Christian allegiance. What has been done, on a small scale at Oxford, must be done elsewhere. The need is urgent, and the Christian Left will have at once to examine what means are in its power to cope with this task. Conferences in other centres and a series of simple booklets explaining the Christian Left position appear to be two essential tasks which the movement must undertake.

There is a third type of work, and this perhaps is the most important task of all. It is the work of building up the Christian Left from within, of encouraging the formation of groups of Christian Left members in various localities who will meet constantly, gradually build up a degree of community experience, study together, and discover what objective activity their Christian

Left convictions demand. It will follow that each of these groups will necessarily develop its own particular methods. In our last number, for instance, we referred to a group which already represents a distinctive interpretation of purpose and belief. We welcome such diversity, provided it is diversity in unity and all such groups are able to work in co-operation with the whole movement.

If the Christian Left is thus able to achieve a measure of decentralization, it becomes all the more necessary that actual membership should be rigidly confined to those who fully accept the Basis and Commitments, and that each member should take full responsibility for the collective activities of the movement by attending general meetings and conferences. It is the quality, and not the quantity, of the membership which will determine how far the Christian Left will prove an effective force in the near future.

Estimated Budget, January to December, 1938

The Committee has endeavoured to carry out the instructions of the November general meeting by drafting the following budget.

The first two items need some explanation. As the general and committee meetings are to be held in different areas during the year, travelling expenses will necessarily involve a large expenditure. It is hoped that as the Committee is working in certain capacities as a standing committee for the Auxiliary movement, some amount of this cost, probably £10, will be paid from that source.

As regards the second item, it is proposed to publish pamphlets, reports of conferences, etc., which will be on sale to members and others, and which will therefore, at least in part, be paid for.

The Christian Left (news sheet) may be bought at cost for free distribution to potential members. It is hoped that this publication will be self-supporting and will supply its own balance sheet. Members are asked to assist in extending its circulation.

Questions and criticisms as to the Budget should be brought before the general meeting at Birmingham.

If the work of the Christian Left is to be carried out effectively the fullest possible financial support is needed. Members and Associates are therefore urged to send their subscriptions as soon as possible to the Treasurer, Miss Kathleen Saw, 99 Cranbrook Road, Handsworth, Birmingham.

	£	s.	d.
Travelling Expenses—Committee, Sub-Committee Delegates ...	50	0	0
Propaganda, pamphlets, News Sheets ...	60	0	0
Secretarial Expenses, Postage, Stationery, Rooms for Meetings ...	25	0	0
Reserve Fund for guarantees to local groups ...	10	0	0
Miscellaneous Expenses ...	15	0	0
	£160	0	0

Balance Sheet, July 1936 — December 1937

Money received July 20, 1936— December 31, 1937	£ s. d. 148 8 11	News Sheet—Alden Press Printer (Ben Williams) Travel Expenses: Committee and Delegates Secretarial Expenses Tea meeting Money received and spent by Secretary Cheque Books, Bank commission Cost of Rooms To Irene Grant	£ s. d. 57 5 8 4 2 6 23 18 1 6 4 6 11 0 13 9 5 9 5 1 15 0 25 0 0
		Total	132 15 7
		Balance	15 13 4
	£148 8 11		£148 8 11
Spanish Fund Money received	£ s. d. 44 10 0	Spanish Fund To International Ambulance Unit	£ s. d. 44 10 0
For Otto Bauer	16 0	To D. Grant for Otto Bauer	16 0

Love and the Class-Struggle

by Gregory Vlastos

I do not mean by 'class-struggle' mere conscious hostility between certain persons who are capitalists and certain other persons who are workers. Such hostility is developing increasingly to-day. But it is a symptom of the struggle. It is not the whole struggle, and it is certainly not the cause. That is why I shall not find it necessary to discuss the philosophy of the Oxford Group. It is irrelevant to our problem. The problem is not unconverted capitalists, but capitalists, or rather capitalism. It is the existence of a social structure which breaks our common life into two groups, mutually dependent, yet mutually antagonistic. It forces these into conflict, quite apart from their intentions, and often against their intentions. This conflict is very largely hidden from the ordinary public, and frequently even from its immediate victims. It has been, and will be, concealed by those who have an interest to conceal it. Yet the evidence of its existence is overwhelming. Anyone who cares to read Adamic's *Dynamite*, Levinson's

I Break Strikes, or Huberman's *The Labour Spy Racket* can catch glimpses of it. And even 'sound' economists find it hard to avoid its mention. Professor Sumner Slichter, of Harvard, writes in his standard text, *Modern Economic Society*:

'Had we deliberately planned an industrial system which would create intense conflict between capital and labour, we could scarcely have devised one which would have achieved this result more completely than does the existing economic order.'

The class-struggle is thus an economic fact. But it is none the less a moral fact. It is an impersonal mechanism in which employers, employed, and unemployed are equally caught. Yet it is equally the personal drama of pride, fear, love, optimism and panic, cunning egotism and reckless self-sacrifice. The class-struggle is the living unity of economic and moral forces. Any attempt to sunder the one from the other is

bound to injure not only the truth of the whole, but also the truth of the parts. It is bound to produce immoral economics and sentimental morality,—on the one hand, the economics of modern capitalism, from Adam Smith to marginal utility, which blasphemously speaks of human labour as a commodity; on the other hand, the ethics of the subjective will, from Kant to Mill, which limits absurdly moral responsibility to the choices of isolated individual wills.

In Tolstoyan pacifism we see this dualism in its most instructive form. Its first premiss is that all questions of morals are questions of inner experience: the Kingdom of God is within you. So the command to love becomes a command to persist in the feeling of love, come what may. Whatever confirms this feeling, is right; whatever disturbs it, is wrong. Therefore, war, military service, capital punishment, police, prisons, courts, private property, school-discipline are wrong. Tolstoy accepts the resulting anarchism without apologies: 'As a moral being, I have only moral responsibility. If economics and politics are not inherently moral questions, then, as a moral being, I need not trouble about them. If I do the one thing that is needful, and cultivate the feeling of love in every relation and under all circumstances, economics and politics will take care of themselves.'

How shall we answer Tolstoy? Shall we concede his dualism, submit to his individualist and sentimental interpretation of love, and then demand that the other side of the dualism be also given a little consideration? That is the thesis that has been popular among radicals in recent years. A convenient formula is to divide up human life into short-range and long-range relations, and say that Tolstoy was right for the first but wrong for the second; that love is the principle of intimate fellowship, but justice is necessary for business and the state. But Tolstoy need only reply: 'If justice is something other than love, so much the worse for justice; love is good enough for me.' And for all the heroic absurdity of his position, Tolstoy's logic is sounder than that of his realist critic. Christians will always find themselves in an impossible position when they seek periodic holidays from love in order to take a hand in the class-struggle.

Is there any other answer? To find it we must strike more deeply into Tolstoy's assumptions. Is he right in his conception of love? Love is certainly an emotion. But it is also a law, a command, a rule of life. It is an inner experience and a pattern of social relatedness. It is feeling and action. Now if it be one of these things and not the other, it is not merely less than love; it is not

love at all, but a peculiar kind of self-indulgence. It is subjective love, that is, self-love. To be sure, it feels like love. But dreams feel like reality to the dreamer; and hallucinations feel like the truth. Just because love is a personal experience, we need a social criterion of its genuineness.

The criterion I wish to suggest is the principle of *emotional transparency*. As John Macmurray points out, emotion is always about an object. The object may be quite trivial, or even imaginary: I may be afraid of mice or of ghosts. But some object there certainly must be. Subjective emotion is not the emotion of a subject without an object, but emotion of a subject who is himself the object of the emotion. When a boy loves his mother, he is not conscious of his love for his mother, but, quite simply, of his mother. Healthy love is the emotional quality that attaches to a particular relation to his mother, whose chief attribute is its transparency. The moment he becomes self-conscious about his love for his mother, his object is no longer his mother but his love. The experience now becomes totally different. It may turn into shame and anxiety; as it might, if an older boy had just lectured him on being less of a baby and cutting loose from mother's apron-strings. Or, in other circumstances, it may grow more tenderly affectionate. But in either case the liberating, out-reaching quality of the emotion is lost in self-consciousness. To recover it, one must recover objectivity. This does not mean returning to the unreflective immediacy of the earlier relation. This is quite impossible. But it does mean focusing attention upon the objective relation, and not upon subjective emotion. If, for example, the boy were to use his mother as a way of keeping warm a newly-discovered self-conscious tenderness, the result would be fatal to emotional sincerity.

It may be asked: Do we not value emotions for their own sake, and do we not find peculiar satisfaction in expressing them? Certainly. But expression is itself a social relation; and objectivity is the guarantee of its sincerity. The moral function of art is to preserve emotional sanity and deepen emotional integrity. It does this through the exacting demands of craftsmanship. The more difficult the artist's medium, the greater its liberating power. Form transmutes emotional excitement into emotional expression. It does not limit nor destroy the emotion. It widens its range through the ordered variety of imaginative symbols. It transforms its flickering transience into solid endurance. The artist's private feelings are not essentially different from ours. If we did not feel what he feels, we should never be able to understand him, and through

him understand ourselves. He differs from us in the power to escape from the suffocating immediacy of passion into an alien world of sound, colour, masonry, metre and rhyme, master its strangeness, and transform it into a luminous symbol of personal emotion.

The same principle applies in religion. The artist who hugs his feelings to himself paralyses the creative impulse; whatever expression he does achieve will be muddy, shapeless, sentimental. In religion preoccupation with our own private experience can only result in emotional aberrations. The cultivation of varieties of inner experience for their own sake rightly strikes the decent pagan as a form of mental infirmity. He feels that it is unreal; and Jesus would agree with him on this point. This was the substance of His own indictment of the self-conscious religion of His time: that it was unreal, mere play-acting, and therefore no religion at all. He opposed to it real religion which must lose its life, in order to find it—the religion which repudiates religious athletics and finds reality in the Samaritan's secular act of material aid to a fellow-man.

With such a conception of religious emotion, I can see no hiatus between the ethic of love and the struggle for justice. The class-struggle is a fact. We live in the midst of it. There can be no question of ignoring it, but of formulating our attitude to it. What will this be? Identification with the privileged? Neutrality? Or identification with the oppressed? I cannot think that the first would be even suggested as the sincere expression of Christian love. The ruling classes in our society will hardly ask for so much. They will be content with less, which is all they need. Those who hold power simply ask for acquiescence. Neutrality will suit them well enough. At that point the liberal and the

pacifist becomes unintentionally the ally of the reactionary. And what is the sanction for such neutrality? It is an interpretation of love which makes the spread of kind feelings and the avoidance of unkind feelings the *summum bonum*. This is sentimental emotion, individualistic morality, unreal religion. It is the religion of seeking to save one's soul, and thus losing it. It is the idolatrous worship of private feelings in place of the God of Love. It is the insincerity of opaque emotion.

Over against this I present the positive alternative. The command to love means active dedication to the kingdom of righteousness. In the name of love it repudiates an economic system which makes real community practically impossible among men and encourages them to seek pseudo-community. Such a repudiation will involve one necessarily in conflict with the beneficiaries of the present system. It will disturb one's peace with bitterness and strife. Is that a reason for drawing back? Only for those who are intent at all costs to preserve the purity of their own motives and the peace of their own soul. Privileged in other ways—cultural, social, economic—middle-class people are also granted the special privilege of a safe place in the social conflict. Will that privileged security and peace persuade them to tolerate the insecurity and strife which is the doom of their less privileged brothers? They may accept that bribe, but not in the name of the Crucified One.

I am told that a pacifist society in Oxford sent two Christmas puddings, one to the President of the Spanish Republic and one to General Franco, with the heartiest Christmas greetings and best wishes for a peaceful New Year. The Pharisees garnished the tombs of the prophets. Christian Pharisees gild the cross of Christ.

A Letter From Spain

We print these extracts from a letter from Dr. Doug. Jolly, written on December 26th, just after the victory at Teruel. Doug. Jolly, as our readers will know, is a member of the Christian Left, and went out to Spain in its name. The Christian Left has regularly subscribed to his work, and at the Auxiliary Conference last Easter £44 was subscribed and was used to buy a new set of surgical instruments. Alas! Teruel is once more in rebel hands, but the importance of the previous victory remains.

Dear Everybody,

Greetings for yesterday and for the New Year. May it bring a successful end to this war here in Spain!

We are naturally filled with the news of the taking of Teruel. Teruel was a name that one did not want to talk of before, even to think of

very much, because it was potentially the most dangerous point in Spain. Now it is shouted in every village street throughout Government Spain. It is a tremendous thing!

We are having a Teruel fiesta this afternoon in our hospital here in this small village—a fiesta for the kids of the village, with a distribution of

toys. They are lovely, black-eyed, friendly, eager little things.

The visit of Major Attlee has made a very great impression in Spain. All his speeches in the House of Commons since his return are published in full in the Spanish papers. I read in today's paper that twenty Labour M.P.s are coming to Spain at the invitation of the Government.

I spent yesterday (Christmas Day) with a battalion of men from Karli's country. In the evening we ate a wonderful paprikas, and then the whole evening they sang songs as only Karli's people can sing. They are a grand people, gay, light-hearted and splendid fighters.

I am sitting in the best room of a peasant's cottage in the village where we have our hospital. A delightful, fine-looking old woman is my hostess and we get on splendidly together. She has just carried in and placed at my feet a large

brass tray of wood embers, for it's bitterly cold away up here in the mountains.

'Hace muy frio, mi commandante?'

'Si, companera, muy friol'

'Espera un momento.'

And so on. Now I can continue to write in comfort. They're a lovely, simple, friendly people. They've known terribly hard times for generations, and now know what they are fighting for. . . .

This victory at Teruel must have a great uplifting effect on the morale of the people here in Spain. It must have a unifying effect. It would not be strange if, after losing ground so steadily in North Spain (Bilbao, Santander, etc.), many of the less politically aware among the soldiers and civil population were becoming disheartened. We can sense the great uplift and new determination everywhere. . . .

Correspondence

To the Editor of 'The Christian Left'.

Dear Editor,

Due to my own carelessness I did not see the Commentary on the Draft Basis in its final form. Paragraph 4 of the Commentary runs: "The emergence of Socialism in the U.S.S.R." The original draft had "the existence of a socialist society". But this goes too far. We are not committed to a defence of everything Russian, but we are committed to recognizing that a socialist economy has emerged in Russia, and that this is the positive governing factor in the transformation of human life by the process of Christianity in our time. Russia represents the first realization of Socialism *in fact*; so that Socialism is no longer a future goal, but a present fact; an existing form of human society, interacting with the other (and lower) forms. But the limitations of Socialism in Russia are also our concern; for they centre in the denial of religion, and this prevents the development of socialist society in Russia, and partly accounts for the strength of Fascism in the rest of the world. It would be well to discuss what the effect on Russia and the rest of the world would be if Russia were to accept the Christian Left position.'

I write this letter because I feel I must make it clear that I do not stand for the implications of the final sentence on the acceptance by Russia of the Christian Left position. The state-

ment which a group of us made at the November General Meeting of the Christian Left position runs: '... We find ourselves sure of Christianity and not anxious for its future. Our sole concern is with the birth and future of the working-class movement, the chief instrument of the transformation.'

'Our existence is rooted in the certainty of the significance of life committed to Socialism.'

'The Christian Left is the vehicle of this message. . . .'

If I am unconcerned for the future of Christianity it is precisely on account of facts like the emergence of Soviet Russia. To me Russia is not outside the Christian stream in history—it is inside. Therefore to advise the U.S.S.R. to accept the Christian Left position would be to deny the very recognition which I profess. That Christians are guilty of such a denial when faced by actual revolution is a charge to which we are only too often open. The Christian Left to me, however, is the re-assertion of the principle of Jesus that theory and practice are one.

This does not mean that Soviet Russia is immune from criticism. It means that criticism cannot be based on the assumed opposition between Soviet Russia and Christianity.

Yours sincerely,

IRENE GRANT.

25 Pyecombe Corner, N. 12
February 10th, 1938.

The Next General Meeting

The next general meeting will be held in Birmingham on March 5th and 6th. The Agenda will include a discussion of further commitments, the budget, and plans for future work.

The meeting will take place at the Club Room, Digbeth Institute, Digbeth, Birmingham. This can be reached by trolley bus 93 or 94 from New Street Station, or bus 15A from Snow Hill. In both cases passengers should alight at Rea Street.

There will be two sessions on Saturday, 5 to 6.30 p.m., and 7.30 to 9.30 p.m. On Sunday the first session will be from 10 a.m. till noon, and the second 2 p.m. till 4.30 p.m.

As these meetings will only be held three or four times a year, it is important that all who can possibly do so should attend. Expenses will be pooled.

News From the Groups

Any isolated member or associate who wishes to know if there is a Christian Left group within reach, should communicate with Miss Janet Jordan, 172 Russell Court, Woburn Place, London, W.C.1.

OXFORD. As announced in our last number the Oxford Study-Group of the Christian Left arranged a conference from January 21st to 23rd. The Speakers included Rudolph Olden, Kenneth Muir, C. Day Lewis, John Macmurray, Kingsley Martin, Kenneth Ingram and Gregory Vlastos. The conference was extremely successful and it is hoped to publish a report of the proceedings in pamphlet form.

MANCHESTER. The Christian Left group in Manchester has been meeting fortnightly to discuss G. D. H. Cole's book *The People's Front*. On two occasions the group has met a left-wing group associated with All Saints' church, for joint discussions on 'Christianity and Fascism' and 'The Christian Left'.

For local activities, the group is linked with other left Christian groups in and around Manchester through the co-ordinating committee of Active Christian Democrats.

ACTIVE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS. Inaugurated in February 1937, this committee arranged a

week-end conference at Hays Farm, Clitheroe, last September on 'Christianity and the Social Revolution'. A manifesto is in course of preparation with which it is intended to challenge the Church Assembly to accept the Socialist implications of Christianity. On Saturday, March 12th (2 to 6 p.m.), a conference with the title 'Towards the Christian Revolution' is to be held in the King's Café, 64 Oxford Road, Manchester, to which all interested are invited.

The group to which reference was made in our last number has met for two week-ends, and a week during the Christmas holidays. The first week-end was devoted to discussions of the main issues facing the working-class movements, in particular, Trotskyism, with reference to some of Marx's early writings. Notes of these discussions will shortly be duplicated, ready for circulation. During the week the group studied Marx's philosophical development from his early writings, and also reviewed the history and nature of British democracy and British working class in an effort to understand their present position.

The Auxiliary Movement

The Annual Conference will be held at St. John's College, York, from Maundy Thursday, April 14th, till Easter Tuesday morning, April 19th. The conference will be concerned with the future task of the Movement, and a detailed programme will be sent to all who notify the Revd. John Drewett, Annandale, North End Road, London N.W.11 before March 21st. A registration fee of 5s. must also be forwarded. The cost, apart from this fee, is estimated at £3 5s. for the five days. Expenses will be pooled. All members of the Christian Left who belong to the Auxiliary should, if possible, attend this conference.

The Summer Conference, preparations for which, as is explained on another page, the Christian Left have been asked to undertake, will be held at Oriel House, St. Asaph, N. Wales, from July 30th to August 6th inclusive. There will be lectures from 9.45 to 10.45 a.m. and from 8.30 to 9.30 p.m. each day. During the conference commissions will meet for the purpose of preparing material on various subjects for the campaign to follow. The general subject of the conference is 'The Christian Answer to Fascism'. The charge will be 30s. per head, plus 2s. 6d. registration fee.

The Editor is anxious to receive information as to recent and future activities of all Christian Left groups. Reports and notices should be clearly written, on one side of the paper only, and should be sent him as early as possible.

The Editor will be glad to consider MSS. which are likely to be of general interest to readers of THE CHRISTIAN LEFT. He will also be glad to receive letters for publication, provided that they also are concerned with issues likely to be of interest to readers. No MSS. can be returned, if

rejected, unless accompanied by a stamped and addressed envelope.

In view of the limited space available in this magazine all contributions should be as brief as possible.

All communications intended for the Editor should be addressed to:

THE EDITOR,
'THE CHRISTIAN LEFT'
172 RUSSELL COURT, WOBURN PLACE
LONDON, W.C.1.

After this issue, copies of *The Christian Left* will only be sent to those non-members who have ordered it from Miss Elsa Young, 16 Highbury Grove Court, London N.5. The yearly subscription is 2s. 6d., post free; single copies are 3d., post free. *The Christian Left* is sent to all members and associates on the revised list

(those who have returned the post card sent out last month); the first 2s. 6d. of subscriptions sent to general funds goes to News Sheet Accounts. As it is urgently necessary to obtain as wide a circulation as possible, all are asked to order as many copies as they can afford to buy.

Some London members of the Christian Left are forming a group for study, etc. A preliminary meeting will be held at 462 Russell Court, Woburn Place, W.C.1., on Monday, March 14th,

at 8 p.m. Anyone who is interested in the formation of this group should write to Mrs. Young, 9 Greenhurst Road, S.E.27.

THE CHRISTIAN LEFT

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April 1938

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Setting Our House in Order

ONCE again our editorial columns must be devoted to domestic matters. An account of the general meeting held at Birmingham last month appears on another page, and from this it will be seen that several important decisions were reached. The provisional Budget which was set out in our last issue was carefully overhauled, and the amended form which is now given represents the financial liabilities which members believe the Christian Left ought to incur, if the work of the movement is to be carried on adequately. Members will see the amount of funds which it is considered that we ought to be able to raise, and it remains for each member and associate to contribute his share to these ends.

The most important decision reached by the meeting concerns the Commitments. These were slightly redrafted and two new Commitments added. The Commitments will be subject to revision only at annual meetings. We ask our readers to consider them carefully, in order that, if they have not already done so, they may make up their minds as to whether they wish to become fully committed members or associates.

The main effect of the amended Commitments is that full membership is confined to those who are able to pledge themselves to a considerable degree of responsibility. As several of our friends have pointed out since the camp conference, there was a danger that the Christian Left might conceive itself to be an ordinary type of organization, with a comparatively nominal membership, the object of which would be to attract as large a number of adherents as

possible to its ranks, with the result that it would be a society possessing a loose unity, a popular front of Left Christians rather than a community of those who share a very definite and vivid religious experience. Development on those lines would have meant that the Christian Left would probably have discovered itself to be much more a political than a religious movement. That this is not our purpose should become evident to all who study the nature of the Commitments. Members now not only subscribe to a common basis of belief and to work in the political field, but they pledge themselves to give a part of their effective income, and to assist any fellow-member who may be victimized as a result of his membership. This is the mark of community rather than of a society, and it is not necessarily anticipated that there will be any large accession of members to our ranks, although we are aware of the existence of groups and individuals who are thinking and working on similar lines, and with whom we should get into close touch. As we have previously suggested, the Christian Left will be tested not by the quantity of its supporters but by their quality, by the degree of effectiveness of which the movement shows itself to be capable in the sphere of action.

As those who have already filled in and returned their post-cards have done so on the basis of the unamended Commitments, all who are associated with the movement are again being notified. We hope that everyone without fail will notify his or her decision, when it has been reached, and that that considerable number

who have not yet replied will feel that now they have been placed in possession of sufficient information regarding the Commitments to make their decision.

The full membership is thus confined to those who feel able to undertake certain definite pledges. It was obviously desirable, however, to leave room for those who, while in sympathy with the Basis and Commitments, are not at present able, for various reasons, to pledge themselves to membership. Associates will be entitled to attend the general meetings and to take part in the normal activities of the movement, but not to hold office or to move resolutions or vote. Moreover, it has not been considered wise to constitute the rank of associate as a permanent second-grade. After a year associates will be required either to apply for full membership or to signify that they cannot continue to take any active share in the work of the Christian Left. The existence of a body of permanent associates would involve the same danger to which we have already referred, the tendency to constitute the Christian Left on a double basis and thus to promote a looser kind of unity in the movement as a whole.

There remains, however, a third grade—subscribers to *The Christian Left*—this news-sheet. Those who are neither members nor associates, but who take *The Christian Left* regularly will not be entitled to attend general meetings, but will be welcome at any conferences or similar activities which local groups or the movement as a whole may inaugurate. It is anticipated that this grade will consist of those who are interested in the beliefs and aims for which the Christian Left stands, though not necessarily in full agreement with them. And it is in this grade that we hope for a vast increase of members. We have stressed the need of avoiding any development which would rob the Christian Left of effective unity and of creating the formal membership of the ordinary society. There is, however, the opposite danger to be borne carefully in mind. The Christian Left has a message and, we believe, a peculiarly vital message. It must not therefore hide that light under a bushel and degenerate into an eclectic group, whose membership is never extending its sphere of influence. There are a large body of people who would fall naturally into the category of subscribers, who want to hear about the Christian Left, who may or may not ultimately desire to apply for full membership. Our monthly publication will form a link between them, and we appeal earnestly to all members and associates to enlist their support. To obtain such support must be an individual work, and

we hope that all our readers will order extra copies of *The Christian Left* and send them to those whom they think will be interested. This is an important work which we can each undertake without delay. We hope to see each group building up an outer circle of sympathizers who are thus made aware of the existence of the Christian Left.

In this connexion we would draw attention to an item in the Budget which provides for the publication of Christian Left pamphlets. A small sub-committee has been appointed to supervise the production of this literature, and this is probably the main channel by which the message of the Christian Left will be made more widely known. It is hoped that the first of these, which defines the purpose and belief of the Christian Left in simple summarized form, will be ready shortly. The financial liability involved in publishing such literature is necessarily considerable, for pamphlets must be sold at popular prices and require large sales before the cost of production can be recovered. Here again we would appeal to members to do all in their power to help in the distribution of this literature. The movement has no distributing machinery at present, and the task is one therefore in which each individual must take his share.

Now that the Commitments have reached their present form we hope that any readers who have questions or criticisms to raise will make use of our correspondence columns for that purpose. We trust that they will feel able to make an early decision regarding their own position, for until our house is set in order we cannot go forward in our task. But such decisions cannot and ought not to be precipitated, and we desire to give every opportunity to a full ventilation of views.

We make no apology for dealing at such length with these domestic matters. The work of laying our foundation is of primary importance, not merely to ourselves but for the purpose which the Christian Left hopes to achieve. It may be that the birth of our movement is more than the coming into existence of a new organization. We believe that the part which the Christian Left is called upon to play in the coming world crisis is of no light order. Those of us who are conscious that this movement may represent nothing less than the emergence of the Christianity of the new, Socialist age, will not fail to realize how essential are these preliminary details. Until we have set our house in order we cannot begin to undertake these larger responsibilities which it may be the destiny of the Christian Left to shoulder.

World Crisis and British Opinion

by Kenneth Ingram

Within the week of March 11th to March 18th more happened in Europe than in the whole preceding twelve months. Further history will have been made before these notes appear in print, but at the moment it may be profitable to look back and calculate what are the immediate effects, particularly on the British public, of the rapid development of world crisis.

The main feature of that development has been that Fascism has revealed its true nature. Middle-class opinion in this country has always been inclined to regard Left-Wing denunciations of Fascism as sensationalist and exaggeratedly prejudiced. It must be difficult to-day for the man who has been prone to apologize for Fascism to deny that the Left has been abundantly justified. Hitler has seized Austria by brute force. He has admitted that he was afraid of a genuine plebiscite, he has once more disregarded pledges and treaties: planes, tanks, troops have invaded a country which was guilty of no aggressive act or hostile intention towards him. We know now—if we had not already been convinced by previous evidence—that he is ready to use war methods to attain his ends. Meanwhile, clearly as a result of his bargain with Mussolini, an enormous quantity of planes and munitions have been poured into Spain: ships laden with material for which Franco has long been asking, have been leaving Hamburg daily. Everyone, except the Non-Intervention Committee, is aware of these facts. If the worst happens in Spain and the rebel flag flies over the ruins of Barcelona, Lord Plymouth will probably be found amiably signing the minutes of the last meeting and tentatively suggesting a further scheme for the withdrawal of Italian mercenaries.

The consequences of Fascist invasion are equally clear. Hell is let loose in Austria and Spain. In Vienna a number of respected and leading citizens have committed suicide, Jews, Liberals, Socialists are being turned back at the frontier, terrorism is in control. In Barcelona by night and day indiscriminate slaughter of a civilian population is carried out from the air and an attempt is made to reduce the city to ashes. These are the means by which Fascist culture is introduced. We have frankly to face the fact that to-day we are faced in Fascism with a threat to civilization not dissimilar in type from the Tartar invasion which swept across Eastern into Central Europe. If Fascism wins,

then the elementary decencies of life, the degree of liberties and culture which we claim to have reached, are doomed. The threat is nothing less than this.

In this critical situation it has been interesting to observe the reactions of British opinion. The Government appears, at the moment of writing, to be determined to commit itself to no stated policy and probably to have no policy other than frenzied rearmament, working agreement with Italy, and a hope that Hitler will behave better next time. 'By these [German] assurances', said Lord Halifax in the House of Lords on March 16th, 'solemnly given and more than once repeated, we naturally expect the German Government to abide. If indeed they desire to see European peace maintained, as I earnestly hope they do, there is no quarter of Europe in which it is more vital that undertakings should be scrupulously respected.' And so on!

Tucked away on a back-page of the *News-Chronicle* on March 15th was an extract which few people seem to have noticed, messages of goodwill from Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Halifax to the Hitler Youth Movement, these messages having been published in an official German youth magazine. I do not suggest by this that Mr. Chamberlain is consciously pro-Nazi. I do not believe that he is. But I suspect that the mentality of the Prime Minister and his supporters is accurately represented by this message, a feeling that the best way of dealing with these outrages is by pretending that those guilty of them are not such bad fellows after all. It is as if, when faced by a hungry tiger, one's best course is to assume that, metaphorically at least, the tiger is wearing an old-school tie.

It was curious also to note the reactions of *The Times* in the middle of this eventful week. *The Times* always affords a good indication of what our rulers want the British public to think. I turned to the correspondence columns of the issue of March 17th, in the height of the crisis. After a few leading letters on the position of Austria—the majority selected for publication being markedly apologetic for German violence—the remainder of the chosen communications dealt with 'Use Christmas Cards', 'Destructive Sparrows', 'The Church in Cyprus', 'Gladstone on the Phonograph', etc.

In the political sphere, outside the immediate Chamberlain circle, the repercussions of the crisis have been more realistic. With these it

would be impossible here to deal, for important results may have matured before the end of the month. It was obvious in the tense atmosphere of the House of Commons on the Monday night Austria debate that it was Mr. Churchill who had emerged as the dominating personality. It was obvious, too, that dissatisfaction with the Government's *laissez-faire* attitude was beginning to be felt on the Tory back-benches. Members of more than one political complexion were already realizing that in a military situation, such as is the present state of Europe, arms without strategy are no defence. It is not without significance that the one quarter in which Mr. Chamberlain was hailed as the best of prime ministers was the camp of Lord Beaverbrook's isolationists.

But it is opinion outside the political sphere with which I am more directly concerned in these pages. The first reaction to the shock was undoubtedly alarm and a complete inability to know what ought to be done. This was succeeded by an attitude which is still probably held by the greater part of the non-politically minded—a desire to avoid war at any cost. 'Let anything happen in Spain or in Czechoslovakia, but do not let us and our children be involved in the horrors of war unless we are absolutely compelled to fight (i.e. unless some vital British imperial interest is threatened).' It should be unnecessary to point out in these columns the danger of this short-term view, though it is very natural that some people should adopt it. But it is desirable that those who are advancing the claims of Left foreign policy should bear this standpoint much more directly in mind, and should accordingly emphasize that when it is urged that a stand against the aggressors should be made now, this is not done because of a callous disregard for the horrors of war, nor because of an irresponsible willingness to risk war: it is done because this seems to be the one possible way to peace. The fallacy of the doctrine that neither Manchuria nor Spain were our affairs is revealed in the alarming events of mid-March. The theory that the independence of the next country which Germany or Italy attack is not our affair will precipitate us into a position where there will be even graver reason for alarm.

Then there is the pacifist attitude which is to be found chiefly in Christian circles. 'To make a stand,' it is said, 'to try to save the world from the Fascist horror is only to imitate the Fascist methods of force. It means bombing innocent German women and children.' It would not be fair to give merely summary reasons for believing that the pacifist interpretation of Christianity is mistaken. All that I

would here insist upon is that the pacifist idea, like any other idea, must be tested by the consequences it will create in action. Pacifism in the present context would mean in action the isolationist policy. And this means that we should leave the Jews of Czechoslovakia, the Socialists and Liberals in Spain to their fate: it is these victims, and not the persons who are professing pacifism, who will pay the price. Can that be Christian?

The most hopeful and the most important development which has at present emerged out of the crisis is the proposal of Soviet Russia to call an immediate conference of the non-aggressor nations. The first constructive lead has come from Russia, with a more cautious and less constructive lead from America. In this connexion the subject of the recent Soviet trials must be mentioned. The opinion has recently been expressed in not a few Left circles that no trust can be put in Russia since she must be honeycombed with treason. The answer to this is to ask why, when nothing would have been easier than to proceed by secret trials, every publicity has been given to these prosecutions. Clearly, the Soviet know they have nothing to fear from their own public. Those who impute the worst motives to the Soviet repressions should remember that, even if their criticisms of Russian domestic policy were justified, in foreign affairs Russia has a cleaner record than that of any other country. She alone proposed a scheme of complete disarmament: her proposal met with ridicule and incredulity from the other powers. She has scrupulously kept her word in all international concerns. She has been actively loyal to the League of Nations. It is not without significance that the first lead in the direction of world order and the salvation of democracy comes from that quarter, from the representative of Socialist civilization.

The German invasion of Austria has been an act of war. This is the new technique of war, and it is no less bloody than the normal war-method: the only difference is that blood flows after the military objective has been attained, and not before. The war area is rapidly spreading. The uncertainty is not as to whether peace can be preserved, but as to where the war will break out next.

I believe that that large section of British opinion which is at present bewildered and is inclined to follow any course which keeps them out of the struggle, is capable of being converted to a realization of the actualities. In this conversion political developments will play a large part. But the Christian Left has its own share to take and its task is in some respects made

easier by the recent course of events. The religious nature of the war has become increasingly evident. The force of evil is openly revealing its evil nature, and no one can fail to recognize the satanic weapons which Fascism employs. Secondly, the pathetic and tragic impotence of Mr. Chamberlain's Government is an indication of the futility of trying to steer a middle course. Liberal-minded capitalism cannot provide a remedy, and the spectacle of Conservative statesmen trying to pretend that this is still a nineteenth-century world is pathetic and tragic.

Finally we should remind ourselves why Fascist aggression has become a grim reality to-day. The Fascists are themselves in no doubt as to the reason: they are making war in order to crush Socialism. This is one of the indications that in our time Christianity is manifesting itself in the birth of Socialist civilization. For it is against the effort to bring Socialism to birth that the energy of the force of evil is directed.

We cannot have world peace until we have wrested from these anti-Christian forces the powerful weapons which they possess. Only then can we introduce peace and order, and it is through this travail that Socialism will be born. Christianity involves Socialism, and it is only by Christianity that the powers of evil can be resisted. Evil can never be tolerant of Christianity, it must resist Christianity whenever the Christian energy threatens to become vigorous and effective in history. The Fascists instinctively recognize what must be their objective. They must crush the Jews, they must stamp out any democracy which threatens to develop a Communist order. And in the process the mask is dropped and the grinning countenance is exposed. The brutal persecution of minorities, the barbarous savagery of General Franco's rule wherever he takes possession of Government territory, six hundred civilians slaughtered in Barcelona in a single night—by their fruits ye shall know them.

The Birmingham Meeting

A general meeting of the Christian Left was held at Digbeth Institute, Birmingham, on March 5th and 6th. After a report from the committee the meeting considered the present card-index and the issue of post-cards in number 10 of *The Christian Left*. A résumé of the memorandum on foreign affairs, which had been prepared for the Easter Conference of the Auxiliary Movement, was given by the member who had been asked to draw it up. Various correspondence was read, including a request for a clear definition of the relationship of the Christian Left to other Socialist Christian bodies. It was decided to include information on this point in one of the pamphlets shortly to be issued.

The Commitments, after a long discussion, were passed in the following form:

- (1) Members accept the Basis.
- (2) Members undertake to make their primary activity their work in the Christian process of world history, the contemporary expression of which is the Socialist transformation of society.
- (3) Members are committed to work in co-operation with the Socialist movement and to membership of one of the Socialist political parties, except where the means of livelihood make this impossible.
- (4) Members undertake to subscribe regularly to the central funds of the Christian Left a minimum of one per cent of their effective annual income.
- (5) Members undertake to share in assisting

(financially or otherwise) any member victimized because of his membership and consequent activities.

It was resolved that any revision of the Basis and Commitments could only be proposed at annual general meetings: that in 1938 the annual meeting would be held in November, and in future years in May or June.

The following decisions were also made:

- (1) Members are those who accept all the Commitments. The control of the Movement is in their hands at general meetings.
- (2) Associates are those who accept the Basis but cannot pledge themselves to all the Commitments. They undertake to decide within one year from joining whether they will become members, and cannot continue beyond that period as associates. They contribute as far as possible to the general funds. They may attend general meetings, but may not make proposals or vote.
- (3) Subscribers to *The Christian Left* (News-sheet) may not attend general meetings, but may be invited to take part in other Christian Left activities.

It was decided to send the News-sheet to all members and associates and to deduct the cost from their subscriptions. It was also decided again to circularize both those who had filled in the 'membership' post-card and those who had not done so.

A Sub-Committee was appointed to supervise the publication of a series of pamphlets.

After the Budget had been considered and passed, reports were made on the York (Auxiliary) Conference and on the Summer Conference at St. Asaph. The Committee were asked to consider the possibility of arranging for a Whitsun camp.

It was agreed that an appeal should be made at the York Conference for the Spanish Fund and that this fund should be continued. A delegate was appointed to attend a conference of clergy. A resolution protesting against the Government's foreign policy was passed and the Secretary instructed to send a copy to the Prime Minister.

Commentary on these Decisions

The Commitments in their final form are rigorous and two points should be noted in regard to them: first, that for members the principles for which the Christian Left stands (set out in the Basis) and the work dictated by them are the primary things in life. As such, they are a first claim on the time and energy of members, and no less on their money. Secondly, the kind of activity primarily required is not something which we do as a movement, or even in local groups, but is the action we take as individuals in the Socialist political movement under the directive of our understanding of the Christian process in history.

The financial contribution required is not necessarily for central funds, but may well be used locally. The effective income of any person must be left to the individual to decide, but the term was introduced to cover cases where payments are made towards the support of some other person. For example, the income of an unmarried person with no one dependent upon him, would all be effective: but the effective income of married persons would be half their joint income.

It was considered important that the Commitments should be given a fair trial before they are reconsidered and consequently a resolution was passed that they could only be changed at the annual general meeting.

Only two main sections of people on our files were envisaged—members who accept all the Commitments, and those who are interested and in general sympathy and are invited to take part in certain activities. The minimum they undertake is to subscribe to the News-sheet. (The right name for them has not yet been found, so in the meantime they must be called Subscribers to the News-sheet.) But between these two sections the need was felt for associates who, while very closely associated with the movement, have not yet undertaken full

membership. Associate membership is limited to one year, during which time the associates should be able to discover whether they are prepared to assume full membership, and, if not, they should be regarded as in general sympathy only.

It is hoped that with the Basis and the Commitments settled, we are now in a position to make a final revision of our files. Post-cards were sent out some time ago with a view to obtaining a preliminary revision, but comparatively few of these have been returned. Probably they were premature; but now there should be no doubt as to what membership involves. A copy of the post-card is being sent out again and it is hoped that everybody will return it as soon as possible.

Those who receive the post-card and who, although not wishing to be either members or associates, desire to maintain contact, should order the News-sheet separately from Miss Elsa Young, 16 Highbury Grove Court, London, N.5, and in place of 'I wish to resign' write, 'I wish to keep in touch with the Christian Left and have ordered the News-sheet'.

Please study the Commitments and other resolutions, and send in your post-card as soon as possible.

The Amended Budget

January—December 1938

I.—Propaganda:			
1. Publicity	...	...	£50
2. Deficit on News-sheet	...	...	£10
II.—Expenses for Meetings:			
1. Hire of Rooms	...	...	£5
2. Committee Expenses	...	...	£35
III.—Secretarial Expenses:			
1. Printing	...	...	£40
2. Postage	...	...
3. Telephone	...	...	£20
IV. Miscellaneous Expenses:			
1. Delegates Fees to Conferences	...	...	£5
2. Reserve for Contingencies	...	...	£25
Fund	...	...	£30
			Total £150

1. Propaganda includes the publication of pamphlets.

2. The reserve fund makes allowance for assistance to members who may be victimized by their adherence to Christian Left principles.

3. The committee was instructed to examine the accounts at each meeting, and review the expenditure, and adjust it in relation to income.

The income from January to March has been £11 1s.

Correspondence

CHRISTIAN LOVE

Dear Editor,

May one who is a Socialist but not a member of the Christian Left be permitted to comment upon the article 'Love and the Class Struggle'? The writer's argument is that Love is mere sentimentality unless it takes full account of the facts of a given situation; that the class-struggle is an inescapable fact of the present situation; that in taking account of this fact Love must identify itself with the oppressed and therefore enter into conflict with those who benefit from the struggle. With the first three points there could be no disagreement, but the fourth is one of those easy fallacies which avoids the real work of Christian Love. That work is to reconcile man to God and man to man.

Zaccheus was a profiteering taxgatherer (to-day's equivalent might well be an armaments manufacturer). Yet Jesus, in the eyes of the crowd, identified Himself with the profiteer by asking to be His guest. Could sentimentality be carried further? Nevertheless, the result was a voluntary renunciation by Zaccheus of his wealth, and so of his power and privilege. In that renunciation he was pronounced by Jesus to be saved, which could mean nothing less than changed from a selfish exploiter of men to an unselfish lover of them. What more could any Left-Wing Christian desire, and would denunciation of the wicked profiteer have achieved the same result?

Yours, etc.

H. N. HORNE.

SPANISH TRAGEDY

Dear Editor,

It is almost a month since 150 Spanish writers, painters, sculptors, musicians, and scientists confirmed their solidarity with the legal government of their country. It is almost a month since 60 members of the United States Congress, including the former Secretary of State, Stimson, cabled their loyal support to Professor Negrin's government in Barcelona. And yet England, the traditional home of democracy, cloaks the Fascist devastation of Spain in perfidious respectability.

What is the reason? Does the English public not know that Franco's German supporter has already condemned the Christianity for which he ostensibly fights in Spain, 'for its Oriental mummery, its abominable levelling mania, its

cursed universalism which denies racialism and preaches suicidal tolerance'?¹

Does the English public not know that on March 31st, 1934, Mussolini and General Italo Balbo met with three Spanish reactionaries (Don Rafael Olazabal, Señor Lizarro, and Don Antonio Giocoechea) in Rome, and offered them aid in their planned overthrow of the Spanish Republic; viz. 20,000 rifles, 20,000 hand grenades, 200 machine-guns, and 1,500,000 pesetas in cash, as an initial instalment?²

Have we forgotten that General Franco has declared that in his new Nationalist Spain 'a military view of life shall shape Spanish existence? Our State will be a totalitarian instrument in the service of national integrity'?³ That Hitler has blessed Spain for the ores it now supplies to him? That one of Mussolini's generals in Spain has said: 'Here on foreign soil we are the representatives of armed Italy and of Fascism. By our actions will be judged the quality and efficiency—moral and ethical—of Italy of the year XV, and that from the judgment passed on us by our enemies and friends will flow consequences of incalculable importance for our country'?⁴

Does Mr. Chamberlain believe that General Bergonzoli, who was shot a few days ago in the battle of Caspe, has been in Spain since the non-intervention pact was signed in the summer of 1936? Does he believe that the Germans and Italians which made up almost the entire company of the torpedoed rebel cruiser *Baleares* had been in Spain almost two years? All the rebel planes which were brought down in government territory in the Basque country a year ago were piloted by Germans who had left Germany after the non-intervention pact was signed. How much more likely it is that those now bombing Barcelona also left Germany after the signing of the pact!

The fact is that black has become white, and the elements in England who will continue this murdering course will refuse to be convinced by truth in any degree whatever. This process of simpering duplicity has reached such a point that I was faced last week in a debate on Spain by an opponent, a Roman Catholic priest, who championed the use of Moors in Spain, and

¹ Kurt Ludecke, *I Knew Hitler*. Scribners, 1937.

² *Mussolini's Roman Empire*, G. T. Garratt. Penguin Special, 1938.

³ *The Times*, April 21st, 1937.

⁴ *Documents on the Italian Intervention in Spain*, 1937.

especially the Moors themselves, as 'a very cultured people'. Little did he know that the Minister of War who authorized Franco to import 40,000 Moors in 1934 to put down the miners in Asturias, said: 'The only argument against the use of African troops is that they are utterly lawless and unrestrained in war, and are therefore liable to offend against the laws of common humanity.'¹

Is England going to allow herself to be hemmed in, stripped of her colonies and cut off from her Dominions, and changed eventually into a jungle for pseudo-men, simply because she will not allow a legally constituted democratic government in Spain to buy defensive weapons for the protection of western civilization? We must act now with ALL who value liberty. Never before have the forces of reaction so desperately resolved to 'divide and kill'. Never before has the necessity been so great for us to 'unite and live'.

WM. C. GIBSON.

New College, Oxford.

Forthcoming Events

AUXILIARY EASTER CONFERENCE. At York, April 14th—19th. See page 8 of March number of *The Christian Left*.

GENERAL MEETING. The next general meeting of the Christian Left will be held at Oxford on May 14th and 15th. All members and associates should endeavour to attend.

SUMMER CONFERENCE. At Oriel House, St. Asaph, July 30th to August 6th. This is an 'Auxiliary' Conference, but the Christian Left have been asked to undertake preparations for it, and members and associates should endeavour to attend. The subject is 'The Christian Answer to Fascism'. Charge 30s. per head, plus 2s. 6d. registration fee.

LONDON CHRISTIAN LEFT GROUP. Some of the London members are now meeting regularly for study. Those who wish to join or learn more about this group should write to Mrs. Young, 9 Greenhurst Road, S.E.27.

SOCIALIST CHRISTIANS AND THE CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT. A conference to discuss the position of Socialist Christians in relation to the co-operative movement has been organized by the Stepney Socialist Christian League, in conjunction with the Co-operative Productive Federation. This conference will be held at Christchurch Parish Hall, Watney Street, Commercial Road, E.1, on Saturday, April 30th,

¹Quoted in Arthur Koestler's *Spanish Testament*, 1937.

from 3 p.m. to 9 p.m. The conference will be open to individuals as well as to delegates from organizations. The Co-operative Productive Federation (which is associated with the Stepney Socialist Christian League in the calling of the conference) represents a group of 40 workers' control societies within the co-operative movement, which owe their inspiration to Kingsley, Maurice, Ludlow, Tom Hughes and E. V. Neale.

ACTIVE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS. A conference dealing with 'Towards the Christian Revolution' was held in Manchester on March 12th. An interesting address was given by Rev. John Bromley of Bury, stressing the special need for Left-Wing Christians to co-operate and act in view of recent international events.

Discussion followed on work for the coming year. The Council were asked to produce study-circle outlines, pamphlets for sale and a list of available speakers. They were also asked to plan for a conference in Manchester in November with meetings on the Friday, Saturday and Sunday; the speakers to be well known and the aim being to make fresh contacts.

A contingent is taking part in a procession and public meeting on March 20th to demonstrate against events in Austria.

The Editor is anxious to receive information as to recent and future activities of all Christian Left groups. Reports and notices should be clearly written, on one side of the paper only, and should be sent him as early as possible.

The Editor will be glad to consider MSS. which are likely to be of general interest to readers of THE CHRISTIAN LEFT. He will also be glad to receive letters for publication, provided that they also are concerned with issues likely to be of interest to readers. No MSS. can be returned, if rejected, unless accompanied by a stamped and addressed envelope.

In view of the limited space available in this magazine all contributions should be as brief as possible.

All communications intended for the Editor should be addressed to:

THE EDITOR,
'THE CHRISTIAN LEFT',
172 RUSSELL COURT, WOBURN PLACE,
LONDON, W.C.1.

Subscriptions and orders for copies of THE CHRISTIAN LEFT should be sent to:

MISS ELSA YOUNG,
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LONDON, N.5.

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THE CHRISTIAN LEFT

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The Christian Answer to Fascism

THE immediate work which the Christian Left is called upon to undertake is that of organizing and running the Summer Conference which is being held by the Auxiliary Movement. Our readers will remember that the Christian Left was given the responsibility of drawing up the programme for this conference, which is to be held at Oriel House, St. Asaph, North Wales, from the evening of July 30th till the morning of August 6th. Full particulars as to the various subjects which are to be studied by the 'commissions'—the groups in one of which each member of the conference will be placed—is given on another page. The cost of the conference will be 30s. for the week, plus registration fee of 2s. 6d. to be sent to the General Secretary, Auxiliary Movement, Annandale, North End Road, N.W.11, before June 27th. After that date the fee will be 5s.

The commissions will meet each day from 9.30 till 11.30 a.m. The rest of the morning will be taken up by lectures and discussions. In the evening from 7.30 till 9.0 p.m. there will be further lectures and discussion, and among those who have promised to speak are John Macmurray, Gregory Vlastos, Karl Polanyi, Kingsley Martin, Vivian Ogilvie and Kenneth Ingram. The rest of the day is free, and there is ample opportunity for bathing, games and walking.

St. Asaph is six miles from the coast and a similar distance from the mountains. The house is a boys' school and sleeping accommodation is provided there and in tents. A leaflet giving further details of the arrangements will be sent on application.

So much for general information. We are anxious, however, to emphasize the need of each Christian Left member and associate who can possibly do so attending this conference and throwing his full weight into its work. The conference is not confined to Auxiliary members: it is open to all our readers and their friends. It is obviously an opportunity for intensive study of the various problems which must be explored, if Fascism in this country is to be resisted effectively. And it is clearly a work to which the Christian Left should devote its full energies. There will be many present who do not share our convictions and it is therefore peculiarly essential that our standpoint should be well represented both in the discussions and the study circles. We hope that our readers will realize the importance of this conference, not only as an opportunity for study and inquiry, but on account of the campaign which will almost certainly arise from it. We have been given this work to do: we should each take our share in ensuring that it is adequately fulfilled.

The Trotskyite Problem¹

The Crisis in the Working-Class Movement

The present crisis, of which Trotskyism is an expression, is due to the fact that we have a partial achievement of Socialism in the world through the successful establishment of Socialism in the U.S.S.R. — not yet a Socialist society, but a Socialist economic order.

This fact brings the Socialist working-class movement up against a new situation. It is faced with the necessity of conserving the Socialist achievement in part of the world, while remaining revolutionary in the rest of the world. The ordinary Marxian outlook contains no solution to this problem.

The Trotskyite answer to the dilemma is the denial of the Socialist character of the achievement in the U.S.S.R. and the consequent readiness to sacrifice that which has been achieved to the abstraction of a Socialist utopia.

The usual Communist answer is the denial of the existence of such a crisis as the result of the Socialist achievement in the U.S.S.R. Yet the Russian working class is forced by Fascist pressure—itsself a result of the achievement of Socialism in Russia—to put the exigencies of the military safety of the U.S.S.R. before the support of the revolutionary working-class movements in other countries.

The right approach must start from the recognition that the establishment of Socialism in the U.S.S.R., while only partial, is a real achievement which must be defended and conserved at almost any cost by the working-class movement of the West, yet without the sacrifice of their Socialist class-consciousness in the process.

Hence the Popular Front issue can be reduced to this: anti-Fascism is not a sufficient slogan. If the defence of Socialism in the U.S.S.R. remains unmentioned in the propaganda for the Popular Front, the Socialist class-consciousness of the workers will be dimmed.

In Fascist countries like Germany and Austria the Popular Front is the right policy, because anti-Fascism in such conditions is necessarily a revolutionary attitude. In Spain, for instance, anti-Fascism implies active participation in the civil war. In capitalist democracies these conditions do not obtain. In these countries the propaganda for the Popular Front must put foreign policy and the defence of the U.S.S.R. in the forefront.

¹ This article is taken from a draft statement which has been prepared by a Christian Left group.

The Situation in the face of an Advancing Fascism

Although the defence of the Soviet Union calls for an anti-Fascist concentration in all countries, it remains open to doubt whether the Popular Front is the most effective way of achieving this end.

The argument in favour of the Popular Front is mainly based on an interpretation of the German experiences which implies that National Socialism won through by virtue of numbers.

Such an interpretation of German events is, however, superficial. The strength of Fascism in a country cannot be gauged according to numerical standards. A country can go Fascist although the Fascists are few. Experience shows that lack of determination on the part of the working class to oppose the progress of Fascism has at least as much to do with its success as the numbers of its adherents. Fascism is the only alternative to Socialism in a definite situation which is typical of the capitalist development in our period. This situation is that of a deadlock between democratic institutions and the capitalist system, a deadlock which may actually threaten to paralyse the working both of the political and the economic system of a country. Unless the working class is prepared and able to put a Socialist economic order in the place of the capitalist, the Fascist 'solution' is inevitable. The only chance of the working-class movement to oppose Fascism successfully lies therefore in its readiness to stand for a full solution of the deadlock through the establishment of Socialism.

The so-called Fascist solution is brought about under the leadership of a capitalist oligarchy. Nationally, it consists of the destruction of the political and industrial influence of the working class while retaining capitalist economics in a non-liberal form, so as to make it more resistant against the attacks of the proletariat; internationally, in the Empire that is to say, it is the solution of the problem of international economic organization by means of conquest.

The Socialist solution of the deadlock lies, nationally, in the extension of democracy to the whole of society, involving a transformation of the property system, i.e. the end of the private ownership of the means of production and the establishment of their communal ownership; internationally, in the institutional co-operation of Socialist countries.

In the clash of Fascist and Socialist forces clarity and purpose count for more than numbers. The latter are, indeed, ultimately dependent

upon the former. When and where therefore the Popular Front is established at the price of this clarity and purpose, it tends to increase and not to diminish the chances of a Fascist victory.

Trotsky's Position

Neither Trotsky nor his opponents provide us with a full statement of the facts of the Trotskyite crisis. Trotsky's method implies secrecy of his actual plans and even of his programme: mainly on account of this, his opponents refuse to accept Trotskyism as a tendency in the working-class movement. The Communists disdain to conceal their ideals and aims—cf. the *Communist Manifesto*.

Trotsky claims to base his policy on the world revolution which he expects as the result of world war. The activities of the P.O.U.M. in Spain; the sabotage of economic construction in the U.S.S.R.; the bargaining with Fascist powers—Germany and Japan—for the partition of the U.S.S.R. and for the accomplishment of a 'retreat' from the advanced Socialist position in it are parts of this policy. In this Trotsky is not inconsistent; indeed his theory of the 'permanent revolution' almost constrains him to follow such a line under the given circumstances. But this theory itself has been proved false, for it implied the dogmatic assumptions: (a) that Socialism could not be established in the U.S.S.R.; (b) that in capitalist countries to-day war or civil war must result in the victory of the Socialist Revolution. The first supposition was refuted by the success of the Five Year Plans including collectivization; the second by the success of Fascism in a number of leading countries.

By ignoring these two facts Trotsky can uphold his theory of the permanent revolution and deny: (1) that the working class has built in the U.S.S.R. something worth defending; (2) that Fascism is a new development which the working-class movement has to face.

The theory of the permanent revolution implied 'that backward Russia would begin the Socialist revolution and be saved from the consequences of its own backwardness by the Socialist revolution in Europe'. Trotsky had rightly foreseen since 1905 that no purely middle-class revolution was possible in Russia and that a revolution in Russia would necessarily be Socialist. But he was mistaken both in the assumption (1) that Russia could not overcome her backwardness and (2) that the Russian Revolution would be followed by a successful Socialist Revolution in the West of Europe. He was refuted by the facts. But these two great mistakes led to a series of misconceptions, every one of which would have been fatal if acted upon,

e.g. that the Russian peasantry should be exploited in favour of the industrial proletariat; that we were on the brink of world-war on account of the inevitable military clash between England and the U.S.A., that armed risings of the German workers in 1924 had any chance of success. Trotsky's greatest mistake, however, was not that he made these assumptions (they were more or less implicit in the position of all majority Social Democrats, i.e. Bolsheviks at the time); but that he adhered to them in a dogmatic fashion in a situation in which new decisions had become inevitable.

Up to the time of Lenin's death nobody in the Bolshevik Party believed that Socialism could be established in Russia alone; world revolution was an essential part of the Bolshevik perspective. But after Lenin's death the economic 'retreat' represented by the NEP¹ began to become unworkable. It was never meant to be permanent; the world revolution, it was hoped, would save Russia from her isolation before economic collapse forced her to capitulate to the Kulak's counter-revolution. But the world revolution did not come, and the pressing needs of the towns and of the Socialist sector of industry compelled the Soviet Government to interfere with the peasant households to a degree that was incompatible with the working of the NEP. Fundamentally, the question was whether a new interim programme should be set up, or whether the Bolsheviks should give up waiting for the world revolution and settle down to a long-term policy. Trotsky who had never wholeheartedly accepted Lenin's theory of the necessity of an alliance of the workers and the poorer peasantry in an agricultural country, and had never disowned the theory of permanent revolution, was logically led to stand for a new interim policy until world revolution should materialize, and to suggest the ruthless exploitation of the peasantry by the workers as the means of tiding over all difficulties. For a long-term policy only two roads were open. The one was suggested by the right wing opposition of Bucharin, Rykov and Tomsky; it consisted in a further retreat on the lines of the NEP, even at the price of liquidating Socialism altogether (this opportunist policy could obviously be combined with a 'waiting for world revolution' line). The other was Stalin's policy of trying to build Socialism in Russia, to 'catch up and overtake' Western capitalism: in fact, the policy of the Five Year Plan and collectivization. Stalin's line did not imply that Russia could remain permanently the only

¹ NEP — New Economic Policy, introduced by Lenin in 1921.

Socialist country in the world; but it did imply that in the new situation Russia must take the risks of an attempt that had hardly been envisaged by anybody before. The striking success of this attempt and the subsequent emergence of Fascism in Italy and Germany as a powerful anti-Socialist force, both in the national and the international sphere, determines the line of the U.S.S.R.

The Revolution Betrayed

The remainder of this article is an attempt to summarize Trotsky's book *The Revolution Betrayed*. If there is any apparent discrepancy between what is set out in this summary and matter referring to the same subject elsewhere in this article, the reason lies with Trotsky himself. That is to say, this is a summary of what Trotsky himself says in his own work; the previous sections are an objective review and statement of Trotskyism in relation to the world situation.

The centre of the Trotskyite criticism of the Communist International, and therefore of the U.S.S.R. and Stalin, lies in the fact that it has not sponsored revolution in other countries; that it has thrown over the idea of world revolution. The reasons for Trotsky's attack could take one of two main lines, viz. (a) that it was economically impossible to build Socialism in one country, in a country like Russia alone, or (b) that it was due to the reactionary bourgeois nature of those in power in Russia, i.e. Stalin and Co., who did not wish to risk their own power and position by helping or fostering revolution in other countries. The former implies a judgment on theory, or at the least a difference of opinion between Trotsky and Stalin on matters of tactics and theory; the latter implies a personal judgment, a human judgment. Throughout his book Trotsky does not specifically attack Stalin as a bad Marxist, but as a reactionary; and, because of that, as an opportunist.

Trotsky attempts to show that the revolution has not been a success and that the reversal of the idea of world revolution is a carefully calculated step on the part of Stalin to consolidate his own power in the Soviet Union and to 'introduce into the social consciousness of the people the idea that the revolution has been completed'. He suggests that the policy of the leaders has been one of zigzag, completely lacking in consistency and method: from headlong collectivization to a milder form, from legalizing abortion to prohibiting it, the change in the policy of the Comintern itself, and so on. Trotsky admits that new conditions have arisen, but declares that this is no excuse for reversals and changes of

policy. Adequate leadership should have foreseen such new conditions and taken steps to overcome them! In fact, all the examples of 'zig-zagging' which he takes have been fully admitted by Soviet leaders. Trotsky seems to rely almost entirely for his material on speeches of self-criticism and admission of incomplete success in one direction or another by leaders in the Soviet Union.

Considerable controversy has existed between orthodox Communists and Trotskyists as to whether Lenin believed in the possibility of Socialism being achieved in one country. Trotsky attempts to dispose of this by quoting Stalin in 1924 (after Lenin's death) as declaring that Socialism could not be achieved in one country. Trotsky declares that NEP was not an indication that Lenin had given up the idea of world revolution, but that it was a 'necessary retreat' dictated by the conditions then existent.

Trotsky admits that great headway has been made in the Soviet Union in terms of industrial production, but complains that it is still a long way behind other capitalist countries like the U.S.A. and Great Britain. He declares that Russia is actually attempting to tackle pre-Socialist conditions with Socialist methods (page 61). This and succeeding statements are tantamount to saying the revolution should never have happened.

Trotsky's most fruitful source of material for an attack on Stalin and the other leaders in the Soviet Union, lies in their statements to the effect that 'Socialism has been finally and irrevocably established in the Soviet Union', and that 'the last elements of capitalism have been liquidated'. Trotsky declares this to be sheer hypocrisy in view of the social inequalities which he says exist in the U.S.S.R. at the present time. It is deliberately calculated to lead the mass of the people to the belief that now the struggle is over and matters can be safely left in the hands of the leaders; in other words, an attempt to further strengthen the power of the state.

Stalin had said that the 'dictatorship of the proletariat has been strengthened'. In view of the fact that 'Socialism has been finally and irrevocably established in the Soviet Union' and that 'the last elements of capitalism have been liquidated', this, Trotsky declares, is illogical and indicates only that the state is strengthening itself, consolidating the inequalities that exist and creating a new caste system.

The Red Army is not immune from criticism. In the Red Army we have the caste system in its most blatant form: a huge mass of trained fighters carefully insulated against any discontent and ready to defend the State against attack

from without—or within. At the time of intervention the Soviet Union relied on the people, on a volunteer army. The fact that Stalin cannot now rely on a volunteer army is a further indication in Trotsky's opinion that Stalin is fearful of the discontent which he is stirring up in the masses. 'He dare not give them rifles.'

On the new constitution Trotsky has a word to say: there is no need for secrecy of the ballot if the country is really Socialist. Secrecy of voting is a method adopted in capitalist countries, in countries where class systems exist and where protection is necessary for the workers in registering their votes. The adoption by the Soviet Union of a capitalistic method of voting is a further indication, in Trotsky's opinion, of the relatively reactionary nature of the Soviet Regime.

The main part of this book was written before the 'big group' of trials took place. His only reference to them is in his speech 'I Stake my

Life' reprinted at the end of the book. In that speech he attempts to show that most of the old guard have now been shot or imprisoned and that most of the present leading representatives of the Soviet Union were reactionaries at the time of intervention or at the time of the revolution.

Trotsky's book is not convincing. He sets out to prove that Stalin and Co. have betrayed the Socialist cause, but he really succeeds in proving the opposite. His book serves mainly to emphasize the enormous difficulties entailed in building up a Socialist state in a country like Russia which was backward in every sense and, by implication, helps one to more fully appreciate the advances in Russia. Most of these advances Trotsky himself admits. The book is, for the most part, confused, illogical and self-contradictory. It is only when Trotsky has the speeches of self-criticism of the Soviet leaders as his material that he approaches lucidity.

The Oxford General Meeting

A general meeting was held at the Youth Hostel, Oxford, on May 14th and 15th. A report was made on the Auxiliary Conference at York, and Gregory Vlastos then gave a talk on his recent visit to Russia and replied to a large number of questions which arose in the discussion.

On the second day the plans for the Conference at St. Asaph in August were considered, and also arrangements for a Christian Left holiday camp at Whitsun. A long discussion took place as to the financial commitment and the difficulties which it involved in a number of individual cases. It was decided that this commitment should be reconsidered at the next annual meeting.

The finances of the Christian Left and the future of the News-sheet was a further item on the agenda. The first pamphlet which the Christian Left has produced, *What is the Christian Left?* was handed round and arrangements made

for its distribution and for publicity in regard to it. A report was made on the present numbers of members and associates, and it was noted that a large number of those to whom post-cards have been sent have still sent in no reply.

Ruth Macdonald was elected to the Committee in place of Gregory Vlastos, when he returns to Canada; and Elsa Young was elected in place of Mrs. Wise.

It was decided to affiliate the Enfield Group to the Christian Left.

A sub-committee was appointed to explore the possibility of holding a four-week seminar on the study of the Gospel records as compiled by Sharman, and to see if it would be possible to arrange for a leader from Canada to conduct this study.

The next general meeting, which will be the annual meeting, was fixed for November 12th and 13th in London.

Ourselves and Others

Perhaps it is sometimes excusable to begin by talking about ourselves. The appearance of Pamphlet No. 1, *What is the Christian Left?* is an event of some importance in our history. For the first time the Christian Left has explained its position in a form which can be presented to the general public. The pamphlet is written simply and answers a number of the questions which are usually asked when our standpoint is being discussed. What is, in our view, the purpose of Christianity, what is our attitude to the Churches, what is the relationship of religion to Socialism, do we believe in God, has the Christian Left any justification for independent existence? are some of the subjects with which the pamphlet deals. It is hoped to produce one or two further pamphlets before the autumn, if we find that there is a sufficient demand for this literature.

Behind the problem of how we can distribute and give publicity to these pamphlets looms a bigger issue. It may be asked: 'Why are you so anxious to sell this literature and advertise the existence of the Christian Left? Are you, in spite of all you have said, aiming at securing a large membership like any other organization?' The answer is 'No'. We do not expect a large membership and we are not seeking to canvass for it. The Christian Left has always envisaged itself as a group of people committed deeply to certain principles and not endeavouring to solicit the support of those who do not fully share those convictions. On the other hand, it is clearly our duty to make our position more widely known. If we have, as we believe, a message which is vital to the times, we must not hide our light under a bushel. Pamphlet literature is one of the chief means of making that message known, and that is why we appeal to every member and associate to order as many copies of this first pamphlet as they can afford and circulate them in appropriate quarters. With our very limited funds we have not at our disposal the opportunities which wealthier bodies possess. Distribution of this literature must therefore largely depend on individual effort. Will all our friends assist in this and order copies from Miss Jordan, 172 Russell Court, London, W.C.1? The price is 2½d. each, post free.

One other word about our domestic affairs. While we do not seek to recruit members or associates wholesale to our ranks, we do expect to obtain double or treble the present number of

subscribers to the News-sheet, i.e. people who are interested but who are not prepared to share in our work. The News-sheet is necessarily run at a loss, and, unless our circulation is considerably increased, we shall have to consider whether we are justified in using our funds to produce it in printed form, and whether those costs should not be allotted to the publication of further pamphlets. Yet if everyone at present subscribing to the News-sheet obtained two extra subscribers that particular problem would be met. So far a considerable portion of the News-sheet has been necessarily devoted to domestic affairs, which will not be of direct interest to a wider circle of readers. But, if this appeal for a larger circulation is successful, we shall be able to remedy this defect in future issues.

May Day this year provided a cold wind and lowering clouds, symbolic perhaps of the grim crisis ahead. But neither cold nor wet prevented hundreds of thousands assembling to witness for the cause of Socialism and Democracy. The Christian Left carried their banner, and indeed received special mention for this emblem in the brief notice given by *The Times*. The religious section was headed by the Dean of Canterbury. The total number of those who marched to Hyde Park has been reckoned at 200,000. The elements composing the demonstration were certainly catholic. Besides Socialists, Communists, Trade Unions and Pacifists, a small group of Douglas Credit Reformers were also noticeable. There has never before been a May Day gathering on so large a scale in London and the spectacle was inspiring. Long after 5.0 p.m. processions were still arriving at the park.

We are beginning to receive mention in unexpected quarters. First *The Times* and then *The Church Times*! The Oxford correspondent of the latter newspaper referred to our general meeting in a recent issue and explained that the Christian Left 'is a movement which professes to be outside the organized Christian Churches, and which appeals to a number of undergraduates without ecclesiastical affiliations'.

From a postcard received by the publishers of a recent book written from a Christian Left standpoint: 'Will Messrs. X kindly inform the writer whether their publication mentioned above is or is not another piece of devilish communist propaganda subtly disguised?'

The Summer Conference

The Christian Answer to Fascism is the transformation of the present order to a Socialist society, thereby making possible freedom and equality and the development of human community.

Fascism must be resisted because of the sub-human status of life which it demands. To resist it we must attack both the economic system (capitalism) which produces Fascism, and the religion which is thrown up to defend and consolidate an intrinsically un-Christian society.

The issue in England to-day is the extension of democracy to all fields of corporate life. The urgent need is that we should be thoroughly informed as to those forces in English society which are openly or indirectly opposing the extension of democracy, and are thus working for Fascism.

The Conference will bring together a group of people who realize the threat of Fascism, who are prepared to study it, to discover their own convictions on the subject, and to proceed to action in the contemporary situation.

The following is a list of the various Commissions which will be held and the issues which each of them will be invited to survey:

1. *Foreign Policy.* Trends of National Government's foreign policy. The Berlin-Rome axis—non-intervention in Spain—Anglo-Italian agreement—position in the Mediterranean—proposed four-power pact—position of Czechoslovakia—Anglo-French relationships—Franco-Soviet pact—collective security. Power of British workers to influence foreign policy.

2. *Civil Liberties in England.* Bans on political demonstrations—press censorship—Incitement to disaffection Act—politics and civil servants and teachers—Limitations on Trade Union activities.

Influence of prospect of war—A.R.P.—enlistment—conscription.

3. *English Democracy.* Pseudo democratic methods and abuses of democratic system—unemployment assistance board—producers' boards—L.P.T.B.—Tariffs and subsidies. Election methods—bribery (e.g. free coal at Christmas)—use of private cars. Local Government system and relation to central government. The Soviet system.

4. *Industry.* Growth of industry—rationalization—development of monopoly capitalism—state controlled capitalism—distribution of national income. Solutions of industrial problems advanced by capitalists—profit-sharing—parliament of industry. Trade unions—labour spying and intimidation. Co-operative movement. Democratic organization of industry.

5. *Equality of men and women.* Position of women in society—equal suffrage—professions closed to women—equal pay. Women and home and family—effect of status on women on birth-rate. Status of women in Germany and U.S.S.R.

6. *Inequalities of groups.* Basis of class distinctions—their maintenance—class war—meaning of a classless society. Nationalism and imperialism, race and anti-semitism—'blood and soil'. Treatment of racial and linguistic minorities in U.S.S.R., Germany, U.S.A.

7. *Cultural Organizations.* Capitalist control of the press—influence of press—comparison of typical papers from point of view of accuracy and policy—selection of news. Control of films—influence of news films and others. Influence of publishing firms—The form of education necessary to counter the effect of propaganda. Influence of capitalism on science and learning—control of universities and institutions—scholarships and fellowships—research. Comparison of state of science, literature and art in Germany, Russia and England.

8. *Religion.* The Established Church—church officials as State officials—Church as property owner. Missionary activity as extending the institution. Missionary work in relation to imperialism. Anglo-Catholicism—the Oxford Group movement—the Archbishop's recall to religion. Quasi-religious bodies—scouts, guides, Toc H, etc.

9. *Education.* Education on class basis—public, secondary and elementary schools—free education and scholarship system. Examination system. Education for life *versus* education for function in capitalist society. Conduct—discipline—obedience—moral training. Sex education. Nursery and co-educational schools. Dalton plan and 'free' schools.

Memoranda, with suggestions for reading, on each of these subjects will be issued to those who have registered, and a limited number of copies may be available for those who cannot attend.

The Financial Commitment

At the Oxford general meeting there was considerable discussion as to the financial commitment, which for many has evidently proved to be the stumbling-block to committed membership. It was contended that those who took a responsible part in the work of a political party were contributing financially to that party and were thus unable to give one per cent of their income, in addition, to the Christian Left. It was also pointed out that to workers earning less than £3 a week one per cent was too high a proportion: and yet many of those so placed should be members of the Christian Left. The question was raised as to whether the contribution to Christian Left funds should not be interpreted to include financial aid to a political party, as this was Christian Left work.

The financial commitment of one per cent was originally framed because it was felt that a minimum financial contribution was a test of a member's degree of interest. But it is clear that this commitment must be more fully considered at the annual meeting. Meanwhile, criticisms and suggestions on this point are invited in our correspondence columns.

Closely connected with this question is the further question as to what is Christian Left work? Some of our friends have urged that in giving up their full time to work for the Labour Party or the C.P. they are working for the Christian Left. There is obviously a danger lest membership of the Christian Left should be regarded as an end in itself and a substitute for political activity. Some will find that their most useful task lies in writing, speaking or undertaking administrative duties for the Christian Left as such: others will realize that their duty lies specifically in the political field. All that at the moment we would point out is that the

work of Christian Left groups is primarily that of education, of training and preparation for responsibilities in the wider sphere.

Owing to pressure of space on our columns in this number, we have had to hold over Correspondence and other matter.

The Editor is anxious to receive information as to recent and future activities of all Christian Left groups. Reports and notices should be clearly written, on one side of the paper only, and should be sent him as early as possible.

The Editor will be glad to consider MSS. which are likely to be of general interest to readers of THE CHRISTIAN LEFT. He will also be glad to receive letters for publication, provided that they also are concerned with issues likely to be of interest to readers. No MSS. can be returned, if rejected, unless accompanied by a stamped and addressed envelope.

In view of the limited space available in this magazine all contributions should be as brief as possible.

All communications intended for the Editor should be addressed to:

THE EDITOR,
'THE CHRISTIAN LEFT',
172 RUSSELL COURT, WOBURN PLACE,
LONDON, W.C.1.

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 THE CHRISTIAN LEFT

September - October 1938

No. 13A

CHIEF CONTENTS

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THE WORLD CRISIS

The Standing Committee of the Cristian Left met in London on September 24th and 25th at a moment of acute crisis in the World situation. The Committee unanimously passed the following resolution, which was at once despatched to the Prime Minister:-

This meeting of the Christian Left urges that the Government, in the interests of world-peace, should make a firm stand against the attempt of the German Führer to dictate policy by terrorist threats, and that immediate steps should be taken to co-operate with France and Russia in order to safeguard the interests of democracy and human liberty throughout the world.

AFTER ST. ASAPH

If ever a history is written in the years to come of the Christian Left Movement, the chronicler will probably refer to the St. Asaph Conference as an event which marked the beginning of a new period. The connexion of St. Asaph to the Christian Left is that the organisation of the Conference was a piece of work which the Christian Left was asked by the Christian Auxiliary Movement to undertake. On another page we give a short account of the conference. The personnel was composed of various types and represented several standpoints, so that the Christian Left message was given to an audience to whom it was mainly unfamiliar. At the final meeting, many of those who had not hitherto joined in the debates, expressed their own conclusions as to the Conference. This was perhaps the most valuable of all the discussions. It proved that the message had been found vital and that the members wanted to hear and read more about it. The desire was strongly expressed that a campaign should follow the Conference as a continuation of its work. On the last evening, the Standing Committee considered some of the ways in which this work should be carried out.

The first result of St.Asaph is, therefore, that the Christian Left is evidently to be set a definite task - that is of spreading its

message, its religious interpretation of the world-crisis on which we are entering. For these purposes we may envisage three sections of the public: the politically conscious Left public, which, as a whole, is indifferent or antagonistic to what it understands to be Christianity: the orthodox Christian public; and the public which has drifted away from the Churches, although retaining a vague loyalty to the Christian tradition, and which is, in the main, equally uncertain as to its political sympathies. It is with the third section that the Christian Left is directly concerned.

The general meeting which will be held in London at the week-end of November 26th and 27th will have carefully to consider the problem of ways and means. In view of the importance of that problem, this meeting becomes itself peculiarly important, and it is urgently desirable, therefore, that all members and associates should attend it. The number of invitations for Christian Left speakers to go to different centres is likely to be large in comparison to the winter speakers. It was provisionally agreed at the Conference, that the text, so far as the acceptance of such invitations is concerned, must be the question whether in the particular centre which speakers are to address there will be provision for following up the meeting or week-end school by some permanent activity, such as a study-circle. If the demand becomes greater than the supply, it was felt that the Christian Left should confine its energies to places where someone would be able to guarantee some form of continuous activity, rather than attempt to supply speakers for spasmodic meetings.

The second result of St. Asaph is that the relations of the Christian Left and the Auxiliary Movement are likely to become more intimate. The Auxiliary is obviously able to draw to some extent on that type of public which the Christian Left is mainly anxious to reach. Though it would obviously be a mistake to confine itself to Auxiliary centres, the Christian Left recognises the value of the Auxiliary organisation and fully reciprocates the desire of the Auxiliary to co-operate.

Thirdly, the Christian Left has been taught at St. Asaph that by attempting to fulfil an objective task, by responding to an invitation from outside to preach its message, it learns more fully to understand its message. There have been some, who realizing that to many members the Christian Left position has been insufficiently classified, have counselled that domestic differences and uncertainties should be resolved within the ranks before setting out on any mission, however slight its proportions. To a certain extent this counsel is justified. Speakers must be sure and must be trained in regard to their mission before they can preach it to the world. On the other hand, St. Asaph has proved that in the creative work of proclaiming a gospel and replying to the criticisms which it arouses, there is a distinct self-educative value. It is evident that the Christian Left cannot any longer delay responding to the call which is being directed to it, and in doing so it will discover both its own weaknesses and the directions in which those weaknesses must be remedied.

As we have insisted more than once in these columns, the object of accepting these invitations to speak and make contact with those who are anxious to hear, is not to gain new members or increase the size of our own organisation. Even if events confirm that we have a mission to perform, we regard it as probable that institutionally the Christian Left may remain a small body of men and women. We shall not reckon success or failure by members.

One other word to be said about ourselves in a more exclusive sense, that is about the CHRISTIAN LEFT news-sheet. A considerable amount of the work of spreading our message will have to be carried out through the medium of written propaganda, and probably it will be found that this will most conveniently be done by extending the series of leaflets, the first of which has already appeared. One Christian Left group has already begun to give valuable service by producing carefully prepared bulletins, as the result of intensive study. At one time it was thought that this news-sheet could act as an organ for such propaganda, but THE CHRISTIAN LEFT must inevitably include a certain amount of domestic news and information which can have little interest for a more general public. It has, therefore, been decided to issue the news-sheet in its present form, so as to save a larger balance of our limited funds for printing pamphlets. We are sure that our subscribers will agree with this course, and they will receive a copy of the pamphlets when published.

CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Editor,

The members of the small group to which I belong are frequently asked why they regard themselves as only associates of the Christian Left. The following account is an attempt to answer that question by giving a full statement of our position. It is not intended to reopen the controversy of last autumn.

The Christian Left was born out of the necessity of recognising a religious experience and its raison d'être "is the consciousness of its personnel that the crisis in which we live concerns the nature and meaning of human life, and that Christianity, as the discovery of this meaning, is both causing the crisis and showing the way to its solution: that this consciousness is an experience, a conviction and a message: that for those to whom it is a valid experience it involves a commitment: that the Christian Left is a community only so far as that commitment is shared: and that only those who fully understand the commitment and are prepared to undertake it, should be responsible for the decisions of the Christian Left." In these words the February Editorial in The Christian Left summed up the position of our group. For the sake of clarity, it will be as well to summarise what we consider to be the Christian Left message under three headings:

- (1) The nature of human life as revealed by Jesus as personal.

(2) Marx, in the light of the development of Capitalism, made a further discovery about human life: that man's personal life is linked to society, and that society is inescapable. The basis of society is economic and its nature is determined by economic relationships - whether they are human or un-human, personal or impersonal.

(3) In the crisis of our time, Christianity, working in history, is destroying this civilisation and bringing in the new - bringing in a more human, more personal society.

The best comment on the first and third of these points is contained in Professor Macmurray's article in the third News Sheet (October 1936): "To say that human life is personal is to define true human society as the relation of man and woman on the basis of their common humanity... Thus Christianity is the struggle in human history which was originated by Jesus... for the achievement of a universal society on a basis of universal equality and freedom".

Now the Christian Left was maintained by a consciousness of community in face of the tasks arising from such a religious experience. Only by a constant and unbroken reference to that community could further clarification, conviction, and action be made possible. The problem of organisation, while not to be escaped, remained secondary, and was consciously so regarded by the group. But the problem was bound to become pressing, and the only way to avoid disruption was to restrict organisation to the necessary minimum. It was on this question of organisation that dissensions began in the Christian Left.

The present leaders of the Christian Left felt strongly that up to the summer of 1937 the movement had been run on insufficiently democratic lines. Democracy is, indeed, all-important, but we felt that there had been a misunderstanding of the nature of democratic procedure. "Democracy", wrote Karl Polanyi, in a letter to David Cass-Beggs, "is a method of running the affairs of a community; it is not a method of bringing community into existence. It is a method of getting things done in accordance with the greatest measure of common consent and a minimum of coercion in a given community. It is not a method of creating the internal community, of which the external organisation or body can be no more at best than a more or less adequate expression. Communities discover themselves to be in existence - historical events, slow spontaneous growths, or acts of leadership may have preceded the discovery. Birth and growth, existence and functioning, community and society, are under different sets of laws.

"Up to the end of April we seemed to be able to master the day-by-day responsibility of being engaged in the birth of a group. Cambridge forced us to face up to the problem of constituting ourselves even though only in view of some very limited tasks, such as dealing with the finances of the Auxiliary Christian Left. Some kind of tentative and provisional formula of adherence appeared necessary. But we were unanimous that nothing more was needed at this stage, and that the principle of avoiding any step that might prejudice the issues raised by the progressive emergence of the true nature of the group

should be strictly adhered to I understand that we proposed to have a Conference in camp the organisation of which should again be such as not to prejudge the issue. At the camp itself I told you frankly what I thought of the draft Organisation suggested in the News Sheet (No.9.) I made no secret that I thought such an organisation at this stage to be an absurdity in view of the fact that it would amount to an attempt at organising a movement, which in fact did not yet exist, and would necessarily injure and weaken the religious forces from which we could alone hope for a genuine movement if such should, eventually emerge. I entirely agreed that the "organisation" of our movement would have to be based on the free and spontaneous democracy of local groups; I proposed that the acceptance of this principle should be substituted for the draft organisation, the latter being regarded as premature".

David Cass-Beggs argued in October that a more elaborate organisation had been necessary in order to avoid what he called "the dictatorial methods of the past". It was pointed out, on our part, that it was not helpful to denounce as dictatorial what was the inevitable position of any leader in the initial stage of the formation of a new community. "The method of democracy, where it applies, ought not to be confused with majority decisions. Every dictatorship from Napoleon III to Hitler (not entirely excluding the National Government of 1931) was based on majority decision. The question is in such cases whether a decision was called for or not; whether it was premature at that stage; whether the community ought, or ought not, to have used compulsion; whether the minority ought, or ought not, to have been coerced; whether each of these issues had been sufficiently clarified by full discussion and ordered deliberation before the question was finally formulated. Lastly, were decisions afterwards interpreted in a restrictive sense by those who carried them out so as not to stretch the content of the decision unduly and extend the scope of the obligations that it statuates?" We cannot help feeling that on every one of these points the methods that have been in use in the Christian Left since May (1937) have been undemocratic.

On the other hand we agree that the methods by which the News Sheet was produced (before May 1937) were in some respects unsatisfactory, "especially also to those who had to take responsibilities which could not be, in the very nature of things, shared at that stage. If this method broke down prematurely, this appears to prove only that the growth of the community spirit did not proceed in step with the emergence of a new lead". We are convinced that the responsibility for this discrepancy in the rhythm of our movement does not lie with one side alone. But unless we can tackle the red herring of 'democracy' effectively, and soon, we shall certainly lose the trail.

It will be agreed, I think, that this letter (of October 25th) fairly expresses our points of difference. Now in a community of real substance such a sharp difference can be turned to full account by recognising it fully and by a determination to regroup the community on such a recognition. The group which signed the statement submitted to the November meeting hoped that an attempt would be made to do this.

They envisaged a re-statement of the full Christian Left position with a full commitment; and they proposed to refound the Christian Left on it, after recognising the mistake that had been made in attempting to hand over the existence of the movement as a religious community — founded on a religious experience — to those who were only an inquiring fringe. They felt unable either to continue on the assumption that the present Christian Left was on a sound basis, or to accept responsibility for its continuance.

The present committee, while accepting the need for a fully committed group, does not accept the necessity of making the reformation dependent upon a full reconsideration, with all its consequences, of the events of the past nine months. Our views on this point were expressed on December 7th in a letter to the committee.

It was in these circumstances that we felt bound to carry on with our own work, to which we felt so deeply committed that we could regard ourselves as only associate members of the Christian Left; for, apart from our disagreement with it, we could obviously not give it our undivided loyalty. We believe that the success of the Christian Left message cannot be measured by its power to change the immediate course of events, but that it should rather be judged by the clarity with which we see and the commitment with which we carry through our task. Lack of clarity is the great danger. We must know precisely where we differ from a number of other groups with whom we have a general sympathy, and who may themselves feel that there is no essential difference between their position and ours. However exactly we state our position, we must expect it to be confused, not only by the outside world but by those most sympathetic to it, with their own. We must know exactly what our criticism of the Marxist position is; we must be able to criticise the working class movement (for its failure to understand its task and in its current policy) while ourselves remaining a committed and fully involved part of that movement. We must know precisely where we stand with regard to Christianity in the Churches, and state emphatically that we think that the various characteristics of pseudo-Christianity are a blank denial of true Christianity. We must reject those dogmas which seem to us to be an expression of the former. But we must be clear not only intellectually, but also in our feeling and in our faith: we must have religious clarity, for we shall be useless if we take up our position on purely intellectual grounds.

We must give up our lives to the socialist movement, whilst preserving the consciousness that that movement is a means and not an end, and endeavour to create a new tissue within the working class. Although we can be sure that the universal human community will eventually emerge, we must be prepared to face a period which will try our faith to the utmost. Without a single-minded commitment, we shall achieve nothing.

It was with such feelings that, six months ago, we started to work on our own. We are about to issue two bulletins: the first deals with the crisis in the working-class movement, and the second with the early writings of Marx. But we do not propose to confine

ourselves to theoretical activity: the following statement is not only a summary of our position, but an indication of what we hope to do:-

The structure of man's consciousness is being re-founded in our epoch. Out of the knowledge of death man's consciousness was born. It was reformed by the discovery of the inner freedom of the person. In our time it is being formed again by the knowledge of the inevitability of society. As man learned to know death, so does he now learn to know society.

The freedom lost by this knowledge is illusory, the freedom gained is valid. In the recognition of his loss of freedom, which he yet must vindicate in and through society, and in the certainty of ultimate attainment man's consciousness is re-grounded in reality.

To the new consciousness the self-estrangement of man under capitalism becomes apparent, and the socialist transformation is recognised as the only means by which self-estrangement can be overcome, and personal life reclaimed in a complex society.

In the cataclysm of our time it is Christianity which is destroying this civilisation and bringing a new one. The Christian force in history is asserting its creative nature by annihilating an order of things which is attempting to negate it. We find ourselves sure of Christianity and not anxious for its future, our sole concern is for the future of the working-class movement, the chief instrument of the transformation.

Our existence as a group springs from the nature of our tasks.

Members of the group belong to one or the other of the socialist working-class parties.

The activities of the group are:

- a. Prophetic: To proclaim our message by pointing to the signs of the times and to the true nature of the present world crisis; by denouncing the apostasy of the Churches; by preparing the minds of man for the inevitability of the transformation of society; by showing the certainty of the significance of a life committed to the services of the working-class movement and to the truth of socialism.
- b. Practical: The creation, through individuals and groups, of a new tissue within the working class, springing from such changes in the forms and techniques of everyday existence as are appropriate to the actual life and Socialist mission of the working-class in this country.
- c. Theoretical: To contribute to the re-grounding of Socialist working class movement in a period defined by the establishment of a socialist system in the U.S.S.R.

KENNETH MUIR.

Postscript. (August) During the past three months, we have issued our first three bulletins, and a fourth, on A.R.P., is in preparation.

Dear Editor,

In reply to your request for my comments on the letter from Kenneth Muir, as one of the people mentioned in the letter and as a member of the present committee, I should like to make two or three observations.

First, a correction: In my reply (about a year ago) to the letter from Karl Polanyi quoted by Kenneth Muir, I made it clear that what I called the 'dictatorial methods of the past' did not apply to any one person - indeed I have never regarded the Christian Left as having a 'leader' - but rather to the group of people who controlled its affairs up to May 1937, of which I was myself a member.

Second, an omission: The Christian Left as at present constituted believes that the decision as to whether a person accepts or does not accept the commitments and thus is, or is not a member, must be made by that person for himself. This principle the group in question did not accept, but held that members should be selected in some manner by those who were originally responsible for the birth of the Christian Left.

Third, while we as a committee were willing that an enquiry into the methods and mistakes of the past, as requested by the group in their letter of December 7th, should be held, we were not prepared to be committed in advance to making the whole future of the movement dependent upon the result of the enquiry, whatever that might be. We preferred to formulate our basis and commitments and to leave the form and future of the movement to be determined by our attempts to put them into practice in the contemporary situation.

Finally, in re-stating much of the religious position of the Christian Left in a rather lengthy letter, the impression is given that it is upon this material we differ. There is, as far as we know, no difference of opinion, as to the religious message of the Christian Left.

David Cass-Beggs.

Dear Editor,

I am gravely concerned over a number of misconceptions in the article submitted by an anonymous "Christian Left Group" in your last issue on THE TROTSKYIST PROBLEM.

It adopts two well-known Trotskyist theses:

- (1) that there is a "dilemma" between the defence of the U.S.S.R. and socialist revolution in other countries;
- (2) that "the Russian working-class is forced to put the exigencies of the military safety of the U.S.S.R. before the support of the revolutionary working-class movements in other countries."

This is called "the crisis in the working-class movement". The "ordinary Marxian outlook" misses this "crisis." Trotsky sees it, but gives the wrong answer. The authors of this article also see it, and give the right answer. And what is that? That socialism in Russia must be defended, yet without the "sacrifice" of "Socialist class-consciousness" elsewhere.

But who wants to sacrifice "Socialist class-consciousness" elsewhere? It is not Trotsky. It must, therefore, be the "ordinary" Marxians. They are ready to sacrifice socialist class-consciousness throughout the rest of the world, in order to defend the U.S.S.R. These "ordinary" Marxians must be quite extraordinary people. For they are also charged with leaving "unmentioned" the defence of the U.S.S.R. in their "propaganda for the Popular Front"

We need not linger over small points of consistency. The big point so far is a refined version of the "Moscow agents" story. Do these members of the Christian Left -- if they are members -- believe that the "ordinary Marxians" are ready to "dim" the class-consciousness of workers throughout the rest of the world in order to serve "the military safety of the U.S.S.R.?" If so, they had better re-organize as a unit of the Right Book Club.

Some of their other views:

- (1) That the U.S.S.R. is "not yet a socialist society, but a socialist economic order." This is dualism. It implies that you can have a socialist economic order, while you have an un-socialist society. What they should have said is that the U.S.S.R. is not yet a communist economy or communist society; that it is only a socialist society, because it is only a socialist economy. They speak of Russian socialism as "partial." I understand that socialization in Russia is about 96% for agriculture and 98% for industry and exchange.
- (2) That "in the clash of Fascist and Socialist forces clarity and purpose count for more than numbers. The latter are, indeed, ultimately dependent upon the former." This is idealism. It is quite true that Fascism can come in a country, though the Fascists be few. The same is not true of Socialism, because Socialism is not Fascism. Socialism is a popular movement. Fascism is a manoeuvre of an oligarchy. The point of the Popular Front is precisely this. Fascism can be brought in by a well-financed clique. Socialism cannot be brought in by a clique of bright intellectuals, with clarity, purpose, and a deep religious experience thrown in for good measure.

There are good, hard-boiled, realistic objections against the Popular Front. The grandees of Transport House and the City know what these are. But when objections against the Popular Front come not from the enemies of Socialism, but its would-be friends, they rest on two assumptions:

- (1) That people who work against Fascism and fight against it will still retain their capitalist mentality. This is dualism.
- (2) That you can't work for socialism unless you are tooting a Socialist-trumpet all the time. This is idealism.

The authors of this article who find time to study Trotsky's works may also find time to read some of Lenin's. If so, I should commend to them a pamphlet entitled, "Left Wing Communism -- An Infantile Disorder."

NEMO.

THE ST. ASAPH CONFERENCE

The conference on 'The Christian Answer to Fascism' which the Auxiliary Movement had asked The Christian Left to organise commenced on Saturday, July 30th and terminated on Friday, August 5th. Nearly one hundred attended, of whom a considerable proportion were members neither of the Auxiliary nor of the Christian Left. The conference was held at Oriel House School, St. Asaph. Throughout the week the weather was, on the whole, in a favourable mood, and during the spare hours the open-air bathing pool was a popular attraction as well as the tennis-court and the local scenery.

On the first evening, Donald Grant lectured on the International situation, and the interest in his lecture was shown by the animated discussion which followed. The evenings from 7.30. till 9.0. were devoted to lectures and discussion. Kenneth Ingram, who took the place of Kingsley Martin, talked on the Sunday evening about Fascist tendencies in Britain, as revealed mainly in recent legislation and in police administration. Karl Polanyi spoke on Monday on Fascist philosophy and economics, Hilda Vernon followed on Tuesday dealing with Fascism and the status of women. On Wednesday evening Vivian Oglivie spoke on Fascist trends in education, while on Thursday, Kenneth Ingram dealt with the outlook of the home Churches and summed up the general message of the Conference.

On the first three mornings from 11.30 to 1.0. John Macmurray described the religious and the specifically Christian influence on the history of Europe, and replied to a large number of questions which his interpretation provoked. Gregory Vlastos followed on the last two mornings, dealing both with the Old and New Testaments and providing an admirable continuity with the message which John Macmurray had given.

The main concern of the Conference centred round the clarification of the religious position of the Christian Left in such a way as to make the answer to Fascism plain.

The first lecture by John Macmurray on the meaning of religion, emphasised the primary task of creating a new consciousness of the meaning of the present crisis and the understanding of Fascism. Beginning by defining religion as the most social of human activities, John Macmurray traced the development of the distinctive Jewish consciousness, which in spite of contact with neighbouring otherworldly religions, retained, often with a great struggle, a non-dualist attitude (Dualism being the division between sacred and secular theory and practice, "This world" and the "Other") which culminated in the teaching of Jesus.

He defined history not as a process, but as the action of God and men. Action is the realisation of intention. The law of action is that unless man's intention is the same as God's, then he is doomed to achieve the very opposite of what he intends. If we maintain that man is imperfect or that the kingdom of heaven cannot be established on earth, then we reject all that Jesus stood for. The history of Europe shows the conflict of this Jewish consciousness of the nature of reality - the equality, brotherhood and universality of man - with the dualist European mind, which while it retains its dualism of the "spiritual" and the "material", is bound to turn Christianity into the negation of itself - inevitably "opium of the people".

A Christian is correctly defined, not as one who believes what Jesus believed, or belongs to the Church that Jesus founded, but one who intends what Jesus intended. He was not concerned with good or bad, but with personal relationships between men and their neighbours. Wheat and tares would grow together until the harvest when they could be clearly seen - the position of crisis.

Today the intention of Russia is the acceptance in society of the principle of universality and brotherhood. Separating out, resisting this, are the forces of Fascism. Fascist and Socialist alike have an understanding of the present crisis, represented by the breakdown of economic order on an international scale, but the intentions by which each attempts to solve it are in complete divergence.

Gregory Vlastos summed up at the conclusion of his last lecture as follows:- "The Christian Answer to Fascism is Socialism." This does not imply that Christianity and Socialism are identical but that they meet today as the answer to the Fascist interpretation of the nature of man and community.

The conference divided next morning into nine commissions which were concerned respectively with Foreign Policy, Civil Liberty and Democracy, Education, The Equality of Men and Women, Culture, Psychology, Industry, Religion and the Churches. On the last of these meetings each commission presented its report. It is frequently the experience, where this method is followed, that although commissions provide a useful opportunity for all members to make their contribution - to an extent which is impossible at meetings of the whole conference - the conclusions at which they arrive are general and superficial. But perhaps the most significant feature of the St. Asaph conference was the high level of efficiency, clear statement and far-sighted criticism which each of these reports attained. These conclusions were recognised as so exceptionally good that an unanimous desire was expressed that they should be collected and made available in printed form in the near future, and this the Auxiliary Movement hopes to do.

The keen interest aroused by the Conference was shown by the number of additional meetings, all of which were well attended. One of these was arranged by the Industrial Commission and was addressed by Alfred Cannon: it led to an animated and valuable discussion. At another meeting the objects and standpoint of the Auxiliary and The Christian Left were explained by John Drewitt and Kenneth Ingram, and a large number of questions were asked. On the last morning and afternoon members were asked to give their personal impressions of the conference and to offer suggestions as to whether it should be followed by any kind of activity. These discussions were perhaps the most striking tribute which the conference could have received.

NOTICES AND REPORTS

The annual general meeting will be held in London on Saturday afternoon and evening, November 26th, and Sunday morning and afternoon, the 27th. The place of meeting will be notified later. All members and associates are asked to attend.

As a result of the St. Asaph Conference, Kenneth Ingram and W.D. McClelland were invited to present the message of The Christian Left, in regard to the Christian Answer to Fascism, at a week-end conference held at Stafford on September 17th - 18th, under the auspices of the Adult School. The conference was extremely successful.

An important conference is to be held in London under the auspices of The National Peace Council on the encroachment of executive and military authority on democratic and parliamentary rights. The date is October 28th and 29th. Those members and associates of the Christian Left who are within reach of London are urged to attend; the place of meeting will be notified later in the press.

Communications for the Editor should be addressed to The Editor, The Christian Left, 172, Russell Court, Woburn Place, London, W.C.1. Subscriptions and orders for copies should be sent to Miss Elsa Young, 16, Highbury Grove Court, London, N.5.

Duplicated by EGA, 5, Stepney Green, London, E.1.

THE CHRISTIAN LEFT

November - December 1938

No.14

IMPRESSIONS OF THE ANNUAL MEETING

A formal account of the Annual Meeting is given on another page. Here, however, we are anxious to convey some idea of the results of that meeting and the development which it registers. Looking back at the meeting last year, we cannot fail to compare the internal difficulties which then confronted us with the greater clarity as to our message and our activities which has now been reached.

Among the more important decisions taken at the recent Annual General Meeting were those relating to what were formerly termed commitments.

While the subject matter of these statements was in general satisfactory, it was felt that the name "commitments" did not correctly describe them. To some, with experience of a similar term in the Auxiliary Movement, it was much too vague, while to others the term involved a far closer and deeper relationship between individuals and to the group as a whole than could be achieved in a group even as large as the Christian Left now is.

These "commitments" were functioning in fact as the conditions of membership: they distinguished between associate and full members, and consequently this name was adopted for them.

The alterations made in regard to the conditions of membership were, in the main, improvements in the phraseology to make them more simple and explicit.

The omission of a stated percentage of effective income from the financial paragraph was made because it was urged that while such a financial undertaking was in many cases an effective test of membership, the acceptance of conditions 1 and 2 might well mean in certain cases that all available resources should be directed elsewhere than to the Christian Left as an organization.

In confirming the basis at this meeting (substituting the proposed alternative Section 7,) the basis passes out of its provisional stage. This statement of the Christian Left position - prepared as a result of our experience over the last few years - becomes more significant as the crisis of our times passes to increasingly more critical phases. Never before was a true

understanding of the nature of this crisis so essential. Now more than ever, the Christian Left is compelled to shoulder the task of making its basic position more widely known. While last year much of our time was devoted to "putting our house in order" the work of the coming year is planned looking onwards, a year of education and extension.

The campaign-work of the Christian Left will, we hope, continue vigorously. It is satisfactory to be able to record that, largely as a result of the St. Asaph conference, the Campaign Committee are receiving invitations to provide speakers for conferences of those who are anxious to undertake regular study and other work on Christian Left lines. We hope that many of our readers will endeavour to undertake this sort of campaign in their own localities and will apply to us, if they so desire, for speakers to address a local conference intended to inaugurate such a campaign.

Another form of organizational activity is the publication of pamphlets. The second of these has now been issued, and valuable work can be done by distributing it widely. The degree to which the first pamphlet has already been circulated, in spite of any distribution-machinery, is extremely satisfactory. In this connexion the Annual Meeting approved the new form which the News Sheet has taken, in order to allow more of our funds to be spent in printed propaganda, and we need, therefore, offer no further apology for continuing to appear in this guise.

Other forms of corporate activity will, no doubt, open up. But, in any case, the Annual Meeting enables us to feel that we can go forward with a much clearer idea of our mission and responsibilities. And, although we shall not register our success by the number of supporters, we hope that we shall gain an access of strength and consequently find ourselves in a position to undertake a wider scope of work, work which was never so desperately needed as at the present stage of the world-crisis.

THE ANNUAL MEETING

London - November 26th, 27th, 1938

The second Annual Meeting of the Christian Left was held at Weymouth House, Hallam Street, London, and was well attended. The first session was held on the Saturday afternoon, when John Macmurray gave a talk on "The Christian Left in the present Situation." He reviewed the situation which had been produced by the Czechoslovakian crisis and stressed the need of approaching the problems which confronted us from the standpoint of personality and not merely theoretically. A number of questions were asked and a discussion followed.

At the second session, held in the evening, Ted Edwards, from the Chair, gave a report of Christian Left activities during the past year. The Committee had met four times and there had been three general meetings. A number of groups associated with the Christian Left had been at work in London, Oxford, Enfield, Manchester, etc. The St. Asaph conference, held in August, on the "Christian Answer to Fascism", had taken place as a result of a request from the Auxiliary Movement that the Christian Left should provide the programme and speakers for that conference. The conference had agreed that a Campaign Committee should be formed in order to carry on the work of the conference by providing speakers on this subject to address meetings and conferences which might be arranged in continuation. Already two such subsequent conferences had been held - at Stafford and Cheltenham - where Christian Left speakers had addressed a series of sessions and where circles had been formed to carry on regular study of the problems involved in the Christian Left message. A further conference would be shortly held at Northampton.

The chairman also explained the work which had been done by Christian Left representatives in regard to the industrial policy of the Auxiliary, as expressed in a recent Auxiliary memorandum.

Turning to literary activities, he explained that in addition to the group memoranda prepared for the St. Asaph conference, a report of the addresses given at that conference would shortly be published. In regard to Christian Left publications, the Committee had proposed that the News-Sheet should be duplicated and not printed, in order to allow for a larger expenditure on the production of pamphlets. The News Sheet would necessarily be concerned with domestic matters, and it was felt that the pamphlets would be a more valuable form of propaganda. The second pamphlet, Will Britain Go Fascist? by Kenneth Ingram (3d) was now available.

The chairman emphasized that he was not presenting this report as evidence of any great achievements: the Committee, on the contrary, were conscious of the small amount of work which had been done. But, it must be remembered that probably the most important contribution which the Christian Left was making was through its individual members and groups in their own activities. He was presenting this report rather with the view of asking the Meeting whether it approved the type of activity which the Christian Left, as an organism, had been pursuing: or whether it was felt that other lines of activity should be pursued.

A long discussion followed, and the meeting generally approved of what had been done, urging that the campaign should

be continued and further literature issued.

At the Sunday sessions, David Cass-Beggs, Fanny Street and Kenneth Ingram were successively in the Chair. The Basis, Commitments and definition of membership, etc., were considered at length, and certain alterations made. These, as amended, are set out on another page. It was decided to issue a leaflet containing the Basis, definition of membership, etc.

The Treasurer stated that £15.5.4. had been brought forward from 1937, £74.7.8. had been received from subscriptions, and £3 received from the Auxiliary Movement. On the expenditure side, £26.15.6. had been spent on the News Sheets, and £7.9.0. on Pamphlet No.1. Other expenses included £14.3.1. for travelling, £9.13.5. secretarial, £1.13.0. hire of room and other costs amounting to £61.14.0. There was, therefore, a balance in hand of £30.19.0.

Douglas McClelland reported that 828 copies of Pamphlet No.1 had been distributed, of which 306 have already been paid for. Over 300 copies had been taken by the Workers' Bookshop.

The Committee and Officers were elected for the ensuing year, and the list is given on another page. This Committee would also act as a standing Committee of the Auxiliary Movement and would have power to appoint sub-committees.

Douglas Jolly, who had recently returned from Spain, drew attention to the urgent financial need of assisting doctors and nurses who had been serving under the Spanish Government, who were now to be repatriated but who, in many cases, would not be admitted to their own country on account of their political associations. Donations should be sent to Irene Grant, 25, Pyecombe Corner, N.12. Out of the pool contributed by members attending the annual meeting, the Treasurer contrived to acquire a surplus of one guinea, which was handed over to Douglas Jolly.

THE COMMITTEE

The following were elected as the Committee for the ensuing year:-

Barbara Cass-Beggs,
David Cass-Beggs,
Ted Edwards,
Nellie Howie,
Kenneth Ingram,
Douglas McClelland,
Geoffrey Miller,
Fanny Street,
Elsa Young,
Alice Lloyd-Williams
Nominee from Manchester group

Kathleen Saw, (Treasurer.)
Janet Jordan, (Secretary.)

THE BASIS OF THE CHRISTIAN LEFT .

1. The Christian Left has arisen out of the recognition of the religious nature of the present critical stage in the transformation of society. This recognition shows us that religion is about human community; that a conception of God which is not a conception of human community is meaningless; and that a religion which does not effectively transform human relations in every sphere of life is an illusion.
2. Jesus proclaimed the truth about human life that man cannot fulfil his true nature except in communion with his fellows. The acceptance or rejection of this truth is expressed in the manner in which the material means of life are produced and made available. The effort to deny this truth lies at the root of the present world crisis. Consequently our society is under judgment, as is shown by the collapse of the social and international order.
3. The true nature of man is asserting itself in the demand for a change in the organization of society which will abolish the private ownership of the means of production, and establish production for use in the place of production for profit. It is asserting itself in the desire for an organization of human life that will abolish political and racial domination and establish a universal commonwealth of peoples.
4. The emergence of Socialism in the U.S.S.R. has brought mankind to a new phase of its development. The refusal elsewhere to proceed to a Socialist stage is a deliberate denial of equality and freedom, and thwarts progress towards a universal community.
5. Fascism has its immediate source in this refusal and is the organized form of it. It suppresses the spiritual nature of man and exalts race and nationality. It is a false religion, the negation of Christianity, not because it attacks Christian doctrine and the organized Church, but because it opposes the creative process of Christianity in the world.
6. It is the religious task of the working-class to bring about the Socialist transformation. We, therefore, identify ourselves with the political struggle of the Socialist working-class movement.
7. The task of the Christian community is not to save Christianity but to save the world. If it seeks to save its own life it will lose it. The life of a Christian community is one of freedom, equality and brotherhood. These are mere words unless they are embodied in the structure of human life, and their extension and realization over the whole field of human life is the purpose of

Christianity. The economic and political relations of men are not merely the basis of personal life, they are an inherent part of it and the criterion of its reality. In our day the economic integration of humanity determines in large measure what forms of personal life are possible. As a result it is no longer possible to maintain or extend the personal life that Christianity demands of us without a transformation of the existing political and economic structure of human life as a whole. It is because we realize that the acceptance or rejection of Christianity is at stake in it that we commit ourselves to an active part in the struggle for Socialism.

8. We recognize that the task of the Christian Left is the true task of the Church. The fact of our existence points to the failure of the Churches. In proclaiming our message; in insisting that the Churches have failed; in pointing to the signs of the times which show the inevitability of the transformation; and in preparing the minds of men for its oncoming by putting our lives at the service of the working-class movement, we see our religious task.

* * * *

CONDITIONS OF MEMBERSHIP

1. Members accept the Basis.
2. Members undertake to put first in their lives work for the socialist transformation of society, since this is the expression today of the Christian force in history.
3. Members are committed to work in co-operation with the socialist movement and to be members of one of the socialist political parties, except where the means of livelihood make this impossible.
4. Members undertake to subscribe regularly according to their income to the funds of the Christian Left.
5. Members undertake to assist (financially or otherwise) any member victimised because of his membership and consequent activities.

* * * *

Members are those who accept and fulfil the conditions of membership.

Associates are those who accept the Basis but cannot as yet fulfil the conditions of Membership. (They undertake to decide within one year whether they will become members). This condition was suspended until next Annual Meeting. They contribute as far as they can to the funds of the Christian Left.

A record is also kept of Subscribers to the News Sheet.

PAMPHLETS

The Christian Left pamphlets have now been published.

- No.1. - "WHAT IS THE CHRISTIAN LEFT?" and
No.2. - "WILL BRITAIN GO FASCIST?" by Kenneth Ingram.
No.1. is price 2d. and No.2. 3d.

We hope that all our readers will purchase a number of copies of both of these and circulate them widely. This is an important and direct means of making the Christian Left message known to a larger public.

Copies can be obtained from - JANET JORDAN,
172, Russell Court, London, W.C.1.

CHELTENHAM

The Cheltenham Conference, held on November 19th - 20th, is the second invitation which the Campaign Committee has received as a result of St. Acaph. Some sixty people attended. W.D. McClelland spoke on the International and Economic Situation, Kenneth Ingram spoke on Fascist Tendencies in Great Britain, and Ted Edwards summed up at the last session of the Conference. Other Christian Left members who were present contributed to the discussions.

The audience represented a number of different standpoints. The Christian Left message was listened to with great interest, and the success of the conference may be reckoned by the fact that the Conference decided to form a local study-group which would read and discuss Christian Left literature during the winter.

NORTHAMPTON

A Conference, held on December 10th - 11th at which the same three speakers talked on various aspects of the Christian answer to Fascism. As before, the message aroused a keen discussion and interest. Two sessions were held on the Saturday, and on the Sunday, the group met both in the morning and afternoon.

* * * *

FUTURE ACTIVITIES.

Kenneth Ingram has been invited to explain the Christian Left position to the students of Queens College, Birmingham, on Jan. 31st.

☆☆☆

A conference at which the Christian Left position will be discussed has been arranged at Birmingham on February 11th and 12th.

☆☆☆

The Editor will be glad to receive notices of any other forthcoming Christian Left activities. All communications for the Editor should be sent to him at 172, Russell Court, Woburn Place, London, W.C.1. Subscriptions and orders for copies should be sent to - MISS ELSA YOUNG, 16, Highbury Grove Court, London, N.5.

☆☆☆

Duplicated by - E.G.A. 5, Stepney Green, London, E.1.

What is the Christian Left?

The Christian Left has arisen out of the recognition of the religious nature of the present critical stage in the transformation of society. ~~Within and without the Churches,~~ It stands for a fundamental restatement of Christianity in terms of our times.

Religion, we believe, is our attitude to reality as a whole, and to nothing less than the whole; our attitude to reality, in general terms, our relation to God, and, in particular terms, our relation to all persons without exception.

We believe that the truth about human life, discovered by Jesus, is that man finds his true nature in communion with his fellow men; that this communion is affirmed or denied by the manner in which the material means of life are produced and made available to all.

We believe that the refusal to extend the boundaries of community, both nationally and internationally, is at the root of the present world crisis.

We believe that the true nature of man is asserting itself in our time in the desire ^{for a} for change in the organisation of society which would abolish the private ownership of the means of production and establish production for use in the place of production for profit. It is also asserting itself in the desire for an organisation of human life on earth which will abolish political frontiers and establish a universal commonwealth of peoples.

We believe that with the emergence of Soviet Russia mankind has entered upon a new phase of its development in which the refusal to proceed to the next step in the transformation of society must necessari-

^{conscious}
rily lead to the denial of human equality and freedom. Fascism which
is based on that denial is also the denial of the truth about human
life discovered by Jesus.

Because this truth ^{is} ~~is~~ fulfilling itself in our time, our society
is under judgment.

It is the mission of the political working class movement to lead the
way to the Socialist transformation. We regard ourselves as their allies
in the religious field.

In proclaiming our prophetic message; in denouncing the Apostasy of
the Churches; ^{interpreting} ~~indicating~~ the signs of the times; ^{pointing to} ~~indicating~~ the
inevitability of the transformation; in preparing the minds to its
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Concealed Draft (for original see below)
by K.P.

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Legal Letter

Concomit
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Religion, we believe, is our attitude to reality as a whole, and to nothing less than the whole; our attitude to this reality is, in general terms, our relation to God, and in particular terms, our relation to all persons without exception. We believe that the basic truth about human life, discovered by Jesus, is that man only finds his true nature in communion with his fellow men; that this communion is affirmed or denied by the manner in which the means to the full development of every person are produced ^{by or for?} and made available to all. We believe that the true nature of man is now asserting itself in the desire for an organization of society which will guarantee to all men everywhere the possibility of the realization of true human community. We believe that the next step in the transformation of society will be the formation of a socialist society, and we therefore regard ourselves as the religious allies of political Socialism.

 THE CHRISTIAN LEFT

March - April 1939

No. 15.

THE POPULAR FRONT

(At the March general Meeting of the Christian Left it was decided to ask three members, not all holding the same views on this issue, to collaborate and, if possible, to produce an article which might be of guidance to readers of the News Sheet in regard to this controversy. The following is the result of their efforts.)

Many supporters of the Left are perplexed and even dismayed by the rift which has appeared in Labour Party ranks as a result of Stafford Cripps' petition and memorandum, and his expulsion from the Party. Besides those who are whole-hearted supporters of the Party executive or of Cripps, there is a considerable body of Socialist opinion which cannot range itself entirely on either side. Among these is a section which would agree that a Popular Front is desirable but which regrets that Cripps has raised the issue in connexion with this particular programme. Probably it will be most convenient to deal first with this objection.

It is quite true that the raising of this issue has divided the Labour Party and might develop a serious split within a few months of a probable general election. No one will deny that this is highly unfortunate. At the same time, apart altogether from the merits or demerits of the Popular Front proposal, it is clear that the raising of the issue could hardly be avoided. For some time a fundamental difference of opinion on this subject has been obvious, and, although the Labour Party has officially rejected the scheme on previous occasions, there is evidently an increasing support within the Party for the policy. In other words the division of opinion is real and fundamental.

To shelve the question would not create unity. Those who believe in the Popular Front believe in its urgency, and, even if they are wrong, they cannot be blamed for insisting that their proposals should be reconsidered, whatever the cost.

There is also a very large body of opinion which, while critical or doubtful of Cripps' proposals, deplors the action

of the Labour Party in expelling him. It is, indeed, regrettable that the Party seems ready to employ much more effective energy in attacking Cripps and his supporters than in attacking the Government. Still more regrettable is the evident undemocratic character in practice of the Labour Party constitution. The block-vote of the trade union, the system of election to the executives are operating in a manner which is clearly authoritarian. It ought to be possible for a question such as this to be brought forward and freely discussed, and a decision on it taken in such a way as to ensure that the trade union executioner do not have so preponderating an influence as to stifle the voice of the constituent parties. Whatever happens in regard to the Populer Front, there can be no doubt that, sooner or later, the constitution of the Labour Party will have thoroughly to be overhauled. The Trade Unions are a section only, although an important section, and it must be remembered, that they embody in themselves many Populer Front features, since they include non-Socialists and Communists. In that respect any hostility they show to Cripps' proposals is hardly consistent.

We must now turn to a consideration of the issue itself. The basis of the case set out in the Cripps' memorandum is that it is impossible for the Labour Party itself to secure a working majority at the next election. Under the most favourable circumstances Labour could not win more than 228 seats: with the assistance of other opposition parties it might win a total of 331, thus securing a working majority. Cripps therefore proposes that an immediate appeal should be made to the Youth movement, on the basis of the T.U.C. Charter, and the issue of a manifesto inviting co-operation on a programme which would include collective action with France, U.S.S.R. & U.S.A., various immediate social reform measures, national control, and co-ordination of transport services mining and allied industries and control of the Bank of England. On this programme the Labour Party would enter into negotiation with any opposition party or group willing to support such a policy with a view to making arrangements in the constituencies so as to give Labour support to non-Labour candidates, where it would be undesirable to run Labour candidates and to secure non-Labour support for Labour candidates where they were standing. In this way a split progressive vote would be avoided, and, it is reckoned, a considerable number of electors might be persuaded to vote for the programme who would not normally support a Labour candidate. Cripps also insists that their arrangement would apply only to the present emergency situation and that there would be nothing in the nature of a permanent alliance.

The main objection on the part of Transport House to this scheme is obviously that it involves the postponement of a full Socialist programme. The main argument in its favour is that, unless it is adopted, the Nationalist Government is bound to be returned at the next election. Cripps replies to the objection by pointing out that his memorandum involves advanced social legislation which is as much as a Labour Government could hope to pass in five years under existing conditions. Even if the present Government were defeated the Labour Party would only, apart from a Popular Front agreement, be able to take office with the support of the Liberal group, so that its Socialist programme would be as heavily compromised as was the first Labour Government. An adverse Liberal vote in the House would bring it to an end.

Do we accept the validity of Cripps' calculations? Even if we doubt the exact figures few of us on a general estimate can deny that a Labour victory at the next election is beyond the bounds of reasonable probability. Cripps emphasizes that the steady growth of opposition to the Chamberlain policy has not coincided with a corresponding increase of Labour Party membership. There is a large electorate which ardently desires a change of government but is not prepared to vote Labour. Partly this is due to the fact that it is not converted to 'pure Socialism', and partly it is a result of want of confidence in the personnel of Labour leaders and general dissatisfaction with the constitution of the Party. The fact is that the Labour Party has evolved as a trade union organisation and its machinery is not fully adjusted to function as the alternative entity in a two-party system. Other opposition parties could undoubtedly supply in personnel much that the Labour Party lacks. If the attempt to unseat the Conservatives is to be successful the appeal must be on a new and wider basis than anything the Labour Party can offer. We may regret this, but we can hardly deny that these are the realities.

We are bound to ask ourselves, therefore, which is better - to postpone 'pure Socialism' in order to rally all progressive opinion against Fascism, or to ensure another five years of reactionary policy? We may be convinced that the only ultimate answer to Fascism is Socialism, but we cannot avoid seriously considering whether five more years of Tory vote may not so limit our existing democratic liberties that the introduction of Socialism may become infinitely more difficult than if it is preceded by a term of advanced social reform. On this our decision in this controversy will have largely to be determined.

There are, of course, a number of other objections which

may be raised against the Cripps' proposals, The Popular Front has not been signally successful elsewhere for various reasons such as the influence of external pressure and it may be urged that its defeat in this country would be peculiarly disastrous; but against this we must set the consideration that the continued defeat of Labour will be just as likely to bring the peril of Fascism nearer. The likelihood of a Popular Front Government being defeated through a split in its own ranks turns largely on the nature of the programme on which it has been formed. Cripps' outline proposals need to be carefully examined, for the strength of a Popular Front is much less a matter of organization than of the objectives which it is setting out to achieve. It is for the programme, not for the organization, that the electorate will be voting. It is the programme which decides whether Socialist principles are being radically compromised.

A warning has also to be given as to methods. An arrangement merely between the headquarters of various political groups is not a stable foundation for a Popular Front. If it is desirable that the Front should come into existence at all, the movement should be from below, through the local parties. The local parties should, in fact, decide whether to put up a Labour candidate - who will be, under the agreement, standing as a Socialist prepared to advocate as a short-term policy the Front programme; or a non-Socialist candidate, who is nevertheless also committed to the programme. As every politician will know, these are not by any means the same tactics.

There is little doubt that the Government will appeal to the country on strictly 'nationalist' lines. "In this time of danger, sink party, and unite in one super party". Is a Labour Party appeal, a strictly 'party' appeal, likely to provide an effective counterblast to this type of propaganda? Something much bigger, something which is non-sectarian and is able to capture popular imagination, seems to be needed. Does Cripps' scheme provide this larger conception?

THE CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE

The Campaign Committee, which was set up as a result of the St. Asaph Conference last summer, has held several meetings in order to plan future activities and review the experience gained from the Conferences already held. Since St. Asaph there have been Conferences at Stafford, Cheltenham, Northampton and Oxford. At the general meeting of the Christian Left in Manchester the work already accomplished was considered, but it was agreed that the campaign should now aim at a more definite objective than hitherto. The

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previous conferences have aimed at establishing permanent study-groups; but it was felt, such conferences ought to lead to the formation of Christian Left groups in the particular localities, which should attempt to build up community experience by week-end meetings, camps, or in such ways as they found to be most suitable. The Campaign Committee will therefore contemplate inviting the formation of such groups at all conferences which in the future it helps to arrange.

The report of the St. Asaph Conference has now been published and has been issued to Christian Left members and it is hoped that, as a result of this, everyone who receives a copy will consider whether it will be possible to hold a week-end camp or conference and invite the Campaign Committee to cooperate and send speakers and that the aim of such a conference will be to establish a Christian Left group.

Copies of this report may be obtained from the Secretary, price 6d, and it is hoped that members will buy and circulate as many copies as possible

The plan of forming Christian Left groups is an important development, and it is a work in which all members and associates should try to assist. Although the Christian Left will continue not to reckon its success by the number of new members and associates, it is regarded as necessary, in view of the urgency of the times, that groups should be formed where possible, throughout the country. Such groups will work on their own methods, but they will aim at providing a centre where from time to time, members and associates and sympathisers can meet and compare their individual experiences in the political and social field, and thus derive a community experience. We hope that there will be a wide response to this appeal to build up new groups.

MARCH GENERAL MEETING

A general meeting of the Christian Left was held in Manchester on March 11th and 12th. There were two sessions on the Saturday, at which various Christian Left business was transacted. The Budget, which is set out on another page, was passed. Attention was drawn to recent publications, particulars of which are also given elsewhere. The work of the Campaign Committee was reviewed, and it was agreed that a more definite effort should be made and members invited to attempt to form new Christian Left groups.

It was decided that those who have neither joined the Christian Left as members or associates, but also have paid

2/6 as subscribers to the News Sheet, should now receive for that subscription, not only the issues of the News Sheet (probably six in the year), but also all Literature issued for a price not exceeding 6d. They will be known henceforward as Literature Subscribers.

Edward Every presented certain amendments to the Basis and Conditions of Membership. It was decided that these amendments should receive full consideration, so that they could be discussed and voted upon at the next annual meeting.

A letter from the Socialist Christian League, inviting the Christian Left to amalgamate, was read. It was decided to appoint two representatives of the Christian Left to meet representatives of the S.C.L. in order to discuss the proposal and explain the position of the Christian Left.

At the Sunday morning session Kenneth Ingram gave a talk on the Christian Left and its message, and a long discussion followed. This meeting was attended by a large contingent of the Active Christian Democrats group and by representatives of other Manchester groups. At the afternoon session these groups were again represented and a talk on the international situation was given by W.D. McClelland.

The Sunday meetings were attended by good-sized audiences and the Manchester Christian Left group are to be congratulated on the success of their arrangements.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

The Basis, with Conditions of Membership and Enrolment Form, has now been issued as a leaflet. Copies can be obtained from the Secretary. It is hoped that members and associates will make full use of these, in order to spread information about the Christian Left among those of their friends whom they think are likely to be interested.

No. 3 pamphlet - 'The Christian Left and the Churches' - (price 2d) has also been issued. This pamphlet has been considered carefully by the Committee before publication, and represents a fuller definition of the Christian Left position on this issue than any statement yet published.

The Report of the St. Asaph Conference has also been issued. It contains the chief lectures given at the Conference, with a Foreword by the Chairman. The title is 'The Christian Answer to Fascism'. This publication should prove of great assistance to all members and associates who

are endeavouring to spread information as to the Christian Left message.

MAY DAY 1939

It is proposed, as usual, to invite Christian Left members to join the Socialist Christian League in marching in the May Day procession in London. Members and associates who are able to come should communicate at once with Elsa Young, 16, Highbury Grove Court, London, N.5. This invitation is not intended to persuade those who will be taking part in their own local celebrations to desert them. But it is obviously desirable that the Christian Left should be represented as largely as possible in the London procession, and all those who can attend are urged to send in their names.

THE 'SHARMAN' SEMINAR

Dr. Sharman is coming over to England specially to conduct a Seminar for the purpose of studying the Gospel records. The Seminar will be held at Princess Helena College, near Hitchin, Herts, from August 5th to 26th inclusive. Dr. Sharman usually insists on six weeks being devoted to this study, but has agreed to compress his work into three weeks on this occasion.

Although three weeks is a long period for many Christian Left members to give up in the holiday season, the importance of this Seminar can hardly be over-stressed. The interpretation which Dr. Sharman's method throws on the Gospel account of the teaching of Jesus is of extraordinary interest to all who share the Christian Left standpoint. The Seminar is being arranged jointly by the Christian Left, the S.C.M., and other groups. The number of available places is limited. It is urgently desirable that the Christian Left should be well represented, and those who are able to attend should write, without delay, to Miss Elsa Young, 16, Highbury Grove Court, London, N.5.

The place chosen for the Seminar is near London, but is in charming country, with facilities for bathing, walks, etc. The whole of the afternoon - up till the late evening - will be left free, so that the Seminar will provide full holiday amenities. The cost will depend on the number attending, but in any case will not exceed 32/- a week.

SUBSCRIPTIONS etc.

The Treasurer of the Christian Left is Miss Kathleen Saw, 99, Cranbrook Road, Handsworth, Birmingham 21. All subscriptions due from members, associates and Literature subscribers, should be sent direct to her. All are asked

to contribute to the growing work of the Christian Left as generously as possible.

Orders for copies of the News Sheet should be sent to Miss Elsa Young, 16, Highbury Grove Court, N.5.

The Secretary of the Christian Left is Miss Janet Jordan 172, Russell Court, Woburn Place, London, W.C.1., to whom all inquiries, editorial communications and application for pamphlets should be sent.

SUMMER CAMP

A sub-committee has been appointed to explore the possibilities of running a Summer Camp in addition to the Sharman Seminar. Any further information as to this will be announced in a later number.

A sub-committee has undertaken to explore the possibilities of providing a permanent site for camping and conferences in the future.

THE BUDGET FOR 1939

The Budget of expenditure for the year 1939 was passed at the March general meeting as follows:-

Publication and Propaganda (including £15 for News-sheet).	£60
Expenses of committees and meetings.	£25
Secretarial expenses.	£15
Miscellaneous expenses (including fees for delegates and Reserve fund).	£20
Total.	<u>£ 120</u>

NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING

The next meeting of the Christian Left Committee will be held (in London) on Saturday, April 29th and Sunday April 30th.

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Duplicated by E.G.A. (T.U.) 5, Stepney Green, London, E.1.

 THE CHRISTIAN LEFT

May - June 1939

No. 16

THE METHODS OF PROPAGANDA

Some time was spent at the Committee meeting held in London, on April 29th and 30th, in exploring certain fundamental principles involved in the methods of presenting the Christian Left case. As this discussion concerned not only the Christian Left but the cause of the Left as a whole and was thus not confined to domestic considerations, it may be desirable to present a survey of some of the issues raised and to bring them to the attention of our readers as a whole.

The problem may be stated as follows: the cause of the Left has probably been more completely justified in the last two or three years than in any preceding period. Socialist warnings as to what would happen in Spain, if the British policy of non-intervention continued, have been all too fully vindicated. The Left has been proved right over Munich, and the Government calculations wholly wrong. Then, how comes it that the Left, whose case in actual practice has been shown to be so strong, has failed in this country to make greater progress? Why does so large a body of opinion, not only among the middle-classes but among the working-class, remain unconvinced? There are many explanations which may be given in answer to this question. One of these answers, however, concerns the methods in which the Left case has been presented.

In general, there has been far too strong a tendency to advance arguments for Socialism dogmatically, in the sense that inquirers - if they express doubts - are made to feel that they are regarded as fools or enemies. A great deal of Left propaganda gives the impression of bitterness and intolerance and this tendency leads often to a further tendency - that of representing the opposite side as wholly evil, or false. Propaganda of this kind is always ineffective, since it suggests that those who are writing or speaking in this spirit are irresponsible extremists who are incapable of critical and scientific analysis: or else they are regarded as perfectionists who admit no weakness or difficulties in any of the conclusions at which they have arrived. The inquirer, thereupon, is led to reject the case because of its advocates.

We must be careful not to confuse tolerance with compromise. It

does not follow that, because the legitimacy of criticism is admitted, the fundamental principles which are being presented, are wilted down or yielded. There is always a danger, of course, that tolerance may degenerate into compromise: but there is no need why this should happen.

These general considerations, may become clearer if we go on to describe how, in the committee's discussion, they were related to the immediate task of the Christian Left and its methods. At all the conferences, in which the Christian Left has recently taken part, there has been a large element of inquirers, people who have not previously had any contact with the Christian Left, or, in some cases, with Socialism. In some cases, complaints have been made of the very attitude which we have been describing. Obviously, that is the kind of impressions which Christian Left speakers did not at all want to give. But in examining this kind of objection, the committee has come to the conclusion that it is the atmosphere and procedure of a conference or meeting, which is mainly to blame. The lecturer is actually or figuratively on a platform. When questions are asked, his answers have to be concentrated into a few words. The psychological effect of this, is considerable. The man or woman who has not made up his mind, feels that he is up against an individual or a group who have made up their minds, and that he has either to accept the case which is thrust upon him, or leave it.

The Committee, therefore, decided that, while continuing to regard conferences and meetings as part of the Christian Left Campaign, the main energy of the movement ought to be directed towards group discussions, held either under the auspices of a camp or indoors. At such discussions, the inquirer will be able to feel that he is on an equal footing with everyone else present. He will not be sitting at the foot of a speaker, he will not be asked to accept or reject a case: rather will he find himself in the position of sharing in the work of exploring social-religious issues and co-operating in the formation of any conclusions.

For this purpose, a sub-committee is endeavouring to discover a cottage, within reasonable reach of London, where Christian Left gatherings can be held both under summer and winter conditions. We shall hope to be able, in a later issue, to give full particulars as to what is the outcome of the sub-committee's activities. Two kinds of gatherings are envisaged: one, open to any friends and sympathisers, where there will be room for free discussion on general or specific issues: and one for Christian Left members only, for intensive study and instruction.

As the larger number of members and associates reside in the London district, the cottage must necessarily be within easy 'weekend' distance of London. It is hoped, however, that Christian Left groups in other localities will make similar plans, either by finding a site

where there can be regular camps, or by holding weekend gatherings in someone's private house. The great need at the present time is to provide some centre, where at regular intervals, the experience of community-life can be offered. Not a closed community, but a community-centre whose doors are open to friends and where friends realise that they are welcome.

This is essentially a religious task.

THE SHARMAN SEMINAR

The arrangements for the Seminar are now complete. It will be held from August 5th to 26th inclusive, at Temple Dirsley, near Hitchin. There is good country adjacent, a swimming-pool, tennis and golf facilities and the afternoons will be entirely free, so that ideal holiday conditions can be combined with study. The cost will not exceed 32/- a week.

Dr. Sharman is coming over to England specially in order to direct this Seminar. The purpose of the Seminar, is to study the records of the life of Jesus and to discover what was his actual teaching in its contemporary setting, free from the influence of two thousand years of tradition. Arising out of this is the question - what is the message of Christianity for this age?

Dr. Sharman's methods of conducting study are unique, although they are less known in England than in the United States and Canada. The opportunity which this Seminar provides, is exceptionally valuable and we strongly advise our readers not to let this opportunity slip. But accommodation is necessarily limited and application with a fee of 2/6d should be sent immediately to, Miss Elsa Young, 16, Highbury Grove Court, London, N.5.

CHRISTIAN LEFT SUMMER CAMP

Sandy Balls, Fordingbridge, Hants

July 29th - August 5th

Arrangements have now been made for the camp, proposed in the last issue of the News Sheet. The date given above has been found to be more generally desirable than the later one originally proposed.

The site will already be well known to many. It lies between Salisbury and Southampton, in the heart of the New Forest country and although the site itself is high up among bracken and pine trees, it is close to the river Avon, with perfect river - bathing and boating.

The week is planned as a Camp - a holiday together - and not as a conference. It is looked upon, primarily, as an opportunity for those who are members of, or interested in the Christian Left, to get to know each other better by living together and by discussing difficulties and problems in twos and threes, rather than in large groups, although, of course, large organised discussions may be held if the camp so desires.

The cost should not exceed 30/- for the week. Applications should be made at once to the Secretary, Miss Janet Jordan, 172, Russell Court, London, W.C.1., who will also provide further information.

A pooling system will be adopted, in an attempt to share the expenses of the camp more nearly in proportion to the means of those attending it, but the Secretary would particularly welcome contributions from interested persons unable to attend, which would be paid to a special fund to enable the camp to guarantee all the expenses of a few people otherwise unable to take part.

LITERATURE

Pamphlet No. 4 will shortly be ready, price 2d. It has been written by Fanny Street and deals with the relation of Christianity to Politics.

Other pamphlets are in preparation. The first three, can be obtained (No. 2 at 3d, the others at 2d each) from Miss Janet Jordan, 172, Russell Court, London, W.C.1., together with the leaflet containing the enrolment-form for prospective members and associates.

Our readers are again reminded of the need of distributing these pamphlets as widely as possible. This is one of the most direct ways in which the message of the Christian Left can be made more widely known. We ask each of our readers, to assist in this task by ordering copies and circulating them amongst their friends. This is a valuable work and one in which everyone should be able to take some part.

The papers given at the St. Asaph Conference, are printed in a small booklet, price 6d and can also be obtained from Miss Jordan. The title of the booklet is The Christian Answer to Fascism.

A valuable series of 'Bulletins' is being produced by a Christian Left group (Pyecombe Corner) and has dealt with such subjects as, Marx's early works, Trotskyism, Russia and the World. The latest of this series, concerns Chartist poetry. These publications are of considerable value and should be obtained from, Mrs. Mary Muir, 395, Otley Road, Leeds, 6.

FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS

A study group for Christian Left members, will be held on June 3rd and 4th, at the 'camp-cottage', if this has been secured by that date.

The next general meeting will be on June 17th and 18th probably in London.

A group meeting for members will be held on July 1st and 2nd.

A group-conference, open to non-members, will be held on July 15th and 16th. The place of these meetings will be announced later.

MAY DAY

Most Christian Left members and associates, presumably took part in their local May Day demonstrations, either on May 1st or the following Sunday. In London, on May 1st, the banner was carried and there was a small contingent of members in the procession. The procession was impressive, although, necessarily not on so large a scale as last year, when the Labour Party and United Front demonstrations were combined. May 1st being a Sunday.

ET CETERA

Invitations to present the Christian Left standpoint, have been received from several Left Book Club groups and other societies and in each case, it has been possible to send a speaker. These invitations, are a sign of the increasing interest in the Christian Left and are probably due, in most cases, to the circulation of our pamphlets. If so, this is an indication of the importance of distributing this literature as widely as possible and hence our appeal to our readers to help even more actively in this work.

John Macmurray talked to a Christian Left group which met at Great Marlow, on the week-end of May 6th and 7th.

Three Czech comrades, who have recently arrived in England, talked to a group at Highbury on May 4th, on their experiences and the present conditions in Prague.

Subscriptions from members and associates are now due for the current year and should be sent to Miss K. Saw, 99, Cranbrook Road, Handsworth, Birmingham, 21.

Orders for copies of the News Sheet should be sent to Miss Elsa Young, 16, Highbury Grove Court, N.5.

The Secretary of the Christian Left is Miss Janet Jordan, 172, Russell Court, London, W.C.1., to whom all inquiries, editorial communications and application for pamphlets should be sent.

The Editor will be grateful for brief accounts of any local meetings of the Christian Left, or for announcements of forthcoming meetings.

Duplicated by: E.G.A. (T.U.) 5, Stepney Green, E.1. STE: 2350.

JOHN MACMURRAY

The issue raised for the Christian Left by the Russian Aggression in Finland, in pursuance of an agreement with Nazi Germany goes to the roots of our meaning. We have never yet succeeded clearly in distinguishing between the Marxist and the Christian position in practice. And we should agree that it is only in practice that this difference is real and cannot be really defined. The question is "At what point must the Christian Left part company with the Communist party, not in theory but in action; not on a question of tactics, but of fundamental principle?" It seems to me that we see this point reached in the Russian attack on Finland; because this is permissible from the Marxist point of view (whether it is good tactics for Russia is another matter) - while it is not permissible from the Christian point of view. Even if it proves to be tactically successful and results in the establishment of socialism or the prevention of a successful war on Russia; it does so in a way that threatens to rob Socialism of its meaning. For the meaning of Socialism is a religious meaning, not a merely political one. It may be possible to achieve socialism in a manner that makes the achievement of Communism impossible without a further revolution. The following notes have been written in order to raise the issues that are involved in a fundamental fashion.

1. Totalitarianism v Democracy.

It is essential to realise the issue, which is a real one, between Democracy and Totalitarianism. This is not possible if we consider them as forms of political organisation. Dictatorship is not the issue. A democratic dictatorship is possible. A totalitarian form of representative government is conceivable (though perhaps hardly likely under any but highly abnormal conditions). The essential distinction lies in the conception of human life which underlies the two. For the democrat, the State is a means to an end; it serves the community; for the Totalitarian the State is an end which its citizens must serve. Consequently democracy rests upon the recognition that political authority is limited; and that there are spheres of human life which in the nature of things lie outside the sphere of political authority. The State has a limited, and defined function, which must not be allowed to claim predominance. It has a right to claim the loyalty and obedience of its citizens only within its own proper field.

From this flow the two main problems of democratic government, viz. (1) To determine what are the proper limits of political authority; (2) To create an effective machinery which will enable the government to perform its proper functions efficiently and yet prevent it from using its power outside the field of its own proper competence. The failure of our capitalist democracies lies specially in their attempt to keep the economic sphere outside

the competence of the political authority. From this point of view the democratic argument for socialism is that with modern economic developments the cultural field cannot be kept outside the range of political authority unless the economic field is brought inside it. Culture is already at the mercy of Capital.

A democratic socialism would bring the economic field under political authority in order to preserve the freedom of cultural life (i.e. the personal and human life of the community). Any socialism which rests on a Christian view of life is demanded with this end in view; on the ground that at the present stage of economic development only a socialist economy is compatible with the freedom of personal life. Totalitarianism is the denial of the freedom of the cultural life. It claims to dictate in the cultural field and to make the political authority the arbiter of personal values. In totalitarian socialism the State takes over the cultural field as well as the economic.

2. Marxist Philosophy and Totalitarianism.

In Marxist (as in Hegelian Philosophy) society is considered to be an organic unity. Indeed the whole of 19th century thought is "organic" in its basic ideas. If society is an organism, then its members are organs or functions of the society and their sole value lies in their contribution to the whole; they exist for the society, which is the supreme value, and they have no other existence or meaning. If this view of society is strictly applied then it involves a Totalitarian claim on the part of the government of society.

Marx rightly opposed the idealism of Hegel's conception of the organic society, by pointing out that the only realistic way to conceive the organic function of men in society is in economic terms. Men are functions of society in terms of the division of labour. This involves an economic interpretation of society and so of social history.

Marx then points out that a capitalist society is imperfectly organic, and therefore, in process of development to the perfectly organic form. The end of this process must be a socialist society, because only a socialist society is a mature economic organism. The process does not depend upon the personal life of men at all; that depends upon the process; and the personal aspects of life are "superstructure" ultimately determined by the basic economic functioning of the developing society. Thus Marxian theory points to a Totalitarian Socialism as the goal; and assumes (without real grounds) that a socialist society will, in virtue of its economic structure, produce a perfectly human cultural superstructure in time.

(There are deeper insights than this in Marx, but they are not compatible with the structural form of his general thought.)

For this reason they drop out of Communist thought and do not guide communist policy. They can only be rescued and made effective by becoming part of a system of thought which is able to sustain them).

3. Christianity and the Organic Society.

The root of Christianity is the discovery of Jesus that human society is not organic, but personal. The organic society is the primitive society. The development of human life is not towards but away from the organic society. The more personal life becomes the less organic it is, and the more inadequate becomes any organic conception of it. When a modern thinker talks of an organic society he means a society organised on an organic plan, which is a totally different thing. It is in fact a machine.

Now there is no reason in Christianity to assert that society should not be organised on an organic pattern. What it does imply is that what is so organised is not the whole of human life but only an aspect of it, and that what organises it is not itself organisable. In other words what is organised is necessarily organised for a purpose that lies beyond it. It is means to an end. This is the reason why we must distinguish between Community and Society - between the functional aspect of human life which is essentially economic, and its personal aspect, which determines the organisation and its purpose. From a religious point of view, therefore, the organised society of economic functions is a means to the personal life of men in Community. This is what the organic view (and the Totalitarianism it implies and in the end creates) denies. It is what democracy affirms.]

4. The Practical Results of this organic conception.

It is not merely that the Christian and democratic view is "higher" or "better" than the organic. The Organic view is false. Because of this it is not possible in practise to produce the organic society. Human life is personal, and no attempt to make it organic can succeed. In other words any organised human group can only function in a way that makes its organisation a means to personal ends. The Totalitarian Society is no exception. The more it attempts to be an organic society, the more it must make power its end, since organisation is merely the concentration of power. And this power must be personal. Even though the society claims that its power is for the good of the society, it cannot in fact be so. The power of the Totalitarian State is the power of its government. Its government is certain persons, and the power in it actually is their power, whatever the theory may be. They use the other persons composing the society for their personal ends, because nothing else is possible. And since their function is to be the government, they are bound to make the maintaining of their own personal power the end of the organised society. The fact that in such a society the rulers determine the ends which all the

citizens must serve, and claim authority in the personal sphere makes this inevitable.

5. Moral Issues in Totalitarian Society.

All morality consists of the structural principles of personal relationship or Community. If Society is conceived as organic and the organic society is identified with the community morality disappears. The only value is "efficiency" and this efficiency is only biological. It is measured by the capacity to survive. Thus in decisions of policy there are no ethical considerations, but only tactical ones. That policy is right which leads to success in the struggle for power. This produces a situation which is both inhuman and irrational; and which must destroy community. "They that take the sword perish by the sword." The will to power of the functional society defeats itself. The irrationality consists in the implicit denial of the personal life as the only absolute end, to which all organisation is the means. In Totalitarianism Organisation (e.g. Socialist economy) becomes an end in itself, and the human purpose of organisation is denied. A homely illustration of this is to be found in the homes of people who are "house-proud". The organisation and running of the house has become an end in itself, and this destroys the whole purpose of running it. It ceases to be a place to live in and becomes a soul-destroying absurdity.

6. Russian Socialism and Religion.

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Religion is the communal expression of the sense of personal community, not of functional co-operation. It makes functional organisation a means to personal community and so makes democracy possible by maintaining the sense of the limited and instrumental character of political authority as a means to personal life and not an end in itself. In the absence of a living religion any highly organised society must become totalitarian, though habit and tradition may prevent this becoming apparent for a long period. The new order in Russia has developed in this direction very fast. One has only to compare Lenin's statements on the Finnish independence with Stalin's to see this. Defence tactics take the place of moral principles. And as this develops the gulf between Russia and Germany narrows; nor merely because Russia is changing, but even more because Germany is changing under economic pressure in the direction of a socialist economy. The Russo-German alliance will take this development further, and may well end in the unification of Germany and Russia on a Socialist and Totalitarian basis. If so, the resulting society will be not less, but more anti-religious.

The adoption by Russia of characteristically Fascist tactics against Finland shows that on the moral issues involved there is no longer any real difference between them. This aggression reveals that the humanitarian traditions, which underlay the earlier communist propaganda, and which profoundly modified the

policies of the earlier communist leaders (including Lenin) is disappearing. The new outlook seems to be anti-religious in a more profound sense, denying not merely false but real religion; the basis of which lies in the recognition of the personal character of all human life.]

7. The function of the Christian Left.

Whatever may be the outcome, it is the function of the Christian Left to stand for this personal basis of life and therefore for socialism as a means to the fulness of personal life.] This is the religious contribution to the struggle for socialism; and the Christian Left must watch especially for every failure of our socialist movements to recognise this religious basis; and seize the opportunity to stress its distinctive message. The Russian aggression against Finland is a clear case of this failure to understand the religious issues by the Soviet Government.

JOHN MACMURRAY.

SOCIALISM AND DEMOCRACY.

1939 or 1940
or later - Post
1936(?)
by J. McM.
Soviet-Nazi Post

The issue raised for the Christian Left by the Russian Aggression in Finland, in pursuance of an agreement with Nazi Germany goes to the roots of our meaning. We have never yet succeeded clearly in distinguishing between the Marxist and the Christian position in practice. And we should agree that it is only in practice that this difference is real and cannot be really defined. The question is "At what point must the Christian Left part company with the Communist party, not in theory but in action; not on a question of tactics, but of fundamental principle?" It seems to me that we see this point reached in the Russian attack on Finland; because this is permissible from the Marxist point of view (whether it is good tactics for Russia is another matter) - while it is not permissible from the Christian point of view. Even if it proves to be tactically successful and results in the establishment of socialism or the prevention of a successful war on Russia; it does so in a way that threatens to rob Socialism of its meaning. For the meaning of Socialism is a religious meaning, not a merely political one. It may be possible to achieve socialism in a manner that makes the achievement of Communism impossible without a further revolution. The following notes have been written in order to raise the issues that are involved in a fundamental fashion.

1. Totalitarianism v Democracy.

It is essential to realise the issue, which is a real one, between Democracy and Totalitarianism. This is not possible if we consider them as forms of political organisation. Dictatorship is not the issue. A democratic dictatorship is possible. A totalitarian form of representative government is conceivable (though perhaps hardly likely under any but highly abnormal conditions). The essential distinction lies in the conception of human life which underlies the two. For the democrat, the State is a means to an end; it serves the community; for the Totalitarian the State is an end which its citizens must serve. Consequently democracy rests upon the recognition that political authority is limited; and that there are spheres of human life which in the nature of things lie outside the sphere of political authority. The State has a limited, and defined function, which must not be allowed to claim predominance. It has a right to claim the loyalty and obedience of its citizens only within its own proper field.

From this flow the two main problems of democratic government, viz. (1) To determine what are the proper limits of political authority; (2) To create an effective machinery which will enable the government to perform its proper functions efficiently and yet prevent it from using its power outside the field of its own proper competence. The failure of our capitalist democracies lies specially in their attempt to keep the economic sphere outside

the competence of the political authority. From this point of view the democratic argument for socialism is that with modern economic developments the cultural field cannot be kept outside the range of political authority unless the economic field is brought inside it. Culture is already at the mercy of Capital.

A democratic socialism would bring the economic field under political authority in order to preserve the freedom of cultural life (i.e. the personal and human life of the community). Any socialism which rests on a Christian view of life is demanded with this end in view; on the ground that at the present stage of economic development only a socialist economy is compatible with the freedom of personal life. Totalitarianism is the denial of the freedom of the cultural life. It claims to dictate in the cultural field and to make the political authority the arbiter of personal values. In totalitarian socialism the State takes over the cultural field as well as the economic.

2. Marxist Philosophy and Totalitarianism.

In Marxist (as in Hegelian Philosophy) society is considered to be an organic unity. Indeed the whole of 19th century thought is "organic" in its basic ideas. If society is an organism, then its members are organs or functions of the society and their sole value lies in their contribution to the whole; they exist for the society, which is the supreme value, and they have no other existence or meaning. If this view of society is strictly applied then it involves a Totalitarian claim on the part of the government of society.

Marx rightly opposed the idealism of Hegels conception of the organic society, by pointing out that the only realistic way to conceive the organic function of men in society is in economy terms. Men are functions of society in terms of the division of labour. This involves an economic interpretation of society and so of social history.

Marx then points out that a capitalist society is imperfectly organic, and therefore, in process of development to the perfectly organic form. The end of this process must be a socialist society, because only a socialist society is a mature economic organism. The process does not depend upon the personal life of men at all; that depends upon the process; and the personal aspects of life are "superstructure" ultimately determined by the basic economic functioning of the developing society. Thus Marxian theory points to a Totalitarian Socialism as the goal; and assumes (without real grounds) that a socialist society will, in virtue of its economic structure, produce a perfectly human cultural superstructure in time.

(There are deeper insights than this in Marx, but they are not compatible with the structural form of his general thought.

For this reason they drop out of Communist thought and do not guide communist policy. They can only be rescued and made effective by becoming part of a system of thought which is able to sustain them).

3. Christianity and the Organic Society.

The root of Christianity is the discovery of Jesus that human society is not organic, but personal. The organic society is the primitive society. The development of human life is not towards but away from the organic society. The more personal life becomes the less organic it is, and the more inadequate becomes any organic conception of it. When a modern thinker talks of an organic society he means a society organised on an organic plan, which is a totally different thing. It is in fact a machine.

Now there is no reason in Christianity to assert that society should not be organised on an organic pattern. What it does imply is that what is so organised is not the whole of human life but only an aspect of it, and that what organises it is not itself organisable. In other words what is organised is necessarily organised for a purpose that lies beyond it. It is means to an end. This is the reason why we must distinguish between Community and Society - between the functional aspect of human life which is essentially economic, and its personal aspect, which determines the organisation and its purpose. From a religious point of view, therefore, the organised society of economic functions is a means to the personal life of men in Community. This is what the organic view (and the Totalitarianism it implies and in the end creates) denies. It is what democracy affirms.

4. The Practical Results of this organic conception.

It is not merely that the Christian and democratic view is "higher" or "better" than the organic. The Organic view is false. Because of this it is not possible in practise to produce the organic society. Human life is personal, and no attempt to make it organic can succeed. In other words any organised human group can only function in a way that makes its organisation a means to personal ends. The Totalitarian Society is no exception. The more it attempts to be an organic society, the more it must make power its end, since organisation is merely the concentration of power. And this power must be personal. Even though the society claims that its power is for the good of the society, it cannot in fact be so. The power of the Totalitarian State is the power of its government. Its government is certain persons, and the power in it actually is their power, whatever the theory may be. They use the other persons composing the society for their personal ends, because nothing else is possible. And since their function is to be the government, they are bound to make the maintaining of their own personal power the end of the organised society. The fact that in such a society the rulers determine the ends which all the

citizens must serve, and claim authority in the personal sphere makes this inevitable.

5. Moral Issues in Totalitarian Society.

All morality consists of the structural principles of personal relationship or Community. If Society is conceived as organic and the organic society is identified with the community morality disappears. The only value is "efficiency" and this efficiency is only biological. It is measured by the capacity to survive. Thus in decisions of policy there are no ethical considerations, but only tactical ones. That policy is right which leads to success in the struggle for power. This produces a situation which is both inhuman and irrational; and which must destroy community. "They that take the sword perish by the sword." The will to power of the functional society defeats itself. The irrationality consists in the implicit denial of the personal life as the only absolute end, to which all organisation is the means. In Totalitarianism Organisation (e.g. Socialist economy) becomes an end in itself, and the human purpose of organisation is denied. A homely illustration of this is to be found in the homes of people who are "house-proud". The organisation and running of the house has become an end in itself, and this destroys the whole purpose of running it. It ceases to be a place to live in and becomes a soul-destroying absurdity.

6. Russian Socialism and Religion.

Religion is the communal expression of the sense of personal community, not of functional co-operation. It makes functional organisation a means to personal community and so makes democracy possible by maintaining the sense of the limited and instrumental character of political authority as a means to personal life and not an end in itself. In the absence of a living religion any highly organised society must become totalitarian, though habit and tradition may prevent this becoming apparent for a long period. The new order in Russia has developed in this direction very fast. One has only to compare Lenin's statements on the Finnish independence with Stalin's to see this. Defence tactics take the place of moral principles. And as this develops the gulf between Russia and Germany narrows; not merely because Russia is changing, but even more because Germany is changing under economic pressure in the direction of a socialist economy. The Russo-German alliance will take this development further, and may well end in the unification of Germany and Russia on a Socialist and Totalitarian basis. If so, the resulting society will be not less, but more anti-religious.

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JOHN MACMURRAY.

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was considered, and eventually, at the Committee meeting in February it was decided to wind up the lease. The following were elected as members of the Committee: Janet Jordan, Kathleen Saw (Treasurer), Elsa Young (Secretary), Jeannie and Alfred Cannon, Jean and Ted Edwards, Kenneth Ingram, W. A. McClelland, Marjorie and Joe Reid, Fanny Street and Freda Phillips.

Most of the discussion at the general sessions centred round the letter which John Macmurray had sent to the Conference, a copy of which will be found on a later page. The letter provoked much lively criticism and various standpoints were expressed. It was not expected indeed, that any general agreement at this stage would be reached as to the issues involved regarding U.S.S.R., but arrangements are being made for a full discussion to which members will be invited in the spring. The New Year Conference concluded on the Sunday afternoon and those who were able to stay on adjourned to the evening performance at the Unity Theatre.

MARRIAGE.

Roy Griffin and Kathleen Day - February 3rd.

CHRISTIAN LEFT

RUSSIA AND FINLAND.

[No. 18]

March 1940

Should Soviet Action be Condemned?

(The following is the letter from John Macmurray which was sent to the New Year's Conference and discussed.)

To the Comrades of the Christian Left,

I had hoped and planned to be with you on your New Year week-end, but circumstances have prevented this. I am reduced to sending you my New Year greetings by letter; and this I do warmly, from my heart, with the conviction that the trust and the necessity of that for which we stand is becoming steadily clearer, and that the great events of the coming year will reveal this with increasing clarity for all who have eyes to see.

What I should have wished to say to you and to discuss with you, had it been possible, is the bearing of Russia's action upon our own position. [In the Christian Left we have a doctrine which holds a deep and implicit criticism not only of the practice of any antireligious, or non-religious Socialism, but also of its theory; that is, of Marxism.] Events are forcing this issue into prominence. It is time now for us to read the events of contemporary history in the light of this criticism.

*probably
= Communism*
The philosophical basis (the theology, if you will) of the Christian Communist is personal; the Marxist (like the Hegelian from which it derives) is organic and impersonal. This means that it makes "Man" more important than men and women; "society" more real than human beings. It is "biological" in its values, and "Naturalist" in this sense. Tennyson saw the implication when he wrote of "Nature" —

"So careful of the type she seems;
So careless of the single life."

The issue is "Totalitarianism" - the claim of the State (as organised Society) to use its citizens, in the whole of their human capacity, as means to State-ends. Institutions, organisations, the form of life, become the end of life. The meaning of such a philosophy and praxis is religion, in all its forms, false or true, adequate or inadequate. Any religious socialism - the Christian Left Socialism in particular, is fundamentally anti-totalitarian. At this point we stand on the democratic principle that in the nature of reality political authority is limited by the rights of human life. The organisation of society is for the sake of life, not life for the sake of the organisation of society. Equality without freedom is as hopeless as freedom without equality.

HE
*1919-20
Communist*
May I recall two issues on which, in the past, I have been criticised by some of you. I once indicated my belief that in a profound sense, Fascism and Bolshevism are dialectical opposites, and the German form of fascism in some fundamental ways corresponded more closely to the "economic determinism" of Marxist thought than did Russia. From this, if it were right, there followed a tendency in Germany and Russia to synthesis. Whether I got this rightly expressed or not, the alliance of Russia and Germany (which seems to be taking on a more serious form) shows that there was something in it.

*1919-20
Communist*
Secondly, I insisted that the adoption by Russia of the position of the Christian Left would make a substantial difference to the policy and development of Russian socialism. I thought then that the difference would be less than history has shown it to be. Up to the time of the Russian attack on Finland it was possible to believe, though with growing hesitation, that this was not so. Now it is no longer possible; Russia has proclaimed herself and revealed a praxis of a peculiarly Hitlerian type, based on trickery and violence. The type of action which now flows from Russian social life is totally at variance with the position of the Christian Left. A Christian Socialism would dictate and effect a quite different policy and praxis.

The practical effect of the Russo-German rapprochement is necessarily to throw all countries, parties and individuals, who hold still to a personal conception of life, against Russia, as well as against Germany. If we fight Hitler we must fight Stalin. If we support Stalin we must stop attacking Hitler. There is no way

out of this dilemma. (This is the meaning of the growing tendency to see the conflict of our time as one between Democracy and Totalitarianism. It is. But, it is still a conflict between Capitalism and Socialism as well; and democracy can only be maintained by a transition to socialism in the economic ordering of life. The Churches are tending to a unification in defence of personal values against the threat of the "Church State" of Totalitarianism. They are identifying the defence of personal values with the defence of the traditional (more or less mediaeval) organisation of political society. This will bring them into alliance with capitalist interests and with the interests (from another side) of social-democrats. The effect must be to produce either Totalitarian capitalism (Fascism) or Totalitarian Socialism (Bolshavism) according to the issue of the struggle. In either case democracy will have been destroyed by her defenders.

There is only one possible way of avoiding this - through a religious socialist movement - on the basis of the Christian Left position. This is what we must try to see as clearly as daylight; and get worked out in its implications.

Two practical issues arise immediately.

1. The Christian Left must condemn Russia without equivocation; clearly and definitely. It is not enough to blame Stalin for misloading Russia, that is simply to go "Trotskyite." The condemnation should go to the root of the matter in the criticism of the anti-religious basis of Marxism. We should have been able to foresee what has happened to Russia.

2. This condemnation must be coupled with a reaffirmation, on a Christian basis, of the necessity of socialism and the overthrow of capitalism, as the only means to establish the personal values of human life in the new society.

At this point we have to stop calculating immediate results and stand firm on our principles. We have to distinguish our position clearly from the Marxist, even when we incorporate most of marxism in our own position. (This was Marx's own plan; he only attacked with vehemence those positions which were close to his own but incomplete.)

Nevertheless, a guess as to the practical outcome that is possible may not come amiss if we do not take it too certainly. If now the socialists of all types would begin to work for the realisation of socialism at the end of the war, as the basis for the creation of a new society, they would have a good chance of success. (After the war the conditions for the establishment of socialism will be good. The chances are that it will be Totalitarian - we cannot disguise that; but this is not inevitable.)

NB

Compare with
Reviser's
improvements

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Compare with
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[If this drive for socialism can be associated with the attack on Totalitarianism, with democracy and the maintenance of personal values in life, in a word with the Christian understanding of life, then a democratic socialism is possible.] It is the task of the Christian Left; and God is with us.

With all good wishes and affectionate greetings,

Yours ever,

JOHN MACMURRAY."

CHRISTIAN LEFT [No. 18] March 1940

(The following is a letter sent by one of the members of the Committee in reply to John Macmurray's letter.)

Dear John,

Your letter to the C.L. Meeting over the New Year raised considerable discussion, and expressed what a number of people there were beginning to feel. In a sense I took a leading part in opposing what you had said and I felt it would be good if I wrote you briefly outlining what I feel on the subject.

There are broadly two points of view, which, it seems to me, one can take on this question. One is to say that Russia has made a mistake, a tactical mistake and that this is regrettable or worthy of condemnation, according to how strongly one feels on the subject. The other point of view is that there is something fundamentally rotten in the Russian system or leadership which has inevitably lead to this Finnish business. The first position is not, in itself, a very satisfactory basis for discussion because the Russian leaders on the basis of tactics, must be the best judges of what is the correct action in the interests of the things they hold to be valuable. The second issue is one on which considerable discussion begins but it inevitably tails off into the discussion on tactics. The reason for this I think is that the difference in the conception of society which we believe to be held by Russian Marxism and the conception we hold in the C.L. is a very fine one in its outward expression. At anyrate, when a discussion has begun on this basis it has slowly but surely turned round to one on tactics. Others may disagree but this is my own impression.

I feel that Russia may have made a mistake and that this has arisen from their general conception of human life and society. Russia was primarily a feudal country before the Revolution, and, in the face of general world hostility, she was forced to build up as far as possible a self-sufficing industry. This entailed great concentration on actual production of heavy goods, of machines, tools and so forth. The life of the country became centred in the

factory and the production graph. Allied to this is a Marxian view of history, all the more materialistic and mechanical because of the era of superstition from which they had emerged. The result has been an inability to appreciate fully the sympathy which Russia has aroused throughout the world. They have tended mechanically to approach the question of their support in other countries and to judge of this in terms similar to those applied to production checking and 5-Year-Plan estimating. [When they looked at the world and saw that the organisations of the workers did not succeed in securing arms for Spain, did not secure the dismissal of Chamberlain and his prototype in other countries and, above all, did not secure a peace alliance with Russia as the centre, they thought that the support which they had was insufficient to prevent these capitalistic countries from eventually attacking Russia at an appropriate time. They were guilty, as one person put it, of "statistical" thinking. They could not, because of the outlook and type of mind reared in the years of construction, plus Marxism, adequately assess the latent support which Russia had.]

This means that I cannot see that there is anything rotten in the Russian system or in the conception of life held by the leaders of Russia in so far as this is evident in their utterances or in the deeds of Russia. Only in the sense which I have suggested do I feel there is ground for this view.

To take the other point of view. In the light of the facts brought to light there seems abundant evidence to show that Finland is not the gallant little independent democracy that it is alleged to be; and that, therefore, to assert that Russia is imposing her will on another independent country is untrue. Since she is a socialist country and is the living negation of all the stupidities of capitalism Russia by her very existence must constitute a menace to the internal security of other capitalistic countries. She has therefore been convinced that sooner or later she would be the victim of attack. Having failed to build up a peace front against unprovoked aggression she has had to resort to other means to secure the defence of her most vulnerable areas. Particularly was this necessary following Munich, when it was clear that Great Britain's policy was to drive Germany against the Soviet Union and thus combat the trade and class enemy at the same time. [When eventually Russia was convinced that Britain did not honestly intend a pact with the Soviet Union she made a pact with Imperialist Britain's Imperialist rival, Germany. The next stage was the occupation of Byelo-Russia. This Russia considered necessary in the light of the lack of support, diversionist or otherwise, which Britain was giving to Poland. On all sides it is now admitted that their action was necessary and even "the only intelligent thing to do." To see the Finnish business clearly it seems to me that it should be considered in the light of the other factors and as a continuation of the same struggle of which Russia won the first two rounds.]

Having secured her frontier against Germany in Poland Russia set to to secure her frontier at its most vulnerable point, viz. the Baltic states. She concluded pacts with Estonia and Lithuania which were described by the statesmen of these countries as not menacing their integrity or independence. She wished to do the same with Finland, and the leader of the first Finnish delegation made a declaration to this effect. He was, however, soon replaced by Tanner and others who became very much aware of the threat to their independence. There followed the frontier incidents and the war began.

I contend that Finland is being used by countries like Great Britain and France who cannot for their own security's sake (internally that is) carry on a war without the Soviet Union being involved somehow. They cannot allow the one socialist country to remain outside, growing stronger and stronger. I suggest that the frontier incidents were calculated to continue until the spring by which time it was hoped that other countries would be mobilised behind Finland and against Russia on the basis of the threat to the independence of that country. The question would always have been, as now, what possible threat could a small country like Finland constitute to a large country like Russia? They were sure that Russia would not do anything in the almost impossible winter conditions which pertain there. Russia has acted quickly again, just as she did over the pact with Germany and the occupation of Poland, and is attempting to defeat their aims. The fantastic stories published since the war began show that the hatred of the Soviet Union was lying ready under the surface all the time and the help which we are giving to Finland, help which foreshadows the actual sending of troops, indicates, I think, the real attitude which we are adopting to this whole business.

Russia has depended during the 20 odd years of her existence as a socialist country on the support which she had from the masses of the working people throughout the world. That she should have risked forfeiting that now must be an important consideration in estimating the correctness of her action. She may have made the mistake, arising out of her conception of life, that I have indicated above. For the life of me I cannot see, and less and less can I see while capitalist support for Finland becomes more evident, that Russia has done anything so terribly wrong.

I have not dealt with the question of democratic socialism. I feel that society is changing, whether under socialism or capitalism, over to a strictly ordered era. [That in this period a great part of our democratic tradition will have to go there is no doubt. Capitalism will certainly take from us our democracy and in the transitional period in the struggle for the establishment of socialism the socialist forces will have to be so vigilant as to risk sacrificing democracy for a period of time. I feel personally that the real issue at the moment is not one of democratic or authoritarian

socialism but whether or not this war should and can continue.] In view of the sacrifices being imposed on the working classes, the unprecedented attacks on their standards of living and liberties, and in view of the preparations for the real war against the Soviet Union, this war should be stopped by the working classes in their own way, as Dimitrov says, and that means the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of socialism. I should be less concerned with the securing of the type of socialism at this stage than I would be with the actual securing of the overthrow of capitalism. This is the job before all else and the job requiring all our energies.]

Edward Every

Edward Every

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CHRISTIAN LEFT [No. 18] March 1940

REPLY FROM JOHN MACMURRAY.

Your letter interests me a great deal, but mainly because it shows that I failed to make clear what I was driving at. I don't take either of the two alternative points of view which you put; because I'm not thinking of the issue on that level at all. If I were, I should agree with your own analysis. Russia has done what one should have expected, and what, from her point of view (or from the point of view of Marxist Nationalism) was the right thing. I tried in my letter to the C.L. to make it clear that my quarrel was not with tactics at all, but with the fundamental basis of Marx's interpretation. It is because Russia has acted in accordance with the principles of Marxism that I think the C.L. must condemn her action; not because she has "made a mistake" in applying her principles. I thought that here at last was a clear historical issue at which the difference in principle between the C.L. position (or at least my position) and the Marxist position asserts itself. I agree that it is difficult to state theoretically; and for that reason it is best exhibited in the difference it makes in action. The use of the mechanism of aggressive war as a means of defending her own territory against possible capitalist attack in the future, is on any Christian view, unjustifiable. "They that take the sword shall perish by the sword," is not a "moral" maxim, but an interpretation of history. The action, on your own showing, was motivated by fear; and fear has a way of producing what we are afraid of. Russia has done exactly what the capitalist governments hoped she would do; and has made it possible to rally the working-class in all the capitalist countries for a war against Russia; it has made Russia more dependant on Germany (we must not slur over the fact that all this was agreed in advance with Hitler) and has blurred the distinction between Socialism and Fascism.

That, at most, means a mistake in tactics or strategy, you may say. Yes; but if that were all I shouldn't worry. What worries me is that the mistake was possible, and in a sense inevitable. What made it inevitable was the Marxist misunderstanding of Christianity. The effect of this is to shift the centre of valuation from the personal life of men and women to the organisation of society. The achievement of a Socialist economy becomes an end in itself, instead of a means to a personal end (I don't mean an individual end). The religious basis will distinguish society and community and consequently between Socialism and Communism, not as different degrees or stages or types of the same thing, but as different kinds of things. And it is the only justification for the existence of the C.L. that it stands for this. It may turn out to be possible to achieve a socialist economy that is pointless, because it has lost the very thing that makes socialism worth while. It is just not true that by solving the economic problem you solve the whole social problem. You merely create the conditions under which it can be solved. Any country that uses war as an instrument of policy, whether capitalist or socialist, stands condemned indeed it condemns itself; it has yet to learn the A.B.C. of cause and effect in human relationships.

I don't know if this helps to clear the issue, or to make clear what my point really was. Perhaps not; but I hope so. I'm not a pacifist; but if I were in Russia now, I should have to refuse to fight against Finland; and I don't think I am hoodwinked at all by the capitalist press and its propaganda.

twelve to twenty million signatures - would itself be an important contribution towards transforming the international situation.

Acland is already being asked whether he intends to form a new political party. The answer is that at present we are clear only as to our basic political aims, but that we cannot yet tell what political organisation may be required to carry them into effect. We may be able to work through an existing machinery or may be compelled to create new machinery.

My own conviction is that this movement is the nearest political expression of the Christian Left standpoint to any political development which I have as yet encountered. Readers of the News Street will, I hope, study Acland's book and form their own conclusions. If they decide that they agree and want to help, I hope that they will write individually to the headquarters of the movement so as to be enrolled as supporters.

CHRISTIAN LEFT [No. 19] April/May 1940

CORRESPONDENCE. from EDWARD AVERY

(We hope that more of our readers will contribute their views, whether on the subject of the following letter, or on any other issues.)

To the Editor,

John Macmurray has in his two letters, presented us with the criticism of Marxism that we knew from his books. It is not wholly novel. I doubt if it finds any fresh kind of justification from recent events, though no doubt it can always be illustrated from the day to day policy and practice of Marxists.

A state built on C.L. principles will still be coercive; as a state and as a means to the ends it serves, it would demand sacrifices for its preservation. The question is always whether the sacrifices demanded are or are not necessary, not merely the state and the form of life, but to the life of personal values which a state is meant to serve. The sacrifice is justified if the eventual alternative to making it is a greater loss of personal life and personal values than it involves.)

The Marxist contention, in such an instance as that of the Finnish campaign, is that we cannot and must not flinch from any sacrifice necessary to the existence of the only

form of society that can preserve personal life and personal values - i.e. Socialism. The Stalin line of correct Marxism is held to be the only practical alternative to the destruction of the U.S.S.R. Some of us doubt that. [But if it is true we can only regard John Macmurray's criticism of Marxism in its application to the circumstances, in one of two ways. Either, though it may be true in a general sense, it simply does not apply to this specific instance as the U.S.S.R. is not the aggressor or - the U.S.S.R. has ceased to be, from the C.L. standpoint, worth preserving.

The actual political result of Russia's crime, or her blunder, or her defensive tactic, however we regard it, is likely to be to place before us the question "to fight or not to fight" against Russia in a world alliance rather than against Finland for Russia. Russia and all Marxism, seems likely to be involved in a war of self-preservation which seems to be the immediate consequence of Russia choosing to invade Finland, though I daresay Russia can argue that if she had not invaded Finland it would have taken place and found her at a greater disadvantage.

It will be contended that Russia if she cannot be defended except by the Hitler alliance, aggression and trickery, is already self-destroyed as a society aiming at freedom and equality. But if we study history, we shall surely see that every revolutionary state and every organisation of a rising class has committed crimes and blunders without changing its fundamental role. We can criticize Russia and refuse to approve some of her actions, without being her enemies.

John Macmurray's general criticism of the Marxism of the U.S.S.R. as containing elements of Totalitarianism is largely true. The Marxist, being anti-religious, is unduly afraid of a collapse of civilization if his line is not at once taken. But the C.L., being religious tends to be, at times, unduly sanguine, and blind to obstacles in the path of Socialism. To see that you will be attacked and to take the most practical step to prevent the attackers from carrying out their plan, is not necessarily to be motivated by fear. It may be a matter of "awareness" to use a word we once loved.

To sum up, Russia has a case. Nevertheless this is a time to consider with care our differences with Russian Marxism.

EDWARD EVERY.

(John Macmurray has replied: "Do not take it for granted that to condemn the government of U.S.S.R. for its aggression on Finland means to take sides against Russia. It might or might not, according to circumstances. By

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condemning Russia I meant pointing out clearly that Russian aggression against Finland, whether or not it is consistent with Marxist principles is inconsistent with the principles of the C.L..... (What I cannot be privy to is the kind of disregard of moral and religious principle involved if we refuse to condemn Russia for doing what we would have violently condemned Germany for doing.)

Comments of the Enfield C. L. Group
on the memorandum on Socialism and democracy.

Preamble. Query - is Socialism a political system or a religion? Socialism is that form of political life in which (particularly) the second commandment can be realised.

Par. 1. The State has - and must have - absolute control over its members; and the only thing that people can do who disagree is to suffer, and if necessary die. In other words we cannot agree that in a democracy political authority is limited e.g. France at the moment.

"Totalitarianism is the denial of the freedom of the cultural life."

In one way or another all states do in fact attempt to control cultural activity. Consider the economic position of most good artists in England to-day: you cannot control culture because creativeness is an innate part of human nature and will continue to assert itself, even in the most unfavourable conditions.

This fact of the attempt of all states to control cultural activities is one that we accept but we see however (1) that the control is never fully effective (2) that it is ineffective in so far as prophets are willing to die.

N.B. That the artists who refused to submit to Hitler's ideas of art preferred exile and the free expression of their cultures.

Par. 2. They agree that a socialist society as described by Marx. provides the economic conditions which should lead to the ideal superstructure.
bottom of p.2.

But we think that it is beyond human power to organise personal life - that is what God does - we can only organise the social life and have faith in God's Love.