

4.9

# THE DIGGER AND CHRISTIAN ANARCHIST

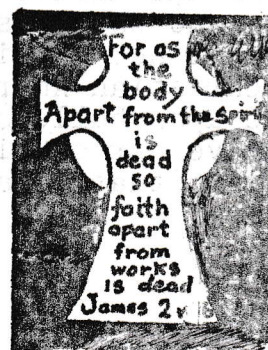
OCTOBER '86

FOR A CHRISTIAN COMMONWEALTH

#12

At long last, I have got the Gestetner going and Digger will now be appearing in this new, sharper format. This method of printing gives much more scope for growth not only in the Digger but in other jobs that may come up. We hope you will like it. You have no doubt already noticed the change in the masthead, this paper is now the Digger and Christian Anarchist. While giving pride of place to Digger, there are a few considerations I have to clarify. The works of Gerrard Winstanley while generally being accepted as seminal to anarchist thought, bear some disturbing traits. For his time and place Winstanley was very lenient in terms of crime and punishment. At a time in England when there were three hundred hanging offenses, Winstanley allows for capital punishment in only three cases, for rapists, for corrupt justices who "administer the law for money or reward", and for any who would buy or sell the fruits of the earth. Capitalism in a Digger society would seem a capital offense. But capital punishment for any reason cannot be accepted in an anarchist society. There were many lesser punishments which were to be administered by a "soldier" or village constable. These were mainly light such as impressed labor or reduced liberties, (although he refused to consider prisons as such). Most surprising and disturbing of all Winstanley made provisions for a standing army. A devout pacifist in his own life, he evidently

thought that peace and freedom at home must be preserved from foreign attack. Such a situation cannot be accepted by a Christian-anarchist. Finally I have been a little uncomfortable for some time with Winstanley's theology. He rejects both Heaven and hell which pretty well precludes any after life. He equates God with reason, fine in so far as it goes, but God is much more than just reason. I personally believe in a loving God who sent His son Jesus Christ to earth to bridge the cosmic gap. That Jesus is the Christ, the only hope of salvation and the only way to know God. I look forward to an active and rewarding after life. Because I cannot accept that this life is the be-all and the end-all. Life to me is not worth the game if this is all there is. So while I give Winstanley and his Digger movement full due for enlightenment I have to add the two words that make this paper and this philosophy what they are, "Christian", and "anarchist". While I accept Winstanley's agrarian communalism, I would like to see it modified into a true Christian anarchist society.



CATHOLIC WORKERS  
TO SPEAK

On October the 10th, Projects for Change will present three people from the Catholic Worker in Toronto. Chuck and Brit Angus and Julie Egan will be at the public library on Friday the 10th to speak on Christianity as Realized Political Activism. The evening will begin at 7:30 and there will be donations at the door. Amounts over \$15.00 can be made tax deductible care of the Peterborough Green Party. The Toronto Catholic workers have long been supportive of the Digger and we urge all who can to come out for this presentation. I know it will be thought provoking and am looking forward to meeting old friends I have only corresponded with.

"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 co-operation for good, with the right of secession. A Christian Anarchist is therefore one who turns the other cheek; overturns the tables of the money changers, and who does not need a cop to tell her or him how to behave. A Christian Anarchist does not depend upon bullets or ballots to achieve her or his ideals; s/he achieves that ideal daily

by the one person revolution with which s/he faces a decadent, confused and dying world."

- Ammon Hennacy,  
'The Book of Ammon'



This is issue no. 12 of the Digger. A sort of anniversary. Digger appeared every other month for six issues and has now appeared monthly for six issues. This means that Digger is actually one and a half years old. Soon be trained.

We'd like to hear from you, the address is Digger, 642 George street N, Peterborough, Ontario, Canada.

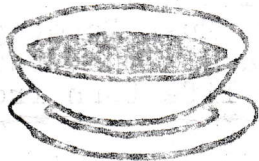
At the end of every seven years thou shalt make a release. and this is the manner of the release; Every creditor that lendeth ought unto his neighbor shall release it: he shall not exact it of his neighbor, or of his brother; because it is called the Lord's release.

- Deuteronomy

PROJECTS FOR CHANGE  
FOOD BANK

The food bank at 219 Hunter street, Projects for Change is growing. At least the need for it is growing. Quite a few folks now come to the food bank those few bad days before the welfare or unemployment cheque is due, looking for some assistance. A drive is on to get more goods for the bank. Containers are being set up in several food stores, the first being the Harvest House at 682 George street N. Customers of these stores will be notified of our need and that they may help by picking up a couple of items of canned or dried goods along with their shopping, and drop these into the containers provided. If anyone would like to make a cash donation they may do so by dropping into the store at 219 Hunter street most afternoons. As well, donations over \$15. will receive a tax receipt, care of the Peterborough Green Party. It is hoped that all friends and all who care for their brothers and sisters in need will be generous.

ALSO KELEYS 414 GEORGE



Lord, I perceive my soul deeply guilty of envy...I had rather thy work were undone than done better by another than by myself!..Dispossess me, Lord, of this bad spirit, and turn my envy into holy emulation;...yea, make other mens gifts to be mine, by making me thankful to the for them.

-Thomas Fuller

LETTERS:

Dear Kenny:

Much love, peace and divine anarchy to you. Hope you got the issue threes which were sent. Here's a couple of fours (issue four? that must mean we're almost established). Do with them what you will. At last I have time to sit in the lazy summer sun and mail off the various pinches to various people...it would be wonderful to gather everyone into one place and share our visions and support. Slowly, slowly. The "Reclaim the city" action went very well, and another is planned (page four). We've done various C.O. workshops at various gatherings and festivals, and the responses have been quite haertening. Hoping to bring out a fairly substantial introductory pamphlet with which to spread the word, though it's quite an undertaking. Will send you the results.

In the meantime, we're moving to a housing co-op in Birmingham (although the London address still holds for mail), as part of a New University project - about which there will be more info. in issue five (it's almost time for our anniversary edition!). Excitement with and enthusiasm for life abounds. Love to everyone in Canada, keep turning the world upside down.

Stephen

(Pinch of Salt is an excellent Christian Anarchist mag from England, chock full o good stuff, write Pinch Of Salt, c/o 11a St. Quinton Avenue, London W10, Eng.)

## SEMINAR ON NON VIOLENCE

On September the 10th, Fr. Charlie McCarthy held a seminar on Christian Non-violence. It was well attended with about 55 people taking part for the whole weekend. The presentation was well put together by Henry Kaszuba and friends and Fr. Charlie was controversial, witty and thought provoking as usual. Films were shown on the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and on the situation in South Africa. Many contacts and friends were made. Rather than go into detail about what was said, I am reproducing a small excerpt from Fr. Charlie's Stations Of The Cross of Nonviolent Love. This and other pamphlets are available for one dollar each from Pat Ferrone, 238 Harris Ave., Needham MA. 02192.

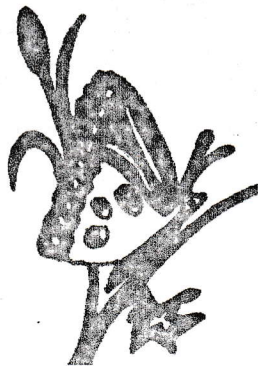
### CLOTHES MAKE THE MAN

"Clothes make the man!" Billions of dollars are spent yearly in affirmation of this belief. For tens of tens of millions being in style is an essential ingredient of being human. People are instantly judged by what they wear. Western Christianity has found it acceptable to ignore human beings in dire need of food, medicine, shelter and education while spending God knows how much money on fashion. The highest Christian holy day, Easter, has become in large part a celebration of unneeded clothes. "If clothes make the man" then new clothes make the "new man"! All this is of course a world of destructive and pseudo-Christianity.

Clothes do not make the man or woman. Mercy, forgiveness, love, compassion and truth make human beings what they are supposed to be. On judgement day the Son of Man will not ask, "How often were you in style?" He will tell us when we responded to human misery

and when we did not. That the resurrection should become an excuse to pamper and religiously legitimize the artificially created need of fashionableness while ignoring the worlds suffering is an abomination. To be a "fashion plate" in a world where one person dies every nine seconds because his or her plate is empty is scandalous.

There was nothing tasteful or tactful about Jesus' crucifixion. He was beaten brutally and stripped naked as hundreds of millions of other oppressed people have been over the centuries and are being today. The vested powers of this world always strip naked those they wish to control, humiliate, delegitimize, discourage and destroy, for if clothes make the man or woman, the absence of them means the "thing" before them is a subhuman non-person. To hide from the Christ stripped of his garments is to hide from the reality of the cross of non-violent love which requires that all be given and assumes that all will be taken if we are faithful. Must Jesus be willing to be stripped of his garments in order to bring the world to holiness? Must Francis of Assisi have his family turn from him? Must Dorothy Day leave her husband? Must Edith Stein have her life torn from her at Auschwitz? Yes, they and we must be stripped of all if we choose to live Christ's cross of non violent love all the way to the place of skulls.



HARVEY PEKARS  
AMERICAN SPLENDOUR

I've just finished reading American Splendour by Harvey Pekar. Harvey Pekar would be a complete nonentity, living in Cleveland, working at a low level government job, but for one thing. Harvey Pekar writes, and publishes comic books. The comic books he writes however are not of the usual super hero, escapist pulp that we see on the newsstands, Pekars stories are mostly about himself or of his friends and acquaintances as they go about their ordinary lives. There is in fact very little action in any of his stories, the only action in them is real action, the kind you and I experience in going to the supermarket or the movies or meeting a new friend. Sometimes the stories are moral as in the case of a slightly shady character who shows up to help Harvey move when all Harvey's best friends have let him down with excuses, the moral being that the best friends are those who come through when you need them, or the revelation of a warm humanity in a little old Jewish lady in a lineup, or the tantrum Harvey throws at work only to realize later that even bosses can be human and that things are not as bleak as they appear. Don't get me wrong Pekar is no saint and with a great deal of candor expresses his own shortcomings and those of others, even their crudities. These are essentially adult slices of life. Come to think of it, (and I'm not just being hyperbolic), but there is a similarity between Pekars little people and those of John Steinbecks Cannery Row.

I think that "underground comic" is not quite the proper term for this form, perhaps "illustrated novel" would be closer. I'm quite sure that Pekar could in fact write a non-illustrated novel. It is the uniqueness of the comic book form that gets us hooked, but the importance and the style of the writing that keeps us reading. After all a dozen panels of one man standing there talking are not exactly breathtakingly visual. Still for all that Pekar gets the best illustrators for his work. Robert Crumb, Gerry Shamray, and Greg Budgett as well as others are the cream of the comic illustrator crop. Some like Crumb are more comic, others like Shamray and Budgett more into realism.

I urge you to seek out anything you can get by Harvey Pekar. "From Off the Streets of Cleveland - American Splendour" is a collection of stories which have appeared in Pekars annual "American Splendour", It was published by Doubleday/Dolphin. 1986.

As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face and I heard a voice of one that spake.

And He said unto me, Son of man, STAND UPON THY FEET, and I will speak unto thee.

- Ezekiel

## DIVES

(Old English Poem)

Now Dives daily feasted  
And was gorgeously arrayed;  
Not at all because he liked it,  
But because 'twas good for  
trade.  
That the poor might have more  
calico,  
He clothed himself with silk;  
And surfeited himself on cream  
That they might have more milk.  
And e'en to show his sympathy  
for the deserving poor,  
He did no useful work himself  
That they might do the more.

ONE CANNOT BE WEALTHY  
WITHOUT STEALING FROM  
OTHERS. IF EVERYONE  
POSSESSED ONLY WHAT  
WAS NEEDED NO ONE WOULD  
BE IN POVERTY

(from Beyond The Rat  
Race by Arthur Gish)

If we possess something we do not need we are stealing it from those who do need it. That stealing may be direct or indirect, or it may be only the refusal to share what we have with our brothers and sisters in need. There is a limited amount of resources in the world. Thus for some people to hoard is to keep things from others. That means that as long as I have more than I need, I am stealing from them. The existence of need anywhere means a moral claim on the wealth I have. If possessions are grossly unequal it is necessary that some people not have the full benefit of their own labor. That is theft.

Money and resources wasted are essential items stolen from the poor and from good causes. There can be no justice for all as long as anyone consumes more than is necessary. Simple living is one ingredient needed to establish justice.

The making of luxuries for ourselves diverts energy from production and services which would benefit the poor and less privileged. Where will the money come from to pay for the real needs of society? Obviously it must come from the segments of our economy where most of the money is now spent, namely consumer goods and war materials. There is a relationship between the availability of electric can openers and the shortage of health care. Luxury is theft.

My luxuries are not as important as others necessities. There is nothing wrong with good food and comfortable living rooms, but when millions have little to eat and barely a place to sleep while we live in luxury we are not being responsible. It is not necessary that our happiness and comfort be paid for by the suffering and death of others. We can find a new understanding of joy and comfort not based on oppression.

To build up wealth necessarily involves exploitation, for it is impossible to acquire a fortune solely by one's own effort. For us to become rich, others need to work and live on a standard below our own. Consider the hardships people have to endure so that we can live luxuriously - the rape and slaughter of the Indians and Blacks, the oppression of the third world. Think of the assembly lines, the suffering masses crowded into our cities, the pollution not only of our soil but of our souls. In order for us to enjoy bananas we force with the help of our military, peasants in latin America to work at extremely low wages. Our affluence is based on our collective theft from people around the world and here at home. Our wealth has dehumanized not only ourselves but others as well.

AND ANOTHER LETTER...

MSC Farm,  
Wilno, Ontario. Can.

Dear Kenny:

Thanks very much for sending us Digger over the last few months, I guess you got our name from our letter in the Catholic Worker, where we were looking for people interested in putting out "The Canadian Catholic Radical". One fellow from Montreal sent us \$50. and a family from near Sarnia came and stayed with us for a week, and that was about it. Eric Gill is the person whose writings most influenced me - I'll see if I can send some of my favourite quotes of his to you.

We live quite poorly, but I'll try to enclose something to help pay postage.

Keep on Digging  
Pax Christi

Barney McCaffrey

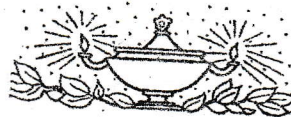
This is the great work of His love which is designed to overthrow the powers of the world in the moment of their seeming triumph. This is the great work of love which will be performed in many obscure and weak and unknown men and women, Christians despised by the world and cast aside as useless; men suffering in prisons and concentration camps, women starving in the bombed out cities of the world, laborers, poor farmers, humble priests, nuns in convents, simple lay brothers, mothers of families, and even little children. In these souls Christ will enkindle in the latter days of the world the fire of a great charity to counteract the love that has grown cold in the souls of the Lords of the earth.

-Thomas Merton

KINDRED VOICES

I also received this month a copy of this great little mag. from Des Moines Iowa. As well as producing this quarterly, the community there runs the Jeanette Rankin shelter for families and single women, and Kindred community house, and a soup kitchen. The spring '86 issue I received has an interesting article on state National Guards being sent to Honduras to help prepare for whatever Ronnie has up his sleeve for our southern brothers and sisters.

Write Kindred Voices, 1337,  
6th Avenue. Des Moines IA. 50314



But though you do take away tithes, and the power of Lords of manors, yet there will be no want to them, for they have the freedom of the Common Stock, they may send to the Storehouses for what they want, and live more free than they do now, for now they are in care and vexation by servants, by casualties, by being cheated in buying and selling, but then they will be free from all, for the common Storehouses is every man's riches, not any ones.

- Winstanley

## AND STILL THE LETTERS KEEP COMIN'

Dear Kenny:

Your last issue of Digger said "What should a paper that deals with the spirit be printed on but a spirit duplicator?"

This question made me have very unChristian thoughts.

How about an article on Christians managing to laugh despite a depressing world, and about being joyful however awful things are, just as Jesus was. You could call the article "Being Jest as Mary as Christ."

David Webster  
Peterboro

Dear Dave well since I've switched to the Gestetner for printing, let's pronounce it Geist tetner (geist - German for spirit). Regardless of the atrocious pun, (yours not mine) it is an excellent idea to do an article on the Christian good life. Look for it in the next issue.

## GILLETTE BOYCOTT

Saw an article on the news last night about what goes on in the lab at Gillette Inc. Someone who used to work there managed to make a secret video and it was pretty sickening. They're are still squirting dishwashing liquid in animals eyes despite the fact that we all know what the results will be. That's why we put this stuff up so the kids can't get at it. It's common for animals to break their necks in the cages. No one seems to mind. Animals are cheap. There is a boycott on of Gillette goods, so if you want

to put an end to this torture help to boycott the torturers.

## THE PROBLEM OF THE MILITARY

"war, that is the maiming and killing of people is incompatible with a religion that is based on love of peace and good-will to people. The Quakers affirm and prove that nothing has so much contributed to the obscuring of Christ's truth in the eyes of the pagans and impeded the dissemination of Christianity in the world as the nonacknowledgement of this commandment by people who call themselves Christians as the permission granted to wage war and use violence.

All the people of our Christian world know, know firmly, from tradition and revelation and from the irrefutable voice of conscience, that murder is one of the most terrible crimes which a person can commit as the Gospel says, and that this sin cannot be limited to certain people, that is, that it is a sin to kill some people, but not to kill others. All know that if the sin of murder is a sin, it is always a sin, independent ly of what people are the victims of it, just like the sin of adultery and theiving and any other.

- Tolstoy