



"THEY SAY I AM CRAZY BECAUSE I REFUSE to be crazy the way everybody else is crazy."

By FR. DANIEL BERRIGAN, S.J.

I honor in Peter Maurin a sense of tradition. Not something merely passed on hand to hand, like a palmed gem. Substance, rather, a sanity under stress, a sameness under variety; what they call today 'identity.' The person, community, faith, worship, activity in the world, all known for what they are, carried forward, translated, part of a history of ideas, symbols, actions, modes of thought. There are recognition scenes. With a start of surprise, one comes on what one has purportedly known. But not really known. Because the soul, life itself, is not yet colored anew, 'assimilated to' (in the clumsy classical phrase) the old realities.

Tradition issues in a style. In Peter Maurin's case, the very opposite of 'stylish,' 'relevant,' a synonym for debased chic. Tradition made him an innovator; his roots made him a wanderer. That mind of his, so rich, quirky, with such unexpected turns, such world savvy, so discerning — it all went along with a perfectly natural and graceful poverty. He took no more of the world than he had a right to. In that way, he lived in comparative peace on the earth — at peace with the earth.

We are coming to understand something of these things; late, perhaps too late. I mean the subtle interlacing of virtue, attitudes, ways of seeing and dwelling in the world that do not curse us as an abomination of the earth. Peaceableness, poverty, the despising of stone-faced individualism, of hankering after property, of the card-carrying consumer society which is, by definition, the war-making society — and finally the cannibal society, self-destructing.

It all came out in the little prose-poems which are indeed, in style and substance, 'Easy Essays.'

Did Peter mean by that that the verses would slide down the throat like a custard cream? As the instruction goes concerning the 'little scroll' in Revelation, did Peter mean that the essays would be 'sweet as honey in the mouth, bitter as gall in the guts?'

In any case, it was a kind of 'little scroll' or 'little scripture' he wrote for us. Almost forty-five years later, the Essays stand up remarkably well. And as far as the Catholic Worker is concerned, it seems to me that their subjects and styles, early on, set the tone of what was to come.

Literarily speaking, you could take your choice. Peter gave us poetry by the yard, or prose clipped to the bone. He had come on a form as old as the prophets and the psalmist. He had also read Peguy. The abbreviated lines stop the eye in its track, get attention; repetition, key phrases, quotes, references to a huge store of authors, living and dead, classics and news stories everything is useful and put to use, part of the whole, an argument finding its way.

He used to recite the essays, we are told, to all sorts of audiences; in those days, east to west, Catholic Workers, to Peter's taste, were coming together. There were farm communities and urban parishes, college campuses, nuns and priests and a few unharnessed bishops, contemplatives and hollersers, people will-

(Continued on page 5)



Fritz Eichenberg

PETER MAURIN 1877-1977

By DOROTHY DAY

When I first saw Peter Maurin my impression was of a short, broad-shouldered workingman with a high, broad head covered with greying hair. His face was weatherbeaten, he had warm grey eyes and a wide, pleasant mouth. The collar of his shirt was dirty, but he had tried to dress up by wearing a tie and a suit which looked as though he had slept in it. (As I found out afterward, indeed he had.)

What struck me first about him was that he was one of those people who talked you deaf, dumb and blind, who each time he saw you began his conversation just where he had left off at the previous meeting, and never stopped unless you begged for rest, and that was not for long. He was irrepressible and he was incapable of taking offense.

The night I met Peter I had come from an assignment for *The Commonweal*, covering the Communist-inspired "hunger march" of the unemployed to Washington. I had prayed at the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, that I might find something to do in the social order besides reporting conditions. I wanted to change them, not just report them, but I had lost faith in revolution, I wanted to love my enemy, whether capitalist or Communist.

I certainly did not realize at first that I had my answer in Peter Maurin. I was thirty-five years old and I had met plenty of radicals in my time and plenty of crackpots, too; people who had blueprints to change the social order were a dime a dozen around Union Square.

At that time Peter Maurin was fifty-seven, had never married, had been "away from the Church" in his youth, had worked with Sangnier and his social studies group in Paris, and had sold its paper, *Le Sillon*. He believed in going to the people in town and countryside, because first of all he was of the people himself.

He was born in a tiny hamlet in the southern part of France, 200 miles from Barcelona, one of a family of 24 children. His own mother had died after she had born her fifth child, and his stepmother had had 19 and was still alive, he said.

"I did not like the idea of revolution," he once told me. "I did not like the

(Continued on page 9)

By EILEEN EGAN

During a visit to London for a Pax Conference, Dorothy Day and I found ourselves in the neighborhood of Highgate Cemetery, the resting-place of so many people whose names are a part of history. Once inside, we could not miss a grave marked by a heavy marble slab atop which was the great sculptured head of Karl Marx. Carved into the base was Marx's powerful assertion, "Philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is, to change it."

The options for changing the world are many but can be broadly classified into those that rely on violence, or at least are ready to utilize it, and those which specifically exclude violence as an option. Certainly, few persons have changed history more profoundly than Karl Marx. When in 1848 he launched the Communist Manifesto with his friend Friedrich Engels, the reliance on violence as the means of social change was unequivocally stated. The aim was simply "the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions."

Peter Maurin was a poor man who lived without a home of his own, without possessions, without a family, without a place in society, yet launched a nonviolent revolution that is still very much alive. It is embodied in a movement that has had deep impact on the Catholic community of the United States and throughout the world.

When the first representative assembly of the American Catholic Church met in Detroit in October 1976 to mark the nation's Bicentennial with a conference on "Liberty and Justice for All," the influence of the Catholic Worker movement was unmistakable in the deliberations and the conclusions. Prophetic positions on war, conscientious objection, voluntary poverty and personalism that the Catholic Worker had championed for over four decades, were, by 1976, the positions taken by thoughtful Catholics from every part of the nation. In point of fact, the Catholic Worker movement was singled out for specific mention in a recommendation urging that the role of the "small intentional community" be recognized "in the work of formation for justice."

Theory of Revolution

The centenary of Peter Maurin's birth is a good time to look at his prophetic, nonviolent revolution. Maurin taught in one of his "Easy Essays," that any revolutionary change had to be preceded by carefully thought-out theory. Maurin wrote, "Karl Marx soon realized, as Lenin realized, that there is no revolution/ without revolutionary action,/ that there is no revolutionary action/ without a revolutionary movement,/ that there is no revolutionary movement/ without a vanguard of revolution,/ and that there is no vanguard/ of revolution/ without a theory of revolution."

Maurin's theory of revolution was the dynamism of the gospel of Jesus, the gospel of love that broke into history with the Incarnation. Jesus, who emptied Himself out of love, and died out of love, asked His followers to love one

(Continued on page 8)

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442

The Great Convergence

"There is no unemployment on the land," said Peter Maurin, when asked for a solution to the most urgent demand of his day. Peter realized that what people needed more than wages was productive, self-expressive work. That work given freely to the community, the worker ought to receive back from society all that was necessary for a healthy life. To achieve this state of affairs, we'd have to re-establish a healthy relationship between town and country. The constructive thrust of Peter's program, therefore, was the Green Revolution, to stem the rural stampede to the cities by making rural life viable, and by resettling unemployed workers and students on farming communes on the land.

Peter believed that urban industrial society is not only unhealthy—physically, mentally, and spiritually—not only anti-ecological, not only inherently authoritarian—building up ever-increasing reservoirs of power—not only immoral in its way of regarding humans as combination machine, product, and disposal unit; but, by the very preferred criteria of this system, dollars and cents, this 'economy' is uneconomical, self-destructive. It is not economical because it is not logical. And "what is not logical is not practical, even if it is practiced."

So why should we be surprised when we pick up the *New York Times*, a journal redoubted for its logic and practical good sense, and come across a Government Accounting Office report which has reached the conclusion that New York City is "unsupportable."

It is not so very long ago that at least one newspaper in this town carried the provocative headline, **FORD TO CITY: DROP DEAD.** And now, just as many New Yorkers were congratulating themselves on a job well done, N.Y. City having done its share to purge this nation of the "Republican element," along comes this alarming obituary in the *Times*.

The G.A.O. report tells us that N.Y.C. lost 180,000 jobs during the '60's and 468,000 jobs since 1970. Between 1970-75 the city's population decreased by 375,000, those with the money following

the top corporations and industries into the South and suburbs. Essentially, so the report goes, there is no way forward in this blind alley. What we have left is an overwhelming conurbation of poor and unemployed, capital abandoning ship, taking along not only jobs but the tax base necessary to support essential social services.

An editorial in the *Times* pondered these sobering facts and concluded, with utmost tentativeness, that perhaps "the time has come" for the government to begin considering a policy of relocation—that is, presumably, a policy of relocation of population away from urban centers and back to the land. And why not? As if the government lacked experience in the relocation business! Spurred by the "Bigger is Best" mentality with regard to agriculture and everything else, aggressive and deliberate Federal policies (recently pursued with exceptional fervor by former Secretary of Agriculture Earl Butz) have relocated five million families off of small farms in the last thirty years. That land has gone into capital-intensive agribusiness or been paved under for suburbs. Just since 1970, farm population in America has decreased 14%, according to government statistics released this week.

And now, whether "Bigger is Best" is in serious question. For starters, it has intensified the class war between rich and poor throughout the world, it has gobbled irreplaceable resources and fossil fuels as though there were no tomorrow, it has poisoned the earth, and crushed the human spirit. And now, New York City is "unsupportable," and even the *New York Times* is jumping on the Green Revolution bandwagon and packing up to join us at Tivoli ... well, not just yet.

The point is that we are approaching what Dr. Schumacher calls in this issue, "The Great Convergence," that is, the convergence between the professional advice of 'practical and logical' folk, and the unheeded insights of the prophets and sages. Of the latter, Peter Maurin, of course, was both. And if he was able

(Continued on page 11)

Tivoli: a Farm With a View

By DEANE MARY MOWRER

May comes like a celebration. It is the month of our Lady. It is the birthday of the Catholic Worker. It is the anniversary of the birth and death of Peter Maurin, who, with Dorothy Day, founded the Catholic Worker movement.

Here at our farm with a view, Farmer John, Terri, and their helpers are ploughing, planting, planting, ploughing. Goats are capering; children scampering. All is celebration. Wood thrushes, robins, wrens, orioles, song sparrows, cardinals weave garlands of song. Lilacs and honey locusts incense the air. Breezes sing antiphons through new-leaved trees. Waves ripple on the sea-flowing Hudson River. Flowers festoon our days. **TE DEUM LAUDAMUS.**

So now it is one hundred years since that Maytime when, under a Taurian sky, Peter Maurin was born. What birds sang then? Nightingales, skylarks, European thrushes, or some obscure mountain bird as much a part of the locale as the peasants themselves? Music there must have been, for Peter Maurin's birthplace, a mountain farm which had been held by the Maurin family for fifteen hundred years, was located in Languedoc country, beloved of troubadours. In this area, too, the Faith had been nourished by the blood of early Christian martyrs. Yet the remains and legends of an even earlier Greco-Roman culture undoubtedly did much to give to Peter Maurin that

of thought. Out of it grew that program of **CULT, CULTURE, AND CULTIVATION** which became the **CATHOLIC WORKER.**

If Peter Maurin were alive today, one of the books I think he would analyze and reduce to Easy Essay form, point by careful point, is E. F. Schumacher's **Small is Beautiful.** (See interview pg. 4.—Eds. note). This book has, of course, been reviewed in the *Catholic Worker* and spoken of often in our columns. It is, however, not just a book to be read, but rather to be lived. Schumacher's emphasis on small, practical technologies, on cooperatives, nonviolence, conservation, personalism, and the importance of the great religious and humanist values, both in communal and personal living, make this book an essential guide for all who wish to avoid the multinational technical horrors of Big Brother and 1984. Peter Maurin was a man who not only looked for but lived "alternate life styles." Schumacher's book is a guide for those who, in our perilous present, would like to do the same.

Practical Technology

Clivus Multrum, a kind of compost-producing toilet invented in Sweden, is surely one of those smaller, practical technologies of which both Schumacher and Peter Maurin would approve. It is a system which operates without water, and which converts all waste matter into compost to return to and nourish the land. It is well designed with a down-draft to prevent bad odors. Now that much of this country is faced with a serious drought, we ought to begin reconverting to **Clivus Multrum.** If we could afford the initial cost of this compost toilet system, I am sure we should start reconverting here at the farm. Meanwhile we are stuck with a flush toilet, septic tank, cesspool, chlorinator system which is constantly breaking down, and seems to do little except pollute earth, air, and water. The cost of maintaining the compost system would be minimal, and for farmers, the compost would soon compensate for initial and maintenance costs. I am sure that John Filligar and Mike Gosman, who worked so hard this Spring cleaning out septic tanks and helping the plumbers with their more complicated work, would be delighted if we could undertake such a change. Anyone interested in acquiring more information about this system, should write to: **Clivus Multrum, 14A Eliot St., Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138.**

No Unemployment on the Land

Peter Maurin used to call his back-

(Continued on page 10)



sense of history and tradition which is manifest throughout his thinking. It is here surely that he first began to understand the true origin and meaning of his key word, **radical.**

The central truths of Peter Maurin's teaching were, as Dorothy Day has always emphasized, those of the **GOSPELS**, of the Sermon on the Mount. To these he related the great truths of past and present, from Aristotle to Marx, Kropotkin, Eric Gill, Mounier, etc. It was a true work of clarification

For Clarification of Thought

The following books were recommended repeatedly by Peter Maurin in reading lists appended to his essays. (Many of these books are long out of print. If any of our readers have extra copies, we would appreciate them. D.D.)

- ADLER, Mortimer:** What Man Has Made of Man.
AGAR, Herbert: Land of the Free.
BENSON, Robert: Lord of the World.
BERDYAEV, Nicholas: The Bourgeois Mind; Christianity and Class War.
BORNE, Etienne: A Philosophy of Work.
BORSODI, Ralph: Flight from the City.
CHESTERTON, G.K.: Outline of Sanity; Saint Francis of Assisi; The Everlasting Man.
CORY, Herbert: The Emancipation of a Free Thinker.
CARREL, Alexis: Man the Unknown.
DAWSON, Christopher: Enquiries into Religion and Culture; The Making of Europe; Progress and Religion; Religion and the Modern State.
FANFANI, Amintore: Catholicism, Protestantism and Capitalism.
FITZPATRICK, Benedict: Ireland and the Foundation of Europe.
FURFEY, Paul Hanley: Fire on the Earth.
GEMELLI, Father Agostino, F.M.: The Franciscan Message to the World.
GILL, Eric: Art in a Changing Civilization; Work and Leisure; It All Goes Together.

- GREGORY, T.S.:** The Unfinished Universe.
HEALY, Father Patrick: The Valerian Persecution.
HOLLIS, Christopher: The Two Nations.
ISWOLSKY, Helen: Soviet Man Now.
KAGAWA, Toyohiko: Brotherhood Economics.
KROPOTKIN, Peter: Conquest of Bread; Fields, Factories and Workshops; Mutual Aid.
LEWIS, Wyndham: Charles V.
LUGAN, Alphonse: Social Principles of the Gospel.
MARITAIN, Jacques: Freedom in the Modern World; Temporal Regime and Liberty; Things That Are Not Caesars; True Humanism.
McNABB, Father Vincent, O.P.: The Church and the Land; Nazareth or Social Chaos.
MICHEL, Seraphine: The Thomistic Doctrine of the Common Good.
MOUNIER, Emmanuel: Personalist Manifesto.
NOCK, Albert Jay: Our Enemy the State.
PENTY, Arthur: A Guildsman's Interpretation of History; Post-Industrialism; Toward a Christian Sociology.
TAWNEY, R.H.: Religion and the Rise of Capitalism.
VEBLEN, Thorstein: The Theory of the Leisure Class.
WILCOX, B.O.: Nations Can Stay at Home.
WILSON, Thomas: Discourse on Usury.

FRIDAY NIGHT MEETINGS

In accordance with Peter Maurin's desire for clarification of thought, the Catholic Worker holds meetings every Friday night at Maryhouse, 55 E. 3rd St., between First and Second Avenues. Meetings begin at 8:00 P.M. Tea is served. Everyone is invited.

May 13—Panel Discussion: Peter Maurin Centenary.

May 20—Robert Coles: Children of the Rich.

May 27—To be announced.

June 3—Arthur Cohen: The Spirit of the Early Hassidic Communities.

June 10—Grace Paley: Reading from her work.

"Be What You Want the Other Person to Be"

(Continued from page 1)

another as He had loved them. He asked them to see in each human creature, especially the sufferer, His own person. He is the homeless one, the hungry one, the one behind bars, the one brought low by disease, the humiliated one covered with rags. Thus, to meet another's need is to meet Jesus, and it is by "emptying ourselves" of our possessions, for love, that we can meet and serve Him. Maurin's theory of revolution was the service of all through love, in other

had several paths open to him in an occupied nation, one of which was that of the righteous violence of the Zealot. He chose to ask his followers to change themselves by laying aside the "old creature" and by putting on the "new creature." Only the "new creature" could be a part of the community of believers. "This is the original revolution," said Yoder, "the creation of a distinct community with its own deviant set of values and its coherent way of incarnating them."

the first centuries. Dorothy explained that once Maurin had issued the appeal, he was confident that the bishops would respond. When no houses of hospitality sprang up, the group in New York opened one themselves, thus carrying out Peter Maurin's dictum of being what you want the other person to be. The house, on the Lower East Side, was soon a place of teeming activity. Dorothy Day wrote of it, "Once, when I looked around our crowded house of hospitality and asked Peter if this is what he meant

wisdom of the day. Perhaps the most "deviant" value was the traditional church attitude on money. By-passing all the "worldly philosophers," as the economists from Adam Smith onwards have been called, Maurin harked back to the time when there was no science of economics as such. Economics was simply a branch of morality; it was the application of moral conduct to livelihood. In this context, he could remind Catholics that the Church had forbidden as evil the lending of money at interest. Usury was not simply high interest but any interest at all.

Maurin pointed out the collision of values that occurs when wealth is invested to make more wealth instead of being utilized in gratuitous aid to the needy. People and societies could be rehabilitated if only a fraction of the citizens of our country saw it as their duty to "invest" their surpluses in other people or in projects of true social value, organic farms, crafts that engage the whole person, and that recognize the great diversity of production in rural areas. The problem is that in modern thinking, there is no "surplus," but merely an endless spiraling of wealth by investment. Said Maurin, "When people save money, they invest that money. Money invested increases production. Increased production brings a surplus in production. A surplus in production brings unemployment. Unemployment brings a slump in business. A slump in business brings more unemployment. More unemployment brings a depression." He foresaw the situation that has descended upon our debt-ridden government as well as crisis-prone cities: "Because the state has legalized money-lending at interest, cities, counties, states, and the federal government have mortgaged their budgets. So people find themselves in all kinds of financial difficulties because the state has legalized money-lending at interest."

Common Good

His strictures on capitalism and its amoral underpinnings are many and go to the root of its evils, the divorce from values and the belief that there is an "invisible hand" (the nexus of the market with its law of supply and demand) that will guide us aright. Maurin asserted, "We have brought about our present unhappy conditions by divorcing education, industry, politics, business and economics from morality and religion and by ignoring for long decades the innate dignity of man and trampling on his human rights. We have taken religion out of everything and have put commercialism into everything... We are beginning to learn that to put big business on its feet does not necessarily put the forgotten man on his feet... When modern society made the bank account the standard of values, people ceased to produce for use and began to produce for profit. Rugged individualism leads to rugged nationalism, which leads to rugged collectivism... In a capitalist society where man is inhuman to man, people cannot keep from dreaming about a society where man would be human to man."

Maurin's insistence on the rights of the producer and the crucial importance of meaningful work, on smallness over inhuman industrial bigness, on the central concept of the "common good" have even more impact in these years than when he first propounded them in the pages of the *Catholic Worker*. Similar concepts are coming from high places like the Club of Rome which warns of the dangers of spiraling and uncontrolled growth, and from such thinkers as E. F. Schumacher, whose *Small is Beautiful* is one of the most widely-read paperbacks on college campuses across the United States.

(To be continued next month, Peter's book, *THE GREEN REVOLUTION*, has long been out of print. We're happy to announce that it may be reprinted later this year. Watch for the notice. Eds note.)

WE HAVE FOUND THIS MAN PERVERTING OUR NATION!

HE STIRS UP THE PEOPLE!

SAYING THAT HE IS CHRIST THE KING!



Ade Bethune

words, the works of mercy. The works of mercy are performed by a person for a person, thus the revolution must be personalist. Christians must band together in service to others and thus the revolution must also be communitarian. The vanguard of the revolution was to be the Catholic Worker movement which would carry out the revolutionary action of taking literally the gospel of love.

Those who formed the Catholic Worker community were trying to work out in their lives what John H. Yoder calls, in the book of that name, "the original revolution." Jesus, Yoder points out,

Maurin described the deviant values and behavior of the early Christian community, saying, "In the first centuries of Christianity, the hungry were fed at a personal sacrifice, the naked were clothed at a personal sacrifice. And because the poor were fed, clothed and sheltered at a personal sacrifice, the pagans used to say about the Christians: 'See how they love each other.' Is there a more deviant set of values in our society than the 'Sermon on the Mount?'"

Peter Maurin made a plea to the Bishops of the United States to open houses of hospitality throughout the nation in imitation of the Christians of

when he talked about houses of hospitality, where the works of mercy could be performed at a personal sacrifice, by practising voluntary poverty, which meant in turn stripping one's self of the "old person" and putting on the "new" which meant Christ, so that we could be other Christs to our brothers and sisters, in whom we were also to see Christ, Peter sighed and said, "It arouses the conscience."

"Arousing the conscience" has been the task of the Catholic Worker over the decades. Peter Maurin emphasized the "deviant set of values" that set Christianity apart from the accepted

Peter Maurin, Master Agitator

By STANLEY VISHNEWSKI

Peter Maurin was Peter to those of us who knew and loved him. No one ever thought of calling him by the formal title of Mr. In fact, once, when a visitor did ask to speak to Mr. Maurin, it took a few seconds for the fact to register. "Oh, you want Peter," we said.

Peter used to relate with glee the time that he was introduced from a platform as Dr. Maurin. He recalled how, when the chairman asked him from which university he had graduated, he had replied: "From Union Square." A smile diffused his wrinkle-lined face as Peter added: "And they never called me Doctor since."

Peter eschewed titles and dignities. He rejoiced in the fact that he was looked upon as an Apostle on The Bum, a Master Agitator, a troubadour of God. He went everywhere, depending in great measure on God's Providence, to spread his message of love. Peter, in his humility, thought that people would discount his shabby, tramp-like appearance and would listen to him. But he failed to realize that the American mentality was more concerned with outward appearances than with

Unsatisfied Customers

It was to spread his message of personalism that Peter became a wanderer, an Apostle on The Bum, a Master Agitator, a troubadour of God. He went everywhere, depending in great measure on God's Providence, to spread his message of love. Peter, in his humility, thought that people would discount his shabby, tramp-like appearance and would listen to him. But he failed to realize that the American mentality was more concerned with outward appearances than with

ideas—and so his crumpled clothes (he often slept in them) usually put people off.

There was the priest who wrote in and demanded his money back that he had advanced for Peter's carfare. He wrote indignantly that we had sent a bum to lecture to his group.

Then there was the time when we put Peter on a train to speak at a conference upstate only to get a phone call a few hours later asking where Peter Maurin was. The caller disclosed that she had met the train but that a workingman was the only passenger that had disembarked. "That was Peter," Dorothy said.

Once Peter was able to get past the initial prejudice, then the force of his humility and his message got through. "It gets people," Peter would say—"It makes to think." I had the privilege of being with Peter on many occasions, some formal and some informal, when Peter would be denied the right to speak. But once he started talking, the American sense of fair play having prevailed, he would hold his audience enthralled, to be met at his conclusion with thunderous applause.

Peter was primarily a teacher—he was a man who had seen a vision of a better social order and wished to impart that knowledge to all who would listen. And when people were put off by his appearance or by his strong French accent, he took to writing out his thoughts in phrased meditations and leaving them with people who had said that they were too busy to speak to him. (It was John Day, Dorothy's brother, who first called

Peter's writings "Easy Essays.")

People were also put off by Peter's vision of a new social order.

Those who thought in terms of vast mass movements, state aid, and high powered, richly endowed organizations, quickly dismissed as hopelessly impractical, Peter's message of personal responsibility, of how Christ means for each and every one of us to be our brother's (and sister's) keeper.

"I do not preach a new philosophy," he would say, "but one that is so old that it looks like new." "I am not a de-nouncer," he once said, "but an announcer."

A Revolutionary Doctrine

What was it that Peter wanted to announce? It was simply the Sermon on The Mount: a doctrine that was so revolutionary that scholars had wrapped it up in nice phraseology and so rendered it harmless. It was time, Peter thought, to take the wraps off that doctrine and make Christianity the revolutionary life force that it is.

What was this revolutionary program that Peter announced, so simple that it was mind-befuddling in its reality? People are hungry and are homeless. Do we sit down, compile statistics and file report after report? The solution is obvious to those who have eyes to see: we feed people who are hungry and we provide shelter for those who are homeless. Therefore, the first plank in Peter's program: House of Hospitality.

A saint once told us that it is impossible to preach to a man on an empty

(Continued on page 10)

ECONOMICS AS IF PEOPLE MATTERED

An Interview with E. F. Schumacher

By ROBERT ELLSBERG and JEFF DIETRICH

Dr. E. F. Schumacher has become widely known in the last few years as one of the leading exponents of organic and decentralist economics, particularly since the publication in 1973 of his book, *SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL: ECONOMICS AS IF PEOPLE MATTERED*. He is also president of the Soil Association, Britain's oldest organic farming association; founder and chairman of the Intermediate Technology Group, which designs and distributes small-scale tools and machines suited to the needs of the developing countries; a director of the Scott Bader Company, a pioneering effort at common ownership and workers' control; and an associate editor and frequent contributor to the journal *RESURGENCE*, published in Wales. An avid student of Gandhi, Schumacher's writing resonates a Gandhian sensitivity for means and ends, for the moral basis of economic life, the dignity of labor and life on the land, the spiritual, aesthetic, as well as material needs of human beings. We began by asking him what had first struck him on reading Gandhi.

SCHUMACHER: Well, I discovered that Gandhi, who was celebrated as the father of India, saint and so on—I discovered that he was an economist; nobody had ever told me that. Of course I learned from Gandhi: he was one of the few people I could learn from. I realized that what Gandhi was teaching—in non-academic language—was real economics. I think of so many of my academic colleagues; they go from school to study, and from study to teaching—and in the process there is such a narrowing—though not a narrowing of your conceits! Well certainly Gandhi never studied economics; he learned by doing, and his whole outlook was to start with people. Now it's much more difficult if you've been brainwashed by economics; it took me a long time to discover that economics isn't about people but goods: "You have to produce more and more goods, and if millions are unemployed, well that's just too bad—give them welfare payments!" It was so much easier for Gandhi, involved in a political struggle as he was, relying upon the people, to realize that economics is a kind of prostitution of the soul unless it is primarily concerned with poverty. Such a foreign idea for any economics faculty! Gandhi helped me to see this.

CATHOLIC WORKER: You are yourself a Catholic. Yet you're probably best known as a proponent of 'Buddhist Economics.' How did you happen to write that article?

EFS: Well if I had launched this article under the title 'Christian Economics,' no one would have read it! But I had worked in Buddhist countries and given some thought to it—so, luckily, I called it "Buddhist Economics," which is my own invention. I was trying to speak to a country such as Burma, for instance, where the government would say, "We want now to modernize our country, but our sacred heritage is Buddhism, and we will never give that up, or contaminate it." And then they 'modernize,' calling in the most materialistic Westerners as their economic advisors, totally unaware, it seemed to me, that economics is an outgrowth of a particular metaphysic or philosophy, and reaffirms or introduces that philosophy wherever that economics is applied. So to say, "We must stick with our Buddhism," and then to ask these Western 'rebuffers' in—oh, you know how they will 'rebuild' your economy—into a Western materialistic pattern totally incompatible with Buddhism. This struck me very forcibly.

CW: It's interesting, though perhaps not obvious, that the same temptation which you urged the Burmese government to resist—that of replacing their own sacred values and traditions with a foreign ideology—is not an experience unique to Buddhist or Third World countries—but was a temptation with which Christians in the West were at one time faced; not unlike the temptation which Jesus himself had to face in the

desert. You are asking the developing world to resist the very same temptation which Christians, for the most part, were unable to resist. Only now it is the Christians themselves that are presenting the temptation. Except, as you say, there could not really be a compromise. Christianity could not live alongside capitalism without somehow becoming critically deformed.

EFS: It is not possible to think and talk economics without the concept of temptation. Yet you can open any book

wrong, its moral and metaphysical basis is wrong. And it follows that once you have started wrongly, you can never get right again. It starts not from any picture of the real purpose of human life on earth. In simplified terms, the *homo economicus* is a person who is interested in nothing but consumption, accumulation...

CW: No longer a creator, no longer a celebrator, a lover—

EFS: Yes, no sense of beauty... And this reductionism may be tolerable for



on economics and not find the word 'temptation' in it. Oh no, there is not such a thing—only "consumer's preference" and so on. Well, economics has become purely materialistic. And these so-called educated elites of these poor countries, all educated in the "value free" environment of the Western countries, they come back saying, "We are the masters, now we have really learned something." And they have all merely been indoctrinated into this modern economics without having been taught that economics is not like physics, not like saying, "This man is standing on his feet," in which case you can say, yes, or no. Economics is the outgrowth of a metaphysic, not of a religion.

CW: Perhaps more of an 'anti-religion.' You could say that what Western economics is based on is the celebration and elevation of what all religious traditions tell us is not our real selves—that is this puny, vulnerable, grasping ego. And yet economics treats it as if there were nothing more. No wonder there are problems!

EFS: I almost called my book, "The Religion of Economics." It is such a poverty stricken, unsatisfactory religion, for after all, success, total economic success leaves behind a taste of total unfulfillment, the taste of ashes. So economics is not concerned with the real reality—it takes us away from reality.

CW: So in other words, maybe it helps to look at economics not as a bad science, but as an inferior religion.

EFS: That's right. That's exactly the point. Because you can't say it's bad science—it's logical, it's systematic, a lot of hard work and hard thinking have gone into it—but its starting point is

a while—it can work out in its full glory and be applied, but in the end it has no connection with reality. It is self-destructive.

CW: Marx would say, however, that any ideology, no matter how much of a mystification—no matter how much it truly conceals, does in fact reflect real social facts, social and productive relations in society, and their constant evolution. Historically speaking, classical economics isn't responsible for creating capitalism. It was simply the ideological justification of real changes in society, the emergence of a new dominant class. So the problem goes beyond simply our ideas or ways of thinking.

EFS: Well that little bit of Marxism one has to take very seriously and I do accept his advice. Don't just make theories—study how people make a living. From that, you learn far more what is possible. That's why I decided to study technology—because that is the main component of how people make a living. Then I began to realize that in the last thirty years—though it started much earlier—technology has moved away from the masses of the people.

I was a farm laborer in the early 'forties. We had good technology, quite cheap. And you could afford a small farm on maybe 2000 pounds worth of equipment. Not a bit of that equipment is available today, and to equip that farm would cost you probably 100,000 pounds. Well there are very few people who have that kind of money and those who haven't are excluded. So technology has strengthened the monopoly of the rich, and reduced the chances of ordinary people to be self-reliant, making their own living. And that's why I set up the In-

termediate Technology Development Group in London, to restore possibilities for the little people or the little places in the outlying rural areas to make a good existence.

CW: But intermediate technology existed before, and it was overcome by the pressures of class interests—not simply by the philosophy of 'bigness.' Do you think the solution consists of re-introducing this technology?

EFS: Well, I have formulated what I call the "Law of the Disappearing Middle." There is a tendency—to what extent this is a class phenomenon, or exclusive to capitalism, which I happen to doubt since it is the same in communist countries, I don't know... But suppose there is a Stage One technology—let's say fairly simple appliances and tools, which will never disappear—they are unforgettable. Then comes Stage Two, more complex but still widely available, and the two exist side by side—some people switch to Stage Two, some don't. Then comes Stage Three; and now something happens—Stage Two drops out. Well you don't notice it because One, Two and Three are developed very closely together. But imagine there is enormous technical progress, and let's say we are at Stage Twelve—and you find One exists, and Twelve exists, the hoe and the combine, but in-between there is a great emptiness.

CW: And I suppose Stage Two represents not only the technology but the person who was using that technology; an "intermediate person?"

EFS: Well either they can go along to Stage Twelve, or they're fixed at Stage One. They had been managing quite well, suddenly they can't afford to farm anymore. So these in-between stages disappear and society becomes polarized, increasingly, between the poor and hopeless on the one hand, and then the rich. You can see it on a world-wide scale and you can see it even in our own countries. Well, family farms in America are disappearing at a tremendous rate. Now there are many things to be done, but one thing in which I have specialized for the moment, is in trying to fill this gap with intermediate technology, helping the poor to help themselves.

Of course the interesting question is, what is the process of change? But this is really a hen and egg story. Of course first you have to have ideas; then you have to translate them. To use Christian language—in the beginning was the Word, and the Word then becomes flesh and dwells among us. So how do you make the word flesh? Well I've tried to put it into hardware, into methodology. Naturally there are many other things that need to be done. But I talk to many people, and all too often, somebody says, actually tells me, "Well you really can't do anything; THEY won't let you. You have first got to change the system." And I say, "Look, you are talking about changing the system, but I am changing it by creating these new possibilities. And you are not changing it by saying that the system ought to be changed."

CW: What do you tell them after that?

EFS: I say that the first thing to do is to sort out one's own mind. What do I applaud and what do I not applaud? As long as most people applaud moon landings and heart transplants and traveling at supersonic speed in the Concorde, and so on—they certainly aren't really part of the new society. Nixon is supposed to have said that the week two unfortunates were landed on the moon was the greatest week since Genesis! Well, he doesn't belong in the new society. But when someone is able to say, "Now, here we are really doing something for the poor, the helpless"—that is the greatest week since Genesis.

The second thing is to join. Now this is not to be treated lightly. There are many people at work and they are very lonesome, they face such financial problems that they can't really get down to work. And people come to me and say, "You are so right about the need for organic agriculture, what can I do?" And

(Continued on page 11)

Peter Maurin: Upstream to the Source

(Continued from page 1)

ing to put their hand to the job of starting houses where the works of mercy could come true once more. They listened and followed through, and the work went on.

No Big Deal

Peter made it plain from the start; the Catholic Worker was no big deal. That was the secret. One needed only a ready hand, a few friends, a few dollars, some sense of discipline, the guts to learn as one went. The politics would rise with the bread. Houses opened, flourished; some closed, others started up. Peter grew along with things.

Any Catholic Worker today would recognize the rhythm. It was a discipline of the street, and of the heart. Everyone took the same vow: of instability, financially speaking. In what must be the longest floating, free Friday university in existence, the soul, so to speak, had her soup.

The rhythm continues. With, of course, an immense difference in both church and society. Peter could count on an innocent church, fascinated with its own energy and potential. Lay people, liturgy, Catholic Action, even pacifism, to a degree — the church was a bubbling pot of mysterious savory ingredients. Modern war, which broke the back of the American dream and made a stalking skeleton of the church, hardly devastated the Worker at all. Evidently, because whatever 'big deal' the CW had concluded, was simply a covenant with the God of peace. War, in consequence, was small potatoes indeed, biblically speaking. It was one of those periodic spasms of empire, a sign of the end of things; more specifically, of the end of empire. As such, it was a crashing stereotype; so was its ideology, its ever more

cunning modes of killing mind and body. No big deal! it was a kind of holy taunt flung at tanks and fire storms and The Bomb. So people went to jail, to work camps, lost jobs, lost good repute, refused good sound money (blood-stained), refused to work in the forges and warehouses of Mars. Of course, no big deal.

"Come down, come down!" Big Bro had to become little bro, before he could be brother at all — even to his own soul. It was this deflation of big balloons that I love about Peter. He had a most unrehabilitated sense of the human size, a gimlet eye. So he took the measure of Superstate, and refused worship. And in such ways, the Worker confronted war, the normal activity of the Great Stalker. War was neither to be feared nor served; in such a way, successive wars became for the Workers simply a testing ground. Weapons, new weapons, especially those aimed at the heart of community, the heart of the mind, were tried out first there; the antipersonnel weapon of untruth. Wars came, and more wars. The church enlisted. World War II; "Yes, but." Korea; "Perhaps . . ." Vietnam (at least in the bloody first years) "Yes, out flat; right or wrong, yes."

But the Worker stuck fast, as the great tides rolled over. Simply, unequivocally, some Christians said No. And hung on. And were all but hanged. They were foolish and simplistic and intransigent as the first-generation 'atheists and corruptors' who once confounded the empire.

Did Peter foresee all this? He would have said something like — he saw what he saw; it was enough to walk by. The essays warn of the creeping fascism that advances under liberal and even radical blah; he insisted on the twinning of justice and mercy; the war of big shots

and little shots drew his ire; he saw the slogans march and the placards drop to the gutter, the inevitable decline from dream to burnt out dawn. One has almost invariably, the sense of a mind firmly in command of its world, of the myths that pass for realities, the truths that starve to death in corners and alleys



Nathan Zobrow, OSB

of the mind. He condemned the first, salvaged the second.

I could not put the matter too strongly. Peter, dead, was a teacher of the sixties and seventies, in a way very few among the living were. I speak here a personal testament almost too precious to assess. We had somehow to get reborn; simply, to pass from church-as-class-phenome-

non — church as slavery-of-empire, to church as noumenon, holy sign. This was difficult beyond words. It was in fact, when it occurred at all, an act of God. But if it were to happen, then from a human point of view, there had to be signs along the road, verifying one's direction — also challenging one's laziness and cowardice. Signs scornful, energizing, ironic, disruptive, reverent, attuned to symbols and symbolic action. And plain spoken; after the 'black lung' inflicted by smoky seminary lamps.

Peter cleared the air. We breathed again.

This is by no means to lay on his bones the burden of this or that anti-war action, taken by us or others, to this day. The point is something other. It seems to me that Peter had a kind of Chinese or Vietnamese sense of the unity of experience. That was what we never heard, in seminary or pulpit. Today it has the familiar ring of a Mao dictum, but the words are Peter's; "Workers must become scholars, scholars workers." In season and out, with the unwearying patience of a sound mind, he insisted: one could never truly dwell in the world as a human, until one acted on behalf of others, on behalf of life. And the act had to be grounded in that perfectly audacious sense of 'tradition' which was Christ's own; 'I know wherefrom I come, and where I am going. . . .' In this way, action was no mere flash in the pan; but a true epiphany of energies, undiminished in the giving, rising indeed on themselves. Coming from somewhere, therefore going somewhere.

We cannot count any more on the church Peter knew, as far as self-confidence, innocence, optimism, bound and rebound are concerned. We have eaten

(Continued on page 11)

Practical Advice, Traditional Wisdom

By E. F. SCHUMACHER

(This sermon was delivered at Grace Cathedral, San Francisco, on March 6, 1977. It is printed here with permission of the Dean of the Cathedral. Eds. note.)

I am not used to giving sermons. I have never done it before. So I beg for your patience.

Maybe I should start with a reading from the Holy Bible. Let's turn to the Prophet Haggai, first chapter:

" . . . the word of the Lord came by Haggai the prophet . . . Thus says the Lord of hosts: This people say the time has not yet come to rebuild the house of the Lord . . . Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, while this house lies in ruins? Now, therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts: consider how you have fared. You have sown much, and harvested little; you eat, but you never have enough, you drink but you never have your fill; you clothe yourselves but no one is warm; and he who earns wages, earns wages to put them into a bag with holes. Thus says the Lord of hosts: . . . Go up to the hills and bring wood and build the house, that I may take pleasure in it and that I may appear in my glory, says the Lord. You have looked for much, and lo, it came to little; and when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why? says the Lord of hosts. Because of my house that lies in ruins, while you busy yourselves each with his own house."

It appears that the Modern Experiment has failed: the experiment, that is to say, to live by the principle: Let us think of production and consumption; nothing else, except of course security, really matters

"The time has not yet come to rebuild the house of the Lord;" we have more urgent things to do. It all sounded so rational and manageable. But it did not work out. With all our science and technology, with our enormous use of our resources, so great that absolute limits to growth are coming into sight, we have not succeeded in building a Good Society. The atmosphere is laden with mutual hostilities, suspicion, distrust, and recriminations—even when people get together to consider what can be done to help build a better city, a place "where people matter."

It appears, however, that we are now entering the age of the *Great Convergence*. What is converging? At all times the saints and the sages have been advising us that we had better put our *inner* house in order, because the outer world in which we live is merely a reflection of our inner world. Not what we take into ourselves is important; but what comes out of us in words and deeds, *that* makes the world.

The "practical people" said, "All this is fantasy; stick to the *real* world. Reality is what can be counted, measured, weighed, purchased and sold." We have been told: *First* seek the Kingdom of God, and all the other things (which you also need) will be given to you. But the "practical people" said: Concentrate first of all on getting those other things and the Kingdom of God will look after itself. We shall all be prosperous, happy, and good with each other.

We thought, on the whole, that the "practical people" had the better message. But it has not worked out. And *now* the "practical people" are being forced to change their tune. Who or what is forcing them? The *facts* of the *physical* universe, of the only *reality* they are willing to recognize.

Now, suddenly, after it had been drummed into us that "the problem of production had been solved," that soon everybody would be rich, and the sky is the limit, we are told, quite correctly, that there are much nearer limits that "the sky." We are told that

we shall have to cut down on our energy consumption, perhaps also on our water consumption; that we cannot pretend any longer that so-called economic growth will solve the problems of poverty, distribution, social decay and disintegration (even if further "growth" along the established lines were possible); that we must develop a *caring* society, a *sharing* society; that we must learn to see ourselves as guests and trustees on this earth and not as the "masters and possessors of nature;" that those who have more than enough must *radically* revise their life-styles, while those who have less than enough must be *radically* helped to help themselves.

All this is now not simply *moral* or *ethical* advice: it is *practical* advice. If society is not to tear itself apart and drift into all kinds of disasters, this advice must be taken. It means, among other things, that social justice ceases to be merely a pious aspiration but becomes a *condition of survival*. It means that economics and ethics can no longer be kept separate. We shall find that only ethical behavior will be "economical" and that *unethical* behavior will be "uneconomical." Or, to put it into words used by Mahatma Gandhi, "that there is enough for everybody's need but not for anybody's greed." It will be much easier than before for people to raise themselves above the petty preoccupations of everyday selfishness when objective, material facts are pushing them in that direction.

In Marin County, I am told, the directors of the water district imposed a mandatory 57% cut in water usage on home-owners and businesses. The immediate response has been to reduce water usage by something like 65-70%. People can and will modify their behavior when they realize that a natural resource is not inexhaustible and when their home-grown ingenuity is challenged and brought into action.

Similarly, we may hope that people will let their better nature respond to demands for greater social justice and mutual help when the course of events makes it clearer every day that without such a response society will disintegrate.

The human being exists at three different levels and, therefore, has three different principal concerns:

— As spiritual beings, we are inescapably concerned with values and *need* to act in accordance with our moral impulses.

— As social beings, we are inescapably concerned with *other people* and *need* to act as good neighbors; that is to say, to render service to others.

— As individuals, we are inescapably concerned with *ourselves* and *need* to establish our identity and develop, by creative/productive activities, the gifts that have been given to us.

We have no reason to be fearful if the course of *objective events* now forces us increasingly to take these three primary concerns more seriously than we have done before and to act accordingly. On the contrary, we may be grateful for it.

The *convergence* of the advice traditionally given by saints and sages and the advice now given by knowledgeable "practical people" may mean nothing or it may mean everything. If we ignore it, the convergence means nothing, and we shall have to face very great dangers. If we accept it, the convergence means everything, and real opportunities are opening up for the building of a better, a more harmonious society.

We may then, perhaps, experience the truth of the second chapter of the Book of Haggai:

Take courage, all you people of the land, says the Lord; work, for I am with you, says the Lord of hosts . . . My Spirit abides among you; fear not. For thus says the Lord of hosts: Once again, in a little while . . . I will fill this house with splendor.

EASY ESSAYS

WHEN CHRIST IS KING

People went crazy for Democracy,
majority rule, mob rule,
Then they went crazy
for the War for Democracy,
trying to bring Peace through War.
Then they went crazy for Normalcy;
then they went crazy for Technocracy;
then they went crazy for the NRA
and they say that I am crazy.
They say that I am crazy
because I refuse to be crazy
the way everybody else is crazy.
For, if I tried to be crazy
the way everybody else is crazy
I know that I would be crazy.
So I persist in being crazy
in my own crazy way
and I am trying to make other people
crazy
my way.

They say that I am a radical.
If I am a radical
then I am not a liberal.
The future will be different
if we make the present different.
But to make the present different,
one must give up old tricks
and start to play new tricks.
But to give up old tricks
and start to play new tricks
one must be a fanatic.
Liberals are so liberal about everything
that they refuse to be fanatical
about anything.
And not being able to be fanatical
about anything,
liberals cannot be liberators.
They can only be liberals.
Liberals refuse to be
religious, philosophical, or economic
fanatics
and consent to be the worst kind of
fanatics,
liberal fanatics.

If I am a radical
then I am not a conservative.
Conservatives try to believe
that things are good enough
to be let alone.
But things are not good enough to
be let alone.
Conservatives try to believe
that the world is getting better
every day in every way.
But the world is not getting better
every day in every way.
The world is getting worse
every day in every way
because the world is upside down.
And conservatives do not know
how to take the upside down
and to put it right side up.
When conservatives and radicals
will come to an understanding
they will take the upside down
and they will put it right side up.

The order of the day
is to talk about the social order.
Conservatives would like
to keep it from changing
but they don't know how.
Liberals try to patch it
and call it a New Deal.
Socialists want a change,
but a gradual change.
Communists want a change,
an immediate change,
but a Socialist change.
Communists in Russia
do not build Communism,
they build Socialism.
Communists want to pass
from Capitalism to Socialism
and from Socialism to Communism.
I want a change,
and a radical change.
I want a change
from an acquisitive society
to a functional society,
from a society of go-getters
to a society of go-givers.

Modern society has made the bank
account
the standard of values.
When the bank account

becomes the standard of values
the banker has the power.
When the banker has the power
the technician has to supervise
the making of profits.
When the banker has the power
the politician
has to assure law and order
in the profit-making system.
When the banker has the power
the educator trains students
in the technique of profit-making.
When the banker has the power
the clergyman is expected
to bless the profit-making system
or to join the unemployed.
When the banker has the power
the Sermon on the Mount
is declared unpractical.
When the banker has the power
we have an acquisitive,
not a functional society.

LOGICAL AND PRACTICAL

What is not logical
is not practical,
even if it is practiced.
What is logical
is practical
even if it is not practiced.
To practice
what is not logical
though it is practical
is to be a bourgeois.
A bourgeois is a fellow
who tries to be somebody
by trying to be
like everybody,
which makes him
nobody.
To practice
what is logical
even if it is not practiced
is to be a leader.
A leader is a fellow
who follows a cause.
The Sermon on the Mount
will be called practical
when Christians make up their mind
to practice it.

THE CASE FOR UTOPIA

The world would be better off
if people tried to become 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 poorest.
And everybody would be what he ought
to be
if everybody tried to be
what he 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 com-
munism 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.
"Capital," says Karl Marx, "is
accumulated labor,
not for the benefit of the laborers



CATHOLIC WOR

The general aim of the Catholic Worker Movement is to realize in the individual and in society the expressed and implied teachings of Christ. It must, therefore, begin with an analysis of our present society to determine whether we already have an order that meets with the requirements of the justice and charity of Christ.

The society in which we live, and which is generally called capitalist (because of its method of producing wealth) and bourgeois (because of the prevalent mentality), is not in accord with justice and charity—

In Economics—because the guiding principle is production for profit and because production determines needs. A just order would provide the necessities of life for all, and needs would determine what would be produced. From each according to one's ability, to each according to one's needs. Today we have a non-producing class which is maintained by the labor of others with the consequence that the laborer is systematically robbed of the wealth which he or she produces over and above what is needed for one's bare maintenance.

In Psychology—because capitalist society fails to take in the whole nature of the person but rather regards him or her as an economic factor in production. A person is an item in the expense sheet of the employer. Profit determines what type of work an employee shall do. Hence, the deadly routine of assembly lines and the whole mode of factory production. In a just order, the question will be whether a certain type of work is in accord with human-values, not whether it will bring a profit to the exploiters of labor.

In Morals—because capitalism is maintained by class war. Since the aim of the capitalist employer is to obtain labor as cheaply as possible and the aim of labor is to sell itself as dearly as possible and buy the products produced as cheaply as possible, there is an inevitable and persistent conflict which can only be overcome when the capitalist ceases to exist as a class. When there is but one class, the members perform different functions but there is no longer an employer-wage-earner relationship.

To Achieve A Just Society We Advocate:

A complete rejection of the present social order and a nonviolent revolution to establish an order more in accord with Christian values. This can only be done by direct action, since political means have failed as a method for bringing about this society. Therefore, we advocate a personalism which takes on ourselves responsibility for changing conditions to the extent that we are able to do so. By establishing Houses of Hospitality we take care of as many of those in need as we can rather than turn them over to the impersonal "charity" of the State. We do not do this in order to patch up the wrecks of the capitalist system but rather because there is always a shared responsibility in these things and the call to minister to our brother or sister transcends any consideration of economics.



*Hommage
to Peter Maurin
after Rembrandt FE 1977*

Frits Eichenberg

WORKER POSITIONS

We feel that what anyone possesses beyond basic needs does not belong to one's self but rather to the poor who are without it.

We believe in a withdrawal from the capitalist system so far as each one is able to do so. Toward this end we favor the establishment of a Distributist economy wherein those who have a vocation to the land will work on the farms surrounding the village and those who have other vocations will work in the village itself. In this way we will have a decentralized economy which will dispense with the State as we know it and will be federationist in character as was society during certain periods that preceded the rise of national states.

We believe in worker-ownership of the means of production and distribution, as distinguished from nationalization. This to be accomplished by decentralized co-operatives and the elimination of a distinct employer class. It is revolution from below and not (as political revolutions are) from above. It calls for widespread and universal ownership of property by all people as a stepping stone to a communism that will be in accord with the Christian teaching of detachment from material goods and which, when realized, will express itself in common ownership. "Property, the more common it is, the more holy it is," St. Gertrude writes.

We believe in the complete equality of all men and women under God. Oppression in any form is blasphemy against God, Who created all persons in His image and Who offers redemption to all. The person comes to God freely or not at all and it is not the function of any person or institution to force the Faith on anyone. Persecution of any people is therefore a serious sin and denial of free will.

We believe further that the revolution that is to be pursued in ourselves and in society must be pacifist. Otherwise it will proceed by force and use means that are evil and which will never be outgrown, so that they will determine the END of the revolution and that end will again be tyranny. We believe that Christ went beyond natural ethics and the Old Dispensation in this matter of force and war and taught nonviolence as a way of life. So that, when we fight tyranny and injustice and the class war, we must do so by spiritual weapons and by non-cooperation. Refusal to pay taxes, refusal to register for conscription, refusal to take part in civil-defense drills, nonviolent strikes, and boycotts, withdrawal from the system are all methods that can be employed in this struggle for justice.

We believe that success, as the world determines it, is not the criterion by which a movement should be judged. We must be prepared and ready to face seeming failure. The most important thing is that we adhere to these values which transcend time and for which we will be asked a personal accounting, not as to whether they succeeded (though we should hope that they do) but as to whether we remained true to them even though the whole world go otherwise.

By PETER MAURIN

but for the benefit of the accumulators."
And Capitalists succeed in accumulating labor
 by treating labor, not as a gift, but as a commodity, buying it as any other commodity at the lowest possible price.
And organized labor plays into the hands of the capitalist, or accumulators of labor,
 by treating its own labor, not as a gift, but as a commodity, selling it as any other commodity at the highest possible price.
And the class struggle is a struggle between the buyers of labor at the lowest possible price and the sellers of labor at the highest possible price.
But the buyers of labor at the lowest possible price and the sellers of labor at the highest possible price are nothing but commercializers of labor.
When the capitalist has accumulated so much of the worker's labor that he no longer finds it profitable to buy the worker's labor then the worker can no longer sell his labor.
And when the worker can no longer sell his labor he can no longer buy the products of his labor.
And that is what the worker gets for selling his labor to the capitalists.
Labor is not a commodity to be bought and sold—
 labor is a means of self-expression, the worker's gift to the common good.

WHAT MAKES MAN HUMAN

Charles Peguy used to say:
 "There are two things in this world, politics and mysticism."
 Politics is just politics and is not worth bothering about and mysticism is mysterious and is worth all our striving.
 To give and not to take, that is what makes man human.
 To serve and not to rule, that is what makes man human.
 To help and not to crush, that is what makes man human.
 To nourish and not to devour, that is what makes man human.
 And if need be, to die and not to live, that is what makes man human.
 Ideals and not deals, that is what makes man human.
 Creed and not greed, that is what makes man human.

THE SIT-DOWN TECHNIQUE

Strike news doesn't strike me, but the sit-down strike is a different strike from the ordinary strike.
 In the sit-down strike you don't strike anybody either on the jaw or under the belt, you just sit down.
 The sit-down strike is essentially a peaceful strike.
 If the sit-down strike remains a sit-down strike, it may be a means of bringing about desirable results.
 The sit-down strike must be conducted on Gandhi lines, that is to say, according to the doctrine of pure means as expressed by Jacques Maritain.

The capitalist system is a racketeering system. It is a racketeering system because it is a profiteering system. It is a profiteering system because it is a profit system. And nobody has found the way to keep the profit system from becoming a profiteering system.

Harold Laski says:
 "In the Middle Ages the idea of acquiring wealth was limited by a body of moral rules imposed under the sanction of religious authority."
 But modern business men tell the clergy:
 "Mind your own business and don't butt into our business."

In the Middle Ages they had a doctrine, the doctrine of the Common Good.
 In the Middle Ages they had an economy which was economical. Their economy was based on the idea that God wants us to be our brother's keepers. They believed in the right to work for the workers. They believed in being fair to the worker as well as the consumer. They believed in doing their work the best they knew how for the service of God and men.

Leon Harmel, who was an employer, not a labor leader, says:
 "We have lost the right concept of authority since the Renaissance."
 We have not only lost the right concept of authority, we have also lost the right concept of property. The use of property to acquire more property is not the proper use of property. The right use of property is to enable the worker to do his work more effectively. The right use of property is not to compel the worker, under threat of unemployment, to be a cog in the wheel of mass production.

Organized labor, whether it be the A.F. of L. or the C. I. O., is far from knowing what to do with the economic setup. Organized labor, as well as organized capital, is the product of the modern mind. The modern mind is in such a fog that it cannot see the forest for the trees. The modern mind has been led astray by the liberal mind. The endorsement of liberal economics by the liberal mind has given us this separation of the material from the spiritual which we call secularism.

Organized labor, organized capital, organized politics are essentially secularist-minded. We need leaders to lead us in the making of a path from the things as they are to the things as they should be.

CHRISTIANITY UNTRIED

Chesterton says:
 "The Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting. It has been found difficult and left untried."
 Christianity has not been tried because people thought it was impractical. And men have tried everything except Christianity. And everything that men have tried has failed.

Unashamed Moralists in the Personalist Tradition

By ROBERT COLES

All through his long poem *Paterson*, William Carlos Williams struggles to expose the banalities, the crudities, the outright evils of modern capitalist industrialism, while at the same time clearly indicating that for him Stalin's bureaucratic totalitarianism was certainly no desirable alternative. Nor was he willing to abandon skepticism when considering the socialist bureaucracies that have their own way of becoming callous if not mean. He was an anarchist of sorts, a libertarian who worried about the poor, worked with them every day as a physician, and wanted better things for them—not with the condescension of *noblesse oblige*, but out of an awareness that the suffering and exploitation of others turns out to be everyone's source of shame and sorrow, or, as he knew some would put it, a continuing cross to bear. He was especially suspicious of the demands abstractions can make on people—the distortions, the all too convenient denial of life's ambiguities, ironies, inconsistencies and contradictions, in the interest of someone's ideological formulations ("No ideas but in things"). He was a restless man, intensely spiritual in his own way, yet utterly practical and preoccupied with the concrete, the here-and-now. And he was obsessed with words—their op-

portunities, their possibilities, their frustrating, demanding presence.

When, in college, my mother would put before me Peter Maurin's warnings, urgings, moral statements, outcries, laments, all gleaned from her reading of the *Catholic Worker*, I would think of Dr. Williams, whom I was lucky enough to know. Unlike in many respects, yet they struggled in similar ways to affirm their particular idiosyncratic selves—and each of them wholeheartedly committed that "self" to the needs of others, while all the while spelling out in words, thousands of them, what the nature of such a commitment ought to be. They were, that is, unashamed moralists, peculiar ones at that—in the non-pejorative sense of that adjective. I believe them both spiritually kin of the personalist tradition.

A Principle of Unpredictability

Personalism as a manner of regarding the world, and our place in it, was not meant to be yet another "belief" or "system" that claimed the allegiance of various (claimed) numbers of men and women here and there, now and then. In his book *Personalism* (1950) Emmanuel Mounier makes it quite clear that he is not afraid to set down ideas, to render generalizations—but that personalism "introduces into the heart of its constructions a principle of unpredict-

ability which excludes any desire for a definitive system." Beware the pedant—or writer of an essay on what personalism is, and is not. Still, one tries to ap-



Nathan Zobrow. OSB

proach the mental and spiritual world Mounier and others chose to portray—its values, ideals, purposes; and does so, perhaps, most successfully through the examples certain lives offer. Personalism affirms the importance of each human being in God's (or the world's) scheme of things; and, thereby, denies the authority of anyone (an entrepre-

neur, an official of the state, and yes, an intellectual) to take anyone else for granted. Personalism is not interested in the psychology of "adjustment," does not bow before the imperatives of the "practical." Personalism makes a strong case for transcendence—"the surpassing of the self" which Mounier pointedly insists "must not be confused with the breaking-out of the vital impulses." So much for hedonism, enlightened self-interest, and, too, Marxist materialism. "To accept suffering and death," Mounier tells us, "in order not to betray human values—this or any other heroic sacrifice is the supreme act of the person." In Gabriel Marcel's words, those of a Christian existentialist, "I am more than my life." One thinks of Simone Weil, blazing with passionate self-sacrifice; of Edith Stein, walking into the gas chambers of Auschwitz; of a worn-out, tired, increasingly ailing Dr. Williams, persisting in those house calls to the poor and working people of New Jersey's industrial slums; and, not least, of Peter Maurin's stubborn, exhausting, itinerant search for a place, a purpose, a community of listeners. The point of such a search, with its varying degrees of self-sacrifice, is not easy to spell out. "Personalists," Mounier insists, "cannot willingly surrender the person to any-

(Continued on page 12)

The Green Revolution: An Interview with Peter

By ARTHUR SHEEHAN

(Condensed from interviews printed in the *CATHOLIC WORKER* in 1943. Eds. note.)

Do you believe that people must have an agricultural college training before going on the land, Peter?

These colleges don't always educate persons to stay on the land. I am in favor of people learning by doing.

How can this return to the land be made a dynamic movement?

It takes dynamic persons.

What do you mean by dynamic persons?

Persons with convictions, who foster actions based on convictions, not based on someone giving orders.

Then the driving impulse must come from within people, you would say?

A leader must be a personalist. If he is a personalist, he will not be a dictator. He will change the attitude of others through the power of example. It takes an awful lot of patience.

How would you break down that feeling of isolation people have in the country?

It must come from the development of a community spirit. We wish to be halfway between the collectivist idea of everything in common and the hermit way with people being rugged individualists.

Why don't you believe in a formal training previous to going on the land?

Education is a life process. People learn by doing. Trouble is, people want blueprints. Let them struggle with it. As they face problems, they get light. If the place is too small, there are not enough crafts, not enough variety. One thousand families wouldn't be too many, if they had the right idea.

My grandfather was a craftsman and a farmer. He was a carpenter, a quarryman, a slate worker and he made baskets to carry dough to the bakers. Dick Aherne, of the Philadelphia group, was a city boy but he learned so that now he can teach others. He learned by working. The trouble with agricultural colleges is that they prepare people for business farming. Our farmers too often aren't farmers at all. They are land miners. They just take stuff out of the soil and don't replace it right.

Look how different a psychology that creates from that of the farmer who tries to preserve the fertility of the land for coming generations. It's really soil robbing, and

practices of this kind don't make for good character. If we had folk schools, these ideas could be brought out. You can see the amount of miseducation that has gotten around.

My aim is to make people think. I am a personalist medievalist, which makes me a medievalist communist.

But what about ownership, Peter?

Families want their own land, their own house, although St. Gertrude said, "Property, the more common it becomes, the

more holy it becomes." About ownership, the size of a piece of land depends on the size of the family. There can be the combination of the two kinds, private ownership and communal ownership. I always make a case for the communal ownership, which is the ideal. Here in America people homesteaded but they became the victims of their isolation and their children left the farms and went to the cities. They forgot the village idea which was in Europe but went off by themselves. It was really the spirit of in-

A Catholic Radical

By ROBERT GILLIAM

"Why read Peter Maurin?" someone asked me recently. A very cheeky question in Catholic Worker circles, but not a bad one. There is no denying that *The Green Revolution* is an odd book, so thoroughly out of step in form and content. Some are put off by the absolutism, the lack of sophistication. Others find it amusingly quaint. Many of us "honor" it as Peter's book, the co-founder's book, but leave it unread.

For me, at this reading at least, the most important thing about *The Green Revolution* is to see how radical Peter is, how fundamental is his disagreement with our world. Dorothy quotes Peter, "People are just beginning to realize how deep seated the evil is." "The world is upside down," he says, and "we are living in a real Dark Age."

Peter offers light in this darkness, in part, because he was a man from another world and time. Arthur Sheehan tells us that Peter's family could trace their continuous ownership of the family farm for fifteen hundred years. Peter was a peasant. He passed his formative years in a virtually medieval world. He saw with different eyes than ours. He looked at the modern, secular, industrial world from a distance, as we cannot.

To try to think with Peter Maurin is to think against the grain. There is an implicit "orthodoxy" in our world and Peter rejected it, more than that, he stood outside it. We do not. This "orthodoxy" is subtle and pervasive, the unspoken foundation of what we think and who we are.

Peter Maurin rejected unequivocally all the available political options. "Christianity has nothing to do with either modern capitalism or modern Communism"—or presumably any possibilities in between. He rejected poli-

tical action, either electoral or revolutionary, and urged on his followers the alternative of Catholic Action. Catholic Action for Peter was holiness in the world. It meant struggling against secularism, "The great modern error of separating the spiritual from the material." His favorite model of Catholic Action was the Irish monks, who by learning, hospitality, and example, "laid the foundations of Medieval Europe."

The other thing which strikes me powerfully with this reading of *The Green Revolution* is how firmly Peter directs our attention to the Catholic tradition. "My word is tradition." Certainly Peter finds light elsewhere as well, but he urges us to look first to the saints, to the history of the Church, and to Catholic social thought. Even among those who remain devout, this is unfashionable advice. Peter's radicalism is Catholic radicalism. I had never before realized, for example, how crucial, how central for Peter is St. Thomas' idea of the common good. Yet few of us have read St. Thomas.

Peter Maurin envisioned a new society, one in which it would be easier to be good, a society not merely "patched up" but truly reconstructed, founded on justice and charity. However painfully remote this society now seems, Peter Maurin still enlightens our way. In whatever situation we find ourselves we can always struggle with Peter to think against the grain, to challenge the prevailing pieties, to take some modest part in the clarification of thought. However protected our lives, we can and must find ways to serve the suffering. Lastly, though we may find ourselves far from communal life on the land, we can try, with God's grace, to make of our lives a "cell of good living," an example, an alternative, a beginning.

dividualism which came from the Reformation, and Catholics unfortunately followed it, forgetting the community, the liturgical idea.

Peter, why do you say that being on the land is better for children?

It's a matter of fresh food, fresh air and being away from city streets.

Do you think that children get a better outlook on life in the country?

Life on the land makes children reflective. They watch the life processes working out before their eyes, and it makes them think. They watch the growth of the animals and plants and get an organic view of life.

How explain then, Peter, the fact that children often wish to get away from the farm?

The schools most often are to blame. They hold up city ideals. The children are educated even in country schools to look up to city living as a superior form of living. It doesn't help to make the child realize the fact that the country is more important than the city. The ideal that working with your head is superior to working with your hands is taught or implied. This is how we get so many crazy ideas in society today.

Isn't it strange, Peter, that people have to break down and be sent to mental hospitals before there is a realization of the importance of farm and craft work as a means to mental health?

When the system has shattered their minds, they have to go to those places. The working in crafts and in gardens is known to bring a better balance to their minds.

Does the idea of a piece of land for themselves have to be held up to children as an ideal so that they will stay on the land?

Something much more than that is necessary. You must realize the selfishness that is in the child and try to offset it. If the child is taught to consider material ownership as a sole badge of respect they are not taught enough. They must be taught the idea of using material things to help other people. This is the idea of stewardship, which is so opposed to the idea of absolute ownership of property. The child wishes to be recognized but he should be taught to see that the right kind of recognition is to be recognized as one who helps people and not as one merely possessing things.

Life of a Worker

(Continued from page 1)

French revolution, nor the English revolution. I did not wish to work to perpetuate the proletariat. I never became a member of a union, even though here in America I did all kinds of hard labor. I was always interested in the land and man's life on the land. That is why I went homesteading in Canada, but after two years, after my partner was killed in a hunting accident, I went around Canada with work gangs and entered this country in 1911, where I have been ever since."

When I first knew Peter, I was busy at a research job which kept me at the library until three in the afternoon. When I got home to my little apartment on East Fifteenth Street, I'd find him there waiting for me, ready to indoctrinate, to give me a lesson in history from the Catholic point of view. He had been sent to me, he said, by George Shuster, later president of Hunter College, who at that time was editor of *The Commonweal*. George thought that we were alike in point of view, both interested in changing the social order and in reaching the masses with the social teaching of the Church.

I had been a Catholic only about four years, and Peter, having suggested that I get out a paper to reach the man in the street, started right in on my education; he was a born teacher, and any park bench, coffee shop counter, bus or lodging house was a place to teach. He believed in starting on a program at once, without waiting to acquire classroom or office or meeting hall. To reach the man in the street, you went to the street. Peter was literal.

I had met Peter in December, 1932, and the first issue of *The Catholic Worker* came out in time for the May Day celebration in Union Square, 1933. What Peter Maurin was interested in was the publication of his essays, and my journalistic sense led me to report conditions as they were, to paint a picture of poverty and destitution, homelessness and unemployment, in short, to so arouse the conscience that the reader would be willing and ready to listen to Peter when he talked about things as they should be.

Things as They Should Be

Peter was very much afraid of class war, and after his first essays were published he could not quite understand why I wrote so much about interracial injustice, hard conditions of labor, inadequate housing. He much preferred to write about how things should be—Houses of Hospitality for the needy, charity exercised in every home, voluntary poverty and the works of mercy, farming communes and agronomic universities that would teach people to earn a living by the sweat of their own brows instead of someone else's.

The Catholic Worker was financed like the publications of any radical "splinter group." If we had had a mimeograph machine, it would have been a mimeographed paper. But we had nothing but my typewriter, so we took our writing to a printer, found out it would cost \$57 to get out 2,500 copies of a small, eight-page sheet the size of *The Nation*, and boldly had it set up. There were no office, no staff, no mailing list. I had a small pay-check coming in for the research job which was just finishing; two checks were due for articles I had written, but these were needed to pay overdue rent and light bills. Father Joseph McSorley, the Paulist, paid me generously for a small job of bibliography which I did for him; the late Father Ahearn, pastor of a black church in Newark, gave me ten dollars; Sister Peter Claver gave me one dollar which someone had just given her. Those were our finances. We took that first issue of the paper into Union Square that May Day and sold it for one penny a copy to Communists and trade unionists.

Peter slept in the back of *The Catholic Worker* office, and he soon brought in an Armenian anarchist poet and a German agnostic to share his quarters with him and to provide sparring partners for round-table discussions. He never took part in any of the work of the paper, except to turn in each month half a dozen "easy essays," many of which he insisted that we repeat over and over again. He was the kind of teacher who believed in repetition, restatement, and the continual return to first principles. He loved, however, to see visitors, and, if none came into the office, he went out into the highways and byways and found them.

The only time Peter got excited was when he found others agreeing with him, approving his ideas. Then his voice would rise, his eyes would shine and he would shout out exultingly. He always expected so much in the way of results that I often felt called upon to put a damper on him, to tone down his optimistic enthusiasms. But I soon noticed that he was never depressed or discouraged by disappointments or failures.

A failure such as that of the first round-table discussion was an example. Peter had hoped for great results from a series of Sunday afternoon discussions he had planned. Optimistically, for the first one he rented the ballroom of the Manhattan Lyceum, where trade union conventions as well as balls were often held. Only twenty people showed up; they gathered around the speaker's table and had an uproarious discussion on political action versus Catholic Action. After that, Peter rented a small meeting room. The waste of money, laboriously collected, did not bother him. There was plenty of money in the world, he believed. What was needed was men and women absorbed by the right ideas. Given the people, the money would follow. All one needed to do was to pray. When bills piled up and creditors came, we used to go to church and pray, all of us taking turns, and we called this "the picketing of St. Joseph." Once when I asked an unemployed chambermaid if she would take a half-hour of "picketing Saint Joseph" over at Precious Blood Church, she asked me if she was to carry a sign. Once the printer sent us his bill with the notation, "Pray and pay!"

I asked Peter several times if he were not disappointed at the lack of success in indoctrinating the man on the street. I pointed to various examples of those who came to stay with us and whose condition seemed to get worse instead of better.

Getting Down to the Roots

"People are just beginning to realize how deep-seated the evil is," he said soberly. "That is why we must be Catholic Radicals, we must get down to the roots. That is what radicalism is—the word means getting down to the roots."

Peter, even in his practicality, tried to deal with problems in the spirit of "the Prophets of Israel and the Fathers of the Church." He saw what the Industrial Revolution had done to human beings and he did not think that unions and organizations, strikes for higher wages and shorter hours, were going to be the solution. "Strikes don't strike me," he used to say when we went out to a picket line to distribute literature during a strike. But he came with us to hand out the literature—leaflets which dealt with men and women's dignity and their need and right to associate themselves with their fellows in trade unions, in credit unions, cooperatives, maternity guilds, etc.

He was interested in far more fundamental approaches. He liked the name "radical" and he had wanted the paper to be called the *The Catholic Radical*. To him, *Worker* smacked of class war. What he wanted was to instill in all, worker or scholar, a philosophy of poverty and a philosophy of work.

He was the layman always. I mean that he never preached; he taught. While decrying secularism, the separation of the material from the spiritual, his emphasis,

Remembering a Friend

By DOROTHY GAUCHAT

We left Newport early in the morning hoping to reach New York City in early afternoon. For both of us, Bill and I, it was going to be a holiday—a precious four days together after what seemed like a long separation.

I had been living with Ade Bethune, serving as her apprentice; but more importantly, so my parents thought, situated in a job far removed from Bill and

I had never met Peter Maurin but was quite intrigued by his *Easy Essays*, his philosophy, and most of all, by the stories I heard about him—this short-statured, wandering saint, living and sharing with the poor and bringing his message of social justice and the Sermon on the Mount to them in public parks and on street corners. I was somewhat surprised when I met him that cold, winter morning. He indeed was short but quite stocky, and looked like a peasant. He was not the thin, aesthetical, dark-haired Frenchman that I had imagined. He was so happy to see Bill, whom I learned, he loved dearly and of whom he said frequently, "I know a man from Ohio. His name is Bill Gauchat. He is a worker and a scholar."

Workers and Scholars

We must all be workers and scholars, Peter said. This was one of the first lessons I learned from Peter. For three hours, seated on his bed in his crowded room on Mott Street (shared with several others), Bill and Peter had an animated discussion on the latest books they had been studying. I caught names like Peguy, Maritain, and Bloy. Peter's French accent was so heavy that I found it difficult to understand him a good part of the time. But I listened intently. The whole thrust of the conversation was personalism, living Christianity, social justice, voluntary poverty. From under his bed he pulled a little suitcase filled with books and leafed through some of them with Bill. They talked about the houses of hospitality and farming communes.

Bill told him about the work the men were doing in the craft shop he had set up at Blessed Martin house and the development of the farm which had recently been given him and was presently being cleared of brush and boulders for spring planting. I was impressed with Peter's enthusiasm and the way his eyes sparkled as this long talk went on. He was obviously thrilled that his idea, that workers be scholars and scholars workers, was becoming a reality in many small areas across the country. He talked for three hours, just as the stories about him said he did. Once he had a platform to use as an opportunity to teach, it was hard to stop him.

I saw him again the following summer. (Continued on page 10)



Peter Maurin

Fritz Eichenberg

his CW house in Cleveland, Ohio. They admired his work with the poor but were adamantly opposed to our marriage plans which didn't fit in with their "middle class" American Dream for their children's future.

as a layman, was on our material needs, our need for work, food, clothing and shelter. Though Peter went weekly to confession and daily to Communion and spent an hour a day in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, his study was of the material order around him. Though he lived in the city, he urged a return to the village economy, the study of the crafts and of agriculture. He was dealing with this world, in which God has placed us to work for a new heaven and a new earth wherein justice dwelleth.

He constantly urged individuals to practice the corporal and spiritual works of mercy; he urged Bishops to establish Houses of Hospitality. Somehow the two planks of the program got mixed up. I can remember well enough how it happened. He had written a series of essays addressed to the Bishops, pointing out to them that canon law called for the establishment of hospices in every bishopric. When a reader who had been sleeping in the subway came into *The Catholic Worker* office one day and disclosed her need (the apartment and the office were already full), Peter's literal acceptance of "If thy brother needs food or drink, feed him, and if he needs shelter, shelter him" meant that we rented a large apartment a block away which became the first House of Hospitality for women. Now we have two houses, on First St. and Third St. Here the works of mercy are still being practiced by the group who get out *The Catholic Worker*, living without salaries, in voluntary poverty. "Feeding thy brother" started with feeding a few poor men. It became a daily breadline in 1936, and the line still forms every day outside the door.

Round-table Discussions, Houses of Hospitality and Farming Communes—those were the three planks in Peter Maurin's platform. There are still Houses of Hospitality, each autonomous but inspired by Peter, each trying to follow Peter's principles. And there are farms, all different but all starting with the idea of the personalist and communitarian revolution—to use Emmanuel Mounier's phrase. Peter was not disappointed in his life's work. He had given everything he had and he asked for nothing, least of all for success. He gave himself, and—at the end—God took from him the power to think.

He was anointed at Easton for a bad heart condition, and a few years later, on May 15, 1949, he died at Maryfarm in Newburgh, New York. Garbed in a donated suit of clothes, he was buried in a donated grave in St. John's Cemetery, Brooklyn.

Obituaries were found not only in *The Industrial Worker*, a Chicago I.W.W. paper which was on the subversive list, but also in *Osservatore Romano* in Vatican City, which carried its notice on the front page.

God has taken him into Paradise, with Lazarus who once was poor. May He bring us, too, to a place of refreshment, light and peace.

(This article is slightly revised from the preface to the 1961 edition of *THE GREEN REVOLUTION*. Eds. note.)

A Farm With a View

(Continued from page 2)

to-the-land program an agronomic university. In practice, Catholic Worker farms have not always lived up to this ideal. This farm, like the others, is primarily a house of hospitality on the land. Many people with many problems come looking for a haven, for some kind of help. Sometimes the few responsible persons are kept so busy taking people to doctors, to clinics, to rehabilitation and other social services that other work must be neglected. Yet with some help from the weather, there is always a good garden, with a harvest for immediate consumption, sharing with our city family, and storing for the winter. Many young people have found here a kind of school, where they have learned by doing. Some have earned considerable credit; a few really deserve degrees. I think particularly of Peggy and Terri who have played such a leading role in ploughing, planting, cultivating, barn building, goat care. As for John Filligar, since he has served as chief professor all these years, he really deserves the title Professor Emeritus.

Over the years many young people have come and gone. Some of the best of them have been deeply interested in Peter Maurin's ideas, and have spent much time while here reading and discussing Peter Maurin's essays. We have also held many conferences here where these ideas have been discussed in some depth. I think, too, that the regional Catholic Worker conference which Peggy Scherer organized here last Labor Day weekend might be considered a kind of seminar in the agronomic university.

So here we are again in the midst of Spring, with much to do and too few to do it. Peggy Scherer, who has done such a splendid job here for the past

several years, has moved to the city. She will, of course, be on hand from time to time, but will probably leave the city for Mexico before many months have passed. Sr. Margaret and Jackie Jury, who did such a fine job here last winter, left early in the Spring. Kathleen Granger, who has also done a fine job, is taking time off with her family. Once again I think I need to



say that we need responsible, capable, practical, dedicated women who love people and community. Not that we do not need responsible men, but numerically at least, men always outnumber women here.

Pray for us, Peter Maurin, that we may realize your great dream. Sing for us, wood thrush, that we may truly know—THE WORLD IS CHARGED WITH THE GRANDEUR OF GOD. ALLELUIA.

AGITATOR

(Continued from page 3)

stomach. Unfortunately, many preachers took this to mean that it was their own stomach that first had to be filled before they could preach. When another saint told us that the coat that hangs in our closet belongs to the poor, many people went rushing to remove their closets.

How sad it is that so many Christian scholars have lulled the rich into a false sense of security by glossing over the hard words of the Bible — that it is harder for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven ...

But once having taken care of the needs of the poor at a personal sacrifice, we come to the second plank of Peter's program: Round Table Discussions. It is in the light of history that we study the problems of today. It is in the light of history that we understand why things are as they are. It is in the light of history that we are able to make a path from things as they are to things as they should be.

The third plank of Peter's program was the most controversial. It was the establishment of Farming Communities: agrarian communities; distributism; cooperatives; village economy — call it what you want: The Green Revolution ... return to the land. In essence, it means that "there is no unemployment on the land" as long as people are willing to work for themselves and not for a boss.

The Catholic Worker has never considered itself an organization. Rather it is a living growth of people (non-Catholic as well as Catholic) banded together in houses of hospitality, farming communities, and cells throughout the country that keep alive the idea that we are our brother's keeper.

What about the future of the Catholic Worker, people ask? "The Catholic Worker has no organization. It seems to lack structure. How are you going to support yourselves? What is going to happen to the movement when the present leaders are dead?" It is foolish to speculate on the future. The problem is the present—the Now. It is true to say that The Catholic Worker movement, which was founded by Peter Maurin, does not depend on a geographical location (i.e. First Street or the Tivoli Farm or even the paper). The Catholic Worker will be with us as long as there is one person in need and another person who can fulfill that need.

A Friend of the Family

(Continued from page 9)

mer. Bill had a folk school at the farm. He invited speakers, scholars and artists, including Peter, Ade Bethune, Fr. Lauer, S.J., Fr. Catich, Brigid Catton and Mary Paulson—to name only a few. Together they shared with the young and old of our friends in the local Worker community. Our day started with Mass celebrated outdoors before an altar made of field stone gathered from the farm land. The men, "ambassadors of Christ" Peter called them, had built a small chapel of these "roundheads." It had a steep-pitched roof and reminded one of the old road-side shrines one saw in pictures of Europe. After breakfast we all spread out to different work areas—some in the garden, others picking berries, a few in the kitchen, etc. It was on the lane to the chapel that I saw Peter, his shirt dampened with sweat, digging around a large stone that was partially buried in the earth. The night before, one of our visitors had driven over this stone and damaged the oil pan on his car. Peter saw the need for the removal of this menace in the road and set about the hard task of hauling away this great boulder. Here was Peter the worker.

Peter the scholar kept the school of several dozen visitors enthralled with his stories of the small farms and communities in his native France and his vision of farming communities here in the States, of creating a new society within the shell of the old in which he believed it would be easier to be good.

I often saw Peter kneeling in quiet prayer. He indeed was a great talker when he got the stage, but he was also a man of deep silence, a man of prayer, a holy man.

We were privileged, the following fall, to have Peter and Dorothy make the trip from New York to Newport to share in our joy when we were married in St. Joseph's Church. (Without my parents' permission, but finally their blessing.) As I look over the pictures in our log of that day, I find many of Peter and Dorothy standing beside the young bride and groom—Peter in his familiar pose, hands behind his back, baggy pants, bulging jacket pockets and that delightful smile on his face.

"Can the Cans"

A year later Peter visited us in our tiny farm house where our first daughter was born. He came to bring his congratulations. He smiled and rejoiced with us over our first born. He and Bill hiked over the snow-covered fields, the teacher and his enthusiastic student. Back in the warm kitchen I proudly showed him the fruits of the harvest labor. Our cupboards were full of canned fruits and vegetables we had put up for the winter. He teased me about this with one of his easy essays: "Can the cans and eat what you can when you can." He was obviously pleased with our "toe-hold" on the land.

In the following years we didn't see him as frequently. Our time and energy were needed close to home, raising a family, running the farm and house of hospitality.

It was during one of Dorothy Day's visits to our home that word came of Peter's death. We knew he had been ill for some time but it was still a shock when the phone rang one night with the news of his passing. We knelt before the picture of Our Lady hanging above our fire place and recited the office of the dead.

The lesson that Peter taught us—that of personalism—was to be his deepest, lasting, and I hope continuing impression on us and our now growing family.

Our round table discussions, as Peter called them, were now taking place around our dinner table with our growing children. The pressures of the responsibility of raising a family along with the social changes brought about by WWII forced us to close Blessed Martin House. Bill was kept busy working the farm as well as an outside job to support our family of six and the always additional guests.

Both Dorothy and Peter had always talked about having a "Christ Room" for guests in need. Our home always had an extra guest—sometimes one, and sometimes entire families, such as our Mexican friends who came for a night and stayed for a couple of years until they were able to get a home of their own. Our children grew up with their children. We were god-parents to a couple of their babies. Whenever anyone came walking down the road with a suitcase in hand, the kids would run in and announce the arrival of a new guest—the Fuller Brush man was taken for one.

House of Hospitality

There were always calls for help and Bill never turned anyone away. That's how we became involved with caring for handicapped children. One of Bill's former school teachers called and asked if we would take in a six-month old handicapped baby. I protested, saying I was not a nurse and didn't know how to care for such a child. But Bill never could say no, so little David came to live with us. He was called a "vegetable," a bundle of living flesh that had to be kept alive. They said he was deaf, blind, and atrophied, hydro-cephalic with spinal-bifida. We were shocked at the sight of him. Once we were able to see beyond the handicap, though, we saw a beautiful child longing to be loved and to love in return.

Following baby David came many more children. Soon our small farm house couldn't hold our family and guests. Across the road was a fifteen-room house and six acres of land. We exchanged our small house and large farm for a large house and small acreage. It didn't take long for this to fill up either. First, five additional children besides our own, and then Bill's sick and aged mother. And the requests for more children kept coming.

Ten years ago we took to begging publicly for funds to enlarge our home. It was a long and arduous task reaching our goal but we did. Six years ago we dedicated a large new home attached to the old house and took in 38 children with a variety of handicaps. This new Catholic Worker House was to be called Our Lady of the Wayside. Last year we bought a new farm with another large house where seven young adults, retarded and handicapped, live. They are learning to farm (they planted their first vegetables of the season yesterday) bake bread and do simple handicrafts—all part of Bill's dream.

We believe that these homes were "built by God" for the least of his little ones. For His instruments He used Peter Maurin and Dorothy Day in this twentieth century to teach many how to apply Christianity to our daily lives. Were it not for Peter and Dorothy some two hundred children in this rural area alone would not have had a home. Multiply this many times and in many places across the country and one can see the tremendous lesson of personal responsibility that they have taught thousands of people.

I pray to God my children and grandchildren will continue to spread this Christian message in the years ahead.

Pain and suffering are a kind of false currency passed from hand to hand until they reach someone who receives them but does not pass them on.

Simone Weil

LETTERS

Community for Creative Nonviolence
1345 Euclid St. NW
Washington, D.C. 20009

Dear Friends,

Our campaign to procure the 38 room house on Fairmount St. from the city, for use as a shelter for evicted and homeless families, has been successful (see the Jan. issue of the CW). The city officials have given us the house on a temporary, lease basis, for the first year. During the second year we'll work out further details, as to long range use.

Now the major part of this effort is upon us: the building is far from livable: there is no electricity or plumbing.

Our great need is for some skilled people to donate some time to us. Plumbers, carpenters, and electricians would be most welcome. If any of you have time to give us, please contact us as soon as possible.

In peace, Mary Ellen Hombs

c/o D. Werner
4453 N. Ashland
Chicago, Ill. 60640

Dear Frank,

I am feeling fragmented again. In December, I had a place to live and a job, then everything went kaput. Yesterday, my car went up in smoke. It caught fire while I was driving. The front end had shooting flames.

Since I am planning to go to Cincinnati, to stay long enough to put together a women's conference, a continuation of the conference held at Heathcote last summer, I need a car to look around Ohio for a place to hold the conference. Also, I want to travel west to learn what the women are doing on Land Trusts in Southern Oregon.

Could you place a note in the CW, asking if anyone has a small car, one that is easy on the gas? I sure would appreciate it. I can't pay anything, but maybe I can borrow a little more money.

Hello to the folks! Pat Rusk

1977 PEACEMAKER ORIENTATION PROGRAMS IN NONVIOLENCE.

PEACEMAKERS is a movement "dedicated to the transformation of society through the transformation of the individual within it." The orientation programs will be held June 22-25 in Arcata, Cal., and Aug. 14-27 in Lum, Mich. For more information write to John Leininger, 1255 Paddock Hills Ave., Cincinnati, Ohio 45229.

Schumacher

(Continued from page 4)

I say, "Are you a member of the Soil Association?" And they say, "Who me? But I have no land, so it's pointless for me to join." But it's not true. People in the Soil Association, of which I'm president—we think that we are only 5000 members, and (sigh) we feel so small, so weak. But once you have joined, then you are at least in contact with like-minded people, and opportunities arise. Perhaps, if you are on the land, you can be instrumental in a great tree-planting scheme—that's something that everybody can do. I know an old lady who's a fanatic about organic horticulture and she has no garden—but she does have a couple of trees growing on the balcony. I take this as a kind of symbol. Get in touch with the schools—agitate that the schools should grow vegetables, the children should be kept in touch with nature.

CW: And what do you say when people accuse you of advocating a "return to the Middle Ages?"

EFS: I am not advocating anything. I am just trying to create, and I am looking for help, in creating a technology that makes it possible for people to live. This technology would be sociologically sound, because it would fill this gap. I know no other way it can be filled. The rich, as they say, are becoming richer, and the poor are becoming poorer. It is also the only way we can possibly cope with our ecological and energy problems and create more decentralized production, better utilization of the country as a whole. Thinking of the United States: instead of having most of the population in this dreadful concentration that can only function with the throb of continuous fossil fuel inputs—oil and gas, oil and gas—you have a much more scattered pattern of small flourishing towns where the wind and solar energy actually arrive. Now you can do a lot with solar energy with small installations, but solar energy in relation to the requirements of the Rockefeller Center would be nothing. I mean, you couldn't even operate the lifts!

CW: Peter Maurin called this the Green Revolution. He believed that the basis of a nonviolent economic system would have to involve the rejection of the urban industrial economy and a return to the land.

EFS: I agree with him, although you never really get me in the rejecting mood. Create something. I know good people all over who are taking little steps back to sanity. Garden Way Associates, in Vermont, for example. They say, why depend on the millers, paying for the long distance transportation of flour, all for not having a small household flour mill, or at least living in the locality of a miller. Then you know what you are putting into the mill, where it comes from, how it's grown.

Now this has nothing to do with smashing machines. But I think this machinery now, these super-duper things, are so fuel-intensive, so anti-human, so anti-ecological, that they will collapse, like the dinosaurs. But I can't promise that. I certainly can't promise that! But nature didn't just provide that the dinosaurs should disappear. She used in her own good time, her own facilities, to create much more elegant gazelles, impalas. That's the new technology: much more elegant.

CW: Marx would agree with you, though for different reasons, that capitalism is self-destructive. Yet tacked on to his 'scientific' analysis of economic laws of motion, comes his ironically moral judgement that what must follow the breakdown of capitalism is a good or better society. Would you necessarily share his optimism?

EFS: I like to think of myself as neither optimist nor pessimist; not hoping but doing. And it's by doing that suddenly you gain a hearing. If I hadn't been able to say in my little book, for the last ten years I've been doing this—and many people knew it—I don't think it would have found a wide readership. It would have been just a little bit of economic poetry.

UPSTREAM TO THE SOURCE

(Continued from page 5)

of the tree, a lethal act. The fruit has exploded on our lips. Whether or not the American church today offers more than a parody of Peter's 'cult, culture, cultivation' is a matter of much sorrow. The sense creeps toward us that it is all over; for the multitudes the cult is meaningless, the surrounding culture disintegrating, the cultivation a multicorporate grand larceny of the earth.

These are matters not merely of speculation among Catholics, but of considerable rancor. Was Peter ever rancorous? I think not. When I think of him and meditate uneasily on those easy essays, it seems to me that today he would counsel a certain detachment. I mean detachment from the despair that racks us, the divisions, the loss of nerve, the disappearance of land marks. In his own day, we cannot miss it; Peter dared a great deal, he went his own way. The best of his essays do not depend on 'papal social teachings,' or an insistence that a 'papal blueprint for society' is authentic, in a biblical sense. Peter was only rarely led down such paths; usually his sense of the church is shrewd and solid; one feels that he must have read the gospels more carefully than he read Osservatore.

Today he would perhaps treat Protestants more sensitively, and give better attention to the plight of women. Perhaps he would listen more.

But when that is said, who of us in

CW: The way Peter Maurin described the society he hoped to work toward was "a society where it is easier for people to be good." I think this casts some light on what you've been talking about: that at the very least society should not degrade and corrupt human life, but more—that economics should enhance the moral and spiritual development of men and women.

EFS: Yes, I think all intelligent discourse comes from the question, "What questions ought we to address to whatever we, or somebody else is doing. I think we ought first to ask, "Is this relevant to the problem of poverty?" Does it contribute to social justice and so forth? Secondly, "Is this conducive to the physical, mental, and spiritual health of people?" Or is it ruining them, systematically driving them into mental homes, drugs, insanity, so that they spiritually shrivel up? These questions have to be addressed. And thirdly, "Is it conducive to the health of nature, ecologically?" Not just saying, "Oh, yes, it creates problems, but leave it to us, we'll solve them," as we do with nuclear energy. "Plutonium is very nasty for all time—but leave it to us, we'll solve the problem some way; we'll just bury it underground for the rest of time. Earthquakes? Well, we'll just pass a law that they musn't happen." Bland assurances. The bland leading the blind. And fourthly, there is the question of resources, the relevance to our energy problem. You address these four questions, and then a lot of what we're doing just falls by the wayside. This is what I mean by technology assessment. You take the Concorde for instance. It falls down right away. It's nothing for the poor, it's nothing for mental sanity, it's no good for the environment, and it's absolutely prohibitive as far as the energy situation.

CW: I'm glad you've raised the issue of nuclear power. The implications obviously go even beyond the hazards of plutonium that everybody can agree upon. Among its dangers is the kind of totalitarian centralization that it demands, such as the world has never seen. This issue would certainly seem to offer a crossroads as far as the possibility of any decentralized society. Once we become committed to a nuclear-based energy system, it won't be so easy to talk about decentralizing. Ten years from now might be too late. It might already be too late.

EFS: That's what I mean. These bland assurances. But what are they really offering?

the 'thirties and 'forties, met our world with the élan, passion, lucidity, good humor, of Peter? Or indeed who of us, here and now, could claim a sense of the tormenting future, much less chart the way? The present is torment enough.

Enough and more than enough if we can be faithful to, intuitive of, one or another main lines of that tradition which was Peter's passionate loving quest; no Ariadne's thread, but a stream followed, against the current, to its source.



In the antic circle, madly celebrating the death of practically everything today, lunatic religion, as is evident, has large part. People cannot bear the world, it is too much for addled head and undisciplined heart. (Too much, let it be added, for the clear and disciplined, quite often.) With the help of nostrums and gnostics, many set about creating a world for themselves. What a sorrowful spectacle! And how we are all drawn to it, the seduction of death, the death of practically everything (and now, through the hellish ministry of the BOMB, the death of practically everyone.) We cry out in anguish. Is there a single non-lunatic structure left — in the simple sense of favoring humans, cherishing them, instructing them, part of a healing web of human effort, compassion, destiny? Is there indeed a church to turn to?

Against all the evidence, I believe there is. I think today of my friends, living and dead, at large in the minimum security of America, at small in jail. I think of Peter Maurin. Of my father and mother, all that hardness and hope, a faith that dug deep in the clay soul of the depression farm, their dignity, how poor we were. How often men like Peter came knocking at the door; and men unlike Peter too, without his charm and intelligence, beaten men on the run, despair their shadow. How they were welcomed; "of a little have a little" was the working motto of those lean years. I think also how the Easy Essays and the Catholic Worker were always in the house; a penny a copy we could manage.

This was the past, which was our tradition, of which one has the right to be proud, since it is a gift, held in simple fee. But I want in no sense to sound nostalgic. The test of a tradition is not whether it worked for Peter or others of his generation. The question must be posed, day after day: what is the moral fulcrum, does the vision change 'the world, the way it goes?' Is the vision modest, practical, does it draw us on?

I think it does. And one would like to let it go at that. In his introduction to the 1961 revised edition of the Easy Essays, John Cogley said this: "The Worker had more influence on more influential Catholics than any other single force in the American church." That is a sentence I prefer to walk away from. It is, I think, a most un-Catholic Worker claim. In the spirit of the Worker, it is not merely too big a claim; it is wrong in claiming anything at all. To paraphrase LaoTsu, the biggest sunflower in the world doesn't know it. When it learns it, it already has a price on its head. Who said existence and life were competitive anyway? The fault is our own.

Thank God then, for this centenary, this man and Christian. And for the Worker.

—For those who refused in the 'fifties, to take absurd shelter against the nuclear storms—a gimmick of mother state on the one hand, a grace of mother church on the other.

—Thank God for the constancy of those who never bought the latest war, which was supposed to be a good war because it was our war, just war, holy war, safe war, sound war. No, it was a bad war no matter what; because it was war. Thank you.

—For the resisters: of the 'forties, 'fifties, 'sixties, 'seventies. All those flaming cards of non-identity, of amnesia, of unholy obedience, those hunting licenses against humans! Oh, what a savory smoke their burning set off, what a light they shed, once they were no more!

—And for the trade unionists. And the teachers. The mothers and fathers. Those who opened houses and maintained them along with their families, in poverty oftener than not, and insecurity and illness.

—For that long unbroken humming wire of moral continuity, incandescent and burning. The message got through, even to the tardy, even to us; it is not allowed to kill one another, it is incumbent on us to feed, clothe, cherish one another.

—For my parents, who dug deep, as did Peter. They were compatible spirits. Although they never met, they would have recognized one another. Indeed, I believe they did, in many strange and rich ways; in 'the breaking of the bread.'

Peter, thank you. Indeed, you started something.

Convergence

(Continued from page 2)

to say forty years ago that these urban Titanics we call home are illogical and unlivable, he was something more than simply forty years ahead of the *New York Times* (a distinction he would have to share with most anyone of vision living forty years ago). He was able to see not only where we've gone wrong, but where we ought to go, and how to get there—because his point of reference was not the Government Accounting Office, not a desire to save Lincoln Center and the better part of the Big Apple from the flood waters of Bolshevism, but a sense of moral karma, a sense of history on the one hand, an identity with the poor and overburdened among whom he lived and died, on the other.

We need to listen to voices like Peter Maurin's, now more than ever. If he were with us today he would surely counsel us to take less interest in the G.A.O. forecast of doom than in the small, but ever growing, signs of hope in our time. Groups like H.O.M.E. Co-op in Hancock County, Maine, are trying to introduce crafts and cottage industries to make rural life viable. People like Bob Swann at the Ashby Independence Institute in Massachusetts are organizing land trusts to make land available for homesteading. Koinonia Partners, in Americus Georgia, is organizing villages of poor people, providing them with jobs and homes on the land. In Washington D.C., the Institute for Self-Reliance is developing forms of cooperative and appropriate technology for urban communities. From Canada to California to West Virginia, Catholic Worker agronomic universities are struggling to achieve a synthesis of "cult, culture, and cultivation."

It's too late to place our hope in government "policy," Peter might say. We have to seize on these seeds of the Green Revolution, these cells of a new society around us, encourage, support and nourish them until they grow to embrace all society.

If Peter, at 100, were still composing Easy Essays for us, he might have one that would start, "I know a man, / Fritz Schumacher. / He is not a shoemaker / but a worker and a scholar. / He knows / that you must make the shoe / to fit the foot. / We need a human economy / to fit the feet of human beings."

Happy Birthday, Peter. R.E.

Saint Joseph House of Hospitality

By DANIEL MAUK

On my way to work each morning, I can see the difference in the yard around Grace Church on Broadway and 10th Street as the days grow warmer and longer. A graceful, old Gothic church, I'm sure it looked quite different years ago when it was surrounded by a more spacious yard. Today, it's like a small island in a rather dreary part of Manhattan, made up mostly of small warehouses and stores and constantly facing the heavy traffic of Broad-

Personalism

(Continued from page 8)

thing unpersonal, and most of them seek in one way or another to personalize these values." Christian Personalism, of course, reminds us of God, the Person, and of Christ, the Person become incarnate. By the impersonal, Mounier had in mind not only capitalist ideology, or Soviet totalitarianism, but the welfare-state insofar as it, too, treats people en masse, and often enough, with arrogance, condescension, and a peculiar bullying masked as "compassion."

I suppose Mounier and Marcel and others like them can be dismissed as anarchists, as cranks, as impractical, as utterly "irrelevant" in their concerns of the day-to-day lives of ordinary, often rather hard-pressed men and women and children. Yet, the yearnings of "plain people" are not unlike those Mounier refers to; are not unlike those the poem Paterson tries to evoke; are not unlike those Peter Maurin tried again and again to speak of. There is in personalism a direct assault on the resignation that accompanies so much of 20th century Marxism and Freudianism: "Teaching that is materialistic or deterministic," Mounier pointed out, "whether implicitly or openly, cannot consistently exhort to action or to the guidance of action. If whatever happens in the world is regulated in advance by irresistible processes, what remains for us to do?—except to wait upon events and regulate our feelings so as to suffer as little as possible?" In contrast, Maurin exhorted his fellow-human beings to think, to work, to take action, to live in altogether new and redemptive (he believed) ways. And Dr. Williams thought, as he once put it in a letter that "every day I can change the course of history—a single life helped to grow, bud, flower." And a migrant farm worker, perhaps impatient with his observer's protestations of commiseration, insisted rather strenuously: "Each day I thank God for giving me this life. It's a hard life, and a lot of the time I wonder why I wasn't born with more luck. But I was born. That's a gift! I hope that when I die I'll be able to say to myself that the world is different, because of me—different because of the crops I harvested, and the family I've been a part of, and the children who have had to keep listening to me, even when they've not wanted to."

He is, besides being a migrant worker, a "lay minister of the Gospel." He is also a tough union organizer. He is both of this world and of another—a secular political activist and a spiritual man who knows the difference between his "impulses" and "needs" and "desires" and a larger order of things, a realm that does not belong to anyone, to any "system" or nation-state, to any of various "powers and principalities." There is an edgy side to Personalism—don't fence me in. One feels that side, that balance of the worldly and the spiritual, in Peter Maurin's writings, in the Catholic Worker tradition, in the "stand" taken by many individuals—the physician-poet, Dr. Williams, a migrant farm worker, and one knows for sure, thousands upon thousands of particular human beings who want a chance to affirm their distinctive humanity, while at the same time holding out their hands to others in affection and support.

way. During the early morning hours of the last winter months, it usually looked more like something out of a Bronte novel, standing gray and dark in the bitter cold and wetness. People on the streets would hurry by, huddling close to an umbrella or under heavy winter wraps, usually never looking up from the sidewalk. But now things are different. Mornings are warmer. The sun shines and people seem more alive and awake. If anyone's rushing, it's probably because they enjoyed being outside too long already, and are now late for work. Around the church, the grass and bushes grow greener, and even the plain, gray marble grows lovelier and softer. At first, it was only a magnolia tree blooming; now the yard is filled with pink and white blossoms of other trees, and the green, fuzzy beginnings of new



Fritz Eichenberg

leaves. We should never allow spring to pass unnoticed. It is so charged with symbolism, filled with reminders of life in this world, the movement in the universe, and what we should be about, as Christians.

36 E. First

Here on East First Street, though pretty treeless, the signs of spring are obvious. They come with great relief after such a long and bitter winter. Though we were among the fortunate, having shelter and heat, every day reminded us of the suffering around us—radio reports of more and more snow, people freezing to death while stranded on roads or trapped in old, heatless hotels—and that most painful reminder of the people who came to our door each day, looking for shelter and often finding there was no room. Some just wanted to warm up for a bit from the cold of the streets or from an apartment where there was no heat.

But now, with warm spring days, life seems gentler and more soothing. The house even takes on a different smell, with windows wide open and sun shining in, dispelling the stale air, smelling of radiator steam. In keeping with the freshness of spring, the second floor of our house, used as a mailing room for this paper, got its paint job—the second phase in the long-hoped-for project of painting the house from top to bottom. With Paul Loh leading and inspiring the project, Gary, Bill Barrett and other willing folks, finished the job with what seemed to be greater ease than the first floor painting of several months ago.

Whether spring or winter, some things go on unchangeably. Someone braves the kitchen each day to prepare our evening meal in the midst of either a quiet and peaceful afternoon or, more often, in the middle of one crisis after another. Besides being an all-purpose meeting room, dining room, kitchen and chapel, our first floor is often a stage, always having an available (though usually disagreeing) audience, where various acts of human drama can be played out. Some of the women from Maryhouse carry much of the burden of cooking daily a meal for 100 people—Sis, Mary Sunshine, Meg and Sr. Rene. Of our First Street cooks in residence, Jim Hiner seems to be leading in popularity,

and Gerry following with a good pot of stew. Despite any kind of weather, Brother Paul can be seen each afternoon hurrying along the rooftop behind us, feeding the 16 or so street cats there who have decided that roof living beats street living. Along with the roof cats, and the pigeons at Cooper Square, who eat our table scraps, we, too, depend on Paul, who faithfully tends to the garbage and occasionally treats us to one of his secret recipes.

As always, we've had visitors and new arrivals at our house. Two members from other Catholic Worker houses passed through in recent days—Peter Weber, from the new house in Detroit, and Peter Weiskel, who has spent time helping at Haley House in Boston. Bernie Walsh, who has been with CCNV in Washington, D.C., is here to spend some

came the light in darkness. With water, we recalled the pledge of faithfulness we made with baptismal waters. With prayer and song and quiet listening, we heard the story of our salvation told once again in the words of the Scriptures. With bread and wine we were reminded that Jesus was to be found not in the tomb, but alive in the world. Fathers Peter and Lyle joined us as our celebrants, along with many friends and neighbors. Afterwards, we enjoyed the company with hot apple cider and a special Easter bread baked by Susan.

The house seemed transformed that night. Its beauty was in its simplicity, as we took everyday items from our house and used them for our Sacrament. Richard sang the Exultet as we all held candles. Color graced our kitchen in lilies, lilacs and daisies, and the long table near the stove became a fitting altar when covered by a beautiful, hand-woven material given by friends in Ahkmin, Egypt. The evening was a good reminder that we're often bereft, not because of a lack of beauty in the world, but because we seldom attend to it. We need these times to make Sacraments from the substance of the earth so that we can feel life again, sense its goodness, and see its intrinsic and undying value.

Community

Besides the vigil, we celebrated the dawn of Easter in our own way by preparing a special breakfast for the people who come to our house to eat each day. Many passed through the door that morning to share in the ham and eggs, coffee and rolls. Thanks to Sister Stella, we're able each Holiday to part from the usual soup and have something special. Jane was the first on the scene that morning, cracking dozens of eggs, while the rest of us wandered in, not quite awake from the night before, looking for a cup of coffee. We knew the morning was in full course when Jane and Anne joined in their traditional Easter morning singing of Regina Coeli. That evening, our family joined in a delicious meal that was brought about by several people. Anne prepared lasagna the day before, which Susan cooked that Sunday afternoon. With a spinach salad Jim made, and ice cream sundaes, we had a feast, and could feel in a strong way the community we are. Remembering Jesus and His Easter Rising is a community experience—and is best done when we recall Him in the midst of those who believe in Him. How good and natural it seems to celebrate Easter in spring—the season when life abounds, following the death of winter.

Easter was a miracle when Jesus, in fidelity to the love of His Father, overcame the darkness of death and human hatred. We need miracles, but even more we need to make Easter sacramental by symbolizing it to others with our flesh and blood. Easter becomes sacramental when we are known to be faithful, when our life becomes a source of light, when words heal and hearts understand. It's quite a task, this calling of ours as Christians, and, like the women who first witnessed the Resurrection at the empty tomb, we move on into life half-fearful, half-excited, knowing, that life is to be different from now on.

To be our brother's keeper
is what God wants us to do.
To feed the hungry
at a personal sacrifice
is what God wants us to do.
To clothe the naked
at a personal sacrifice
is what God wants us to do.
To shelter the homeless
at a personal sacrifice
is what God wants us to do.
To instruct the ignorant
at a personal sacrifice
is what God wants us to do.
To serve man for God's sake
is what God wants us to do.

PETER MAURIN

time with us, along with Jonathan Beasley from Louisiana. Though she has lived at the farm in Tivoli for several years, Peggy Scherer has always been much a part of our community here on First Street. We're happy to have Peggy living with us now, as she plunges into the Catholic Worker urban scene. Along with constant hellos and new acquaintances, we often have to say goodbye to people who have added much goodness to our family. Fr. Henry McMurry left last week to return to his work in Montana after spending a year in the city. His work on the mailing of the paper, and attentiveness to us all will always be appreciated, along with the peaceful evenings he led us in the prayer of the liturgy. We wish him well and all God's blessings.

Death and New Life

After we finish the chores of the day, we gather in the evening to pray Vespers. This past Lent we read the book of Exodus together and listened to the story of how our spiritual ancestors, the children of Israel, were led from life to death. A good reminder it was as we approached Holy Week, and particularly those last days before Easter Sunday. On Good Friday, a group of us kept a silent vigil at St. Patrick's Cathedral during Holy Hours. We thought it to be an appropriate time to remember the victims of capital punishment and pray for a turn in public opinion which is moving back in the direction of legalizing this form of murder in many states. Many people stopped to read our signs, and an occasional word of approval or curse of disapproval was heard. We ended the vigil by passing out leaflets, sharing our belief that life is sacred and should be protected at all times.

As we approached Holy Saturday evening, all hands were present helping in preparation for the most important of Christian feasts. Walls were washed, pots and pitchers were scrubbed and shined. Come Saturday night, all was ready and, along with Christians all over the world, we kept vigil in celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus. Our paschal candle, which also suffered the effects of winter by sitting too near a hot radiator, was brought out and freshened up, recalling to us how Jesus be-