

Thursday  
Jan 2 1936

My dear Zoe--

Thank you very much for your long letter which reached me via  
Irene to-day.

Personally, I do not attach too much importance to the  
Policy Conference vote. It would be ~~to~~ unwise to try to force our  
convictions on a reluctant majority, or for that matter,  
minority. I should be surprised, if anybody of us cared to  
attempt that.

The Xtian Left, inside and outside the "Aux", will have to decide  
upon its course in the immediate future. Whether this decision  
will initiate a forward move or not, remains to be seen.

In either case the Xtian Left inside the Aux will be able to relate  
its attitude responsibly to its own position.

I do not think that it ~~then~~ still must ~~prove~~ too difficult to  
carry on inside the Aux, fruitfully.

.....

I just had your note from Annandale ~~MEM~~ on Russian education.,.,.,  
(No further mention of the subject is made in this letter).

Home to Lawney

Jan. 19. 1936.

Dear Professor Tamm,

The enclosed is the 5th number of our News Sheet, - I am not quite sure whether you have already been sent a copy. I also enclose a copy of a short forulation of our position in one of its aspects which we are circulating to our own group, but which we want to issue more widely in the next News Sheet. I should be grateful for any special criticism or comment if you have any to make.

May I come once more for a short talk with you? I want to let you know something of recent developments, and to ask now for your promised advise about a teaching plan. Perhaps you would be so kind as to ring us up (Hillside 3994) if you feel you can spare the time to do so.

On Saturday Feb. 5th John Macmurray, who is a member of your group is coming to meet a number of us to make a statement about the religious position and task, as he conceives them, of the Christian Left. We should be very happy if you could join us on that afternoon. Please try.

Yours very sincerely,

HL  
Nov. 9th. 1936.

For our files  
Ire  
HL  
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 cooperation 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 & Fascism.
  - iv. The relation of Christianity to Communism.

(e) To facilitate arrangements for common action.

(3.) 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.

1.  
25, PYCOMBE CORNER,  
LONDON, N.12.

November 14, 1936.

Dear Auxiliary Member,

Those of us in whose name this letter goes out to you feel that some more detailed description is necessary of the development which has led us to resign from the General Committee and the Executive Committee of the Movement.

Nine months of thought, discussion and action in the 'Aux' led to the formulation by a group of members, now generally known as the Christian Left group, of the resolutions presented to and passed by the Durham Annual General Meeting. These resolutions had been discussed in their essentials at the May meeting of General Committee to which the Christian Left was invited. The substance of the resolution was there accepted as a basis for discussion, indeed the actual formulation originated, in part, at that meeting.

The resolutions (see September "Student Movement") had two main purposes: 1. to secure official recognition of the Christian Left group within the Movement, and to assure it of reasonable support for its activities within the 'Aux' and outside. 2. To initiate the revision of the "Implications," the "Brief Statement" and the "Grey Book" so that they would make much clearer the position of the 'Aux' in relation to contemporary affairs. The resolutions were not themselves attempts at rewriting these documents. They indicated the way in which the Christian Left felt that the 'Aux' must be ready to define itself if the group were to be able to stay and work, as a group, within the Movement.

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." Our position is the result of the religious conviction that community must be extended to cover all mankind; that the obstruction which makes every forward step in this direction impossible lies in our arrangements for meeting the material needs of men; that the present crisis, with all its threatened international anarchy and war, is due to this obstruction; that we are offered, in this crisis, two alternatives—we may choose a Socialist arrangement, or not. If we do not, we shall have some form of Fascism imposed upon us. We are convinced that Christianity has a role to play, in this moment of choice, which may prove decisive.

This is not a conviction that the role and meaning of Christianity is coincident with a socialist economy, though such a purely political conviction has been constantly attributed to us. It was rather a conviction about the next necessary step that must be taken if the Kingdom of God is to be realised among us. That is to say, the political and economic issues before us are the focus of the religious issue.

The Christian Left therefore, desired to remain within the fellowship of the Auxiliary for this reason—that our fundamental conviction is a religious one. We shared with the rest of the fellowship a belief about the essential nature of human life. But we desire to be sure that the organisation would not be, through lack of clarity, in danger of helping, instead of hindering the growth of Fascism. We did not desire to turn the 'Aux' into a political party or an appendage of one.

It seemed clearly our duty to put before the 'Aux' as a whole, our own position and the nature of the changes in the Movement itself which would make it possible for us to remain loyal members. These changes we embodied in the resolutions presented at Durham. No other resolutions were presented to the meeting. At the Conference, at which about 130 were present, we knew of less than 30 who acknowledged themselves as members of the Christian Left. Many of these had never met as a group before. They met at Durham from time to time for the urgent work of discussing the presentation of material, suggested amendments, etc. This serious effort at clarity and effective presentation has been called "bloc" organisation, or sometimes a "caucus."

Within the limits of the Annual General Meeting, the resolutions were fully and thoroughly discussed and accepted by the meeting as a whole. The fourth resolution, on the constitution, was designed to prepare steps which would make the constitution and habits of the Movement less undemocratic.

The Christian Left group had also taken steps to make sure that any nominations they might make for General Committee should be those most widely acceptable to the whole group. They found that all the names thus submitted, with one exception, had already been nominated by other members of the 'Aux.'

Of the 12 elected members of the new General Committee seven were Christian Left sympathisers. At the first meeting of the new General Committee at Durham four co-options were made—Mrs. Errington, to represent Durham, Hilda Norman (Birmingham), Marjorie Young (London Council nomination), and Eileen Holmes (Scotland). Nancy Daldy was invited to be Vice-Chairman with a seat on the Executive; Dr. Tatlow was also asked to serve on the Executive. Both said they were unable to accept. The four elected members of the Executive—to serve with the officers were Kenneth Muir (York) who was asked to edit the next issue of the magazine; Marjorie Young, Irene Grant (London), and David Beggs (Oxford).

At this meeting Edwin Barker tendered his resignation from the staff because, in his view, the resolution adopted by the Annual General Meeting made impossible the work of the Industrial project for which he was responsible. He agreed to postpone the resignation, after some discussion on the part of the Committee, till the Autumn meeting of General Committee.

The next development, as far as we knew, was the banning of Kenneth Muir's editorial on the Conference. There followed the announcement on September 11th that the whole staff, except Donald Grant, would resign at the October Meeting of General Committee, and the statement that a number of 'Aux' members, including the members of staff, had planned a new and separate movement, and had circulated a letter about it to some members. (This letter, actually the initiation of the new movement, began with an attack on the position reached at Durham, and on the Christian Left. In it signatures and subscriptions were asked for, although the 'Aux' itself was at that time in a serious financial position. By October 3rd £70 and 81 signatures had been received. Many to whom the letter was sent refused to sign it.)

At about the same time the Executive met. It was faced with a financial situation very much more alarming than had seemed the case at Durham. It was decided to draft and send to all members a letter about the state of affairs. The letter was not sent out, since Edwin Barker, secretary to the Committee, declined to dispatch it in view of the notice to quit offices and magazine which had just been received by the 'Aux' from the

S.C.M. (This notice was revised by the S.C.M. after the Christian Left members had left the General Committee on October 4th). Executive members took the view that the S.C.M. action only made the situation still more urgent. The secretary, however, persisted in his refusal. Resignations of Executive members followed. (Later, in the General Committee, the Left members agreed, in spite of this, to co-operate in the liquidation of the overdraft by sending out a finance letter. The letter was to be sent out as a final communication from the whole General Committee, before the resignations took effect, to all the membership. But though the letter was sent out, most Committee members only knew on receiving their copies that it had been signed as from a group of members; several General Committee members' signatures were lacking).

On October 3rd, General Committee met. Edwin Barker tendered his resignation. Hilda Hudson announced that she would reserve her resignation until she saw whether the Committee would actually return to the pre-Durham position. Miss Fairfield had associated herself with the letter initiating a new movement. The letter was read to the Committee and confirmed the fact that to those associated with it only a pre-Durham position was acceptable. It was clear that the officers of the Auxiliary (except Donald Grant) and those supporting them were ready to split the Movement rather than accept the directives endorsed by the Annual General Meeting.

The Christian Left members of the Committee then resigned. Irene Grant, in offering the resignations, said, among other things:

"The position as we find it means that those of us from the Left group on this Committee are in a situation which shows that our hope that the Auxiliary could retain active Christian Left within it has turned out a vain one.

The situation is one in which the prime question, the principal issue, is one of a religious nature.

As I tried to say at Durham, we have to accept the fact that such a conviction places us in a paradoxical, and sometime tragic position. We are convinced; we desire that others should also be convinced. But we are unable, in the nature of the case, to accept a situation in which it would appear as though we wish to coerce the convictions of others. Such coercion is impossible and unacceptable.

The development of affairs since Durham has shown us that we may well be called upon, in the Auxiliary, to bear responsibility—for instance specially in regard to the Durham resolutions—which we should in fact be unable to carry through.

The remarks on the situation made by Miss Hudson and Mr. Barker in regard to their possible resignations made it clear that from their side only a pre-Durham position was really acceptable.

This being so, we feel as a Left group that we must choose rather to resign from this Committee, making thus another effort to show clearly that a legal position with no inner substance is not what we seek or sought. We should, of course, as a matter of responsibility, try to explain this to the whole membership."

After completing work on the General Committee finance letter, the Christian Left group retired from the Committee. This action was not, and was not intended as a sign of readiness to withdraw from our conviction about what we believe the 'Aux' could and should be. It 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 we should try to make it still more clear.

We remain members of the Auxiliary Movement, with the same convictions as before. We believe, as before, that the questions raised by the Durham discussions are fundamental; that they are not questions of tactics. This we always asserted. Those who disagree with us, and who often assured us that we merely differed from them on tactics, acknowledged by the drastic action they took, and propose to take, that the substance of the Durham resolutions was a question of fundamental and vital importance.

We believe that the General Committee, if it is to act constitutionally, must therefore refer the whole matter back to the membership once more. In a democratic society the will of the membership must be decisive. The General Committee have no mandate to do what, according to the Minutes of the Committee and the November editorial, they propose to do—that is to consider that "the 'Aux' as it now is should be regarded as the new movement envisaged in the letter" sent out to certain members.

However important and opportune such a movement may be—and about this there will probably be great difference of opinion—the 'Aux' is not now that movement. The problem before us is not simply one of "Christian Left convictions or not." The question is whether the changes in the 'Aux' are to be of the nature expressed in the Durham resolutions and passed by the Annual General Meeting, or not; and whether this is to be democratically decided, or not. This is the position Christian Left members, as well as many others, take on this matter.

It has been announced to representatives of the Christian Left, that the 'Aux' Easter Conference will, in practice, be a Conference of the proposed "new movement"; that the Annual General Meeting will be asked to suspend the constitution and rescind Durham resolutions. The issue, therefore, is a double one—it concerns the methods and constitution of the Auxiliary; and the substance of the Durham resolutions.

The Christian Left continues with its work, both within the Movement and outside. The News Sheet will continue to be published as occasion arises. Details of work will be given as far as it is possible in the News Sheet. The questions which came up at Durham are still vital questions, and the 'Aux' is still faced with them, and the decisions they involve; for they are the deep problems of our time.

Your fellow members :

DAVID CASS BEGGS.	KENNETH MUIR.
IRENE GRANT.	LEONARD SCHIFF.
DONALD GRANT.	FANNY STREET.
DOUGLAS JOLLY.	MARJORIE YOUNG.

July 1937

HP

To The Editor,  
The Times,

Dear Sir,

On July 2nd you published a paragraph relating to two memorials presented to the Home Secretary urging him "to consider the desirability of taking such legislative (or other) action as will prevent altogether the exhibition of such posters" as "Communist (sic) posters showing the hammer and sickle emblem superimposed upon a cross."

We presume the posters referred to were those mentioned some time ago in a discussion in the House of Commons. We do not know more than was revealed in that discussion about the posters, nor have we seen them.

The Auxiliary Christians Left, a group to which the signatories to this letter belong, uses an emblem which might be described in the terms of the memorials presented to the Home Secretary. Christian groups in France and Central Europe have used a similar emblem. It shows a large upright cross, on the lower part of which lie a hammer and sickle.

The religious meaning of the emblem is surely not in doubt: it is the conviction that the Christian force in history is today expressed in the socialist working class movement, represented - in this symbol - by hammer and sickle. That the Christian stream in history could flow through such a channel may not be recognised by those who signed the memorials to which your report referred. It is, nevertheless, not the first time in history that the weak things of the world have been chosen to confound the mighty.

The emblem expresses the consciousness of the religious nature of the crisis of our time. No Christian can any longer escape the problem of establishing economic justice. In Russia, in spite of error and tribulation, this next step is today being taken.

For Christians, therefore, the question raised by the memorials is a vital one. An effort to suppress, "by legislative ( or other ) action" any such expression of religious conviction must be opposed by all serious Christians, whether or not they share all that is involved in the conviction.

Yours etc,

(Signed)	David Cass-Beggs	Kenneth Muir
	Barbara Cass-Beggs	Mary Muir
	Irene Grant	Fanny Street
	Kenneth Ingram	Marjorie Young.

(cut signed by 14)



395 Otley Road,  
Leeds 6.  
May 6, 1938.

Irene dear,

I'm glad you are happy about C.L. affairs.

1. Bulletin I. Agreed that it be published forthwith minus clarity & commitment and + draft basis, ~~if-it~~
2. Early Marx Bulletin. Agreed that it be published as soon as possible after No.1.
3. Draft Statement. ~~Para~~ Para.3. touches rock bottom is ambiguous. May mean "is at last firmly based on reality" or "reaches the depths of despair" or both. And I doubt whether a consciousness can touch rock-bottom; it is very dangerous to use a metaphor in a statement of this kind, as people can interpret it almost as they please.  
~~Para~~ 5. I still hate "inescapable setting", and Mary and I both beg you to change it.  
~~Para~~ 6: Omit "from the certainty....and"  
Last paragraph: I still cannot see its purpose.  
"In proclaiming our message....transformation" is contained in (b) The remainder is contained or implied in the rest of the statement.
4. Agreed about meeting second week-end in June.
5. News Sheet. Agreed about article. We will try and do it, and post it to you for approval as soon as possible.
6. Better not initial the Chronicle of Marx's life, as I merely made a summary of half a dozen chapters of a biography.

This I think answers all your immediate questions. We'll tell Donald anything further. The Rev. Thompson has written again, still disagreeing. But as I told him I didn't expect him to agree, I'm not going on with the argument. He merely repeats himself.

As for Moira, I wish the S.C.L. joy of her.

Love,

Kenneth

*Prophetic: To proclaim the message of the true nature of the present world crisis; by denouncing the apostasy of the churches; by preparing the minds of men for the inevitability of the true form of society, or by showing the certainty of the social order committed to the service of the working class movement in the truth of Socialism*

*Postscript*

May, 1939.

The current issue of Bulletins for Socialists is entitled THE CRY OF THE CHARTISTS: 1839-1939 The previous Bulletin, (Feb. 1939) on RUSSIA IN THE WORLD is still available. The next issue will deal with the question of COERCION AND DEFENCE.

The Bulletins cost 6d a copy, post free, and may be ordered from

Mary Muir,  
395, Otley Road,  
LEEDS 6.

They appear at irregular intervals; there will probably be five in a year, and they will deal with questions of fundamental importance to socialists in these critical days. The effort to publish these bulletins can only be maintained if enough subscribers are found to cover the costs of production. If you have not already done so will you please inform Mary Muir whether you wish to receive the bulletin. If you can suggest the names of other possible subscribers please send them in with your own order, for which the attached form may be used.

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Kindly send me the next issues of BULLETINS FOR SOCIALISTS,  
for which I enclose in payment.

NAME (Block letters) \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

THE CHRISTIAN LEFT

172 Russell Court,  
W.C. 1.

June 6, 1939

Dear Comrade,

The summer General Meeting will be held on Saturday and Sunday June 17th and 18th at Hill Farm Cottage, Marlow Bottom, Bucks.

Programme

Saturday 4-5 Tea

6-8 Kenneth Ingram will speak on "The International Situation--A Peace Commonwealth".

8.30 Supper

N.B. If possible, members should read Kenneth Ingram's recently published book "Defeat of War", Allen & Unwin, 3/6d, before the meeting.

Sunday Alfred Cannon will open a discussion on "What Shall I do if and when...?"

Times of meetings and meals to be determined by the group.

If necessary there will be a short business session but apart from this the weekend is open to members and friends. Members are urged to invite any who wish to know more about the Christian Left.

This meeting is being held at a cottage which we have rented as an experiment for weekend meetings such as this. This will be a housewarming so please come if you possibly can.

We are only providing a minimum of furniture and you are asked to bring, if at all possible, the following equipment:

Lilo or camp bed	2 plates, 1 cup
Blankets and bedding	Knife, fork and spoon.

Gifts in the form of cushions and small stools, rugs etc. will be much appreciated and should be sent to me at the Cottage by post.

If you wish to come but cannot provide the equipment listed above, please let us know as much as possible in advance. In order to provide food we must know the number attending by Tuesday, June 13th. Please write before that date to Barbara Cass-Beggs, 15 Museum Road, Oxford. It is intended to levy a charge of 1/- per head toward the rent and to charge food at cost.

The cottage, 2 miles from Marlow and 3 miles from High Wycombe, is however some 300 feet above sea-level and is in most attractive country. It is very easily approached, as follows:

First, to High Wycombe by any of the following routes:-

1. G.W.R. from Paddington or Birmingham
2. L.N.E.R. from Marylebone  
Frequent service on both lines in under an hour. Day return 3/7, week-end return 5/0.
3. L.P.T.B. Green Line--Coach Route Q--from Upper Regent Street, 15 minutes before each hour; return fare 3/9.
4. United Counties Coach route, leaving Victoria Coach Station on Saturdays at 12:45, 2:30, 4:45, 6:30 P.M., or on Sundays at 9:45, 10:50 A.M.  
Day return fare 3/9; week-end return 4/3, approximate time  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hour.

Then, from High Wycombe proceed by Marlow bus (starts from "The Fountain" at the even half-hours) to Marlow Bottom (20 minutes run, fare 9d return). From the bus stop turn right off main road in direction of Marlow Bottom (sign posted), then first right again and straight on uphill, Hill Farm being marked on the Gate on left hand side; total walk  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile.

Janet Jordan,

Hon. Secretary.

395 Otley Road,  
Leeds 6.

Chr<sup>n</sup> Left

Kari

June 10. 1939.

To the Editor,  
Radical Religion,

Dear Sir,

Here is a letter a  
small group of us in  
Chr<sup>n</sup> Left wrote on our  
own account, (before later  
great disillusion re. Russia -  
we can stand on one leg)

In your fall issue, 1938, there was an editorial paragraph under the heading "Christian Socialism" which dealt with the Christian Left Movement in England. We were the authors of the draft statement which you quoted. At the end of this letter we refer to our present relationship to this movement. We should like, with your permission, to offer some comments on your remarks.

You began with the premise: "In all Christian Socialist movements the primary question is whether Marxist analyses of the problems of life and society are regarded as primary, and Christian convictions are thought of as valuable supports for the socialist task, or whether Christian truth is regarded as primary and the socialist transformation of society is thought of as a necessary social task in the light of the Christian understanding of life."

Having set out this clear cut alternative the article proceeded to class the Christian Left among movements which regard the Marxist analysis of life and society as primary and stated that "this kind of

2.

We do not refer to the article by David Paton in the same issue of RADICAL RELIGION on "the Christian Socialist Movement in England". In this article he unwisely reserves his special commendation for the Industrial Project of the Christian Auxiliary Movement - a project which has been

Christian Socialism is confusing".

This alternative is, however, fallacious: the refusal to recognize it as valid /belongs to the essence of the Christian Left position. A position which is primarily Marxist and secondarily Christian appears to us as unreal as its converse would be, that is a position/primarily Christian and secondarily Marxist. We do not claim to be primarily either. Our Draft Basis is simply an attempt to define the situation of man in a complex industrial society: can he gain certainty of the significance of his existence?

In historical terms the human situation is this. Man's consciousness of self was probably born out of the knowledge of death. Consciousness as we know it was constituted by the discovery of man's true nature which is freedom. This truth came to us through Jesus, and ever since it has been the active force in history. In our epoch man's consciousness is undergoing a change: in a complex industrial society ~~man~~ <sup>he</sup> cannot avoid coercing others and thus losing his own freedom. This recognition is as final as the knowledge of death. It defines the human situation and its urgency; for how can man live in the face of such knowledge? Our answer is that he must work for socialism. In so doing he gains the certainty of the significance of his life.

#### The knowledge of society.

In society man is faced with alternatives from which he cannot escape. Wherever he turns and whatever he decides, he finds himself living on other people's lives.

Power and economic value are inherent in society. Their form may change but their human essence remains the same,--coercion. Yet we cannot abstain from taking part in the creation of either. We cannot avoid helping in the creation of power, even though it be only the power of public opinion. Similarly, we cannot contract out of the process of consumption which is at

the root of economic value. Any conviction we may entertain may make us responsible for the coercion practised in the name of a public opinion which appeals to convictions such as ours. Yet we cannot entirely refrain from holding convictions. Even the spurious conviction that we should avoid having convictions altogether might still make us responsible for the suffering caused to others by that state of anarchy, which would, in a complex society, arise from the absence of government arising from such a conviction. The same lack of freedom exists, in a complex society, in the economic sphere. Our relation to the material goods capable of meeting our needs is necessarily such that we unwittingly make others serve those needs by inducing them to supply us with the goods we demand. Producing goods is part of the lives of human beings. By expressing our needs we may cripple and hamper their lives; by suppressing them we may, for all we know, nullify the lives which are fulfilled in the satisfying of those needs. Society faces us with the choice of one form of power or ~~still~~ another, one form of economic value or another. Wherever we turn, whatever we may decide, whether we choose to act or to refrain from acting, we cannot prevent the coercive effects of our own lives.

This recognition means the loss of freedom. It is final and irremediable. By suffering this loss we understand the true position. Such a recognition must affect us personally. We now understand that the freedom we lived by was an illusion and ~~we~~ ~~was~~ our whole existence unreal. The loss we suffer is not, however, merely our own, it is man's loss. It is not our personal situation that we realise, but our situation as human beings. Such a recognition is death to the inner life of the soul.

#### Freedom, beyond society.

But he who loses his freedom in this way has not really lost it. For the freedom which he lost he never really possessed. It was an imaginary freedom

and his loss is therefore imaginary. He has lost an existence which was never real. The life into which he passes through this loss is real. It is infinitely poorer but it is grounded on reality. He has grown mature; the freedom he now gains is valid. For it opens up to him the certainty of achieving freedom by fulfilling in actual fact the responsibilities for the social effects of his actions whether the choosing was inevitable or not. Such a fulfilment implies that we have accepted the loss of freedom involved in the inevitable alternatives of social existence. To accept responsibility means to judge one's existence by the standards implied in that acceptance.

To realise freedom, therefore, we must overcome society in actual reality. Society must be such as to allow us to fulfil our responsibilities. The less coercion there is, the more our responsibilities are fixed for the application of it, the nearer we are to freedom. Democracy makes for freedom because it minimises economic value by lessening need. Under the communal ownership of the means of production the coercion of one human being by another by means of irresponsible ownership ceases. Human relationships are as direct and immediate as they can be in a complex society. Socialism removes the self-alienation which is inseparable from a market economy. It is the next step towards a condition of affairs under which human relationships are as distinctly human as the elaborate means of production allow and individuals are enabled to fulfil their responsibilities for the coercive effects of their actions - which is the form freedom takes in society.

Socialism is therefore not the goal of human existence, but rather the next condition of it. Freedom cannot be realised in society, but only beyond it. We must change society in order to be free of it. As long as we have not discharged our material debts to one another, we have nothing we can strictly call our own. Under these conditions we can imagine ourselves free



only by disregarding our obligations to others. Socialism will allow us to withdraw from society and remain free.

Acting in the real world.

as far as is humanly possible

We do not deny that the urgency of the human situation may actuate both the socialist and the fascist in trying to solve the problem of the isolation of man in a complex industrial society. But the fascist is overcoming society and establishing a spurious community at the price of denying the law of freedom, while the socialist is facing the same task of overcoming society in accepting that law. The meaning of their endeavours is diametrically opposed; between them there is battle to the death.

Our present civilisation may well have to give way to another; not for the first time in history will the unfolding of man's nature in history have destroyed a civilisation and ushered in a new one. The establishment of Socialism in Russia is the beginning of a new epoch. The price of this achievement in terms of human suffering does not vitiate this act of emancipation. To stand for socialism while refusing to be responsible for the inevitable sacrifices involved would imply an uncritical belief in the harmonious nature of things. The knowledge of the inevitability of society makes us proof as much against such an illusory belief as against idolatry of even a perfect society. Yet the convictions here expressed make those who hold them safe and secure in their socialist activity. For in working for socialism they possess the certainty of the significance of their existence, knowing that they are acting in the light of that truth which is the actual driving force in history.

X  
See  
the  
page  
note

This letter is written on behalf of the group which published the draft statement you quoted. In this matter the position is not quite simple.

X  
It may be worth while to point out that the omission of a line in your quotation the statement was rendered meaningless. The sentence should read:

The movement called THE CHRISTIAN LEFT has no responsibility whatever for the group in question, nor has Professor John Macmurray, though as left wing Christians in this country we should not disclaim our debt to him, to whom we owe, in particular, an understanding of the fundamental nature of the concept of the personal. As to the group for whom we speak it is probably unnecessary to say more, except that we were originally members of the Christian left. The foregoing statement is the expression of our underlying convictions as active socialists, whether this be regarded as Christian or not.

SOCIALIST BULLETIN GROUP  
Sec. Mary Muir.

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x

(Contd.)

"Our sole concern is for the future of the working-class movement, the chief instrument of the transformation."

THE CHRISTIAN LEFT

172, Russell Court,  
Woburn Place,  
London, W.C.1.

July 1939.

Dear Comrade,

I am sending you a copy of pamphlet No. 4,  
"Can the Christian Stay Out of Politics?" (price 2d).

Will you please help distribution by buying  
as many copies as possible and passing them on to in-  
terested people.

Booksellers can be supplied with pamphlets  
on a Sale-or-Return basis at the usual trade discount.

Money and orders for further copies of  
pamphlets should be sent to me.

Yours sincerely,

J.M. Jordan,

Hon. Secretary.

THE CHRISTIAN LEFT.

172 Russell Court,  
London.W.C.1.

Dear Comrade,

The next Christian Left "Open" Week-End will take place on Sat. & Sun. July 15-16, 1939, at Hill Farm Cottage, Marlow Bottom, Bucks.

This will be an open week-end in the sense that not only members but friends and anyone interested are invited.

Donald Grant will deal, in the course of two talks, with the following subjects and questions:

"Will Japan conquer China and dominate the Pacific?"

"Will Japan's 'New Order' exclude western nations?"

"The Role of America - The Future of China".

The time-table will be as follows:-

Saturday: 4.00 Tea.  
5.00 Talk and Discussion.  
7.30 Supper

Sunday: 10.30 Talk and Discussion.  
1.00 Lunch.

All who intend coming should notify A.Cannon, 73 Trinity Court, Grays Inn Rd, London, W.C.1., not later than Monday July 10th.

Equipment: Unless you have already deposited them at the cottage, bring with you the following:-plate, knife, fork, spoon, cup; and any sleeping equipment you need (Li-lo, blankets etc); you may camp if you wish, and if you bring your own tent.

If you are quite unable to bring <sup>one or more</sup> any of the above necessary items, inform A.Cannon when you notify him you are coming, and we will endeavour to provide for you, though we cannot guarantee to do so.

Access: to High Wycombe via:- i) LNER from Marylebone,  
ii) GWR from Paddington or Birmingham,  
iii) Green Line bus from Oxford Circus,  
iv) United Counties bus from Victoria;

then from High Wycombe by "Thames Valley" bus labelled Marlow from "The Fountain" each half-hour, alighting at "The Three Horseshoes", where you cross the road and a style and follow the footpath which through corn field and high hedges in ten minutes to Hill Farm Cottage winds ( sorry! apologies to Baedeker).

Cost: The bare cost of meals, plus 1/3 towards rent, light and heating etc..

Yours Sincerely, J.M.JORDAN.

## CHRISTIAN LEFT CAMP

Sandy Balls, Fordingbridge, Hants.

July 29th--August 5th, 1939

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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, providing excellent walks, and while the site itself is high up among bracken and pine trees, it is close to the river Avon with perfect river bathing.

The week is planned as a camp--a holiday together--and not as a conference. It is for those who are members of or interested in the Christian Left to get to know each other better by living and working together and by discussing difficulties and problems in twos and threes rather than in large groups, although of course, larger organised discussions may be held if the camp so desires.

The cost should not exceed 30/- per head, exclusive of fares, and may be less if the number taking part is reasonably large. The usual pool scheme will be operated in which the total cost of the whole camp including all travelling expenses will be determined and divided by the number present, giving the average total cost per head. With this figure in mind members of the camp will be asked to give their own contribution above or below the average according to their means and to pay into the pool this sum less what they have already spent in travelling expenses.

There should be no need to remind those who know the Christian Left that children are accepted as part of the community and special arrangements are made for them wherever possible. They are however not included when estimating the average cost--no payment being expected for them.

Those who can do so are asked to provide as much of their own equipment as possible. Bell tents sleeping four or five, groundsheets, straw-filled palliasses and two blankets per head will be the normal equipment provided

for those who do not possess their own. Any who wish to take part in the life of the camp but do not wish to sleep under canvas would probably be able to rent wooden camping huts (furnished) in the vicinity, for which application should be made direct to the warden of the Sandy Balls estate (address above), informing the secretary at the same time.

Please register by completing the enclosed form and questionnaire re equipment and post it not later than May 29th to Miss Janet Jordan,  
172 Russell Court,  
London W.C.1.

A letter with all further details will be sent to those who register, about three weeks before the camp.

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REGISTRATION

Name.....

Present Address.....

Address for July.....

Will bring the following equipment:

Tent (state whether you propose to share it with anybody else).....

Complete bedding

Groundsheet

Lilo or similar air bed

Blankets (state number)

Strike out what does not apply.

Travelling

If you are travelling by car and can offer a seat to any one coming in a similar direction please state number of places available and approximate route.....

Wilt. Tribune.

Nov 25. 39

Sir,

This week's and last week's articles by VIGILANS seem to me among the clearest and most important published by the TRIBUNE since the outbreak of war.

It is true that this war is, in its present form and aims, "Chamberlain's war". It is our job, as socialists, to make it ours. Only then can we safeguard ourselves against being used as a tool of intervention in Germany once the internal revolution in that country starts.

But Vigilans has omitted to note what is, surely, the most important fact for socialists in the whole situation. We feel deeply, almost instinctively, that we must stand by the USSR, the first socialist country in the world. Equally clear is it that, as socialists, we cannot stand by what her rulers are saying. What they are doing, may be, as Vigilans shows, necessary, inevitable, justified. But its value for socialism is cancelled in the moment when what is said betrays what is done. Even though ~~we~~ we might regard the pronouncements of the Russian government and its justifications for policy as merely regrettable, we must regard those of the Communist International as a tragic mistake. If we accepted that they would make a war for democracy and socialism impossible, even a crime. They constitute in fact, in their mention of Germany along with the other imperialist powers, simply an alibi; for they work out as an argument in support of Germany's immediate foreign policy, and a full attack on Britain and France. By denying the ~~very~~ basis of an internationalist socialist faith Soviet Russia's leaders destroy the inner security of socialism, and finally its outer security. Our very fears that we may find ourselves fighting with a Europe suddenly turned against the USSR show that that country is today less, not more secure, than she was in spite of extensions of territory and influence. It is left now to us with all our handicaps and weaknesses to rescue ourselves, socialism and Russia from the dangers precipitated by the ideological blackout with which her rulers have accompanied their actions. We have not only to insist on this war being fought till "Hitlerism" goes, but until we are secure against being compelled to prevent that revolution which will end Fascism in Germany and make it impossible here.

The present leaders of this country do not mean to prosecute the war as far as that. The people of this country therefore will have to demand other leaders and those changes within our own land ~~and~~ as will make such a prosecution of the war possible. The changes will be great ones, leading down to the roots of our social and economic existence; and they will be accompanied by the conviction that the life of the Russian people ~~are~~ set set in ~~the~~ direction of that equality and freedom which it is the task of socialist planning to make possible.

And we should

not forget the fact that the present leaders of this country do not mean to prosecute the war as far as that.



It is better to face, and not to ignore, the fact that the present Russian leaders have ~~xxx~~ pronounced the destruction of the socialist forces of the west and destroyed there the very instruments of revolution. It is for us, in the action now demanded of us, to build them up anew and range them alongside the life of the socialist Russian people.

CLG/10/1

11, Marlborough Court,  
Harrow,  
Middx.

May 20. 1940.

To the Editor of the News Chronicle,  
Sir,

The people of this country are facing a deadly peril.

No government, neither the present one, nor any other that might follow it, can, by itself, rally sufficient forces to meet that danger in time. For the most that any government can do is to use all the available forces to the maximum. It cannot do more than make full use of the manpower and industrial potential of the country. Even if such an effort succeeded in nationalising industry and doubling or trebling the rate at which fully equipped armies are put into the field, this would still be insufficient today.

What is to be done? The situation can be met only by a swift and complete change of outlook of the whole population in two spheres: the social and the military. Nothing short of a complete reversal of attitude to both will be adequate.

The quality, dimensions, and acceleration of the peril which confronts us - total war - turn our traditional English habits of mind into fatal weaknesses. Social distinctions is one; the claim to civilian existence in war-time and a corresponding rigidity of the military mind another. The attack can come today in the most unexpected way. In Roosevelt's words, what we need is a "dynamic and flexible expression of the vital forces of the nation, and the will to meet whatever challenge the future may hold." Immediate military needs thus become the lever of far-reaching social transmutations. Risks are involved; but as long as the military purpose is achieved it is irrelevant to discuss them.

Lines of immediate action are

- a) the ready acceptance, by all sections of the adult population, of military discipline, including training in the use of arms at their place of work. Of those so trained, at least the factory workers must be trusted with arms - a trust which would express the solidarity of the community;
- b) the complete equality of the sexes must be given full recognition in every sphere, the military no less than the industrial. In neither should women be excluded from any duty which they are physically capable of performing;
- c) the immediate liberation of the peoples of India. We could then call upon them for their free co-operation in a common struggle against German racial domination.

(over)

2.

11, Marlborough Court  
Harrow  
Middx.

10/10/50

Such actions would increase the military potential of the country.  
But, infinitely more important, they would, if anything would, release in  
a flood the vital forces of this people.

Yours etc.,

( Sgd. )

Marjorie Young      Jean Wilson  
Joseph B. Reid      Douglas Jolly

Irene Grant

Paul Raymond

Jeannie McConnell

...

...

...

(over)



*in your criticism*  
As to the ~~criticism~~ levelled against us *We* find it ~~rather~~ difficult  
to discover that element of truth ~~in it~~ to which we could hitch ~~our~~  
~~our~~ defence. You call our "conviction about life so essentially  
and uncompromisingly Marxian" that it should better be expressed  
in purely Marxian terms. Very few Marxians whom we can think of  
would regard our position as even as much as compatible with ~~the~~  
the holding of a Marxist ~~philosophy~~  
~~philosophy~~ philosophy. Although we ~~uncertainly~~ do not agree with  
~~them~~ *them* and ~~actually~~ believe that the so-called dialectic  
cal materialism is far from being true to Marx's original philosophy,  
*yet we* we ~~still~~ cannot imagine ~~how~~ these ~~convictions~~ *convictions*  
stand *for*  
should be classified ~~as~~ *as* purely Marxian. Our ~~positive~~ *stand*  
~~in Russia~~ *can hardly* ~~is shown~~ by itself  
~~in Russia~~ / ~~certainly not~~ account for such a judgment in view of  
the undoubtedly Marxian convictions of the Trotskyists whose  
attitude to Russia is diametrically opposed to ours. We have no reason  
~~whatever~~ for regarding Marxism as an opprobrium; ~~still~~  
~~still~~ *yet* we ~~fail~~ *fail* to understand the ~~dogmatic~~  
assertions of your article on this point. *made* in your article that  
The charge ~~of idolising~~  
~~we are idolising~~ society *The charge of idolising*  
~~levelled against us~~ society which is ~~made~~ *made* in your article is so ~~clearly~~ *clearly* contrary  
to her ~~whole~~ *on* position that ~~it must be~~ *almost* ranked as ~~pure~~ *a caricature*  
~~et simple~~ *misunderstanding*. ~~indeed it~~ *indeed it* in our view it is sheer  
utopianism to expect ~~socialism~~ socialism without tears.  
-a remnant of liberal convictions of which ~~all~~ all Christian  
Socialists should make themselves free. The only stricture we can,  
until further proof *accept*, is the

the complaint ~~of the draft~~ that your draft is "too  
obscure to be easily understood". In this ~~respect~~ connection it  
may have been helpful to mention that ~~the draft~~ you were  
and not a final statement, not to omit a ~~line~~  
quoting a Draft ~~statement~~ and ~~also~~ ~~to omit~~ a line of  
of our draft ~~the~~ <sup>also</sup> ~~lack~~ <sup>only</sup> of which made the text ~~appear~~ not obscure but  
~~this draft~~ simply meaningless. " 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. "

By an unfortunate accident, the italicized words were omitted in your  
~~text~~ text. *round*

*If that ~~line~~ <sup>most</sup> of your reading emphatically  
agreed to your change of showing.*



25x4x4 395 Otley Road, Leeds 6.

Irene dear,

I always thought that it was unwise to continue meetings after 11 p.m. It seems to me that nearly all the alterations in the draft were unwise, and Mary agrees with me.

Only rhetorical with conviction! must go!

- 1.) New draft is too rhetorical. A statement should not be a speech.
- 2.) The expansion doesn't make it clearer but less clear.
- 3.) You have changed your minds about mentioning the 2nd death; but I'm sure it is far better not to mention it. — *until the book is published. — I disagree.*
- 4.) "Inescapable alternatives of a complex society" means nothing, without further explanation or further knowledge. *Substance must remain. My "alternatives" within...*
- 5.) "vindicating his freedom". Look up vindicate in the dictionary. No meaning there given fits in with the sense you intend it to mean.
- 6.) Those semi-colons in that sentence should be commas, and there should be an and before the last clause. *Yes.*
- 7.) "The socialist transformation is recognised". By whom? *Yes.*
- 8.) "its modern inescapable setting"; inescapable again, and it was never a good word; impossible to use it twice in a short statement.
- 9.) c. Theoretical: Read: "to contribute, in a period defined by the establishment of a socialist system in the USSR, to the re-grounding of the socialist working class movement." *Yes (This applies to both drafts)*
- 10.) Last paragraph. I think it is better omitted. It adds nothing essential to what has gone before. Anyone holding the views of the document will attack the churches &c

Doubtful, but with "re-assert" might stay.

by the new concurrences

includeable & unshrinkable really in rhetorical. Only "inevitable" remains

Disagree completely except for minor change of phrasing

I think the changes are disastrous!! I can find nothing in the new version which is not stated or implied in the old. If I were person interested in the work of the group, I should be put off by the new draft. I should think that it showed that the group was too emotional, too willing to trust to rhetoric, and too self-confident. I think it will do harm to us in the wider Christian Left, who will find in it what they had accused us of before, and what is more important, it will do us irreparable harm with members of the working-class movement. Do think how awkward you would feel to read this draft to a meeting of communists, or to almost anyone. A Statement should ~~be~~ not be excited, but calm.

What's diff. between conviction self-confidence?

How?

I wouldn't shake a bit

I am sorry, Irene, but read it through in the cold light of dawn, and you will see that it won't do.

makes it look O.K. time!

Love,

Kenneth



11/11

BULLETINS FOR SOCIALISTS

We publish these bulletins as a contribution to the discussion going on within the working class movement to-day.

They are informed by the conviction that the USSR has successfully established a socialist economy for the first time in history - human history has entered upon a new era.

They are an effort to contribute to an effective socialist working class consciousness in this country, and to the accompanying ideological and cultural revolt. The working class, whose mission it is to bring in the socialist society, will be made militant by a recognition of its historical role; it must be aware of the danger of a pacifism which finds itself ranged on the side of the status quo; and it must base its fight against Fascism on an adequate socialist philosophy.

The bulletins are deliberately removed from party political controversies, in order to serve more freely the unity of the working class movement.

Socialist Bulletin Group.

- Previous Issues:
1. Trotskyism (Out of print.) ? (KP)
  2. Notes on the Early Writings of Marx. (KP)
  3. Critique of Pacifism.
  4. Russia in the World. (KP)
  5. The Cry of the Chartists, 1839 - 1939.
  6. Coercion and Defence. (In the Press.)
  7. Working Class Culture in Vienna. (In the Press.)

Orders for the bulletins (6d a copy) may be sent to MARY MUIR, 395, Otley Road, Leeds 6.

[Bulletin on Working Class Culture in Vienna was never produced  
The article #7 was an General W. Notabley, Paul Tree Dred  
never printed]