

A PINCH OF SALT



"You are the salt of the world....." Matthew 5,13

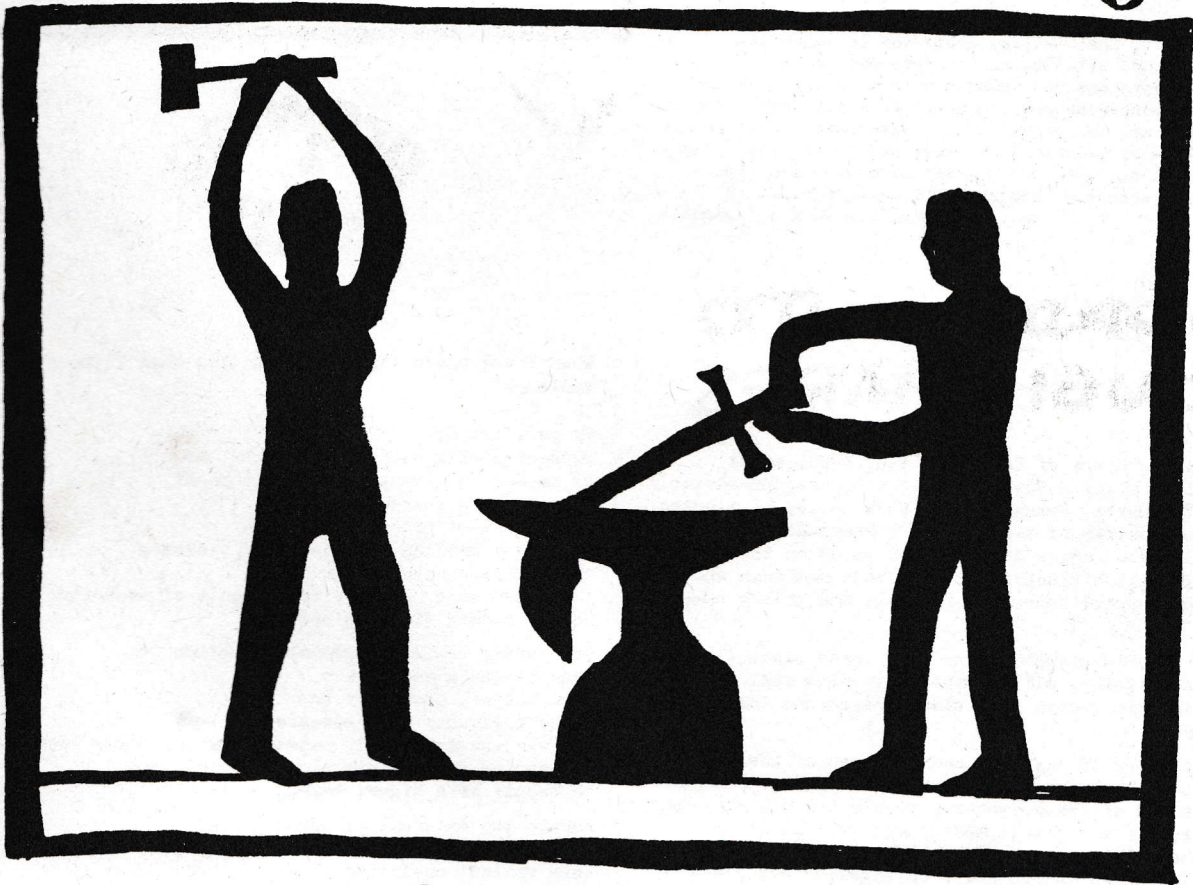
C.I.A. (Christians Interested in Anarchism)

beneath my fig tree, in peace, unafraid

Issue four



they shall beat their swords
into ploughshares
and their spears into pruning-hooks



NATION shall NOT wage war
against NATION
NOR ever again prepare for war..

— Micah 4,3 —

CHRISTIAN ANARCHISM

"Christ, by means of his disciples, would have caught all the world in his net of faith, but the greater fishes broke the net and escaped out of it, and all the rest have slipped through the holes made by the greater fishes, so that the net has remained quite empty. The greater fishes who broke the net are the rulers, emperors, popes, kings, who have not renounced power, and instead of true Christianity have put on what is simply a mask of it."

Isech Helchitsky in the fifteenth century

"Just across the border, then, we can see the beginnings of a rainbow between God and an earth no longer cursed..."

"In a country whose entire Christian tradition has been formed by respect for authority, the idea of an antimilitaristic church sounds like a mockery. Whenever I mention Christian Anarchism here my audience looks at me as if I were from the moon."

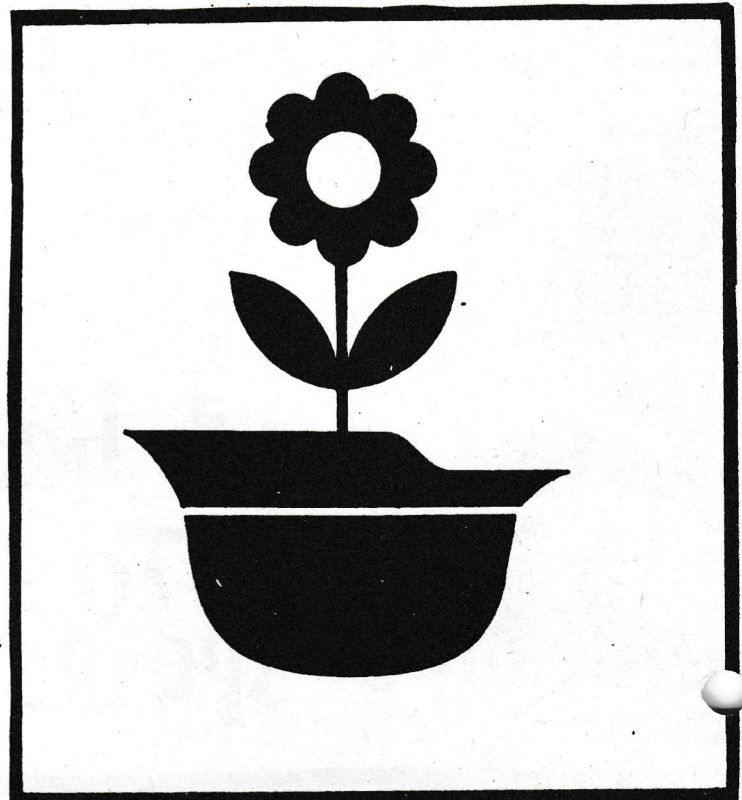
"But taking the Sermon on the Mount seriously is not anywhere near as remote a thing as the moon. 'Happy the gentle', it says, for 'they shall have the earth for their heritage' (Matt. 5,3). A church of peace, a church of the people, a church of the gentle that gathers grassroots power from below to pit against the power from above, a church like that could be a genuine oppositional force in a society that is not gentle at all and that is becoming increasingly militaristic."

Dorothee Sölle, 'Of War and Love'

"Christian Anarchism is based upon the answer of Jesus to the Pharisees when He said that s/he without sin was to cast the first stone; and upon the Sermon on the Mount which advises the return of good for evil and the turning of the other cheek. Therefore when we take any part in government by voting for legislative, judicial and executive officials we make these people our arm by which we cast a stone and deny the Sermon on the Mount."

"The dictionary definition of a Christian is: one who follows Christ; Kind, Kindly, Christ-like. Anarchism is voluntary co-operation for good, with the right of secession. A Christian Anarchist is therefore one who turns the other cheek; overturns the tables of the money-changers, and who does not need a cop to tell her or him how to behave. A Christian Anarchist does not depend upon bullets or ballots to achieve her or his ideal; s/he achieves that ideal daily by the One Person Revolution with which s/he faces a decadent, confused and dying world."

Ammon Hennacy, 'The Book of Ammon'



SWORDS INTO PLOUGHSHARES

In the early morning hours of September 9th, 1980, eight Christian activists entered General Electric's weapons-assembly plant in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania. In a matter of minutes, they hammered the casings of two Mark 12-A warheads - first strike weapons - and poured a bottle of their own blood on the weapons and on nearby classified blueprints. They then sat down and began praying and singing until security officials and police came to arrest them.

Since then many such-inspired actions have taken place (though none, so far, in Britain), all attempting to make real the words "They shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks".

This issue of "A Pinch of Salt" we pass on some of the thoughts of a couple of the people who have taken part in "Plowshares" actions. Quite a few of the Plowshares people are now serving prison sentences, and would welcome support. A list of the various actions and "prisoners" is available from us on request. Else write to: Isaiah Peace Ministry, 66 Edgewood Ave., New Haven, CT 06511, USA.

God bless 'em all

When I was asked for the 572nd time what I thought about violence

My pacifist friends proceeded with extreme violence at an innocent general electric plant located in a peaceloving town named king of prussia when they used an instrument of violence the old-fashioned hammer to render some harmless instruments of security namely atomic missiles useless

To justify their irresponsible action they quoted a man from the eighth century bc whose followers they appeared to be and who was apparently possessed by the crazy idea of beating swords into ploughshares on behalf of a higher being

And in the interest of lower beings people to lazy to work and fringe groups this violent coalition of the very high and the very low of what they call god and what they call the poor represents for us in the neutral middle a genuine threat to security

Dorothee Sölle

The end we seek is sought literally by the same means - disarmament for disarmament. It is something very powerful and truthful that few other disarmament strategies approach. It is similar to the fact that desegregation occurred on the day that Rosa Parks sat at the front of the bus just as much as it did when civil rights laws were enacted.

Frank Panopoulos
(AVOO Plowshare action)



NUTS AND BOLT-CUTTERS

On May 27th, in Reading Magistrates' Court, a Ministry of 'Defence' policeman admitted on oath that nuclear weapons were manufactured at R.O.F. Burghfield. Other police refused to answer the question put to them by Rev. Roger Ruston, a Dominican from Oxford, on trial for criminal damage to Burghfield's perimeter fence. The policeman was later seen leaving the court under escort. We have come a long way from the trial of a year ago, when the very word 'Burghfield' was so secret that it had to be passed to magistrates on a piece of paper!

Roger Ruston was one of a group of six people taking part in an action at Burghfield on Holy Innocent's Day (28th Dec. 1985) as part of the Snowball Campaign. The Yorkshire TV film 'Inside Britain's Bomb' claimed that the parish around Burghfield has leukemia and lymphatic cancer rates ten times higher than the national average in children under five.

As part of their protest the group cut a hole in the fence near the nuclear bomb stores but were not arrested, although they gave themselves up to the police. Later M.O.'D', police served a summons on Roger Ruston alone, charging him with £232 of damage. The summons sheet had originally shown the sum of £464, halved presumably to prevent a Crown Court trial with judge and jury.

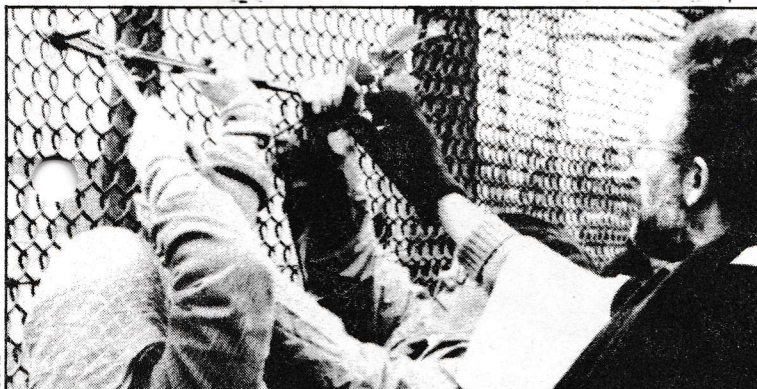
In court Roger Ruston admitted that he had cut the wire with others, but denied that this was criminal damage as defined under the law. He said that he had lawful excuse for his actions because he was attempting to prevent future war crimes...

The defence case received a good hearing and the prosecution seemed worried that there may be an acquittal. In a speech for the Crown it was stated that if Rev. Roger Ruston was acquitted it would encourage people all over the country to cut the wire and expand the Snowball campaign. The prosecution also challenged the view that nuclear war could be imminent. The imminency of genocide, it seems, would justify civil disobedience.

Finally, the magistrates found Roger Ruston guilty and fined him £100 and £150 for compensation and costs. At £5 a month he has, in effect, four years to pay the £250 bill. A fund has been set up which will not only help to pay the fine, but will also replace the boltcutters which were put under a destruction order.

It is strange that the reason for the destruction of the bolt-cutters was to prevent further crimes taking place - although these were unspecified and there was no proof that they were imminent. As Roger Ruston's defence, this argument was not accepted.

(from PLOUGHSHARE, July 1986, the bi-monthly newsletter of Christian CND....22/24 Underwood St., LONDON, N1 7JG)



HIS WORD

Who are the law makers in our society?
Usually the breakers of His word,
Leaving their graffiti
On walls of decency, making mockery
Of morality.
We cannot kill they decree until they give
A uniform to you and me, all in the name
Of liberty.
Chosen for us by the state is our enemy
Killing them we become patriots,
Truth is laid beneath blood soaked field
Of dead men.
And we find we are chained to betrayal
By heaving chains bruising mind and soul
Till they cannot be healed.
So do not delegate your conscience
To states and elites,
Save your Amen for your Saviour as you walk
In peace the streets of his world.

Pat Isiorho

BITS AND PEACES

In a historic decision, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland voted, in May of this year, to reject nuclear weapons:

"As of now this General Assembly declares that no Church can accede to the use of nuclear weapons to defend any cause whatever. They call on Her Majesty's Government to desist from their use and their further development."

The addendum was brought before the Assembly by the Very Rev. Lord Macleod of Fuinary and was passed overwhelmingly; over 1000 commissioners voting in favour and under 100 voting against.

Lord Macleod, now aged 90, has struggled for forty years to bring the Church to this position, much of it faced with seemingly implacable opposition. Lord Macleod was a founder member of CND in Scotland and was the inspiration of the Iona Community in the 1930s. This vote is the culmination of a lifetime witnessing for peace and love in the service of God.

During the Assembly debate, a longstanding opponent of nuclear disarmament - Lieutenant Colonel Warnock - announced that he had changed his mind. In an emotional speech he admitted that when he looked at what the small leakage of radiation at Chernobyl could do, he could not imagine anyone being Lord High Executioner in a nuclear first strike which could not "in the name of Christ" be tolerated.

(from SANITY, July 1986)

ANIMAL RIGHTS

Twenty seven animal rights activists have been sentenced to terms ranging from two years suspended to two and a half years in jail, with most getting 18 months or two years. Forty people in all were tried for conspiracy to burglar and conspiracy to commit criminal damage after a raid at the Unilever laboratories at Colworth House in Sharnbrook, Bedfordshire.

The aim of the raid, on August 19th, 1984, was to obtain documents and photographic evidence of work on animals at Colworth House, but the police arrived before the "raiders" had finished. A large number were arrested, but only 40 were eventually tried. The defence requested, and was granted, a reporting embargo until the end of the trial, as it was felt that evidence in the first trial could adversely influence the juries of the second and third. However, this may have made it harder to mobilise support for what was a nonviolent action. Meanwhile, those convicted in the first two trials had been sitting in jail not knowing how long they would be there, as the sentences were all passed together.

The British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection (BUAV) have been supporting the trial. A spokesperson, Peter Knowles, said that BUAV were "outraged by these sentences. It appears that in this country there are two different forms of justice where animals are concerned. People who attempt to help animals are severely punished, whereas those who harm animals escape lightly." He added that "if judges think that giving out sentences like these will deter people from fighting for something they believe in then they are badly mistaken".

The Judge, David Wild, is known to have been hunting, and in his summing up speech he said, "I reject the alleged sincerity of your motives".

Contact: BUAV, 16a Crane Grove, London N7
(from PEACE NEWS, no.s 2272 and 2273)



George Gissing, 1857-1903 - I can see science destroying all simplicity and gentleness of life. Restoring barbarism under a mask of civilization, darkening men's minds and hardening their hearts.

RECLAIMING THE CITY....

City rich called on to repent

CITY financiers were startled to find about thirty Christian peace activists holding a service of repentance on the steps of London's Stock Exchange yesterday.

By JANEY HULME

Traders in stocks and shares were invited to join in the service and asked to examine their own conscience along with others in the group.

While declining politely to join in, many grey-suited businessmen stopped to hear what was being said and others accepted leaflets.

Curious Stock Exchange staff craned their necks from within the building to read a large placard which said:

90 PER CENT

"90 per cent of the world's resources are consumed by just 20 per cent of the world's people—most of whom live in the rich countries of the Northern hemisphere — like Britain."

During the service Gandhi was quoted, alongside the Bible: "The first principle of non-violent action is that of non-cooperation with everything humiliating."

The Christian peace activists came from various groups such as Christian CND, Pax Christi and Catholic Peace Action,

under yesterday's umbrella of "Reclaim the City Christian Group"

They were protesting about the inhuman economic system which leaves only 10 per cent of the world's resources for poor Southern hemisphere countries.

As a result, 50 million people died last year from hunger-related diseases and two-thirds of the world's population did not have their basic needs met.

REFUSE

The Reclaim the City Christian Group believes that continuing personal action is required by everyone.

People can, it says, refuse to invest money in, work for or buy from companies which perpetuate the process of exploitation and starvation.

Instead, they can work for and buy from alternatives such as co-operatives, the group argues.

A small vigil was maintained after the service and the City of London police appeared to turn a blind eye to the leafletters, making no arrests.

RECLAIM THE CITY. "The Earth is being stripped bare of her resources, and the whole of creation is being threatened by the blasphemy of military escalation. Yet we know in our hearts that there is enough for all." On May 27 Christians, and people of other faiths, joined in an act of worship outside the Stock Exchange in London.

...AND AGAIN

Having reclaimed the City of London for half a day, and having felt really good about it, we've decided to do it again. Contact Roja Hallam throughout: 11a St. Quintin Ave., London W10 tel. 01 960 5773

September 7th, Sunday: "Reclaim the City" planning meeting, 12.30 LU FoR, 40-46 Harleyford Rd., Vauxhall, LONDON SE11

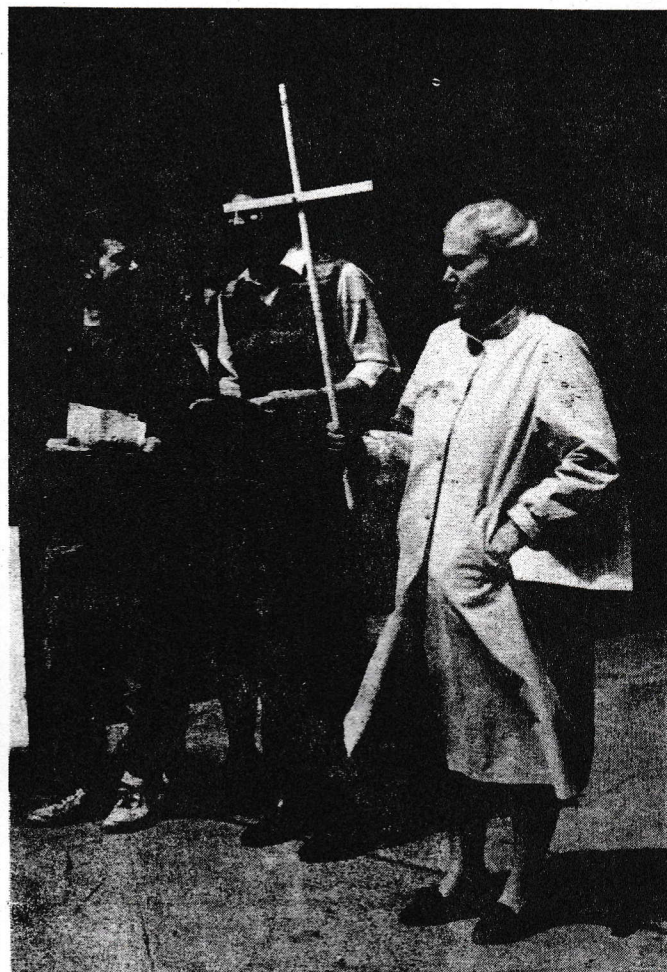
October 20th and 23rd, Monday and Thursday (of ONE WORLD WEEK) vigils in the City of London

October 24th, Friday: "Reclaim the City" (again)

sharing



Christian peace group startles City slickers



Christian peace activists outside London's Stock Exchange yesterday tried to prick the conscience of City financiers over the unequal distribution of the world's wealth with a service of repentance.

Full story: p.5



photo: Keith Ollett

PREVIOUS INCARNATIONS

The Committee of 100's activities in the early sixties led to a rebirth of non-parliamentarian politics and put flesh on the unilateralism that CND had embraced despite its leadership. (*) This led, in time, to an whole new generation of radicals seeking a political philosophy consistent with their practice, and within the ranks of Committee supporters anarchism had a small but marked boom. Indeed it was so obviously seen as the philosophy which corresponded with NVDA (NonViolent Direct Action), that non-anarchists within the Committee were forced to justify their philosophies, which for most anarchists then active was a new state of affairs.

Initially, most of those who came to anarchism, however, only did so to the extent that they took to reading anarchist papers; they were already active within the Committee and usually in other campaigning ways, and only a minority saw a need to join formal anarchist groups. Nevertheless groups did mushroom, and where in 1961 there was only one group in the country, there would have been twenty or thirty in '63; and by '64 the C. of 100 was in decline and the anarchist movement had outgrown it.

For to '61 (for at least ten years) those of us who were Christians in the anarchist movement had to accept being constantly on the defensive; if one wasn't prepared to accept that one had to stay away - as several did - the only alternative was Jim Connell who was deaf, and made a point of never bringing his hearing aid to anarchist meetings. A number of those who came to anarchism from the Committee of 100 were similarly alienated, though a significant minority round Peter Lumsden, in touch with the New York Catholic Worker, managed to carve out their own field of activity.

However in '66, Carl Pinel, infuriated by what he thought was an overly snide attack in Freedom, decided to launch a distinct British Christian Anarchist group. Freedom put him in touch with me, partly because it had learnt to accept that I was incorrigible, partly because it knew that I had contacts with Christian anarchists who had stayed outside the formal anarchist groups.

Carl's initiative immediately aroused secularist attack; some saying that he was trying to take anarchists away from the movement, some thought that he was trying to infiltrate it with Christianity, and at least two people, not previously known as Christian, remembered a kirk upbringing and proclaimed themselves Christian anarchists, later saying that this had been only to check up on us. Nevertheless of roughly 100 names who in some way expressed interest, Carl managed to put together a cohesive group of about thirty, and the Londoners began meeting - initially at Housman's.

There was already in existence an organisation called Christian NonViolent Action (originally the Christian sub-committee of the Committee of 100), and another Christian NVDA-leftist group called CHURCH (when CNVA moved away from the C. of 100, CHURCH had been formed to replace it); so inevitably the three groups operated in the same field and had overlapping membership. Most of our activities were joint ones, though the fact that CHURCH's name caught the eye, meant that though initially it was the smallest of the three groups, it was given credit for the actions of all three. In these circumstances those who were attracted to the Christian Anarchist group were those who wanted a theory of Christian direct action and a theology of anarchism; and group meetings became fairly heavily theoretical...

I moved back to London from Oxford in '67, and a few months later Carl moved away, and so (partly because I had taken over as secretary of the London C. of 100) I became secretary, and so remained until I left London again in '71. By the time I took over, the meetings had moved to St. Paul's Bow Common, whose vicar Fr Gresham Kirby was chair of the group (he had previously chaired the Socialist Christian League, for most of the time providing a solitary anarchist voice within a predominantly Trotskyist League). Briefly in the Winter of 1970/71 there were two London Christian anarchist groups, a group in Kensington having risen more or less spontaneously; but we failed to develop. I was by then clerical for at the Guardian, involved in a union dispute, and unable to devote time elsewhere, and for various reasons no one was able to take over: so that the East London group collapsed when I left London in the following summer, while the Kensington group faded away at the same time.

The early distrust caused us to spend quite a time producing a basic statement (unfortunately I haven't got a copy of the final product which was rather beautiful), and so we were fairly rigidly committed to a more or less syndicalist conception of anarchist revolution, marrying that syndicalism with a strong mixture of Tolstol and Thoreau, as with deep roots in the revolutionary wing of Christian socialism (in Britain going back to Stewart Headlam who had been closely linked with William Morris). (Carl apparently thought that we were too rigid, and blamed me, though he didn't tell me this until after the group had collapsed, and we met by chance.)

Denominationally those who came regularly to meetings were overwhelmingly Catholic, dividing evenly between Anglo-Catholics and Romans; but the largest single grouping on the original mailing list were Quakers; Dave Mumford brought in a fairly strong Methodist contingent (of "Prim" tradition); we were not confined to Christians, if non-Christians wished to attend, nor did we insist that people necessarily must be committed to the label anarchist before they came, provided that they accepted we would try to convert them. We did not however take kindly when someone came and said we ought to give up the name Christian anarchist as it was sectarian, in that it excluded Buddhists, Stalinists and Tories!

Laurens Otter

(*) Laurens has written "Serious Politics begin with the Bomb" which gives some of the overall picture of the peace movement, and the anarchist presence within it, in the late Fifties and early Sixties. Available from Anarchist Arguments, College Farm House, Mill Lane, Wellington, Salop TF1 1PR for 50 pence plus postage.



"Except the seed fall into the ground and die, how shall the harvest follow?"

DON'T START THE REVOLUTION WITHOUT ME

Hello,

I'd like to start by saying how stimulating it has been reading the 'Pinch of Salt' pamphlet. I'm a Christian who has had an extreme interest in anarchy, since as long as I've been a Christian (about six years now). And all of this stuff on digging up the Diggers, and quaking up the quakers is quite refreshing.

However, there is one crucial thing I find impossible to get to grips with, and that's the almost inevitable mark of humanitarianism, scarring the heart of most of the thinking. I'm not talking about the resulting morality systems which seem to be adhered to. Much of the ethics of Winstanley and Tolstoy, for example, I find brilliantly incisive. Rather, the humanitarian premise that the world is made up of Angels with dirty faces. And if only the filth of oppressive state coercion were to be wiped away, we would be released into a liberation so real, 'Pinch of Salt' would be completely redundant.

I know this is an oversimplification of the tone of the pamphlet, but if there's a grain of truth in this assessment, I feel a need to present a very different viewpoint.

This will rub some people up the wrong way, but central to my anarchist thinking is an orthodox Christian concept of the 'Fall' or 'Original Sin'. Being orthodox, I don't mean an interpretation which points to when humanity decided to embrace state structures as the time when the forbidden fruits were initially eaten. No, my interpretation is not nearly as sophisticated. Simply put, we're dirty with dirty faces.

(Shock, horror, who is this reactionary cynic?) The Fall is the catastrophe at the centre of all our lives. It has hideously deformed our relationship with God, and consequently with the creation. We have become alienated in an extreme sense. Original sin is much more than a kind of ill-mannered naughtiness, which none of us can help. It is a deep personal isolation, which perpetuates a wider regime of awful contradictions. These range from those which are overtly political/economical; for example, half of the world is starving, while the other half is worried about dying of overweight; to those which are overtly personal, such as, the more I discover God and hence Truth, the more I realize I am a petty broken reflection of it.

In this context, the State does not cause humanity to sin, humanity's sin causes an embrace of the state, as an inept or inadequate solution to the contradictions and chaos in our lives. This 'solution', at best, can only ever contain the madness (this is one of the reasons the Bible often wants to argue that government, or the state structure, is divinely appointed, or at least 'allowed', Rom.13,1, '...because no authority exists without God's permission.'). However, given that the State can never offer any real solution to our alienation, it often serves to compound the madness, as it's our initial insanity which craves such an inadequate answer. The idea that the State is synonymous with order is relentlessly perpetuated by the establishment. This is done to justify privilege and oppression, but also as an attempt to fulfil a real need that everyone has to be told 'It's alright, don't worry, things are in control'. In fact, we face desperation and fear, and smell the stench of death in every corner of our lives and the world.

Christians everywhere must understand that the State and its inevitable coercion, through government, police, army, class structures etc., whilst might be 'allowed' by God, is essentially the shadow of our fallenness. In other words, short of wiping us out we don't give God alot of options. Because of this relationship between ourselves and the State, it is Satan who is able to command complete authority through our political systems. In Luke, for example, the Devil, with surprising candidness, explains this reality: The kingdoms of this world have been 'given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. So if you worship me, it will be yours.' Jesus' refusal of this offer is crucial, for it sets God against the State in an extraordinarily stark way, which is in turn exemplified by the notion of a Kingdom of Heaven coming upon the earth. God is imminent, is fire, is rebellion, is anarchy. Initially, of course, Lucifer was the petty rebel; now God in Glory is the Supreme Rebel.

This very basic theme echoes throughout the whole of the New Testament, and climaxes with the explosive energy of Revelations; the New Jerusalem is vividly described and promised by God through John's vision.

'Then I saw a New Heaven and a New Earth, for the first Heaven and the first Earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City....and I heard a loud voice from the throne saying "....There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away....benold I am making everything New."' (Rev. 21,1-5)

God is revealed, not as some timid liberal reformist, but as a revolutionary with a devastating promise that the old order will be annihilated or 'passed away', and be replaced by the completely New.

This New Order is a revolutionary challenge to all Christians, a challenge which is anarchistic, in denying the human acquisition of power as the route for change. This theme is constantly expounded throughout Jesus' and the apostolic teaching.

"The meek will inherit the earth." (Mt. 5,5)

"(God) has brought down the rulers of this world and lifted up the humble." (Lk. 1,52)

"(God) has chosen things low and contemptible, mere nothings to overthrow the existing order." (1 Cor. 1,28)

This theme calls us to powerlessness. However, this is not to be confused with limp useless passivity, for God will use us to challenge the entire order of things, politically, socially, and individually.

The problem with my cynicism is that if it is without God, our prospects are no less than horrific. There is no hope, for we have corrupted all. As the old prophet Isaiah said, 'Even our righteousness is like filthy rags.' God is our Liberator by Grace alone, through Jesus, not because we deserve it, but because God loves us. It is at this point that my cynicism stops being reactionary, for we are called to convert our New found Faith into Revolutionary action.

For me, this 'conversion' is made insipid by the humanitarian strain within much of anarchist thought. Liberation is not creating a humanistic life-style, which is then converted into the Grace of God. Liberation is the Grace of God accepted, which is then converted into naked, unashamed revolution. It is only this which will challenge the dark powers of the world, whether it be in our own personal lives, or in the social and political order which surrounds us.

Finally, it is from this position that the notion of Jesus as Saviour becomes a fantastic reality for me. he is not just a good teacher who ought to be followed - or even a divinely inspired individual who reveals God to us. he didn't say "I will show you the way, the truth, and the life.". he said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life".

The physical incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection, whilst on one level can only be interpreted as totally bizarre, is for me the hallmark of Jesus' claims, which would otherwise be the cries of a man with extreme delusions of grandeur.

Christianity and Anarchy do come together, however nervous we feel about their union sometimes. But never allow this nervousness to lead us into timidity. It is right to be cautious, because, so often, either Christianity is 'watered down' to seemingly accomodate for full-blooded anarchism, or any seed of anarchism is quickly choked in the name of 'sound' Christianity.

There's nothing cleverly noble about being a Christian anarchist heretic (In certain circles, I suppose, it might give you a bit of credibility, but so what.). Similarly, there's nothing rational or even sensible about being a sound Christian wishy-washy liberal (God is not some English, middle-class democrat, skilled in the art of compromise).

Jesus said, "Anyone who is not for me is really against me." (Mt. 12,30). Everyday, we must all make this choice.

Steve Smith

(any thoughts on the matter, please write to: Steve Smith, 'Dumelà', Weir House, Weirs Lane, OXFORD, OX1 4UP)



SPEARS INTO PRUNING HOOKS

03313-045
F.C.I.
Pembroke Station
Danbury, CT 06810
U.S.A.
19 June 1986

Dear C.I.A.,

I was delighted to get a copy of your lively newsletter, "A Pinch of Salt." I'm glad to learn there are Christian anarchists on both sides of the Atlantic.

I remember the first time I heard anyone confess to being a Christian anarchist. That was when I heard Dorothy Day speak in 1972. At that time, I thought I was an anarchist, but did not yet realize I was a Christian. Perhaps Dorothy helped me start the journey toward discovering the Gospels.

I don't know how much news of the Plowshares movement reaches you over there in Britain. I'm serving an 8-year prison sentence for one of the Plowshares actions. (On February 19, 1985, I was arrested at a Missouri nuclear missile silo after I struck the silo's concrete lid with a 3-lb. hammer.) The Plowshares movement has not been deterred by recent long sentences; in fact the latest Plowshares group, the Silo Plowshares, who were arrested on Good Friday morning, will be going on trial in Kansas City, Missouri on June 23.

I will send along to you some more information on the Plowshares movement. Keep up the good work.

In peace,

Martin

Martin Holladay

We often hear it said that the problem of nuclear weapons is a political problem. If this is so then we do well to approach the problem's solutions through political lobbying and the pursuit of arms control negotiations. But for me the problem of nuclear weapons tears at my heart, and I cannot say that I even understand what is meant by saying this is a "political problem". To me the problem lies in another realm, at once spiritual and physical.

The spiritual devastation caused by the nuclear arms race is a present fact, not an impending danger.

For over 30 years our government has embraced the policy of deterrence, and has more recently sought to retain the option of a nuclear war-fighting capability. Either justification for our nuclear arsenal - deterrence or war-fighting - assumes that we have already accepted the plan to murder millions: in fact we have expended a huge fraction of our national wealth to implement that plan. That much sought-after military asset, credibility, depends entirely on the fact that the decision to use our nuclear weapons has already been made.

We all walk now in this uninvited yoke, carrying the knowledge that our country is committed to unprecedented murder. The extent to which our acceptance of this moral burden has devastated our spiritual resources cannot be calculated. Silently and inexorably, our commitment to nuclear weaponry eats at our souls.

To what values can we appeal, once we have granted to the Pentagon this doomsday authority? There has settled over our land a mood of wild and empty hopelessness. Countless polls document this despair, especially among the young: we deem the nuclear problem insoluble, nuclear war inevitable and individual citizens powerless. Since our actions apparently have no effect, we make daily choices with indifference, and lives are bereft of moral structure. Our times are suffused with the lassitude that is voiced in the book of Ecclesiastes:

"The hearts of men, moreover, are full of evil,
and there is madness in their hearts while they
live, and afterward they join the dead."

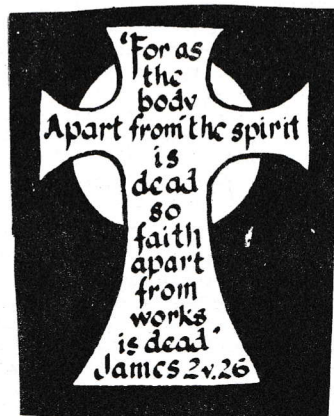
(Ecclesiastes 9,5)

"All things are wearisome, more than one can say."

(Ecclesiastes 1,8)

And it seems that the cause of much of this despair is not simply the high probability that this world will soon be destroyed, but the fact that we have already accepted the moral responsibility for unleashing that destruction.

Now this great spiritual problem of nuclear weapons is distinguished from the more general problem of sin, because these weapons are uniquely and imminently threatening to the survival of all God's creations. The danger is daily made more critical by our refusal to act as if nuclear weapons are concrete.



The trend of modern life is to separate ourselves from any physical involvement with our problems. Most of us do not climb on the roof to patch a leak; most of us do not actually feed the hungry in our neighbourhoods; most of us do not lay out and wash the bodies of our dead. We are increasingly alienated from the world, from this mystery of incarnation.

Yet nuclear weapons have brought us to a crisis not merely because they are sinful, but because they are a physical problem, like a plumbing pipe burst in the kitchen or a fire in the woodshed. In such domestic crises we know enough to run to the valve to stop the water or unbuckle the fire extinguisher. Yet because we cannot possibly understand the extent of the destruction threatened by nuclear weapons, we have responded to the problem mostly with words. Meanwhile the nuclear engineers have been quite busy pouring concrete, shaping steel and refining plutonium. In the Midwest for instance, great holes have been excavated from the farmland, and ingeniously designed weapons of destruction have been there installed.

There are steps we can take to bring our understanding of the nuclear crisis more in line with physical reality. First, we can visit the weapons sites: the submarine shipyards and the buried silos. We can smell the welders' torches, feel the chain-link fences. Paradoxically, seeing the weapons does not increase one's fear; it is the first step to dispelling our hopelessness. The experience grounds us in reality, and can motivate us to action. For me it helps to sit on the concrete, and to feel the handcuffs. As there is still life in us, as we breathe and love, we must choose to say no.

Our bodies have not completely forgotten the responsibilities of the physical world. At the sight of a child broken or bleeding from an accident, every parent rushes to the scene with a wounded heart, no matter the danger. Our love then overcomes our reluctance to accept the tasks a crisis requires.

To extend that love to mean a willingness to rush to the missile sites requires us to overcome the wisdom of the world: the myriad restraints of social position, legal ordinances, and even what passes for common sense. As we ponder our responsibilities, we come face to face with the imposing structure of nuclear logic, the logic which requires and protects the physical existence of doomsday weapons. Block by block this edifice of nuclearism has been constructed: out of the legitimacy of violence, the necessity of war, and the pursuit of technical improvement in every field. Nuclear weapons fit like the very keystone to this deadly arch of logic.

The logic of nuclearism is so final that none of us has fully grasped its implications. Can we be surprised that courts see fit to sentence Plowshares activists to prison for 18 years? For our lives are already forfeit. The Pentagon deems us expendable, and we are already stacked as chaff for the furnace. The moment of our execution now depends only on the requirements of military strategy, and so it is perfectly logical that the Bomb must be protected by measures without limit. As long as we accept this logic, which can no longer offer us even a future, we remain gripped by a suicidal paralysis. And this paralysis is all that is needed to see this logic confirmed.

We find ourselves born into a world in which insanity reigns. Disarmament is so at odds with the accepted truths of this world that we are often overwhelmed by loneliness and doubt. We are adrift, in search of a definition of sanity itself. I know of no cure for this heart ache apart from faith.

Jesus became flesh to walk among us: to heal lepers, to break bread and share the cup, and to die on a cross of wood. His incarnation forces us to accept without question the fact of our own birth - even into a world inexplicably armed with nuclear weapons. We are in fact commanded to accept responsibility for each other's lives: "Love each other as I have loved you."

And so our faith in God is something far different from physical irresponsibility. The Hindus express the responsibility of incarnation as karma - the working out of our sinful inheritance through faithful action. We do not abandon action, but our action is transformed by love and faith into action without grasping, a nonviolent offering up of all of which we are capable. We must relearn what it means to care: to care for the physical world not as a miser cares for treasure, but to care enough for this miraculous creation, and for our sisters and brothers, to believe that our love, which comes from God, has the power to transform the world.

Such care instantly overthrows the logic of war, which holds all lives on earth of no account. We are comforted by the ungraspable promise that an inheritance awaits us, if only we can see beyond our doubts to the rock of faith. Faith in God's promises provides us with the hope which is the essential basis of action - action which breaks through our deadly paralysis. The required action is called disarmament.

We are blessed by our daily work, for it is such business which spares us from madness. We are comforted even by such an unlikely task as hammering on the lid of a missile silo, and by such an unsought consequence as a prison sentence. We do what we can, and rejoice at the blessing of having been granted the opportunity to be here, in this mysterious world that we will never fully fathom.

Martin Holladay
(from PEACEWORK, June 1985)

On February 19, 1985, Martin entered a Minuteman II missile silo of Whiteman Air Force Base. He damaged the lid of the silo with a hammer and chisel, poured blood on the silo and spray-painted "No More Hiroshimas". He left at the site an indictment charging the U.S. government with committing crimes against God and international law by its nuclear war preparations. On May 16 he was sentenced to eight years in prison, five years probation, and \$3243 in fines and restitution. In court the judge attempted to extract from Martin a lifetime pledge to obey all the laws of the U.S..

Martin's was the 12th in a series of nonviolent Plowshares actions. No doubt, he would appreciate letters of support, sent to the address at the top of his letter. A list of other Plowshares "prisoners", and a brief outline of the various actions is available from "A Pinch of Salt".



QUAKER A HAM

That is the title my six co-conspirators gave me as we met to plan our disarmament action - "Quaker with a hammer." The action took place on Thanksgiving Day 1983 at Griffiss Air Force Base, where we put dents and holes in the bomb-bay doors of a B-52 bomber being refitted to carry between 12 and 20 nuclear-tipped cruise missiles. We also poured our blood on it and painted "320 HIROSHIMAS" on the side.

My friends sensed somehow that "Quaker" and "hammer" do not go together and that's the reason for the nickname.

Let me try to explain why, as a Quaker, I felt called to take up such a hammer, and why, in our time, such radical actions are necessary.

Plowshares actions are characterized by the symbolic and the actual beating of swords into plowshares. We believe that disarmament can begin by converting at least one weapon or part of a weapon. We splash these genocidal monstrosities with our own blood to label them, to expose them for what they are.

There have been 17 of these actions since the fall of 1980. In one recent (November 12, 1984) action, two Oblate priests, a mother of 11, and an Ojibwa Indian used a jackhammer to convert part of a Minuteman missile silo and radar attachments near Kansas City.

Of all of the people now in prison, awaiting trial or out on probation, as far as I can tell, I am the only Quaker.

Our actions arise from a loose federation of groups called the Atlantic Life Community, inspired by the work of Dorothy Day and the Berrigans. Many in the Atlantic Life Community work at feeding the poor and homeless through Catholic Worker Houses or similar organizations. We believe in simple living, often living with the poor, and see our peace witness as both attempting to prevent the destruction of the world and bringing the Good News of abundant life closer to the poor.

In addressing the question of Quakers and hammers, we first need to talk about clearness. Ours was an action in which we had elaborately and at length examined and prepared our consciences. I believe in the clearness committee and have used it myself in preparation for past actions of civil disobedience.

In this case, because of the possible prosecution of conspirators by the government (even people who merely knew about the action in advance), the Griffiss Plowshares Seven had to serve as our own clearness committee. In six retreats of two or three days each we tested and prepared ourselves and planned our action.

We held daily Bible study, prayer, and liturgy. We spent several days questioning one another, exactly as a Quaker clearness committee does. We compared our beliefs and practice of nonviolence and found we fully agreed that none of us could or would do anything to endanger or even threaten harm to another human being. Moreover, we agreed that we would never raise our voices in anger but would speak softly and try our best to show only love to security, police, prosecution, judges, and jailers. We put to the test the religious foundations of our beliefs, our personal maturity, and our willingness to bear the consequences of our actions, including its impact on family members.

We are four women and three men, ranging in age from a nursery school teacher of 22 to my bearded 57 years. We are an extremely diverse group in both experience and personality. By the time the retreats were completed we had been welded into a powerful spiritual unity; we had become true conspirators in the original meaning of "breathing together."

Along the way we examined anew all the theoretical and practical arguments for and against taking up hammers. We concluded that all who understand the urgency of the threat of nuclear annihilation, the way such weapons are already killing by their very existence, and the deep psychological and spiritual damage they are causing to our young people are called to undertake the most radical action possible consistent with the nonviolent love of God.

We concluded these genocidal weapons are "non-property." They fall within no definition of property, having no useful or proper function, and our hammering on them would bear witness to the fact that they have no right to exist.

One thing I hadn't realised until I was actually hammering on those things was the mystique I had personally put on those weapons. I had this wild idea that, since they could travel beyond the atmosphere and come back and withstand the temperature now in the world could my hammer do any harm?.....It was important to me to see the dents right there on the warhead.

Molly Rush
(Plowshares Eight)

WITH HAMMER



I think Quakers who are critical are concerned that people will misunderstand our using hammers, that many will think of us as terrorists or violent people. This did not happen to any significant degree. Even the most extreme critics in the Syracuse, New York, area, where our trial was held, saw us more as vandals than as terrorists. We have seen many of those who were willing to listen changed during our trial and subsequently. Those who were not changed were those who would not have listened even if our action had been less radical. Their hearts were already hardened into the military-security mold.

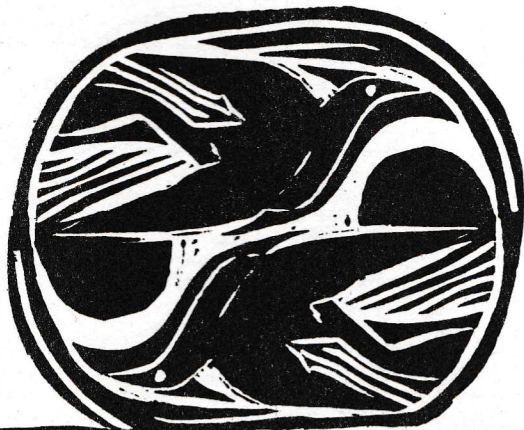
It is important to keep in mind that in all Plowshares actions the amount of damage has been limited in order that such actions be understood as symbolic. There were no guards at Griffiss that morning; everyone knew we could have destroyed seven unguarded airplanes. And we could have gotten away as easily as we came in.

More of a problem to me than hammers was the secrecy involved. Quakers are open and truthful and believe in acting in the Light. But I came to recognise that the Plowshares actions also concern Light. We are determined to carry the Light into the very centre of darkness, the very belly of the beast, in order to expose the evil that is taking place there. So we did climb over a cattle fence and walk across a golf course and into the unlocked, fully lighted, unguarded hanger. Then we waited for over an hour. When no one came, we went and found security to arrest us. We are fully confident that by giving ourselves up to arrest and by conducting ourselves in a soft-spoken and loving way, we more than overcame the initial negative impact of secrecy.

Defendant Clare Grady, in her testimony, referred to the biblical passage (Ezek. 33,6) which says that if the watchman sees the sword coming and fails to sound the trumpet, he is guilty of the blood of the people who perish.

We would not maintain that all must join in Plowshares-type actions. But we do insist that all must wrestle their consciences to a decision now, soon, and sound the trumpet in the loudest way possible consistent with their understanding of divine, nonviolent love.

Vern Rossman
(Friends Journal May 1985)



We would not maintain that all must join in Plowshares-type actions. But we do insist that all must wrestle their consciences to a decision now, soon, and sound the trumpet in the loudest way possible consistent with their understanding of divine, nonviolent love.

learning



Plowshares 8

I want to tell you a little about the immediate days preceding this action; indeed, about the days that have preceded every arrest we have undergone.

We have never taken such actions as these, perilous, crucial, difficult as they are, without the most careful preparation of our hearts, our motivation, our common sense, our sense of one another. We have never admitted to our group any person whom we could not trust to be nonviolent under pressure of crises.

This is simply a rule of our lives; we don't go from the streets to do something like the King of Prussia action. We go from prayer. We go from reflection. We go from worship, always. And since we realized that this action was perhaps the most difficult of all our lives, we spent more times in prayer this time than before.

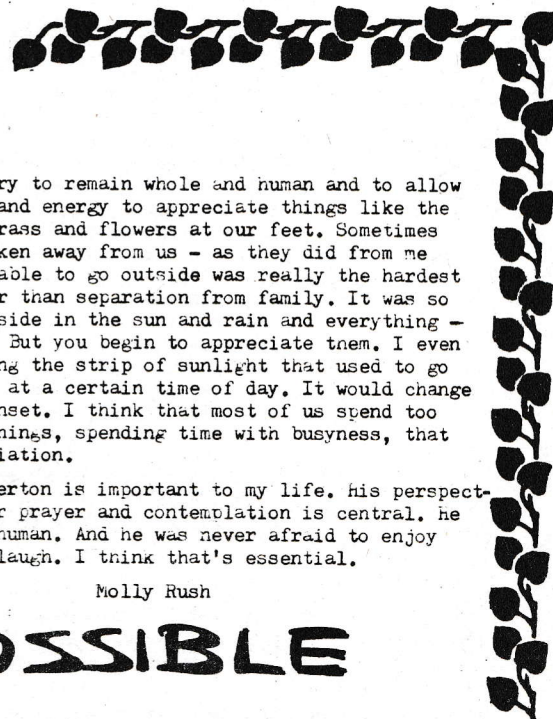
We passed three days together in a country place. We prayed, and read the Bible, and shared our fears, shared our second and third thoughts.

And in time we drew closer. We were able to say, "Yes. We can do this. We can take the consequences. We can undergo whatever is required." All of that.

I talked openly with Jesuit friends and superiors. They respected my conscience and said, "Do what you are called to."

That was the immediate preparation. And what it issued in was a sense that, with great peacefulness, with calm of spirit, even though with a butterfly in our being, we could go ahead. And so we did.

Daniel Berrigan (part of his response to direct examination by Sister Anne Montgomery at the trial of the Plowshares 8)



It's always necessary to remain whole and human and to allow ourselves the time and energy to appreciate things like the sun above us, the grass and flowers at our feet. Sometimes these things get taken away from us - as they did from me in jail. Not being able to go outside was really the hardest thing for me - other than separation from family. It was so hard not to get outside in the sun and rain and everything - just to be shut up. But you begin to appreciate them. I even remember appreciating the strip of sunlight that used to go across my cell wall at a certain time of day. It would change colours with the sunset. I think that most of us spend too much time getting things, spending time with busyness, that we lose that appreciation.

That's why Thomas Merton is important to my life. His perspective for the need for prayer and contemplation is central. He could accept being human. And he was never afraid to enjoy a drink and a good laugh. I think that's essential.

Molly Rush

IMPOSSIBLE

"If I do not love them as they are, it will not be they whom I love, and my love will be unreal."

Simone Weil

"Perhaps we are too much used to saying that one ought to love (thereby giving to understand that, generally speaking, we do not love). We know that there is a duty to love, that people have received a commandment to love each other. But we take it for granted that they hardly ever obey this commandment. And thus we conclude that the world is evil because there is so little love in it, and we blame and castigate those whom we hold responsible for this lack of love.

"Thus a theology or ethics of punishment and retribution takes the place of the vision of love, and love becomes an idealized abstraction. The daily reality of our lives is not under the rule of love, but under the rule of law, of force, and of punishment. We talk of love, but we live by hate: we hate in the name of love. In this situation it becomes necessary to assert once more that to love is not impossible. Love is not something unreal. On the contrary, love is the only reality. Everything that is, is by virtue of love, and if love is not clearly evident in all things, the reason is that we ourselves have made no effort to see love in all things. In a very radical sense, love is the only and unique possibility. And everything that is not love is essentially and basically impossible."

Thomas Merton

Is it Finished?

A black bundle of bones
Suckles a mother's dry breast,
then cries out
"Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?"
I was surprised she spoke Aramaic.

A card is carried with hope
To a smiling desk clerk;
"Sorry, it's been filled"
The man is beaten
Victim of invisible economics,
Passing through the door he cries
"Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?"
I wonder if he studied Aramaic at night school.

A mother of three
But not quite married
Sits by candle light;
Romantic?
No, the "lec's been cut off"
And as her last goes to sleep
Wearily she cries out
"Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?"

A tiny coffin
Plus one man from the Co-op,
Burial care of the D.H.S.S.
Is as bleak as a January morning
I cried out
"Oh, God, where the bloody hell are you?"
Then went in search of a priest
because I had blasphemed

Gordon Banks

I. THE EXPLORER

I'm trying to live really
Although it may not seem like that to you
For I'm not content to live
In some hollowed out niche
While the answers are all outside.
When I feel there's more to life
Am I really selling out
To some fantastic myth?
When the winds blow
And the tides change again
Should I keep on swimming on?
For constantly we are told
That faith isn't modern
While the world fails
Yet I must hold my head up high
To see those mountain peaks
And keep my eyes open
For the sun capped dawn.
My casket of treasure is waiting
But not in some Swiss Bank
And I have to press on
An explorer seeking truth.

Graham Sturges

Dear Anna

Just a note to say how much I liked Finch of Salt. Also how moved I felt by your letter to it. (see APOs 2) There is no reason why people should not love in any way as an act of worship. But on what a shock it is to read the very thought!

I'm reminded of Thomas Kelly: "A Testament of Devotion" who wrote of that blissful feeling (of the mystic)
"One sings to oneself inexpressibly sweet songs and tries to keep one's inner hilarity and exuberance within bounds" - this can be a day-long, week-long, month-long sensation. And how could it be wrong to "worship" in that vein? Indeed the very word "worship" implies such a feeling of joy and wonder, doesn't it? And if God is happy for us to feel this way - then why should we not worship as we make love. (I can't pretend I ever have. Nor would I know how to begin, but that's not God's fault - nor is it any evidence that God would wish me not to.)

Oddly, Joyce Tyler seems to suggest that sex excludes God because it involves total commitment to someone else. But when does total commitment to others rule out God? To be fair to Joyce I think her view is entirely understandable. I'm still wrestling with images and ideas to see how sex and worship might be one. The more I wrestle the more I realise that I'm totally immersed in "dualism" (mind or body, spiritual or selfish, etc)...

...The way we separate, but cannot separate, love, compassion, and desire, - and the way we then clam up about all three.
(Well I do)

Love
Jim

LETTERS

Paisley accuses rivals of joining CIA payroll

Dear Christians Interested in Anarchism (I'm glad that someone is),

As Jesus said "Beware the Church & the State. Total Anarchy Now." Sorry. No, what he actually said was (Mark 8,14-15 Yes it really is there),"Take care and be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and the yeast of Herod."(well, I was close).

This is very good advice; the great enemy of Christian Anarchism has all too frequently been the Christian establishment. Throughout the last 2000 years certain Christians (usually on the heretical fringes of Christianity) have really taken to heart Christ's most wonderful teachings, such as the love commandments and not judging people and forgiveness. This has often prompted the rest of Christendom to get out the thumbscrews and fire-lighters. Christians have a long tradition of killing each other, and it is usually people like you who are the first to go. God may be on your side but the Church almost certainly isn't.

Nowadays, of course, they merely bash you over the head with the Bible or confront you with a list of doctrinal statements that would be unintelligible to all but the worst acid casualties. Joyce Tyler's letter, for example, with its appeal for censorship on your part, its Bible references and its attack on sexuality. You can prove anything by appeal to the Bible; e.g. God hates people, Job 9,22,"When an innocent man dies, God laughs", and in any case the proof text use of the Bible has long been discredited. People who use this inhibiting and authoritarian way are being dishonest, in as much as all use of the Bible is selective (there's so much in it), and so the actual authority lies not in what is selected but in the selection process.

She, like many other people, associates anarchism with a naive belief in the goodness of human nature. This is not necessarily the case. Indeed, if people are not naturally good then it is very foolish to allow a small minority of people the vast amount of power that the so-called 'world leaders' enjoy. If people are not naturally good it makes much more sense to limit their power and put them into an environment in which they will be held responsible for their actions. Governments do not, and cannot do this, because they work by concentrating power and by delegating responsibility. So, paradoxical as it may seem, such a limiting of power and increasing of responsibility would actually increase the power of the 'person in the street' over her/his life. In an anarchic society there would be (touch wood, and of course by definition) no hierarchical relationships, people would deal with each other as equals. This would limit the amount of damage any individual could do, and increase the accountability of an individual to those around him or her. It would be up to each individual to make a go of it and not to behave in such a way as to undermine their environment. Nowadays the presence of a police force means that society can carry all sorts of parasites, from muggers through to stockbrokers and politicians. The police ensure that despite the levels of crime, be they muggings or political oppression, society will remain relatively stable. Parasites need a stable society; in a country of thieves and murderers the thief and murderer has no advantage. In an anarchist society there would be no such artificial stability and people would have to deal responsibly with one another in order to make it work. If you wanted to live in Mad Max II you could, but if you wanted something better, well then it would be up to you. You might say that anarchism is a calculated gamble, that rests not so much on a belief in human goodness, but rather on a belief that very few people find the Mad Max lifestyle appealing.

Finally, love and sex. It is a mistake to confuse the feelings of sincerity and commitment which all loving relationships require, with a lifelong legal commitment.

Lots of love

the Altrincham(A) team

ET CETERA



When Francis of Assisi was asked eight centuries ago if a life without property wasn't hard and overly burdensome, he replied: "If we want to own things, we also have to have weapons to defend ourselves. This is where all the quarrels and battles that make love impossible come from. And this is why we do not want to own anything."

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

I first read "A Pinch of Salt" at Christian CND's Peace Pentecost in Glasgow and felt moved to respond to the request to "Tolstoyans Diggers, Quakers, Anabaptists, heretics, Franciscans or whatever" to describe their own heritage of "Christian nonconformism/radicalism/subversion/vision/anarchism". I am a Franciscan and I would like to think you might find something of radicalism and vision in my heritage, but not subversion and anarchism - but I may be wrong.

So here goes.

A cursory reading of the life of Francis of Assisi (or watching Zeffirelli's film "Brother Sun, Sister Moon") immediately shows that the young 12th C. Italian was not overly conformist to accepted values. Born into establishment society, he chose to live a dissolute life in preference to studying his father's successful cloth-business. After his conversion, he further rebelled by rejecting his father, his money, his place in society, and even, in that way that could only stem from someone desperately in love with "Lady Poverty", his clothes. The next few years were spent on the fringes of society, among lepers and other marginal people, and on the fringes of the church, rebuilding the ruined church of St. Damiano. Within a few years he had many followers.

If you think that the early Franciscans were subversive or anarchist, let us compare them with contemporary reforming/heretical sects, also on the fringes of church and society. Unlike the Franciscans, these groups set themselves over against the established church, denouncing it for its corruption. Not surprisingly they were persecuted. The Waldensians and Abigensians, to name two well-known schismatic groups, were denounced as heretical by Pope Innocent III at the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215. No doubt they led lives of great self-sacrifice and piety. No doubt some of these groups seemed little different from St. Francis' band of brothers, and an equal challenge to the church hierarchy.

Why then did Francis escape the persecution, and hence start a way of life that is eight centuries old? Why was Francis actually able to visit Innocent in 1210 and receive his blessing, and permission to found an order, much to the surprise of the Vatican courtiers who fully expected the little poor man of Assisi to be dragged away to execution?

Unlike the sects, Francis was always totally loyal to the church and desired his brothers to put themselves in positions of powerlessness under its authority. He was never persuaded to join the priesthood, and was always suspicious of learning, the preserve of the powerful.

Here are some extracts from his "Rule" of 1210:

"Brother Francis shall promise obedience and reverence to Pope Innocent.....None of the brethren shall have any power....Who ever would be the greatest among them let him be their servant....all alike shall be called friars minor (lesser brothers)....All the brothers must seek to follow the humility and poverty of our Lord Jesus Christ.....let us treat all clerks and religions as our superiors in everything that concerns the salvation of the soul and is not contrary to our religion, and let us respect their order, and their office and their work in the Lord"(reconstructed text by J.R.H. Moorman, "Sources for the life of St. Francis of Assisi", 1940)

The later rule of 1223 adds...

"The friars are forbidden to preach in any diocese if the bishop objects to it....They must obey their ministers in everything that they have promised God and is not against their conscience and our rule....If any of the brothers is inspired to go among the Saracens or other unbelievers, he must ask permission from his provincial minister. The ministers, too, are bound to ask the Pope for one of the cardinals...to be governor, protector and corrector of this fraternity, so that we may be utterly subject and submissive to the church."

Not for nothing do modern Franciscans take a vow of obedience. But true obedience does not imply uncritical subservience; note that the "conscience clause" is written into the Rule. Nor does it bring an easy life. But living life in obedience to each other, one's elected ministers, and the church, under the Rule and one's conscience shows something about obeying God in a way that words alone will not. Obedience is a witness to the world and a challenge to the church.

Life under "Rule" is very different from life under rules. Obedience to it can do much to bring about that sense of "spontaneous order" described in the last issue by Tony Coats.

Yours sincerely

Br. Jacob SSF

Dear Stephen,

Many thanks for APOS 3. The CIA reprint on Anarchy seemed to separate anarchy from Christianity, then try and link them through certain aspects of the Gospel messages. This approach severely runs into problems? Romans 13,1-7 - you must obey all the governing authorities, and that since the civil authorities were appointed by God, to resist them is to rebel against God; and so on. On the subject of the state ruling through fear: Romans 13,5 says we obey the state through fear and because of our conscience. Mark 12,17 - render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's. Thus Christian Anarchy runs into problems - if it emphasizes the Anarchy, it would seem to go against the Bible's teachings; yet to follow the Bible denies the anarchy. Short of saying our religious books are in error, how do we reconcile this problem? Jesus' teachings would seem to fit better into "Civil Disobedience As Prayer" (see APOS 3), where you "disobey" the mores of current society that go against your Christianity - refusing to take revenge, refusing to accumulate wealth, and so on, but all the time keeping within the explicit laws. Where the law can be argued around (picking grain on the Sabbath? trespassing on public land the MoD have enclosed?) we start to reach the individual's own interpretation of Christianity. How anarchy as seen by non-violent confrontation leading to arrest fits in with this, could be interesting.

On the philosophy of anarchy - is the basis empirical evidence of small groups? Anarchic communes I can believe in; but moving to a city of two million, ten million, whatever...? Small is beautiful, maybe, but the USA needs well-policed laws to avoid a handful of companies buying up the smaller ones, creating larger companies. This can be seen within the oil companies - once, they were all small one or two people enterprises; then a single person, Rockefeller, got into the game. Will we need repressive laws to prevent the formation of multi-nationals or large cities?

God be with you,

Jeremy

P.S. For your next vegan cookery section:-

"First catch your vegan..." ? Or is this in very bad taste?



BEING BORN AGAIN

Being born again - how it happened to me, the least of the Lord's servants:

"Lord, may my life be for the fulfilment of the meaning, the purpose, and the will of creation."
When I had been saying the above prayer (winking at the Lord each time) for some years, I cried one night as though my heart would burst, and when it was over I understood the question that I was being asked: with joy I was able to say "Yes: Lord I will"; at that moment the first piece was placed in the jigsaw of a covenant and life began. At first it was easy to say "Yes": create a garden for my mother, whose time was to be short - it was her heart's delight for the last two years. Free a woman who was generous but suffered because of me. Be humble for the life of a frog. Find that closed doors can be opened and the lost found. Go to Hall Green Birmingham Quaker meetings: although I knew at once it was my spiritual home, saying "Yes" became harder. Witness to Friends the extent of my ignorance, vanity, conceit, self-will, and grow to be confident in obedience; coming to know the gifts of the Lord's love in truth. Care for a man who has become a child again. Still my thoughts and listen, help and encourage where I can, speak as the path is revealed to me. Most of all - have no fears for the future, the love of the Lord is the light by which a disciple is made free.

The witness of the least of the Lord's servants who said "Yes" to a song:

On the morning of Thursday the 15th May, when standing in shirt and underpants about to put on trousers, words came to my mind in definite verse order. Quickly I sat in my shirt and wrote the enclosed words; only when it was finished did I realise that it was a song; people who understand these things tell me that it is a chorus - for me it is a piece in the jigsaw of a growing covenant of faith.

Lord I sing your song.

Lord now that I see the light	Lord give you my heart today
Lord know what the dark is like	Lord I long to be with you
Lord I find the truth in you	Lord what is my life to me
Lord what will you have me do	Lord your peace will see me through
Lord I listen to your words	
Lord your will is harmony	Lord you are my ecstasy
Lord with you I learn to share	Lord you give me everything
Lord now you have made me free	Lord your love is guiding me
	Lord what can I do for you
Lord now on my knees I pray	
Lord please let your spirit stay	Lord is this your paradise
Lord be standing by my side	Lord excuse my tears of joy
Lord in you I lose my pride	Lord obedient child I stay
	Lord I sing your song.
Lord you taught me wrong from right	
Lord you taught me not to fight	
Lord my day is in your care	
Lord I know that you are there	

Barry Cox

The only(!) problem is that this is very oppressive to others. If some people never clean up; contribute to the mess but never to the washing up, then others eventually have to do it for them, because they can't live in the clutter. And that certainly isn't the worst of the problems that egocentric people can contribute in the creation of general chaos and worse. The good have to suffer the bad. Unfair? But that is precisely the Christian principle. And it is the principle of conversion. Because human nature is at the rock bottom good, that is to say it is at rock bottom being rather than non-being (Perhaps Eastern religions can't agree with this? - which means they can't assimilate Anarchy). The anti-social person will eventually perceive that s/he is acting at the very least unfairly, in fact inflicting harm, - other people are taking upon themselves his/her sins, and s/he will begin to feel 'guilty'. And providing s/he is not blamed ('judge not that you be not judged') s/he will become open to change, will want to change in order to become comfortable with him/herself again - and by changing will gain the 'more life' - 'Life more abundantly', that Christ promised: the union with all others of the complete society, and at the same time the individualization of freedom, of complete personal development that seems so difficult to reconcile with it:

Christian Anarchy

Elizabeth Abraham
Violet
Greenham Q Peace Camp
Newbury
Berks



CHRISTIAN ANARCHY

Apparently many people see a total opposition between these two terms. Christians vs. Anarchy would put their position better.

But it seems clear to me that only the 'Christian' qualification can make viable the Anarchy; that is implicit in the true Christian position.

The problem with 'Anarchy' ('No Rule') per se is that it contains within itself no principle of unity, and won't accept any such principle outside. It contains only a principle of what shall not be: Rule, Control. And observation of 'Anarchist' societies does seem to bear this out. In practice they all do seem to end in chaos and confusion, tho' you might well say that the energy and vitality they generate in their brief lives is enough to justify the principle of No Rule. Even so, the trouble is that that energy is more akin to the energy of a nuclear explosion, than to the energy of steady state ecology. And, given that we do have to live in symbiosis with everyone else; that the individual can no more live and be him/herself without Society, than Society can live without the life of individual being - a principle of cohesion is necessary. Civilization, indeed all culture, does require stability. We are right to crave it.

But it is true that individuals find themselves, discover their true being, thru' Freedom, and develop their being in proportion as they are allowed to be free - and that does include the freedom to be wrong - Long live anarchy!

DO NOT WORRY

Everything around us has gone stale. Fast food, cubical cars, sex life, and society. Not only are we faced with the dragons of unemployment and poverty raising their ugly heads, but the very survival of our poor race is threatened by the overwhelming spectre of nuclear cataclysm.

Society is desperately clinging to things to give it security, be they politicians or possessions. Countless individuals are lost in the swamp of externalism. By that I mean everything and everyone is regarded as an object to possess or control. This is why the states and multinationals are able to abuse our world's resources, and even contemplate turning it into a radioactive desert.

Where is the safe path out? It does not lie in any institution, not even the Church, because they are all tainted with corruption and this-worldliness. The path out, I believe, lies in the anarchic freedom of just being. "Do not worry" said Jesus; He meant us to live. Live abundantly and freely, in co-operation and anarchy. It is only when we are totally free from the constraints of order and law that we can truly be slaves to Christ.

"Now we are discharged from the law, dead to that which held us captive, so that we serve not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit." (Rom. 7, 6)

Peace and Wholeness to you

Chris



ON TRYING TO LOVE POLICE PEOPLE

Police people are just ordinary people, like us all. After all, my brother's one, and he's fairly ordinary (and special). I believe in a God who is love, and I want that love to be in every part of my life, each breath, each word, each thought - reaching out, and being reached. Trying to love God, life, people (all looks so easy on paper)...and constantly failing, tripping, falling....standing up, being stood up, and carrying on again. This piece could just as well have been called "On trying to love people", were it not for my experience of relating to police people. Somehow, I am beginning to learn a great deal through such relationships. Essentially, the worst of human feelings and ways of relating become magnified in such relationships. Hopefully, through such relationships, we can begin to recognise our mistakes, our distortions, our lack of love, and, through this brokenness, begin to grow again.

Us and Them. A frequent thought. Me, the admittedly-not-perfect-but-trying-harder-than-many, and them, the thoughtless-careless-conscious-agents-and-protectors-of-violence. This division so easily springs to mind and heart when among police people, because they wear uniforms and I don't; because I usually meet them in the context of "my struggles against violence", and I more often than not interpret them as being in the way/ being on the side of "the baddies". How readily we refuse to recognise someone else's humanity - made in the image of God-, and how much easier it is to depersonalise police people in particular. To make them merge into indistinguishable uniformed figures. That line of police becomes a wall. That beautiful, frightened face becomes a helmeted riot shield. And, quite often, this is exactly the intention on the part of the police. Talking to a chief inspector (never found out his name...), he quite openly admitted that police wouldn't be able to cope with their job if they were open to their feelings. How painfully sad and true. I could feel the pain of those nails piercing Christ's wrists - a broken person dying so that we could be made whole again, so that we need not hide from our feelings.

My pride is bad enough. Human pride aligned with power is disastrous. Fortunately, we often recognise our pride, and it is wonderful when we can regain the calm of our humanity - pushing away the cancer. But, still, swallowing that pride can be difficult enough. But so often I have seen police people totally refuse to see such pride, and so they hide behind violence, hide behind trying to control someone else - as if that proves that they are right.

"You! Move!"

"But, I'm doing no harm, I'm only..."

"Move, or you're arrested!"

"But..."

"Right!"

Or, in the middle of some conversation, actually feeling that I'm getting somewhere:

"That's enough. End of conversation."

"But, I haven't had..."

"Enough! Finished!"

because the police person feels that they are in control. Most of their career asserts that they should be in control. So, the usual human traits of mutual respect and listening are more readily swept under the carpet. Our mistakes are magnified in this allegiance between pride and power. And, consequently, how much more tempting it is to humiliate a police person - to make it clear to the world that they are not in control. To run circles around their evidence in court, to laugh at their mistakes (particularly when there are more of us than them). The vicious circle of our inhumanity to one another goes round and round.

But we can break free of this vicious circle. Our humanity is sometimes only too apparent. Molesworth: an M.O.'D'. police person walking inside the perimeter fence, sees the peace camp kitten, looks this way and that to make sure that no one is looking, then bends down to beckon her with playful fingers flicking against the weld-mesh fence. Those tears in the eyes of a police person as he looks upon a group of peace protesters kneeling, singing, praying in silence, calling out the pain of all our divisions - the hate, the fences, the uniforms, the weapons. Our humanity is sometimes only too clear. The shared smile. The shared words. The shared mother and father.

But, still, my stomach turns with winded aching pain when a police officer threatens to arrest me - when I am caught off balance, when images of my arm being twisted and spiteful threats spat out rush through my mind. When I would love to stop and try to talk, to share my humanity, but am frightened by his threats - and he knows it. He knows his power. Put my fear shows an absence of love. For love drives out fear. I know that in my heart. That I can disentangle my pride from my humanity, and risk arrest, risk threats, risk being beaten up, so that I can express love to that police person who is infuriated by my continued presence, and wildly impatient with his power.

If I can begin to love with all my heart, so that I do not fear the consequences of acting in love in the moment, then my steps are in the right direction. So that I can accept each police person as they really are, so that I stand up for my and every one else's humanity but not my pride. So that I do not try to humiliate or defeat, however tempted, but sympathetically try to listen, challenge, accommodate. For, because of the very limitations of their career and their consequent self-image, the path to change is much more difficult for police people - because the obstacles to change are magnified and painfully defined. The hierarchy, the "loyalty" which asks no questions, the uniform, the expectation that people will fear them (their power) and that they can control those who don't conform. So often we entrench such feelings and perceptions, we make it harder for police people to emerge from their constraints. We identify their pride, their desire to control, their inability to question self, and we respond with our own pride and desire to see them changed without any cost or involvement on our part. And so we build higher the walls that separate. Yet, walking in the love of God, we can begin to dismantle the walls (hopefully and necessarily together), begin to make it easier to see each other - but at a cost. And still, that cost frightens me.

The words of this song I have come across are offered only in love:

"Whoever invented the policeman ought to be licked into shape, toughened and trained till the arms are a chain, till the body's a cane, till the nerves feel no pain, till obedience rules and encircles the brain with walls, so he'll never escape.

Because who'd do that to a child, jumping with joy and desire, floating on fantasies, drowning in dreams, burning with feelings of fire.

And progress is all very well, but not when it locks up our dreams....."

Stephen





CONTEMPT OF COURT



On Monday, I was in court in Dumbarton to watch a friend, who had taken part in the Green Action at the Coulport Trident construction site, being sent to prison for psychiatric reports to be done on her. She had refused to give her name to the court, as an act of protest and non-cooperation with the legal system that was about to punish her for following her conscience.

That experience made me think very clearly about how I felt about non-cooperation in court. All I could think of to do, at the time, was to write "Contempt of Court is not a crime but a duty" on a slip of paper, leave it where we'd been sitting in court and leave...out into the sunshine, away from that place, away from the pain...

I'm in court myself in a few months' time, for taking part in the Peace Pentecost service at Coulport in May - 18 of us chained ourselves together and knelt in prayer outside the gate of the Polaris base. Various experiences when I was in jail, a few months ago, had made me believe that there is no connection between courts and justice, or law and morality. Most of the men I was with in Barlinnie prison were being made to suffer, because (ultimately) of their poverty. Poor and depressed and homeless, unemployed for so long he'd forgotten how long, Willie would go and get drunk as a short-term anaesthetic for his feelings...he was arrested for "conducting himself in a disorderly fashion" and fined. Out of his supplementary benefit there wasn't much left to pay a fine with. So, when he hadn't paid, he was jailed for a week. Alan, remanded for three weeks for psychiatric reports because he'd stolen a loaf of bread. So many more, too many to remember...Alex, alcoholic for as long as he'd been out of a job, violent when drunk but a kind, gentle and considerate cell-mate - 4 months for hitting someone

on the head with a bottle...Not one of the men I met should have been in jail. They had problems, sure enough - alcohol problems, money problems, psychiatric problems - mostly rooted in that feeling of despair and rejection when society doesn't seem to want you anymore, or have any use for you. Jail makes that worse, inevitably. It can never make it better.

But our system of "justice" is blind to the circumstances of someone's crime. Just as, for peace criminals, our reasons for following conscience rather than law are ignored, so for others the background to what they did is treated by the court as irrelevant while all the attention goes on the bare facts of what they did. "Did you or didn't you cut that fence - never mind why?" has its exact parallel in "were you or weren't you walking along the road shouting and swearing - never mind that you're angry that society seems to have thrown you on the scrapheap and you can't see anything left to live for, so you go and get drunk to cover the pain".

So I've gradually come to the conclusion that I must refuse cooperation with the court when I appear in November, and I must gently and kindly explain to the Sheriff why. I think that my action at Peace Pentecost wasn't just to say "No" to nuclear weapons, or to all war...but to say "No" to all the violence in our society, all the thousands of ways human beings are degraded every day, to say that peace will not be ours until we think in terms of justice too.

Justice, if it's to be real, must be based on love. And courts can never do justice, with their abstract standards of law and their refusal to look at people, but only at crimes. We must all live justice - it's the only way to make it real - by creating a more loving and human way of living together. A truly nonviolent society. And, in the meantime, to go along with the court system would be, for me, to make half of a statement...to protest about one aspect of violence, but not violence itself...to affirm one aspect of nonviolence, but not nonviolence itself. Ultimately it would be untrue to love.

Contempt of court is not a crime but a duty.

Gordon



"When you spend 8 hours a day standing by an assembly line making cars; and then, after work, you have to walk quarter of a mile past 200,000 unsold cars to your own car; and you sit in a traffic jam for an hour on the way home to where you live, which is by a noisy motorway in an environment poisoned by exhaust fumes; all so you can pay the instalments on the car and buy consumer goods; which make it possible for you to forget what a hellish job you have; then it isn't really so strange, is it, if sooner or later you react against the insanity of it all?"

Trade Unionist Chrysler (Britain)

DIARY

August 31st - September 6th: New University Project, national meeting and skill/knowledge sharing week: a week of radical, relevant and holistic education, living in rural Suffolk, more info Roger, 11a St. Quintin Ave., London W10 01 960 5773

September 7th (Sun): "Reclaim the City" meeting 12.30, LU For 40-46 Harleyford Rd., Vauxhall SE 11, contact Roja 11a St. Quintin Ave., London W10 01 960 5773

September 15th (Mon): World Wide Day of Fasting and Witness for Nicaragua. Contact Church Action for Central America (Rev. Peter West), 01 743 4917

September 17th (Wed): Franciscans for Justice and Peace vigil at NATO HQ, Northwood, near Watford. Contact Sr Liz Yates, 16 Saltoun Rd., London SW2, tel 01 274 6062

September 19th-21st: Gathering of young Christian Peacemakers in Wellingborough (near Molesworth). Further details from Gordon Matthews, For, 40-46 Harleyford Rd., London SE11 5AY Tel: 01 582 9054

October 4th (Sat): "Reclaim the Hills" CND National action at Culpport, Scotland.

October 5th (Sun): "Arms Around Scotland".

October 20th and 23rd (Mon and Thur): "Reclaim the City" vigils in the City of London, coinciding with One World Week.

October 24th (Friday): "Reclaim the City" again....

October 31st-November 2nd: National Conference of the Fellowship of Reconciliation (For). More details 01 582 9054

November 28th-30th: Christian CND Annual Conference in Cardiff ..CND, 22-24 Underwood St., London N1 7JQ

THANKS

to all who have contributed to this issue of "A Pinch of Salt" in any way at all. The fruits that you see depend on the root of all evil, which looks something like this:

balance after issue three (inbalance more like it).....
.....minus (-) £186.06
donations after issue three (thanksalot).....
.....plus (+) £240.00
mid-term expenses (stamps and stationery).....
.....minus (-) £009.00
balance before issue four expenses.....
.....plus (+) £0070.34

issue four will set us back another £190 or so anyway, who needs money (or, better still, does anyone know of nonviolent bank robbery techniques)?

And all the letters and articles and poems et cetera, which can only be acknowledged on scrappy bits of paper with scrappy throw-away lines....love and thanks to all of you

LOVE, PEACE 'N' ANARCHY

Yes! I've read "A Pinch of Salt" and would like to receive this newsletter/magazine/blessed publication regularly.

My name is.....

and, more often than not my address is.....

.....

.....

.....

I enclose £.....million/I'm broke
(cheques made payable to Stephen Hancock)
regards/yours because his/love peace 'n' anarchy

....."A Pinch of Salt", c/o 11a St. Quintin Avenue, London W10

**BUZZY SAYS:
LOOK OUT! I'M
TAPPING
YOUR
PHONE!**



BOOK REVIEWS

would be nice

REGIONAL CONTACTS

would be nice too, if any one's willing to have their name and (an) address published in this disreputable publication, so as to gather the lost sheep into a motley herd

MONEY

isn't particularly nice, so give it to us, and we'll look after it for you - cheques payable to Stephen Hancock, c/o 11a St. Quintin Ave., London W10

*Vegangelical
Cookery
Corner*



would be really nice if anyone could be bothered to send in a recipe.

IT

would be very nice if people could undertake to distribute a few more Pinches. So write in if you can

WE'RE MOVING

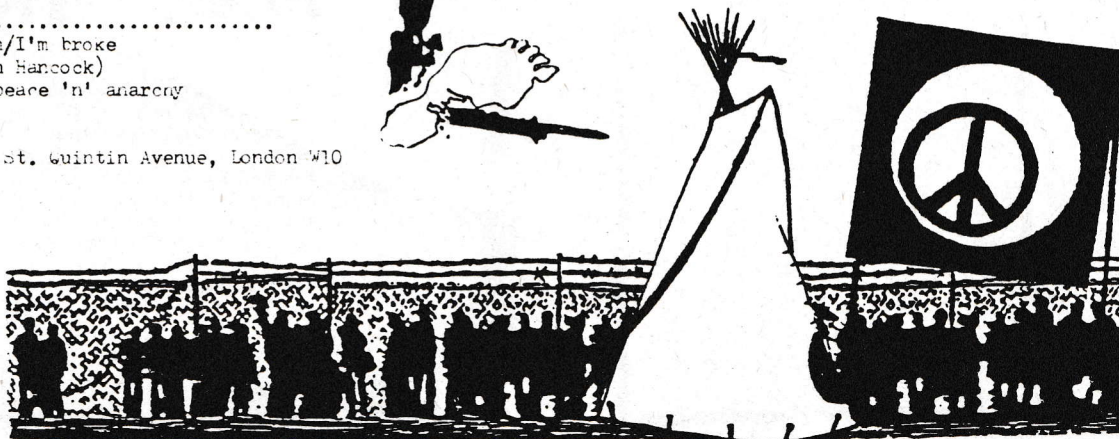
to a very nice house in Birmingham sometime in October, though the London address remains intact until we (and after we, please Neil) get our mortgage (pops) through.

PINCH #5

should be out sometime in October. So, keep your contributions rolling in

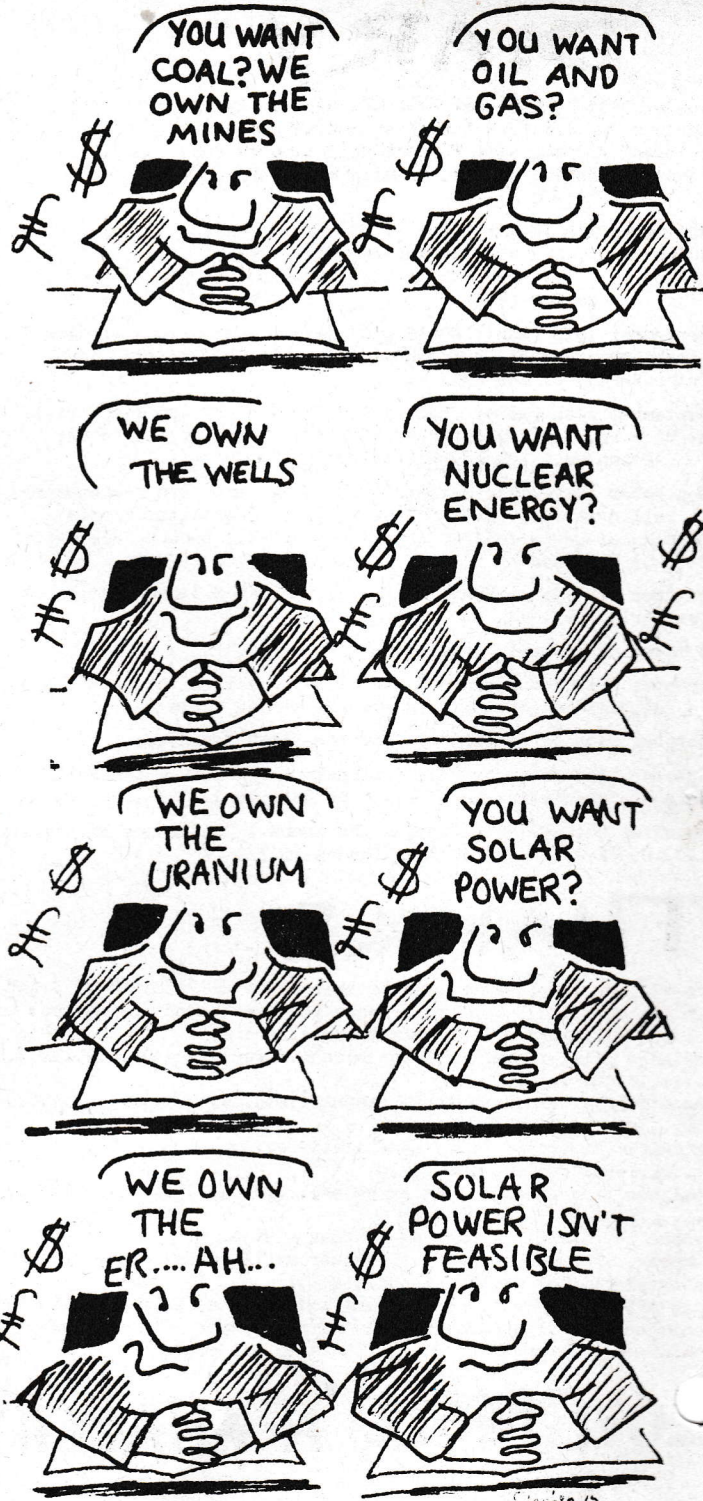
SPELLING

so, no body's perfect..... **MISTAKES**



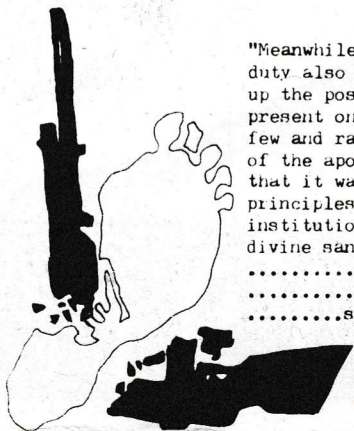


let us sow the seeds of change



MEANWHILE, THE READER WHO FEELS TROUBLED...

"Meanwhile, the reader who feels troubled lest it should be their duty also to forsake all the conditions of their life and to take up the position and work of a common labourer, may rest for the present on the principle, securus judicat orbis terrarum. With few and rare exceptions the whole of Christendom, from the days of the apostles down to our own, has come to the firm conclusion that it was the object of Christ to lay down great eternal principles, but not to disturb the bases and revolutionise the institutions of all human society, which themselves rest on divine sanctions as well as on inevitable conditions....".....
.....Farrar - in reply to Tolstoy's 'What I believe'.....
.....sounds familiar?.....
.....spread the word.....



"We long as we have not been 'worn' into ploughshares and as long as we have not made tractors and petrol out of 'edum-rare' oil, it would be the task of this 'worn' to help in the death machine out of 'edum-rare' literally not 'worn'."

London 1911
"War and Peace"

If undelivered, please return to:
"A Finch of Salt",
11a St. Martin Ave.,
London W10
(thanks)