

Christi-Anarchy /kristiaeneki/ n. Christlike life; lifestyle that is characterized by the radical, non-violent, sacrificial compassion of Jesus the Christ. A way of life distinguished by commitment to love and to justice; to the marginalized and disadvantaged; so as to enable them to realize their potential, as men and women made in the image of God; through self-directed, other-oriented intentional groups and organizations.

- Dave Andrews in *Not Religion, but love*

a punch of salt



FREE! or nearest offer

An anarchist is anyone who doesn't need a cop to tell him what to do.

-Ammon Hennacy

Liberals say we should end employment discrimination.

I say we should end employment.

- Bob Black

Words are as strong and powerful as bombs, as napalm.

-Dorothy Day

The people who were honoured in the Bible were the false prophets. It was the ones *we* call the prophets who were jailed and driven into the desert.

-Noam Chomsky

We must become extremists for love.

- Martin Luther King Junior

Inside APoS...

The Western church is being shunted from its historic place of privilege. For some this is a cause of panic. After 1600 years (there-about) of "Christian-values" enforced by state violence they wonder if anyone will take them seriously without fear of God and God's earthly agents. Perhaps this panicky fascism hovers over us all: the will to self.

But some, move tentatively towards this new opportunity to be powerless, discovering a God who hates violence and domination. They don't see the state as the source of our salvation but as one of many forms of oppression. And some of them call themselves anarchists.

Issue 20 includes a reprint of the article by Dan Banks (2) to allow for some of the readers who responded (4,7,8) to his invitation to 'talk'.

Along with the abolition of work (9-10) and the restoration of community led justice (3+5) we begin to discern a new world being built in the shell of the old.

Love, peace, and anarchy,
Keith Hebden
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What Would Jesus Be Arrested For?

By Dan Stork Banks



Like many Christians, I am suspicious of Britain's nuclear deterrent. I have long felt that nuclear apologetics were rooted in enlightenment rationalism. Furthermore the example of Christ is that of suspicion of 'the powers' and subversive resistance to the causes of material and spiritual death.

You may be surprised to learn then that last year I policed an AWE demonstration and engaged in my fair share of crowd control. At one point I found myself in the sad position of having to get hands on with a fellow Christian who had thrown himself into the road to stop the traffic. Naturally I needed to think this one through. What had gone so wrong that two believers had ended up in this position? I would like to share some of my reflections of resistance and policing with you.

First, those attempting to enter the AWE facility put lives at risk. Clearly if we allowed anyone to enter, eventually someone would unleash terrible destruction. Of course one might argue that therefore such a site should not exist; I don't disagree, but it does, so it needs to be policed.

Secondly, the human road-blocks I tried to stop, impacted more than the AWE staff getting to work. Road blocks, cause traffic jams, and potentially prevent sick people getting to treatment, the unemployed getting to job interviews, and so on. Is this how Jesus exemplified challenging the powers?

Whilst Jesus would have no problem breaking the law, or causing an outbreak of public disorder (his disruption in the temple was a breach of section 4 of the Public Order Act)

he also told Peter to "put away the sword" when the temple guards came to take him away. Clearly there is a 'right' and 'wrong' way for his followers to stand against the powers.

Thirdly, whilst many protesters were lawful and gracious, some acted in a very un-Christian-like way. I am all for co-belligerency with like-minded people outside the church on issues of social justice. but some who attend protests, are disrespectful, provocative, and violent towards police. My colleagues found it difficult to distinguish between Christians who campaigned with grace, and those who abused, patronised, and insulted us at every opportunity. The peace of Christ was not being communicated to us. Saint Paul's counsel of "not being unequally yoked with unbelievers" comes to mind.

Jesus is the great leveller of opposites; suspicion and anger cannot last long where Christ rules. These principles equally apply to Christian. This can be achieved through the prevent breaking of bread and through mutual understanding.

I pray that Christian protestors will offer more than a protest against the nuclear deterrent, but go further and separate themselves from those who provoke the police and disrupt public freedom. Not only would the nuclear powers be challenged, but so too would protesters who conduct violence in the name of peace. God willing, this might draw other protestors away from violence. It could mean that Christian radicals would lose their reputations amongst their fellow protesters; indeed they might even gain a good reputation from the police! Such a proposition may make skin crawl for some Christian radicals, but I am pretty certain Jesus also spent time with the most unpalatable of all in society: those who enforced the law.

Brothers and Sisters let's talk...

Dan is a member of the National Council of the Christian Police Association. This article is repeated from last issue to put responses in context.

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Don't be shy.

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Pray.

There's a thin (blue) line between violence and non-violence

By Laurens Otter

Dear Dan Stork Banks,

You say you oppose nuclear weaponry though you didn't register as a conscientious objector as some of your fellow police officers over the last fifty years. And on the basis of your doubts about AWE you presume to lecture disarmers on how we should demonstrate.

I am aware that forming a moral opinion takes time and one doesn't, in the early stages, necessarily make all the principled stands that one would later. Sixty one years ago – to my continuing shame – I lacked the courage to go to prison rather than do national service. But if you are in those early stages of forming an opinion, do you not think it might be a little presumptuous to lecture those who have fully formed views?

The NVDA (Nonviolent direct action) movement has always worked on the assumption nuclear weapons are the moral equivalent of gas chambers. You may not accept such a view, fair enough, but don't then pretend that your "suspicion" about nuclear weaponry and power means that you and those you arrest or batter with your truncheon have the same views.

The above may seem harsh, in which case I apologise. Perhaps if I explain that at the last AWE demo' which I attended, Easter 2008, one of your number hit my wife with a truncheon, she was about to have major surgery for cancer and the bruise form it which she still has, made lying in a hospital bed somewhat uncomfortable. He too, in subsequent discussion, claimed to be a Christian.

nuclear weapons are the moral equivalent of gas chambers

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If, on the other hand, you do accept that the AWE is as evil as the gas chambers; try looking again at your third paragraph, "of course one might argue that therefore such a sight could not exist; I don't disagree, but it does, so it needs to be policed." Tricky, don't you think? Would the Nuremberg war-crimes judges have been impressed by "potentially prevent sick people..?"

You seem to think that NVDA groups should always drive out from demo's all who are not fully committed to NVDA. Occasionally there are demo's that are strictly nonviolent and ask people who have not attended discussions or nonviolence training to refrain from taking part; but it is not our job to act as an extra level of police, keeping demonstrators away from targets. We could not, even if we wanted to; nor would the police be in the least pleased if we could; and it is sheer hypocrisy to ask pacifist demonstrators to distance themselves from others and so split the wider movement.

The first imprisonments for civil disobedience at a UK nuclear site were in December 1958. We were all hand-chosen pacifists. On the first demonstration, after we were all carried out of the site, we saw someone – not one of us – being man-handled out and fighting back. Our organiser went over and asked him his name and to leave as he was obviously not a pacifist. A fortnight later he turned up in court: Chief Supt. Simpson. Three years later in Trafalgar Square there was a man standing on one of the plinths yelling at us to get stuck into the police. He was, you've guessed it, a policeman. There had been three or four such instances between. Last month, outside the Bank of England, two people yelling for a fight were asked to desist by their fellow demonstrators. They went to the police cordon, showed their warrant cards, and were allowed out of the kettle. This was seen by many.

Laurens is a veteran peacemaker and member of the Society of Sacramental Socialists. He's been a contributor to *A Pinch of Salt* since the early issues of the 1980s.



Towards a Just Society

by Sophie Hebden

My two-year-old has a story about a cheeky monkey who goes around playing pranks on the other animals in the jungle. Later his mother finds out, and her authority forces him to put right his wrongs – such as untying the elephant's trunk and cleaning the flamingo's muddy feathers – and to say sorry. This is the essence of restorative justice. It gives victims and offenders the chance to meet, to convey and understand the impact of the crime and to ask questions and do something to repair the harm. There is evidence to show it reduces re-offending compared to the alternative – penal justice. The restorative justice model should be the norm, according to the gospel of Matthew. In chapter five, Jesus advises us to settle matters with our adversary outside of the courts.

Much biblical narrative bemoans the shortfalls of judges - people susceptible to bribery or just sheer laziness - appealing to God as the true fair judge. How much better do we feel when we can talk through our contentions with our families, colleagues and neighbours and resolve things? Our courts are not perfect. Prisons are horrible places. So if we can avoid these establishments and provide a small-scale, community-based system of justice that works, all the better. There are limitations, however. Restorative justice cannot be used if one party is not willing to cooperate. Such cases have to be dealt with using traditional, adversarial justice.

There is also the need for an agent to facilitate bringing the two parties together – the equivalent of cheeky monkey's mother. This role can be taken up by teachers in schools, bosses in workplaces, managers in hospitals or, if the situation has escalated, the police. Provided they are willing.

According to the Home Office, the police have been using restorative justice processes as part of adult Cautioning practice for some time, and apparently it is now 'a mainstream method for delivering Reprimands and Final Warnings for juveniles'. Thames Valley Police cite an example of what they call 'Restorative community conferencing', in which a group of shopkeepers were outraged by the behaviour, over a long period of time, of a group of youths who congregated in their shopping centre. The police were called on numerous occasions, some youths were arrested and taken to court, others were Cautioned, but the behaviour deteriorated. Local police officers negotiated with the shopkeepers, some of the young people involved, and the Youth Service, and organised a restorative community conference to address the effects of the behaviour and find solutions.

Jesus advises us to settle matters with our adversary outside the courts.

The conference was attended by thirty people, lasted a day, and ended in agreeing a code of behaviour that the young people undertook to enforce themselves. It also involved the Youth Service organising extra activities for young people. Behaviour in the shopping centre improved and police call-outs were reduced. The shopkeepers were satisfied that their complaints had been taken seriously and the young people felt they had been treated fairly and their needs considered.

Continued page 5...

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Objections to anarchism by George Barret 1888 – 1917

No. 14 What will you do with the criminal?

There is an important question which should come before this, but which our opponents never seem to care to ask. First of all, we have to decide who are the criminals, or rather, even before this, we have to come to an understanding as to who is to decide who are the criminals? Today the rich man says to the poor man: "If we were not here as your guardians you would be beset by robbers who would take away from you all your possessions." But the rich man has all the wealth and luxury that the poor man has produced, and whilst he claims to have protected the people from robbery he has secured for himself the lion's share in the name of the law. Surely then it becomes a question for the poor man which he has occasion to dread most – the robber, who is very unlikely to take anything from him, or the law, which allows the rich man to take all the best of that which is manufactured.

To the majority of people the criminals in society are not to be very much dreaded even today, for they are for the most part people who are at war with those who own the land and have captured all the means of life. In a free society, where no such ownership existed, and where all that is necessary could be obtained by all that have any need, the criminal will always tend to die out. Today, under our present system, he is always tending to become more numerous.

... from page 4

All well and good but can restorative justice be extended to more serious crimes? Can it replace normal criminal justice? In a paper published in October 2005 entitled 'Repairing the harm in society: the future direction of justice?', Martin Wright advocates six principles to improve restorative justice in practice.

First, everyone should have access to restorative justice – perhaps through local mediation centres. Second, there should be maximum community involvement. People have a right to handle their own conflicts rather than have them 'stolen' by professionals. The community also has a role in making available suitable reparations. Third, state intervention should be minimised.

In New Zealand, less serious cases are diverted out of the criminal justice system, using 'family group conferencing', in which a young person's family work out a suitable action plan. Fourth, everyone should be treated with respect. The

criminal justice system is not always respectful. Victims are given little consideration except as witnesses; offenders have

little chance to explain their actions or apologise; people from ethnic minorities are more likely to be imprisoned and less likely to be employed in the criminal justice system. Fifth, the restorative justice system must provide a quality service. For example, not giving up on the offender if they breach their contract. Why they didn't make reparation as agreed? Perhaps they felt it was too severe, or their circumstances have changed. Sixth, prevention. The informal context of restorative justice enables participants to speak freely, whereas in court it is in the defendant's interests to admit as little as possible. Participants can make changes, based on the information shared, to improve things for everyone and to build peace in the community. These principles get close to my understanding of anarchism, and show how restorative justice could replace penal justice, even for serious crimes, were it to be fostered in communities.



Shaken Down During the 2nd Sorrowful Mystery

by Ciaran O'Reilly

Sometime during the second decade of the sorrowful mysteries, I had a sense we were not alone. Martin, Katrina and I sat in a small East London park facing the Excel Centre where the twenty most powerful government leaders were gathered to rearrange deckchairs on their sinking ship. Thousands of police had been deployed around the Excel Centre keeping the few hundred protesters a quarter of a mile from the site. A case of over-catering.

We somehow managed to get through to this small park for a face off with the building. We were praying seated at a park table when this big guy leaned over me, I looked up to see an automatic rifle in his hands and a pistol strapped to his knee. He told me to stand up slowly. As I did I went to place a paper in my pocket he said "Keep your hands visible". This guy was serious, I extended my arms away from my body for a frisking and looked around to see four other guys and a gal in paramilitary uniforms circling our table all armed. six of them with twelve weapons, three of us with a bible, rosary beads and liturgy sheet. I like these odds.

As Martin stood up he kept reciting the rosary, didn't break stride. My copy of the Guardian began to flutter in the breeze under the park table I thought I should step out and stand on it so it wouldn't blow away. I then

thought, 'I really like my left kneecap', stayed still, refused to give my name and was detained under anti-terrorist legislation, fifth time in the past year in three jurisdictions!

The cops paced around methodically as they checked Katrina and Martin's bags....these folks were the real deal, the last card in the cop deck. After the four million CCTV's, the fluorescent jacket guys, the riot squads with shields and batons, come these folks I guess.

Our visitors seemed satisfied that our liturgy sheet was not indeed a map of the Excel Centre as reported by their Intel. After we were released from the mystical anti-terror detention and the super cops departed, we returned to prayer and further reflection on these dark times we're in and what small human response we could muster.

Outnumbered, out-resourced, outflanked, but not out of the game - Katrina produced a rainbow PEACE banner and Martin drew up a placard with a quote from Catholic Worker founder Dorothy Day "**Our Problems Stem from our Acceptance of this Filthy Rotten System!**" and made our way toward the G20 gathering.

Across the city others were being raided, arrested, recovering from wounds and long hours of detention/kettling from the previous day's scene outside the Bank of England. A lot more good folks, following weeks of media hype and scaremongering, were internally migrating away from expressing dissent in this historic moment wherein the climate and the economy crash. Where this filthy rotten system based on production for production's sake rather than meeting human needs, that operates in the denial that the environment does not have limits to exploitation.

The only way out of this atomised fear and off this sinking ship is nonviolent resistance and solidarity.

<http://www.londoncatholicworker.org> **6**

There is a general misperception, even among Christians, that police represent the common good. For example, Mennonite ethicist Duane Friesen says, “The aim of community policing is to nurture the common good of the community.” Tobias Winright, one of the first Christian ethicists to focus on the police, also claims that the police “share a stake in the common good.” The common good is such a pervasive theme in just policing that a full ten percent of the pages in *Just Policing, Not War* mention it.

Just policing advocates claim police promote the common good without attending to history. They assume police are as natural and ancient as social life itself. They repeat the state’s cliché that the police are a thin blue line between order and chaos. However, history shows that rather than being a natural part of society that serves the common good, the police are a relatively recent invention designed for an expansive new political order: the nation-state.

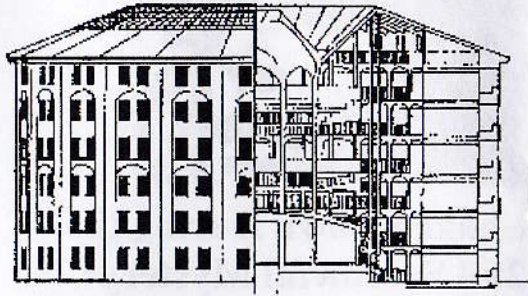
In Acts 21, Luke reveals the Roman approach towards crime. In this chapter, Paul’s presence in the temple caused some people to cry out, “Men of Israel, help . . .” This was the common cry made by anyone who had been victimized. When someone called for help in this way, everyone nearby was expected to aid the person. Thus a crowd aided the men and they dragged Paul out of the temple and were about to kill him in the streets. Responding to what sounded and looked like a riot, the military commander gathered some soldiers in order to quell a potentially unsettling disturbance (Acts 21:31). They placed Paul in chains, and assumed he was an Egyptian rebel who previously stirred up a rebellion (Acts 21:38).

That the Ephesian and Judean Jews were familiar with hollering for help in the event of a crime shows that it was common practice. The authorities’ response also confirms that they were not concerned with petty crimes, but with disturbances that threatened Rome’s smooth and orderly reign designed for resource extraction.

The first modern police forces arose in

Policing and the common good

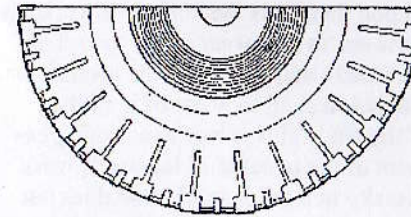
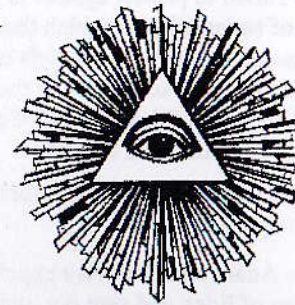
by Andy Alexis-Baker



Europe. The term “police” began to spread across Europe in the late fifteenth century. The first section of all police ordinances, from 1530 through the eighteenth century, regulated worship life, church attendance and doctrine. With the church in disorder because of the Reformation, the burgeoning states immediately filled the power vacuum assuming responsibility for people’s spiritual and moral well-being. In contrast to medieval law, which simply codified existing norms, these police ordinances helped create a society in which the state executed the same moral power the church had previously assumed. Furthermore, they had to monopolize the right to use violence and traditional forms of recompense. To support this transition, the royal courts and their theorists claimed that they were acting for the “common good” (gemeine Beste). “Common good” referred to preserving the state’s particular interests under the guise of enlightenment universality.

Just policing advocates claim police promote the common good without attending to history

The ideal model of this policing, according to social philosopher Michel Foucault, was the Jeremy Bentham’s panopticon. Bentham had



designed an ideal circular prison with a tower in the centre. From this tower, one could see into any prison cell but inmates could not see into the tower and take note whether they were being watched or not. “They are like so many cages, so many small theatres, in which each actor is alone, perfectly individualized and constantly visible.” This panopticon was the ideal vision of power in the nineteenth century. Bentham laid down the principle that power should be visible and unverifiable. Visible: the inmate will constantly have before his eyes the tall outline of the central tower from which he is spied upon. Unverifiable: the inmate must never know whether he is being looked at at any one moment; but he must be sure that he may always be so. This technique was a perfect fit for the broad agenda of the police ordinances. Being visible and invisible, the police played an integral part in creating the new order.

The English had a long tradition of valuing their freedom and defining themselves over against the French. They viewed the continental system as tyrannical. Yet by the early nineteenth century wealthy Englishmen were calling for a police institution. They began to see demands for lower bread prices and calls

The term “police” began to spread across Europe in the late fifteenth century.

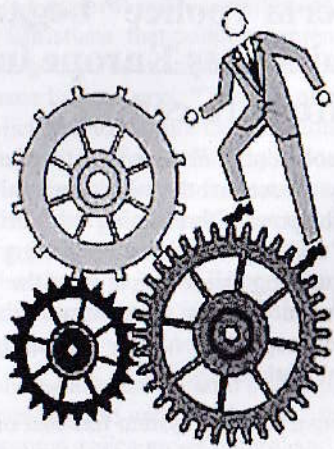
to fire crooked officials as a threat to the fabric of society. Consequently, when the wealthy accused the poor of threatening the fabric of “society” in using traditional bargaining techniques involving direct action, what the wealthy meant was that the poor were threatening the new capitalist order by appealing to traditional justice.

By seeking a policing system like that of France and Germany, the English were demanding greater control over workers, peasants and poor people. There was fierce working class resistance to the Metropolitan Police Act of 1829, which established the first English police force. Despite their cries of “No standing armies!” the art of policing, perfected in panopticonism quelled these demonstrations; outright rebellions withered and failed.

Greater control over workers, peasants, and poor people

Christian claims that police represent the common good do so without attending to history. Police are a recent invention that have neither represented the common good nor benefited the marginalized. Instead, police have promoted particular interests siding with the dominant racial and economic groups. The police did not result from inevitable forces of history but from calculated moves. Christians should be cautious because history does not vanish but materializes in the present. As police historian Eric Monkkonen wrote, “The historian must preserve a radical doubt as to the need for police, thus insuring that the proper energy goes into accounting for their existence.”

Andy writes and researches languages, theology, and politics, he is a Mennonite and a founder of jesusradicals.com



Against Work

by Peter Pick

The current Labour government is sharpening its claws on the helpless. I had long expected an attack on the “undeserving poor”, ever since there was Frank Field, back in the days when Blair was first elected.

There has always a puritanical edge to the Labour Party, and this Calvinist Stalinism is now manifested in an attack on the disabled and the single mother. Frank was altogether too unthinkable at the time, but since then a mean spirited Presbyterianism has gained the ascendancy, and the smart young professional James Purnell has emerged as smiling executioner. Purnell claims that the depressed and the disabled, forced into taking low paid low skilled insecure jobs will be “happier” as a result of spending most of their waking lives in pitiful mind-numbing subservience, frying burgers and operating the tills in petrol stations. I am not about to deny that there are many on Incapacity Benefit who were placed there when it suited governments both Conservative and Labour to remove them from the unemployment register, and nor would I pretend that motherhood has not long been seen as a career move, a way of getting a flat and an income, a rational reaction to female teenage powerlessness and impoverishment.

What I wish to protest against is the assumptions of superiority on which these policies are based, the imported models of privatised welfare-to-work schemes and the psychological distortions of the rhetoric of empowerment with which it is defended.

Culture may not be all about history, but history helps.

When Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden and sent out into the desolate, fallen world, chief among the curses placed upon them was the burden of work. From now on ‘in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread’, and ‘cursed is the ground for thy sake, in toil shall thou eat of it all the days of thy life’. This is hardly a ringing endorsement of the benefits of labour. If work is a necessity in a fallen world that does not suggest that it is either beneficial or improving, rather it is another regrettable consequence of transgression, an enforced effort to correct for that which has always already gone wrong.

Throughout history work has been seen in this light, as a necessary evil. The blessed Greeks had slaves to do that unpleasant sort of thing for them while they contemplated philosophy. There is no suggestion that the Roman nobility, lounging on their couches and disporting themselves in their vomitoria felt that labour would be improving. According to Thomas Aquinas, everything moves by its own nature towards rest, and in rest finds its perfection.

The Chinese idea of ‘cutting wood and drawing water’ combines contemplation and toil, but is based on an ideal of self-sufficient agrarianism far removed from the industrial or post-industrial present, where wage slavery is a better description of the general system of employment than self-sufficient agrarianism. Not that I wish to advocate subsistence agriculture, you understand.

Christ had a less respectful attitude to honest toil. Not only did he take fishermen away from their boats but he is quoted as

saying “Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?” (Matthew 6:26): a sound critique of the agrarian economy, only a little more positive than his well-known judgement on the money-changers in the Temple.

It is proper then to consider work in this light: a necessary evil, one which we have to perform in order to attain a greater good: to preserve life, to feed and clothe ourselves and our dependants, and this is the attitude which I believe most of us take towards work, a practical attitude which does not preclude the possibility that ideally we would like to escape from this necessity and return to Eden where we belong, in perfect rest.



In fact, such is the prosperity of our society and the abundance - indeed excess - of material goods available to us that there is no need for most of us to work half as much as we do or indeed for many of us to work at all. Like a shark on a bicycle capitalism feels it can only survive whilst going forwards, “growth” is considered essential to economic wellbeing, and is used as a measure of economic health. It is our obsessive desire for growth which grinds the planet on which we depend to dust, boils the air and poisons the water. As if growth was an undisputed good.

Work destroys not only the world surrounding us, but also those who engage in it. The

history of industry is a history of disease, mining disasters, drowning, poisonings and accidents. Shift workers die early. Of the two ‘epidemics’ which currently infect the west or the hive mind of the media - obesity and stress - stress at least is directly attributable to our highly pressurised work culture, and that culture is certainly at least implicated in obesity. Does not a constant cultural emphasis on growth and expansion have some influence on our own personal expansion as individuals? the passing of a more leisured age.

The uncomfortable disjunction between our desires and our culture is made entirely explicit by the commonly quoted phrase ‘work/life balance’. What does this phrase reveal when examined? A clear and plainly expressed opposition between ‘work’ and ‘life’, obviously conceived as mutually antagonistic. Work and Life are thus set out as antithetical absolutes, things or entities as distinctly opposed as night and day, or pleasure and pain. How can this opposition have entered, un-remarked, into the script of every media voice or lifestyle pundit? How has this phrase passed without comment despite this extraordinary choice of opposites? Perhaps because it is a formulation that holds within it a tacitly understood truth of our culture, a truth which cannot be mentioned, a heresy.

This formulation makes clear the unacknowledged fact that we have our lives when we are not at work. When at work we are not really - or not properly - alive. This is not life, it is work; an area, a large area of our lives in which we do not live, or at least not as ourselves.

Idleness is the highest honour society can bestow on an individual. It is the mark of a truly civilised and meaningfully egalitarian society that it could offer this singular gift to the poor as well as the rich. We must deplore the passing of a more leisured age.

Peter is a member of ASIRA: Academics interested in Religious Anarchism, part of the Anarchist Studies Network.

Faith Groups to blockade AWE Aldermaston

They will beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.
Isaiah 2:4

Trident Ploughshares

Trident Ploughshares is organising a big blockade of Aldermaston for Monday 15th February 2010 from 7am. This huge nuclear bomb factory has seven gates. The Tadley Gate has been assigned to faith groups.

So often the public gets the impression that religions are in competition with each other. This is our chance to stand together in opposition to a monstrous evil, and to witness to the significance of faith in the struggle for a peaceful world.

Trident Ploughshares is co-ordinating the blockade. They will be providing legal support if necessary, and if arrests take place, support for those arrested.

Groups coming will be organising and training themselves.

We will arrive fully prepared to start blockading at 7a.m. on Monday 15th February. Everyone will gather after the action for food and de-briefs.

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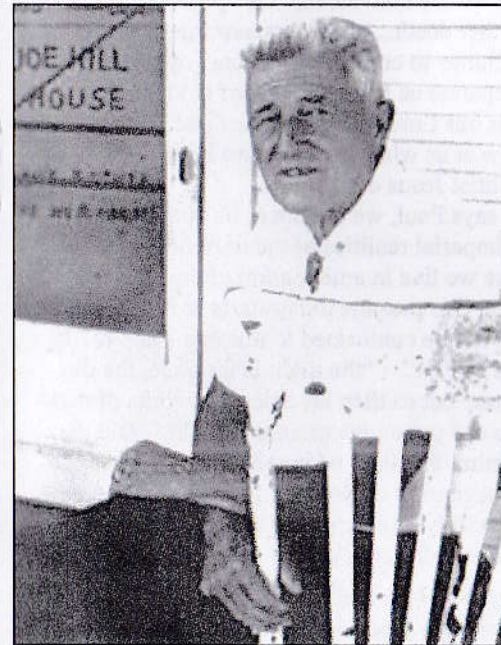
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To contribute an article or artwork to *A Pinch of Salt* email editor: apos@gmail.com

Ammon Hennacy

(Born Ohio, 1893 – 1970)



Ammon Hennacy saw himself as a role model for activists; a 'one man revolution.' He was in and out of prison most of his life for dissenting against state violence. Hennacy considered going to prison a prophetic act and essential to his non-violent protest.

Influenced by Leo Tolstoy's theology and Dorothy Day's practice, he was baptized a Roman Catholic in 1952. He remained a Catholic anarchist much of his life co-editing the *New York Catholic Worker* from 1953 to 1961, and remains an influential figure for this international movement. He also wrote and distributed his own tracts and books on politics and religion.

Hennacy refused or evaded tax, often by working for food and shelter. He was vegetarian by default of practical simplicity and would often give up his bed for strangers. As an advocate for non-violent resistance he challenged both state and Church. He would often picket churches and military bases infuriating the former with his insistence on doing so 'as a Catholic'.

A successful organiser, he established one of the first Social Workers' Unions and four houses of hospitality: 'Joe Hill Houses'. Between 1953 and 1961 he stirred up resentment against New York's annual air raid drills seeing these as a deliberate attempt to control through fear. With relentless street walking, his use of media and a network of other activists he generated enough momentum that in 1961 around 2000 people publicly defied the law and the drills were ceased.

by Keith Hebden

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To Hell with Romans 13

By Brian Walsh

An extract from the sermon originally Delivered February 6, 2007 at Christian group in Canada

Let me put my cards on the table right from the outset. I am sick and tired of hearing Christians who have something at stake in the status quo of economic, social and political systems of injustice appealing to Romans 13 to legitimate unswerving obedience to oppressive and deceitful regimes.

“Well, how can you use language of subverting the empire when Paul says that we are to submit to the governing authorities?”

And for years I have attempted to be patient in my response. My patience has run out. In the light of Guantanamo Bay, the deceit of the administration in leading America into war in Iraq, the refusal of that state to submit to almost any significant international treaty, and the idolatrous protection of the revered “American Way of Life.”

In the face of undeniable evidence of the human impact on global warming, I’ve lost it. I’ve got no more patience for this appeal to Romans 13 to justify idolatry, deceit, violence, repression and imperialism.

To hell with the Romans 13 of the Religious Right! To hell with the Romans 13 of lackeys of imperialism! To hell with the Romans 13 of those who are comfortable in Babylon!

Or to make my point more biblically clear – to hell with Romans 13 read out of context of Romans 12, the rest of Paul’s letter to the Romans, the life of Jesus, and the whole prophetic testimony of the Hebrew prophets. Let’s assume that Paul is not an idiot and that he doesn’t go about blatantly contradicting himself. Here he has been writing a letter to a community at the very heart of the empire and from the get-go it has been clear that this is a counter-imperial gospel that he proclaims. It is the gospel of Christ, not Caesar that is to shape their lives together as a unified community.

13 And it is in Jesus Christ our Lord

that we are more than conquerors when that false Lord Caesar imposes on us hardship, distress, persecution, nakedness, peril and the sword.

“For we are convinced,” the apostle writes, that “neither death...nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers...will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Let the rulers and powers throw at us what they will, we have the victory in Christ Jesus our Lord.

No, says Paul, we are not to be conformed to the imperial realities of the present age, because we live in anticipation of the age to come. Our passage today starts at Romans 12.2 – do not be conformed to this age – and really ends at 13.12 – “the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armour of light.” And the question that Paul addresses in these verses at the beginning of Romans 13 is, “how do we live wisely as children of light in the midst of an age of darkness?”

If I were to summarize what I think Paul is up to here, I would say that he is calling us to be as wise as serpents and as innocent as doves.

Don’t be naïve about the violence of the state, Paul tells these Christians. Handle the state with care, he counsels. Some authorities really should be feared. But don’t allow such fear to be the last word on the way you comport yourself in this world.

“Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.”

And sometimes, such love – even of the enemy, even of the persecutor – will require disobedience, because you are subject to the very same God that the authorities are subject to. And when they inhibit your freedom to obey this God of liberation, then you are subjects of the kingdom of this God, not slaves of any regime – duly authorized or not.

<http://empireremixed.com/2008/02/14/to-hell-with-romans-13/>

A Pinch of Salt to shake the Empire

In 1930 Gandhi led a march to the Indian coast challenging colonial tax-theft. As he held high a lump of salty mud he said, “with this I am shaking the foundations of the British Empire”.

Gandhi and his companions were protesting against what they saw as an unjust tax law. It was illegal for Indians to make their own salt yet they were taxed heavily on the salt they bought from the state. The result was more hardship for the poorest to the benefit of the wealthy.

Looking back at that historically significant event the contemporary dissenter would do well to remember that the British Empire wasn’t centred at Dandi beach. Until that day it is likely that most British administrators, save the local ‘Collector’, would struggle to know where it was on the map.

Perhaps Gandhi was advised by friends on how to tackle this injustice. “Go to Delhi and dump a sack of rice outside Lord Irwin’s house”, “Find a way to put salt into his water supply”, “send bags of salt to London with a petition for tax relief”. But Gandhi did none of these things nor in any other way petitioned the government or even protested the injustice. He could see that in this case the power for change lay in the hands of the people through making their own salt, thus rendering the salt law impotent.

Just as Jesus’ most revolutionary message is in the way he lived his life, so Gandhi has discovered that the most revolutionary act is the one that is independent of state. How do we challenge the principalities and powers? Creatively seeking first the kingdom of God. Power isn’t scared of megaphones and placards; he’s scared we may turn our backs on him altogether.

by Keith Hebden

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Top Ten Blog-tags on A Pinch of Salt blog

1. Christian anarchism (39)
2. Anarchism (32)
3. Media (20)
4. Economics (16)
5. Protest (16)
6. Conference (13)
7. Police (13)
8. Israel (12)
9. Peace (12)
10. Catholic Worker (11)

The crucial difference between the program of Caesar and the program of Christ is between peace through violence and peace through nonviolent justice. -Crossan & Borg **14**