

# CATHOLIC WORKER

## Back to the Land

By Delrita Joseph (Guest Writer)

The origins of Distributism and the 'Back to the Land' movement', are from Pope Leo XI's encyclical in 1891, Rerum Novarum." Pope Leo XIII advocated for the land to be shared among the different classes of people, in order to bring about equality. Furthermore, by working on the land the people will appreciate it more as they see the result of their labour which has given them their food.

The idea was taken up and developed by English Catholic Writers such as GK Chesterton, Hilaire Belloc and Fr Vincent McNabb OP during the 1920's and 30's, as an alternative to both capitalism and communism, neither of which adequately satisfied the needs of ordinary people. These writers saw capitalism as enslaving the individual and communism as tyranny. Belloc, referring to communism, said "the remedy is worse than the disease."

In his book, "The Outline of Sanity", Chesterton advocates going back to being farmers by living on the land and using hand tools. He also advocated cottage industries such as weaving, blacksmithing and carpentry – occupations that facilitate craftwork and traditional skills as opposed to the repetitive, unskilled piecework which goes on in industrialised factories. Gandhi had similar ideas for developing India's villages because he believed that industrialisation and urban life were not good for people. (cont'd p4)

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## Terror on Every Side

by Martin Newell

As bombs go off in Baghdad, as thousands of British troops prepare to go off to Afghanistan, as cat-and-mouse threatens to turn to bombs and missiles between Iraq and the UN Security Council, it is well to remember that there is a history, a background, a long-range preparation, for the attacks, the victimising and the demonising of the innocent.

On December 28th, the Feast of the Holy Innocents, the London Catholic Worker attempted to remember, to break through our amnesia, and our semi-comatose lack of awareness.

We began at the MI6 building in  
(continues on p5)



Feast of the Holy Innocents, outside Downing St.: Maria and Scott Albrecht, along with Stuart Helmsley of Pax Christi, read out names of the innocents killed in the Iraq war,

## We Did Not Invent Community!

By Scott Albrecht *(All Italics: Dorothy Day)*

*“Essentially each one of us is alone, and that makes us first realize our helplessness and then our need of each other and responsibility to each other.”*



Building the Beloved Community

My wife Maria, my children and I live on a council estate in which two people have died in the last four months. The first was “Jimmy Boy” a Gypsy man who lived on the estate named “Jimmy Boy”. He died of a heart attack while driving his car into the estate. While he was still leaning on the steering wheel of his car in the middle of the road his very large family began screaming in the street alerting the whole estate. A week later the half mile long funeral procession out of the estate occurred. Both these events were painful yet revitalizing to witness. People were fully engaged in the process of death; suffering, grieving and celebrating. In our civilised society these emotions are often hidden. The second death, only a few days ago, was a 21 year old girl who had recently been released from a psychiatric unit, having admitted herself. She hung herself from the climbing frame in the estate park. I will probably never know her name.

I had the opportunity to visit the sites of these two events recently. It was a chance to mourn and grieve for the deaths of these individuals whom I had never met, whom I’d never tried to meet. Yet they are part of our community and part of Gods ‘beloved community’.

*“We have been living for fourteen years in community in Mott Street. Every night as we said compline, we said "Visit O Lord this community!" And we meant the street, the neighbourhood, the two parishes we lived between, the group where we felt ourselves at home, as once we felt ourselves at home in our families, "felt ourselves approved, affirmed, in our functional independence and responsibility.”*

We did not invent community! Community is grounded in the Trinity. The relationship between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit is one of mutuality, interdependence, love and endless peace; fully integrated and dignified. The persons of the Trinity dance together in unison. Community can be seen in the continuum from the Trinity to the individual and his or

her harmony between the mind, the spirit and the body. We are told by the Hebrews that the word for this unity in humans is *nepesh* or the living soul. Moving along this continuum, we who are married recognise the communion between two lovers and the creation of family, which are also communities. As it broadens community envelopes friends and social groups, workplaces and housing estates, cities and nations and ultimately the world itself. To this extent we want globalism but not globalisation. All of those who participate in a spirit of faith, hope and love will return back to the Trinity; the source and final end of all creatures and ‘all will be one in One’. “*If you have no will for human association, I tell you that you are exposing civilization to the fate of dying in fearful agony,*” said Dorothy Day quoting Pierre Leroux.

London is not unlike Dorothy’s New York in some respects. Many are isolated and alone “*Here, within this great city of nine million people, we must, in this neighbourhood, on this street, in this parish, regain a sense of community which is the basis for peace in the world.*” Although we in the London Catholic Worker are not living together...*A real community need not consist of people who are perpetually together; but it must consist of people who, precisely because they are comrades, have mutual access to one another and are ready for one another.*”

Dorothy Day’s insight into the human reality of being in communion is grounded in the Trinity where each person possesses the essential nature of the whole. “*A real community is one which in every point of its being possesses, potentially at least, the whole character of the community*”. And its integrity and dignity are related to its self provenance and truthfulness to it. “*The internal questions of a community are thus in reality questions relating to its own genuineness, hence to its inner strength and stability.*” An understanding of the interrelatedness and communion or community of all creatures was a Franciscan gift and accepted readily by Dorothy. “*Writing [this article] is an act of community. It is a letter, it is comforting, consoling, helping, advising on our part, as well as asking it on yours. It is a part of our human association with each other. It is an expression of our love and concern for each other.*”

The plaque on Jimmy Boy’s roadside crucifix states that he was a gift not only to his family but to “the family”. Lord help us to see one another as “Family”.

### **Distributism and the Catholic Worker** (from p1)

The ideas of the Back to the Land Movement and Distributism were taken up in a practical way by Peter Maurin and Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker Movement in America during the 1940's. As well as helping the poor via soup kitchens, Catholic Workers started some small scale farming, but not on the large scale that Chesterton, Belloc and McNabb had visualised it. Both Peter Maurin and Fr McNabb liked farming and it was this that triggered off their passion for Distributism.

The ideas of Distributism and the Back to the Land Movement were discussed at a recent London Catholic Worker meeting. Although well received, the main concerns were over practicality. Some of the questions raised were: "How will it work? Land costs a lot of money" and "We are called to witness in the city where we are."

### **The Green Revolution**

Christians are called to bring about the Kingdom of God by being practical. Our Lord Jesus said that we must shelter the homeless, feed the hungry and clothe the naked. Traditionally, these have been done in the form of charity. Mother Theresa's work in Calcutta is a good example of this. However, it is recognised that traditional ways of helping others can make people dependent. As an alternative, the ideas of Back to the Land Movement and Distributism are dynamic and comprehensive, in that they offer the possibilities of independence and of learning how to provide for ourselves. Other modern issues such as ecology and the environment are also related to what Peter Maurin called 'The Green Revolution'.

### **Appropriate Technology**

The Back to the Land Movement/Distributism is a credible, practical, alternative to globalisation as high tech industrialisation, particularly among western nations, which uses so much of the world's resources and are its biggest polluter. Industrialisation also reduces individuals to becoming, "a cog in a machine". Films such as the Terminator and the Matrix show us a possible future in which we are going to be controlled by mechanical gadgets, machines and faceless authorities who do not value our humanness and view human beings as dispensable items, whom they would rather do without. Adolph Huxley's book "Brave New World" is another good example of this. More recent writers such as Ivan Illich also warn of this danger.

### **A Decentralised Economy**

In order to want to change things, you have to be unhappy about the way that things are at present and to rebel against it. Distributism has a vision of a world where we will work with the use of tools instead of machines - we will work on the land instead of concrete and glass cities - we will have small cottage industries instead of factories and large scale industrialisation - we will work with autonomy instead of doing boring repetitive piece work which produces alienation and dissatisfaction - we will live in cottages instead of blocks of flats - we will look after the earth, treat it with respect and preserve its ecology instead of plundering its resources -we will have Community instead of individualism - we will bring each other joy instead of competition and rivalry

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**April 2nd** : ‘Naming the Dead’: on the Anniversary of the Siege of Fallujah: Mass Act of Disobedience to the US / UK Occupation of Iraq, Parliament Sq.– for more info, see [www.voicesuk.org](http://www.voicesuk.org) or call LCW.

**April 11** - 1.45pm - Martin Newell in Stratford Magistrates Court for non-payment of fine from 2004 Feast of the Innocents

**May 4th** - BAE Systems AGM: call CAAT on 020 7281 0297 or see [www.caat.org.uk](http://www.caat.org.uk)

**June 2-4:** Christianity and Anarchism Conference, Leeds- [uk.jesusradicals.com](http://uk.jesusradicals.com)

**5 July** Pitstop ploughshares re-trial, Dublin

**26 Aug - 4 Sept.** ‘Camp for Climate Action’

[www.climatecamp.org.uk](http://www.climatecamp.org.uk)

e: [info@climatecamp](mailto:info@climatecamp)

We meet every other Tuesday St Joseph’s RC Church, Highgate Hill. If you are interested in coming, call us on 07985 204 878

**The London Catholic Worker** is part of the autonomous international Catholic Worker movement founded in 1933 in New York USA, and inspired by the radical Gospel vision and practice of our founders, Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin.

### Join us at a monthly vigil:

12noon – 2.00pm

1st Tuesday of the month

Reed Elsevier, 1-3 The Strand, London WC2N 5JR - they now own Spearhead, who run the DSEi Arms Fair. **But check**

**first:** tel: 020 8986 6335

London CW needs—

- donations to sustain and increase our work
- New members
- (Photo)copier
- House / café /space for hospitality for the poor
- Participants in vigils, acts of witness etc
- Prayer—without this, all the rest is useless

### Other Catholic Worker contacts:

Edinburgh: Gilbert: [gilbertscm.aol.com](mailto:gilbertscm.aol.com)

#### **Oxford Catholic Worker:**

St Franci House, 227 Cowley Road OX4 Rachel, Susan and Richard 01865-248-288: & Clive Gillam and Mena Remedios

**Dublin Catholic Worker:** Ciaron, Damien +353 (0)1-454-9144

Portsmouth: Les Gibbons 01329-312 –553

Durham: Fr Chris Hughes 0191-373-8525

Liverpool: Eileen Laing 0151-260-8533

This list could be much longer. Our Lord Jesus told us that we are light in this world. That means we have to take the lead in guiding those who are in darkness. It is said of the early Christians, that they turned the world upside down. (Acts 17v6). We all have to find our way of bringing about the Kingdom of God. Our Lord told us that the Kingdom of God will be taken by force and forceful people will lay hold of it. (Matthew 11v12).

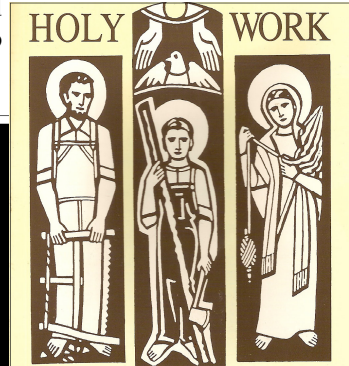
The ideas of Back to the Land Movement/Distributism are an alternative to capitalism and communism. It does not claim to be a perfect solution, but it is there to be tried. Peter Maurin quotes Chesterton as saying, “The Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting. It has been found difficult and left untried”. Then Maurin explains, “Christianity has not been tried because people thought it was impractical. And humans have tried everything except Christianity. And everything that humans have tried has failed.” Back to the Land Distributism is an idea worth trying.

### Recommended Reading

**The Outline of Sanity**. GK CHESTERTON (1926). Norfolk, Virginia, USA. IHS Press

**Tools for Conviviality** IVAN ILLICH . Fontana

**Gandhi and the Contemporary World** (Edited by) ANTHONY COPLEY and GEORGE PAXTON IndoBritish Historical Society (1997)



## What The Catholic Worker Believes

1. The Catholic Worker believes in the gentle personalism of traditional Catholicism.
2. The Catholic Worker believes in the personal obligation of looking after the needs of our brother and sister
3. The Catholic Worker believes in the daily practice of the Works of Mercy
4. The Catholic Worker believes in Houses of Hospitality For the immediate relief of those who are in need
5. The Catholic Worker believes in the establishment of Farming Communes where each one works according to his ability and gets according to his need
6. The Catholic Worker believes in creating a new society within the shell of the old with the philosophy of the new which is not a new philosophy but a very old philosophy, a philosophy so old it looks like new.

Peter Maurin

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Website: [www.londoncatholicworker.org](http://www.londoncatholicworker.org)

**Financial Donations to our work:** please make cheques payable to London Catholic Worker” and send to the above address.

### Want to receive another newsletter?

I would like to continue to get the London Catholic Worker newsletter. I enclose 10 2<sup>nd</sup> stamps (UK) or donation

Name.....

Address.....

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## “The sower went out to sow” (Mark 4:3) by Martin Newell

“You don’t know what’s going on in a big company like this.” The security guard was examining the leaflets we’d been giving out to members of staff on their lunch breaks and passing tourists, and one man who said he worked in the Cabinet Office. Reed Elsevier is a multinational publishing company headquartered at 1-3 The Strand, just outside the SOCPA (Serious and Organised Crime and Police Act) exclusion zone. They own among other things the medical journal “The Lancet”. But we were there because Reed recently bought Spearhead, the company which runs the DSEi Arms Fair every other year.



Martin Newell and Angela Broome started going there in August, and have so far managed to be there once every other month. Sonya Sireau joined them before Christmas, but now her work hours have changed. The second time, a couple of Community Wardens(?) tried to tell us we had to have permission to leaflet there. A radio call confirmed otherwise. The security guard took a bundle of leaflets, and said he would give them out in his staff room to the other security people.

We counted this a little victory, a small seed of God’s Kingdom planted. Not that he is the only Reed worker to take an interest. But it is the little drip drip that adds to the bigger picture, gradually wearing away at the hearts of stone to uncover the heart of flesh inside. The bigger picture includes the Lancet article questioning the compatibility of a medical journal with a company that organises a market place in death and injury. As the security guard said, some people will do anything for money, although we wondered if they haven’t got more than enough already. We are praying for the conversion of those whose whole way of life is based on exploiting people’s fears, on their desire for a false security. And especially those who promote weapons and fighting as a solution to problems, but never risk themselves or their families. We are praying that we too will grow in confidence in the ‘perfect love that casts out fear’ as St Paul wrote, and place our trust in God and the weapons of the Spirit.

### NEWS...NEWS...NEWS...continued...

this has proved to be a valuable way to connect with some of the most marginalised groups in Hackney.

#### CPT Hostages in Iraq

Tim, Angela, Rebecca and Martin have been taking part along with many others, in the vigils that have been organised for the four Christian Peacemaker Teams hostages in Iraq, including our friend Norman Kember. As we go to press, Norman and two of the Canadians have been freed, and after a night in the British Embassy in Baghdad, Norman has returned home. Sadly, the fourth hostage Tom Fox was found dead two weeks ago. We ask you to keep them and their families, and all detainees in Iraq and elsewhere, in your prayers.

**STOP PRESS: Martin Newell will be in court at 1.45pm on 11th April, in Stratford Magistrates Court E. London, following Feast of the Holy Innocents 2004 “Remembering the Innocents”, for non-payment of the fine of £661.**

**A new Catholic Worker has started in Ghent, Belgium.**

**Check out their website at: [www.catholicworker.be](http://www.catholicworker.be)**

### THE CASE FOR UTOPIA

By Peter Maurin

The world would be better off  
if people tried to be better.  
And people would become better  
if they stopped trying to become  
better off.  
For when everybody tries to become  
better off,  
nobody is better off.  
But when everybody tries to become  
better,  
everybody is better off.  
Everybody would be rich  
If nobody tried to become richer.  
And nobody would be poor  
If everybody tried to be the poorest.  
And everybody would be what (s)he  
ought to be  
if everybody tried to be  
What she wants the other fellow to be.

Christianity has nothing to do  
With either modern capitalism  
Or modern Communism,  
For Christianity has  
A capitalism of its own  
And a communism of its own.  
Modern Capitalism is based on property  
without responsibility  
While Christian capitalism  
Is based on property with responsibility.  
Modern Communism  
Is based on poverty through force  
While Christian communism  
Is based on poverty through choice.  
For a Christian,  
Voluntary poverty is the ideal  
As exemplified by St Francis of Assisi,  
While private property  
Is not an absolute right,  
But a gift  
Which as such cannot be wasted,  
But must be administered  
For the benefit of God’s children.

## **LCW NEWS... NEWS... NEWS...**

The London Catholic Worker group is continuing to grow and develop, to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable. Martin Newell has now been able to start working full time on getting the house of hospitality and café off the ground. We have welcomed Rebecca Gower, Jonathon Wallis, Steve Barnes, Una and Henrietta Cullinan in recent weeks. We also had visits from Delrita Joseph talking about distributism, Dan Martin helping us prepare for the Ash Wednesday witness and Lent, and Luke Devlin from Scotland!

### **Block the Builders**

Angela Broome and Martin Newell visited Aldermaston again recently. While 'Block the Builders' were stopping construction lorries and other staff from working on the massive new laser going up, Catholic Workers and others took part in a multi-faith prayer service in the entrance road at Tadley Gate.

### **Vine and Fig Tree Planters**

Martin was also able to attend the trial of the 'Vine and Fig Tree Planters' in February, which included Susan Clarkson of the Oxford Catholic Worker. They were on trial for cutting an entrance in the fence in order to begin the transformation of AWE Aldermaston nuclear weapons factory into a peaceful garden, to fulfil the prophecy of Micah (Micah 4)! They were convicted and given one month suspended sentences.

### **Broadway Market Occupation**

The big news story in Hackney recently has been the occupation by local people of Tony's Café in Broadway market. Hackney Council had sold of the property a number of years ago to a private developer, amid incompetence and allegations of corruption. Now the developer is taking advantage of the superficial gentrification that is starting there. As usual local people, the home and livelihood of Tony and his family, and the community service the café provided, were the victims. Nik and Simone of the London Catholic Worker have long-standing connections with some of the organisers, including members of the Hackney Independent group. They've been down there supporting when their daughter Isla allows! Martin Newell was also able to help by spending a night there while the wait was on for the bailiffs to come a second time. The occupation had been thrown out once, only to get back in and rebuild the semi-demolished café. Sadly the café is now no more, but the struggle continues, now fighting for Spirit, another Broadway Market shopkeeper. There is also a similar occupation at the former public hall and "4 Aces" nightclub in Dalston Lane, another area where incompetence and corruption in the past has handed a whole area over to unscrupulous developers.

### **Hackney Winter Shelter**

Martin has also been able to helping with the Hackney Churches Winter Shelter. Together with the Urban Table Sunday afternoon drop-in, at the Round Chapel Church on Lower Clapton Road,

## **"Terror on Every Side" (Jeremiah 20:10) (continued from p1)**

Vauxhall, where we prayed that the truth might set us and them free. The Magi, the wise men, had gone to Herod with reports of a King, the birth of a different kind of power in the world. Herod had seen this as a threat. Today's "wise men" in the "Security" Services, had likewise been reporting on the rising star of another powerful man, Saddam Hussein. The Magi said they had seen a star: the Security Services claimed to have seen evidence of weapons of mass destruction, 45 minutes from doom. Our untruths condemn us.

From M16 we walked to Downing Street. Herod was a lapdog for the real imperial power of the day, Rome. Today's Imperial Power is based in Washington and has its own lapdog. Like Herod, Tony Blair sensed a threat that needed to be eliminated, and so, like Herod, issued orders that led inexorably to the massacre of innocents by the thousands. At the gates of Downing Street we remembered and prayed for the many who have died in Iraq, Iraqi and British and others, with Stuart Helmsley and a few Pax Christi friends, as well as the company of Sky News. Maya Evans had been arrested and convicted for little more than this, just a few weeks before, but on this day the police just wanted to make sure we weren't blocking the path.

The Holy Family fled the murderous paranoid fear of Herod, seeking refuge in Egypt, another imperial power reduced to second rate status in the time of Jesus. So we went to the Home Office, in solidarity with all those who seek refuge on our shores, fleeing persecution and the massacre of innocents. There we prayed that our country might be as welcoming to today's refugees and migrants as Egypt was to the Holy Family.

From the Home Office we travelled to Tavistock Square. There have been innocent victims of the war *of* and the war *on* terror in our own town and country. Under the statue of Gandhi, in the square where a red London bus became red with blood, we prayed for all the victims of this new, long, war that has replaced the Cold War so soon after it finished. We prayed for those who do the killing and dying, and those who order it too.

And we pray that we won't have to go back next year.

## The Catholic Worker and Anarchism by Simon Watson

“Anarchism” and “nihilism” are two words familiar to the young and now increasingly attractive to them. Many do not believe in building a new society within a shell of the old. They believe that the old must be destroyed first. That is nihilism. In a way, it is their denial of the “here and now.” Perhaps St. Paul defined the positive idea of anarchism by saying of the followers of Jesus, “For such there is no law.” Those who have given up all idea of domination and power and the manipulation of others are “not under the law” (Galatians 5). For those who live in Christ Jesus, for “those who have put on Christ, for those who have washed the feet of others, there is no law. They have the liberty of the children of God.” (Dorothy Day, *On Pilgrimage: Twenty Years.*)

A few years ago the London Catholic Worker tried to book a stall at the Anarchist Bookfair but was turned down because the organisers believed that anarchism was irreconcilable with an “authoritarian” Roman Catholic Church. Later, after some sharp exchanges, we were given a space and it is a credit of the organisers that they were willing to listen and change their minds.

But I would like to look at the whole question from an opposite angle: can you have real anarchism without Jesus Christ?

### The Revolution of the Heart

Dorothy Day covers a lot of ground in the short passage quoted above. The most important part is that statement “those who have put on Christ”. That does not mean those who are nominally Christian. It means people who have gone through a real, lived experience of the Divine and had gone through what Dorothy called a “revolution of the heart”. The first government that must be brought down is the government of our own sins within ourselves. Capitalism, war and racism are essentially organised forms of our inward sinful states. James writes:

*Those conflicts and disputes among you, where do they come from?  
Do they not come from your cravings that are at war within you?  
You want something and do not have it; so you commit murder. And*



The cleansing of the Temple:  
Ade Bethune

## Community Café Developments

We are still looking for our first house of hospitality. Ideally, we are looking for a shop with a flat above, located in or around the borough of Hackney. We plan to use the flat for a small residential community offering hospitality to either destitute refugees or destitute east Europeans. The shop we plan to use for something like a community café. This is a big move for us, as we have been dreaming of having a house of hospitality since 2000. We have been given enough money to rent a place and run it for two years, but we have been talking about the possibility of raising money to buy a place. This has also meant working to organise ourselves better. Keep us in your thoughts and prayers, as we discern the way ahead.

## The Duty of Hospitality

By Peter Maurin

People who are in need  
And are not afraid to beg  
Give to people not in need  
The occasion to do good  
For goodness sake.  
Modern society calls the beggar  
Bum and panhandler  
And gives him the bum's rush.  
But the Greeks used to say  
That people in need  
Are the ambassadors of the gods.  
Although you may be called  
Bums and panhandlers  
You are in fact  
The Ambassadors of God.  
As God's Ambassadors  
You should be given food,  
Clothing and shelter  
By those who are able to give it.  
Mohametan [sic] teachers tell us  
That God commands hospitality,  
And hospitality is still practiced  
In Mohametan countries.  
But the duty of hospitality  
Is neither taught nor practiced  
In Christian countries.

## CATHOLIC WORKER BOOKS AND VIDEOS

“**Dorothy Day, Selected Writings**” the authoritative collection of the inspiring and challenging writing of the co-founder of the Catholic Worker movement. : £15  
AVAILABLE FROM PAX  
CHRISTI. Tel: 020 8203 4884  
[www.paxchristiuk.org.uk](http://www.paxchristiuk.org.uk) ???

“**Binding the Strongman - a political reading of the Gospel of Mark**” - abridged version - re-published by London Catholic Worker. 48 pages, and only £2.50 including postage and packing. From London Catholic Worker.

“**Peace On Trial**” Video tape from the **Pitstop Ploughshares**: record of the first trial, March 2005 £6. Available from London CW. From: LCW, 14 Deal Street, London E1 5AH. Proceeds to Trial Support Fund.



## Thus Says the Lord...

### No New Nukes!

By Dan Martin

On the morning of 1 March 2006, Ash Wednesday, three Catholics marked the Ministry of Defence with blessed charcoal. They were Sister Susan Clarkson, Fr Martin Newell, and Dan Martin. The action followed prayer with supporters in a near-by park where Fr John Concanon blessed the ash and charcoal.



Prayer outside the MoD (photo: Tim Nafziger)

At the front entrance of the MoD, the three Markers wrote, or attempted to write, 'Repent' and 'God says: No to new nuclear weapons', 'No to Trident'.

The police confiscated the charcoal and escorted them to the bottom of the stairs, where the group handed out leaflets to workers and passers-by and held a banner. No arrests were made.

Later in the day about 60-70 supporters gathered for a liturgy and supportive presence for a second marking of the building as an intrinsic part of the prayers for peace and communal repentance. (continued p19)

(from p1) As part of the service we marked our own foreheads with the ashes of repentance. The participants acknowledged their own sin and complicity with the evil of nuclear weapons. And we brought that same blessed ash and charcoal to the MoD to encourage repentance from and resist to the nuclear weapon war preparations of this country. In the presence of the prayerful supporters and during the liturgy, the MoD was marked again with the words 'Repent'. No arrests were made; the prayers continued; the work for peace encouraged.

This process, going on its 24<sup>th</sup> year, reflects the personal and social components of sin and echoes the Pope's message of two days ago:

"Repent and believe in the Gospel" (Mark 1:15). It is an invitation to make firm and confident adherence to the Gospel the foundation of personal and communal renewal.'

As part of a Lenten devotion/practice a few people will hold a weekly vigil at the MoD. Contact Pax Christi for more details.

*you covet something and cannot have it; so you engage in disputes and conflicts. James 4*

This revolution of the heart does not occur by our own efforts. It comes about by yielding to God who reveals all those ego-cravings within us that must change (naming the powers within, if you like) and then bringing them to the cross. Only then can we have Christ formed and risen within us. Christ is the New Covenant, the living law that God puts in our minds and writes on our hearts (Hebrews 8), the anointing that abides in us so that we need no men to teach us (1 John 2.26). It is this Christ within all people, rich, poor, of whatever race or creed that equips each to know right from wrong, and to have the power

to do the good and resist the wrong. This is the Divine power which makes government and their law enforcers redundant. But when the Spirit of Christ is suppressed or ignored the desire to control and coerce rapidly manifests itself. The demise of atheist anarchism in the Spain civil war – its incredible achievements notwithstanding - should be a warning to those who put all their faith in human nature.

### Building the New Society in the Shell of the Old

No Christian can be a Christian alone. We can only really know Christ by knowing him in our neighbour - to the extent that there is no real separation between us, no Greek or Jew, man or women, slave or free. But the trappings of the capitalist system - money, property, power, violence and class - divide us. The new social order is not created simply by trying to tear down these things in a piecemeal and ineffectual way. Rather it comes about by the divine joy that flows in the simple acts of giving and receiving food, shelter, clothing, medicine, as well as giving our time to listen and encourage. It also arises from the prophetic word of truth spoken to those who persist in destructive behaviour. This is not a just-over-the-horizon utopia to emerge after a glorious revolution that never quite happens. Neither is it the perfect world that can only come once God has destroyed the world at some unspecified date in the future. As the Lord's prayer clearly states, God Kingdom comes when his will is done on earth as it is in heaven. Out of these small individual acts, what St. Therese Liseux calls the "little way" a great revolution takes place that little by little creates (Continued p10)



"City of God?"  
by Claire Pnney

(from p9) a whole new set of human-divine relationships that makes the cold and remote state system redundant.

### **Personalism**

Catholic Workers have never shied away from defining themselves as anarchist, but they have often used the term “personalist” to emphasise that the goal is a society based on a relationship of person to person, or Christ in one person to Christ in another.

‘These are the words of Christ’ writes Dorothy Day. “Call no man master, for ye are all brothers.” ‘Never be severed from the people, set out always from the point of view of serving the people, not serving the interests of a small group or oneself...we must and will find Christ in each and every [person], when we look on them as brothers [and sisters].’ If we Catholic Workers are anarchists of the here and now then where and what are the actions and deeds?

### **Education**

The first task has always been to educate, as the disciple’s was to preach. The first corporate act of the movement was to create the newspaper “The Catholic Worker” from which the movement got its name. But within the movement teaching was an ongoing project as it was for Jesus and his disciples. So there are continual “meetings for the clarification of thought”. The prime mover in this was Peter Maurin, who knew that a successful revolution requires clear understanding and a clear message. The paper you are reading now is our “London Catholic Worker” and we meet every fortnight for clarification of thought, planning resistance, and prayer.

### **Hospitality**

Catholic Workers run houses of hospitality, a continuation of the ancient church tradition of having a building for the poor where food, rest and shelter are freely available. We also practice the early church tradition of the strangers room, a room specially set aside in our homes for the traveling visitor. In London we hold the ‘Urban Table’ in Hackney where homeless people, asylum seekers, those struggling to find work, or anyone, can join us in a meal we share together. Some of our guests prepare the food too and join in the work of clearing up afterwards. Now we are seeking to start a café in London where people can take food on a pay-what-you-can (or nothing if you can’t) basis.

### **Worker ownership**

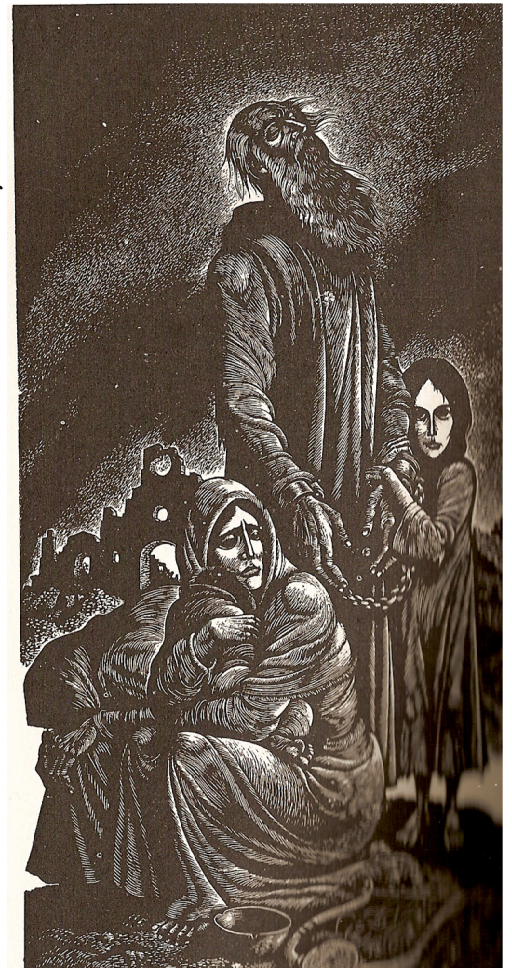
Catholic Workers anarchists have also sought to undo the damage done by the capitalist production line by creating rural co-operatives where workers own the means of production and distribution. A number of

becoming the world’s reserve currency. If that were to happen, the potential dollar crash would severely reduce US purchasing power and living standards. The dollar has already lost 20% of its value in the last five years, and a further a massive if gradual drop in the dollar is inevitable. So it may be a relevant factor that before the invasion, Iraq was about to start selling oil in Euros. Iran has announced a similar plan for later this year.

It may be that the US attempt to guarantee its ‘full spectrum dominance’ on land, sea, air and space, will bring about its own demise as an unchallenged global power. Particularly with the rise of the Chinese economy, the US attempt to assert its dominance militarily and control its access to global resources, may bring about the very economic consequences that it fears. This in turn would make it much more difficult to finance its military adventurism. It is a classic case of ‘imperial overstretch’.

### **Prophecies Fulfilled**

Long term, whether suddenly or slowly, this is the future that will appear. Radical Islamism may not achieve its aims for global Islam, but the financial burden of the war on terror may still bring down their sworn enemy. From a Christian viewpoint, this is merely the backdrop to history. The great powers rise and fall, ruling “for a time, two times, and half a time”. (Daniel 7:25) We are called simply to be faithful to the way of Jesus, sharing life among and in solidarity with the poor and oppressed.



### (from p13) Fairford In Line Again

Instead of invasion, it seems the more likely choice would be bombing. There has been speculation that Israel would do the job (justifying the T-shirt seen in Jerusalem ‘Don’t Worry America: Israel Is Behind You’), of taking out the Iranian nuclear sites, as they did when they bombed the Iraqi nuclear sites in the 1980’s. On the other hand, Paul Rogers, Bradford Peace Studies Professor(1), has suggested that the US is likely to do the job itself. In that case, Britain will be involved through the use of Fairford airfield in Gloucestershire. The B2A ‘Stealth Bombers’ require specially equipped hangars to protect their anti-radar coating. Until recently, these hangars did not exist outside of the USA. Fairford, however, is now fully equipped to handle stealth bombers. The peace movement needs to respond to the likely bombing of Iran, and specifically to the expected use of Fairford and any other British involvement.

This threat of an attack against Iran is very real, and the consequences worse. There a large number of sites that could be considered to be related to the nuclear programme, many of them in or near urban areas. And Iran has treaties with both Russia and China. We are praying that the Iranians as well as the US and its allies will have a change of heart. However, the US choice to invade Iraq and not North Korea has shown the Iranians and others the risks in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century of being a major, middle east, oil producing nation without nuclear or other weapons of mass destruction.

### Beating Ploughshares into Swords

The US is already paying the price for the ‘war on terror’. The cost of the invasion and occupation so far is \$249 billion (www.costofwar.com). It has cost the UK government £4bn. This is happening at the same time as the Bush regime has been seeking major cuts in already minimal welfare programmes, and running up enormous budget deficits, and the UK government is enforcing a multi-billion dollar debt repayment from Nigeria as the price of an overall debt reduction plan.

Money could be the US Achilles heel. It is by far the world’s biggest debtor, with its debts to the rest of the world in the trillions of dollars. Countries like Japan and China hold hundreds of billions of dollars of US government debt. Billions of dollars is also held in the form of ‘hot money’, both legal and illegal, by international drug barons, by ‘3<sup>rd</sup> world’ elites and by global financial speculators. The war on terror is adding to this debt pile at an astronomical rate, and there is a limit to the amount of debt the world can absorb, especially with the threat of the Euro

Catholic Worker Houses are farms, which take forwards Peter Maurin’s hope to see rural life revived, making it easier, as he put it, for people to be good. The Oxford Catholic Worker has two allotments, which is a small but significant step in this direction.

### Resistance and pacifism

To Catholic Workers anarchism that uses force and coercion to achieve its ends is not anarchism at all, and like the early church before the time Constantine joined Christianity to the state, the movement is pacifist. More than that it actively resists war making and witnesses against it. It is probably in this area that the Catholicism of the movement is most strongly manifest, since actions are conceived as liturgies. There is an interesting a parallel in recent secular anarchist actions where street theatre is used to name and disarm the Powers that be in anti-globalisation demonstrations.

But despite having clear anarchist credentials, we are still asked “how can a bone fide anarchist organisation fit under the umbrella of the authoritarian Roman Catholic Church?”. Firstly Catholic Worker is not a



St George and the Beast of Babylon  
By Fritz Eichenberg

Roman Catholic religious order and it includes members from other denominations, other faiths, or even have no faith at all. In some quarters of the church the movement is unpopular and some quarters of the movement the church is seen as irrelevant: the Atlanta Open Door Community describe themselves as the ‘Protestant Catholic Worker’: Boston Catholic Worker is mostly Buddhist. But the Catholicism connects us to a religious body that upholds Christ and seeks to present the way in which we are to live according to God’s will in a clear and unequivocal manner. Historically there may have been times when Christian anarchism and Catholicism could not coexist. Today that isn’t the case and Dorothy Day’s vision of anarchist society with the structure and authority of the church in a supportive role is now more real than ever.

## “We Looked for Peace, But Behold Terror” (Jer14:19)

by Martin Newell

After the citizens demolition of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990, Francis Fukuyama proclaimed ‘the end of history’. Most of us had another hope: that the era of the Cold War could be followed by an era of peace. The hope of a ‘peace dividend’ was widely proclaimed, that ‘swords would be beaten into ploughshares’.

It is becoming clear that we have entered a new era of history, but not the one we hoped for. 1990 is a significant date for another reason: it marks the date of the Gulf War following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. This was just the beginning of a conflict that continued with aerial bombing and trade sanctions all through the 90’s.

### The New Cold War

It now appears that the September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 attack on the Twin Towers was the equivalent not so much of Pearl Harbour as the Soviet explosion of their own nuclear bomb which symbolically began the Cold War on the 29<sup>th</sup> of August 1949. Of course, the roots of the Cold War went back to an August four years earlier when an unearthly light appeared above Hiroshima and far beyond. It looks increasingly as if we are now at the beginning of what both sides seem to hope will be a similarly long War on Terrorism / War of Terrorism, with roots just as deep if not longer. To quote the Prophet Jeremiah, “We looked for peace, but behold terror” (Jer 14:19)

Iraq seems to be on the verge of civil war, and there is no sign of US or UK troops leaving. US troops in particular are entrenched in massive new military bases, giving the US a new power base in the Middle East. Thousands of British troops are preparing to go to Afghanistan, to free up US troops for a more aggressive role in a country where the government’s authority extends little further than the capital Kabul, and where opium production is double what it was before the US led invasion.

### Will Iran be Next?

This is a messy war of a new kind but no less dangerous and murderous. In one corner stands US led global capitalist imperialism. In the other corner, a radicalised form of Islam that comes out of the accumulated anger of decades of humiliation for the Umma, the worldwide Islamic family. After the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, the US sponsored radical Islamist groups resisting the Russians. In 1980 the US-backed dictator of Iran, the Shah, was overthrown in Tehran by the world’s first Islamic Revolution.

Since then the Iranian government there has since backed similar revolutionary groups, mainly in the Middle East. Saddam Hussein’s government in Iraq was, of course, secular and the US and western governments backed him in the war against Iran until he stepped out of line by invading Kuwait.

In this long war, Iran appears to be the next country caught in the cross hairs. However, the US is already overstretched in Iraq and Afghanistan. Invasion appears highly unlikely. An invasion of Iran would make Iraq look like a picnic in the park, with the whole country united against the invaders. But the pretext for conflict is already being prepared with the war of words and the diplomatic games of cat and mouse over access of UN Inspectors to the Iranian nuclear power programme.

### Nuclear Proliferation

There is no doubt that Iran wants nuclear power. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty explicitly states that every country has the right to peaceful nuclear power production. It is also true that, when it comes to energy supplies, Iran has enormous reserves of oil. Oil will run out eventually of course (possibly in about fifty years), and Iran has as much right to diversify its energy supplies as anyone else. But why does a poor, oil-rich country like Iran want to spend so much money and effort on nuclear reactors? My personal conclusion is that the Iranian government are planning to produce nuclear weapons., as a defensive measure.

If Iran builds a nuclear bomb it can only make the world a more dangerous place, bringing the number of countries with nuclear weapons to ten. However, it is stunning hypocrisy for the US, UK and the rest of the “Big 5” ‘traditional’ nuclear powers, to enforce a Non-Proliferation Treaty that they themselves do not even attempt to follow. They ignore their treaty commitment to work towards disarmament and instead develop new weapons, all the while relying on weapons they– we– seek to deny others. (cont. p14)

