

[1967/12/25]

Dear Tom: An ice-cold day here. Looks like Nyack was transported during the night to the northern reaches of British Columbia.

First of all, thanks for the recent letters to Tom, Linda and myself. The photo on Linda's wall is good to look upon--you look like a stevadore who's just gotten a letter from a long-lost girl friend (don't know whether that's an appropriate image). Anyway, it does warm up the room. I still have negatives of you that I've never made up extra prints of, which you long ago asked for; now I feel a little off the hook.

Gary Gagner is up here today--has two days off, arrived last night by bus. I enclose two little reports he has made up, one on his last meeting with our lawyer, Vic Rabinowitz, a wonderful, ~~bearded~~ bearded man; and the other a statement of his direction at present. I mention this mainly to ask if you might consider doing a "Dear Friend" fund-raising letter which we might in turn send out to our list in order to raise the \$2500 he'll need, of which I have thus far raised \$300 (\$200 actually from general CPF funds, \$100 from Graham Carey). Such a letter might be relatively short, make reference to your own contact with him and the present legal effort. You needn't write it now--and if you wish I could do a draft, based upon the earlier letter you wrote on his behalf and reporting on the legal significance of the case. *But if you want to write it now, that would be ok too.*

I'm beginning to do some serious reading on zen, sparked in part by Nhat Hanh's good vibrations, and in part by the desire to do ~~you a~~ a decent review of your Mystics & Zen Masters book for a new magazine called Inner Space, and finally by the simple curiosity I've had about zen for a long time. I mention this by way of asking your comments on the books available--it's something of a job deciding what to read in a jungle of so many books--Watts, who writes so much on the subject; Three Pillars of Zen; Suzuki's many works, etc etc.

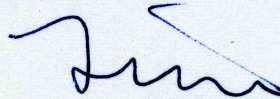
I was glad you decided to sign the cable to the Pope, not because I don't agree that it may be futile and even antique, but because it will help in providing American Catholics another opportunity to look on the present situation from a somewhat more international perspective, which is badly needed.

I'm not very optimistic about the way things are going. The president really does sound mad when I see him on TV, which I try to avoid generally--and I mean mad in the head, not angry. This mixture of religion and mayhem which seems to be so fundamental to the American tradition! And it is true, of course, that we are a nation rooted in genocide of a most basic variety. It is as if American history began when Columbus set sail. Buffie St Marie, a popular folk singer at the moment, and a girl of Indian descent, has a ballad concerning the trading of blankets for land in the middle of winter--"blankets for land is a bargain indeed," she sings--and it turns out the blankets had been taken that day from the beds of diseased soldiers--~~the tribes~~ "the tribes were wiped out and the history books censored." The song ends with the simple observation, "Can't you see that their poverty's profitting you." But of course we can't. The song is played on no

radio station; Christmas buying is the order of the day. Let nothing interfere with the roar of the cash register.

The one encouraging event of the moment is the hippie thing, not in toto, of course; many of the kids are simply the victims of a profound alienation which, while a healthy phenomena in itself, has yet to find mature expression. But others--I think of my sister, for example, now living with Indians in an isolated part of New Mexico--are really on pilgrimage to a new way of life which is at once spiritual and materially expressive--a departure from the country's economic and ideological foundations which is also an arrival somewhere else.

I didn't intend to go on at any length. Best Christmas wishes. Much love. "Don't be like those humans," the Lord of the flowers said. "Don't give a damn about tomorrow."



P.S. How will the resignation of the abbot affect things for you?