

A PINCH OF SALT

SOME SORT OF AN ATTEMPT AT REVOLUTIONARY CHRISTIANITY



THEN

IT WAS AS IF I SUDDENLY
SAW THE SECRET BEAUTY OF THEIR HEARTS
WHERE NEITHER SIN NOR DESIRE NOR SELF-KNOWLEDGE
CAN REACH, THE CORE OF THEIR REALITY, THE PERSON
THAT EACH ONE IS IN GOD'S EYES. IF ONLY THEY COULD SEE THEMSELVES AS
THEY REALLY ARE. IF ONLY WE COULD SEE EACH OTHER THAT WAY ALL OF THE
TIME. THERE WOULD BE NO MORE WAR, NO MORE HATRED, NO MORE GREED.....
I SUPPOSE THE BIG PROBLEM WOULD BE THAT WE WOULD FALL DOWN AND WORSHIP
EACH OTHER. BUT THIS CANNOT BE SEEN, ONLY BELIEVED AND "UNDERSTOOD"
BY A PECULIAR GIFT

Thomas Merton
Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander

Christians Interested in Anarchism (CIA)

They cut me down and I leapt up high

at least one pence (please)

"You are the salt of the Earth..."(Matthew 5.13)

Issue six Easter 1987

Guatemala Golgotha

Luke 23:33: "When they came to the place they called 'The Skull', they crucified Jesus there, and the two other criminals, one on his right, the other on his left."

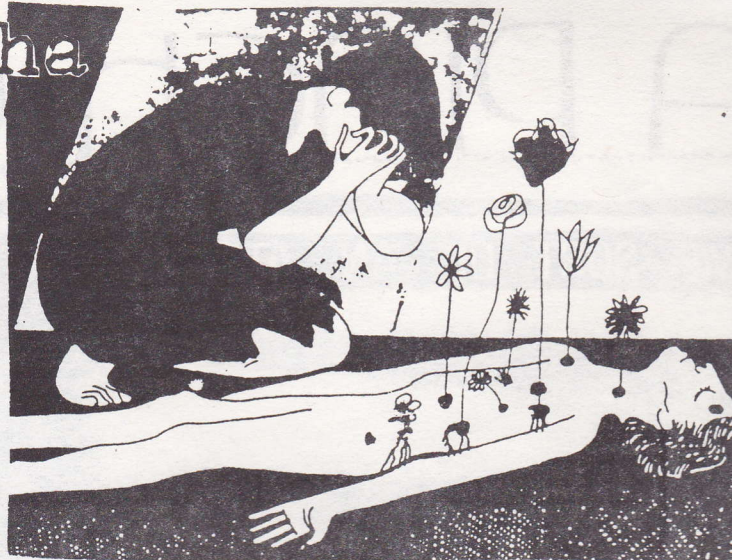
All day long we were fleeing. We ran, seeking the ravines. We brought all of the injured from the other villages; there were many. The largest number were women and children. We hid in the mountains, but the women wore clothes of many colours, and from the helicopters they could see us very well.

We saw the helicopters begin to fly in circles, surrounding us all. They began to machine-gun the people. The only way to save ourselves was to run to the ravine and throw ourselves into it, which was quite steep. We began to run and run to the mountain, falling and falling. The small children ran alone. They were being left behind, getting lost among so many people; and all shouted "Mama, mama...". And then the women, upon seeing them behind, returned to get them. Many of them, on returning, fell from the bullets. We couldn't return to assist them because the army came to ten metres from those at the end of the multitude.

On arriving at the ravine, a woman behind me fell. She carried a child on her back and another in her arms, which fell to the ground in a long fall. She was all covered in blood and her hand dislocated. She shouted to me, "Help me, help me with my child. Look, I can't carry it, I can't endure it!" I took the child without looking at it and ran at the side of the woman. In a moment I heard the child shout, then I saw its head. It was split, almost open.

We fell, tumbled, rose up, and returned to running. Without giving it a thought, we had walked and run for six hours.

We stopped and cleared the wounds of the women and children. We could hardly do anything, because we had arms and legs completely dislocated or broken. We had no sedatives, nothing to cure or bandage with. It began to rain heavily. The children cried from hunger. It was seven o'clock and everything was dark, dark. The injured we placed in a ranch that only had a roof, no walls. We also put some children in there. We started looking after each other. We were shaking with cold beneath the trees.



One woman cried, she cried alot, talking in the language of Quiche. I didn't understand well what she said. Someone said to me, "She's crying because her child was killed".

I had seen the little child. She had been born only fifteen days earlier. The woman had carried the child on her back. She fell when she was running and she fell on the child and it was killed. She said "God is going to punish me. I have a great sin on me because I have killed my child." Others tried to tell her that she had not killed it, that it happened for trying to flee from the army.

Some men cried and said, "I am not a good father; I lost my child." "I only brought two, there are three left and lost." All night one could hear the crying of the people; the wounded cried out in pain, the children cried from fear and hunger, and the women for their lost and dead children; because when we were all together, we could tell that not all of the children were there. That is how we passed the night and half of the morning between cries for sadness and for pain.

There came a moment when I could not endure it any more. I was trying to give courage to the people, but to see so much pain... When they had calmed somewhat, I went to one side to cry, because I felt that I could not do anything for anyone.

A woman said, "God is not with us. God has abandoned us. If we haven't done anything bad, if we haven't asked for so much, why does God abandon us now?"

I no longer had any words. Yes, I had known that it wasn't God who had done this to us; but confronted with so much pain, how could I make them understand that it wasn't the work of God, but of men?

Testimony of a woman doing pastoral work in the highlands of present-day Guatemala.

TWO WORLDS

All humankind is creation of God's harvest,
But we the rich reap
Our stolen double share
And seem not to mind
We keep half humanity
In starvation.
An elite quarter sized over consuming,
Can only leave hungry world
Assuming the over prized
Have urgent need of the bomb
To defend privilege,
While we the overfed
Pretend the poor
Are no longer with us
And by our consensus
Make them cease to exist.
And while living in potential desert
Of nuclear dust
We cling to our bomb
And insist
It brings us Peace.

Pat Isiorho



Photo: Jenny Matthews/Format

Eyes right. Guatemalan riot police pass a member of the support group for relatives of people 'disappeared' by the Government.



No Way to the Old Way

Originally an anti-nomian heresy (the above wood-cut is of some "Ranters") in which Christians were seen as perfect and therefore did whatever they liked, above and beyond any morality. Now, a rallying call for Easter, a celebration and a warning. We will try to live in a new way together, devoid of violence, trying to be loving in all relationships. No way to the old way of doing things. Also: there is no way to the old way of relating, apt death and destruction. Crisis: opportunity and danger. Hope against all hopes? But hope none the less, if only a spark or glimmer. Hear what the apostle Errico says:

"...we are anarchists because of a feeling...without which our anarchism would be either a lie or just nonsense.

This feeling is the love of humankind, and the fact of sharing the sufferings of others. If I eat I cannot enjoy what I eat if I think that there are people dying of hunger; if I buy a toy for my child and am made happy by her pleasure, my happiness is soon embittered at seeing wide-eyed children standing at a shop window who could be made happy with a cheap toy but who cannot have it; if I am enjoying myself, my spirit is saddened as soon as I recall that there are unfortunate fellow beings languishing in jail; if I study, or do a job I enjoy doing, I feel remorse at the thought that there are many brighter than I who are obliged to waste their lives on exhausting, often useless, or harmful tasks.

Clearly, pure egoism; others call it altruism, call it what you like, without it it is not possible to be an anarchist. Intolerance of oppression, the desire to be free and to develop one's personality to its fullest is not enough to make one an anarchist. That aspiration towards unlimited freedom, if not tempered by love of humankind may well create rebels who, if strong enough, become exploiters and tyrants, but never anarchists.

(Why we are anarchists.....Errico Malatesta)

Life Camp: Moving Home...



Life Camp gets lifted by Miller Construction

from Peace News, No. 2285

FASLANE

CAMP LIFTED AT EVICTION

On January 16 Life Camp (the Christian camp outside Faslane base) was moved—by crane! Miller Construction, who had arrived to start work on the Garelochhead bypass carefully lifted the caravans 100 yards down the road. Campers climbed onto caravans and crane to try to prevent the eviction, and four arrests were made. The contractors seemed sympathetic, and were careful with the things they moved. They even moved the camp's firewood, which included many surveyors' stakes! The camp is staying at its new site with the permission of the Secretary of State for Scotland.

FASLANE PEACE CAMP, below St Andrew's School, Shandon, nr Helensburgh, Dunbartonshire; tel Rhu (0436) 820901.

Prayer for Peace

Prayer for Peace, Assisi 27/10/86

The day of prayer for peace at Assisi was widely reported. That representatives from most religions came together to pray for peace, and that, worldwide, many conflicts did cease for a day can only be seen as positive signs in this age of conflict between different religions, different races and different classes. However, some aspects of the event went virtually unreported.

Firstly, there was opposition from conservative elements within the Catholic church to Pope John Paul II's invitation to other religions to come to Assisi. The Traditionalists asserted that the other religions were inspired by devils and demons, and a leaflet was widely circulated on the day, condemning the Pope for this ecumenical move for peace. Two traditionalist priests were "repressed" by the police and the remaining leaflets were confiscated.

Indeed, the event was heavily policed. It is hard to see how the cause of peace can genuinely be furthered by filling Assisi with over 1,500 armed carabinieri, police and vatican "security agents", not to mention the carabinieri helicopter which hovered over the procession of V.I.P.s (very important priests) on their way to St. Francis' Basilica where they went to pray together.

Secondly, the invitation from the Pope was not accepted by the Protestants of the Italian Evangelical Federation (Methodists, Baptists and Waldensians). The reason for this was that the event was seen as a media spectacle rather than a serious meeting for prayer. In fact, to a great extent, this was true, with television and newspaper reports centering on the celebrities rather than on the actual prayers. Ordinary people who came to participate had to do so outside the churches in most cases, and were made into passive spectators rather than active participants. Many had only come to worship the Pope anyway and sales of "Viva il Papa" (Long Live the Pope) pennants were brisk.

Lastly, on the positive side, there were many people who did pray, dance, and sing for peace in the streets, notably a group of young Irish people who had made a peace pilgrimage and who lifted our spirits in the cold damp outside the Basilica. Some one from the nonviolent movement was circulating "Azione Nonviolenta" and we distributed 2,000 copies of "The Prayer for Peace" in Italian despite harassment from the "security" forces on two occasions. Hopefully the prayer will be spoken in hundreds of ordinary churches and homes in the future.

Frank, Anarcha United Mystics (AUM),
Comunità Agricola, Contrada Santa Lucia 34,
63020 Curetta di Servigliano,
Ascoli-Piceno
ITALIA



A Faslane peace camper about to get lifted as Life Camp is evicted.

photo: David Mitchell

More Swords into Ploughshares

On Epiphany (Christ's revelation to all peoples of the earth), Jan 6th, Lin Romano (a long time advocate of the poor), Greg Boertje (an ex-army officer), Dexter Lancot and Thomas McGann, both priests, enacted the 16th Plowshares witness at Willow Grove Reserve Air Station outside of Philadelphia. They remained undetected by base security for 1½ to 2 hours.

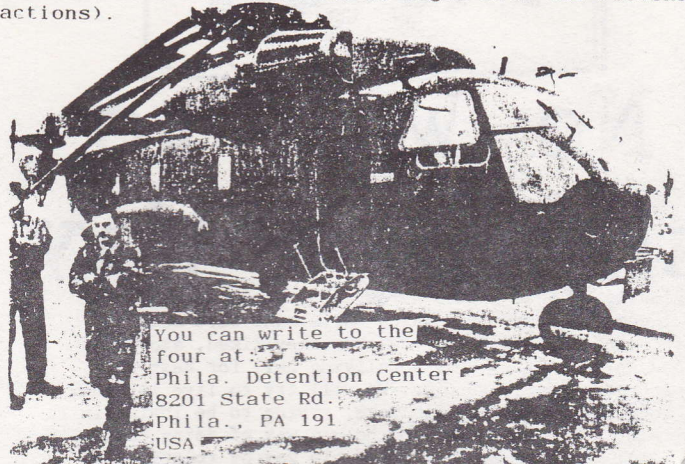
The four Plowshares activists were held incommunicado on the base for 9 hours after arrest. The federal government has charged them with conspiracy; sabotage of national defence material, destruction of government property and trespass. The four rejected a personal recognizance bond and remained in custody.

The group calls itself the Epiphany Plowshares. They are the first Plowshares community to combine the interventionary and nuclear issues. Entering Willow Grove at approximately 4.00am, Lin Romano and Dexter Lancot began disarmament on an Orion Anti-Submarine Warfare plane, employing blood, hammers, they damaged the fuselage, bomb doors, landing gear, and inside the plane, the radar screen, armament control panel, bomb bay controls, plus the "kill, search and destroy" control.

Meanwhile Greg Boertje and Thomas McGann performed disarmament first on a Marine assault helicopter, called the "Sea Stallion", and later, on an Army helicopter enclosed in a hangar. In both cases, they damaged engines clipped electrical circuits, and, in the Marine machine, destroyed sonar equipment. Initial damage estimates run from \$400 000 to half a million.

The Epiphany Plowshares appeal to friends, asking for more dedication to direct action and civil disobedience, for communication to friends and media, and for funds.

Furthermore, they remind us all that the only factor that will save Reaganate from becoming a whitewash is resistance from the peace movement and the American public. We must impeach Reagan; prosecute North, Poindexter and Secord - stop the interventions in El Salvador and Nicaragua and the Middle East and begin OFFICIAL DISARMAMENT. (Unofficial disarmament began with the Plowshares actions).



You can write to the
four at
Phila. Detention Center
8201 State Rd.
Phila., PA 191
USA

HELI-COPTER damaged in a break-in at the Willow Grove Air Station awaits repairs by ground crew. The plane was one of three aircraft attacked with sledgehammers yesterday. Four members of the Epiphany Plowshares, a peace activist group, were arrested and charged with sabotage and trespass. Story and another picture on Page 4-B.

HOME NEWS



BROTHER Keith, an Anglican Franciscan monk, is led away from the demonstration outside Whitehall.

Pictures by E. Hamilton West

Gruaniad March 5th

page four

Christians charged after MoD protest

By Martin Wainwright

FORTY-FIVE Christian opponents of nuclear weapons were arrested yesterday after scrawling texts and crosses on the Ministry of Defence headquarters with a mixture of charcoal and ashes blessed by priests.

Fortyone were charged with criminal damage and will appear before Bow Street magistrates tomorrow. The protest — on Ash Wednesday, a traditionally Christian day of repentance for the sins of repentance for the sins of the world — was supported in writing by one Catholic and two Church of England bishops.

The bishops' letters were handed out by some 150 Christians accompanying those arrested, who included four priests, a hospital consultant, an ex-RAF fighter pilot and at least three grandmothers.

They managed to write "Repent" and "Father Forgive Them" on the building and "See Act V, vs 29" (where St Peter says: "We must obey God rather than men.")

In his supporting letter, the Bishop of Dudley, The Rt. Rev. Tony Dumper, wrote: "Any technical infringement of the law is irrelevant to the real issue, which is how we



WRITING on the wall in blessed charcoal

can better care for God's world."

The protest, one of the biggest Christian acts of disobedience in recent times, was organised by Catholic Peace Action, Christian CND, the Fellowship of Reconciliation and Pax Christi.

At Ministry of Defence buildings in Liverpool 80 people demonstrated.

Freedom from domination, freedom to live one's own spiritual life, freedom to seek the highest truth, unabashed by any human pressure or any collective demand, the ability to say one's own "yes" and one's own "no" and not merely to echo the "yes" and the "no" of state, party, corporation, army, or system. This is inseparable from authentic religion. It is one of the deepest and most fundamental needs of humankind, perhaps the deepest and most crucial need of the human person as such: for without recognising the challenge of this need no one can truly be a person... The frustration of this deep need by irreligion, by secular and political pseudoreligion, by the mystiques and superstitions of totalitarianism, have made us morally sick in the very depths of our being. They have wounded and corrupted our freedom, they have filled our love with rotteness, decayed it into hatred. They have made us a machine geared for our own destruction.

(Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander)

On my forty-sixth birthday they put an ape into space. They shot him farther than they intended. They recovered him alive. He flew through space at a fabulous speed, pressing buttons, pulling levers, eating banana-flavoured pills. He signaled with faultless regularity, just as he had been trained to do. He did not complain of space. He did not complain of time. He did not complain of either earth or heaven.

He was bothered by no metaphysical problems. He felt no guilt. At least it is not reported that he felt any guilt.

Why should an ape in space feel guilt? Space is where there is no more weight and no more guilt. And an ape does not feel guilt even on earth for that matter.

Would that we on earth did not feel guilt! Perhaps if we can all get into space we will not feel

Do not depend on the hope of results. When you are doing the sort of work you have taken on, essentially an apostolic work, you may have to face the fact that your work will be apparently worthless and even achieve no result at all, if not perhaps results opposite to what you expect. As you get used to this idea, you start more and more to concentrate not on the results but on the value, the truth of the work itself. And there, too, is a great deal to be gone through, as you struggle less and less for an idea and more and more for specific people. The range tends to narrow down, but it gets much more real. In the end, it is the reality of personal relationships that saves everything.

You are fed up with words and I do not blame you. I am nauseated by them sometimes. I am also, to tell the truth, nauseated by ideals and with causes... It is so easy to get engrossed with ideas and slogans and myths that in the end one is left holding the bag, empty, with no trace of meaning left in it.

The big results are not in your hands or mine, but they suddenly happen, and we can share in them; but there is no point in building our lives on this personal satisfaction, which may be denied us and which after all is not that important.

The next step in the process is for you to see that your own thinking about what you are doing is crucially important. You are probably striving to build yourself an identity in your work, out of your work and your witness. You are using it, so to speak, to protect yourself against nothingness, annihilation. That is not the right use of your work. All the good that you will do will come not from you but from the fact that you have allowed yourself, in the obedience of faith, to be used by God's love. Think of this more and gradually you will be free from the need to prove yourself, and you can be more open to the power that will work through you without your knowing it.

The great thing after all is to live, not to pour out your life in the service of a myth; and we turn the best things into myths. If you can get free from the domination of causes and just serve Christ's truth, you will be able to do more and will be less crushed by the inevitable disappointments. Because I see nothing whatever in sight but much disappointment, frustration and confusion...

The real hope, then, is not in something we think we can do, but in God who is making something good out of it in some way we cannot see. If we can do God's will, we will be helping in this process. But we will not necessarily know about it beforehand....

(Letter to a Young Activist)

press buttons, and eat banana-flavoured pills. No, pardon me. We are not quite apes yet.

We will not feel guilt in space. We will not feel guilt on the moon. Maybe we will feel just a little guilt on the moon, but when we get to Mars we will feel no guilt at all.

From Mars or the moon we will blow up the world, perhaps. If we blow up the world from the moon we may feel a little guilt. If we blow it up from Mars we will feel no guilt at all. We will blow the world up with no guilt at all. Tra la. Push the buttons, press the levers! As soon as they get a factory on Mars for banana-coloured apes there will be no guilt at all.

I am forty-six years old. Let's be quite serious. Civilisation has deigned to grace my forty-sixth birthday with this marvelous feat, and I should get ribald about it? Let me learn from this contented ape. He pressed buttons. He pulled levers.

thomas merton

's page

They shot him too far. Never mind. They fished him out of the Atlantic and he shook hands with the Navy.

page five

(conjectures of a Guilty Bystander)

Easter Poem

It is Easter,
and our thoughts are turned to the hope of
New Life/New Beginnings/Resurrection.

It is Easter,
and a resurrection story is being told in our time:

Gay People have been crucified,
both literally (as Scripture commands)
but just as much through prejudice and intolerance.

Gay People have been crucified.
We have been sacked from our jobs,
disowned by our families,
ridiculed by poofta-jokes.
We have hidden our lovers from the rest of the world,
and married to maintain respectability.

Gay People have been crucified,
not just for three days and nights,
but for thousands of years we have been buried.

Now we are rising from the grave.

We are rising from our past crosses:
the prisons of cruel legality,
the electric shocks of narrow psychiatry,
the hell of fundamentalist religion.

We are rising to a New Life
of equality/freedom/and common humanity.

We are rising to tell our own stories,
to claim and celebrate our heritage,
to dream of a new society.

In coming out as a gay person, I sometimes feel afraid:
Do I prefer death to new life?
Do I long for the security of the past?
Do I try to avoid the Way of the Cross?

In coming out as a gay person, I sometimes feel alone:
Does my family still accept me?
Does the church recognise my ministry?
Does the gay community welcome me?

In coming out as a gay person, I believe in Easter.
I stake my life on that Loving Reality to which Jesus
pointed;
on the claim that Justice is at the heart of
all things;
on the hope of a new creation.

But do I really believe in Easter?

I don't know.
I only know that I am
glad to be rising,
glad to be coming out,
glad to be who I am.

Warren Talbot, Easter 1984

(from "UNFINISHED BUSINESS: Confronting issues of
Christianity, sexuality and politics", an Australian
Student Christian Movement publication, edited by
Jennie Clarke, Ruth Ford, Diana Nobbs. Very good.)

The Gift of Sexuality

In his book "Money, Sex & Power", Richard Foster
(author of "Freedom of Simplicity" and "Celebration of
Discipline") writes:

What is to be said for those who, as best we can
determine, are confirmed constitutional homosexuals?
The first thing that needs to be said is that they
did not choose their homosexuality any more than a
clubfooted child chose clubfootedness. Both are
distortions of God's intention, but neither are
blameworthy. We live in a fallen world, and many are
trapped by the condition of sin that plagues the
human race.

He goes on to write:

The Christian fellowship cannot give permission to
practice homosexuality to those who feel unable to
change their orientation or to embrace celibacy.

Extracts from his book were published in a US mag.
called SOJOURNERS. The below letter was printed in the
following edition. As the authors of the letter say:
WHY IS IT THAT THE CHURCH IN GENERAL...IS COURAGEOUS
ON SO MANY JUSTICE ISSUES, BUT PAYS SCANT ATTENTION TO
THE ENORMOUS PAIN, EXCLUSION, CONDEMNATION AND
OPPRESSION VISITED UPON GAY AND LESBIAN PEOPLE BY BOTH
CHURCH AND SOCIETY?

"We strongly disagree with the uninformed and pat-
erning treatment of homosexuality in Richard J. Foster's
article "God's Gift of Sexuality" in the July issue of
Sojourners.

He argues that the Bible condemns homosexuality and
therefore we must. Yet, as traditionally interpreted,
the whole tenor of the Bible sanctions slavery, and the
overwhelming burden of the Bible is that women are
inferior to and should be subordinate to men. Are we
prepared to argue today that slavery and the oppression
of women are biblically justified? No. The Spirit has
been and is leading us into new truth (John 16:12-13)
and teaching us that what once we thought unacceptable
is now clearly acceptable to God (Acts 10).

There is, in fact, no biblical sex ethic. The Bible
knows only a love ethic which is constantly being
brought to bear on whatever sexual mores are dominant
in a given country, culture, or period.

Foster describes being a homosexual as like being
born with a clubfoot. This gross analogy not only
demeans the experience of homosexual love but also
breaks down of its own weight. Is a clubfooted person
not to try to walk? Rather, a homosexual person might
be viewed as a left-handed person in a right-handed
culture.

Foster is preoccupied with the sexual activity of
homosexual people, ignoring the reality of deep and
abiding love between two gay persons. How are we to
understand the gay and lesbian partnerships which have
endured for years or decades with the kind of fidelity,
tenderness, and mutuality we celebrate in heterosexual
partnership?

Is our word to a gay son or lesbian daughter to be
"It is God's will that you remain celibate all your
life"? No. We do not believe that it is God's will. In
the mystery of creation and culture, a significant
percentage of people in every age, time, and place has
been, is, and will continue to be homosexual. That
must be all right with God. God's gift of sexuality is
to all God's children, not just the right-handed ones.
Celibacy is a choice offered to both gay and straight
people but can never be a true vocation if imposed as
punishment for the "sin" of being who you are.

The question of justice concerns us most. Why is it
that the church in general and Sojourners in particular
is courageous on so many justice issues, but pays scant
attention to the enormous pain, exclusion, condemnation,
and oppression visited upon gay and lesbian people by
both church and society? Is it possible that we have
been infected and blinded by the patriarchal ideology
embedded in our culture and religious traditions? It is
worth remembering that -along with the Jews- communists,
gypsies, the disabled, and homosexuals went into the
ovens of Auschwitz.

Young, gay and proud



As we have learned that the "black problem" turns out to be the problem of white racism and that the "women problem" turns out to be the problem of male sexism, so we are learning that the "homosexual problem" is the problem of heterosexism and homophobia. Any theology which inhibits us from seeing, feeling, and identifying with oppressed homosexuals in the love of Christ is flawed at its roots.

If it is offensive for whites to define the experience of blacks, and men of women, it is offensive for heterosexuals to define the experience of homosexuals and assign their "acceptable" behaviour...

We believe the Spirit is inviting humanity to a homecoming banquet where Arab and Jew, male and female, Russian and American, white and people of colour, gay and straight will sit down at table together with our Lord, in mutual acceptance and peace. The church of Christ is called to embody such reconciliation now.

In love and friendship,

Daniel Berrigan, S.J.
William Sloane Coffin Jr.
Morton Kelsey
Virginia Mollenkott
James B. Nelson
Robert Raines
Walter Wink

Dear...

c/o 8 Cranwells Park
Weston
BATH BA1 2yD

Dear Stephen and all friends at "Pinch of Salt"...

...I have not seen or heard anything of the periodical recently and was wondering if Scotland yard or the other CIA had repressed it...

...In reply to your question "would I like my name printed as a local contact?" The answer is a resounding YES. I would love to meet any Christians interested in Anarchy anywhere between Bristol and Swindon. I would like to know of anyone especially in the Chippenham to Bath area, this is the immediate area around where my unrestricted orbit seems to revolve most.

I am also very keen to be a distribution channel for "Pinch of Salt". and my brother and I have considered raising funds for the venture by having a series of Gigs and parties, my last donation was the result of a day's busking in Bristol...

You may also like to know that I am at present writing a series of articles as a first stage towards a book on Christian attitudes to Anarchism. I am also searching through all the stuff I did at Polytechnic on the subject and putting together some ideas as to how Christian Faith and Anarchism can work together. I am also concerned with the idea of forming a Free Association of Christi-Anarchist Thinkers.

This latter idea would not be a "Club" or a "Society" but a group of people, identifying with each other and meeting occasionally to debate and publish Christi-Anarchist statements, criticisms and theories on various events as they happen. We would gather at various locations at perhaps four different per year once each season. I would like to advertise this idea in the next issue of "Pinch of Salt" and have anyone interested write to me so that a first gathering could be got together soon..

Love and justice are the fuel upon which the Kingdom of God and Freedom shall function. Let us be done with Oppression.

In Jesus

Tony Coats
(Tony Coats)

Dear Stephen,

Thanks alot for "A Pinch of Salt" - more interesting, thought provoking and eye-catching than ever!

The "The thoughts and practices of a young Quaker Anarchist" certainly made me think and probably created quite a stir (I can see how unpopular your policy of non-censorship might be with some, but freedom is necessary as you write at the back). But why is it unsigned? Not that who wrote it really matters. I can't help noticing that he doesn't mention God or Christ once and also brings in astrology. Still I can't complain as whilst I'm theoretically more orthodox than he (whoever he is) he leads a challenging life which is practically more orthodox. Still to combine the two could blow this world apart...

Here's a quote from someone to put somewhere: Hans Meier (Hutterite) "We feel nearer to people who do the will of God than those who merely talk about it."

Keep it going...

Yours

Jutin.

MISUNDERSTOOD MINORITIES No39-Anarchists



Dear Pinches of Salt,

So far, in the last year, we've received 201 letters, ranging from the wonderful to the illegible, the unusable to the unprintable. Unusable should read unusual. Thanks to everyone for their varied missives. Very heart warming, and makes it all the more pleasurable my getting up in the morning (before putting on my hair shirt and lying in a bath of sub-zero dirty bath-water). Please, please use letters as a vehicle for fame, and I'll happily include them on this (dwindled) letters' page. Debate, irritate, narrate, and ramble in IN PRINT!

lovingly

Stephen



The Anarchist Implications

Ammon Hennacy states in the preface of his autobiography:

"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 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 cooperation 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/him how to behave. A christian-anarchist does not depend upon bullets or ballots to achieve her/his ideal s/he achieves that ideal daily by the One Person Revolution with which s/he faces a decadent, confused and dying world."

Contemporary christian-anarchists see Jesus as God incarnate. They, therefore, see the importance of His place in history in terms of his responses to particular circumstances. As John Yoder argues in his book "The Politics of Jesus", it is in Jesus' response to the reality of Roman imperialism where we find the political ramifications of christian discipleship made explicit.

Yoder argues that, by the time of Jesus' birth, there had arisen within the Jewish community the option of four basic political responses to Roman imperialist government. He goes on to state that these four responses roughly cover the options we are faced with today. Jesus, however, rejected collaborating with the Romans and the subsequent financial benefits of the path of sabbucee. He also refused to work for limited reforms within the power structures as the pharisees did. He did not go off into the desert cutting ties with an evil world in order to live a life of purity with an essene community. Nor did he join the zealots in their quest to impose a new revolutionary government through guerilla warfare (although some of His disciples were originally zealots). Today's "collaborationist", "reformist", "holier than thou hippy" and "national liberation front" options strongly echo the sabbucean, pharisaic, essenic and zealot options of Jesus' time; and indeed, all these options are presently being exercised by people claiming to be followers of Christ.

While rejecting these options, Jesus set loose in the world a new political reality by inspiring a free and freeing people, organising on the basis of voluntary community. Jesus and the disciples (the early church) preached anarchist principles by the only viable means, that of living them out in a broken world, creating a new world within the old. In their lives it became true that the Kingdom of God was at work; this new political reality (however small) had entered the social organism. The christian community was founded on such principles as the holding of property in common, revolutionising relationships through consensus decision-making and dealing with offenders, not through imprisonment (which is the foundation stone of the State⁴) but by confronting them and forgiving them. Jesus also taught that there is no place for violence in loving relationships. He did this by living a nonviolent life to the point of accepting the cross rather than killing His political enemies. Christian-anarchists are those who have continued this political reality initiated by Christ as an integral part of their faith and have therefore formed the basis of the pacifist stream within the church.⁵

Jesus has also presented the world with a revolutionary concept of "leadership" as the christian community was voluntary and the role of leadership was inspirational. The institution of leadership within communities dominated by government is based on order giver/order taker relationships which are cemented by the violence of the state apparatus - police, army, courts, prisons, death-squads etc. Within the christian community it is a role shared by all and qualified by the essential (christian) principle of free will - to reject or accept the initiative of another member of the community. Organising on the principle of serving

God not Mammon, disciples of Christ have always been on a collision course with governments because governments demand dominion over our lives and attempt to usurp the place of Christ as the central orientation in our lives. They demand that christians be available for military training and that we forget about "loving your enemy" when it doesn't fit into foreign policy. Whether it be under free enterprise capitalism or state capitalism, governments demand that christians must co-operate in relationships based upon inequality and violence - not only at the point of production but also throughout the array of social activity operating within the "consumer-culture".

Christian-anarchists affirm that, throughout the past 2000 years of betrayal of christian principles by the larger sector of the church, there have always been groups (large and small) who have refused to burn incense for Caesar.⁶ They have done this by organising in nonviolent, non-hierarchical communities and holding their property in common. The major historical developments which saw the church largely transformed from a revolutionary community into a powerbroker of the fallen world were those surrounding the fourth century conversion of the Roman Emperor, Constantine, to christianity. Constantine's decision to become an ally of christians and not their persecutor (while remaining the head of the Roman state) had dramatic and destructive consequences for both the church as a revolutionary community and the process of developing christian ethics. Within one century the situation changed from one of it being illegal to be a christian to one where it was illegal NOT to be a christian. Since Constantine had become a christian without giving up his role of the head of the state, the reality of a "baptised Caesar" was now at play. The church as an intentional community disappeared as it became a civil obligation to be a christian, while Caesar became the most important christian. Christian ethics no longer sprang from the promises of Christ but were tailored by the realities and considerations of a fallen world,⁷ making the absolutist teachings of Christ open to compromise and betrayal on the basis of pragmatic argument. No longer, for many believers, does the life of Jesus provide the parameters of the possible - as the revolutionary nonviolent mandate given by Christ became relative to the functioning of the state.



U.S.A.F. Molesworth: 'Harvest for the F

of Christian Discipleship

Fr George Zabelka, the priest and pastor for the airmen who dropped the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, recently reflected on the "Constantine betrayal" which permeates the church.

For the first three centuries, the three centuries closest to Christ, the church was a pacifist church. With Constantine the church accepted the pagan Roman ethic of a just war and slowly began to involve its membership in mass slaughter, first for the state and later for the faith.

Catholics, Orthodox, and Protestants, whatever other differences they may have had on theological esoterica, all agreed that Jesus' clear and unambiguous teaching on the rejection of violence and on love of enemies was not to be taken seriously. And so each of the major branches of Christianity by different theological methods modified our Lord's teaching in these matters until all three were able to do what Jesus rejected, that is, take an eye for an eye, slaughter, maim, torture.

It seems a "sign" to me that seventeen hundred years of Christian terror and slaughter should arrive at August 9, 1945, when Catholics dropped the A-bomb on top of the largest and first Catholic city in Japan. One would have thought that I, as a Catholic priest, would have spoken out against the atomic bombing of nuns. (Three orders of Catholic sisters were destroyed in Nagasaki that day.) One would have thought that I would have suggested that as a minimal standard of Catholic morality, Catholics shouldn't bomb Catholic children. I didn't.

I, like the Catholic pilot of the Nagasaki plane, 'The Great Artiste', was heir to a Christianity that had for seventeen hundred years engaged in revenge, murder, torture, the pursuit of power, and prerogative violence, all in the name of our Lord.

I walked through the ruins of Nagasaki right after the war and visited the place where once stood the Urakami Cathedral. I picked up a piece of a censer from the rubble. When I look at it today I pray God forgives us for how we have distorted Christ's teaching. I was the Catholic chaplain who was there when this grotesque process that began with Constantine reached its lowest point - so far. ⁸

There have always been, however, Christians faithful to the Church, to Christ incarnate - who have recognised citizenship (subservience to the state) as a form of idolatry. Groups such as the Anabaptists went as far as to make themselves distinctive from the rest of the community of believers because of this issue. The Anabaptists claimed that living under the New Covenant they needed no human-made laws - that redeemed people have no need of government.

Those Christians, on the other hand, who compromise the revolutionary pacifism of Christ and have adopted (or support) authoritarian politics whether it be that of the left (Marxist-Leninist, social democratic, etc.) or the right (liberal democratic, corporate capitalist, fascist, etc.), emphasise the broken nature of humanity. These Christians depoliticise the redemptive ministry of Jesus Christ. The Christians of the authoritarian right (eg. Moral Majority, National Civic Council, Festival of Light) dehumanise Jesus by separating him from his social reality and putting him into a mythic setting - where Jesus is Lord strolling through Israel oblivious to the political questions and structured violence around him. For these people, Jesus has little to say in a political sense. They believe that strong government (the force of cops, army and prisons) is necessary to protect the populace from sexual deviance, questioning the faith and the authoritarian left.

The Christians of the authoritarian left dehumanise Jesus by insisting that other humans can't be like him, that they need to be governed. For these people, Jesus' message is basically one of personal (face to face) morality which sometimes spills over into the political sphere as a reaction to cruel leaders, it is a politics of moral outrage and protest. When they venture beyond protest into what they see as an essentially secular political world they are most often prepared to support those who have placed themselves at the leadership of reform or revolutionary movements only to find (if successful) that they have aided the installation of a new insensitive bureaucracy. For them, strong government (the force of cops, army and prisons) is necessary to ensure that certain principles of justice are enforced since the people themselves cannot ensure the protection of these principles because of their broken nature.

These Christians, of both the authoritarian right and left, fail to see the political phenomenon which existed amongst Jesus and the disciples, a phenomenon created by Christ's redemptive ministry and which holds explicit answers to the essential political questions of how the means of production in a society should be managed, how resources should be distributed, how decisions should be made and how we should respond to deviants.

It is this understanding, that the "redeemed individual" - the person who has chosen to live inside the New Covenant under the law of love - does not need government which is at the basis of both the anarcho-Christian and anarcho-humanist belief that the process of personal redemption must go on at the same time as social change. If everyone acted in a loving way, hierarchy and oppression would crumble but, with changed structures and unchanged people, even the best developed structures are open to abuse. In the final analysis it is the morality of the individual participants which defends the anarchist society from betrayal. The hope of both Christians and humanists lies in the process of redemption, the possibility and the active move towards it. It is the belief in the process of learning from experience and history which, for the anarcho-humanist, provides the basis for hope in people realising their potential and anarchism being achieved. For the Christian the basis for hope in people realising their potential is found in Jesus Christ as an historical reality. Because Jesus lived the way He did, it is possible for all of us not to compromise the law of love, to witness now to the possibility of a revolutionary society, and, ultimately, it is possible for a society to function without a state. To the Christian the revolution has already come in the form of the resurrection. It is merely a matter of living out that promise, not living by the standards of the fallen world. The Kingdom of God exists within the social organism, it is our role to make it universally manifest.

continued overleaf



Hungry' ploughing 1984 Andy D'Agorne

When christian-anarchists speak of the state, we see it as Gustav Landauer did, "as a condition, a certain relationship between human beings; we destroy it by contracting other relationships, by behaving differently". We see ourselves as personally responsible (sinful) for the construction and maintenance of these exploitative relationships, whether it be in our personal relationships or in our complicity in the consumption of "stolen" products from Third World sweatshops. Accepting personal responsibility reinforces our nonviolent position as the foundations of the state are not contained in "an all-evil ruling class", but located in the attitudes we hold. Therefore, in the decision to follow Christ, in both celebration and resistance, we realise that we meet at a point of brokenness.

More and more christians are beginning to rediscover the church as an intentional, revolutionary community. In this age of total nuclear-destructive capacity, many christians have seen the state (the military-industrial complex) take on the proportions of being the antithesis of the life-affirming Christ (The Beast as described in the Book of Revelations). Such christians (particularly in the United States) have begun to organise in "Communities of Resistance and Celebration". They are establishing communities which resist the military-industrial complex and celebrate the coming of the Kingdom of God through experimenting with new relationships based on the christian principles of self-management, reconciliation and nonviolence. These communities such as Jonah House in Baltimore are integrated to the point where members work, live, rear children, pray and resist together.

Jonah House, for example, is a community of adults many of whom (eg Phillip Berrigan, Fr Carl Kabat and Elizabeth McCallister) have been involved in revolutionary resistance to militarism for over twenty years. Phillip and Elizabeth were among those Catholic pacifists who, during the Vietnam War, invaded draft offices and destroyed draft files with napalm. Phillip and Carl were amongst those eight christians who, September 1980, invaded the General Electric nuclear missile factory in Pennsylvania, and committed the first act of nuclear disarmament in 35 years - by destroying missile blueprints and plans and three cones which were to hold nuclear warheads. Jonah House together with other christians has, for over ten years, kept up a consistent presence at the Pentagon - employing the symbols of ash and human blood to protest the making of war. In this way they bring the irrational symbols of death and destruction to the most "rational" of people - people who talk about acceptable levels of population loss in a limited nuclear war. These people have been able to maintain a high level of resistance - including spending periods of time underground and remaining sane and creative during prison experiences because of the support and integrated life of the voluntary community.

Although some of the anarcho-christian communities have remained as factions in the mainstream churches (eg. The Catholic Worker,¹⁰ The Community of the Ark¹¹) while others have organised as sects (eg. The Tennessee Farm,¹² Sojourners Community¹³) all have reaffirmed the two basic missions of Christ and his disciples, that of healing and revolution,¹⁴ while rejecting the power-broking of the post-Constantine era.

In his recent visit to Australia Jim Wallis, editor of Sojourners magazine, delivered a powerful and relevant message to christians here:

Everyone seems to recognise that we have serious problems in the church. There is a wide agreement that fundamental change needs to take place, but there the agreement ends. A variety of answers is offered as the solution.

For some, the answer to our problem is the preaching of the Word - renewal through evangelism. For others, it is the filling by the Holy Spirit - renewal by charismatic experience. For others, it is service to the poor and political action on behalf of justice. And, for others, it is acts of resistance to the power and violence of the state.

We have all come from different places, traditions, and experiences within the church, and one or more of those answers have been part of our various histories. They are all right answers. They speak to great and glaring lacks in the church's life and contribute to a fuller understanding of what the

church is to be in the world. But all those answers are inadequate.

The greatest need in our time is not simply for kerygma, the preaching of the gospel, nor for diakonia, service on behalf of justice, nor for charisma, the experience of the Spirit's gifts, nor even for propheteia, the challenging of the king. The greatest need of our time is for koinonia, the call to simply be the church - to love one another and to offer our life for the sake of the world. The creation of living, breathing, loving communities of faith at the local church level is the foundation of all the other answers.

Proclamation of the gospel, charismatic gifts, social action, and prophetic witness alone do not finally offer a real threat to the world as it is, especially when set apart from a community which incarnates a whole new order. It is the ongoing life of a community of faith that issues a basic challenge to the world as it is and offers a visible and concrete alternative. The church must be called to be the church, to rebuild the kind of community that gives substance to the claims of faith....We have to create a base that is internally strong enough to enable us to survive as Christians and to empower us to be actively engaged in the world. The community is the place where the healing of our own lives becomes the healing of the nations. The making of community is finally the only thing strong enough to resist the system and to provide an adequate spiritual foundation for better and more human ways to live.

There is no greater moral authority than that given by standing before the world free of its securities. There is no greater threat to the system than that of being free of its rewards and punishments, and therefore free of its control.

Ciaran O'Reilly, Social Alternatives Vol.2 No.3, 1982
Notes opposite...



NOTES

1. Ammon Hennacy, "The Book of Ammon" (C/ Joan Thomas, Box 25, Phoenix).
2. John Yoder is a Mennonite theologian.
3. Although the policy of the pharisees was to be not of the world in the midst of the world, they did, however, maintain their partisan life in the wider community attempting to represent purity within the economic parameters set up by the Roman Imperialists.
4. ...as legislation would be meaningless without a prison or a firing squad to back it up.
5. ...the Church being the Community of Believers.
6. The Roman state would annually demand that its citizens burn incense as a symbol of their allegiance to the state, and as a mandate to the Roman Imperialist army. Many Christians saw this as a form of idolatry and refused to take part in the ritual. Some were punished by death.
7. ...and the protection of the Church's power position in that world.
8. Fr Sabelka, "I was Told It was Necessary", Sojourners Aug. 1980
9. For example, the Jonah House community paints houses, while the Tennessee Farm is largely involved in self-sufficient farming.
10. The Catholic Worker Movement was initiated by Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin in The Bowery, New York, during the depression of the 1930s. The Catholic Worker "Houses of Hospitality" have fed and sheltered many of the US's poor, while offering a catalyst for resistance through their newspaper, their refusal to pay taxes and their willingness to partake in nonviolent direct action. There are now over 20 (both rural and slum) Catholic Worker communities in North America involved in hospitality and resistance.
11. The Community of the Ark, in France, was initiated by Lanza Del Vasto, following the pilgrimage with Gandhi in India. They are a farming community and very much involved in the anti-war and anti-nuclear struggles as well as living a viable non-violent lifestyle.
12. "The Farm", as it is more commonly known, is a community of 1500 Christians living on 1800 acres in Tennessee. This community had its beginnings in Haight-Ashbury, San Francisco during the Flower Power explosion of the 1960s. It is a vegetarian (nearly) self-sufficient community. Its members are presently involved in the anti-nuclear and anti-war struggles as well as sending skilled (in health, farming etc.) volunteers to Guatemala, Bangladesh and the Bronx. "The Farm" has 12 sister communities, located in the US, Canada and Ireland.
13. The Sojourners Community had its beginnings in the anti-Vietnam War struggle of the late 1960s and early 1970s - a period which brought many Christian pacifists together in active resistance to US imperialism. The community consolidated and moved to the nation's capital where it keeps up a consistent peace witness, lives with the poor of inner-city Washington and produces an important monthly magazine.
14. Christ's ministry was a grassroots one - feeding the hungry, healing the sick, confronting the spiritually sick power-barons and comforting the afflicted while attempting to live a life which was a new political phenomenon. He never attempted to impose the Kingdom through legislation (lobbying etc.), but attempted to inspire others to share in this new reality.

Of Millenarians and Mystics

The Christian life abounds with paradox and the turning upside down of conventional perceptions and wisdom:

- "The first shall be last and the last first..."
- "Sell all that you have and give it to the poor..."
- "Love your enemies, pray for those that persecute you..."
- "Turn the other cheek..."

At times we are only too ready to admit with Paul that God's wisdom is foolishness. Jesus' life culminates in the ultimate paradox: the cross.

- "Save yourself if you are God's son!"
- "Come on down from the cross!"

But, there and then, Jesus did not. And so we hesitantly follow this ultimate call, hoping, perhaps, to be part of God's redeeming breath in whatever path we are called to:

- "Take up your cross each day and follow me..."

The presence of a paradox immediately speaks of perceived opposites - irreconcilable, seemingly mutually exclusive. Somehow Christians latch on to these opposites all too enthusiastically. The resultant good old dualisms are all too easy to find: Spirit/flesh; Spiritual reality/physical reality; humanity/nature.....the solution? All too often conflict - one must overcome the other. The body must be overcome. Nature must be subjugated, better still, ravaged for all She has to offer. This world around us doesn't matter - my eyes are firmly fixed on the life to come. From the blatant to the more subtle, subtler still, 'till the veins of our culture and being are permeated with a sense of conflict which results.....not in victorious solution, but isolation, detachment, worse still, violence, to ourselves, our planet and The Other out there which threatens us. We shy from our bodies, from other beings, from the beauty and sacredness of the world around us. We divide, we oppose, we chisel the spheres of our lives into angular boxes of safety and predictability. You may be my neighbour, but you live next door and don't you forget it. A little bit of sympathy, maybe, but definitely no empathy. Whether the over-specialisation of labour and the pursuit of knowledge, our conditional gifts (tied economic aid, conscience salving charity), or our various hierarchies: the masculine over the feminine; the intellectual over the manual.....we cling to definitions, to security. And then, along comes some input, some impulse, some image that embraces what we seek to keep apart, and ignites dormant embers in our very being. A glimpse of the reality of love, of unconditional self-sacrifice, of wholeness, of salvation.

"I have come that you may have life and have it in its fullness..."

And, 'though we may lapse, stumble, retrace our steps, rest, despair, some essence of hope remains in our step. Stripped bare of our securities, if only for an instance, we search for True Security.

Still, I like to pause, now and again (and now and again), on this journey that some discomforting/comforting Divine Spark has prompted me to set out on.

One paradox that frequently revolves in my mind takes the form of the question: What is reality? The contenders for this revolution (from revolve) are sometimes, what could be called, the Millenarian and the Materialist. On the one hand "The Kingdom of God is at hand". At its very worst, the millenium is so imminent that nothing else matters - especially not this world. Or, moreover, if this material world can accelerate that longed-for event, all the better (nuclear weapons are all part of God's plan...). This world does not matter. My body does not matter. Suffering and oppression will pass/are all in the mind/are in the (transcendent) physical realm. On the other hand "People are born free but all around are in chains". This physical suffering is real, is the only reality. Solutions must be practicable, quantifiable, expedient. Well-being is dependent on....and limited to....the material. Obvious change is imperative - the seizure of power for change all the more tempting and justifiable. The divine is not present, or, at least, not Ultimate. My spiritual well-being is not observable and therefore of relatively little importance.

Another dualism - exaggerated for effect - but real enough, it seems. I suppose that if we take the analogy of the narrow path being so narrow that it becomes a tight-rope, then the danger of that journey is all too clear. The tight-rope of perfection threatens its performers with inertia and insignificance on the one side, and self-righteousness and self-destruction on the other. The tight-rope we are presently walking threatens millenarianism to my right, and materialism to my left. But, let's suppose I'm still standing up there, God knows how, and I'm not so scared out of my mind so as not to think.....

What are the good things in a millenarian? Imminence need not stagnate in anticipation - it can launch itself into action. A future perspective can produce ambling complacency, not to mention nightmares:

- "Do not think about tomorrow: for tomorrow will take care of itself..."
- "Look at the birds in the sky; they neither sow nor reap..."
- "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God..."

Now is the time to dance. Now is the time to cry. The time to share. The time to be that revolutionary you always wanted to be. Now is the time to be nonviolent and loving in all situations. Now is the time to tell

that magistrate to renounce all claims to power over anyone, give up her or his job, and to go and hammer the nose-cone of a nuclear war-head. Now is the time to say "I can overcome these physical constraints without overcoming these physical constraints". (To quote Gandhi, for example: "The moment the slave resolves that s/he will no longer be a slave, her/his fetters fall. S/he frees her/himself and shows the way to others. Freedom and slavery are mental states.") With my heart and mind focussed upon God, I can accept these material happenings without aggravation, resentment, anxiety, or struggle. At best, to quote Thomas Merton:

"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."

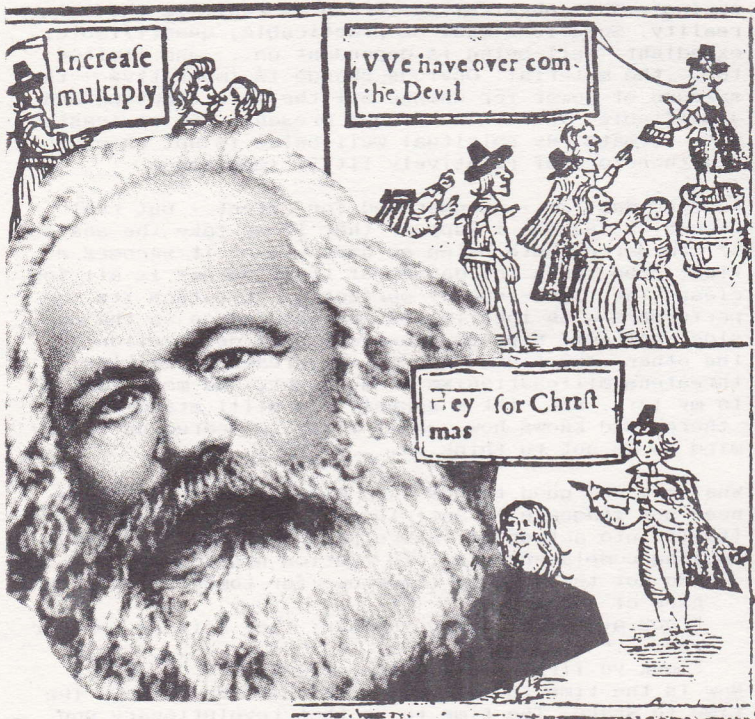
.....the poetic balance continues.....

And what, we ask ourselves, are the good things in a materialist? If anything, Christianity teaches us of incarnation - the presence of the Divine is on, and in, and through this earth we dwell upon. God is at the centre of it all. God is in the midst of it all. As one person put it, in a sermon I once heard: "Love gets involved with the shit of life...". Jesus gets crucified on a hill outside the city walls, mocked, spat upon, naked and taunted for all the world to see. Hence (I suppose true love would even do away with this "hence") we care for the sick, the poor, the oppressed, the marginalised. Whether through sympathetic action or even living solidarity and empathy (becoming poor, being marginalised).

"I was hungry and you fed me...."
Change is real, is visible - "a city on a hill". We are peacemakers. Not, as has been said, peace lovers. We forge ploughshares from swords. We hammer the nose-cones of nuclear war-heads. We distribute our material goods. We see the fruits of nonviolent action in creative land reclamation, changed hearts, self-confidence, unilateral disarmament... We are radical - we look to the roots. We begin to understand the war machine, the mechanics of imperialism - we find out whether a spanner in the works will do, or if there is some king-pin we can remove. With these realisations, I will struggle in love for liberation.

"If we see a sister or brother in need, yet close our hearts, how can we claim that we love God? Our love should not be just words and talk; it must be true love, which shows itself in action."

(1John3, 17,18)



.....synthesis.....

"Seek ye first the Kingdom of God....and all these things shall be added unto you..."
"By this shall all generations know that you are my disciples: that you love one another as I have loved you."

The middle ground is no restful compromise, but a stark cross. Pain and joy. Crying and dancing. Thinking gets me so far, I think. Being, living, gives me a sense of the eternal. The eternal breaks through time, dwells through time, for the time being. The Divine is Incarnate. I am a materialist in pursuit of the millenium. I am an anti-millenarian against materialism. I am nothing.

That one solved, I now have to translate my words into the language of action (sinner that I am, I'm still plagued by dualisms). In Nikos Kazantzakis' book, "God's Pauper", about St. Francis, Brother Leo, through whose eyes the story is told, recounts to Francis one of his many searches for God, in which he meets a holy ascetic along the way:

I bowed down, prostrated myself before her and said:
"Holy ascetic, I have set out to find God. Show me the road."

"There isn't any road." she answered.

"What is there then?" I asked, seized with terror.

"There is the abyss. Jump!"

"Abyss?" I screamed. "Is that the way?"

"....Jump!"

(Post script: It's all very well jumping into the abyss, but, if you remember, we're on a tight-rope - and the idea is to stay up there. Anyway, if I jumped I'd either land on the left or on the right. I suppose I could always crouch down precariously, swivel one hundred and eighty degrees 'till I'm dangling upside down, and then let myself go. At least when I hit the bottom, I'll occupy the middle ground....)

Book Shelf



THE POLITICS OF JESUS, John Howard Yoder

£6.95 from Paternoster Press, 3 Mount Radford Crescent, Exeter, EX2

The trouble with reading radical books which don't quite make all the conclusions you want them to, is that the consequent sense of aggravation is more intense than if the whole book had been reactionary and uninspiring. I suppose it's the curse for being such a dogmatic anarchist..... Anyway, the good bit about this book, which is the main theme, is that Jesus' life was not lived out in some political vacuum, and that a bridge between theology and social ethics is consequently essential and unavoidable. Especially unavoidable through New Testament studies, which is what alot of this book is taken up with. Those ideas which deny such a bridge are carefully put in their place for their lack of "biblical realism": Jesus' ethics as apocalyptic and therefore not permanent and generalisable; his ethical teaching as only relevant to village sociology; Jesus not facing the responsibilities which Christians now face in a Western Culture and therefore saying little relevant to our situation; Jesus as ahistorical by definition - only talking about spiritual and existential matters.

"The Possibility of a Messianic Ethic", which is the title of the first chapter, is proclaimed, with much focus upon Luke's Gospel. Not just the obvious bits like Mary's Magnificat and Jesus' declaration:

"He has anointed me to preach good news to the poor;
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives;
And recovering of sight to the blind;
To set at liberty those who are oppressed,
To proclaim the acceptable year of Jahweh."

but throughout Jesus' parables and discourses. Yoder
continued on page fourteen

The common factor in Jesus' and Gandhi's private and public experiments in reality is that all their experiments made then poor, increasingly poor in their very being. The voluntary poverty of the wilderness was completed by the state-enforced poverty of the cross. Jesus' and Gandhi's experiments in a public reality forced them into a still deeper poverty, realised in arrest, personal humiliation, and execution or assassination. An engagement with Reality at this depth is the spiritual constant analogous to the speed of light, which few approach closely enough to begin to initiate the spiritual change analogous to the physical transformation of the atom. The spiritual constant is self-emptying love for the sake of others, at an inconceivable depth in ourselves. The deeper the love, the more it will necessarily merge one's life with the life of all humanity, and thus approach the spiritual constant. In that perspective the crucifixion of Jesus is the absolute opening and invitation into a new Reality.

The transformation hypothesis will stand or fall on the assumption that there exists an objective Reality² for change which is the spiritual equivalent of $E=mc^2$. That assumption can be proven only by experiments at the centre of our lives. The key to proceeding in those experiments is to realise radically that it is not so much our lives which count but rather whatever reality for change can enter the world through them. Our lives are like

the un-mined uranium destined for a particular atomic bomb: Scattered and hidden beneath the earth, the uranium's power for change is slight. When it has been mined, and progressively purified and integrated by a series of experiments, however, the uranium can be brought gradually to the point of a nuclear explosion, whereby it is scattered across the world with an inconceivable energy. Neither at the beginning nor at the end of this process is it the particular bits of uranium which are our concern but rather the power present beneath them. When that infinite power has been released, obliterating the uranium as we know it, the uranium's purpose in the experiments has been accomplished. So it is with our lives as we experiment in Reality.

Photo of Larry Cloud Morgan at a Minuteman Missile Silo, near Kansas City (Plowshares Number 11).
Quotations from Jim Douglass' book "Lightning East to West: Jesus, Gandhi and the Nuclear Age"
A most wonderful and inspiring book.

"I tell you most solemnly, whoever believes in me will perform the same works as I do myself, they will perform even greater works, because I am going to the Father." (John 14:12) By Jesus' going into a deeper Reality through his death, the objective power of the Spirit has been released. The way has been opened. Whoever believes in Jesus' way deeply enough, a way of life and death which is a way of seeking the further release of an objective love-force in history, will perform the same works as he did, and even greater works - which are absolutely necessary today for the continuation of human history.

Lightning East to West

emphasises Jesus' proclamation of the Jubilee (see above) - a year which included four prescriptions: (1) leaving the soil fallow (2) the remission of debts (3) the liberation of slaves (4) the return to each individual of their family's property. These themes, Yoder shows, echo throughout the Gospel: "Forgive us our offenses as we forgive those who have offended us" is a mistranslation. It should read "remit us our debts as we ourselves have also remitted them to our debtors" (the verb is *aphiemi*). The parable of the "unmerciful servant" who is forgiven his debts but doesn't show the same jubilee forgiveness to a fellow servant, is consciously grounded in economic terms because "abolishing debts and liberating debtors whose insolvency had reduced them to slavery.... was not optional. It belonged to the precursor signs of the kingdom".

Yoder also emphasises the political nature of Jesus' crucifixion:

"Jesus was not just a moralist whose teachings had some political implications; he was not primarily a teacher of spirituality whose public ministry unfortunately was seen in political light; he was not just a sacrificial lamb preparing for his immolation, or a God-Man whose divine status calls us to disregard his humanity. Jesus was, in his divinely mandated (i.e. promised, anointed, messianic) prophethood, priesthood, and kingship, the bearer of a new possibility of human, social, and therefore political relationships. His baptism is the inauguration and his cross is the culmination of that new regime in which his disciples are called to share."

However, having made such conclusions that "What is Caesar's and what is God's are not on different levels, so as never to clash; they are in the same arena" - "the cross and the crown are alternatives", Yoder then tries to wrestle in the same conscientious fashion with bits of the Old Testament and Pauline writings. Various chapter headings: "Revolutionary Subordination", "Let Every Soul be Subject", "Justification by Grace through Faith". In trying to reconcile Romans 12-13 and Matthew 5-7, Yoder writes "They both call Christians to respect and be subject to the historical process in which the sword continues to be wielded and to bring about a kind of order under fire, but not to perceive in the wielding of the sword their own reconciling

ministry". There seems to me to be a great contradiction here - thereagain, I suppose it could be called a mystery. There is much talk about subordination and submission, as if redemptive in themselves. O.K., so Yoder does point out that Paul's call to mutual submission/respect - wife/husband, child/parent, slave/master - were relatively quite novel and radical approaches, but never novel and radical approaches, but, never-the-less, read as they were intended to read, they are still calls (whether consciously or not) for acquiescing to violent structural relationships, and are inescapably sexist. How does subordination relate to dignity? Subordination isn't revolutionary. You can lovingly protest and nonviolently accept consequences without condoning or co-operating with relationships based upon violence and inequality and disrespect. Also, Yoder's perception of/apology for police forces is somewhat naive (are police and armies/wars really as "structurally different" as Yoder claims?).

However, however, we can't all be anarchists (no, yes we can), and the issues are looked at (which is probably why I felt so aggravated), and Yoder's presentation is fairly accessible and free of "pedantic paraphernalia", and the main flow of Jesus' life is seen as applicable, relevant, necessary and revolutionary, and the chapters usually end on a good note (so does the book):

"A social style characterised by the creation of a new community and the rejection of violence of any kind is the theme of New Testament proclamation from beginning to end, from right to left. The cross of Christ is the model of Christian social efficacy, the power of God for those who believe."

Stephen

(P.S. Paternoster Press are soon bringing out a book called "Christian Anarchy" by V. Ellor. Watch this page.)

Consummation/Crucible

or

The Ultimate Recipe

I want to put
everything - I mean EVERYTHING
into a big hole
Stir it up
Add Spirit
and
Ignite the World.

+

Then I'd
give it back,
Transformed.

Dianne Aslett.

Vegangelical
Cookery Corner



Well, you bunch of ascetics, as the only recipe anyone sent in has since been mislaid (sorry!) and none other of you miserable sinners have even attempted to delight me with your culinary experiments/fantasies (I don't know if this is quite what I mean), you're on a bread and water diet until the next "Pinch of Salt". In fact, make that a bread and water diet without the bread.....

INGREDIENTS: Water (pref. stagnant)

DIRECTIONS: Drink (occasionally)

Love Anarchef

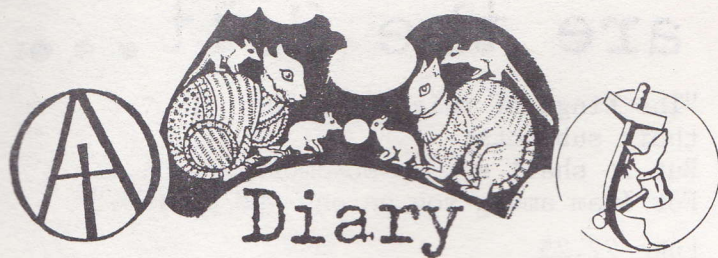
"CRY OF the heart"

IN JUNE-JULY-AUGUST I'M going for
the ROAD. IF ANYBODY IS
WISHING TO TRAVEL ALSO then
LET'S get in touch.

ANYBODY WILLING TO ORGANISE
a christian vegan ANARCHIST
CONVOY TO join with OTHER
CONVOYS, RAINBOW-WARRIORS,
GOD-SQUAD etc, then
PLEASE COMMUNICATE

TIM Greenhow,
3 Riakes rd
Darcy lever, BOLTON BL3

For only when the sparks come
Forth to one,
will we be in the light
To SHINE our healing truth
and warm the coldest HEARTS.
Let us be the flock of GOD
But not a flock to slaughter
Get in touch
Tim,



Diary

Sun 19th Apr: Easter Sunday. Dancing through and out of the graves of militarism.
 Wed 22nd - Fri 24th April: Christian CND pilgrimages from:
 FYLINGDALES to YORK
 MOLESWORTH to BEDFORD
 BURGHFIELD to SOUTHAL
 contact CCND, 22-24 Underwood St., London N1 7JG
 Sat 25th April: CND/FOE National Demo. 11am Victoria Embankment. 2pm Hyde Park. Interested in flogging "Pinches" and badges? Contact Roger & Stephen, 24 South Road, Hockley, BIRMINGHAM B18
 Mon 4th May: Beating the Bounds at Molesworth. Contact: APF(Anglican Pacifist Fellowship), St. Mary's Vicarage, Bayswater Rd., OXFORD
 Fri 8th/Sat 9th - Sun 10th May: Christians Interested in Anarchism (CIA) Gathering. Yippee. in Brum. See piece somewhere in this mag. Contact: CIA, 24 South Rd., Hockley, BIRMINGHAM B18
 Sat 6th June: PEACE PENTECOST 1987. Further details from CCND.
 20th - 28th June: BREAD NOT BOMBS WEEK. Details SAAT, 11 Goodwin St., London N4 3HQ
 25th July - Mon 3rd August: New University Skills & Knowledge Sharing Festival (in a field). Contact: New University, c/o 24 South Rd., Hockley, BIRMINGHAM B18
 Fri 28th - Mon 31st August: GREENBELT FESTIVAL.
 More info "Pinch" number seven

Old Pinches



Well, as we all know, in years to come "A Pinch of Salt" will be a collector's item; another idealistic spark that So, why not obtain those issues you never knew existed, impress friends etc.

ISSUE ONE: "Sold" out.

ISSUE TWO: Easter*Poem*Earth Camp*Holy Innocents* Towards an Anarchic Church?*lotsa letters*more poems*Making Music with a Leper's Bell*Christian-archy*and more*more*more*

ISSUE THREE: Pentecost*Thoughts on Spontaneous Order*CIA Gathering*Life Camp*Civil Disobedience As Prayer*The World Turned Upside Down*A Feeling I have*lotsa letters*not alot of poem*and*bits*and* pieces*

ISSUE FOUR: They Shall Beat Their Swords Into Ploughshares*Reclaiming the City*Previous Incarnations*Don't Start the Revolution Without Me*Spear Into Pruning Hooks*Quaker With a Hammer*poems* letters*On Trying to Love Police People*Contempt of Court*and*m*x*r*x

ISSUE FIVE: Black and Red cover!*Greater Love Has No One*The Love of Jesus*You Will Go out With Joy* Dreams and Reflections*The Thoughts and Practices of a Young Quaker Anarchist*letters*poems*Book Shelf*Opposing the Evil of Apartheid with the Power of the Holy Spirit*Faith as Adventure*and so much more it's difficult to put into words*

Oh yes! Plus Vegangelical Cookery Corner in each issue. If you want any of the above, just write to the Brum address.

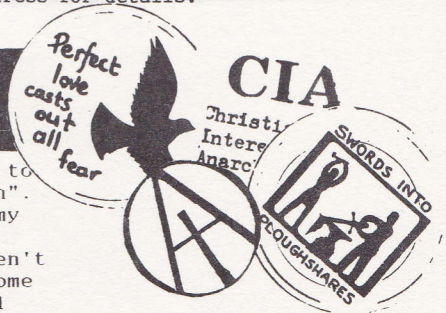
CIA Gathering

All previous gatherings have been fairly tiddly affairs, and we were hoping, perchance, that there might be more out of the closet coming, and lots of people will come to this one. Look at the exciting (proposed) timetable:
 Friday(8th May): rolling food, arrivals and introductions.
 Saturday (9th May): morning prayers, breakfast
 various discussions and food (lloking at role of Jesus in our ideas)
 showing of the video "Into the King of Prussia" in evening (about US Plow-shares action)

Sunday (10th May): our own service
 "A Pinch of Salt"
 actions and activities (including a bit on community)

Obviously, open to change and addition (suggestions?).
 Write to the Birmingham address for details.

BADGES



I have made some badges to raise money for "A Pinch". Please send an SAE for my promotional leaflet and order form (which I haven't produced yet - but if some one sends an SAE it will be an incentive). The badges are individually crafted and hand-painted using techniques passed down foot to mouth for millenia. Go on, punk, make my day.
 ANARCHAPITALIST PRODUCTS, c/o Stephen, 24 South Rd., Hockley, BIRMINGHAM B18

Interpersonal Transactional Marketing Device

The cover price (at least one pence) is a new interpersonal transactional marketing device. The idea being to boost readership. That simple act of giving (at least) one pence, whilst no great financial liability, could be just that personal relationship that person needed in order to cement themselves to the eternal and (still) unfathomable cause of christianarchism, or whatever (You know... that "How much is it?"... "What a bargain!"... "I think I've got some change in my pocket..." "Here you are" and that tentative moment as they drop the money into your hand trying not to touch you. So much more human than simply thrusting it into some one's bewildered arms and never hearing from them again, or leaving it lying in your local Christian Bookshop, unbeknown to the owners... now that's an idea). I ramble (what's new). Anyway, it's only an experiment. So order some extra copies NOW!

Henceforth Herewego



Look at the birds in the sky, they neither have bank accounts..... Hereby and henceforth and herewith and herewego "A Pinch of Salt" has its own bank account, under the name of "A Pinch of Salt"! Talking of which, just before this issue comes out, the total pennies in the aforesaid account are £44.55. Whoopee? Not quite. Roger's loan of £130 still has to be paid off, which leaves us -£85.45... ..and then there's this issue's printing costs, stamps etc.... So do not worry..... seek ye first the Kingdom of God..... do not worry about tomorrow; it has enough worries of its own.

Imaginative bank robberies? We love 'em.

For those of you who can't find a subscription slip anywhere else in the mag, here y'are:

Yes. Please send me "A Pinch of Salt" as regularly as possible. I enclose a donation of £.....million /I'm broke (cheques payable to "A Pinch of Salt")

I am..... My address is.....

You are the Salt...

"The Kings of this world Lord it over their subjects;
But it shall not be so among you.....
For I am among you as one who serves."

Luke 22,25

Photo on cover by Mikk Carnes:
The 10th International Nonviolent March for
Demilitarisation in Denmark. The soldier's
name is Frank (I think).



POET'S MANIFESTO

Take back the land for our descendants
Take back the earth for our poor souls
Take back the Commons for our ancestors
Take back the soil for our wholeselves
Take back the empty property
Take back the empty officeblocks
Take back the empty factory floors
Take back the empty homes & shops
Take back the military training-grounds
Take back the army camps and barracks
Take back the airfields and shipyards
Take back the food & ordnance depots
Take back your roads and footpaths
Take back your roots and birthplace
Take back your time
Take back your space

dennis gould



Turn the World Upside Down

The money required to provide adequate food, water, education, health and housing for everyone in the world has been estimated at \$17 billion a year. It is a huge sum of money ... about as much as the world spends on arms every two weeks.



If undelivered, please return to:
"A Pinch of Salt", c/o 24 South Rd., Hockley, BIRMINGHAM 18

