

1937

FIRST OF A SERIES OF SIX LECTURES ARRANGED BY A COMMITTEE  
OF CHRISTIAN LEFT GROUPS, IN LANCING ST. SCHOOLS.

5. 3. 37.

I. - "The Birth of a New Society" - by Rev. John Groser.

1. Anomalies in present form of society:

Fundamental unsoundness of Capitalism: cannot meet needs.  
Problem of production solved: yet poverty exists in midst of plenty.

Able-bodied men unemployed while children in work:  
School leaving age not raised because Capitalists must have cheap child labour.

Capitalism has played its part, but it must now go.

Nature of the State. (State does not equal community.)

More and more the state is shown in its true function - that of maintaining power for the ruling class.

2. Justice is gradually being shown up to mean simply the administration of the law in the interests of the ruling classes.

e.g. growth of "petty offences" among unemployed - loitering with intent to commit a felony.

Former convictions may make it worse for the poor offender.

A vagrant community is a danger to property-owners.

Law is used unfairly against unemployed etc. in interests of property owners.

e.g. also P.A.C. legislation, Trade Union Act, Sedition Bill, etc. all in relation to the developing situation.

3. Tendency in crises to turn Religion to the purpose of upholding existing order, property etc.

e.g. a) Sir Walter Layton, 1931, said Churches' job was to tell workers not to distrust economists and capitalists in their efforts to right the system - presuming that the righting of the Capitalist system is to be desired.

b) Cardinal Bourne ditto in General Strike, 1926.

c) R.C.s in Austria.

4. Internationalism. Desire of millions for international Court of Justice rendered abortive by the opposing economic interests of capitalist states and imperialism.

Ditto Disarmament and rearmament.

(Continued).

5. Gradual emergence of Class Struggle into open Warfare.  
Conventional ideas and habits go by the board.  
The Class divisions stand out more clearly, viz:-
- a) Fascism: the form capitalism takes on to smash democracy.
  - b) Working Class: or those of them driven by economic events to co-operate.
  - c) lining up with the Working Class, those like us, who see the issue and have decided which side we are on; though often against our own immediate interests.
  - d) A large body who don't understand what is happening. Often Christians, opposed to any form of totalitarianism, and therefore in a fight between two forms of (apparent) totalitarianism, they would tend to side with fascism as the "lesser of two evils".

Development of Protestant Dualism. - built up largely by Karl Barth.

A temporary victory for fascism seems probable, but that would not solve the problems of capitalism.

It's having to retrench democratic liberties etc. would show up its contradictions.

A temporary fascist win would make struggle more ruthless, the transition to socialism more difficult. Because under democracy workers are being trained to run their own affairs (Trade Unions, etc.), and fascism would stop all that.

But sooner or later we must go forward to the next stage: a planned socialist economy, for use, not profit.

The nucleus of the new society is being built up in the womb of capitalism.

Question of its capacity, methods etc., and how far all this is within our control or not - here we have an enormous part to play. The ideas that each of these four groups have of one another, nature and vulnerability of the opposition and weapons, are things we can affect to a great extent.

In G.B. situation distinctive: because first in field industrially, our history of religion, growth of democracy.

Our capitalists have often been nominal christians, and as a result many concessions have been wrung from them which wouldn't have otherwise been gained - even in the growth of our Empire.

But, in spite of this, somewhere between now and the introduction of Socialist economy, the ruling class will resort to force to defend their position. What then? In different countries, the manner and point of it's use and amount of ruthlessness will depend on past history and convictions, and non-economic factors such as our ideas of one another.

Danger of saying "there is no alternative between Communism and Fascism", because it is vital to get agreement on a short-term policy of immediate objectives - i.e. socialism. Hence to state "Communism" here is to face us with a false choice.

(CONTINUED).



A Christian ought to be a socialist for economic reasons. But the same person may, not must, reject philosophy of Communism because it results in wrong tactic: a Christian must fight for a classless society because he is concerned with human beings today, not just in next world: all human beings too, including Capitalists.

On what does the value of the human being rest? On it's significance to the State? or to God? or to his fellow men?

Have we the right to use another human person (or ourselves) as a means to an end only?

No true social life if we lose the dignity of saying "I have sinned by my own fault". Not just because we have been found out, but because we have found ourselves out and are ashamed at our own outrage of God's image. The sense of individual responsibility depends on a belief that we are responsible human beings. This can only be maintained by a belief in God, and cannot be maintained if man is the creature of a temporal order and merely relative to it at any stage.

As Capitalism decays it's evaluation of man is exposed.

The maintenance of human evaluation is our job, whatever the struggle leads us into.

- a) Must realise that the person against you is so because of your sin (and be sorry for it) - even in killing him.
- b) You must want his conversion.
- c) You must regard him as part of the end, and therefore even if he is killed either in opposition or in undertaking a dangerous task on behalf of an immediate social end, you remain responsible for him and cannot rid yourself of that responsibility.

Christians must strike out for absolutes like Truth, Beauty, Goodness and Justice. c.f.: - C.P. which admits "pragmatism".

Labour Party and C.P. tend to miss out whole series of factors, and thus misunderstand situations.

A Christian should be able to understand the reactions of working class folk better than the communist, and thus make a greater contribution to the working class movement.

But to do this, Christian must accept Marxist economic conception of history, etc. or he can't analyse situations - even though no working class political group embraces the whole person.

We must see the class war as an actual fact, see the new society being born in the womb of capitalism. But we shall fail in our duty to the W-C if we don't give this distinctive contribution of ours. In doing so, must be prepared to cut across things previously accepted, e.g., we are not concerned with preservation of the state because our primary allegiance is to the new order of society now being built up. Re Rearmament: not concerned with whether we like it, but whether it's to be used pro or anti existing order.

H.

The Birth of a New Society. Fr: Green.

Religion - Communism - some will have to be forced up to it.

1. Peace is health in society. Fundamental misreading of Capitalism. Cannot meet needs.

"Starvation in midst of plenty".  
able-bodied men out of work, strike their children can get it.

Cap. has played its part, must go.

2. Nature of State - comes out clearly (State not = Community)

see it in certain small things such as  
eg. Raising of school age - comes from demand on demand State must do something.

eg. Nature of Justice - No' we conceive of Justice as being above all, it is actually administered in ruling class interest. Eg. Loitering v. without to commit a felony. hanging change. - unemployed men committed to prison as "being without to commit crime" since there is an increase in petty crime.

A former conviction may make it worse.  
Is there a rampant community danger to property?



PrC. Lesit: - rllat: h  
Kerilim Bilk di. Changig siluet:

40

(g) Ability of State in crisis to use religion  
to unify society.

Layton in 1931, this job of church was  
left useless with the advent of economic  
bright machine.

Cardinal Brannan in general studies.

(R.C. Church in America.)

(d) Internationally Conflict but desire for  
international court of justice - need to  
continue impartial international policy - can't  
come kind.

(e) Internal emergency of class struggle with  
open warfare - conventional ideas &  
habits go by the board. Then resistance of  
those who see dangers of this. Continuity of  
conflict begins to increase.

Then large group of people, not driven to take  
part who are on verge of taking part in  
this struggle.

When it comes to a fight bet. 2 totalitarian  
middle people will take the Fascist side.

Combined development of Protestant Socialism

- built up largely by Karl Barth.

A temporary victory for Fascism may appear  
possible - but it cannot solve <sup>the</sup> problem  
of Capitalism.

A temporary fascist war = a more ruthless struggle.

If Fascism gets a real hold, it may <sup>make</sup> ~~be~~ <sup>labor</sup> ~~unprofitable~~ <sup>unprofitable</sup>.  
Trade Unionists have seen a ft. thing in  
managing war affairs.

But some of these would need to go through  
next stage to a planned economy for use.

In world of Capitalism unless the new  
society  $\rightarrow$  being built up. Question of its  
capacity, methods etc., or how far all  
this is in our control or not - here we  
have an enormous part to play. Their  
ideas of our analysis, nature & value of  
opposition are things we can affect to a  
great extent.

In Eng. sit<sup>n</sup> is somewhat different.  
- 1<sup>st</sup> in field technically - at disadvantage  
- 2<sup>nd</sup> ideological advantage - hist. of relig.

Capitalist was a nominal Christian -  
as result many concessions were given  
than which it's not otherwise have been  
gained. Capitalist in conflict with his  
Christianity.



Even Empire, awful but it is, was  
somewhat less awful because to some  
extent even our imperialists set their  
limits.

Somewhere bet. now & introduction of  
soc. economy, ruling class will  
resort to force. What then? Brave  
game. Point of use, amount of  
militarism is dependent on past history  
& conditions.

Here there is room for work on  
factors other than economic.

Need for agreement about immediate  
objective — i.e. Socialism.

To use word "Communism" means  
much more than merely an  
econ. objective. After Socialism,  
what? To put Socialism Communism  
in here is to face us with a false  
choice.

A Xian ought to be a socialist,  
because of futurity of present



initial: . But some persons may not  
must reject philosophy of Communism.  
Because it results in wrong tactic -  
It must fight for classless society because  
concerned about human beings - human  
being today.

For what does value of a human being  
rest? Can his value be understood  
without reference to God? To his fellow  
man. Can - among - I use another  
human person as a means? May I  
be used, allow myself to be used?  
No live social life if we say have  
to say - I have found myself out?  
Now may not lose that sense.

Now more as capitalism decays, its  
value is exposed: Transhumanism of  
human evolution is our job,  
whatever the struggle leads us into.

In court for perjury - police looked  
someone to keep man on probation.

1. Must remember - even in killing - humans
2. want his conversion
3. It is a part of the end -

In question of justice, a great: I will  
have an ultimate absolute - CP -  
admits "pragmatism" -

Tendency of Marxist groups on whole -  
is to miss out a whole series of factors -  
Misunderstand situations - Average  
Communist was apt to misunderstand a  
sit. then chosen as a pt.

No working class political party  
embraces his whole program. You must  
however, accept primarily, Marxist  
economic analysis.

The New Society is being born in the  
bosom of Capitalism. We shall find  
completely in our loyalty to working  
classes if we water down our old  
conceptions.



## AFFIRMATIONS

1. We believe that we have a religious unity that finds different expressions and is not dependent on a unity of doctrinal formulation or practical activity.

Question Would you agree to a statement of this type as an affirmation ?

2. We believe in Christianity as the act of God ~~through~~ in history through Jesus Christ for the redemption of man.

3. We believe that our Christian discipleship consists in accepting our place in the work of redemption in the circumstances of our time.

Question: How do you understand "accepting your place"?

4. We believe that we find our place through the conflict of divergent interpretations and divergent policies of action within the one fellowship of the Auxiliary Movement.

Questions. Is there anything in these affirmations to which you object?  
Is there anything missing which you would like to see included?  
Is there any different formulation which you would prefer?

It would also help the Commission if you would answer the following question - "What reason would you give to a non-member for your membership of the Movement in addition to or instead of your membership of a Christian denomination and / or political party ?

1935/36