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1026 12TH ST.
TELL CITY, IN

47586

CATHOLIC WORKER



Vol. LV, No. 8

December, 1988

Subscription:
25¢ Per Year

Price 1¢

Thomas Merton and the Catholic Worker Waking From a Dream

By JIM FOREST

On March 18, 1958, while on an editorial errand in Louisville, Kentucky, Thomas Merton stood still at the corner of Fourth and Walnut Streets. No one paid any attention to him—his name was well known but not his face.

Those moments pausing at this busy downtown intersection proved to be a crossroad in his life. Until that day, he saw his life in isolation from others. His tendency toward condescension and sarcasm had been little changed by his conversion to Christianity, his entrance into the Catholic Church, or his becoming a Trappist monk. He had been attracted to a monastic environment in part because he saw the monastery as a place of radical, even God-blessed apartness where one could walk out on the world and slam the door.

The following day he wrote in his journal about what had happened in Louisville. "[I] suddenly realized that I loved all the people and that none of these were, or could be, totally alien to me. As if waking from a dream—the dream of my separateness, of my 'special' vocation to be different." Later, preparing parts of his journal for publication, he explored at length the event in Louisville, the significance of which had continued to unfold and deepen:

The whole illusion of a separate holy existence is a dream... The sense of liberation from an illusory difference was such a relief and such a joy that I almost laughed out loud... It is a glorious destiny to be a member of the human race, though it is a race dedicated to many absurdities and one which makes terrible mistakes: yet for all that, God Himself gloried in becoming

a member of the human race. A member of the human race! ... I suddenly saw the secret beauty of their hearts, the depths of their hearts where neither sin nor desire nor self-knowledge can reach, the core of their reality, the person that each one is in God's eyes. If only they could see themselves as they really are. If only we could see each other that way all the time. There would be no more war, no more hatred, no more cruelty, no more greed. (*Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*, New York: Doubleday, pp. 140f.)

Merton concluded these pages—I have left much out—with the observation: "I have no program for this seeing. It is only given. But the gate of heaven is everywhere."

How did Dorothy Day and Thomas Merton start corresponding? In February 1959, Dorothy was reading Merton's autobiography, *The Seven Storey Mountain*. She was not altogether happy with the last part of the book. She felt that Merton had "plunged himself so deeply into religion that his view of the world and its problems is superficial and scornful." Dorothy decided to write to Merton. She also started sending him copies of *The Catholic Worker*. He responded on July 9, 1959. He wrote:

I am deeply touched by your witness for peace [referring to the arrest and imprisonment of Dorothy and other Catholic Workers who had refused to take shelter during civil defense drills]. You are right in going at it along the

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The Flight Into Egypt

Gary Donatelli

Our Light In Darkness

By KATHARINE TEMPLE

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light. (Isaiah 9:1)
Advent is my favorite season in the Church calendar. Strange in some ways, as late-November, early-December are my least favorite days in the normal course of events.

If we lived in a different climate, perhaps things would look different, but I always feel, with a glance to Shelley, "If autumn comes, can winter be far behind?" Fallen decaying leaves clog the drains; the first waves of colds, flu and viruses run through the house during a slump when we are least able to cope. More than that, November announces the hardest weeks and months for people on the streets and, as often as not, brings news of callous police actions. Right now, in the aftermath of election campaigns, the public realm and the international scene seem only to mirror the weather as the winter of our discontent. Over the years, too, just before Advent, we have often been visited by death—Stanley, Dorothy, Johanna, Alice, Jacques. In short, it can be a period of running on empty (or, more likely, running on coffee) when I, for one, am tempted to let pessimistic feelings take over.

But on second thoughts, no wonder Advent remains my favorite Church season: Lighting the Advent candles always rekindles a sense of anticipation deep down inside, while the Biblical readings remind me of "the hope that is within us." (1 Peter 3:15) How are we to speak

about this hope? One traditional way is found in the collect for Advent in the Anglican *Book of Common Prayer*:

Almighty God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness and put upon us the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which Thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when He shall come in His glorious majesty, to judge both the quick and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal. . . .

"To cast away the works of darkness" surely does not sound like a Pollyanna-ish escapism only for those blessed with a sunny disposition! To many contemporary ears, though, this business about life immortal conjures up misconstrued notions that religion pushes any consolation for the troubles in this life onto the next one. "There will be pie in the sky when you die"; or, "Working for God pays very little, but the retirement benefits are out of this world." People in other ages did not think this way; they would have had a hard time figuring out Karl Marx's remark about religion being "the opiate of the people," a distraction to dull the pain and stifle change.

"The people of 1000 A.D. felt quite differently. The Kingdom of God is approaching? Well then, let us be worthy of it. Even better, let us anticipate it. One might almost say it was the reaction of a mischievous child, who knows it is going

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To Spread the Work of Peace

By JANE SAMMON

The West Bank and Gaza have been brought into our homes over the last year through images which flash across the television screen on the evening news—women in shock, mourning their dead; strong, healthy teenagers throwing stones and rocks; Israeli soldiers, the other face of the young, guns in tow, uniforms disguising their humanity—all smoothly interpreted for us by the professional commentators. But when these brief minutes are over, what have we learned about the Palestinian uprising, the Intifada?

The person seeking a true picture of the Intifada must look somewhere other than television for the answer. Other voices have called attention to this tragic year-old cycle of death and destruction. They are not well-known commentators, and perhaps they have only spent a short time in the territories and will, for that reason alone, run the risk of becoming instant experts on the Middle East. But on the other hand, it would be foolish to think that people of good will have no responsibility to condemn acts of terror in the West Bank and Gaza simply because their visit was a brief one, or was sponsored by partisan supporters.

A few weeks ago, I had a thoughtful

discussion with Scott Schaeffer-Duffy of the St. Francis and St. Clare Catholic Worker in Worcester, Massachusetts. In their newspaper, *The Catholic Radical*, Scott wrote of his travels to the West Bank and Gaza this last August, where he spent nearly three weeks. He and Claire are the parents of two small children. In the course of his time in the camps of Palestine, Scott saw the results of brutal acts committed against children, an unspeakable and heinous experience for all decent people.

On August thirteenth, for example, I witnessed a family of six being carried into a clinic after they'd been tear-gassed in their shuttered and locked two room house next door. The two-and-one-half-month-old baby was unconscious and may already have died from respiratory problems by the time of this writing. The three-year-old boy was screaming in pain by the mother's side. I photographed them and went outside to cry. My son is three and my daughter is two-and-one-half-months old.

Scott's travels were sponsored by the Eyewitness Israel program of the American Arab Anti-Discrimination Commit-

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Vol. LV, No. 8

December, 1988

CATHOLIC WORKER

Published eight times a year: January-February, March-April, May, June-July, August, September, October-November, December

ORGAN OF THE CATHOLIC WORKER MOVEMENT

DOROTHY DAY, PETER MAURIN, Founders
(1897-1980) (1877-1949)

Managing Editor: MEG HYRE. Editors: FRANK DONOVAN, TIM LAMBERT, JANE SAMMON, KATHARINE TEMPLE.

Contributing Editors: RITA CORBIN, EILEEN EGAN, ARTHUR J. LACEY, MATTHEW LEE, DEANE MOWRER

Circulation: DOLORES DAMORE, BILL GRIFFIN, PRESTON LEWIS, JEANNETTE NOEL, PATRICK J. RUSH, MARION SPINELLI, FRELIS TAUPIN, SUE TROYANO.

Editorial communications, new subscriptions and changes of address:
36 East First Street, New York, N.Y. 10003

Telephone (212) 777-9617

THE CATHOLIC WORKER (ISSN 0008-8463) is published eight times a year: subscription rates: United States, 25¢ yearly, Foreign 30¢ yearly, by The Catholic Worker, 36 East First St., NY, NY 10003. Second class postage paid at NY, NY. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Catholic Worker, 36 East First St., NY, NY 10003.

Nuclear Waste "Disposal"

By J. EMMETT GARRITTY

Concerning your recent article, "N.Y. Moves to Dismantle Shoreham Nuclear Reactor," (August 1988, p. 2) I felt the need to inform you of the condition of one of those supposed "future repositories" of nuclear waste. Just outside of Carlsbad, New Mexico, in the southeast corner of our state, the "Waste Isolation Pilot Project," (WIPP), is under construction. Apparently the knowledge of the geological problems of the site are not being dealt with. Under the present "WIPP" site is a pressurized brine reservoir. There is also water seeping into the site from surrounding salt beds. One of the reasons that the Department of Energy (DOE) selected this site was because of the belief that the area was dry due to the presence of the salt. It appears that the DOE is trying to side-step the known problems of the site in order to open it and begin the storage of the nuclear waste. Not only are there significant geological problems that are being overlooked, but the plans for safe transportation of the nuclear waste from the different facilities, have been laden with setbacks and failures. For instance, the proposed "TRU-PACK" containers have failed the NRC's standards. Provided the containers pass, there still remain the

inevitable accidents while shipping the waste. In conversation with the Office of Emergency Preparedness (those who will be the first on the scene of an accident), I had found out that the training was related to low level contaminated materials, such as clothing, shoes, etc. There had been no training involving the handling of the plutonium powder that will be shipped. Three percent of the proposed shipments will contain this powder.

I have been active in two groups that are trying to stop this "experiment," as the DOE has termed it. I fear, as do others, that the future of the whole region involved is being overlooked by the DOE's blatant avoidance of the problems that permeate every aspect of this project. These problems illustrate that the safe storage of radioactive waste is not possible here in New Mexico, or anywhere for that matter.

I fear that the growing nuclear mentality in this country will lead only to greater tragedy. If the public condones the hiding of this ever growing tragedy of nuclear waste, it will become magnified. Once "out of sight . . . forever out of mind . . . ?" Not so with this, for even in 10,000 years the radioactivity will still be a threat to existence on this planet. If we continue hiding our problems, burying them, as is common in the American mentality, how will we ever learn to resolve such problems? Granted, I know that we have got to do something about this pressing problem, but the ominous black cloud that is hovering overhead is the fear that once the nuclear waste is in the ground, we will stop thinking about it and not be concerned with a true solution.

There is an old Hopi myth concerning a great dragon that lives in the Earth, and it is the Dragon of Death. It is taught that this Dragon of Death must be left in the Earth. Could it be that we have not only dug up this Dragon, but we are also returning it to the Earth with a greater strength for destruction? The uranium cycle from beginning to end threatens the very existence of all Creation—why don't we just leave it in the ground? Why do we continue releasing this Dragon of Death from the Earth?

I hope that I have given you a little insight into our fears here in New Mexico, and that with the information that I have included, you may more fully understand and become more aware of the tragedy of misinformation that the DOE continues to maintain about these repositories. (Anyone wanting more information may write to CARD, 23 Tome Hill Road, Los Lunas, NM 87031. —Eds. note.)

St. Joseph House

By JOYCE VOORHEES

It was during the two weeks that the house was closed (see Michael Sintef's house column in the September issue) that I arrived at St. Joseph House. Things were relatively calm and most of the mealtime chit-chat centered on either the massive police/protestor riot that took place less than ten blocks from here the same night I arrived, or about new, helpful strategies for ridding the house of bedbugs.

Even after reopening, the soup line was now cut from five days a week to three due to a scarcity of workers and those of us here had some time for the taking of deep breaths and praying for more help.

I thought I'd come a long way from my home in Louisiana, but soon came Adam Owen from England, and Bettina Wortmann from West Germany. (Bettina came at great personal sacrifice, because the bedbugs seem to find her tastiest.) Now the general level of activity and energy in the house seems to be increasing.

There are plans to add a "portable Saturday" to our list of weekly events. The idea is to hand out coffee and a snack to go, Saturday mornings, and we hope to begin around Advent. Not only are we pleased because this idea adds a fourth day of serving to our week, but, being on the weekend, it gives people (including some greatly missed soup-serving friends) who are interested in the Catholic Worker but who work elsewhere Monday through Friday, a chance to be part of our life here.

In light of the increase in help, can we do still more? Because no commitment as to length of stay is asked of people who come to share in the work, it is difficult at times to know who will be here in the months to come. The work opportunities you create when you have, say, ten people, you are stuck with if five leave. Then the problem is one of either continuing that commitment without enough people to maintain a calm, workable atmosphere for all involved, or one must cancel the event after having established it, and confuse those you serve. (If someone walks twenty blocks to your door thinking you offer soup that day and you don't anymore, it isn't a good situation for either of you.)

Strength Through Weakness

On the other hand, the Bible verse, "I can do all things through Christ Who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13) comes to mind. And if there is one thing I've learned in my journey-struggle as a Christian, it is that God has always met me at my level of need. The more I needed of Him, the more He gave me.

Looking at the Old Testament, one finds numerous stories of God revealing Himself and His strength through the weakness of humans. For example, the way He repeatedly helped the Israelites in battle was not to send them huge troops in order to win a human victory, but instead, to defeat the huge enemy ar-

mies with terrifyingly small numbers and give the victory through weakness and risk. How then could these who witnessed such an event not glorify God? So today, at St. Joseph House, if God leads us to positions of greater risk and vulnerability, will He not support us in our time of weakness?

It is important to remember, however, that as well as serving soup meals and meeting emergency needs all day at the door, we are here as a house of hospitality to provide a home for many people who trust the house for safety and shelter from the streets. To whatever degree one takes on for the house more than can be handled, one puts others at risk as well. If, for example, it becomes impossible to maintain an atmosphere of nonviolence outside the house among the men waiting in line for soup, those living in the house may not be able to come and go from the building in safety. Others may or may not share one's belief in personal sacrifice and risk in God. For these reasons the struggle to live risk or reality at the house (as now seen in the question of whether to return to a five day soup line or take on other responsibilities) seems constantly present here.

Festive Gatherings

So these days, with the energy level of the house rising, the mealtime chit-chat is often about our different visions for how the house can best use this energy and better perform the works of mercy . . . oh yes, and newer, more helpful strategies for ridding the house of bedbugs.

There's more to life here than work and talk about work, though. Good times during the last few months have included late night parties on the roof (before the cold of autumn put a stop to it), and community gatherings to celebrate the marriage of Marilyn to Winfried and to celebrate the harvest at Peter Maurin Farm. Personally I think my favorite memory is of the men-folk dropping the old bedbug-infested mattresses we had to replace off the roof into our tiny concrete backyard . . . five stories, trying not to hit the soup pots (somehow it seemed to make more sense than carrying them all down our skinny stairways). And who will soon forget the blessing of pies, cookies, bread pudding and corn bread baked at all hours by Michael, Adam and Lorraine?

What does the future hold for me and my new home? I can't count the number of times I've been warned about the toll the fierce winter takes on our house and on the homeless. That is when sleeping in the streets becomes a matter of life or death, and desperation increases tension tremendously. But they promise me lots of snow (a curious concept for this southern girl) and good company so I shall reserve judgment and just close by asking readers for prayers for all of us here in our warm, cozy beds and on the cold, hard concrete. Peace.

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 much as we can see ahead, those we will hold at First St. will be marked with an asterisk (*). Both houses are between First and Second Avenues (2nd Ave. stop on the F train).

December 9 - Sally Cunneen: Reimagining Mother Church - Insights on Education.*
December 16 - Michael Harrington: Politics and Ethics for the '90s.
December 23 - Carmen Matthews: Christmas Gathering With Readings.
December 30 - No Meeting. Merry Christmas.
January 6 - Meg Brodhead: Reflections on Plowshares Actions.*
January 13 - Herbert Mason: The Crisis in the Middle East.
January 20 - Mel Most: Inauguration Day - Did It Pay to Vote?*

January 27 - Fr. George Kuhn: El Salvador and Tompkins Square: Connections?

MEETINGS BEGIN AT 7:30 P.M.

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION (Required by 39 U.S.C. 3685)

1. Title of publication: THE CATHOLIC WORKER, Publication No. ISSN 0008-8463 USPS 557140.

2. Date of filing: September 30, 1988.

3. Frequency of issue: 8 times a year (Jan.-Feb., Mar.-Apr., May, June-July, Aug., Sept., Oct.-Nov., Dec.). Annual subscription price, 25¢.

4. Location of known office of publication: 36 East 1st Street, New York, NY 10003.

5. Location of the headquarters or general business office of the publisher: Same.

6. Names and addresses of publisher, editor and managing editor: Publisher: The Catholic Worker; Editors: Frank Donovan, Tim Lambert, Jane Sammon, Katharine Temple; Managing Editor: Meg Hyre; all of 36 East 1st Street, New York, NY 10003.

7. Owner (If owned by a corporation, its name and address must be stated and also immediately thereunder the names and addresses of stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, the names and addresses of the original owners must be given. If owned by a partnership, or other unincorporated firm, its name and address, as well as that of each individual must be given. If the publication is published by a nonprofit organization, its name and address must be stated.)

The Catholic Worker, 36 East 1st Street, New York, NY 10003 (Frank Donovan, Meg Hyre, Tim Lambert, Jane Sammon, Katharine Temple; all of 36 East 1st Street, New York, NY 10003).

8. Known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages or other securities: None.

9. For completion by nonprofit organizations authorized to mail at special rates: Not applicable.

10. Extent and nature of circulation (First figure is average no. of copies each issue during preceding 12 months; parenthesized figure is actual no. of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date): A. Total No. Copies (Net Press Run): 95,300 (93,000); B. Paid circulation: 1. Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors and counter sales: None (none); 2. Mail subscriptions: 93,100 (92,700); C. Total paid circulation: 93,100 (92,700); D. Free distribution (including samples by mail carrier or other means: 1,000 (200); E. Total distribution: 94,100 (92,900); F. Copies not distributed: 1. Office use, left over unaccounted, spoiled after printing: 1,200 (100); 2. Returns from news agent: None (none); G. Total: 95,300 (93,000).

11. I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.

FRANK DONOVAN,
Business Manager

Racism, Silence, and the Subversion of Justice

By CARL SICILIANO
and MEG HYRE

In his recent book, *Black Robes, White Justice*, Bruce Wright, a New York State Supreme Court Justice, and one of the few black jurists in the United States, characterizes the racist nature of the United States justice system this way: "Most of the judges in America are male, white, middle class, aloof and conservative. Before them is brought a parade of dark-skinned defendants, all alien to the concept these judges have of the way life ought to be." Bruce Wright's chief concern is the judiciary, but the point extends throughout the justice system as a whole. African-Americans in New York, as well as other groups ironically understood to be the "minority" in this city, daily face treatment by white law enforcement officers who don't have an inkling of what their lives are like; who see before them offenses to "law and order" without recognizing within our system of law and order the violence of racism, which cripples a whole people and spoils the notion of justice altogether.

The plain truth of Bruce Wright's charge is constantly before our eyes in this city, and has taken on a visceral reality for us and for anyone who has encountered racism on the streets, in the police precinct, in the prisons, or in the courts, in even a superficial way. Yet it is doubtful that we can ever listen closely enough to the voices which tell us that the history of the African-American community in the US is unlike that of any other—these voices are many, and yet normally out of earshot of most whites, even those of us who would like to consider ourselves "socially conscious." Do we wince in shame at the reminder that the experience of black Americans has been, and continues to be, one of "bondage and war?" (Those are the words of Father Lawrence Lucas, pastor of Resurrection Church in Harlem, and one of the handful of black priests in the New York archdiocese.) Do we take to heart the cry of African-Americans that, as the brother of a black man slain by whites said just the other day, "blacks cannot get justice through the courts?"

Statistics cannot hand us the truth of the myriad human tragedies which lie behind them, but some figures speak too loudly to be ignored. One such fact is that the rate of incarceration among poor blacks far exceeds their proportion in the population. It is not that crime is less frequent among whites, and the middle and upper classes, but rather that sensibilities all along the line are altered markedly by the races of the defendant and the victim. To take but one example, we reported in these pages three months ago the finding that when it comes to capital sentencing, the race of the victim and the defendant is far and away the chief factor governing the decision to apply the death penalty. Thanks be to God, New York State has been spared the death penalty, which used against any person is a blatant violation of the requirements of justice. But doubly so is its use as an instrument of racism and hatred, and so the facts bear restating. Since executions were resumed in 1977:

- Someone who kills a white is ten times more likely to be executed than someone who kills a black.
- A black who kills a white is about five times more likely to be executed than a white who kills a white.
- A black who kills a white is about sixty times more likely to be executed than a black who kills a black.
- And the most telling fact of all: Though there have been well over 2,500 white on black homicides nationally since 1977, not a single state has yet put to death a white who killed a black.

The point of all of this is not to suggest

that the poor, of whatever color or background, do not ever commit crimes, or that, even questioning the integrity of the criminal justice system as a whole, there are not many deemed guilty by the system who are in fact guilty of wrongdoing. Rather, the point is that in all these cases one factor is a constant: the racial (and perforce once again, the class)



Robert Hodgell

discrepancy between those who mete out the justice and those who receive it. It pays to keep in view the great degree to which enforcement of the law is a discretionary practice, with choices being made at every turn. There is the initial predisposition to see certain people as criminals, and to recognize certain acts as crimes; there is the decision as to whether arrest and prosecution are worthwhile; there are broad assumptions made about what sort of punishment will "work" for what sorts of "criminals."

What We Have Witnessed

The different standard of justice to which blacks are subject has been observed frequently on the street by many of us living at the Catholic Worker. We see it enacted by police officers (who at least in our precinct are usually white) as they encounter the homeless people (the great majority of whom are black) with whom we try to share our lives. We see repeatedly that these people are often treated with a violent use of force which far exceeds the nature of whatever offense they are accused of committing.

In the summer of 1986, Carl witnessed an incident in which a white policeman tried to break up an argument between two black homeless men on Second Avenue, near Sixth Street. One of the men made a feeble attempt to reach for the po-

liceman's stick. Then the policeman, with the help of a bouncer from a nearby club, threw both men to the ground, and kept them pinned there until more policemen arrived. In the meantime, a young white man who had been eating in a nearby cafe came over and repeatedly kicked one of the black men in the head, shouting racist insults, with no attempt by the police officer to step in. When more police arrived, the two black men were arrested and taken away. The white man who had done the kicking went back into the cafe. Carl, describing what he had seen, told the policeman in charge that two crimes had been committed, but only one had been attended to. He was ignored. He complained to a few more policemen, to no avail. He then went into the cafe and asked the man what made him think he had the right to be kicking people in the head. The man shouted that he was a hero, and had been "giving scum what they deserve."

On another occasion, in June of 1987, Carl was walking by a small park on the corner of Greenwich and Eighth Avenues. Just then some policemen were closing the park, and ordering several homeless men to leave. One large white policeman was going from bench to bench, knocking over people's bottles with his club and rudely ordering them to leave. One black man protested this treatment. The policeman grabbed him by the neck and threw him into the gutter in the street, spraining his wrist, and giving him a bleeding wound on the head. Carl went up to the policeman, and told him that what he had done was a crime, regardless of the badge he wore. The officer cursed at Carl, and shouted that he had better not interfere. Carl judged that the color of his skin earned him a warning instead of an assault. Both the victim and Carl later filed complaints with the Civilian Complaint Review Board, and Carl followed up the applications with numerous telephone calls to the CCRB, informing them of the incident. Over a year later, he received a letter from the CCRB telling him that because of his and the victim's failure to cooperate (!), the case against the officer had been dropped.

These cases, along with many others to which we have been witness over the years, point to that amalgamation of poverty and race in our society which has caused the creation of a class of virtual nonpersons, who may be abused with impunity. Though Police Commissioner Benjamin Ward is himself an African-American, this entrenched attitude of racism persists in the ranks of an overwhelmingly white police force. These instances also reveal the degree of anger and resentment which simmers just below the surface in many members of the New York City Police Department, who feel maligned and unsupported in their communities, and in a city known for its

violence, extremely fearful on the job. This complex of grievances offers many officers a justification for leveling their hostility directly against anyone who broaches resistance to their authority. (More than one woman at the Catholic Worker has encountered a mixture of racism and sexism when she has objected to police treatment of a black man on the street—here, the stock response has been to demand whether she would make the same objection if the suspect were guilty of raping her, her sister, her mother, etc.)

As disturbing as these incidents are, they read only as indicators of a practice of violence which has culminated over the past decade in greater New York in a series of well known incidents in which white policemen have actually killed black people without cause. Locally, nothing is more responsible for the crisis of confidence of African-Americans in the justice system than the needless, and unpunished, use of deadly force against them by the police force of the City of New York.

The killing of Michael Stewart, a twenty-five-year-old photographer and model who was beaten to death by transit police, galvanized the despair of many blacks with the justice system. Mr. Stewart, a Brooklyn resident, was arrested on September 15, 1983, on charges of writing graffiti in a Manhattan subway station. An eyewitness stated that after six white transit police had handcuffed Mr. Stewart, they proceeded to bludgeon him, mortally wounding him. He was unconscious when he arrived at Bellevue Hospital. Two nurses on duty later testified that on arrival, every part of Mr. Stewart's body had been traumatized. He had lapsed into a coma.

Summoned to the hospital, Mr. Stewart's parents brought in a doctor to see their son, but their physician was prevented from conducting an independent clinical evaluation on Mr. Stewart for seventeen hours, while officials insisted that he produce his medical diplomas and license. In the meantime, the administration of Bellevue Hospital told Michael Stewart's parents that he was doing well, when in fact he was in a coma. Michael Stewart never regained consciousness, and after thirteen days, he died.

Miscarriages of Justice

The ensuing investigation and trial proved a disgrace. One of the attorneys who conducted the investigation for the Stewart family reported that his work was frustrated by every branch of the official apparatus involved. Cooperation was not forthcoming from the hospital administration or the transit police. The Medical Examiner's office mishandled the forensic report. The eyewitness was pressured by the assistant District Attorney not to testify against the police.

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Joan Andrews Released

Shortly after the October-November issue went to press, we learned that Joan Andrews had been freed, after serving two years of a five year sentence for her nonviolent protest at a Pensacola, Florida, abortion clinic. On October 16, Joan was taken from Florida to Pittsburgh. Her Florida sentence had been commuted to time served, and the state of Florida extradited her to face outstanding charges in Pittsburgh for a protest there in 1985. The judge in Pittsburgh sentenced her to probation.

Efforts toward winning the commutation of Joan's sentence had grown in recent months, and included thousands of letters written to state officials, as well as protests in Tallahassee, the state

capital of Florida. Joan spoke shortly after her release with our friend Pete Sheehan, a reporter for *The Long Island Catholic*. She told Pete: "In all honesty, I think [I was released] because they realized it would cause them less trouble if they sent me home than if they kept me in." She also thinks that "perhaps they changed their minds and decided it was an inordinate sentence."

Joan has spent some of the time since her release at home with her family, but she was also arrested in late October in a sit-in at an abortion clinic in Canada, where she was released without charge. She intends to continue with her work, including the possibility of future protests in Florida and Pittsburgh.

A Friend of God: Louis Massignon Remembered

MEMOIR OF A FRIEND, LOUIS MASSIGNON. By Herbert Mason, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, Indiana. 1988. 170 pp. \$18.95. Reviewed by Bill Griffin.

Herbert Mason, a professor of history and religion, has written a moving memoir of an important religious thinker and nonviolent activist. Louis Massignon (1883-1962) was a Frenchman and, outside of academic circles specializing in Arabic and the Middle East, not widely known here in America. He should be and will be, thanks to this gripping, personal remembrance and a forthcoming translation, also by Mason, entitled *Testimonies and Reflections, Essays of Louis Massignon*. Notre Dame Press will publish these essays in 1989.

It is not easy to answer the question, who was Louis Massignon? He was so very many things. Like other important spiritual leaders, Dorothy Day comes to mind, he is not a person to be quickly

seized, defined and digested. He resists that greed in us.

During his own life he was known as the pre-eminent French scholar of Arabic language and culture for having written a monumental study of a tenth century Muslim mystic named al-Hallaj, an extraordinary figure, distinguished by his concern and compassion for humanity. But Massignon had not only scholarly gifts, he had the gift of friendship, as well. In his youth, while traveling in Algeria and Morocco, he met and became a close friend of Charles de Foucauld, the former Army officer turned Trappist monk, who was living out his Christian witness in solitude and poverty among poor Arab tribes. De Foucauld's prayers, Massignon firmly believed, had saved his life and allowed him to recover his faith "in the God of Abraham" during a terrible period of crisis. De Foucauld's "fraternal life" remained Massignon's model ever afterwards.

Later, Massignon was the intimate friend of Jacques Maritain, the Thomist philosopher, and of Teilhard de Chardin, the Jesuit paleontologist and theologian. In the late thirties he met Gandhi. Massignon had been a decorated military officer serving in the trenches of World War I; he had been a diplomat for the French government. His encounter with Gandhi changed his life. Massignon's openness to the truth in other cultures and in other religions, the profound experience of evil he and his country went through in the Second World War, and his deepening Christian faith led him to become an outspoken exponent of nonviolence.

Massignon, the friend, was a husband, a father and, with Pius XII's special permission, a priest in the Melkite (Greek and Arabic) rite. However, what makes this uncommon person most important for readers of *The Catholic Worker* is the fact that he was, during the eight last years of his life, the spiritual leader of the nonviolent resistance, in France, to the French war in Algeria against the Arab independence movement, which began in 1954 and ended in 1962 with Algeria winning its independence.

This memoir is not sedate biography. Part One, an in-depth, introductory essay, sets the stage with descriptions of the tense and violent atmosphere of Paris in the late fifties when brutal, murderous riots over the Algerian Question were tearing the capital apart. France seemed irrevocably split between those who wanted to keep Algeria a French colony whatever it cost militarily, in human lives, or in abuses of human rights, and those who believed the Algerian people had a right to their independence. Mason describes how Massignon anguished and how he worked tirelessly to make all sides recognize the others' humanity and how the struggle broke him and killed him.

Part Two of Mason's memoir is the diary he kept from 1959 on, when he met Massignon for the first time, became a friend of the family, and had, for a period, almost daily contact with the elderly but still vigorous scholar. Massignon, the person emerges from the diary entries as a prophetic figure, both loved and hated, skeptical of French leaders, advising patience toward them, but indefatigable activity on behalf of their victims. Massignon's favorite saying was: "Place yourself among the victims."

He was the leader of two groups, which later fused into one: *Amis de Gandhi* (friends of Gandhi) and *Badaliya* (an Arabic word meaning taking on suffering as a substitute for another person). These groups became a prayer sodality made up of Christians and Muslims. Fasting, prayer and pilgrimages to France's religious shrines were their constant activity; reconciliation was their message. Massignon preferred pilgrimages so the poor of France and the poor Arabs working in the industrial centers could meet and experience what they had in common. They went on pilgrimage to prisons in which Arab militants were held and were known to be undergoing torture. Massignon led them to cemeteries where French soldiers who had died in the war were buried. Muslims and Christians took part in ecumenical liturgies honoring their sacrifice. Massignon prayed publicly for police-men who had been killed during riots.

He had a profound sense of honor, French honor, and this, he felt in a personally excruciating way, was what was being defiled by the war and the official lies about the torture and the senseless violence. As Mason writes, "The turning of a deaf ear by one not deaf was to him an act of falsehood. Cultivation of falsehood in defense of national security was an act of dishonor. Draining the resources of another's community to enhance one's

own was an act of injustice. And the use of any language to deceive, was a betrayal of the essence of human intercourse. Language itself reveals what is in the heart."

To take a radical stance on justice you had to have, according to Massignon, a deep respect for law; not a mocking or cynical attitude toward it. You had to bear in mind the sources of possible injustice in yourself, the humanity of your opponents, and you had to have a clear idea of the state of things existing, here and now, as distinct from the state your dreams hoped to bring about. Massignon was a realist, and hardest on himself and his followers. A Jewish friend said of Massignon, "He has a sword sharpened for justice, but he always puts it through his own heart before it touches the others."

Those concerned about the direction of the Peace Movement today, in our own parlous times, here in the United States, must be grateful to Herbert Mason for bringing to us Louis Massignon's clear ideas on nonviolence, with their emphasis on purity and honor. Massignon's sense of the sacred honor of his country is a challenge to fashionable cynicism. His labors to bring Jew, Christian, and Arab together are an inspiration and example to everyone of good faith. The sources for his energy and courage flowed from the spirituality of Charles de Foucauld, Gandhi and al-Hallaj. This "friend of God," as he was called by his Muslim friends, points us toward their lives and writings, if we want to deepen our understanding of nonviolence and want help on our own spiritual journeys.

(Two other books by Herbert Mason that shed more light on Louis Massignon and Muslim spiritual concerns are: *A Legend of Alexander and The Merchant and The Parrot. Dramatic Poems*. University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, Indiana. 1986. \$8.95, and *The Death of al-Hallaj. A Dramatic Narrative*. University of Notre Dame Press, 1979. \$4.95. Unfortunately, *Moments in Passage*, another book on Massignon by Professor Mason is not in print. We hope The University of Notre Dame Press will publish it again.)

Agnus Dei

Given that lambs
are infant sheep, that sheep
are afraid and foolish, and lack
the means of selfprotection, having
neither rage nor claws,
venom nor cunning,
what then
is this "Lamb of God?"

This pretty creature, vigorous
to nuzzle at milky dugs,
woolbearer, bleater,
leaper in air for delight of being, who finds in astonishment
four legs to land on, the grass
all it knows of the world?

With whom we would like to play,
whom we'd lead with ribbons, but may not bring
into our houses because
it would soil the floor with its droppings?

What terror lies concealed
in strangest words. O lamb
of God that taketh away
the Sins of the World: an innocence

smelling of ignorance,
born in bloody snowdrifts,
licked by forebearing

dogs more intelligent than its entire flock put together?

God then,
encompassing all things, is
defenseless? Omnipotence
has been tossed away, reduced
to a wisp of damp wool?

And we,
frightened, bored, wanting
only to sleep till catastrophe
has raged, clashed, seethed and gone by without us,
wanting then
to awaken in quietude without remembrance of agony,

we who in shamefaced private hope
had looked to be plucked from fire and given
a bliss we deserved for having imagined it,

is it implied that we
must protect this perversely weak
animal, whose muzzle's nudgings
suppose there is milk to be found in us?
Must hold to our icy hearts
a shivering God?

So be it.

Come, rag of pungent
quiverings,
dim star.

Let's try
if something human still
can shield you,
spark
of remote light.

— Denise Levertov

(From *Mass for the day of St. Thomas Didymus*. William B. Ewert, 1981.)



Sally Elliott

USED CHRISTMAS CARDS

New and used Christmas and greeting cards are requested to help support a number of social projects in Bombay. Oriol Pujol has written to thank all the people who have contributed cards in past years. He writes: "One of the ways of supporting the Social Centre is reconditioning & re-selling the used Christmas & Social cards that people from abroad send us." Mail parcels of less than 8 pounds can be sent to: Oriol Pujol, Sadhana Society, Flat 39, Daulat Nagar (10-N), Santacruz (W), Bombay 400 054, INDIA.

The Life of John Woolman

A Heart to Do His Holy Will

By VINCE BUSCEMI

"Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." (Luke 12:15.)

John Woolman lived in the eighteenth century and has been called the Quaker Saint; had he lived today, his principles could easily fall within the Catholic Worker Movement. He lived a life of Christian simplicity, insistent pacifism, and kindness not only toward all people but also toward the "brute creatures." The Quaker Testimony of Simplicity calls for living from your divine Center by divesting your life of encumbrances with confidence that our loving will provide for our need; and in this manner being free to respond in holy obedience to the leading of the Holy Spirit that arises from the depths of our silence and prayer.

In May 1772, toward the end of his life, Woolman embarked for England on a divinely inspired mission to minister to the poor and the oppressed. On the first days out of port, he moved from the cabins decorated with carved work and imagery, because such luxuries "entangled many in the spirit of oppression" and he could "not find peace in joining in anything which he saw was against the wisdom which is pure." He traveled in the steerage, where for six weeks he shared the hardship of the sailors, "their exposure, their soaking clothes, their miserable accommodations, their wet garments often trodden underfoot." This is plain living with high principles. To quote Dorothy Day: "The mystery of poverty is that by sharing in it, making ourselves poor in giving to others, we increase our knowledge and belief in love."

To track the life of John Woolman by reading his Journal, is to be inspired by a spiritual journey that demonstrates that faith is something to be lived as well as professed. He was born in 1720 near Mount Holly, New Jersey, on a farm where he spent the first twenty-one years of his life regularly attending Quaker meetings, reading the Bible, and communing with Nature. This spiritual grounding was the foundation of all his outward leadings. When wrestling with injustice and oppression, his faith was simple: "My prayers were put up to the Lord, Who graciously heard me and gave me a heart resigned to His Holy Will." This is bestowment of the Grace of God.

He left the farm to become a tailor and in 1746 established his own dry goods store which provided the needs of his wife and daughter as he traveled in the ministry. He was soon troubled, however, over the burden of its growth and commercial success. He strongly felt that his obligation to serve God demanded the bulk of his time and attention. "Through the mercies of the Almighty," he wrote, "I had in good degree learned to be content with a plain way of living," so in 1756 he abandoned merchandising altogether. This was living his faith, as his message in traveling amongst Quakers was to return to a pious way of life instead of pursuing materialism and wanton luxuries.

Action Against Slavery

During his early ministry, John Woolman spent much of his time taking action against slavery. He traveled throughout the South with a concern for Friends owning and abusing other humans. He paid for his own lodgings rather than accept hospitality granted by slave labor. As he visited with slave owners, he was also concerned for their spirituality and he gently listened to their rationale in defense of the practice of slavery. He clearly saw their actual reasons when he wrote: "The love of ease and gain are the motives in general of keeping slaves, and men are

went to take hold of weak arguments to support a cause which is unreasonable." The system violated the basic Christian principle of the equality and kinship of all people. At this time he also gave up using sugar in his food and dyes in his clothes because they were products of slavery. Largely because of John Woolman, all Quakers gave up the practice and freed their slaves, with the Civil War still about one hundred years away.

The French and Indian War erupted in 1754 due to the greed of the white settlers and political in-fighting between England and France. Having traveled and befriended the Indian nations, John Woolman encouraged young Quaker men to maintain their pacifism by refusing to fight and "feel that spirit in which our Redeemer gave His life for us." With regard to personal property he admonished: "May we look upon our treasures, the furniture of our homes, and our garments, and try whether the seeds of war have nourishment in these our possessions." He also refused to pay the taxes levied by the English to finance the war. "To refuse the active payment of a tax," he explained, "was exceedingly disagreeable; but to do a thing contrary to my conscience appeared yet more dreadful." This statement captures his essence whether he was taking stands against wars, slavery, poverty, oppression or other social evils. He believed the root of the problem was the corrosive effect of wealth, luxury and covetousness. As a consequence he advocated that people adopt a plain, simple way of living so that they could devote more time to serving the Lord, their families and communities. He realized the difficulties involved and stressed faith in Christ's example which "teaches us to be content with things really needful, and to avoid all superfluities, and give up our hearts to fear and serve the Lord."

The voyage Woolman took to England traveling in steerage proved to be his last. He was ministering to the poor by walking from London to York because of the cruel hardships imposed on post boys and horses. "So great is the hurry in the spirit of this world that in aiming to do business quick and to gain wealth, the creation at this day doth loudly groan." After four months, he contracted smallpox, died in perfect calm, and was buried in a plain ash coffin according to his wishes.

The scourge of materialism is a constant focus of the Catholic Worker and one reason that so many Quakers have been involved in the movement over the years. A clear instance is a time in the early 1940s when Fritz Eichenberg met Dorothy Day at Pendle Hill, a Quaker center for study and contemplation. It was instant synchronicity and resulted in forty years of friendship and devotion to the cause of the poor and the oppressed. Just as we see many reprints of Dorothy Day's columns, we also see many reproductions of Fritz Eichenberg's wood cuts in almost every issue of *The Catholic Worker*. There is even a Rufus Jones Catholic Worker House in Des Moines, Iowa, named after a divinely inspired Quaker mystic of this century. The family of Catholic Workers encircles all and requires you "to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God." (Micah 6:8)

John made his life speak by walking cheerfully over the earth answering to that of God in everyone, as put by George Fox, the founder of Quakerism. Dorothy Day in last month's column, "What Do the Simple Folk Do?," stated: "The grace of hope, this consciousness that there is in every person that which is of God, comes and goes, in a rhythm like that of the sea." Are we not of the same mold?

Our Light In Darkness

(Continued from page 1)

to be entrusted with a certain task, and who tries to cause both pleasure and surprise, as well as assert his own independence, by carrying out the task before the word is spoken. Everywhere the faithful gathered together in assemblies of peace. From then on, they felt, they should introduce amongst themselves the Peace of God." (Emmanuel Mounier, *Be Not Afraid*)



Sally Elliott

In our century, we seem at a bit of a loss to understand such childlike confidence that the Kingdom is at hand. We are not totally bereft though, for we still have our martyrs and saints to give us inspiration. There are also a few theologians and philosophers, who knowing the real world, here and now, can help direct our thoughts to hope. One such scholar was the Swiss Protestant Karl Barth, who interestingly enough, died twenty years ago on the same day as Thomas Merton, December 10th.

Early on in his career, in lectures given in 1928 and 1929 and later published as *Ethics*, Karl Barth had some things to say about hope in the Bible as the desire for perfection.

In hope, we are citizens of the future world in the midst of the present. . . [B]eyond every existing order and in spite of the humility we are given, our conduct requires an orientation toward the coming perfection. Faith affirms God, love rejoices in God, and hope seeks Him. Beyond all that is present, hope expects everything from Him.

The great light tells us about our life and assures us about what is possible. Otherwise, we are prone to seeing the world as a swirl of depressing shadows with no exit or to indulging in dreams, fooling ourselves, misreading events, pursuing false leads. Karl Barth also talked about the pitfalls of illusory hope, any optimism not from God. "Hope would, of course, be a mere fantasy and fanaticism if it were just an unrest of spirit." Biblical hope, in the light of perfection, however, gives us clarity. One of the Hebrew words for "hope" means "to be a watchman,"—to be attentive to reality, to know what to look for and what to expect.

Out of his understanding of Christian hope, Karl Barth was able to recognize the darkness of Nazi Germany from the beginning. In 1933, when almost everyone else there either did not want to see, or felt confused and trapped, or was caught up in the folly, he drafted the Barman Declaration for the Confessing Church. This document denounced the forces of the Hitler regime by means of a theological statement that Christians cannot serve two masters. For this he lost his official job and was deported back to his homeland. Fifty-five years

later, Karl Barth's theological witness may strike us as a bit removed from our own daily lives. At the same time, if we are honest, we can learn much from him, including what it might mean to be a watchman in the night.

Another voice for clarity and courage has been the much less famous, Canadian thinker George Grant. Before he died this September he said he did not want any eulogy, so let me just say that I personally owe him a great intellectual debt. That, of course, does not matter much compared with *what* he taught. As a political philosopher, he drew many would-be "new Leftists" in Canada to come to grips with modern technology at the moment when "the meaning of the English-speaking world's part in the Vietnam war gradually presented its gorgon face." As a Christian Platonist, he saw the need "to think about what that technology is: to think it in its determining power over our politics and sexuality, our music and education. Moreover . . . we are called to think about that technological civilization in relation to the eternal fire which flames forth from the Gospels and blazes even in the presence of that determining power."

Like Karl Barth, George Grant cherished the yearning for perfection and the vigilance of the watchman. He spoke often in terms of light and darkness—the "one light which is always a light in all times and places," and the "darkness which has fallen on both tradition and revolution" because we have given up on the language of the good in favor of the will to power. Despite the labels put on him, George Grant was not a pessimist, for he believed that only the good can illuminate the darkness as darkness and that, within that knowledge, we are drawn to perfection. At the end of one of his books, *Technology and Empire*, he calls for courage:

In such a situation of uncertainty, it would be lacking in courage to turn one's face to the wall, even if one cannot find fulfillment in working for or celebrating the dynamo. Equally it would be immoderate and uncourageous and perhaps unwise to live in the midst of the present drive, merely working in it and celebrating it, and not listening or watching or simply waiting for intimations of deprival which might lead us to see the beautiful as the image, in the world, of the good.

Advent, as far as I can tell, is the season set aside by the Church to pay attention to such intimations, when we watch and pray for them. It may be an austere time, a "little Lent," but not a bleak time, for our delight is in the Lord. Neither is our waiting an occasion to give up on the world. The root for a second Hebrew word for "hope" is the strand in a rope that keeps it from breaking—the strand of patience, the staying power that allows for "walking in the darkness" following God's commandments and not just observing it or enduring it. There is no need to run on empty when, like Enoch in Genesis 5:22, we can "walk with God."

We who are believers have seen a great light and we look forward to its fullness. Only because God has promised and because we insist on His promises is it possible to live in hope. Above all, we can hope, we can be patient (and we should not forget what Dorothy said about patience, that "the very word means suffering"), because of what God has revealed about Himself. Our God is Love, our God is Faithfulness and our God is also Hope. He is long-suffering and kind. In hope, He created us, and in hope He forgives our sins. He yearns for our perfection and He carries us. He is the light and He is the strand in the rope as we walk in darkness. He is Emmanuel, God with us. As Christians, we believe our God walks with us through Advent to become flesh at Christmas.

The Work of Peace In Time of Strife

(Continued from page 1)

tee (ADC), a group compared by some to the Witness for Peace, the US-based movement which sponsors trips to Nicaragua. In his time in the West Bank and Gaza, Scott and the others were encouraged to talk with anyone who might wish to be interviewed, and to record any human rights violations witnessed. Among those whom Scott interviewed was

a mother of eight children whose husband was shot in the head and killed while holding their three-year-old daughter in his arms. He had been standing in their kitchen by the window. The mother was six months pregnant at the time of his death. Israeli soldiers broke all the windows in her home the next day.

Scott met many among the Palestinians who wished no harm to Israel, wanting only the peace and security of a land to call their own. He witnessed acts of nonviolent resistance, considered provocative in an occupied area. "I saw young and old people display the V for Victory sign and the outlawed Palestinian flag, in spite of the obvious danger from the never far off Israeli troops."

Palestinians want what all people under the yoke of oppression want. Nor can anyone deny the tremendous evil being perpetrated on them by the current Israeli government through its "Iron Fist" policies of deportation, mass arrests, burning of homes, tear-gassing of children, etc. Scott was fortunate to meet those who believe that upping the ante will never lead to peace, for there are those who explicitly think otherwise, calling for the driving out of the Jews, and the destruction of the state of Israel. This is not to infer that the Intifada's goal is the eventual end of Israel, and it is not to suggest that the gross actions of the Israeli Armed Forces are therefore to be countenanced. Complete withdrawal of Israel from the West Bank and Gaza would not bring instant peace to those areas; but it is difficult to imagine how continued occupation, even of a more "innocuous" or "humane" brand, will do anything to further peace.

In the last few months, hope for a possible breakthrough in the Intifada soared, if only temporarily, when some of the leading personalities of the Arab world came together to discuss the need for an independent Palestinian state. We cannot yet know what the outcome of the Palestinian National Council's meeting in Algiers will be, although there are many indications that it will declare Palestine independent, proceed to set up a government-in-exile, and petition world governments to recognize its credentials. Much of this is set against the backdrop of the recent Israeli elections, which showed a gain for the religious right wing (including a couple of those factions which would like to "transfer" the Arabs out of the occupied territories, and the probability of an even greater repression of the Palestinian people. As well, the new president-elect of the United States will need to court favor, as is the wont of political powers, with the various parties in the Middle East, along with the Soviet Union, it appears. If one attempts to analyze all of this too facily, however, one runs the risk of missing the complexities of the issues at stake in the greater Middle East region.

Another tragedy of this uprising is the role which the US taxpayer plays in the repression. As long time advocates of tax resistance, the CW sees the situation as most illustrative of its position. In an op-ed piece which Scott wrote for the Worcester Magazine, August 31, he recalls the tear gas incident in fuller detail:

Moments later, I heard screams from the house next door. Mahmoud, a

strong man of about twenty-six, hastily climbed out of a second-floor window and leaped from our roof to the house next door. He scrambled through a narrow opening between the roof and wall to drop down into a cloud of tear gas. He quickly broke open their locked door and carried several family members to the clinic. . . . [Later] the cannister was brought to me. It was clearly marked: "For use by trained personnel only. Improper use may result in injury or death. FOR OUTDOOR USE ONLY. Made in USA."

What does this bode for the second year of Israeli occupation?

Again, the one group given the scantiest attention in the media, even in those quarters where we look for alternative viewpoints, is the growing peace movement among Israeli and Diaspora Jews. These people will always be condemned by more "pragmatic" Israelis who fail to

realize that nothing is more pragmatic than a negotiated settlement on Palestine. These pacifists will be called traitors, subversives out to destroy the state. For his part, Scott is right to point out that many Israelis support Palestinian independence, while an even greater number object to the severity of the occupation. . . . Unfortunately, at least for now, these Israelis are in the minority.

Yes, it is a "minority," but one subject to great harassment by the government and its vocal supporters. These people need encouragement and more recognition. The indifference to their voices among many in the solidarity movement is cause for question. Why does this need to be said? Regrettably, it has been my experience that often the greatest critics of the Israeli occupation speak with a disdain beyond justifiable protest; unfortunately, there is a good deal of veiled anti-Semitism in the critique of Israel.

Abbie Nathan, whose letter on his Peace Ship activities appeared in the pages of the February 1976 CW, has recently been labeled naive for having met with Yassir Arafat, and for having encouraged direct negotiations with the Palestinians. In a letter to The Jerusalem Post, he said:

I will continue to be naive and cross the boundaries of any nation, friend or foe, anywhere on our planet, if I feel I could spread the work of peace and bring some hope or comfort to any child, be he Arab, Jewish, Ethiopian or any other. I will shout as loud as possible until I drown the voices of those who preach war and hatred. . . . It is sad enough that so-called experts and politicians control the right to send our young ones to war to kill and be killed. They must not have the monopoly on making peace. It is the birthright of every individual, every citizen willing to sacrifice and to risk his life in time of war to contribute people-to-people towards peace.

American Hibakusha: Isolated Then and Now

By RACHELLE LINNER

There is a group of Americans for whom the Second World War did not end on August 15, 1945—the American survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki (the Japanese word for the survivors, "explosion-affected persons," is *hibakusha*.) Their numbers are small: 751 identified, but some estimate they number 1,000 or more. Forty percent of them are women who came to the United States as war brides of American soldiers stationed in Japan during the Occupation; another 20% immigrated in the post-war years.

The remainder lived one of those hidden chapters of the war's history, a parable of the dislocations war foists on ordinary citizens. In 1941 approximately 30,000 Nisei (second generation Japanese Americans) lived in Japan; some had gone to visit relatives or to receive part of their education in Japan, and some to enter into marriages with Japanese nationals. Trapped in Japan when the war began, they were unable to return to their homes and families (most of whom would have been in relocation camps). Some were accused by the Japanese of spying for the United States; by Americans that they were working for a Japanese victory. Caught in the maelstrom of war they suffered a double isolation, and they remain alone in the years of peace, dismissed by a government that says "too bad, you were in the wrong place at the wrong time," largely unsupported by the Japanese-American community, and ignored or manipulated by political groups.

Kanji Kuramoto was four years old when his parents took him from their Hawaii home to visit his ailing relatives in Japan; subsequent illnesses delayed their return, until the war began. "Because I made that one trip," he often says, "the course of my life changed." The Kuramoto family lived in Hiroshima, but Kanji, an engineering student, was two hundred miles away. It took him two days to return to Hiroshima after the bombing. The city he found was flat, "nothing. The second day and it was still burning." "I saw countless victims dying — young, old, men, women, children, babies. I can still hear their voices crying out for help."

He found his mother and brother, injured but alive, amid the ruins of what had been their home, but his father was missing. For two weeks Kanji Kuramoto walked through a city of corpses ("they looked like dark rotten peaches") searching for his father. He assisted at a makeshift hospital. He joined cremation crews; the odor of burning flesh clung to him so

that "my hand continued to smell for twenty, almost thirty years."

He never found his father but in those weeks of searching Kanji Kuramoto became a hibakusha, a person exposed to lethal doses of the radiation that transformed the new bomb into a weapon that kills through time.

Since 1947 the United States government has spent millions of dollars studying the delayed effects of radiation exposure, identifying a numbing litany of associated diseases and conditions, ranging from leukemia and other blood disorders to cataracts, multiple myeloma, solid tumors of the thyroid, breast, lung



Heart Flower

Susan MacMurdy

and stomach, diabetes and early aging. Yet perhaps the most frightening of this constellation of diseases is the mental and physical retardation of the youngest hibakusha, those who were exposed *in utero*. The incidence of pathology has become more ominous in light of recent studies which recalculated, to a lower exposure rate, the radiation dosages hibakusha received, revealing radiation even more dangerous than previously suspected.

Despite decades of ill health, hibakusha's greatest fears are for their children. Many hibakusha have become eloquent witnesses of atomic terror, tireless in their peace work, but the deadliness of radiation is repudiated with equal grace by the courage of ordinary, anonymous men and women who, despite fear, chose to have children.

In 1957 the Japanese government enacted a law giving hibakusha free medical and social services (and some financial benefits), a complicated assistance

program that was initially extended only to a Japanese hibakusha. In 1978, responding to a suit by a Korean hibakusha, the medical benefits were extended to all hibakusha, regardless of nationality. Unfortunately, distance and cost have made it almost impossible for American hibakusha to avail themselves of this care.

They face difficulties obtaining health insurance, since commercial policies will not cover illnesses caused by war or atomic explosion. Cultural constraints and language difficulties can lead to discomfort when hibakusha raise their concerns and fears with American physicians, many of whom are not trained in how to take a radiation history.

Their isolation began to be lessened in November, 1971, when the Committee of Atomic Bomb Survivors in the United States (CABS) was organized in Los Angeles; Kanji Kuramoto has been its president since 1974.

A major focus of CABS has been legislative efforts to obtain assistance for medical costs. Congressional action is necessary because the United States is exempt from claims arising from "the lawful conduct of military activities in wartime." A 1978 Congressional study estimated such a program would cost \$500,000, a modest figure in light of the amount spent on studying hibakusha's health in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Under the sponsorship of the Hiroshima Medical Association and the Japanese government, every two years since 1977 a group of physicians, specialists in radiation-related diseases, has provided free medical examinations of hibakusha in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Seattle and Honolulu. 109 people were seen in 1977; numbers have grown consistently, and in 1987, 379 were examined. A more recent project was initiated by members of the Hiroshima A-Bomb Teachers' Association, which has raised funds to pay for American hibakusha to travel to Japan for medical care; to date, fourteen people have benefited from this effort.

Kanji Kuramoto "would like to put the whole experience behind me, but I feel that I must continue trying to lessen the suffering of hibakusha and to warn people about nuclear weapons. . . . I still love American idealism. . . . this is what encourages me to continue." Under his leadership CABS has formed links with other victims of radiation; he serves on the board of the National Association of Radiation Survivors. A support group, Friends of Hibakusha, was formed in 1983 to assist in education efforts. Two of its board members are the novelist Dorothy Stroup (*In the Autumn Wind*)

(Continued on page 8)

Letter from Death Row

By ROBERT WEST

For the last three days on Texas death row we have all been caught up in the worst game I have ever seen the state play in all my years of incarceration. This article has finally been thrown in my face by what happened, my only problem now is shaking off the after-effects and getting it down into words.

Starting on the morning of September 13, the cops came and told my neighbor Dusty, who happens to be my best friend in here, to pack his property because they were going to move him into the observation cell in front of the cellblock because his scheduled execution date was coming up on the 15th. They do this so they can keep a watch on the condemned man to make sure he does not kill himself. Last year when I had my first execution date they moved me into the same observation cell. As soon as I got in there I tore the sink and toilet off the wall and they proceeded to move me all the way to the back of the cellblock into a solitary cell with a solid outer door locked behind me. Nobody could see me there. That goes to show how serious they are about watching someone.

After taking Dusty from us they gave him the option of staying in his cell or going down the hall to another dayroom and recreating alone. Imagine the psychological torture that goes with this. A man is taken out of the routine that he has become accustomed to, and made to live the last days of his life alone and isolated from the only friends he has, left only to pace and think about being murdered.

The next morning they came in and got him, and took him across town to the unit where the death house is, called The Walls. He stayed there all day preparing himself to die. Late into the night, at 10:20 p.m., they told him he had been given a stay of execution.

Why? It so happens the Supreme Court is still waiting to be heard from on the case of *Penry v. Lynaugh*, which might overturn the death penalty statute now being used in Texas. The way it is written now, a jury sentences someone to die in a capital murder case if there is a probability that they would be a continual threat to society because they are likely to commit other acts of violence, although not necessarily murder. In addition, it raises the question of whether a person with an I.Q. of under 60 can be executed. It will be late 1989 before they get this straightened out, and we are back to business on death row. But if the courts know this case is pending, and so many executions are being given temporary stays, why did they let this guy suffer in the death house till one hour and forty minutes before they were due to kill him?

They make people suffer as long as they can. People they know still have appeals out are taken all the way to the front door, making them think they are going to die. Then they expect them to go back into death row community and be all right. All right, that is, until they want to play the game over again.

Dusty was on the phone saying goodbye to his family when the warden came in to tell him he had the stay. Knowing how execution happy the system and society are, he will probably have to say goodbye to them sometime next year, and possibly again the year after that. It is horrifying to think how the people that go through something like this would act if they were set free and put back in society. Come to think of it, maybe that is why society goes crazy when somebody on death row is found innocent and released after spending years down here, or gets out through a loop-hole. People know what the system's tricks do to a person, and the last thing they want is for that person to be set free so he can play the same tricks back on them.

The next time Iran goes crazy and snatches up a bunch of people, or somebody tries violently to overthrow a government, check the newspaper and listen to the public scream about the other guy being a heathen and what a civilized society we are. They are worked up over these so-called terrorists holding their hostages, teasing them with death, sometimes killing them, sometimes letting them go. They forget the man they left shaking in the death house, and act like it does not matter they are ready to do it again. This, my friend, is called justice. (Robert West's address is Ellis Unit 1, #731, Huntsville, TX 77343. — Eds. note.)



Susan MacMurdy

Intimations of a War In Heaven

By FELTON DAVIS

(Early in the morning of October 4th, the feast of St. Francis of Assisi, Felton Davis walked up to the large sign marking the entrance to Picatinny Arsenal near Dover, New Jersey, and there spray-painted "All who draw the sword will die by the sword." (Matthew 26:52) Picatinny Arsenal researches and helps to develop weaponry for both conventional and nuclear war. He was subsequently charged with a misdemeanor, and faces a possible six month prison term. His statement about what he did follows. Eds. note.)

Enclosed is the latest article about Picatinny Arsenal, that appeared in *The New York Times* in June. It is a measure of how much violence we accept, how possessed we are by the power of death, that the military facilities are busy polluting the land they are supposed to protect, perhaps beyond repair.

This is the seventh year of my witness at the arsenal, which each year has included arrest, trial and imprisonment. I wonder very much whether seven more years are to come, before the environment collapses and we choke to death on unbreathable air and undrinkable water.

During these years I have stayed with a dozen different families and communities in the northeast, and I usually find myself taking the commuter train out to Dover, New Jersey and walking up Rt. 15 to Picatinny. I watch my boyhood go by as the train passes through various towns in which my family lived. I see the apartment we moved into when I was a baby, the grade school I attended for a few years, the college where I took night courses, the hospital where I had my wisdom teeth removed. By the time I get off the train a great part of my life is with me in memory, and I do not feel at all alone.

Then I walk up Rt. 15, a distance of about three miles, and during that walk I receive — I'm not sure what to call them — intimations, perhaps.

The strongest of these intimations is that there is another world besides the ordinary one, and this other world is not at peace. If it is heaven, then there is war in heaven. If we are in trouble, then heaven is in deeper trouble. If we have to struggle here, then that is probably a preparation for the real battle, which is being fought there.

I wish I could describe how these intimations come, and how they change the appearance of things, but what good does it do to say that the trees no longer look like trees, the clouds no longer look like clouds, the road no longer like a road, and so forth? I guess the best I can do is to say that the world loses some of its ordinary reality, and gains a certain spiritual reality. The unseen world begins to open up, and it is a cosmic drama beyond imagining!

Next to these intimations, these glimpses of the real battle, all the earthly consequences of all my arrests are hardly worth mentioning, only so much nonsense. Necessary nonsense, perhaps, given the dismal state of this world, but still nonsense. Not to be compared with what's at stake.

It is not all fear and apprehension, I'm glad to say. There is also a sense of positive excitement. Imagine: we are in the presence of infinite goodness! There is a God after all! The cause is not completely hopeless!

May you share in these intimations along whatever road you must be taking, and may they enliven your steps. The battle must be fought, the victory won, "on earth as it is in heaven." God waits for us, but will not wait forever.

Felton Davis, 04996-050
Otisville Federal Prison
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Racism, Silence, Injustice

(Continued from page 3)

In the end, the police officers were found innocent and allowed to walk free.

Michael Stewart's death was followed the next year by the killing of Eleanor Bumpurs, a 66-year-old grandmother who was shot to death in her Bronx apartment. On October 29, 1988, the police emergency service unit was called to help evict Mrs. Bumpurs, who owed four months back rent. (Her rent was \$98.85 a month.) The police say that during the dispute, Mrs. Bumpurs threatened them with a knife. A white officer, one of the six officers present, then shot her twice, killing her. Mrs. Bumpurs' family maintains that she was too ill and infirm to have posed any serious threat to the po-

lice officers. In the storm of protest which followed this needless shooting of an elderly, ill, and confused woman, several officers were demoted, but no one faced imprisonment.

Other black New Yorkers killed by white officers in recent years include Randolph Evans, Yvonne Smallwood, Clifford Glover, Nicholas Bartlett. Only in light of this history can the case of Tawana Brawley be understood. Tawana Brawley is a sixteen-year-old girl who was missing for several days last year before she was found in dazed condition; she said that she had been the victim of a vicious racial attack. Early on, the Brawley family and their advisors announced they would refuse to cooperate with the grand jury in the case, because they believed that given the blatantly racist nature of the justice system, justice would not be done.

The grand jury finally prepared its report without the testimony of the Brawley family, concluding (over the protests of at least one of the two black jurors) that Tawana Brawley fabricated the attack on herself, and her account of what happened to her. In spite of a plethora of unanswered questions, the underpinning of this much sensationalized case is the experience and conviction of African-Americans — which the white legal officials involved have been signally unable to comprehend — that, when they are victims of hate violence from whites, justice is utterly beyond their reach.

Any discussion of the legal administration of justice in this country must acknowledge the question of whether there ever could be a system of justice in any authentic sense of the word, in a nation as large as ours, as urban, as industrialized, and as powerful. Any mention of the failings of the police force or the courts is bound, now, to bring the rejoinder that the agencies of law enforcement are up against an unprecedented crime rate, and a wave of violence aimed at law officers themselves. This may be true, but it overlooks the connection between such crime (especially related to drugs) and a culture which exalts money, and identifies one's worth with one's ability to spend and to consume. We are aware on the one hand, of the harsh actuality of the lives of the poor; and we speak insistently, on the other hand, against the burgeoning growth of power placed in the impersonal hands of the State — its bureaucracies civil and criminal — while the lives of the excluded ones become yet more desperate. But at the same time it is constantly necessary to exact an accounting from those who, for better or worse, are in the positions of authority, which is to say, rightfully, not first of power, but of responsibility.

We witness in this city an outpouring of shock and concern whenever a police officer is killed in the line of duty, particularly where the death has been drug-related. These deaths are tragic, but our shame is that they are not matched by any outcry against deaths for which the police themselves are responsible or where victims of white violence go undefended. The Church shares in this shame when its leaders neglect to speak out in the knowledge that so many who have perpetrated acts of violence or willful disregard against people of color are Catholics, who look to the teaching and example of the Church for the formation of their consciences.

We have been offered an ideal of justice as a blindfolded lady holding the balanced scales of impartiality. In *Look Out Whitey! Black Power's Gon' Get Your Momma!*, Julius Lester makes the call: "It might help things a helluva lot if Justice would take off that blindfold. Seeing a few things might help her out, 'cause it's obvious that her hearing ain't none too good."

Waking From a Dream: Thomas Merton and the C.W.

(Continued from page 1)

lines of Satyagraha [Gandhi's term for nonviolent action; literally, it means the power that comes from living in truth]. I see no other way, though of course the angles of the problem are not all clear. . . . You people are the only ones left awake, or among the few that still have an eye open.

Rereading Merton's letters to Dorothy, I am occasionally reminded of what he had recorded about the event at Fourth and Walnut. The link is most vivid in a letter Merton sent Dorothy about his visit on February 3, 1960, with the Little Sisters of the Poor in Louisville.

I . . . realized that it is in these beautiful, beat, wrecked, almost helpless old people that Christ lives and works most. And in the hurt people who are bitter and say they have lost their faith. We (society at large) have lost our sense of values and our vision. We despise everything that Christ loves, everything marked with His compassion. We love fatness, health, bursting smiles, the radiance of satisfied bodies all properly fed and rested and sated and washed and sexually relieved. Anything else is a horror and a scandal to us. How sad. (Letter to Dorothy Day, August 17, 1960.)

What was important about the link Merton made with the Catholic Worker movement was not that he suddenly saw for the first time that the Christian commitment had radical social consequences. Rather, he realized that people in the Catholic Worker movement were trying to live a vocation that had much in common with the monastic life and gave even more striking witness to the presence of God in each person. He valued Dorothy and the Catholic Worker for daring to connect love and justice and for taking an active stand against war—something practically no other Catholic institution, certainly no monastery, was willing to do.

It was in the pages of *The Catholic Worker* that Merton first made public the new turn in his thinking. He sent Dorothy a carbon copy of "The Root Of War Is Fear," a chapter that would be appearing in *New Seeds of Contemplation*, asking if she wanted to publish it. He wrote some further paragraphs especially for *The Catholic Worker*. They remain impressive nearly thirty years later.

The task is to work for the total abolition of war. . . . Unless we set ourselves immediately to this task, both as individuals and in our political and religious groups, we tend by our very passivity and fatalism to cooperate with the destructive forces that are leading inexorably to war. . . . First of all there is much to be learned. Peace is to be preached, nonviolence is to be explained as a practical method, and not left to be mocked as an outlet for crackpots who want to make a show of themselves. Prayer and sacrifice must be used as the most effective spiritual weapons in the war against war, and like all weapons, they must be used with deliberation: not just with a vague aspiration for peace and security, but against

violence and war. (CW, October 1961.) There is not space to trace the development of Merton's correspondence with Dorothy and others close to the Catholic Worker, or to review the twenty or so articles, reviews, and letters by Merton that were published in *The Catholic Worker*. Instead let me summarize a few of the main emphases.

Compassion

The more Merton became engaged with groups involved in protest, the more he became aware of how hard it was for those involved in protest to grow in patience and compassion. It can be intensely frustrating to try to change the way people think. Without compassion, the protester tends to become more and more centered in anger and may easily become an obstacle to changing the attitudes of others. The majority of people,



Sally Elliott

Merton noted, crave undisturbed security and are threatened by agitation even when it protests something—militarism, nuclear weapons, social injustice—which really threaten their security.

[People] do not feel threatened by the bomb . . . but they feel terribly threatened by some . . . student carrying a placard. . . . We have to have a deep patient compassion for the fears of men, for the fears and irrational mania of those who hate or condemn us. . . . (Letter to Jim Forest, January 5, 1962.)

Avoidance of Hidden Violence

Where compassion is absent, actions that are superficially nonviolent tend to mask deep hostility, contempt and the desire to defeat and humiliate an opponent. "One of the problematic questions about nonviolence," Merton wrote, "is the inevitable involvement of hidden aggressions and provocations."

[We] have to consider the fact that, in its provocative aspect, nonviolence may tend to harden opposition and conform people in their righteous blindness. It may even in some cases separate men out and drive them in the other direction, away from us and away from peace. This of course may be (as it was with the prophets) part of God's plan. A clear separation of antagonists. . . . [But we must] always direct our action toward opening people's eyes to the truth, and if they are blinded, we must try to be sure we did nothing specifically to blind them. Yet there is that danger: the danger one observes subtly in tight groups like families and monastic communities, where the martyr for the right sometimes thrives on making his persecutors terribly and visibly wrong. He can drive them in desperation to be wrong, to seek refuge in the wrong, to seek refuge in violence. . . . We have got to be aware of the awful sharpness of truth when it is used as a weapon, and since it can be the deadliest weapon, we must take care that we don't kill more than falsehood with it. In fact, we must be careful how we "use" truth, for we are ideally the instruments of truth and

not the other way around. . . . (Letter to Jim Forest, February 6, 1962.)

The Human Dimension

Merton often sensed that the peace movement (though not the Catholic Worker) was excessively political, tending to identify too much with particular political groups and ideologies. Ideally its action should communicate liberating possibilities to others no matter how locked in they were to violent structures. "It seems to me," he wrote, "that the basic problem is not political, it is apolitical and human."

One of the important things to do is to keep cutting deliberately through political lines and barriers and emphasizing the fact that these are largely fabrications and that there is another dimension, a genuine reality, totally opposed to the fictions of politics: the human dimension which politics pretends to arrogate entirely [to itself]. . . . This is the necessary first step along the long way . . . of purifying, humanizing and somehow illuminating politics. . . . Is this possible? . . . At least we must try. . . . (Letter to Jim Forest, December 8, 1962.)

Detachment

Not to be confused with disinterest in achieving results, detachment means knowing that no good action is wasted even if the immediate consequences are altogether different than what one hoped to achieve.

Do not depend on the hope of results. When you are doing . . . an apostolic work [such as work for peace], you may have to face the fact that your work will be apparently worthless and even achieve no result at all, if not perhaps results opposite to what you expect. As you get used to this idea, you start more and more to concentrate not on the results but on the value, the rightness, the truth of the work itself. And there too a great deal has to be gone through, as gradually you struggle less for an idea and more and more for specific people. The range tends to narrow down, but it gets much more real. In the end, it is the reality of personal relationships that saves everything. . . .

The big results are not in your hands or mine, but they suddenly happen, and we can share in them; but there is no point in building our lives on this personal satisfaction, which may be denied to us and which after all is not that important. . . . The great thing, after all, is to live, not to pour out your life in the service of a myth and we turn the best things into myths. If you can get free from the domination of causes and just serve Christ's truth, you will be able to do more and will be less crushed by the inevitable disappointments. . . .

The real hope . . . is not in something we think we can do, but in God Who is making something good out of it in some way we cannot see. If we can do His will, we will be helping in the process. But we will not necessarily know all about it beforehand. (Letter to Jim Forest, February 22, 1966.)

Nonviolence

Despite his personal commitment to nonviolence and membership in pacifist groups, Merton never condemned those who resorted to violence in self-defense. He accepted the possibility that just wars could occur and never insisted that a Christian must be a conscientious objector to all wars. But, as he wrote to Dorothy in 1962, the issue of the just war is pure theory. . . . in practice all the wars that are [happening] . . . are shot through and through with evil, falsity, injustice, and sin so much so that one can only with difficulty extricate the truths that may be found here and there in the "causes" for which the fighting is

going on. So in practice I am with you. . . . (Letter to Dorothy Day, June 16, 1962.)

What he found valid in the just war tradition was its insistence that evil must be actively opposed and it was this that drew him to Gandhi, which he praised Dorothy for doing in his first letter to her, and to membership in the Fellowship of Reconciliation, a movement committed to active nonviolent struggle for social justice.

Unity

One of the most striking of Merton's insights has to do with human unity.

He spoke of this deep sense of God's presence everywhere and in everyone in a talk given to his brother monks when he was moving into a hermitage at the Abbey of Gethsemani:

Life is this simple: We are living in a world that is absolutely transparent and God is shining through it all the time. God manifests Himself everywhere, in everything—in people and in things and in nature and in events. It becomes very obvious that He is everywhere and in everything and we cannot be without Him. You cannot be without God. It's impossible. It's simply impossible. The only thing is that we don't see it. What is it that makes the world opaque? It is care.

In the talk he gave in Calcutta a few weeks before he died, Merton said:

The deepest level of communication is . . . communion. It is wordless. It is beyond words, and it is beyond speech, and it is beyond concept. Not that we discover a new unity. We discover an older unity. My dear brothers, we are already one. But we imagine that we are not. What we have to recover is our original unity. What we have to be is what we are."

It was precisely this unity that he experienced at Fourth and Walnut in Louisville when God woke him from his dream of separateness.

(Thomas Merton's letters, including those cited here, are collected in *The Hidden Ground of Love: The Letters of Thomas Merton*. Selected and edited by William H. Shannon, New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1985. —Eds. note.)

Hibakusha

(Continued from page 6)

and Steven Okazaki. (His most recent commercial movie is *Living On Tokyo Time*. He has won acclaim for his documentaries, including *Survivors* (1982) about American hibakusha, and *Unfinished Business*, a portrait of three Japanese-Americans who refused to go to the relocation camps. It received a 1987 Academy Award nomination.)

On August 6, 1988, as they do each year, American hibakusha gathered in a solemn memorial service. Led by Buddhist, Shinto and Christian clergy they offered prayers for the spirits and souls of those who died forty-three years ago. The stark simplicity, the restraint and dignity of the service seemed to render more painful the memories and grief of that distant summer day. Two floors below, thousands of people crowded the streets of San Francisco's Japantown for the annual end-of-summer street fair. The incongruous echo of laughter and music filtering into the meeting room was a violent intrusion, harsh and abrasive, but somehow fitting, a visual and aural confirmation that American hibakusha, isolated in war, are isolated still in peace. Despite that, they persevere.

(For more information, or to make contributions, contact the Committee of Atomic Bomb Survivors in the United States, 1109 Shell Gate Place, Alameda, California 94501. —Eds. note.)

A BIOGRAPHY OF ADE BETHUNE

Since the earliest days of the Catholic Worker, readers have been edified and uplifted by the artwork of Ade Bethune in the pages of the newspaper. We know that many people will be pleased to learn about the publication of a biography by Sr. Judith Stoughton, CSJ, entitled *Proud Donkey of Schaerbeek: Ade Bethune, Catholic Worker Artist*. Copies are available, at \$19.95 plus \$1.50 for shipping, from: North Star Press of St. Cloud, P.O. Box 451, St. Cloud, Mn. 56302. Tel. (612) 253-1636.