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John Macmurray

THE AUXILIARY MOVEMENT.

Notes from Christian Left Training week-ends, 1937.

I. Christianity. What we mean and what we do not mean.
Professor John Macmurray.

It would clear the religious atmosphere considerably if people would say what in traditional Christianity they do not believe. Is there anything that we do not believe that people say is essential to Christianity?

Christianity is primarily centred in the life and teaching of Jesus. But two possible conceptions of a religion may arise from this. Christianity may be a religion about Jesus in which he appears as a kind of lay figure. Such a religion embodies a set of doctrines. But if we read the gospels to try to understand what they say and mean, we arrive at something very different from the set of ideas about God and Jesus which are usually associated with Christianity - indeed a good deal of subtlety is needed to make these agree with what is to be found in the New Testament. If we try to understand what constituted the religious outlook and thought of the early Christian Church we find that they had no theology.

Jesus took it for granted that people believed in God, and what he was interested in were the implications of this in human life. His discovery was that the way you live your life in relation to one another is the only real expression of your relation to God.

The important thing to remember about Jesus is that he was a Jew, and took the Jewish conception of God for granted.

The degree of difference between orthodox theology and what is to be found in the New Testament is such as to make a canon of authenticity for the N.T. unnecessary. Much of orthodox theology comes from Greek philosophy and not from the New Testament at all. The temper of orthodox theology is derived directly from Greek philosophy - it is speculative, dogmatic, dualist. In contrast, the teaching of Jesus is in temper empirical and behind it is the Jewish conception of religion.

The Jewish religion is something quite unique. Its outstanding feature is that it is through and through historical. For the Jew the material of religion is the actual history of the Jewish people. If you think of the Jewish religion, you think of history, and if you think of Jewish history, you think of God. The Jewish prophets always think religion in terms of history.

Since Jesus was a Jew his first task was to recall his own people to the reality of their own religion.

Religion is for Jesus and for the Jew a way of understanding the world. The Jews are religious just because they haven't a religion. If you are religious then religion isn't something you have, religion is the way you understand the world. If you "have a religion" then you live your life in terms of some philosophical outlook or other - and turn away from living when you turn to God.

Marxist conception of religion.

Marx was a Jew, and therefore came near to a religious understanding, but his theory of religion arose from the system that he knew. For him the defining characteristic of a religion is a belief in another world and in immortality. But if this theory of religion is right then the Jews of the Old Testament were not religious at all, yet looking at history we see that the Jews were the only fundamentally religious people in historic times. (This does not mean that a belief in immortality is false, only that it is not a defining characteristic of religion). A belief in immortality is a Greek idea which crept in to the Jewish religion and was completely rejected by the Sadducees, although others were not prepared to reject the idea merely because it was a new one.

In criticising secular thought, religious people invariably instance naturalism and empiricism - which is actually the Christian thing breaking through the dogmatic Greek tradition. The teaching of Jesus scarcely ever makes a statement of general principle - instead a particular case is instanced to express an attitude of mind which will enable one to deal with any number of particular situations. Jesus was very much aware of the temporal process. He knew that if you state general laws of behaviour they very soon become out of date. The capacity which Christianity has shown for persisting from one form of society to another is due just to this absence of general principles. See St. Paul's answer to the Corinthians: "All things are lawful, but all things are not expedient". What is expressed here is a religious attitude, not an ethical one.

Although the Jewish religion started with a code of laws, these were continually being adapted to meet a changing situation. Throughout the O.T. there is evidence of the tension between the effort to keep the letter of the old law and the effort to bring it up to date. And throughout European history we can see that what expresses itself as an attack on the Jews is really an attack on the Jewish attitude to life as an element in the European tradition, and therefore on Christianity. This has been made clearer by Hitler than ever before.

The Jewish is the only real understanding of religion because it is about the life of the community. The Jews thought of

themselves as the children of Israel - the idea of the family developing to that of society - and they thought of society in terms of personal relationships. The Jewish idea of the individual is completely different from the modern European idea; the individual was never contrasted with society but was thought of as a member of the community which as a whole would have to suffer for his sins and benefit from his virtues.

The Jews were chosen by God as the means by which he revealed himself. This statement lent itself to two interpretations - first, that God chose the Jews because he liked them better than anyone else; second, that God would use the Jews even to the extent of their own destruction for his purpose of redeeming the world. This latter is the issue on which Jesus stood - he consistently attacked the former - imperialist - view, and his first mission was a call to the Jews to return to the way of God's purpose. Here Jesus takes his place in the continuity of the prophetic tradition. He insists on the redemption of the Jew as the first task. But when he reached the conviction that this effort would fail, that the Jews would refuse the task, he realised that the question of nationality was not essential, and that God would choose others to fulfil his purpose. (For suggesting this he was nearly lynched in his own synagogue).

The discovery that Jesus made, which was not an ideal but a truth, was that human life is personal. To understand this it is necessary to point the contrasts that Jesus pointed - that human life is non-natural; non-organic; communal, not social; and that relationships between humans are not based on ties of blood or nationality - in fact, it would be impossible to build a human community on the basis of blood relationship. Any such society must inevitably break down. It was this discovery that enabled Jesus to be so certain of the ultimate success of his mission. The rejection of it, which he foresaw, would involve inevitable failure. Thus Jesus was able to say to his disciples "You can't possibly fail". In rejecting the truth men would be attempting to live in a way which contradicted their own nature, and so frustrating themselves.

Human community.

The positive side of the teaching of Jesus is the explanation of what human community is. The defining attitude is expressed in the new conception of love - at the root of the love relationship lie the structural ideas of equality and freedom. These are not ideals that may or may not be achieved, but are essential to any relationship which is a human relationship - they are statements of the actual structure of any personal relationship. They are religious, not political, ideas. The equality that is the substance of community is a personal equality, not a quantitative thing measured by material possessions, but an equality of opportunity to establish free human relationships. This, of course, involves material arrangements, which are the stuff of opportunity. This

explains why things that were at one time tolerable later become intolerable. So long as personal inequality is not felt, in the religious sense it does not exist. But consciousness of inequality appears as soon as the possibility of a change which will increase equality and freedom is recognised. At such times the functional situation in social organisation becomes a religious situation. In the same way pacifism today is the expression of the fact that war is no longer inevitable. A future war will for the first time have been deliberately chosen, in spite of the consciousness that it was avoidable.

Even where the facts have not changed, a change in the consciousness of the facts has the result of transforming the situation. The Marxist argues that a change in the facts produces a change of consciousness; but this is only partly true. The full truth is that the awareness of the facts is itself one of the facts, and one of the changes in the situation may be a change in our consciousness of the situation.

Faith.

This is the one technical term that Jesus used. We think of faith as belief in something or someone - faith in God, faith in a doctrine. But faith was used by Jesus in contrast to fear - to describe an attitude. "If ye have faith" - not faith in anything. Faith is an attitude of trust - a state of mind - not a system of beliefs.

The teaching of Jesus has been a determining force in the world, not because he led an exemplary life, but because he discovered the truth about human nature. The other ideas that are associated with him - that his birth was miraculous, that he was raised from the dead - are of no importance compared with this. The stress that is laid by the apostles on the resurrection is accounted for by the fact that they found it impossible to understand their own feeling that Jesus' teaching was of world importance, and the resurrection was a triumphant vindication of this feeling. "This man rose from the dead, now will you listen". That many people today find it impossible to believe in the resurrection of Jesus may not make it untrue. But its truth or lack of truth makes no difference to the importance of Jesus in world history.

Christianity and the Churches.

If we look at the set of organised religions that is called Christianity we see nothing that can be called the Church - only a series of churches, each one of which has arisen in dialectic

opposition to the one from which it grew. Historically, therefore, each stands for the denial that the other churches are Christian. This idea has lately worn very thin - it is dwindling together with the religious reality of the churches.

The embodiment of the historical process that Jesus initiated cannot be found in the history of the churches, especially since the adoption of Christianity as the religion of the Roman Empire. The churches have, in fact, been the religions of Europe. The unchristian societies of which Europe has been composed have each had their religion, which they have labelled Christian, but which have existed to express and maintain the communities of nation or class to which they belong. The churches functioned in precisely this way during the war. These religions have acted as a conservative force maintaining definite forms of society with their corresponding moralities and consciousness. The real Christian movement in history is concerned with the establishment of a society in the world which is the denial of all of these. In consequence, at every time of crisis we find the churches largely on the antichristian side.

At the same time the churches are part of the total effect of the impact of Christianity on the world. They perform the function that religion in a limited society must perform. Thus a given church firstly expresses the extent of the development of Christianity in that society, and secondly the opposition to the Christian dynamic which threatens to destroy the society in its limited form - it expresses the limitation that a particular society imposes on Christianity. Society as a whole is in process of becoming more Christian, and the churches are tending to oppose this movement. For since they exist as the religions of a temporary form of society they must cease to exist in their present form with the passing of the present form of society. If they cling to their existing forms by attempting to defend and conserve their traditional dogmas and institutions they identify themselves with the form of society that Christianity is in process of destroying.

1933 *Wear*
1934 *back to Vienna*
1935-6 *Spain*
Dr.

THE AUXILIARY MOVEMENT.

Notes from Christian Left Training Week-ends, 1937. (38)

II. Community and Society. The Christian criticism of our Social Order. Dr. Karl Polanyi.

1. How do we focus our discussion on subjects related to society, e.g. politics, economics?

a) Politics, economics are essentially religious subjects because religion is about the personal field and these subjects are only different aspects of the relationship of human persons. (cf. "The Christian Task":- "There are no problems of human life that are not religious problems, that are not problems of the relationship of persons. The particular problems of our political and economic life are also in every case problems of the relationships of persons to one another. If, therefore, an attempt is made to solve economic or political problems without treating them as religious problems they cannot be solved".)

This does not mean that political or economic problems are merely religious problems, or that religion is merely a problem of the right politics and economics; but it does mean that at times the problems of society may be insoluble unless we put the religious consideration first. (The relevance of God to bread and butter.)

b) Religion, on the other hand, cannot be detached from our life in society, from politics, economics, etc. ("Religion, we believe, is our attitude to reality as a whole, and therefore to every aspect of the whole, including bread and butter".) (The relevance of bread and butter to God).

2. Why can the Marxian analysis of society be accepted by the Christian?

Because the Marxian concept of socialism and of society is essentially personal.

The Marxian definition of a Socialist society is that of a "human" society. In this context in the writings of Marx the term "human" means a mode of existence in which distinctively human motives prevail, i.e. relationships are direct, unmediated, personal. They have value for their own sake. (This definition of Socialism is contained in Marx "Thesis on Feuerbach" 1845.)

The concept of society of Marx, is that of the relationship of human beings. In this case the relationship is not, as a rule, personal. As often as not it is impersonal, it is merely factual, like the relationships between persons engaged in a productive process.

There is a relationship between the owner of a mill and the human beings operating the mill, a relationship which has an objective reality whether the persons are conscious of their relative positions or not.

In socialism society fulfils its own nature. The actual relationships of the human beings in it are such that their relationships can be "human", i.e. personal.

In religious terms the Marxist position can be expressed thus: the reality of society lies wherever the technological conditions produce a community of persons. Class society is a denial of community.

3. The limitations of Marxism as a philosophy.

The reference of Marxist philosophy is to society. It regards community as the reality of society, but at the same time it limits the significance of community by restricting it to the society, but the personal field is not limited to society. Human community is both immanent in, and transcendent of, society. Society, as such, is irrelevant to the Christian. Communion is sharing of our person, but that which we share is not necessarily dependent on social organisation. The content of personal life is unlimited; art, nature, life, action and contemplation in known and unknown forms belong to its still unfathomed depths. Only in the interval of ages does personal community become linked with the organisation of society as a whole. When this happens, prophets arise to announce the fulness of time. It is with this exceptional period that the Marxist theory of revolution is concerned. From the religious point of view, it is an effort to define the link between historical time and "eternal" time. Its limitation lies in the fact that it knows of no other sphere of the realisation of community than the social and historical. Although "true human history begins with Socialism" there is nothing in Marxist philosophy to guide humanity onward once this stage of true history has been reached.

4. The Christian criticism of society.

The Christian criticism of society refers to society as a whole. Both nationally and internationally, the extension of community is impeded by the actual institutional relationships between human beings under our present economic system. The

trouble is not with the parts but with the whole. The denial of community lies in the refusal to change our social system as a whole, although such a change has become, materially, possible. It has become so, because we could use our means of producing material goods today communally without impairing the welfare of our fellows, thereby, indeed, probably even increasing it. This simple fact makes that which may have been morally neutral or indifferent, now a denial of common humanity. When liberal capitalism took hold of society, Christians, including the orthodox, denounced it as patently inhuman. Impressed by the vast increase in production due to the system, they gradually subsided into toleration. Though the needs of material production no longer demand the maintenance of this system, Christians still fail to protest against its continuance, partly because the moral sensibility of the Church has been fatally impaired by the constant toleration of the intolerable, partly because her material and financial interests have become inextricably interwoven with the present order of things.

5. Market economy.

Liberal capitalism was a unique experiment. Under this system the production and distribution of material goods forms a separate and autonomous sphere within the body social. This sphere embodies the dual principles of competition and the private ownership of the means of production. It stands under the blind rule of the prices which are the result of the market mechanism. Thus all material goods or services come to have prices which are called by many different names, such as interest, rent, commodity price, wages, and so on. As all human and social ends depend for their achievement on material means, ultimately the blind forces which govern the means determine also the ends. Thus by the force of things, the means tend to rule over the ends. Grotesque perversions of common sense take on a semblance of rationality under the sway of what is supposed to be an economic law. A symbolic instance is the treatment of human labour as a commodity to be bought and sold, like cucumbers. That to this commodity a human being is attached is treated as an accidental feature of no substantial relevance. That by disposing of this commodity according to the law of the market a human being may be abused in such a way as to destroy the fabric of society, which is composed of him and his like, is a consideration beyond the scope of the system. The same holds true of all human and social values on which the existence of a society depends. Under liberal capitalism there is no organic means of safeguarding these values; they can only survive in spite of the system. The trouble is with the whole

system. In capitalist society the economic system is being developed apart from the rest of society. The reabsorption of this system into society is the next step in the fulfilment of community in society. Liberalism has disintegrated society into separate economic, political, "religious", and other spheres. Their re-integration into a whole is the task of our time. It is this that presses upon us the further task of changing the economic system.

6. The limits of moral development.

The cash nexus is a means of estrangement. The market acts like an invisible boundary isolating all individuals in their day to day activities, as producers and consumers. They produce for the market, they are supplied from the market. Beyond it they cannot reach, however eagerly they may wish to serve their fellows. Any attempt to be helpful on their part is instantly frustrated by the market mechanism. Giving your goods away at less than the market price will benefit somebody for a short time, but it would also drive your neighbour out of business, and finally ruin your own, with consequent loss of employment for those dependent on your factory or enterprise. Doing more than your due as a working man will make the conditions of work for your comrades worse. By refusing to spend on luxuries you will be throwing some people out of work, by refusing to save you will be doing the same to others. As long as you follow the rules of the market, buying at the lowest and selling at the highest price whatever you happen to be dealing in, you are comparatively safe. The damage you are doing to your fellows in order to serve your own interest is, then, unavoidable. The more completely, therefore, one discards the idea of serving one's fellows, the more successfully one can reduce one's responsibility for harm done to others. Under such a system, human beings are not allowed to be good, even though they may wish to be so.

7. Fetishisation.

The market is the source of that unreality of human existence which is the characteristic of life in a capitalist society. Commodity values have a semblance of objective reality. Goods appear on, or disappear from, the market, are hoarded or become unsalable according to the relationship of the market price to their "value". The exchange value of the goods is, however, only a reflection of the relations between the human beings engaged in the production of the relations concerned. The man producing milk and the man producing boots are unconsciously working for one another. The exchange value of their produce is a reflection of the conditions under which they carry on their separate works. Under definite conditions the boots and the milk will exchange in the relation of the hours of labour needed to

produce them respectively. The mysterious process which crystallises the personal and subjective relation of the producers into semblance of an objective entity as, for example, commodity value, interest rate, capital, and so on, is called by Marx fetishisation. The term is derived from an analogy with a phenomenon in primitive religion. The unconscious process of introjection, by which a worshipper of a stone or a tree invests the dead object with the miraculous qualities of the spirit which is supposed to inhabit that object, presents a close analogy to the way in which useful things are exalted to the rank of commodities in the capitalist system, and are consequently credited with a value residing in the goods themselves, very much as the spirit of the tree or stone is supposed to reside in the fetish.

8. The Capital fetish.

Of all fetishes the fetish of Capital is the most disastrous to the emancipation of mankind. Past labour assumes in the shape of Capital a semblance of independent existence, and poses as the third original factor of production alongside of Man and Nature. Obviously, nothing of the kind is the case. Capital is merely the result of man and nature's inter-action; its amount can be deliberately increased, it can be produced at will. Though it is rightly regarded as one of the important factors of production it is in no way an original factor like man and nature. That under capitalism this derivative factor appears as the main factor on the presence and amount of which the effectiveness of man and nature depend, is the result of a process of fetishisation that is ultimately due to the private ownership of the means of production. But for private ownership of the means of production, Capital would be regarded as what in reality it is, namely, tools, machinery, plant, hoarded goods, the outcome of past labour that is being used by present live labour in the process of producing consumer's goods.

9. Class society.

Private ownership of the means of production implies the responsibility of one set of people (the owners) for the use to which tools and machinery must be put in order to safe-guard productions; at the same time it implies the existence of another set of people, (the workers) who neither have, nor can have, any say in the matter and who have, accordingly, no responsibility in it. The justification of such a system can be found in the necessities of a technological situation in which the means of production cannot be used in any other fashion. At the beginning of the industrial age such a condition of affairs was given. Since that time, however, the position has changed. Machinery can be used today by the community as a whole. The class division has become unjustified,

from the point of view of the productive needs of society, and its retention, therefore, turns into a denial of community. As long as unemployment, unequal incomes, inequality of opportunity, were the unavoidable accessories of an economic system which was in other ways justified, they were regarded as the price paid for the progress and the rising material welfare of the community. Since they have become avoidable, they have become indefensible, a stark denial of common humanity. Malnutrition for some amidst the affluence of others, enforced idleness for some amidst the voluntary idleness of the leisured few, lack of opportunity for education and training for some alongside the monopoly of an expensive class education for others, become equivalent to deliberate wrong-doing and crime. It is on account of this denial of community that our society is in process of being destroyed.

10. The next step.

The next step is a transformation of society through a change in the economic system. The private ownership of the means of production ^{must} be abolished, and the means of production must be owned by the community. Our society would then cease to be divided into economic classes; its unity would be accomplished. Our society can be saved from destruction in war and civil war in no other way. It is easy to show that the international organisation of the life of mankind cannot be accomplished by our national communities which are communities only in name. As long as part only of the people have any responsibility in the productive system, the other part being excluded from such responsibility, the whole must lack the will and power ~~needed~~ to proceed to the massive economic adjustments needed to make an international community possible today. The ultimate reason for the helpless drift of the world towards destruction is the denial of community within the nations expressed in the retention of the capitalist system.

11. Marxist economics and the labour theory of value.

Marx started from an anthropological concept of the nature of man. Both his philosophy of history and his philosophy of society are constituent parts of his anthropology. Such an approach was incompatible with the acceptance of sociology as an independent science. What, with Marx, appears as sociology, is but the application of his anthropological principles to the field of society. His main theorem in this sphere of knowledge is the so-called materialistic interpretation of history (so-called because it is not materialistic in the philosophical sense, merely in the sense of allowing full weight to the factor of production in the compass of social

phenomena).

Marx's theory of Capitalism was an instance of the application of the materialistic interpretation of history. What he aimed at was not the theory of an economic system, but a key to a society. This key he was convinced he had found in the economic system pertaining to our society. His description of the economic system was first and foremost relevant from this point of view. As a theory of actual economics it does not take us far, as a theory of prices it is insufficient. It is of great scientific value in two other respects.

1) The trends and tendencies of Capitalism were forecast by Marx with the most surprising accuracy; viz, the accumulation of capital, centralisation of production, recurrent trade depressions, the contradictions inherent in liberal capitalism, both nationally and internationally.

2) The predominant forms of consciousness in our time were shown to be the inevitable results of the private ownership of the means of production under modern conditions (fetishisation, the self-estrangement of man, the pseudo-reality of economic objectifications like commodity value, capital, etc.)

12. Natural and historical laws.

Marx describes the economic process as a process between: 1) Man and Nature; 2) Man and Man. The first is a timeless phenomenon present wherever labour and nature interact in order to meet human needs; the latter is a historical phenomenon reflecting the given organisation of society, i.e. the actual relationships of the human beings taking part in production. Accordingly the natural elements of economics are labour, raw materials, tools, human needs, and so on. In our present society these take on the historical (i.e. transitional) forms of wage labour, capital, demand, purchasing power, and so on. While in a Socialist economy the natural elements would still be present, they would be divested of their capitalist form and appear in their true shape appertaining to man and nature. Thus man would rid himself of the pseudo-realities which limit his life at present, and would enter a state of freedom in which his relationship to his fellows would no longer be falsified by illusory elements.

13. The role of classes.

Marx's theory of the class war is usually misrepresented as contending that the economic interest of classes is the ultimate driving force in history, and that, accordingly, the explanation of historical progress must be found in the sectional interests of economic classes. Obviously such a theory would leave that unexplained which is mainly in need of explanation, i.e. why in some cases some, in other cases another, class succeeds in taking the lead in social transformation. Unless the theory provides us with an

answer to this question, there is nothing to connect class interest with progress. In fact the Marxist theory asserts that the interests of society as a whole are the decisive factors in history; that these interests coincide with the best use of the means of production; that, therefore, that class is destined to lead society which can safeguard the best method of production; that in case of a change in the methods of production a new class may be fitted to take the lead if a change in the system of production is also in its economic interests; the interests of this class will then represent the direction in which society as a whole must be moving if economic progress is not to be artificially checked.

In other words, not class, but the interest of society as a whole, is the ultimate agent in social history; class is effective only if and when it represents the spearhead of evolution. It was the historical mission of the middle classes to introduce the capitalist method of production under which the productive forces of mankind and the standard of individual freedom and liberty were raised far beyond the feudal level, though the economic organisation of society which was involved in this transformation resulted in an almost intolerable deterioration in community life. It is the historical mission of the industrial working classes to lead society on to another transformation. The means of production which forced capitalism on mankind are calling for a socialist organisation of economic life today. The interests of the working class single them out as the group which alone can perform this mission. For of all classes in society, their interests alone would not suffer by such a change. When the time comes for the inevitable change, the other classes in society will look towards them for a lead. The communal ownership of the means of production will usher in a classless society. Not on account of the force of its interests or the strength of its organisation, but on account of the need of mankind as a whole must and will the working classes fulfil their historical mission, and it is on account of this need that others will support them to assure their ultimate victory.

14. No perfect society.

In this as in other cases, Marxist Socialism silently assumes that society can be perfect. Such an assumption is foreign to the Christian. State and Society are by their very nature imperfect. Community transcends society. Not because man is evil, but because society is necessarily imperfect, no society can be the realisation of community. Power and value are inherent in society; political and economic coercion belong to any and every form of human co-operation. It is part of the ineluctable alternative of human existence that we can choose only between different kinds of power,

and different uses to which to put it, but we cannot choose not to originate power or not to influence its use once it has been created. Public opinion, for example, is power yet nobody can exclude himself from participating in it. Whatever one's views may be, there is always a possibility that some one will agree with them. By doing so he will refer to us as a factor in public opinion. Thus, whether we wish it or not, we shall have been originating power. The same necessity holds good in the sphere of value. Whatever our needs, we cannot help valuing some goods more than others. By doing so we inevitably depreciate those aspects of life that are dependent on the value of those goods or services. Yet we can only choose between valuing different kinds of things or, eventually, going without them; we cannot choose to refrain from a decision even though it be negative. The ideal society is that which makes fully responsible human existence conceivable by throwing the responsibility of our choice on ourselves and, where no choice is possible, by allowing us to shoulder consciously the inevitable burden of our responsibility for sourcing and interfering with the lives of our fellows.

The measure of true freedom is the measure in which we are free to choose where choice is possible. Where and when it is not, to take our share in the common evil. There is no contracting out of society. But where the limits of the socially possible are reached, community unfolds to us its transcending reality. It is to this realm of community beyond society that man yearns to travel.

But personality only begins where recognised debts are discharged. Under capitalism it is impossible to do this; neither the measure nor the fashion of our indebtedness to others can be seen or understood. Under Socialism, the increasing transparency of society allows us to pay our way. By doing so we pass beyond society; we reach the sphere of the personal. The independent individual of liberal capitalism is independent only because he is unconscious of his dependence; yet he is unconscious of it only for the lack of moral sensibility which allows him to disregard the social effects of his individual actions and omissions. He who wishes to be truly independent must first shoulder the burden of dependence in order to build a society in which it is possible to be really and truly independent. Such independence is not to be achieved by not knowing, or disregarding, our indebtedness to others; it can be achieved only by liberating ourselves from social bondage by paying off our debts. He also is misguided, who falsely believes that he can realise perfection by meeting with his fellows in love and fellowship. In doing so he is hiding from the call of true community which is beyond the boundaries of our present society. So-called community for community's sake is a poisonous beverage that makes us dream of the things it prevents us from achieving. Community for universal community's sake is the only fellowship today that is not a denial of fellowship. Both the temptation of the perfect society (in the future) and of the perfect community (in the present) must be resisted for universal community's sake.

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NOTES OF CHRISTIAN LEFT TRAINING WEEKEND

Community & Society.

11. Karl Polanyi. The Christian Criticism of our Social Order.

1. How do we focus our discussion on subjects related to society - e.g. politics, economics?

A. Politics, economics are essentially religious subjects because religion is about the personal field and these subjects are only different aspects of the relationship of human persons. (from "The Christian Task";- "There are no problems of ~~human life~~ human life that are not religious problems, that are not problems of the relationship of persons. The particular problems of our political and economic life are also in every case problems of the relationships of persons to one another. If, therefore, an attempt is made to solve economic or political problems without treating them as religious problems they cannot be solved.")

This does not mean that political or economic problems are merely religious problems, or that religion is merely a problem of the right politics and economics; but it does mean that at times the problems of society may be insoluble unless we put the religious consideration first. (The relevance of God to bread and butter).

B. Religion on the other hand cannot be detached from our life in society, from politics, economics etc. ("Religion, we believe, is our attitude to ~~society~~ reality as a whole, and therefore to every aspect of the whole, including bread and butter.") (The relevance of bread and butter to God).

11. Why can the Marxian analysis of society be accepted by the Christian?

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been created. Public opinion is power, whatever my views may be there is always a possibility that some one will approve of them. By doing so he will refer to me as a factor in public opinion. Thus, whether I wish for it or not, I shall have been originating power. The same necessity holds good in the sphere of value. Whatever our needs, we cannot help valuing some goods more than others. By doing so we inevitably depreciate those aspects of individual lives that are dependent on the value of these goods or services. Yet we can only choose between valuing different kinds of things differently or, eventually, going without them altogether; we cannot choose to refrain from a decision even though it be negative. The ideal society is that which, by throwing the responsibility of our choice on ourselves and, where no choice is possible, by allowing us to shoulder the finally inevitable burden of our responsibility for coercing and interfering with the lives of our fellows, alone makes fully responsible human existence conceivable.

The measure of true freedom is the measure in which we are free to ~~make~~ choose where choice is possible. Where and when it is not to take our share in the common will. There is no contracting out of society. But where the limits of the socially possible are reached community unfolds to us its transcending reality. It is to this realm of causality beyond society that man yearns to travel.

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There is a relationship between the owner of a will and the human beings operating the will, a relationship which has an objective reality whether the persons are conscious of their relative positions or not.

In Socialist society fulfill its own nature. The actual relationships of the human beings in it are such that their relationships can be "human" i.e. personal.

? In religious terms the Marxist position can be expressed thus: the reality of society lies wherever the technological conditions produce a community of persons. Class society is a denial of community.