

# THE CATHOLIC WORKER



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## In The Year Of 1492

By JANE SAMMON

Many current observances marking the arrival of Columbus have given considerable attention to the Native Peoples' tragic fate. Previous accounts had been replete with tales of adventure, lush vegetation, extraordinary landscapes, exotic flora and fauna. Such narrative eclipsed the deeper implications of what the "Discovery" meant for millions of human beings, imagined to be barely above the wildlife encountered in the misnamed "West Indies."

The 500th anniversary of this event has given birth to critical scholarship, revisions that cast explorers, missionaries and their supporters alike in the roles of evildoers. Our modern hearts can easily make judgments—those smug gifts of hindsight—on all involved in the Atlantic voyage. Certainly such arduous travels were executed by some brave navigators besides those mere profiteers out for the promise of lucrative spoils. But no serious inquiry can deny the great and unparalleled evil that was perpetrated for wealth and gain in the Americas: Estimates of over 40 million killed, through violence and previously untransmitted diseases with no natural immunities; the introduction of slaves from Africa on the very first voyage, and the later institutionalizing by royal decree of this criminal act, the buying and selling of black human beings. Apologists claim that no one knew better. If this were so, what about the few of another sort of courage, who dared to speak against those atrocities and who were censored for doing so?

In the watershed year of 1492, Ferdinand and Isabella—despite their generally disregarded and feeble "winning hearts and minds" advice to the Europeans: To protect the Indians, to teach them the faith, to use them for labor but as "free" people—unwittingly become the forerunners of Hitler, Stalin, Amin and their future countryman, Generalissimo Franco. Their policies reverberate into a later century, with our own expansionist United States, the yearnings of Manifest Destiny.

But 1492 is part of a much larger epoch. It is the period when the church of Christ is breaking apart from within; when Dissenter, Islamic believer, and others come under the

lethal yoke of the Inquisition. Thus seen, baptism for the Native peoples is of a piece: It is imperative that the far-away heathen as well be saved from perdition. This goal is an all-consuming passion for a Catholic monarch of the times; Ferdinand and Isabella are not given the grace to know that Christ Himself is being put in the blasphemous position of Executioner, and many of their subjects will join them in having little sympathy for strange, distant creatures resisting their moment of salvation.

The mind boggles in front of the political climate of this era. Spain's naval preeminence; its threat to England; the routing of the Muslims from Western Europe—all play off each other while the ships are being built, the commissions handed out. As one reads on, another layer of meaning is revealed. The eyewitness account of "New World" Dominican, Bartolome de Las Casas, is vivid testimony of Indian suffering; but, in less than a hundred and fifty years, it will provide anti-Spanish fodder for the notorious Protector of the English Commonwealth, Oliver Cromwell. Himself architect of massacres in Ireland, and no lover of Catholicism, Cromwell counts the translated earlier reportage of a priest as proof of his enemies' "barbarity."

In *The Tears of the Indians*, Bartolome de Las Casas narrated the horrific story of one massacre's survivors. As they fled to mountains in terror, the conquerors, fast on their trail, "...hunted them with their hounds, whom they bred up and taught to pull down and tear the Indians like beasts: By these dogs much human blood was shed...."

The year 1492 brings other memories, intimations of genocides to come. This was the same year in which the Jews of Spain were issued the startling ultimatum: Convert to Christ, or leave the land. Before the ships sailed, there were numbers of Jews who became such *conversos*, little regarded in spite of their baptism; despicably called by another word, the one for filthy, dirty, swine: *Marrano*. Since Granada, the last Islamic stronghold, had been reconquered in January of the same auspicious year, the Jews were the only obstacles remaining in

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## A Woman For All Seasons

By EMMET MADIGAN

It is not difficult to understand why Dorothy Day was so taken by St. Therese of Lisieux, the Little Flower, that she wrote a book about her. It was because Dorothy Day was a very Gospel-based person, and in St. Therese she recognized a kindred soul. Both of them were given the grace to discern the key elements in the teaching of Jesus and to pass them on to us in a way that was understandable and that insisted, "This is not just for an elite; this is for everyone." St. Therese has been misunderstood or too quickly rejected because of her supposedly "cloying sentimentality." Actually, she was as tough as steel, and she had a fine, penetrating mind. Dorothy Day has been misunderstood too (or was for a long time) to the extent of being called a "Catholic Communist." She too was tough and had a critical intelligence. And, a worldly-wise and sophisticated journalist, she understood and completely accepted the Little Way of Spiritual Childhood taught by St. Therese.

She simply realized that if anyone follows this "Way" he or she will become holy. For it isn't really St. Therese's way; it is the Gospel way—Jesus' way.

But to follow this way one must overcome some obstacles. First, there is the common reaction against the word "little." St. Therese used it often: She was God's little flower; her way was the little way; her offerings to God were little daily duties done out of love, little irritations, little acts of self-denial, little (and later big) sufferings. She did not aspire to greatness but to littleness. And many people are not attracted but are rather repelled by such a childlike spirituality. But again, Therese didn't invent this idea; she got it from Jesus, Who Himself used the word "little" quite often. At least three different times He told His disciples that they must become as little children and that this was a condition for entering heaven and that they could

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St. Francis Of Assisi

Gary Donatelli

## 1992: No To Global Economy

[This article was first published in *The Mustard Seed*, newspaper of the Catholic Worker in Toronto, Canada—Eds. note.]

The prospect of a free trade pact with Mexico (or to be more precise a North American "free trade" zone) is truly frightening. What was once the idle day-dream of Ronald Reagan is fast becoming a reality, posing a grave threat to the cultural, economic and political lives of ordinary people everywhere in North America.

We hear of our world being referred to as a "global village," and so it has become. Technology has made it possible to conduct day-to-day business instantaneously across vast distances. We are living in a "space age" world, held together by micro-chips and micro-communications.

If the wondrous capabilities of "modern technology" were serving the purpose of helping people to better understand one another, of breaking down cultural barriers and building a global consciousness of justice and solidarity, then we might not have such cause to fear the increasing globalization of our lives. We do, after all, share a common destiny on this very small planet of ours. What happens in one part of the world has real effects on every other part. Whatever can help us to build a secure and human future for all the earth's people should be welcomed.

But let us not be blindly naive. The reality is that globalizing technology and patterns of social organization are being used to enrich the few while impoverishing the many. Have

we ever seen in the whole of human history such gut-wrenching disparities between rich and poor as we see now and accept as "reality"? The growing divide between the very rich and the very poor—a trend that has accelerated at an alarming rate in the last fifteen years—is well documented. It is not an accident that people are poor. Poverty, famine, squalor—these are all the real and direct consequences of a system that is organized according to the principle of profit, not human need.

We are told that a free trade deal will bring a new prosperity to our society. We need to look critically at what our politicians promise so readily.

A free trade arrangement encompassing Canada, the US and Mexico is a globalizing tendency, a master economic plan that would integrate the economic lives of some 400 million people into one massive, integrated, inter-dependent and very profitable monolith—a monolith controlled by a small corporate elite whose self-interest and worldview seems to blind them to the consequences of their decisions. The social organization of North America will be increasingly determined by the interests of those few beneficiaries and not the human needs of real people, especially those who, for whatever reason, have no "marketable" skills and cannot "compete." But if we're lucky we might get a little "trickle down" to get us through the "transition."

We have only to look at Flint, Michigan to get a taste of what a North American Free

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## From The Book Of Notes

By RIC RHETOR

Folks have been working hard at First Street to spruce the place up: The office has been painted and transformed into a contemplative space/study room office. Vincenza painted the womens' floor. With the help of Father John and other friends, we've finally had a new walk-in cooler installed which actually gets real cold! The last one was little more than a giant Petri dish in its final days.

People are studying here left and right. Brian and Bernie are both studying theology, Brian at Fordham and Bernie at Maryknoll. Kassie continues her Hebrew Bible studies up at the Drisha Institute. Jo is taking a class on Renaissance ideas of gender, up at the CUNY Graduate Center. David Mastrodonato, now living in Brooklyn, is working in Labor Studies, and Sabra is taking an art class. Bible study continues on Thursday nights in the Maryhouse library with the Gospel of St. John, attended by people of both houses and members of the Kairos community.

Elmer Maas and Dan Berrigan have told us that Phil Berrigan has not been well. He was moved from the Lorton jail where he is serving a six month sentence for his part in the Holy Innocents Day action at the White House last year. He was in the prison hospital being treated for pneumonia and cellulitis—the latter not being helped by the leg-irons he had to wear even in the hospital bed. Get well and God Bless, Phil.

Marj Humphrey, a Maryknoll Lay Missioner and Catholic Worker, is back from Kenya. Marj has been traveling through East Africa and the Middle East, and painted a very disturbing picture of the situation in the Sudan, racked by wars and starvation and given little press coverage here in the West. She'll be mostly up at Maryknoll till the beginning of November.

Jane is back from Ireland, North and south. Another story not highlighted in the press—the continuing conflict in the North of Ireland.

Recently, Sabra, Joe, Don and Annie went with the New York delegation to help support Randy Kehler and Betsy Corner, war tax resisters in Colrain, Massachusetts. Jennifer, Siobhan, Brian, Annie and Don attended the Atlantic Life Community (ALC) retreat in Kirkridge, Pennsylvania. We've been grateful for the evening of meditation sitting over at Sam and Liisa's apartment, and the day-long prayer workshop at St. Francis Xavier Church. There was also a recent fast in solidarity with People for Justice and Peace in the Americas.

Jeannette Noel has gone up to be with the folks at the Mustard Seed in Worcester, who

are celebrating their 20th year as a house of hospitality. Our congratulations to them go with her!

Sad news from Kathleen Jordan. She heard that Fred Ross Sr., labor organizer and colleague of Cesar Chavez, died in California. Kathleen said that Cesar considered Fred a mentor who taught him much in the United Farm Workers' early days of organizing in the fields. Our sympathy goes out to Fred's family.

With all the observances of this 500th year after the arrival of Columbus, the Guatemalan bishops have written an encouraging and moving statement asking pardon for the errors of the Church and contradictions in conduct "that have fallen unjustly on the indigenous people." And five of our own



Clifford Harper

bishops, down south, have recently written a strong letter condemning the death penalty.

Anyone interested in finding out about the craft work of homeless and formerly homeless people, is welcome to contact **Voices and Visions From the Margins**, South Press, 343 Broadway, Dobbs Ferry, NY 10522. Please write care of Ann Quintano.

Sabra asked Joe to marry her and he said yes. Wedding being planned for next summer. Congratulations, folks! We love you. ✚

### FRIDAY NIGHT MEETINGS

In keeping with Peter Maurin's recognition of the need for ongoing clarification of thought, we invite you to join us for our weekly Friday night meetings. The meetings are held at either Maryhouse—55 East Third St., (212) 777-9617, or St. Joseph House—36 East First St., (212) 254-1640. As far ahead as we can see, those we will hold at First St. will be marked with an \*. Both houses are between First and Second Avenues (2nd Ave. stop on the F train).

October 30—Otto Maduro: 500 Years of Oppression; 500 Years of Resistance.

November 6—Terry Rogers: Palestinian Voices.\*

November 13—Friday Night Forum: Roundtable Discussion on Voting and the Election.

November 20—Gerald Gioglio: Day of Decision—The Oral History of Conscientious Objection During the Vietnam War.\*

November 27—Friday After Thanksgiving. No Meeting. Happy Holidays!

December 4—Remembering Thomas Merton.

December 11—Maranda Loengard: Monastic Voices.\*

December 18—Christmas Party—Come One, Come All!

December 25—No Meeting. The Birth of Jesus. Happy Christmas!

MEETINGS BEGIN AT 7:30 P.M.

## PETER MAURIN FARM

By KEVIN DALY

The summer has been a wet one, and though at this stage we really could use some more sun, the garden is flourishing. What a contrast with last summer when it was oppressively hot and dry, and, except for tomatoes, summer squash and some green beans, we didn't get much of a yield. This year it's been just the opposite and we've been reaping a great deal, even more at times than we know what to do with. What we can't use ourselves we distribute to friends and neighbors, to the priests and nuns at the parish church in town, to a soup kitchen in Newburgh, to some migrant workers a few miles down Latintown Road, or bring down to the city. We've been feasting on some of the most delicious produce I've ever tasted and our freezer is rapidly filling up with the broccoli, zucchini, green peppers and other vegetables we like to use in our soups, stir-frys and casseroles.

It's also been a summer in which I've learned a great deal, an education I wouldn't have traded for any other, in keeping with the Catholic Worker tradition of establishing "agronomic universities." Though a classical musician by training (my instrument is the pipe organ) I've discovered to my amazement that I'm completely at home in an organic garden. I'm finding that it's not at all impossible to strike a balance between the manual labor of gardening and intellectual work like music. The two, rather than competing and detracting from one another, actually complement one another and lead to the fulfillment of one's potential.

I didn't, however, realize any of this at the beginning. In early April, as I planted the first seeds in our modest and unheated greenhouse, I had the panicky feeling one gets when one doesn't know what one is getting oneself into. The work and its demands literally take on a life of their own. You have to keep up with a pace the plants themselves set for you and though the principles of gardening are simple, you have to be constantly on top of things and vigilant. I'll never forget the wonder and relief I felt upon seeing the first shoots of cabbage, broccoli, eggplant, tomatoes and other vegetables peeping up out of the potting soil. I spent many a contented hour mixing peat moss, compost and top-soil for our potting mixture and transplanting the seedlings to larger vessels once they were sufficiently mature. George Lee, a veteran of the Catholic Worker and longtime resident of both St. Joseph House and the Farm, checked the seedlings' progress every day and made sure I understood the principles underlying the work. At one point he alerted me to the fact that the greenhouse was being over-run by mice and that I'd better set out the traps—just one more aspect of rural life to bear in mind. Before too long there were pots and seed flats taking up almost every available corner of our little glass-covered enclosure.

In the meantime, Ralph and I had borrowed a pick-up truck from the local parish to gather up manure and compost from neighboring

farms to spread on the field. To work it all into the soil, we used a device called the roto-tiller, a machine with rotating blades that you push through the soil as you would a lawnmower through grass. I'm grateful to have learned how to operate this particular piece of appropriate technology for it really does save labor (though it's rather noisy!)

As the days lengthened and the weather grew warmer, we carefully transplanted the first seedlings from their relatively pampered environs to the section of open field that Ralph and I had prepared. Again, I was relieved that my "babies," as I'd come to think of them, didn't all die off at this crucial juncture. Of course, in gardening, it is impossible at times to differentiate between the routine and the miraculous. Transplanted seedlings flourish and bear fruit every summer, but it's still a miracle!

Upon completing that stage of the process, Else became concerned that if we didn't put mulch down the weeds would soon take over the garden. I groaned inwardly at the thought of all that work, but in the end it actually made things easier. We gathered up the tall grass Ralph had cut with the bush-hog and spread thick mats of mulch around the plants. Sure enough it did a lot to stifle weed-growth.

With the mulching completed, we had finished the first phase of the growing cycle, beyond routine weeding and watering. We did have a problem with cabbage worms and flea-beetles attacking the eggplant leaves but nothing that wasn't manageable. We avoid resolutely the use of sprays and chemicals and still the garden is thriving. Even the eggplant, despite heavy damage when the plants were still young, have burgeoned into large healthy bushes. The yield from all of our plants, considering the relatively modest proportions of our garden, promises to be enormous.

It's interesting to me that my big reading project this past winter was Milton's *Paradise Lost*. I couldn't have realized as I was reading it how much his description of Adam's and Eve's duties in the Garden of Eden would inspire my own labors this past spring:

On to their morning's rural work they haste  
 Among sweet dews and flowers; where any row  
 Of fruit-trees over-woody reached too far  
 Their pampered boughs, and needed hands  
 to check

Fruitless embraces. Or they led the vine  
 To wed her elm; she spoused about him twines  
 Her marriageable arms, and with her brings  
 Her dower, the adopted clusters, to adorn  
 His barren leaves. Then thus employed beheld  
 With pity Heaven's high King....

I was reminded of Thomas Merton's assertion that the purpose of monasticism is nothing less than "the reclamation of Paradise" and that all of Nature is "meant to remind us of Paradise." It's hard to exaggerate how extremely pleasant working in an organic garden can be. To be out in the fresh air and sunshine (especially here, where the grounds are as lovely as any I've ever seen) and developing a white gardener's tan (pale chest, brown everywhere else) while tilling the soil, pulling up weeds, watering etc. can make you feel at times as though you're at the very center of everything. It's also been of vital importance to me as a vegetarian to gain the hands-on experience of growing the food that I eat every day. A connection has been made and an essential aspect of my being has been rounded off and completed.

And so we continue our joyful harvest, reaping the bounty of God's good earth and singing with Adam and Eve their hymn at daybreak:

Join voices all ye living Souls; ye Birds,  
 That singing up to Heaven's gate ascend,  
 Bear on your wings and in your notes His praise.  
 Ye that in water glide, and ye that walk  
 The earth, and stately tread, or lowly creep,  
 Witness if I be silent, morn or eve,  
 To hill, or valley, fountain, or fresh shade,  
 Made vocal by my song, and taught His praise.  
 Hail universal Lord, be bounteous still  
 To give us only good; and if the night  
 Have gathered ought of evil or concealed,  
 Disperse it, as now light dispels the dark. ✚

# A Voice For Torture Victims

On November 2, 1989, Ursuline Sister Dianna Ortiz was abducted from the Posada de Belen, a religious retreat center in Antigua, Guatemala. Sister Dianna, a US citizen, had been working among the people in the district of Huehuetenango. She had been under surveillance, and had received death threats. She was held by the Guatemalan Security Forces and interrogated, tortured and raped. The next day, when the car taking her to a new place of incarceration was stopped in traffic, she managed to escape.

Sister Dianna's ordeal caused a considerable outcry from outside Guatemala. It was one of the events leading to the US government's decision to end military aid to Guatemala in 1989, and to tie economic aid to an improved human rights record.

In 1990, President Vinicio Cerezo set up a special Presidential Commission to oversee the investigation into the case. After the 1991 elections, the new president, Jorge Elias Serrano, disbanded the commission. The Special Prosecutor he eventually named to continue the investigation, Fernando Linares, has been extremely loath to do so, despite repeated efforts both from the States and from Ursuline delegations to Guatemala. Meanwhile, Sister Dianna has been subject to accusations from military and judicial officials

in Guatemala that she fabricated the case—one judge has claimed that the cigarette burns on her back were self-inflicted.

In April of this year Sister Dianna returned to Guatemala to give evidence against her torturers. The importance of her courageous decision cannot be overestimated. She is the first survivor of torture ever to have testified in court against the Security Forces.

The all-pervasive power of the military allows it to act with total impunity, immune from prosecution. In a country where in the last decade 100,000 people were killed and another 40,000 disappeared, the 1991 convictions of two soldiers after the deaths of 13 campesinos in Santiago Atitlan were the first time that any members of the armed forces had been held responsible for human rights violations.

Sister Dianna, as a North American citizen, has support from beyond the borders of Guatemala that has helped her battle her case in the courts in a way that no Guatemalan citizen has been able to do, living daily with the presence of the death squads. She does so as one of the hundreds of thousands of victims of torture in Guatemala, and she carries the hope of the people with her. This effort to break open the justice system comes at a time when human rights abuses are on the rise. The Guatemalan Human Rights Commission recorded 1,203 cases of disappearance and torture in 1991, and 764 "extrajudicial executions." In considering this situation, let us not forget that torture techniques are studied by members of the Guatemalan Security Forces as part of the counter-insurgency training program at the School of the Americas in Fort Benning, Georgia. (For further information, the School of the Americas Watch can be contacted at PO Box 3330, Columbus, GA 31903.)

—Jo Roberts

By MARY FABRI

[Mary Fabri is a clinical psychologist at the Marjorie Kovler Center for the Treatment of Survivors of Torture, one of tragically few such places. She is Sister Dianna's therapist, and accompanied her on the return trip to Guatemala last April. The following is taken from an article she wrote for the August-September issue of *Kairos*, the newspaper of the Su Casa Catholic Worker in Chicago—Eds. note.]

Torture is an extreme violation of human rights. It is a brutal, dehumanizing experience. The methods of torture attack the physical and psychological being as a means of destroying the victim's personality. Families and communities fear that their actions may result in more severe torture for the victim, and that they may themselves become potential targets for the torturers. Torture survivors include, therefore, the individual victims and members of their family and com-

because I worked for the Marists on Staten Island once, and they had a statue of our Lady with her arms outstretched, her hands open, in the midst of a garden of roses, at Our Lady of the Elms, in Prince's Bay.

And, of course, there are other readers who make our life rich, and warm us and clothe us and feed us too, together with those we are trying to take care of, who have not been properly thanked, so we do it now, for their packages, their letters, the money they sent and the continued interest and understanding in our work. God bless them all, with blessings that are heaped up, pressed down and running over. ❖

[We reprint this to say our heartfelt "thank you" to all the many readers who responded so generously to our appeal. Thanks to you all our common purse now appears to be full enough to carry us through the end of the year—The Editors]



Working Woman with Sleeping Child. 1927. Courtesy Galerie St. Etienne, New York.

Käthe Kollwitz

## Gratitude

By DOROTHY DAY

From an article in the February, 1956 CW

During one of the questionings by the city as to our activities, the investigator, a kindly and gentle person, who was always considerate enough to allow us to present our views, looked at Charlie McCormack's spring coat and generally well-dressed appearance, and said:

"Do you mean to say that no one gets a salary around the Catholic Worker? What do you do for toothpaste—for recreation?"

"It just comes in," Charlie said, and I could not help but laugh to myself, because we had just been talking of one of our friends who is always spending all his money on theater tickets and wanting to take us to shows.... There is recreation aplenty in books, radio concerts, walking with friends. And as for toothpaste—that comes in, too.

One of the young women who used to visit us often while looking for a job, said sadly: "Everything seems to come in, fur coats, shoes, galoshes, furniture for my apartment—everything but a husband."

Seriously speaking, when one becomes part of a distributing agency as we have, one must keep in mind voluntary poverty, and day by day try to pare down, do without, pass on to others, and be troubled in conscience for being too comfortable while trying to make others comfortable. For instance, we have never been so warm before, with central heating. Poverty becomes very much a hidden thing and we begin to have sympathy and a high regard for those who have no appearance of poverty and yet are more interiorly mortified than we are. It all goes to make us realize more and more that we should never judge others....

Yes, we are certainly grateful for all the things that come in, and we try to write the donors, and we certainly say plenty of God Bless Them's as we unwrap packages. But there are times when a package is unwrapped and the address is lost, and people do not get properly thanked, and then we can only pray to God to make up to them for it, to bless them especially, and send them all the graces they need.... There is that wonderful statue of our Lady of Grace which came to me from a Fr. Francis (is it Father or Frater) and where is it from? I found it on my book case in my room on Chrystie Street, and do not know whom to thank. Also a statue of St. Joseph on my desk. We are going to make a little shrine for the Blessed Mother in the women's quarters on the top floor. I love it especially

munity.

Torture survivors, like rape victims, are in a precarious legal position that compromises the rights of the victim. They must prove that the event actually occurred, that they are innocent of some yet unidentified wrongdoing, and that they are of deserving character. The legal system is experienced not as an advocate for victims, but as an adversary. This experience complements the tactic of torturers telling victims, overtly or by inference, that no one will listen to them, or care about what happened to them, as a way of increasing the likelihood of later silence.

The experience results in a constellation of symptoms called the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. The dynamics of the disorder are best understood by the interaction between two factors: The painful intrusive memories of the trauma, and the defenses used to ward off these memories. The story is rarely recounted without an actual sensory reliving of the experience (physical pain, tastes, sounds, and smells). It is not simply a recollection of events, but a re-experiencing of them.

Torture destroys an individual's sense of personal control. Individuals being tortured are usually physically isolated, or else made to feel isolated. The physical logistics of questioning torture survivors psychologically recapitulates the torture and isolation. The taken-for-granted expectation of eye contact is almost impossible for the torture survivor. Staring also undermines the survivor's sense of control. Precipitated by the experience of someone's stare, the survivor relives the experience of being constantly observed and stared at without any control.

Memory difficulties may be the result of defense mechanisms being employed psychologically to protect the individual from the intense pain of the recollections. It may manifest in a variety of ways, such as denial that torture occurred, minimization of the experience, or the blocking of memories. Some details are never entered into memory storage, and therefore are not retrievable.

Trusting is difficult for survivors of torture. There is a strong need for victim advocacy to help the survivor regain a sense of control in his or her life. The survivor needs an available network of support to counteract the

impersonal and unsupportive treatment by investigating agencies. The survivor's therapist is a likely advocate and provider of support which may allow the procedure of recounting the torture events.

Guilt is another primary issue for torture survivors. An irrational self-blame, which is unfortunately reinforced by the investigative process, exists for torture survivors. It is twofold. They may blame themselves for "allowing" the torture to have happened, and they may question why they survived and others were mercilessly killed. Also, when the torture and murder of a person associated with the survivor occurs, the survivor usually blames himself or herself. Tremendous feelings of guilt often result.

Torture is the most traumatic experience a human being can undergo. It leaves profound wounds not only in the survivor, but in the family and community. Rehabilitation is a process of healing that occurs gradually. It involves a reclaiming of personal power and control, and a rebuilding of trust in other human beings. Giving testimony lends itself to a revictimization of the torture survivor. Many of the logistics, such as medical documentation of abuse and repeated questionings, precipitate painful relivings of the actual torture, and overwhelming feelings of loss of control, intense guilt, degradation, and de-personalization.

The paragraphs above outline the dilemma encountered by survivors of torture when they attempt to pursue some semblance of justice for the violations they have suffered. They are just descriptive words, however, which cannot convey the depths of the experience of torture, nor the pervasiveness of the residual symptoms. ❖

As for me, my bed is made: I am against bigness and greatness in all their forms, and with the invisible molecular moral forces that work from individual to individual, stealing in through the crannies of the world like so many soft rootlets, or like the capillary oozing of water, and yet rending the hardest monuments of [human] pride, if you give them time.

—William James

# NAFTA—Free Trade Is Greed Trade

By KATHARINE TEMPLE

More than twenty-five years ago, George Grant, the late Canadian political philosopher, wrote *Lament for a Nation*, where he mourned the end of Canadian independence. Since the 1940s, he argued, Canada (and especially English-speaking Canada) has been less and less willing or able to resist the dominant forces for continental (indeed global) integration. For instance, he wrote, "The United States is no longer a society of small property owners, but of massive private and public corporations. Such organizations work with scientists in their efforts to master nature and reshape humanity. Internationally, the imperial power of these corporations has destroyed indigenous cultures in every corner of the globe. Communist imperialism is more immediately brutal, but American capitalism has shown itself more subtly able to dissolve indigenous societies."

By now, this book could be dismissed as a mere footnote to Canadian history, except for the negotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with Canada and Mexico, plus talk of expanding the area to all of Latin America and even Eastern Europe. In the wake of the collapse of Communism, this treaty is touted as a tribute to free market economics, to the benefit of the whole world, through the reduction of trade barriers. Any opposition to NAFTA can be made to sound like a typical left-wing, anti-American, knee-jerk reaction, reminiscent of the now despised 1960s. And so, if we are suspicious about expanded free trade, we need to look carefully at the actual social and economic implications. This is not an easy task. Most of us do not find the financial pages of the newspaper easy to follow, and TV sound-bites are beyond the pale. (And the recent currency turmoil in Western Europe, the other proposed free trade zone, has not made matters simpler.) Nor, save for some trade unions, is there much public dismay over the basic principles at work in free trade.

One exception is *Trading Freedom: How Free Trade Affects Our Lives, Work and Environment* (from the Institute for Food and Development Policy, 145 Ninth St., San Francisco, CA 94103, 1992). It is a collection by more than thirty writers from Canada, the

US and Mexico, who speak in various ways of the social costs of free trade practices—social costs across the board, except for boards of directors—that exploit financial gain at any price. In one article, "Free Trade: The Great Destroyer," David Morris brings to the fore again some of the questions raised earlier in *Lament for a Nation*. Quoting sources who are themselves cheerleaders for corporate structures, he restates the reality for the 1990s: "Planetism rearranges our loyalties and loosens our neighborly ties. As *The New York Times* puts it: 'The new order eschews loyalty to workers, products, corporate structures, businesses, factories, communities, even the nation.' Martin S. Davis, chairman of Gulf and Western, goes further. 'All such allegiances are viewed as expendable under the new rules. You cannot be emotionally bound to any particular asset.' We are now assets."

## Who Benefits?

As for the new rules when applied under free trade, Ed Finn, in an article for Canada's *Catholic New Times* (Sept. 13, 1992) states them quite simply. "When the ancient Romans wanted to understand what was happening to their economy, they asked the simple two-word question: 'Who benefits?' (*Cui bono?*) When they found out who gained from an economic trend or decision, they were better able to judge if it was a good or a bad deal for them. To understand NAFTA we have to know who will profit and who will lose from it."

"It is not difficult to identify the winners. They're the large transnational corporations, mostly based in the United States, who will be guaranteed a good supply of natural resources in Canada and a good supply of cheap labor in Mexico. The NAFTA losers are obvious too—the workers in all three countries. More Canadian and American workers will lose their jobs, while more and more workers in Mexico will be forced to work for a few dollars a day in the *maquiladora* hell-holes." (*Maquiladoras* are the factories where US-made intermediary products and raw materials are assembled for re-export back to the US.)

Such a stark view of NAFTA is not often heard in this country, and even less noticed

are the voices raised from within Mexico. For example, the Mexican Bishops' Commission on Social Concerns has decried the treaty as it favors the already wealthy elite in Mexico, while ignoring fair labor practices and the environment. We North Americans should not delude ourselves: It is the people of Mexico who will pay the price, followed by workers in Canada and the US, while the rich get richer.

But, you may say, the power of the multi- or transnational corporations (and I think we cannot leave out the banks, or the Pentagon as the largest state corporation), power beyond that of all but the largest nation-state, as the organizers of economic, technical and human forces, as the destroyer of other loyalties, is hardly news. What is new is the insistence on "free" trade with a Third World country.

The demand for free trade, in this form at this time, has to be seen on the stage of world debt. *The Debt Boomerang* by Susan George (Pluto Press, London, England, 1992—available from the Institute for Policy Studies, 1601 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington DC 20009) gives us this background. As in her earlier book, *A Fate Worse Than Debt* (Grove Press, 1988) she spells out the disastrous effects of "debt management" (a euphemism for usury, which has gone quite out of style as a sin!) for poor nations. The argument is complex, but two key points are important—the amounts of money and the control of payments through "structural adjustments." "The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, acting on behalf of the creditor countries which are their major stockholders, have undertaken this task. Their job is simple: To make sure the debt is serviced. Thus a chief goal of their economic management must be the accumulation of enough hard currency to ensure levels of payment. . . . At the behest of the Bank and the Fund, debtor countries have deprived their people—particularly the poorest among them—of basic necessities in order to provide private banks and public agencies of the rich countries with the equivalent of six Marshall Plans. This unprecedented financial assistance to the rich from the poor may be startling, but it is nonetheless arithmetically true." For our understanding of NAFTA, the impact on Mexico is crucial, and the Mexican plight in the face of this crushing debt is presented in "Free Trade Won't Help Mexico's Poor" in *Trading Freedom*. It is small wonder that the Mexican government thinks it has little choice but to accept or even wants to accept the yoke of NAFTA.

## Lost Jobs And Markets

Susan George goes on to describe how these very policies are now also having serious repercussions on the countries to which the money is allegedly owed. Again, she conveys complex arguments without over-simplification. Her chapter "Lost Jobs and Markets" is the one most directly related to our concern about free trade. Basically, if we want to receive the debt payment in hard currency, we have to import goods from debtor countries and have to curtail our exports to them. "Creditors cannot have it both ways—they cannot both sell more to debtors and receive higher interest payments from them." Thus, to jump to the conclusion, world debt management is a major contributor to the recession in the US. "People who criticize present debt management policies on ethical, economic or ecological grounds have generally tended to be identified with the political left. When vanishing markets and glaring trade deficits are concerned, however, establishment voices have also taken the floor. The causal connections between the debt crisis and these losses were recognized almost from day one and their impact measured early on."

NAFTA, it seems to me, is an attempt on the part of the establishment to stave off the effects of the recession on the transnationals

with cheaper natural resources from Canada, cheaper labor costs and expansion into Mexico in a way that will not upset the apple-cart of the debt payments insisted upon by the banks. It is the attempt to shore up the power of the transnationals within the structure of world debt profiteering. It is the attempt to salvage technocratic-capitalistic usury with more of the same. ✦

## END THE ECONOMIC BLOCKADE OF CUBA!

# Boycott News

Nestle Company is still on our list of boycotts. Nestle supplies large amounts of free infant formula to hospitals in "Third World" countries. As health care workers bottlefeed new infants, their mothers' breast milk supply ceases, and they are forced to rely on the formula, many of whom cannot afford to do so.

Often the formula is diluted with contaminated water, and the directions, in English and therefore unreadable, are not followed. UNICEF says that a million lives a year are lost because of the resulting malnutrition, diarrhea, dehydration and disease. Breast milk offers a child immunities to many diseases that formula does not.

Nestle's has been boycotted on and off since 1977. In 1984, they agreed to follow the World Health Organization code, which requires proper labeling, including a message that breast feeding is best for the infant. The code bans large donations of formula to hospitals. Nestle's continued with their donations, so the boycott has been back in place since 1986.

The World Health Organization has no power to enforce their code, and the US voted against it (the only nation to do so). It is up to consumers to convince Nestle's to comply.

## Boycott the following Nestle products:

—All Nestle's drinks, baking products and candy bars (including Baby Ruth, Butterfinger, Kit Kat and Raisinets)

—Cain's, Chase and Sanborn, Hills Brothers, Taster's Choice coffee

—MJB coffee and tea, Nescafé and Nestea

—Libby's juices and Poland Spring Water

—Carnation Mighty Dog, Friskies Buffet and Dr. Ballard's dog food

—Stouffer's frozen foods; Lean Cuisine; Stouffer's hotels, restaurants, and resorts; Sea World

—Cain's condiments and spices

—Coffee Mate

—Cantadina products

—Crosse and Blackwell

—Libby's

—Maggi seasonings and soups

—MJB rice

—Carnation infant formula

—Beringer, Chateau Souverain, Los Hermanos and Napa Ridge wines

—Alcon Labs eye products

—L'Oreal and Warner cosmetics.

It speaks to the bigness of the modern corporation that this list is so long. We realize that such a boycott is difficult to maintain, so in addition to abstaining from these products:

**Write the company:** Alan C. MacDonald, President, Nestle Company, 100 Manhattanville Road, Purchase, NY 10577.

In the spirit of announcing rather than denouncing, we are happy to report that Neighbor to Neighbor (who led a successful coffee boycott that ended earlier this year) and Equal Exchange (an alternative trade group) are providing a link between El Salvadoran coffee co-ops and North American consumers.

The new brand, Café Salvador, will allow agrarian reform cooperatives (still threatened by former land owners) to sell their coffee for three times what they previously received under the oligarchy. The profits go to co-op projects such as clinics and schools.

For more information, call Equal Exchange, (617) 344-7227.

Our thanks to Aspen Olmstead, Mark Smith and the *Syracuse Peace Newsletter* for their information.

—Jennifer Belisle

# 1992: No To Global Economy

(Continued from page 1)

Trade accord has in store for us. General Motors, the mainstay of its local economy, axed 30,000 jobs in the latter half of the 1980s at a time when GM was experiencing record profits. The lay-offs left the community economically devastated. It has yet to recover.

Why were the jobs lost? Free trade. To maintain the "profitability" of the company the auto plants were moved to a free-trade zone in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico where GM, in its corporate munificence, pays its employees \$8 a day. The plant managers live across the border in the comfortable suburbs of El Paso, TX, where the cost of living is roughly the same as in Ciudad Juarez, while the Mexican workers live in desperate poverty. What has resulted is a situation of economic apartheid.

The Catholic Worker is a Christian anarchist movement. To put it simply, we do not believe that bigger is better. Rather, we believe that the inevitable consequence of big business and big government is poverty, powerlessness and death. "Bigness" in forms of social and economic organization are created and sustained by violence, are fueled by greed and are profoundly dangerous to human life because they put the maintenance of institutions, profitability and power ahead of human beings. In a world where "bigger is better," the human person simply becomes another resource, an object to be used in whatever manner is most cost-effective.

The Catholic Worker envisions a decentralized society, a society where forms of social

organization are created and defined by all those who are affected by them. A radically different society where each person takes direct responsibility for the common good at a personal sacrifice and avoids the temptation to "give over" that power and that responsibility to governments, institutions and corporations. A society, built on a directly personal and human scale, wherein it is easier to be good. A society of rural and urban landtrusts, small worker owned and managed factories, family farms, food, housing and other cooperatives. A society where self-sufficiency through crafting, farming and appropriate technology is possible. A society where money becomes once more a medium of exchange and human beings are no longer used as commodities.

We see that a North American free trade arrangement is directly opposed to this vision of society. It is a globalizing movement that concentrates wealth and power in fewer hands. We believe that the work of resisting "free trade" is comprised in large measure of opting out of the globalizing economy.

We, at Zacchaeus House, value the art of living locally as the beginning of an effort to create a decentralized society. Trying to buy what is grown, produced and made locally; shopping at locally-owned stores; boycotting chain operations. As we have found, this is a sometimes difficult, often inconvenient and time-consuming process but it is a further expression of the effort to take responsibility for the common good. We struggle and we are not consistent but we are trying. ✦

## Usury, A Reflection

Winchester, VA

Dear Kassie,

This is to acknowledge your kind letter to me several months ago, when I inquired about some further information on the usury issue. I've been aware of *The Catholic Worker* and the work you folks are doing for a little less than a year now. You've rattled my cage of comfortability with the usury issue—a perturbation that I am grateful for. We all need to re-examine our lives periodically, and I think that the value of the self-examination that we go through is directly proportional to the level of discomfort that is felt when we get disturbed.

Allow me to give you a bit more background. Years ago I held a successful scientific research position in Washington, D.C. It paid well. I had decided years earlier, however, that more money and material acquisitions were not an answer. Thus I began living well below my income level, and put savings aside, as I laid plans to make a major change in my life. Eight years ago, I moved to the country and began building a simple house and living in voluntary poverty—all from the savings accrued from my former life.

This new life has opened up much for me, as I've discovered the value of a life that is similar to a rural existence of a hundred years or so ago. The physical labor I do means so much to me. To be no longer a part of the "system" our country has created has been very satisfying.

Shortly after beginning this new life, I came to realize that checking out of the system was not enough. I became very aware of my fortunate lot in life, but saw that taking solace in my good fortune was rather hollow...something was lacking. Why was I so lucky? It had less to do with my own accomplishments than with the luck of being born who I was (and where), but also to the hard work of those who went before me.

The only sensible path (the true path) seemed to be finding some way to serve the world in some way—to try to make my presence on this planet a positive one in some sense. The way to do this, it seemed to me, was simultaneously to develop my spiritual life, to which I'd given little direct attention for many years. The path has led me over the last 3-4 years to Gandhi, to Quakerism, to Buddhism, to maybe now a further exploration of my Christian roots.

To return to usury: I have been living off savings, and planning for the day a decade or so from now when a retirement plan from my earlier life will become available. Then, as my consciousness was being raised by reading *The Catholic Worker* (and some other fine periodicals I've come to know), my equilibrium was upset when you showed me by what mechanism the interest on my savings and retirement trust was happening. I had never given real thought to how that interest was coming about. Yes, I was quite aware of the havoc wreaked upon the Third World by the malevolent IMF and World Bank, but your usury articles made me realize that I could take no comfort in thinking I was so different from them. In a similar way, Thich Nhat Hanh made me realize after the Gulf War that we must all recognize our complicity in what happened—we must all see the George Bush and Saddam Hussein within each of us.

So I've been wrestling with this usury issue these last months. I have no answer yet for myself. I am trying to become more aware of the issues involved (it is so complex) and then decide what this means for me and my little pot of money. In the meantime, I'm looking at the interest I accrue as money I'm acquiring on behalf of others, rather than something that's mine. Again, thank you. You have helped me very much.

In peace,

Geoff Huggins

## Bhopal Gas Survivors Still Seek Justice

By JOE HAMILTON

In December 1984, forty tons of extremely toxic and highly volatile methyl isocyanate gas leaked from the Union Carbide Corporation (UCC) pesticide factory in Bhopal, India into the surrounding community. As a

UCC, a US-based, billion-dollar, multinational corporation, built the Bhopal pesticide factory as a joint venture with its Indian subsidiary UCIL, and the Indian Government. This arrangement provided the Indian government with ownership of a significant interest in the factory. As with so many multina-

The odorless, colorless gas, methyl isocyanate, is fatal to human beings in quantities above 0.02 ppm. The massive amount that engulfed the nearby areas caused the enormous number of casualties. Those who were killed in the disaster suffered a slow, torturous death. The victims were subjected to coughing, choking, foaming at the nose and mouth, and, eventually, after several agonizing minutes, the loss of life.

Since the accident, the victims have been ignored and manipulated in various ways by Union Carbide and the Indian Government. Notably, the most promising resolution of the situation, private negotiations started by UCC in the later half of 1988 with the victims' US representatives, was undermined by the February 1989 announcement of a settlement agreement between UCC and the Indian government. The agreement demonstrated a complete disregard for the interests of the victims, since it was a unilateral decision made without their consent or approval. Moreover, the Indian government sought to represent the victims' interests. Umar Majid, a representative of the Bhopal Gas Victims Relief Committee commented on this arrangement: "To own a percentage of the factory where the incident occurred, then control the justice system that adjudicated the claims, then represent the victims is an appalling conflict of interest, that apparently complemented UCC's ethical and moral standards."

### Suit Filed In Texas

Recognizing the unlikelihood of receiving an impartial and fair redress under such murky conditions, 17,000 families have filed a law suit in Texas (Abdul Wahid vs. UCC) due to that state's open forum laws. Open forum laws allow an individual to institute a law suit within that state regardless of residence. Such laws are unique to Texas. The victims chose this path so as to have their own representation and to receive compensation directly from the US-based Union Carbide. The Federal Courts, applying both federal and Texas state law, are, in the victims' opinion, the only recourse available to them.

UCC has thrown its considerable weight into this legal battle and, after two unsuccessful efforts, has transferred the matter to New York, where the courts are considering UCC's *Forum Non Conveniens* motion. Such a motion seeks a judicial determination of the proper court to decide the issue at hand. UCC wants the matter sent back to India, a situation that would greatly benefit the company's position at the expense of the victims, who would then continue to be subjected to the collusive neglect of UCC and the Indian government. Union Carbide is desperate to avoid American standards of liability for its irresponsible conduct in Bhopal. At this juncture in the proceedings, the families are demanding that the matter be adjudicated in Texas. The courts have been unresponsive thus far to this demand.

The gas victims deserve a prompt, fair adjudication of their claims for just compensation. UCC has vigorously avoided fulfilling their moral and ethical obligations to these impoverished individuals. The lack of both attention and a large public outcry has aided UCC in shirking its responsibilities. Multinational corporations such as Union Carbide must be held accountable for the unconscionable pain and harm they inflict upon innocent victims at home and abroad. People of conscience interested in supporting the rights of the Bhopal gas victims can send letters and petitions to:

Abdul Wahid vs. Union Carbide Corp. Docket No. 92-7327 c/o Clerk's Office, US Court of Appeals, Second Circuit, Foley Square, New York, NY 10007, for a jury trial of the facts in the state of Texas.

Our thanks to Umar Majid and to the Bhopal Gas Victims Relief Committee for sending us the information for this article. They can be reached at PO Box 83414, San Diego, CA 92138.



Rita Corbin

result, hundreds of thousands of individuals died or suffered permanent injuries. Eight years later, the victims' misery continues, their demand for a just compensation thus far thwarted by the evasive legal maneuverings of the UCC.

national corporations in the "Third World," concern for the safety and well-being of the people of Bhopal seemed minimal at best, and, with the approval of the owners and operators of the factory, large quantities of this dangerous gas were stored at the site.

## In The Year of 1492

(Continued from page 1)

the way of a united Catholic kingdom. Although some Muslims remained in Spain until given a similar edict in 1609 (there were *en masse* forced baptisms—Muslim converts to be known as *moriscos*), their power, after almost 800 years, had ended; Jews who wouldn't convert would have to go as well.

The expulsion of the Jews was not a new development. Persecutions, arbitrary Church prohibitions, restrictions on property, burnings of sacred books, the wearing of badges on outer garments to signify their Jewishness, and countless pogroms—all had befallen Jews during the centuries leading to 1492. There were memories of the Crusaders, who had vowed to rid the Holy Land of Saracens, those who called God "Allah," and the sword did not discriminate between Jew or Muslim along the road to Jerusalem. But during Islamic rule, Jews had been to a great extent left alone to strengthen their already formidable cultural and religious ties.

Their lives were more respected by Muslim leadership than by our own Christian forebears (although under both Christian and Muslim aegis, there were Jews given prominent positions in public life). It was the general spirit of peace during the Muslim period that would make the expulsion so excruciating. The Jews were not only the largest community in Spain, but considered the most advanced in Western Europe.

Those Jews who remained steadfast in their belief in the God of Israel first made their way to neighboring Portugal where a large amount of money was extracted from them for the "privilege" of being allowed to

enter. But Jews were once again expelled if conversion was rejected. Ironically, as fewer avenues remained open to them in Western Europe, there were Jews who made the trip to the Americas, prominently heading to the southwest, where the Inquisition's tentacles had also reached. (It should be noted that the Inquisition was not so concerned about those who remained Jews unless they tried to persuade recent converts to return to their faith. The Inquisition was virulent in the persecutions of so-called "Judaizers," those converts who practiced their beliefs secretly.)

As for the believers in Islam, who remember the 500-year anniversary of the fall of Grenada, those not slaughtered departed from Western Europe as vanquished conquerors who had contributed stunning cultural, literary, mathematical, scientific and architectural ideas to the world.

In these last 500 years, little has remained the same except our human nature. One is tempted to all sorts of clichés about the mistakes of the past, learning from them, the march toward a better ordering of the world. "We believe in one God," we say, and our God is not One Who forces a system of belief down our unwilling throats; our God bears no hatred towards us, no ill-will because one is Jew, Muslim, woman, gay, Spaniard, African or Native American. 500 years ago, 500 years from now, this is the Eternal Truth. No attack is permitted under God's Great Law of Love. Ours is a prayer that we will obey this lovely and freeing Law, so that we will have the courage to speak in front of grave injustices. May our tongues be loosened to cut through the silence of the centuries. ✦

# This Is Our Path To Wholeness

By SABRA MCKENZIE and JOE HAMILTON

You will find out that charity  
Is a heavy burden to carry  
Heavier than the bowl of soup  
And the full basket.

But you will keep your gentleness  
And your smile.

It is not enough to give soup  
And bread  
This the rich can do.

You are the servant of the poor,  
Always smiling  
And always good humored.  
They are your masters,  
(Terribly sensitive) and exacting masters,  
You will soon see.

The uglier and dirtier they will be,  
The more unjust and insulting,  
The more love you must give them.

It is only for your love alone  
That the poor will forgive you  
The bread you give to them.

—St. Vincent De Paul

It seems so very clear that, more than any other thing, we need a renewed sense of gentleness in our lives: The kind of gentleness that speaks kindly and affirms; the kind of gentleness that notices little things, that looks us in the eyes and asks how we are; the kind that takes a moment to merely be, be with and listen; the kind that rests in truth, love and faith, not human strength and violence.

The reality, however, is that work abounds, and the complex pressures of living at the Catholic Worker scrape away at what reserves of patient endurance and compassion that any of us may have come here with. And our "masters," those ugly, dirty, unjust, insulting, terribly sensitive and exacting cho-

the seemingly unloveable, the enemies. So many faces come to mind....

And it angers, tires, hurts. It makes us resentful. It makes us want to withdraw, begging for silence and distance. It makes us ask ourselves why we try to care, give, offer, break, hope, struggle and share with those who curse and resent us for it, those who act and react with abuse and violence.

To be with the poor is to be with the anger and the hurt of the poor. It is to share, in some small way, the violence and injustice inflicted upon people daily by an oppressive political economy. It is to be vulnerable, to allow our wounds to meet, to share, indiscriminately, our human need and neediness. To be with the poor chafes away our most protective layers, and exposes the best and worst potentialities of our own struggling humanness.

And yet, in some miraculous and graceful way, this is our path to wholeness. Moreover, our position on this path is not to be enablers or doormats, condescending saints or long-suffering martyrs, as tempting as any of these

roles may be. Rather, our calling as Christians is to learn to love and do so as patiently and unconditionally as possible. It is in our effort to give our best (best of our food and resources, best of ourselves) that we learn how to offer this love. Thus we can bring into the wound a love that transforms in its tenacity, in its capacity to absorb the hurt and offer healing, all the time knowing, even expecting, rejection, indifference, resentment.

What becomes difficult to remember is that we must invite God into this path. (God is, in fact, this path.) Often in our attempts to give and love we forget to let go of our actions and intentions, and we invest ourselves in the grand results we wish to see from our offerings, from the supposed seeds we have planted. The harsh reality is that we are the ones receiving, the ones learning. It is our arrogance to assume that we have all to give and nothing to receive. The poor are more than objects to practice our sanctifying charity upon; they are human beings with whom we must work for justice.

In order to see this reality, we must learn to

## A Woman For All Seasons

(Continued from page 1)

become great only if they became little. St. Therese simply figured that He really meant what He said, and acted accordingly. And it's ironic—one of God's many ironies—that she, who sought hiddenness and anonymity, became world-famous and was called by Pope Pius XI "the greatest Saint of her century."

The other obstacle to be overcome in accepting the "Little Way" is the feeling that "it's too simple." There is a strong tendency in modern society to make simple things complicated. This holds true of the spiritual life too. Becoming holy can't be as simple as St. Therese makes it sound. And yet it is. It's certainly not easy, but it's simple.

The Little Way of Spiritual Childhood can be summed up in two words, the same two words that sum up the Gospel: "Love" and "humility." From these flowed the other virtues that she emphasized: Absolute confidence in God's loving mercy, self-surrender, the value of little things done out of love, and the serene acceptance of suffering. In her relationship with God, she habitually thought of herself in terms of a little child relating to a good Father. Perhaps no one ever took the first two words of the Lord's Prayer more literally or completely than she did. When she said "Our Father" she meant it with her whole heart. She was weak and must depend on her Father and trust Him and love Him. Jesus said, "Unless you be converted and become as little children you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven." If we don't at least try to see ourselves in this way, we won't grow spiritually.

### Abandonment

But Therese did not just see herself as a child with a loving Father. She also always saw God as having the same attitude to her as a loving father has to his little child. She fell asleep during meditation—well, a good father loves his child just as much when she's asleep as when she's awake. She sinned and she was sorry—well, a good father is always willing to forgive his child's waywardness. She was weak and weary and unable to go on—well, a loving father will pick up his child at such times and carry her. One other favorite parable was the one about the Prodigal Son, and she burned its message deep into her own mind and soul, with a confidence reminiscent of that expressed by Charles de Foucauld in his Prayer Of Abandonment:

**I surrender myself into Your hands  
without reserve  
and with boundless confidence  
For You are my Father.**

As to love and humility, they are simply two sides of the same coin.

First, love, the heart of the Gospel message and the heart of Therese's vocation and spirituality. Stripping the word to its barest, basic

meaning, love means, "You are very important to me." You love God with your whole heart if God is more important to you than anything or anyone in this world. You love your neighbor if every human being is important to you. Loving God with our whole heart is the first and the greatest commandment, and many have forgotten this. But Therese didn't forget. And she records that as she realized God's love for her, her love for Him grew, and that as this grew so did her love for others (the second great commandment), and her zeal for the salvation of souls grew as intense as a flame within her soul. Her love for others was not just humanitarian (as Dorothy Day's was when she began her long pilgrimage); it was a reflection of the very love of God for souls.

Since God's love for us was expressed in the person of Jesus, it was to Jesus that Therese's love was directed. She had realized that the only thing that we can give God is love—love freely given—and that this is really all He wants from us. Again, it's not easy, but it's simple.

Therese's humility is knowing the truth about oneself. And the truth about each one of us is that of ourselves we are nothing. Every gift, every talent, every grace, everything we are, is from God. Therese knew this to be true of herself. She didn't pretend it was so, she didn't believe it was so, she didn't feel it was so, she didn't think it was so, she knew it was so. And it is probably in this that she differs from most of us. We can't bring ourselves to admit that apart from God there are not at least some things that we can take credit for, some achievements for which we can justly be praised, or even be glorified. It's very hard to accept the truth that "Any worth I have is God-given; of myself I am nothing." It's especially hard in our time when pop-psychology is telling us the opposite. But Therese knew it to be true. She got over the hurdle that tripped up Adam and Eve—the desire to be independent of God—which trips up most of us, her children. Self-esteem is fostered as meaning, "Of yourself you have great value," rather than, "As a child of God you have great value." Pride is so deeply ingrained in us that St. Therese's desire to be hidden, unknown, unacknowledged and unpraised, and her glad acceptance of humiliation, can seem absurd to us. It's as though she expects us to turn ourselves inside out. Which is pretty much what Jesus asks us to do.

Therese's Way of Spiritual Childhood is for everyone, but not everyone will accept it. It is so contrary to the attitudes and values of "the world" that many will dismiss it with scorn. But Dorothy Day saw it for what it was: The distillation of the teachings of Jesus, and she wholeheartedly endorsed and accepted it. And, quite simply, the more we do so, the better the world will become. ✚

truly let go and thereby create space for God to work within the world, and within ourselves. This is the space of gentleness, the space of quietude and prayer. It is also the place where community is born, where those who struggle in similar ways for truth come together for sustenance. It is the looking at and recognition of human need within all of us, the opening for which and into which Christ became flesh and suffered.

The Catholic Worker brings so many marvelous people together, those working toward and needing so desperately a new and more just world. Here we run around and around, serving soup and bread, cleaning well-worn bathrooms and washing endless dishes, taking people to medical appointments and revisiting them in the hospital, fixing the interminable plumbing nightmares and painting old walls, organizing demonstrations and committing acts of civil disobedience, hearing insults and threats at our vigils and at our front door. And it is here that we must work to remember to leave room for our Loving God Who, through grace, reminds us to care gently for one another, and so humbly enables the needy to forgive the needy. ✚

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### CATHOLIC WORKER BOOKS

We are happy to announce the publication this Fall of two books.

Robert Ellsberg's comprehensive anthology of writings by Dorothy Day, previously printed as *By Little And By Little*, is now reissued under the title *Selected Writings*. On its first publication, Deane Mary Mowrer wrote in these pages, "The material is so well-chosen and arranged that one feels Dorothy's presence and hears her voice throughout its vivid recountal of her conversion, work, and long pilgrimage."

Fritz Eichenberg's *Works Of Mercy* is also being published. It contains much of the artwork that Fritz did for *The Catholic Worker* over many years, with accompanying texts by Dorothy Day, Thomas Merton and others. Jim Forest has written the introduction.

Both books are published by Orbis. ✚



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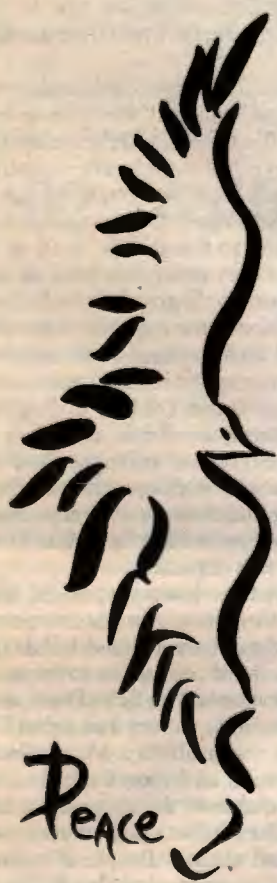
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sen children of God, make our "servant's" work at times even more challenging to understand and tolerate.

Many who come to our doors are warm and friendly. Many others are not. The difficult thing is that we are called by Christ truly to love one another, including (and especially)

**WE NEED BLANKETS!**

## JOY

By JENNIFER BELISLE

My friend Joy died. I knew her less than a year. We met last Fall—Joy was living I don't know where. I would see her sitting on Second Avenue, or occasionally in our dining room for lunch, wrapped in a yellow blanket.

Sara used to ask Joy if she wanted to take a shower, but she generally refused. She said her smell, an unwashed urine odor, protected her from being raped. Sara and I talked about how incomprehensible it was to us to have to protect yourself in such a horrible manner.

But Joy, for the most part, was joyful. She said she had a husband, Samuel Gompers. While we doubted his actual existence, we admired her choice in men! She was always willing to talk to me, and smile.

Early last Fall, a few weeks after I met her, she was picked up and taken to Bellevue, to

## FR. FURFEY

By ALBERT SCHORSCH, III

Paul Hanly Furfey passed to eternal life on June 8, 1992 after over seventy years of service as priest, sociologist, and activist. This dean of American Catholic sociologists was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1896, was ordained in 1922, and served Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. for over forty years as teacher, researcher, and chairman of the sociology department.

Fr. Furfey's life spanned this century's developments in American Catholic social thought. His decade and one half experiment with the notion of "scientific charity" beginning in the 1920s gave way to Catholic activism. Associated throughout the 1930s and '40s with radical Catholic movements like the Catholic Worker, the interracial Friendship House (FH), and two Washington apostolates, Il Poverello House and Fides House, Fr. Furfey penned *Fire on the Earth*, an exhortation to Catholic activism *à la* Matthew 25, and traveled the country recruiting young college students for such apostolates. He also served as one of Friendship House founder Baroness Catherine de Hueck Doherty's (several and simultaneous) chaplains during those exciting days when Thomas Merton was an FH volunteer in New York's Harlem and the Washington FH (now closed) was taking shape.

He was one of a very few American Catholic priests (another being Fr. John C. Ford) who publicly condemned the Allied tactic of mass bombing cities during World War II. Fr. Furfey's "Bombing of Noncombatants is Murder," encapsulated in his *The Mystery of Iniquity*, presaged the Second Vatican Council's condemnation of mass destruction. His lifelong study of juvenile delinquency was reflected in his tenure from 1956 to 1961 as Assistant Director of New York City's research into Juvenile Delinquency, paralleling his significant technical papers on this subject and on methodological issues. Returning to the popular arena he challenged the Vietnam generation of activist Catholics with his *Respectable Murderers*. Of special interest is Fr. Furfey's retrospective and retroactive work, *Love and the Urban Ghetto* (1978), in which he offered his critique of a century of American Catholic activism from John A. Ryan to George C. Higgins, from *Rerum Novarum* to Dorothy Day, to Christian socialism.

A recipient of the papal medal *Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice* in 1956, Msgr. Furfey outlived many of his students, and, as a result, many young Catholic activists are unfamiliar with his work. This remarkable man continued to search for God and for justice to his dying day, and his letters, written up to his final illness, are filled with self-effacing humor and moral curiosity focused above all on Christian love—the love expressed by the Works of Mercy (Matthew 25 and I Thessalonians). May our daughters and sons prophesy and prosper likewise! ✚

the psych ward. The city decided she was a menace to herself. Christophe and I went to visit her. She was so glad to see us. Joy gave each of us a kiss to both cheeks, twice. I gave her some fruit I had brought, and we sat down to talk.

She told us about the cops who picked her up. She told us how the patients had to light their cigarettes by holding them in their mouths to holes in the walls. She asked us to get her out. Joy knew the next stop was Creedmore, the state mental hospital. She said it was a dead-end road—she wouldn't be allowed to leave.

She was indeed transferred to Creedmore, and I went to visit her there. Bellevue I could take—I had been a candystriper in high school, and thought I had seen it all.

But Creedmore is overwhelming. It's huge, a village of buildings. I walked five minutes from the bus stop to Joy's building, and waited for an attendant with keys to let me in her ward.

She was happy to see me again; more kisses on the cheek. She was glad for the sweater and cookies, and we sat down to talk.

She told me she had seen a doctor, and had to have breast surgery. She told me she didn't like her roommate. Joy said the Board of Education owed her a million dollars, and if I called and got the money, she would take me to Poland. She asked me to get her out.

I met Joy's social worker. The woman sat down with us and asked me questions about Joy as if she wasn't there. I was questioned by other social workers and doctors on other visits. I really didn't know anything they didn't, and I'm not sure I would have told them if I did. Joy had told them she would answer questions on the day she could leave, and I admired her stubbornness. The hospital administration didn't; they refused to give her money for the commissary. I sent her a few dollars every once in a while.

My visits to Joy dwindled by late Spring. I wasn't sure how much they helped her—all she did was beg me to get her out, which I couldn't do. Also, honestly, I felt helpless. In the face of such overwhelming, antiseptic-smelling misery, I gave up. I talked to Joy when she called, I wrote her, and I prayed for her at Vespers.

Her social worker called me late in the summer. Joy had died, apparently of a heart attack. Did I know where her family was? I did not. I repeated the story I had told so often—I knew Joy when she lived on the Lower East Side, when she came for lunch.

We talked for a while, about the conversations Joy and I had. I said I would see if we could arrange the burial. The state would have to put her in a Potter's Field, since they never learned Joy's real name or all-important Social Security number.

I told a few people, and we agreed that we could handle the funeral. As I was making arrangements, Joy's social worker was going through her purse. She found some business cards, made some phone calls and, guided by an angel, I'm convinced, found Joy's family.

I canceled the arrangements, and listened to the social worker tell me the story. Joy was



Rita Corbin

indeed a teacher, she had a family in New Jersey and a son my age. What happened, why she wound up here, neither one of us knew. The family was going to bury her, end of story.

Florence and I talked about women and mental illness. I'm convinced that mental illness can be an involuntary response by women to poverty, to hopelessness; a way of protecting themselves from the horror that life can be. But if you are poor and mentally ill, you end up in an institution getting "medicated," because you can't afford a therapist, let alone the necessities for a sane life.

I wanted to do something for Joy, but I couldn't. I couldn't get her out, I couldn't visit her, and in the end, I couldn't bury her. I could listen to her, but I couldn't figure out that what she was telling me was real. The social worker told me Joy's real name, and I realized that Joy had told me herself, but I just didn't know. My consolation is that the professionals could do no more than I could.

I have to say, I prefer the name Joy anyway. It suited her, her smile, her amazingly bright blue eyes, her kisses. I did offer Joy my friendship, such as it was, and I continue to offer my prayers. And I hope now, that she offers hers for all of us as well. ✚

## Laws And Walls And Tompkins Square Park

By JENNIFER BELISLE

I walked through Tompkins Square Park for the first time this August. A rather unremarkable thing to do, except that it had just been re-opened, and as long as I've lived in New York (since last Fall) the park has been closed. I came for a weekend in June '91; my first trip to the big city, my first trip out of the midwest, really. That weekend was the "Arms around the Park" rally, a great introduction for me to the neighborhood. A line of all sorts of people facing the park, hand in hand, and a line of stony-faced police officers facing us in the hot sun. There were more police than I had ever seen in my life.

Sometimes I wonder why we write about this besieged park. There are so many places of injustice around the world to write and pray about. Few of us see those places, however. What we do see, and the suffering people we do meet, are in our own neighborhoods. And in the "East Village," as developers like to call it, homeless people once were unequivocally living in Tompkins Square Park.

You can re-read Jane Sammon's article about the park in the August '91 CW. In her words:

"It's a beautiful park. The old velvety trees provide significant respite in a concrete-wear neighborhood. Over the last few years, concurrent with the great housing crisis and the move toward gentrification of this area, some homeless people have moved into Tompkins Square Park, and set up camp. The

key question: Should people be allowed to buy enormous pieces of land, and let them lie fallow if the market isn't "good," or buy up and "warehouse" empty apartments, while the poor can't afford the high rents for the few that remain? The key question: Should people be told to go to shelters, dangerous and impersonal though they may be, just because they are poor? The key question: Should people feel forced to live in the street or the park?"

I went back with Alan and Samba to the park later that night of the Park's re-opening. Hundreds of police were again waiting, this time in clusters at the park's entrances, their vans and trucks lining the surrounding streets.

We bumped into Tina and Bill, sitting by the group of people giving and listening to various speeches. It was the blessed anarchy of people trying to work out common problems, trying to get along. Tina told me about the riots in '88, and said she felt uncomfortable sitting in the park, as if she was somehow betraying all the people who had been moved out.

Most of the speeches that night were about the new midnight curfew. A few were about the people who were forced out of the park, and later forced out of nearby lots.

As someone from the neighborhood wrote in a letter to *The Village Voice*, "The encampments were never an 'experiment'—to the homeless, they were a means of survival. Residents to whom they spoke heard

## Vinoba Bhave, A Great Soul

The year 1994-95 will mark the centenary of the birth of Acharya Vinoba Bhave, a spiritual revolutionary and the disciple of Mahatma Gandhi. Vinoba devoted his whole life to the service of the millions living in more than five hundred thousand villages in India. Vinoba walked for more than 14 years, from 1951 to 1965, marching from one village to another asking the landlords to give *Bhoodan* (land donations for the millions of landless people, the poorest of the poor) by invoking the spirit of compassion for suffering fellow human beings. He was able to receive 4.2 million acres of land through this unique way of changing hearts. It was the first time in human history that such a miracle took place. Vinoba had proved that nonviolence and compassion could pave the way for a new social order.

This great soul was born on September 11, 1895 in a small village near the metropolitan city of Bombay. He joined Mahatma Gandhi in his Ashram near Ahmadabad in 1916-17, remained with him throughout his life, and worked with him as his friend, philosopher and guide. Vinoba died on November 15, 1982.

Gandhi-In-Action (an international group of nonviolent activists) has decided to celebrate the birth centenary of Acharya Vinoba Bhave, as *Jai Jagat Mahotsava*, which means the celebrations for the emancipation of all living on this globe. It was Vinoba who gave this mantra (call) of *Jai Jagat*, which means "victory of the whole world," a victory that would be achieved only through nonviolence and compassion.

Our idea is to organize *Jai Jagat Mahotsava* in as many places as possible around the world. We also plan to repeat the "Peoples' March for a Nonviolent Society," first held in 1986, in which 30-40 committed nonviolent activists from around the world will participate. We appeal to everyone concerned to give us their moral support and active help in this venture.

For further details, please write to A.B. Bhardwaj, Gandhi-In-Action, B-29, Bhajanpura, New Delhi, 110053, India, or Gary & Sandra Worthington, 4242 Sunset Beach Drive NW, Olympia, WA 98502, USA

—A. B. Bhardwaj

tales of shelter guards who beat people and stole, of TB, of earlier evictions due to fires or unemployment. We realized homeless people were living in 'our' park because there was no place else they could go. So when the police came to disperse them and destroy their belongings we stood with them." (Fran Luck, East 7th Street.)

All that happened before I ever laid eyes on Tompkins Square Park, and Brian was right when he said I couldn't really know what the park meant to the neighborhood. But I'll never forget that first weekend when I came to visit, taking coffee and sandwiches out late one night with a group from Maryhouse. I met a woman who was living in one of the lots, formerly in the park, formerly in an apartment she lost when the rent went to over \$1,000 a month. She still had bruises on her face from a police officer's nightstick, but when she heard I had been in NYC less than 24 hours, she was concerned for me, and gave me a hug as we left.

Alan and I didn't stay until midnight the night the park re-opened. On the way home we talked about the power struggle for the park, about the old and endless struggle between the few in power and the many not. We talked about our small stands, washing dishes, making soup.

Late that night I finished *Davita's Harp*, by Chaim Potok. One line stayed with me. "I had learned a strange lesson: Walls are laws to some people, and laws are walls to others." And park fences, too. ✚

# A View From Death Row

By MICHAEL ROSS

"You shall have the punishment of death inflicted on you by electrocution." With those words I joined the approximately 2500 individuals on various death rows across North America awaiting execution.

Since those chilling words were spoken to me over five years ago, I've found plenty of time to think about capital punishment. I never thought about the death penalty in any great detail, and my Cornell degree certainly never prepared me for death row. But now I had both the time and motivation to research and reflect on the subject.

When the United States Supreme Court lifted its moratorium on capital punishment in 1976 it found that "in any given case...the death penalty must 'measurably contribute' to one or both of two 'social purposes'—deterrence and retribution...." Let's examine these two criteria, keeping in mind that a constitutional justification for a punishment doesn't automatically make it morally right. After all, in the past the court has found justification for, among other things, slavery, the prevention of women's voting rights, and other forms of sexual and racial discrimination.

The most commonly given justification for capital punishment is that it is a deterrent to murder—a more effective deterrent than life in prison. However, over the past 30 years or so, numerous studies have been done attempting to find a connection between capital punishment and homicide rates. Researchers have found overwhelming evidence that capital punishment has no effect on murder rates.

For example, Canada abolished the death penalty for murder in 1976. Yet, in a speech to the House of Commons in 1986, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney pointed out that ten years after abolition the homicide rate in Canada had reached a 15-year low and that during the past two years alone first-degree murder charges had declined by nearly 25 percent. All without the death penalty.

Even the United Nations Committee that studied capital punishment found that "it is generally agreed...that the data which now exist show no correlation between the existence of capital punishment and lower rates of capital crime." This, among other reasons, led the General Assembly to affirm that member states should seek progressively to restrict "the number of offenses for which the death penalty may be imposed, with a view to the desirability of abolishing this punishment."

However, you will always have people who will insist that a system of "if you kill, you will be killed" is a definite deterrent, but what they are assuming is that a murderer thinks as they do. Clearly this is a mistaken assumption. As former United States Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall has pointed out: "The error in the hypothesis lies in its assumption that because men fear death more than imprisonment after they are convicted, they necessarily must weigh potential penalties prior to committing criminal acts. It is extremely unlikely that much thought is given to penalties before the act is committed."

## No Deterrent Value

It is the premeditated crime which society deems as the most reprehensible, yet this type of crime is the least likely to be deterred by capital punishment. In a premeditated crime, people don't expect to be caught, or, much rarer, don't care if they get caught. They expect to get away with it because of good planning, or don't care if they're caught because they feel so strongly about their actions that they're prepared to face the consequences. There can be no deterrent value in a punishment that one doesn't expect to receive, or is prepared to face. And no premeditated murder has ever been committed because the punishment was merely life in prison.

In a spontaneous, emotional murder, logic just doesn't come into play. One doesn't think of getting caught or consider the conse-

quences of actions. Emotion clouds the thought process and the person is not acting on something, but rather reacting to something. Emotions diminish the capacity for reason. The factor of capital punishment becomes a non-factor in the emotional framework of the moment.

There is no question that capital punishment is not an effective deterrent to murder. To argue deterrence as a reason to continue executions is simply to ignore the facts. But this will continue because as social psychologist Dane Archer, a world authority on homicide, explains: "Revenge is a powerful undercurrent in all societies, including our own. I believe that the deterrence hypothesis is frequently nothing more than a veneer for revenge."

Justice Marshall often argued against "the purely retributive justification for the death penalty—that the death penalty is appropriate, not because of its beneficial effect on society, but because the taking of the murderer's life is itself morally good."

Retribution has, as its core logic, the crude and un-Biblical proportionality of "an eye for an eye." Indeed, it is often heard that the death penalty is "a just punishment in kind" for murder. But we have to make a distinction between society's need for "justice," and the crime victim's desire for personal retribution. We don't burn the arsonist's home, rape the rapist, or steal from the thief. Obviously the form of the punishment must adhere to and be limited by the standards of decency which govern society.

# Thoughts On Nonviolence

By KARL MEYER

What is nonviolence? It's a way of life based on these human beliefs: Human conflicts can be resolved without violence or force; organized social aggression can be faced and turned back effectively without war and without killing anybody; most crime problems can be addressed more effectively without the use of violent methods or punishment or restraint; people well educated in the use of nonviolent methods will almost always be more effective in human relations than those who use physical threats and weapons.

Commitment to nonviolence requires us to find solutions that address the needs and feelings of all parties. Resorting to violence means that one party will lose and be forced to give up when the other party wins. Nonviolence begins with respect for the needs and feelings of others, and a serious attempt to appreciate their point of view. The methods of nonviolence are communication, negotiation, mediation, arbitration, and non-violent forms of protest and resistance, when other forms of communication fail to resolve a conflict. When these methods are used with skill and persistence, most conflicts can be resolved without any party feeling the need to resort to violence. Organized, persistent nonviolent action can overcome oppression and resist aggression more effectively than violent means.

The fact is that all of us use nonviolent methods in most of our human relationships, most of the time. It would be a sorry world if we didn't. What would it be like if we used violence instead of negotiation every time that someone else had something that we wanted? What would it be like if we used violent retaliation every time that someone else did something that obstructed us or angered us? We use nonviolent methods in most of our family disputes. We use it in our schools, our work relationships and our commercial trading transactions. We use it in almost all relationships between communities within the established borders of nations, and in most relations between nations.

Many of us never resort to the explicit use of violence at all. Most others resort to it only in occasional situations.

We carry on most of our activities within a

structure of law and customary principles of nonviolent relationship. It may seem that this structure is only held together by the ultimate threat of police force; but, in fact, the fabric of social relationships in families, in groups and in larger communities has always been held together primarily by voluntary assent to common principles of social organization.

Throughout history it has been common to resolve conflicts between nations by warfare and the use of force. Yet even here the majority of relationships have been governed by negotiated agreements, treaties, laws and customs.

Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. did not invent nonviolence. Their instinctive contribution was to show how organized nonviolent action could solve intractable situations of longstanding oppression and conflict. Before them, others believed that these problems could not be solved, or could be solved only by violent revolt.

Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. King showed how we can take the nonviolent methods that we use most of the time in everyday relationships, and develop them as powerful tools to solve the most difficult problems of entrenched oppression and institutional violence.

We are all believers and practitioners of non-violence in human relationships. The challenge is to extend our belief and our practical skills to more difficult and remote situations of human conflict. Those who really commit themselves to these principles find that they work. Many lives are saved. Destruction is avoided, and everyone benefits as the process develops.

Our politicians often tell us that it is impossible to resolve conflicts without war. The fact is that they don't try hard enough, because it is our lives and our wellbeing that they put on the line when they decide that violence is necessary.

Subsequent columns will discuss why non-violence works and how it can be applied to the most difficult problems of conflict and aggression.

[The beginning of an occasional series by Karl on nonviolence.]



Rita Corbin

As the courts have found, it is "clear that channeling retributive instincts requires the state to do more than simply replicate the punishment that private vengeance would exact. To do less is simply to socialize vigilantism." While "punishment in kind" may often sound good, it is seldom true justice.

A major problem with retribution is that it is a difficult concept to deal with in a factual context as required by the judicial system. By its very nature it is an emotional topic, espe-

cially when dealing with the more serious crimes. The high court has ruled that "it is of vital importance to the defendant and to the community that any decision to impose the death penalty be—and appear to be—based on reason rather than caprice or emotion." However, capital cases tend to be sensationalized and highly emotionally charged, and in some it becomes almost impossible to dig through those emotions to reach the underlying facts needed to make a fair and just decision.

How do we make the distinction between retribution and emotionalism? In the context of capital punishment one is supposed justice, yet the other is nothing more than the purposeless and needless imposition of pain and suffering. As former United States Supreme Court Justice William Brennan observed, "Given the emotions generated by capital crimes, it may be that juries, trial judges, and appellate courts considering sentences of death are invariably affected by impermissible considerations." Perhaps we are just not capable of fairly making such a decision. But even if we are, do we really wish to execute criminals merely to get even with them?

Perhaps I, and individuals like myself, deserve to die, but in light of suitable alternatives, such as life without parole or natural life sentences, is society in general paying too high a price? Justice Marshall once wrote: "I cannot agree that the American people have been so hardened, so embittered that they want to take the life of one who performs even the basest criminal act knowing that the execution is nothing more than blood lust."

It is time for us to acknowledge the death penalty for what it really is, rather than for what we wish it to be. We must not be fooled by politicians using capital punishment to sound tough on crime, for such rhetoric actually detracts from the real work of developing genuine programs for crime prevention and control.

By rejecting the simple solutions that compromise our values and undermine the fundamental principles of our society, we maintain the greatness of our country. For it is true that by giving in to our basest emotions we lower ourselves to the level of the very ones that we wish to execute, and in the process weaken the moral fibers that bind and protect our society.

But by recognizing the humanity of even the vilest criminals, by acknowledging them as fellow human beings rather than objects to be discarded, we pay ourselves the highest tribute and celebrate our own humanity.

For information on how you can help to abolish the death penalty, contact one of the following groups: the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty (1325 G Street NW, Lower Level-B, Washington, DC 20005) or Amnesty International's Campaign to Abolish the Death Penalty (322 Eighth Avenue, New York, NY 10001).