

the catholic peace fellowship

An educational service conducted by Catholic members of the Fellowship of Reconciliation

5 BEEKMAN STREET, NEW YORK, N. Y. 10038

WO 4-8367

December 29, 1966

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Dear Tom:

Christmas is drawing nigh: And Christmas shopping is still not accomplished. It has been a very busy couple of days here. Paul Hanly Furfey just left, having spent the part of these last two days with us. Have you seen his latest book, The Respectable Murderers?

I have just been talking to John Wu, Jr. He is the son of your friend John Wu, and recognized your many photographs on the wall here. I didn't recognize the name at first, and felt a little silly when he mentioned the fact that you and his father were in contact. Then it dawned on me.

John is seeking recognition as a conscientious objector. But there is a wrinkle. He just lost his student deferment, and within a very few days received an induction order, before he was able to apply for recognition as a CO. That means that unless the Selective Service people are willing to suspend his induction order so that he can apply for recognition as a CO, he will be faced with the likelihood of prosecution if he refuses to submit to induction.

I have just written to his local Board with a carbon copy to the State Director of Selective Service in Trenton, New Jersey, asking that they consider his claim, suspend the induction notice and grant him full right of appeal as a CO. Perhaps if you wrote a similar letter, addressed to the local Board No. 18, Room 301, 1060 Broad Street, Newark, New Jersey, it would help.

Robert Pollack's son was in a couple of weeks ago, with a standard CO case. I don't think he will have any trouble. But we could be in for a hard time with John Wu if they refuse to consider his claim. There is some legal precedent for re-opening a classification if the crystallization of the objection occurred before the induction order was sent. This is a new interpretation just given by a Federal Judge in this District. It has yet to be tested.

I am getting in touch with my own lawyer, Marvin Karpatkin, on this. Karpatkin is I think the best Selective Service lawyer in the country. He did a fine job for me.

Wish I could go on at greater length, but we are very rushed and I would like to close up early today to buy a Christmas tree. I am

Thomas Merton

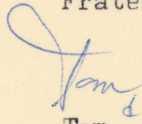
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going to attempt to see Alice Lynd this weekend. She is working on a book concerning conscience, objection, dissent whathave you, and I think she is going to use some of my stuff.

Best wishes for a very good Christmas for you and for everyone down there, with hopes for a productive New Year.

Fraternally,



Tom

TC:d