

BE RECONCILED

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KATALLAGETE

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Journal of the Committee of Southern Churchmen

WINTER 1974

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KATALLAGETE BE RECONCILED

Journal of the Committee Of Southern Churchmen

EDITOR

JAMES Y. HOLLOWAY

Box 936, College Station
 Berea, Kentucky 40403
 (606) 986-8218

PUBLISHER

WILL D. CAMPBELL

for the Committee
 of Southern Churchmen

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The Committee of
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GIDEON FRYER
 President

WILL D. CAMPBELL
 Director

Post Office Box 2215
 Nashville, Tennessee 37214
 Telephone (615) 758-7862

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Front Cover by Al Clayton:

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ABOUT THIS ISSUE

This issue of *Katallagete*—Be Reconciled is about non-violence. And it is about violence. It seems to be difficult to write about non-violence without writing also of violence. We asked a number of people to write on the subject. Some of them were involved in the Civil Rights Movement. Some of them were in the Anti-war Movement. Others were observers and marginal participants in one or both.

Some of those most actively involved in, and committed to, the non-violence of the sixties declined to say anything at all. Others of them agreed to say what they have said here. As to what the declension of those in the first mentioned group says of them we can but speculate. The words of the second group speak for themselves.

We note that more whites than blacks chose to address us. Maybe this says more about us than we wanted to hear in the first place. Of the four women who agreed initially to write, none did. Perhaps the same word is true here.

So much for those who think it a time to speak. And so much for those who see it as a time to keep silence.

Why is it difficult to speak of non-violence without it often becoming a response, or an alternative, to violence? Is violence the *given* within the human breast and non-violence merely a *possible* we can but strive for? Is violence the norm and non-violence some strange mutation which occasionally will capture the fancy of a few freaks, weirdos and fanatics? The writers on the pages which follow argue and document both positions.

In introducing what they have said it is not our intention either to commend or refute. They have said what

they have said. So be it. Neither their words nor ours are going to put an end to the violence in the world. And neither their words nor ours are going to establish finally and definitively whether the *given* is violence or its absence. The intention is rather to stress two simple points which are made in one way or another by those who write for us.

First, if we, all of us, as one and as a body, cannot find it possible to refrain from violence, we can at least refrain from celebrating it, from being proud of it. Never, for example, has one of our wars been lamented, not even the most recent one, the most rational purpose of which was finally stated as follows: *The purpose of the war was to bring our prisoners of war home with honor.* Even such complete lunacy as that is celebrated. On our special days and by the new President of these United States when he refers to our hired—albeit for the most part coerced and unwilling—killers as the “silent heroes of this generation,” and tells those who refused to be our hired killers that they can come home only with *dishonor*, namely the admission that they were wrong, and by restitution for their alleged immorality. We can make our national days of feasting and jubilation days of fasting and repentance. We, of the Faith, can drown out the roar of cannons, soaring jets, long and loud patriotic speeches with our own sounds of breast beating, confession, lamentation and sobs of sadness. To do otherwise is sure and certain blasphemy.

Second, we of the Faith, we who claim to take our cue from the Christ, can cease to ask the State on every and on each occasion to tell us when our violence is permissible, when it is moral, ethical and all right. Even as we cease to do so, Caesar will say, “But your Christ was not non-violent. He said, ‘I come not to bring peace but a sword.’” And so He did. We do not say that Christ

was non-violent, at least not in our culturally defined use of the term. We say only that He was, and is, the Christ. “Ah, but your Messiah was no pacifist. He took a whip and drove folks out of the house of worship.” And so he did. We are not contending that the Messiah was a pacifist. Again, not as we have permitted “civilization as we know it” to define and interpret. We are contending only that He was, and is, the Messiah. And then, parenthetically, add that it is a long way for sure from a leather strap to chase chicken peddlers out of the church house to dropping forty thousand tons of bombs on a tragic little country on His birthday and in His name.

Whether the violence is in war, in school, in prison or in church, it is the same. Whether it is directed at body, mind or spirit, we go on turning to the powers of this world to define, legalize, authorize, ethicalize, and justify our violence.

For example. “Is it all right, sir, to kill my neighbor if he beats his wife, starves his family, poisons my cattle and empties his sewage in my yard so as to give my children typhoid?” “No. Certainly not. And if you do kill him we will put you in prison.” “Very well. I won’t do it.” “By the way, though. It is permissible to kill, in my name and because you are loyal to me, 1,659,531 Vietnamese men, women and children.” So we do it.

And for example. “Is it all right, sir, if we kill my wife’s mother who does not know her name, where she is, what day it is, what century it is? You see, sir, she is a terrible burden on my wife’s body and I have heard tell that you have ruled that everyone should be able to control

their own body.” “Well, no. At least not yet. But you *can* kill your daughter’s baby if she or he (we prefer to say *it*) is a burden on *her* body. Or even if he or she (we still prefer *it*) is going to be an inconvenience for awhile. But don’t get impatient. As soon as science and technology can make it clean enough, antiseptic enough, nothing left to see or touch or mourn, *then* we’ll let you kill your mother-in-law too.”

“Thank you, sir, for your moral and ethical clarification and leadership. I’m too old to fight your war. But since there is no Selma Bridge to march across I’ll man the referral switchboard. ‘Cause I’m still a lover. Just like then. And I do *so* want to be on the frontier, on the cutting edge, of social action.

“By the way, sir. What do we do about the Sixth Commandment?” “Well, that didn’t mean don’t kill for your country. You remember. Even your sweet Jesus said to give me what’s mine.” “But what about the violence to the unborn?” “Well, again, I, law, have decreed that a human is not a human until I declare it a human. And another thing. Quit calling me Caesar. We’re *all* Caesar. We’re *all* the state. That’s why we vote and pay taxes and try to get good churchy folks in politics. So back to your altar fires and tea parties. Church and State are at peace. We are at Oneness. There is no conflict. Have no fear of me and I’ll have no fear of you for you are me and I am you.”

“We have no king but Caesar!”

“That’s more like it. Only don’t call me Caesar.”

“What about if we *all*, you, and we, sing in unison:

“We have no Church but our church?”

“O, I think that’s so much better!”

W.D.C.

NON-VIOLENCE IN AMERICAN SOCIETY

Vine Deloria, Jr.

Vine Deloria, Jr., a Standing Rock Sioux, is the former Executive Director of the National Congress of American Indians. He was a member of the Board of Inquiry on Hunger and Malnutrition in the U. S. A., and of the National Office for the Rights of the Indigent. An attorney, he holds degrees from the School of Law of the University of Colorado and the Lutheran School of Theology at Rock Island, Illinois. His most recent book is God is Red (Grossett & Dunlap); He is also the author of Custer Died For Your Sins; We Talk, You Listen, and editor Of Utmost Good Faith.

The world has grown much older and smaller, it seems, since the days when, summoned to a new frontier which could be subdued by sincerity and purity of heart, we began a process of non-violent social change. In the intervening decade and a half we have seen the world revolve many times, heard prophecies of doom and reassurances of the normality of our existence, and participated in the martyrdom of many prophets of non-violence. After a decade of social and political effort to make the American ideology applicable to all people, we stand dumbfounded while the greatest political criminal in American history retires from the scene, pardoned and with pension and sympathetic groupies in hand.

The bitterness of reflection these days dwells not on what was accomplished but on what could have been accomplished had men been reasonable, just, or even consistent with themselves. But the purpose of disillusion is to force us to clarify what and who we are and to enable us to examine, in the light of our goals and beliefs, those forces that changed our lives and manner, in which both incident and coincidence forever altered our lives.

One cannot satisfactorily date the beginnings of our modern social movement, for there are many events waiting as candidates for historical immortality, and in choosing which incident proved to be the spark that caused people to become dissatisfied with the conditions around them, we preclude examination of what it was, in the final analysis, that we were trying to do. Perhaps a better way to review the meaning of our adult lives, for that is what we are discussing, whether we are fifty years old or half that age, is to examine the basis upon which we expected changes to come about. If there was any single motivating strategy in the last decade and a half that had meaning, it was the commitment to seek change through non-violent protests, which carried symbolic and practical goals into the arena of history.

It is too easy to examine non-violence as a technique without recognizing that most significant practitioners of non-violence now lie in their graves, sacrificial victims of a process that demonstrated high ethical and social commitment in a world devoted to survival at any cost. We should not be concerned initially with the sacrificial victims, even though they form an indelible part of our world and describe for us the extent of commitment that non-violence requires. The task should be rather to question why we thought that non-violence was a viable option for any type of change that would certainly prove disruptive of existing conditions and institutions.

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Non-violence, it seems to me, is a way of life that depends upon a number of factors that are generally

assumed but rarely, if ever, exist in significant quantities in any society. It must certainly — for adherents of the Christian religion and peoples of some of the other traditions — stem from the religious world-view taught in religious institutions and promulgated in political theory as a justification for the concept of citizenship and its corresponding sets of responsibilities. Both citizenship and religious commitment seem to be based upon a number of propositions, two of which we must certainly confront in an examination of the place of non-violence in social existence.

One proposition that must be present when discussing non-violence would seem to be that societies and religions are built at least partially on the supposition that no significant number of people will be stirred from their inertia to accomplish anything. They will not think. They will not question. And, most important, they will not object to whatever happens until it directly affects the manner in which they view their own personal survival.

This inertia works constructively and destructively. A small group of dedicated people, enlivened with a vision of something better and more profound, can sway the inertial mass by introducing, symbolically and through non-violent refusal to go along, a new understanding of what it is that everyone thinks they believe. The genius of the early demonstrations of the civil rights movement was that the battle had already been decided in the courts. The symbolic question of integration that was raised was almost always "why shouldn't we integrate?" "Why shouldn't blacks have the same rights as whites?" The inertial mass had democracy, law, and ethics already defined for it in the courts, and the problem was one of bringing the message into tangible situations where it could be understood. Suffering, as a means for defining in concrete terms the abstractions of citizenship and morality, was a powerful and proper weapon.

The commitment to non-violence, however, was soon twisted in its symbolic impact because the medium of television consumed symbolic events much quicker than people consumed them. The technique of illustrating injustice and oppression via demonstrations began to backfire as soon as the message of the demonstrations became complex. By the time of the Poor People's March, the issues were so profound and so much more complicated than the simplicity of integration that the inertial social mass could no longer understand the complexity of tangential issues which the leaders of social change could clearly see. Television became a demon creating instant leadership and raising issues of emotional intensity which had no structural place in the process of defining the meaning of human existence.

At this point in the process, the second basic proposition of non-violence emerged. Non-violence assumed that there was a basic minimum level of decency present in any society. This proposition was expressed in many ways, but never articulated directly so that people for and against social change could adopt it as a basic boundary

of the meaning of human existence. Non-violence had to be based upon the idea that sacrifice and suffering were redemptive, because there was a minimum definition of the meaning of a human being which all people accepted and below which no person would dare to go.

The destructive nature of the inertial mass was thus able to assert itself, for as the situation became confused, the demagogic politician arose, who reassured the mass of the basic decency of human existence as defined by the old rules which the demagogue promised to reinstitute. By appealing to the fears and confusion of the inertial mass, the situation was reversed by proponents of the *status quo* and exploited for purely selfish and egotistical reasons. As we have seen from the Watergate revelations, there was no minimum sense of decency present in the administration past, and there may be very little existing in the present administration.

Non-violence, therefore, was a partial answer to the question of social change because it described partially and optimistically the best that was possible in human experience. Yet the use of non-violence assumed the existence of a benevolent god who presided over a benign universe and whose actions were largely incomprehensible yet always produced a satisfactory conclusion. Like the pre-established harmony of the philosophers, social conditions were supposed to resolve themselves because the goal was right, people were sincere, and the principles on which change was predicated were consistent.

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The mysticism of both the Christian religion and the American political system was examined minutely by the technique of non-violence and found wanting, because deep down there really was no basic definition of decency when confronting the reality of masses of people living together. Even the proponents of citizenship who believed deeply and not rhetorically in the American values, counseled people that it didn't matter how one voted, just as long as one did vote. Again the mystical assumption that beneath the tensions of social existence either the unseen hand of god or the wisdom of the people would automatically work to set things right.

Reliance on the unseen and unsuspected intervention of the minimum definition of decency seems to be a function of the prophetic role in western religions. Jesus, in the New Testament, relates that the people who acclaimed him decried the fact that their fathers had killed the prophets and vowed that had they been alive in the times of the prophets they would have recognized the prophetic message and responded properly. Jesus' insight was merely an echo of what has been experienced in the past and what the future would one day realize. The attitude exists today and few people, if one were to ask seriously, would not have chosen to support abolition of slavery had they been alive a century ago, or would not have stolen Indian lands in fraudulent treaties had they been given the chance to negotiate the agreements.

If we understand the boundaries within which non-violence can work, we can see that we have been somewhat askew in understanding the nature of human existence. Neither our religious teachings nor our political institutions have been founded on firm foundations. We have traditionally skirted the question of evil in the world by observing, first, the needless suffering of people and jumping almost immediately to the question of how god can allow such things to happen. We have sought comfort before we have even understood the meaning of our problem. Instead of asking "why does evil exist?" we should have been asking, "why do men do evil things?"

The same principle comes into play with our political institutions. We have been taught to demand our rights, but there has been little emphasis on our responsibilities. The expectation has been that government exists to make us happy and to guarantee fulfillment of our personal whims whether by hook or crook, and the lower the profile the better. Political theory has demanded only that people assent to what does not directly and immediately affect them, because the complexity of problems requires that we delegate decision-making and responsibility to our chosen representatives. We dare not question what motivates our political leaders to do the things they do. Our only responsibility has been to believe and to assume that somewhere a minimum definition of decency and integrity exists because we have defined governments as the means that individuals chose to order their social, political, economic and philosophical relationships.

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The prophetic function of both religion and politics must stem less from the romantic and more from the practical, if we are to understand where we have been and why, upon reflection, we did not come the way we intended to come. One can perhaps only remember Jeremiah's commission "to root out and pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, *to build, and to plant,*" (Jer. 1:10) to recognize the naiveté with which people in the domestic social movement approached non-violence as a prophetic commission, for the commitment to change failed to describe adequately or consistently the manner in which the world would again become comprehensible politically or socially.

One could object that Martin Luther King's great speech at the Reflecting Pond describing the new society that would be built on the old, or the optimism of "Aquarius" and the Flower Children was sufficient demonstration of a new order to attract a following and blunt the forces of reaction. But again we assume in this objection that the minimum definition of decency operates to pull people forward to a greater experience of their humanity. Spontaneity of visions can be inspirational, but they do not provide the myriad of minutiae demanded by a society in turmoil and change. Solutions in a social movement must come nearly as fast or at least

as profoundly as the events that disrupt the society.

We cannot conceive of non-violence today without remembering the grandeur of former days when our motives were pure, our cause just, and our movement charging with singleminded determination toward a not-to-distant goal. As we recall former days, we should not despair at our lost innocence or degrade our memories of times of crisis and danger. Regardless of how far we appear to be from our original goal, the fact remains that we have changed the world in an irreversible manner, and in participating in what has been essentially an act of creation, we have broadened the boundaries of a possible minimum definition of decency which now needs to find the time to incarnate itself and grow old, familiar, and wear thin until we can rediscover at an even greater depth the absence of a commonly shared realization of our humanity.

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Non-violence seems to be an exhaustive and consuming avenue in which the conditions for creation can occur. As such it consumes lives either in a corresponding violence of reaction or in an enervating passage of time in which the passion of justice becomes the wisdom of perspective. It would do well for us, in these days of institutional paranoia and political perversion of our lives, to reflect on the nature of non-violence as the procreative act necessary to trigger forces beyond the comprehension of any expectations we might have had.

Social existence in a real sense is the continual testing, expansion, and retesting of possible definitions of the meaning of human existence. The non-violent response to conditions is perhaps the most explosive method of change available to the human species, for it instantaneously freezes the definitions which orient humans at the deepest level of identity crisis and it forces these definitions which have been covered over by vague and comfortable beliefs to come together for a testing of the integrity of the world. And when that integrity is found wanting, as it will always be, because of the nature of our existence in time, a creational process must certainly ensue which can be benign or evil, but which most certainly will come to pass.

The final question for any society, therefore, is not how much violence it can take, but how much non-violence it can take. American society quite probably can take no more non-violence at present. Its myths are facing a geometrically increasing rate of dissolution with the revelations that the most profound representatives of its former myths, the politicians, are far behind the ordinary citizen in discovering a minimum definition of a human being. The most profound disruption today would be the articulation of common sense alternatives, common sense being the rarest of human characteristics.

The very logic of our institutions compels such disruption. Pardons, it would seem, must abound if the most profound criminal of all has already received his pardon.

If success can only be achieved through trickery and deceit, then the only criteria for action can be inconsistency, and we already see this eloquently demonstrated in Congress and our other institutions, for even good trickery can be predicted and only the arbitrary can be seen as a rational principle of operation. The very chaos of our times would seem to indicate a change for the better, because we appear to be exhausting all possible rationales for our existence. The inevitable logics that locked our minds into predetermined patterns of behavior are giving way to the possibility of the freedom of exploration of the meaning of human existence.

It was perhaps this intuitive leap that Martin Luther King and others made when they described the civil rights results as being "free at last," for the connection is not immediately obvious to most of us. We come, then, to the original boundary of non-violence, the proposition that no significant number of people will depart from the generally anticipated patterns of behavior. In a society unwinding its rationale, there can be no deviations, merely a series of choices, but these choices will not be choices taught to us as the proper choices, they will simply be those paths of life that seem proper, attractive, and meaningful.

□ □ □

But finally, there is simply the profound sadness that comes to us when we hear old songs, recall half-forgotten incidents, or see the debris of places that once meant so

much to so many people. Contrary to the American social doctrine, it is really good to be sad for a while. The final dimension of non-violence must certainly be in the comfort of the remembrance of having practiced it once in one's life and in allowing its mellowed wisdom to flow back in warmth, occasionally.

Debate over the validity of non-violence as a technique for social change must certainly and finally give way to one thing, among many that humans seem to share: expectations. Unless human beings have or are allowed to generate a certain number of expectations, they have no distinctions from the other life forms and probably do not do as well as the other life forms in fulfilling themselves. The demonstration of non-violence is the ultimate expression of expectation, because it opens the possibility of discovering that one is not alone—which is the only affirmation we have of our existence.

We have been and we will continue to be in a state of creation, generated a decade and a half ago. If we cannot see the waves of unexpected change sweeping over us as the direct result of the non-violence of the past and see that it is time to build and plant, then we have badly misunderstood the dimensions of our own existence. We will have mistakenly committed a final rejection of our own deepest beliefs in the efficacy of redemptive suffering which, once unleashed, energizes the universe and sweeps everything clean before it. We have no choice now but to follow the spirit where it leads.

There is, after all, no other way out

□

OF POISONS AND ANTIDOTES

Philip Berrigan

Phillip Berrigan is a member of the community of Jonah House, Baltimore, Maryland. His most recent book is Widen the Prison Gates; earlier titles include No More Strangers; A Punishment for Peace and Prison Journals of a Priest Revolutionary. He spent thirty-nine months in jail for his anti-war activities.

I heard recently of a farmer who had a watermelon patch. With it, of course, came an unwelcome popularity—the neighborhood kids began to poach and feast. Accordingly, the farmer set up a sign, "One of these watermelons is poisoned. Guess which one!"

In a day or two, the farmer went to check his melons. Next to his sign, he encountered another, as bold and imaginative as his own: "There's your poisoned watermelon, and there's ours. Now *you* guess which one!"

Some will get the point easily. Americans tend to view the world as the farmer viewed his watermelon patch. Moreover, if Americans are white, privileged and "men of rank," the tendency often becomes dominant, even obsessive. Naturally, natives from Indochina, Latin America, Indonesia and Africa will contest our view, just as the neighborhood kids contested the farmer's view. Poaching begins. Then poisoning. Then, in turn, counterpoisoning.

Without wringing excessive meaning from a simple parable, this much seems clear: the violence of the farmer's possession of the kids' stealing, or of the first, second or tenth poisoning, describe a minor war between owner and thieves. "There's your poisoned watermelon, and there's ours. Now *you* guess which one!"

A case in point is Indochina. There, the analogous stalemate between farmer and kids has reached classic and profound proportions. Americans have gotten from that twenty-five year-old war a case of war poisoning as spiritually deadly in its own right as the physical death spewed out upon the Indochinese. It is, furthermore, war poisoning of an almost irremediable form, characterized by twin delusions in leaders and people;

widespread craving for normalcy, and increased dosage as antidote for poisoning, i.e., more weapons systems for peace.

As for the Indochinese, they too have known war poisoning, less spiritual in its devastation than physical, geophysical, economic, social and cultural. The war has decimated their population, ravaged the peninsula (perhaps irreparably), ruined the economy, and riddled social and cultural patterns with American commercial and technological garbage. Famed as is the Indochinese (especially Vietnamese) culture, capable as it has been of withstanding foreign onslaught for upwards of a thousand years, history's last word is not yet in on the American invasion. The Vietnamese egg (symbol of native culture) may have indeed cracked the American rock. But in the struggle, the egg itself may have depleted its life, exhausted by counterpoisoning.

Yet, in pursuing an analogy from farmer and kids to Americans and Indochinese, it is not my intent to provoke the interminable controversy of violence versus non-violence, remarkable, by and large, for its ignorance of either reality. Nor is it to disparage a resistance nearly unparalleled for its tenacious inspiration and heroism. It is merely to reassert the Christian position of love of God and love of neighbor, a position which allows neither equivocation or qualification, neither poisoning or counterpoisoning. "Love is the highest and only law of human life . . . In reality, as soon as force was admitted into love, there was no more and there could be no more love as the law of life, and as there was no law of love, there was no law at all, except violence, i.e., the power of the strongest" (Tolstoy).

II.

One can hope to grow wiser with age. When I first entered civil disobedience against the government and

its Indochina War in 1966 and 1967, I saw violence only in the grosser characteristics of the war—racism, paranoia about Chinese expansion, imperial firepower versus peasant insurgency, etc. My training had not been in non-violence *per se*, but what we Catholics call justice and rights, so I felt a gut outrage over burying black veterans from my parish, or over accounts of a 1000-to-1 firepower ratio. The whole debacle struck me as horribly cruel and unjust.

Nor did I comprehend, in terms of violence, the formidable Catholic support for this brutal and inexplicable war. Assuredly, I felt a ranking disgust with Catholic silence, Catholic rationalizations, Catholic cowardice. I loved my church as most Christians love theirs, and to contrast its warmongering with the resistance of Ignatius Martyr, Thomas More or Alfred Delp, I found profoundly mortifying and shameless. I recall one bitter day, sometime after my first week in jail, when I understood that most Catholics, Christians or Jews—like Americans professing nothing—believe little worth living for.

I saw violence only in its specifics those days, not as a spinoff of the idols that we enshrine, or as evidence of individual and institutional participation in the Fall. American leadership in the doomsday marathon I found singularly insane, and strenuously questioned it from the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962. On several occasions, I shared platforms with scientists converted from research and development of thermonuclear weapons to posts with Kennedy's Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. Conjectures flew about—much more so than today—addressing the question, if the death race proceeds, will we make it? Our chances, the scientists guessed, on the best authority they had, as less than half.

Their estimate, which I believed and believe to be even less today, helped to make Vietnam a priority issue for me. As far as I could see, our one-ups-manship against the Nazis and Japanese (Dresden, Hamburg, Tokyo, Yokohama) threw the industrialized world into military lockstep. We confirmed that perilously at Hiroshima in 1945. Vietnam was the rancid fruit of that tree, a tragedy continuous with our share of the 50 million dead of World War II, the 400,000 Japanese of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the casualties of Korea. More than this, I felt, Vietnam placed an intolerable strain on the lockstep, and indeed, accelerated its cadence. It took faint imagination to fear it as already convulsive, or the final catalyst to oblivion.

I bore the reader with this because one must explain a process whereby belief combines with observation to become conviction. When the two fuse, one must act. Valentyn Moroz, currently dying in a KGB prison in the Soviet Union, writes of the foundation that faith imparts to resistance: "It appears as if a person is first convinced and then begins to believe. In reality it is the opposite; at first a person flares up with faith and only then seeks arguments to uphold his convictions. If there is faith,

the arguments will be found. They (the arguments) may be naive, but that makes no difference" (*Report from the Beria Reserve*, p. 96).

Some thought the arguments naive when we defaced Selective Service Records with blood at the Customs House in Baltimore in 1967. When people absorbed that "bizarre display" with equanimity, we went back to Catonsville, there to fashion a better statement by burning records with homemade napalm. The government reacted with six years for Tom Lewis and myself, but our second time in trouble, and the harsh sentence, tended to evoke more notice and understanding. People felt, I suppose, that the government was playing dirty pool by burning out peasants and locking us up. Support solidified more with the Catonsville trial, with another before the State of Maryland in May 1969, and with the Harrisburg Conspiracy trial in early 1972. Nor did thirty-nine months in prison, several stretches in solitary and several anti-war fasts hurt.

It was all not lagniappe. With too many perhaps, we become the focus of resistance to the war. They resisted in us. But others enlarged the trend, initiated by the Baltimore Four, participating in over 200 "standby" and surreptitious raids through 1971. General Hershey, then Director of Selective Service, testified before an appropriate Congressional Committee that these incursions had considerably hampered the system, exacerbating problems caused by young men refusing conscription. To cap it off, many of the resisters and raiders disrupted the federal penal system from within by strikes against prison industries (largely war-related), by anti-war demonstrations and fasts. Perhaps this history, however unpretentious, explains why the mandarins fear and respect the so-called religious "left," and why it is held in such high regard abroad.

But these achievements remain indeed modest in the face of an American public whose spiritual damage is magnified by nearly thirty-five years of war madness. Modest too, in face of the Indochinese, who have suffered 100,000 dead since we signed the Paris Peace Accords; who are now affected by mass starvation in South Vietnam and parts of Cambodia. The Saigon regime cages forty-seven percent of the world's political prisoners in *our* jails and Tiger Cages and Cow Caves (a recent sophistication of the Tiger Cage, where prisoners languish in foul, cramped caves, foreign to light and even, sometimes, air). Modest, finally, while war is entrenched as primary national business and primary element of foreign policy (note military budgets, new weapons systems, arms sales and Ford's faithful apeing of Nixon's Middle East and Indochina programs).

It is in this context of official lunacy and public numbness that non-violent resistance must be built. (The human odds against it being built do more than boggle the mind; they stun it). If one can conclude that the political roots of war are public apathy and official powergrabbing, one must then appraise the liberal-

radical capacity to build resistance and peace. Liberals and most radicals will not build resistance (to build resistance is to help others form lives of resistance) for two reasons: they lack sufficient religious and traditional roots (a *satyagraha* must believe in God); and secondly, they avoid the State's penalties for civil disobedience. The first lack obstructs the development of stamina; the second hinders a clear exposé of the State's crimes, as well as preventing others from seeing viable alternatives to complicity.

Ellul claims that it is nearly impossible to form non-violent resistance in the West, especially in the United States. In India, he insists, Gandhi worked with an invaded and exploited people, with a native tradition receptive to *satyagraha*, and with the liberal Christianity of the British. No such advantages exist in the United States—no clearcut poverty under an invader (Americans recoil from thinking that their financial and political pharaohs are "invaders"), no receptive religious tradition ("what's good for G.M. is good for the Kingdom"), and virtually little official or public tolerance for serious dissent, whatever the magnitude of grievance (recall Hoover's Counterintelligence Program of 1968, Rockefeller's crushing of the Attica uprising, and Nixon's mandate of 1972).

Nevertheless, the principles of *satyagraha*, (pursuit of truth, loving means and self-sacrifice) remain inherently relevant to any people, any culture, any human conflict. Rejection of them, moreover, may be suicidal, the nature of war now being what it is, and so, advantages in the United States, or in the West, remain nonexistent or trivial because they are not made. In fact, their absence throws into harsh relief the idolatrous bent of structured Judaism and Christianity, their apotheosizing of privilege and the leader. Property being the first graven image of Jew and Christian, support for war becomes hardly surprising, war being the second idol to protect the first idol of property.

Jew and Christian need to recall the kingmaking episode of I Samuel 8, which follows the sequence of rejection of God, worship of idols (property), king-making ("to rule us and to lead us in warfare and to fight our battles") and inevitably, war itself. Christians would do well to ponder the first temptation of Christ, since they habitually succumb to it, or reflect upon the first beatitude, invariably regarded as fullblown utopianism. Both the Bible and history evidence that the idol of property displaces God as God, destroying the divine injunction to reverence life, and eventually flinging wide the door to murder. For the privilege of being captive to power (property), Nixon would become a genocide. For the privilege of being captive to his bank, Joe Ordinary will kill in "just" wars, or covertly support them with complicit vote, war tax and silence.

III

Which leads us not to what *must* be done, but what

can be done—"must" being a course which most Americans will practically reject, because they neither comprehend the bond between privilege and war, nor grasp the peril to which privilege-war has brought them.

Somewhat close to the mark of "can" is the story of Elis Weisel, from his novel *Souls on Fire*. "One of the Just Men came to Sodom, determined to save its inhabitants from sin and punishment. Night and day he walked the streets and markets preaching against greed and theft, falsehood and indifference. In the beginning, people listened and smiled ironically. Then they stopped listening: he no longer even amused them. The killers went on killing, the wise kept silent, as if there were no Just Man in their midst.

"One day a child, moved by compassion for the unfortunate preacher, approached him with these words. 'Poor stranger, you shout, you expend yourself body and soul; don't you see that it is hopeless?'"

"Yes, I see," answered the Just Man.

"Then why do you go on?"

"I'll tell you why. In the beginning I thought I could change man. Today, I know I cannot. If I still shout today, if I still scream, it is to prevent man from ultimately changing me."

By way of minimum, one "can," therefore, struggle against the corruption of a complicit majority. But that is hardly a Christian position, suffused as it is with hope for the most criminal of adversaries. What then of the Christian witness when the "Christian" West resembles Sodom, or when the Superpowers are like maddened rattlers with nuclear fangs?

James Douglass, in a forthcoming book, addresses this question, "How does a Christian live in 'end time' — at ten, or five minutes to twelve?" In this vein, he recalls how the early Christians prepared for the world's end and for the Lord's return; even as perhaps, Christians should today prepare for the world's end at the hands of man, the suicide.

One would live daily perhaps, with a faith termed the ultimate sanity—with the conviction that the Lordship and Brotherhood of Jesus, despite contrary human evidence, remains the dominant power in creation. That means, in effect, that we allow Christ's sovereignty to destroy every other sovereignty in us, every work of death—every personal and interpersonal violence, every partnership in official violence.

Rather than leave such abstractions lofty and useless, I would conclude that concretely, one should seek a setting favorable to personal and public growth; one should live in poverty, in community, in non-violence, in risk and in resistance—the two main risks arising from resistance to interior violence, and from resistance to the State.

Carl Jung wrote prophetically before his death, that Westerners, as the "conglomerate State" devoured spiritually and socially, would turn to one another in the

realization that people are the last, and indeed, the only human resource. He predicted that communities of prayer, study, non-violent life and resistance would offer people the last refuge of sanity. George Orwell and Walker Percy, in their novels *1984* and *Love in the Ruins*, state the prospects, if not the options.

That process has begun in the United States—painfully and sporadically as with all new beginnings. But still begun. The basic for beginning is the powerlessness of government to be other than murderous, wasteful, exploitative, backed by the powerlessness of church, campus and media to offer viable alternatives to State corruption and crime. Americans have, I think, learned much from nuclear arms insanity, from governmental and institutional failure to insist on black rights, from perpetual war in Indochina, and from Ford's immunizing of Nixon, who should with Kissinger, Laird, Westmoreland and others, be held to a moral and legal accounting for war crimes.

Neither official propaganda, nor cultural trivality, nor the American penchant for flight from reality can entirely induce forgetfulness of the crimes and failures of power. As inflation and unemployment mount, as the war game remains a non-negotiable item of economy and policy, as the quality of national life deteriorates, as "leadership"

generates crises faster than people can analyze them or react to them, increasing numbers will seek one another to explore traditions presently comatose, saner modes of living, more vital forms of community, more rational ways of non-cooperation and resistance. That is the hope. Indeed, there may be no other.

What I suggest in closing is the priority of translating Gandhian *satyagraha* to an American setting, a *satyagraha* resting firmly on its Biblical sources. Unfortunately, there is no room in this treatment to widen the theological and political aspects of that priority beyond a few broad and basic guidelines:

1. A necessity to deepen faith in Christ as Lord and Brother; to see humanity as the unity he did; to develop trust in people.

2. An experimentation with God's truth, à la Gandhi, applying to all facets of life—contemplative, intellectual and emotional—to sexuality, diet and property.

3. Familiarity with the violence in our culture, in its interior and exterior forms.

4. Joint accounting to God and to community.

5. Balance between contemplative and public (later, resistance) life.

6. Determination to purify desire, to conquer fear, to love victim and enemy

NONVIOLENCE: FROM STRATEGY TO KARMA

Dick Gregory

Dick Gregory is a comedian, lecturer and social critic.

I guess I'm just the opposite of many others who were active in the civil rights movement of the sixties. I grew into non-violence rather than away from it.

In my autobiography *Nigger*, I wrote of my initial ambiguity regarding nonviolence. It was 1963. I had come to Greenwood, Mississippi, with 14,000 pounds of food and considerable celebrity status as a nationally acclaimed comedian. With that much food at today's prices, I'll be right at home alongside Rockefeller at the confirmation hearings.

An old Black Greenwood resident asked me a pointed question: "What are you going to do if they spit in your face, if they hit you, if they knock you down? Are you going to hit back?"

I answered as I felt at the time: "I'm going to try not to."

The old man's answer startled me: "Then we can't use you."

"Can't use me? Why the hell not?"

"Mister Gregory, you got to *know* you're not going to fight back."

The old man was right, of course. He knew the strategy of nonviolence was meaningless if there was any possibility of non-violent demonstrators succumbing to the old American way of violent reaction. Perhaps the old man also knew that nonviolence must be a way of life; a total commitment rather than a temporary strategy. If he did, he had learned a lesson I was to grow into gradually over the passing years.

My initial commitment to nonviolence was as a necessary strategy in the civil rights battle. And I'll always be grateful to Dr. Martin Luther King and the civil rights

movement for introducing me to the concept of non-violence because, in the process, I recovered my own manhood.

For hundreds of years, the Black man has lived under a system of oppression which stripped him of his manhood. The only thing left to the Black man was his cowardice. He could only pick up a gun and kill when white folks told him to do it. In those instances, the Black man was following orders rather than the dictates of conscience.

So when Dr. King began preaching nonviolent resistance, he appealed to my cowardice. In the process of going and confronting wrong nonviolently, I got my manhood back. The mistreatment I suffered while standing for the right nonviolently tested my manhood. Every time I saw a Southern sheriff or state trooper throw down his gun, club or cattle prod with tears in his eyes, unable to continue his violent, bullying ways any longer, I realized that the capacity for violence was not the measure of true manhood.

Violence is really a cover for cowardice. During the early stages of the civil rights movement, many Blacks excused themselves from participation by saying, "I'd sure like to go to Alabama but I'm not nonviolent. If someone hits me, I'm going to hit them back." Then along came Malcolm X and the old excuse didn't work any longer. Violence could not be used as cover for cowardice and an excuse for nonparticipation in the struggle. Blacks who felt they had to hit back could be told to go join Malcolm X and defend themselves. In most cases, those same Blacks would decide to stay with Dr. King for a while.

As a strategy, nonviolence meant "turning the other cheek" when victimized by violence rather than retaliating with an "eye for an eye" retribution. As my personal commitment to nonviolence deepened and my understanding of the concept grew, I was drawn closer to the commandment "Thou shalt not kill." For me, the commandment was total and uncompromising. You shall not kill, period. There are no qualifiers, justifications or modifications. You just don't kill. You don't participate in violence and killing.

I became convinced in my own mind that nonviolence had to mean opposition to killing in *any* form. I felt that the commandment "Thou shalt not kill" applied to human beings not only in their dealings with each other—war, lynching, assassination, murder and the like—but in their practice of killing animals for food or sport. Animals and humans die and suffer alike. Violence causes the same pain, the same spilling of blood, the same stench of death, the same arrogant, cruel and brutal taking of life.

So one night, during a nightclub engagement in San Francisco, while sitting in a hotel room in the wee hours of the morning talking with my comedy writer Jim Sanders, I made the decision never to eat meat again. I had become firmly convinced that the killing of animals for food was both immoral and unnatural.

Human beings are the most beautifully and brilliantly constructed machines in the universe. They are endowed by Nature with a wisdom and an intelligence surpassed by no other creature. As a human being and the beneficiary of Mother Nature's endowment of mind and body, I refused to stoop to the lowliness of *killing* something to get my dinner! That night, I became a vegetarian.

It was a moral decision; a decision which did not involve factors of diet or health. It was merely the natural outgrowth of my commitment to non-violence. Perhaps more accurately, I moved from commitment to non-violence as a total way of life.

I had seen nonviolence as a strategy partially applied. I had seen America pervert nonviolence by giving it a partial and racist interpretation. The nonviolent strategy was interpreted to mean that Black folks were not going to hit white folks.

America would applaud and breathe a sigh of relief if every Black person in the land stood up and said, "I am nonviolent." But when Muhammad Ali, Dr. King and other Blacks tried to show America that nonviolence means we are not supposed to be violent under any circumstances, anywhere in the world, which means, of course, not going to war, they were branded "Communists," called "unpatriotic," placed on "enemies lists," and in some cases thrown in jail.

So I became personally convinced that nonviolence was meaningless if it was applied selectively. Non-violence could not be applied to the war in Southeast Asia without applying equally to the Mideast or any other area of the globe. Black violence against whites is just as wrong as white violence against Blacks. Non-

violence must be taught on a mass scale rather than just teaching it to one segment of the world population. I believe the world would be a better place to raise our children if *all* men and women were nonviolent.

Of course, my personal, total commitment to non-violence means that I could not join my Black brothers in Africa or the United States were they to rise in bloody revolt. Nonviolence prohibits killing as a means of expressing even the most just of grievances.

My commitment to nonviolence endured during the late sixties and early seventies, the period of time when some former practitioners of the nonviolent strategy began to advocate more violent alternatives, because my changes in diet were accompanied by a growth in spirituality.

Although my becoming a vegetarian was a moral decision, I soon noticed changes taking place in my body. For one thing, when I stopped eating meat, my weight jumped up more than 100 pounds! I was under the mistaken impression that I somehow had to compensate for not eating meat, so I ate all the non-meat dishes I could hold, as often as I could.

But I noticed another change. My stomach and my sinus trouble disappeared. The only thing that was different about my way of life was that I no longer ate meat. So I was convinced that meat-eating (eating a violent dinner) had been responsible for my stomach and sinus ailments. I began to see the relationships between diet and health. If I had stopped smoking or stopped drinking when I became a vegetarian, I would have sworn the alcohol or tobacco were responsible for my physical problems.

In 1967, I made another moral decision, once again related to my commitment to nonviolence. I wanted to do something dramatic and personal to protest the continued violence and slaughter in Vietnam. So I announced that beginning on Thanksgiving Day, 1967, until New Year's Day, 1968, I would take only distilled water for nourishment. And I did just that!

My first forty days fast was really more of a protest against the violence in Vietnam than most people realized. Because I really thought I was going to die! I had never fasted before, although I my nutritionist-advisor Dr. Alvenia Fulton of Chicago had fasted for many long periods. I knew a forty-day fast was possible, but I wasn't sure it was possible for me.

During that first fast, I would come back to a hotel room somewhere after giving a lecture, flop down on the bed and fall asleep. Then I'd wake up in the middle of the night and pinch myself to see if I'd died in my sleep. I'd never been dead before, so I began to think, "Wow! Maybe this is what death feels like! Just one everlasting pinch!"

But I didn't die, as some of you may have heard. Quite the opposite, I climbed to a new plateau of living. What began as an act of social protest—a political act—became in the process of living it a "purifying act"—in

mind, body and spirit. As my body was cleansed through fasting of years of accumulated impurities and poisons resulting from improper eating habits, my mind and spiritual awareness were lifted to a new level. I felt closer to Mother Nature and all her children. I felt more in tune with the Universal Order of existence. I now knew the true meaning of the words I used to hear in church: "The body is the temple of the spirit." Just as Jesus drove the moneychangers out of the temple, fasting had driven the "devils of my former diet" from my own "temple," and my life changed completely.

My diet changed. I stopped eating cooked foods, eating only raw fruits and vegetables. Eventually I dropped the vegetables and became a fruitarian.

And my understanding and appreciation of non-violence was sharpened. I became aware of the law of Karma and the price which must be paid for ignoring Divine Wisdom and Universal Order. Karmic law is the law of cause and effect. It is summed up in the simple teaching, "As you sow, so shall ye reap." The law of karma insures that evil acts will bring evil consequences. Deeds not in tune with the natural order will produce a distortion. It is simply a fact of life, it's the way the Universal Order operates.

Acts of violence are violations of karmic law and sooner or later a price must be paid. We see the law of karma operating every day. While the violence in Southeast Asia was raging full scale, and American planes and pilots were causing terror in cities and villages of Cambodia, Laos, and North Vietnam, Southeast Asian folks were afraid to walk the streets for fear of being killed by Americans lurking somewhere in the clouds.

It's no accident that at the same time Americans here at home became increasingly reluctant to walk the streets of their own cities, afraid of being maimed or killed by other Americans lurking in the shadows. It's the law of karma.

To cut down crime in the streets of New York, special high-intensity sodium street lights were installed. All of a sudden, a Department of Agriculture study appeared showing that the new street lights were killers themselves. They were murdering the trees!

The lamps confused the trees by reversing the arrangement of the Universal Order, of night and day, summer and winter. Young trees froze to death because the lamps kept them growing longer into the fall than they would naturally. Once the wheel of karma starts turning, it cannot be stopped.

In his inaugural address of January 14, 1963, Governor George Wallace of Alabama told his cheering audience: "I draw the line in the dust and toss the gauntlet before the feet of tyranny; and I say segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever."

Five months later Governor Wallace stood at the door of the University of Alabama to block the entry of two Black students accompanied by federal officials. A court injunction and a presidential proclamation had ordered him not to interfere. But the Governor chose instead to support and encourage the path of violent resistance. The state National Guard was federalized and, the same afternoon, the Black students were registered at gunpoint under the law of the land.

Nine years later the same George Wallace stood before another cheering crowd in a shopping center in Laurel, Maryland, seeking the nomination for the same office he had ignored and abused nearly a decade before. As he tried to leave the shopping center, his exit was blocked by a would-be assassin (or assassins) whose sentiments were registered at gunpoint. Sooner or later the law of karma will prevail.

□ □ □

The current food crisis bears a direct relationship to violence at the dinner table. If folks were nonviolent in their eating habits, there would be enough foods to go around. I agree with the Chinese (at the recent world population conference in Bucharest) that eating habits, waste and greed are more to blame for world hunger than a population explosion!

The consumption of beef, for example, is quite literally taking grain away from starving human beings. It takes 10 pounds of grain to produce one pound of beef on the hoof. It takes 100 pounds of grain to produce one pound of edible beef. And it takes 10 pounds of edible animal protein to produce one pound on the person eating the meat. That means, 1,000 pounds of grain are needed to convert into one pound on the carnivorous person. Look at all the overweight meat-eaters in America and you get a pretty good idea who shares the blame for world hunger and starvation!

But food shortages are becoming more and more of a domestic problem and reality. Rising food prices are making the purchase of food an increasing impossibility for the poor. When food riots erupt in the streets and supermarkets of American cities, perhaps folks will realize that violence at the dinner table can lead to violence against each other.

It's the law of karma again

□

SPECULATIONS ON NON-VIOLENCE

Robert K. Musil

Robert K. Musil was active in the campus anti-war movement at Northwestern University and organized GI's at Ft. Benjamin Harrison, Indiana before refusing orders to Vietnam. He was discharged as a CO and was Associate Secretary of the CCCO—an agency for military and draft counseling, 1971-74. He has been on the councils for the National Council to Repeal the Draft and the National Council for Universal and Unconditional Amnesty and is currently an associate with the Center for National Security Studies, Washington, D. C.

"A pacifist! How quaint!" When people discover that I don't believe in war, it is as if I am transformed before their eyes into a character, complete with broad-brimmed hat, beard, and collarless shirt, out of another, simpler time. There is an air of amusement, mixed with condescension, that I find barely tolerable. "You mean you don't believe in fighting under any circumstances?"

Pacifists as Social Deviants

I am often tempted to respond in these situations, and have, "Oh, you mean you believe in settling political differences, if necessary, by raping, burning, disemboweling, and beheading people?" It is an unworthy retort. But at least it keeps me from throttling my would-be conversationalist. It also establishes quickly that I will not be subjected to the kind of arrogant, dehumanizing social stereotypes too familiar to anyone who has been called a "women's libber," "hippie," or "black militant."

I suppose I am sensitive about such condescension because I have not always been a pacifist. And I am taken less seriously now that I am. It first struck me hard when I returned to my home church in Garden City, Long Island. I was the last speaker in a series of weekly lectures in the church's "Peace Forum." I had been preceded

in previous weeks by a number of relatively prominent academicians and theologians from New York and I was most anxious to do a good job. My topic was "Youth, Resistance and the Vietnam War." I hoped in one quick speech to convince the members of the church to do more to resist the war and to provide assistance to resisters themselves. I naively had such high hopes because I had helped break the ground for the church as a child, and had been an All-American boy of sorts at Garden City High School. I figured that my current status as war resister and Associate Secretary of the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors would be offset by my golden past. I was wrong.

The speech went well and a number of listeners asked perceptive questions about amnesty, counseling, anti-war work and so on. But the session degenerated when one man asked me if I believed in fighting at all. I told him that I personally did not, but that I had come to talk about Indochina and resistance, much of which was non-pacifist. He persisted, demanding to know if I wouldn't defend my property from someone stealing corn out of the backyard.

This was a fairly weird question since Garden City hadn't been rural since Lindbergh flew from there to Paris, but I tried to answer seriously. I suggested that we might all disagree about defending our corn, but that perhaps we wouldn't call in B-52's and F-5A's to "defend" it. My audience was amused, but I was unable to stem a discussion that consisted of increasingly absurd hypothetical questions about defense. What had been a pretty friendly audience concerned about the war and resisters, turned into a less skilled version of a local draft board. I was sick. My years in anti-war work, including

teaching a war/peace course at Northwestern University, organizing GI's in the Army before I refused to go to Vietnam, not to mention my golden high school reputation, vanished in a second. I was a discredited, unrealistic utopian.

Such a response was not limited to a relatively unsophisticated church audience, however. While preparing to write this article, I discovered similar perceptions close at hand in 1974. I have just started work with the Center for National Security Studies in Washington, D.C., a non-pacifist group that hopes to arouse the public to reverse the country's disastrous national security policies and institutions grown up since World War II. After getting to know the new director, Bob Borosage, better, he admitted that he had been leery of having a pacifist on the staff. I had been hired by the acting director, Les Dunbar, when the group was set up, and Bob was afraid he might have inherited a namby-pamby, apolitical, Quakerly type who wouldn't seriously grapple with complex, tough, political issues. I was amazed.

I began to suspect a conspiracy when chatting with someone from the ACLU National office at the reception for our new group. "Where did you work before?" he asked. "CCCO in Philadelphia."

"Oh, I've rejected pacifism." I could have shot him.

Then, at our conference on the CIA and Covert Action I heard Dan Ellsberg call for the elimination of covert action. He was careful to point out that his solution might sound extreme and simplistic, but of course, he was aware of the complexities of foreign policy. And, he noted that the calls from CIA apologists to keep covert action capability for some hypothetical situation we might want to influence reminded him of the hypothetical questions put to his pacifist friends. "And I have a number of friends who are pacifists." Did my ears betray me? The implication seemed clear. Don't put me in a box with simplistic pacifists who oppose the military and foreign policy on absolutist grounds. I may take an extreme position, but I am still a sophisticated critic.

"Ah," I thought. This is the crux of the matter. To flatly oppose war and violence is to lose subtlety, sophistication, influence, power. In a society permeated with violence, and in awe of technical expertise, to espouse non-violence is to give up all pretensions to influence. I am reminded of the old saying about Einstein and his opposition to war, "He was a genius in physics, but a babe in politics." Few of us have credentials even faintly resembling Einstein, so there is a tendency to play down our attraction to non-violence and pacifism, to squirrel away whatever remaining credibility and credentials we have left. It is a fatal trap. Because it is those wed to violence and oppression who are in power. In a society propped up by war and intervention it is the opposition who always has more credentials and credibility. It is a mistake for someone like Dan Ellsberg to imply, "Listen to me. I may be a peacenik now, but don't forget I worked for Rand and DoD." It is too easy

to reply, "Yes, Dr. Ellsberg, but Mr. Colby, with whom you disagree, is the Director of the CIA. And he carries out the policy of the President and Dr. Kissinger."

This desire to still be taken seriously in an insane world leads to some peculiar insanities—and weak arguments. In recent debates over the defense budget and Secretary Schlesinger's push for a new counterforce strategy, a striking phrase ran through several liberal critiques of defense policy. It was: "a single, hard-to-locate Polaris submarine is alone capable of destroying much of the Soviet Union and would be sufficient deterrence."

Anyone who would make such a statement—involving dismantling over 1,000 MIRVed land-based missiles, wiping out the SAC bomber fleet, doing away with short-range nuclear missiles and scrapping our remaining subs—is on the brink of unilateral disarmament. But, they don't dare say it. Besides, the *New York Times* won't print it and no member of Congress will buy it. So, there is the obeisance to threats, deterrence, the Soviets . . . reality. But what a proposition! If the world is that bad, I'll go with the Pentagon's ICBM's, just to be sure.

At the risk of sounding absolutist, any argument that accepts the idea of an infernal underwater machine that can spray nuclear death on millions of innocent citizens in a foreign land is a covenant with hell. Such an idea is fundamentally inhuman and mad. I seriously doubt that critics of defense spending wish to hang on to the ability to fry a million Muscovites. But the desire for credibility, a serious social role, makes them say they do.

I know I am sorely tempted to have some credibility with those in power, and it is hard to give up pretensions to power. But it is the wisest lesson I have tried to learn from better pacifists than myself. It is not the kind of meekness and denial of all self that leads to quietism and lack of real political passion, but rather the simple recognition that if you oppose a world run on power and violence, you're not going to get a slice of the pie.

Pacifists as Counter-Revolutionaries

A far more serious problem for those committed to non-violence is criticism from those on the left, both Marxist and non-Marxist, who support violent revolution. Typical of this was a reaction of an old friend from graduate school when he discovered I had become a pacifist. He had been my political mentor in school and introduced me to radicalism and the anti-war movement. I had not seen him in several years when I moved to Philadelphia in 1971. He was by then a member of the Communist Party and organizing for a teacher's union at the university where he taught. We launched into an all night discussion of political strategy, prompted by an article in *Liberation* by Staughton Lynd. We had both admired Staughton in Chicago, but now both Staughton and I were hopeless "bourgeois idealists," and my notion of the possibility of non-violent revolution was simply "ahistorical" and based on my "class interest."

I don't mean to belittle Marxist terminology and distort our conversation. Jim's challenges were far more searching and close to home than the condescension of liberals who seek to have some influence with those in power. Our discussion, along with mirror ones with other close friends—a former student of mine from Northwestern, now a Trotskyist, a former staff member of CCCO now a Maoist—as well as countless others less close to me, symbolizes the agony of my generation born in a New Left influenced by A. J. Muste and a civil rights movement dominated by Martin Luther King, and baptized in fire at Berkeley, Chicago and Kent State.

What is different now in 1974 from the halycon days of the mid-sixties is the awful reality of how to resist repression and wage a revolution. Can a non-violent movement, however large and militant, ever hope to dislodge a ruling class that in recent years has given ample evidence that it is prepared to use any means necessary to suppress serious opposition to it? No one has to make the absurd claim that the United States is already a fascist state to recognize clear signs in that direction: the FBI's COINTELPRO program to "disrupt and neutralize the New Left" and "prevent the emergence of a Black Messiah," the chain of infiltrators, provocateurs, physical attacks, and police raids that flowed from that document; the mass arrests at May Day; the Huston plan—all indicate that some day in the United States "going limp" when arrested may be an invitation to execution. Anyone committed to non-violence in recent years has had to seriously and continuously re-examine that commitment as we learn more about US training in torture and assassination through the CIA, AID, and the International Police Academy. Current CIA Director William Colby's record in Operation Phoenix in Indochina and his admission of working to "destabilize" the Allende government in Chile—leading to the butchery in the stadium in Santiago—gives no room for easy assumptions about the humanity in everyone.

In addition to demonstrating against American involvement in the Chile coup in September 1973, I remember another long discussion with Jack Mulinowski of the Episcopal Peace Fellowship and Jack Travers of the Fellowship of Reconciliation about what our response to such a coup in the United States would be. We came to no consensus. Both the image of marching proudly to the execution stake singing "We Shall Overcome" and the vision of us dashing about corners in black clothes with flaming AK-47's was too absurd to contemplate. (I was the only one who had fired an automatic weapon in Army training and, like most GI's I was lousy and passed marksmanship by fudging on the score-sheet.) What struck us most was how little serious discussion of such possibilities had ever occupied us.

I thought of that discussion again when Secretary Schlesinger announced that he had put a special watch on the military during Nixon's resignation to avoid a coup. We were not so paranoid after all.

The lack of serious thinking among pacifists about real

repression is mirrored in a similar lack of systematic thinking about the kind of society we want in the United States and how to achieve the revolution that will be necessary to achieve it. I recall my amazement when I first read one of Fidel's speeches. He was addressing a crowd of over half a million in Havana. The greater part of his speech (and it was long, of course) was devoted to a discussion of development and the need for so many tons of sugar cane, so many tons of fertilizer, petrochemical plants, trucks, cows, books, buses—just about everything but revolution. It was a striking lesson. Pacifists generally are against things—violence, war, oppression, civil defense, the draft, guns, war toys—but are often unclear about what they are for. If we seek to avoid violence at home and abroad, we will not only have to redouble our efforts against war and violence, we will have to present concrete programs for building a new, peaceful and just society.

The kind of negative bent to non-violent thinking I am talking about has often led to a seemingly counter-revolutionary stance. This took its clearest form in early anti-war days when groups like SANE and FOR opposed the SDS April 1965 march because it was not equally critical of Hanoi, or later in support by some pacifists for Thich Nhat Hahn's Buddhist Peace delegation in seeming opposition to the National Liberation Front. The point is difficult, subtle, and crucial. Pacifists will, of course, always support other pacifists for true liberation, but it is really in opposition to human freedom and an end to violence to oppose liberation movements that have chosen armed force as their only chance of independence. I am always reminded in discussions of support for liberation movements of the stance of many of those abolitionists who were pacifists, indeed absolute non-resistants. William Lloyd Garrison and others abhorred violence and yet refused to condemn David Walker's *Appeal* for slave resistance, or the Nat Turner rebellion or Elijah Lovejoy's defense of his abolitionist press, or John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry. They saved their wrath for the oppressor, as should we.

Events in Africa make a fair analogy to the old abolitionists' debates. Tad Szulc, in a recent article in *Esquire*, has shown how the United States has increasingly moved toward a military alliance with the Union of South Africa and has even speculated about drawing South Africa into NATO. No matter that millions of black are held in the slavery of apartheid, we discover. Our "national security" demands stability in Africa, tracking stations, strategic sea lanes, and the investments of Gulf Oil and others. Given such a situation, it is the duty of pacifists not to preach to Africans how best to overcome oppression, but to demolish a system at home that supports such misery. Unless United States support for South Africa is withdrawn and the government there pressured to change its policies, the inevitable result will be a bloody uprising and revolution. Then we can expect outraged protests (or intervention) from the United States, and even from many liberals and

pacifists about terror and violence on the part of blacks. It will be hypocritical, but it will be familiar.

Non-Violence as a Cop-Out

In fact, it is the frequent resort to cries of non-violence on the part of those in power, and from pacifists who fail to recognize the legitimacy of revolt by those who just as conscientiously oppose oppression, that has given non-violence a bad name and a bad taste. Who can forget their feelings of disgust at the sugary hypocrisy of Lyndon Johnson mouthing calls for non-violence during the riots that followed the assassination of Martin Luther King? Or the continued condemnation of student "violence" by Johnson and Nixon, even as their troops invaded campuses and rained bombs on Indochina? This tactic was used while I was in the Army in 1970. Shortly after the Army Math Center in Madison, Wisconsin was destroyed by a powerful bomb that also killed a young researcher, Robert Fassnacht, who was working in the middle of the night, I was bombarded by taunts, criticism, and outrage. "I thought you protesters were for peace and against violence?" "What a crazed, immoral act that was," and on and on. All from men who proudly wore medals testifying to their experience and prowess in killing Asians. One man who was outraged was my boss at the time, an Information Officer, Major Bill Duerre. He is the same person who told me that he would have covered up My Lai. Later, he headed off for a second tour in Vietnam with MASCOG, the Army group responsible for "dirty tricks" in Vietnam.

I defended the people who bombed the Math Center then as I do now. It may seem contradictory and confused. Perhaps it is, but I refuse to let others club me with "non-violence" so that I will oppose those who choose to resist with force. This perverse use of non-violence even appears in the amnesty movement. Many groups and prominent individuals calling for unconditional amnesty include only those resisters who were "conscientious" or "non-violent" or both. It disturbs me that people who are opposed to the war and for amnesty support, by implication, the prosecution of draft board raider, Karl Armstrong and GI saboteurs who pleaded guilty of second-degree murder and four arson counts in the bombing of the Army Math Center in Madison, Wisconsin, where Robert Fassnacht was killed. Karl was sentenced to twenty-three years in prison. I don't believe one has to give up non-violence to be in favor of the non-prosecution of Karl Armstrong by the likes of Richard Nixon. I was heartened that despite the "official" amnesty movement's skirting or denial of resisters who employed violence, several prominent pacifists such as Dave Dellinger did come to Armstrong's defense. Dave properly reminded the court that even Gandhi did not oppose violence when all other resistance to oppression had failed. Now that Nixon has his pardon, there can hardly be any excuse not to call loudly and explicitly for amnesty for Karl Armstrong and others whose

conscience called them to use force.

My use of the word conscience reminds me of my Communist friend's charge of "class interest" and one of the many times I have suspected he is right. I used to write the fund appeal letters for CCCO and saw all the returns. We often got hate mail—in fact, we once got fresh shit, neatly wrapped in wax paper—but few responses sickened me as much as the one I got about Ted Roulette.

I had explained in an appeal letter our support for Ted, a Navy AWOL. Ted was black and grew up in a broken home where his father beat him. He ran away from home at twelve and joined a Florida carnival. His first brush with the law was when he was picked up with others joy-riding. He had other minor brushes, and finally charged with a marijuana offense, he was offered jail or a tour in the U.S. Navy. He took the Navy. In the meantime, he had married and his wife was having severe psychological problems in pregnancy. Ted applied for emergency leave. It was denied. That was his first AWOL and his first brig time. Ted's wife went insane. She was institutionalized and Ted later remarried. His second wife also developed severe psychological problems and illness in pregnancy. Again, no leave. So, Ted went AWOL again. By this time he was a mature, bright and capable young man. He worked in the campaign of a prominent black politician and was ready to keep his life in order, but he was still a fugitive. Finally, he came to CCCO to help document his case for improper denial of a hardship discharge.

I had talked at great length with Ted and was deeply impressed with him, so I was shocked and angered when I opened an appeal envelope, found no contribution, but instead my letter about Ted with the words, "This guy is no true CO, he's just a bum," scrawled across the top. CCCO contributors are presumably well-meaning, pacifist or near-pacifist types who detest war and favor conscientious objection or resistance. But, don't ask some of them to understand the plight of a black man rebelling against a racist system—that is, unless he has absorbed Gandhi, Tolstoy and King.

No wonder I get condescending reactions when I say I am a pacifist. I still resent it, but my defensiveness stems in part from guilt. Guilt that too many pacifists extend their own smug self-righteousness to those who have not reached their "conscientious" position, that they have become incapable of empathy with oppressed people whose plight is worse than theirs. For many, non-violence is an unexamined luxury that does flow from the security of the middle class.

What is to be Done?

A commitment to non-violence, like all faiths and ideologies, needs constant questioning, and doubt, and re-examination. Perhaps the most impressive thing about A. J. Muste's career was his wavering course. His turn from Christianity to Trotskyism and labor organizing

and return to radical pacifism signaled to me someone whose commitment to justice was paramount, and whose commitment to non-violence was open to constant criticism and evaluation. Perhaps A. J.'s greatest contribution to the New Left was not his pacifism, but his commitment to action and resistance. It is that constant willingness to act and to risk on behalf of the oppressed that marks the great drum majors for justice—pacifist and non-pacifist alike. If we are to follow the path of non-violence, it will require risk and action. People who are quick to criticize or condemn Karl Armstrong in the name of non-violence must ask themselves if they have done enough, risked enough, to make such acts unnecessary. My own answer and I presume of many would have to be, No.

What, then, is to be done if non-violence is to have a future? I think we have to work harder to combat that image of the broad-brimmed, bearded, simplistic anachronism. A modern pacifism, or what Dave Dellinger

calls revolutionary non-violence, is a far cry from the quietism, pietism, and other-worldliness expected of pacifist sects, or the prim, tight-lipped rejection of unwashed revolutionaries by middle-class parlor pacifists. It calls for action and risk, or it is simply a dodge from the real concerns of the world. The world will sooner or later have to give up inequality and violence if it is to survive. On that at least I am agreed with my old friends on the left. We simply disagree on when such a world is possible and how to get there. They may be correct that it takes the right historical conditions and a lot of force. I'm not sure. But I do know that if we don't act and struggle and risk to end violence and oppression now, there will be plenty more in the future.

It is the essential impatience of revolutionary pacifists, I find, their concern with violence now, their troubling tendency toward direct action now, and their refusal to compromise with power now, that makes them so quaint, so irritating, and so necessary. □

BE YE THEREFORE PERFECT

Julius Lester

Julius Lester is an author and poet and Lecturer in Black History at the University of Massachusetts. His books include To Be A Slave; Revolutionary Notes: Search for the New Land; Long Journey Home: Stories from Black History; The Seventh Son: The Thoughts and Writings of W.E.B. DuBois, and Two Love Stories. He is a member of the Editorial Board of Katallagete.

I.

For the native, life can only spring up again out of the rotting corpses of the settler. . . . For the colonised people this violence, because it constitutes their only work, invests their characters with positive and creative qualities. The practice of violence binds them together as a whole, since each individual forms a violent link in the great chain, a part of the great organism of violence which has surged upwards in reaction to the settler's violence in the beginning. . . . The armed struggle mobilises the people . . . it . . . introduces into each man's consciousness the ideas of a common cause, of a national destiny and of a collective history.

Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*

Violence is neither good nor evil. It is . . . If a man tries to take my life, he is . . . giving me permission to try and take his life.

Julius Lester, *Revolutionary Notes*

The blue-velvet sea was at our backs. Stokely and I lay stretched on the ground, firing AK-4 rifles at targets on a hillside. It was the summer of 1967, Cuba. We had been brought to a practice range for the afternoon. I didn't know why, except that a week before Rap Brown had been shot in Cambridge, Maryland, and the acrid smell of burned-out buildings still pinched nostrils in Detroit. It seemed that the real American revolution was about to begin.

I had never fired a gun, or even held anything resembling one since the day in my eighth year when I playfully fired my BB gun at a cardinal. It had not occurred to me that I might hit it, and even as I saw it stop in its feathered-flight and plummet to the ground, I could not believe that I had been the terminator of the fluttering motion. I waited for it to rise from the Arkansas dust, and when it didn't, I walked over, reluctantly, hoping it had flown away without my seeing it. It was as red as a bloodstain and still as only death is.

Twenty summers later, however, I had forgotten. I was a revolutionary now, and violence was the necessary means toward the creation of a new society. I quickly forgot that I was holding an instrument of death and concentrated on learning to shoot, as if it were a skill like any other. Before long, I was hitting the target with regularity, and then, the bulls-eye! I smiled, and was particularly pleased to note that I was a better marksman than Stokely, who had bragged often about his shooting ability.

Quickly, I tired of shooting at targets and my mind transformed them into "enemies." I imagined myself on the rooftop of a Harlem tenement and across the street, on another rooftop, were U.S. soldiers. BANG! Bulls-eye. BANG! BANG! Bulls-eye again. And with the sea shimmering behind me like a mirage, I continued firing, and "they" fell with each gentle squeeze of the trigger. "Killing" was fun! You simply had to forget that you were depriving someone of his life, and that was remarkably easy to do.

It was easy for a lot of us that summer. The black "revolution" and the New Left had aligned themselves with Eldridge Cleaver's definition of humanity: "You're either part of the problem or part of the solution." I never accepted that, knowing that each of us were a little of both. But, in 1967, you had to be on one side or the

other. Between LBJ and Cleaver, I couldn't see much to choose between, but not to choose was to align one's self with Johnson.

I was out of the country for a good portion of that year—France, Sweden, Cambodia, Laos, North Vietnam and Cuba—and, among the young people of the European Left, and particularly in the two socialist countries, I learned that violence was not the Hydra-headed monster I'd always believed it to be. I met a young woman from the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam, who, I was told, had killed twenty-five American soldiers. I looked at her, stunned by her beauty and gentleness. She was a murderer, yet her complexion was as clear as a lake in high mountains. Her eyes reflected no shadows of the deaths she had inflicted. Why were her hands not stained with blood? Why was she not scratching at her palms and crying, "Out, out damned spot!" I remembered the day in Hanoi when I walked toward a bomb shelter during an air raid, and crossing the hotel garden, I saw the waitress from the dining room run by with a rifle in one hand, a helmet in the other. Each morning she and I flirted playfully with each other, and it had never occurred to me that she was anyone more than a shy young girl. She must have noticed me staring in amazement at her, for she stopped, looked at me, blushed, and then, putting on her helmet, continued to her assigned position. How dare she blush in the middle of a war, with air raid sirens screaming and anti-aircraft guns filling the clear blue of the afternoon sky with clouds from exploding shells.

Violence is a cleansing force. It frees the native from his inferiority complex and from his despair and inaction; it makes him fearless and restores his self-respect.

Fanon, *Ibid.*

Was that why the North Vietnamese women could carry rifles and retain the look of virgins? Was that how the soldiers could walk the streets in the evenings, rifles in one hand and bouquets of flowers in the other, and not look incongruous? Maybe there were two kinds of violence: one which ravaged the face of LBJ, and another which made Ho Chi Minh look like a Taoist sage. Perhaps the former was a violence in which one became involved and identified with, the "Kill! Kill! Kill!" Marine recruits are made to shout as they ram bayonets into dummies. The other violence was doing what was only necessary. It was a defensive violence, and one did not involve his entire being in it.

. . . you mustn't believe in killing. . . . You must do it as a necessity, but you must not believe it. If you believe in it the whole thing is wrong.

Hemingway, *For Whom The Bell Tolls*

The revolutionary is he who cries for the one he has killed.

Lester, *Ibid.*

Rap Brown legitimized the use of violence by saying that it was as American as cherry pie. And just as sweet? I wondered. Just as good? Was the crust so light that you returned for a second helping in spite of yourself? I feared so, for I had been in the streets of Atlanta the summer of 1966 when blacks stoned police cars, attacked any white motorists unfortunate enough to be passing through the neighborhood. Violence was better than cherry pie. I could not see blacks becoming invested "with positive and creative qualities." The next summer I was in the streets of Newark, and there, too, I saw only despair flinging itself in desperation against an impassive white society. The redemptive violence Fanon wrote about was absent. Instead, there was a bacchanal of violence, a blood ritual in which the victim learned, with exultant joy, that he/she could be an executioner.

Yet, violence seemed to have been a "cleansing force" in North Vietnam and Cuba. In America, however, it was the whipped cream on a banana-split society. The North Vietnamese and Cubans had engaged in defending their countries, and perhaps, this was one reason why their violence did not become personal. Blacks had no spiritual relationship to a land. We had no place on the globe that was ours. We had no soil in which to sink our roots, so they spread through the void, searching for the earth which hugs them close. There was none, and if a people look into mirrors and no reflection is returned, they can only be vampires.

The souls of black folks were not what they had been when Du Bois wrote of them in 1903. He saw souls inching their way from slavery with a faith born on auction blocks. They had looked out onto the world from the high vantage point of a cross, and hanging there, it was ironic for them to realize that they had an unobstructed view of heaven. So, they could sing, "I Love Everybody," while despairing that sometimes their cotton sacks got so heavy.

The new souls had a different religion, and they poured over the Little Red Book with the same intensity their grandmothers had applied to spelling out the words of the Gospel before kerosene lamps. The new souls received communion from a chalice of blackness and opened their mouths to have bitter wafers of ideology placed on their tongues. You were either part of the problem or part of the solution, and we could not see how profound a statement of nihilism that was. Only he who is uncertain of his identity feels threatened by those with a different one. "I'm black and I'm proud!" sang James Brown, and no one thought to ask him, "Why?"

The new souls of black folk were a dust bowl and violence was an attempt to irrigate the desert. But no crops grew. A look at the Sahara of white folks' souls could've told us that, however, for who loved violence more than they did? (Any people who can invent and use paper plates and plastic eating utensils are capable of blowing up the world.) Malcolm X knew, for he said, "Who wants to be integrated into a burning house?" After he was safely dead, black people cheered and

applauded. But it was so cold being outside. How long can a people live with perpetual frostbite? How long can a people stand naked on an ice floe? So, we ran outside to warm ourselves in the fire, certain we would not be consumed. After all, we were black! So are ashes.

II.

The Negro must love the white man, because the white man needs his love to remove his tensions, insecurities, and fears.

Martin Luther King, Jr., *Stride Toward Freedom*

Dear Dr. King:

It feels rather strange writing a letter to a dead man, but then again, I don't know anything yet about being dead. Maybe death is only another aspect of life that we, who claim to be alive, are merely impervious to.

I hate to intrude on your death, but while you were alive, I didn't think about you much, except to deride you, as did quite a few of my contemporaries. Of course, I was in SNCC, and we knew a different you than the one white America projected as a "responsible" leader. But, since you've been dead, I've been able to think about you more objectively.

I was a senior in college when the sit-in movement began in nineteen-sixty, and through it, was introduced to non-violence. Incidentally, I don't like that word, non-violence. How can you be a negative? Not being violent does not tell me what to be. Not being violent leads to passive resistance, which was one of your mistakes, I think. But more about that later.

I remember going over to the office of the Nashville Student Movement early one evening in the late spring of 1960. A lot of the leadership of the civil rights movement was to come from Nashville, and most of it was there that evening: Diane Nash, Bernard Lafayette, James Bevel, John Lewis, and others. They were having a heated argument about non-violence: Was it a tactic, or a way of life? I said nothing, because although I thought it should be the latter, I was willing to admit that I might be wrong. You see, at this time in my life, I had begun thinking of myself as a monk in a secular world, without the slightest idea of what that meant, or how to live it. But I was convinced that non-violence was part of it. That evening I listened to the arguments, and it was apparent that John Lewis was the only one who believed in non-violence as a basis for existence. I didn't realize it, but I was witnessing an important moment in the history of the civil rights movement, because a decision was being made which would effect the course of that movement. I knew then, Dr. King, that it was the wrong decision, that if the movement used non-violence as a tactic, it would fail. But I lacked the intellectual acumen to explain that to anyone, including myself. It was just a feeling.

It is at this point that I find fault with you, for you could've done something. Oh, I know how forcefully you

spoke about non-violence as a way of life, and warned us of the consequences of advocating violent revolution. But that's just it, Dr. King. I heard your words, but I didn't believe *you*. In your presence, I did not feel that you were any different than me. I was not challenged to change my life by the example of yours, and that, Dr. King, is a central component of *satyagraha*—to challenge another to the spiritual realm of Being by the force of your soul. (To be frank, Martin, I had a hard time staying awake whenever I heard you speak. You could preach pretty good, and for a man with a Ph.D., you were damned good. But you couldn't get back in the woods like my daddy or Ralph Abernathy can. Now, they can sho' nuf preach!) You didn't engage my soul, Dr. King. I do not doubt that you believed your words, but I experienced a chasm between them and you. I heard the precepts of Tolstoy, Thoreau and Gandhi coming from the personage of a middle-class Baptist preacher. With all due respect, the disparity could not have been greater if I heard Superfly recite *The Iliad* in Greek.

You see, if non-violence is a way of life, why didn't you change yours? And, don't say that I don't have the right to ask that. You were a public figure, a symbol. You were Moses, an analogy you made poignantly in your last public appearance. You accepted that role, and I have to ask the question, because if one lives in public, he cannot have a separate private life. Not even in death is that to be allowed, Dr. King. So, if non-violence is a way of life, why did I always wonder, what's King *really* like?

I think I know, despite your widow's effort to hide your life in her fantasies. I think you were a very lonely man, someone who awoke one morning to find himself elected Messiah. You didn't want the job and were uncertain what to do with it once you got it. It seems that you had no real knowledge of non-violence before Bayard Rustin and others from the Fellowship of Reconciliation came to Montgomery, and they saw in you a man who could articulate certain principles far better than anyone in American history ever had. I ascribe no unseemly motives to them or you. Indeed, it is fortunate that they were there to talk to you about non-violence.

Those were difficult days in Montgomery, and I think you were right to listen to Rustin, because anything other than non-violence would have precipitated a Sharpesville Massacre. Non-violence created the sympathy necessary for social change in Montgomery, for who could criticize the exalted dignity you and the blacks of Montgomery showed?

After that, however, you seemed lost. You were now a world figure and you went to India and paid homage to Gandhi. You returned, and a lot of us expected you to go to Little Rock, Clinton, Tennessee, or Clay, Kentucky, and escort one of those black children through the mobs of vicious whites to the school door. You didn't. When the sit-ins began, you didn't occupy a lunch counter seat,

but tried to convince the students to make their new organization, SNCC, the youth auxiliary of SCLC. When the freedom-rides began, you didn't board a bus, but when Bobby Kennedy called and asked for a "cooling-off" period, you agreed. That took a lot of nerve, Martin! You never got on a bus.

After Montgomery, you were alone, a symbol whose charisma could be used to mobilize people for dramatic demonstrations, but where was the non-violence in your life? You became an executive, and the corporation was the civil rights movement.

You loved Gandhi, but I have to wonder if you ever understood what his life was about. It's right there in the subtitle of his autobiography: *The Story of My Experiment with Truth*. Where were your experiments? And please forgive me if I sound harsh and unsympathetic, but I don't expect anymore of you than I do of myself. We must learn to be lovingly ruthless with ourselves and each other. So, I ask you: Where were your experiments with truth? You simply used one technique over and over—mass demonstrations. Get as many people in the street as possible, create an "unbearable tension," I believe you said, and then move toward negotiations and "reconciliation." From Montgomery to Albany, Georgia, to St. Augustine, Florida, to Birmingham to the last hurrah in Selma, and ignominious defeat in Chicago. You played one song on an instrument designed for an infinite number of melodies.

What is even more startling, however, is realizing that Gandhi's experiments with truth began where yours never led—his life. I guess that's what makes me most angry: You never ceased being a member in good standing of the black bourgeoisie of Atlanta, Georgia, and there is not a black middle-class in America like the one in Atlanta. (Well, maybe Durham, North Carolina.) You consistently addressed yourself to the mass: Gandhi always addressed his soul first, and then the mass. You did not become a *satyagrahi*, but remained a non-violent celebrity, a star for the Spirit. A *satyagrahi* is supposed to witness to truth; such a man does not accept a Nobel Peace Prize, because instinctively, the *satyagrahi* knows that one day he might find himself keeping company with Henry Kissinger, and we all know what an apostle of non-violence he is.

One of the missions of Christian non-violence is to restore a different standard of practical judgment in social conflicts. . . . The temptation to get publicity and quick results by spectacular tricks or by forms of protest that are merely odd and provocative but whose human meaning is not clear may defeat this purpose.

Thomas Merton, *Faith and Violence*

Non-violence in the civil rights movement would not have been so short-lived had you used your life as an experiment in truth and showed us a different way of being in the world. Whenever you needed a rest, however, you went to Bermuda. Why didn't you go to a Cis-

tercian monastery? Too, I've wondered why you never fasted. Fasting is inseparable from non-violence and from the life of a Christian, though only the Eastern Church regards it seriously now. Fasting is an expression of non-attachment, as well as a means of physical and spiritual self-purification. Whenever Gandhi observed a tendency to violence growing in his followers, he fasted, spiritually letting himself, for the impurity was in him, also. I wonder what the impact on all of us would have been if you had fasted when blacks took to the streets of Birmingham? When the Watts Rebellion erupted, what if you had done penance for the violence, fasting even unto death? Perhaps it would have had no effect in preventing the rebellions which were to come, but your statements about not giving in to violence meant nothing. You even justified President Johnson's ordering troops into the black community of Detroit during the rebellion there in 1967. How can we use you as our model for *satyagraha*? Except for the fact that you talked non-violence, you were no different than the rest of us, and because you weren't, you have given non-violence a bad name among black people. I hate you for that.

Gandhi left no part of his life unexamined. He lived with the untouchables; he worked with his hands; he created communities; he started schools on principles of *ahisma*; he became a celibate. (Don't get uptight, Martin. I have no talent for monogamy, either, and, celibacy!) I bring this up because to be non-violent means not exploiting another human being, and where is exploitation more rampant than in male-female relationships? I'm not saying you should've been celibate, but I've wondered about those other relationships of yours. Did you use those women to shield you from the loneliness of being Moses? You knew you were only a man, as frail as a reed at your strongest. So it is with us all. But your people needed someone in whom they could invest their hopes, and tag! You were it! How lonely you must have been, always surrounded by people, always expected to lead the children to the Promised Land. Everyone who came to hear you carried a piece of you away with them, and you were left empty. You were the Deliverer, the symbol of the race, something to be used to wipe away the tears and bandage the wounds. They carved a crutch out of you and you were left broken, shredded and splintered. And so, when the women came, their vaginas wide like out-stretched arms, you entered, and for a few hours, were safe from the loneliness beating with bat's wings at your soul. But, maybe I'm wrong. Maybe you were truly non-violent and loved each and every one, and your nights with them were weddings of I and Thou. I hope so, but I don't criticize you if they weren't. The bats hang upside down in the caverns of all our souls. It's ironic, Martin. You and Stokely were political adversaries, yet you had so much in common.

One last thing and I'll let you go. You talked a lot about love, and it is the heartbeat of non-violence. You told us to love the white man. (I guess nobody had to tell you,

or me, about loving white women.) You told us that the white man needed our love. I agree, but love is not the Carter's Little Liver Pills of the soul. It is an environment one creates with excruciating pain, and I think you were wrong to tell us to love white people because they needed our love. There's something exploitative about that. You should have told us to love whites, because that was what we needed to do to save our own souls. You should have told us that only in loving do we become human and worthy of the God that gave us life. But that kind of love is an every minute activity, not an attitude of passivity. Love is the only means of acknowledging the holiness of another, even if he is Sheriff Rainey, George Wallace, and (Oh, Lord, it's hard to say), Richard Nixon. Love is the only means God has of using us to find Himself in another. If we do not love, we cannot be instruments of God. And if we are not God's instruments, why do we live?

Dr. King, I hope you know that my harsh tone is not an expression of hatred. But people have the mistaken notion that love is always gentle and kind. Tibetan Buddhists say, "Compassion is ruthless." Jesus said he came to bring a sword. Truth is also ruthless. Gandhi was ruthless with himself and others in his experiments. I have to be unsympathetic to you, even as I try to know your pain, because you have become recognizable. Others are rewriting your life to fit their own emotional needs. You are about to become as unreal as Peter Pan. Through the prism of white guilt, you are now seen as a martyr. But every person who is murdered is not St. Stephen. Only those whose witness to truth is so intense that society has to change or put that person to death. I'm afraid, Dr. King, that you were just one more in the long list of lynched black men. I don't say that to denigrate your life or demean the manner of your dying. But those of us who remain, and who care, must force ourselves to learn from your life, no matter how painful the effort.

Love,

III.

Black Power . . . is Christ's central message to twentieth century America.

James Cone, *Black Power and Black Theology*

What we need is the divine love as expressed in Black Power which is the power of black people to destroy their oppressors, here and now, by any means at their disposal. Unless God is participating in this holy activity, we must reject his love.

James Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation*

When the life expectancy of the average secular ideology today is about five years . . . it seems rather irresponsible to identify the Gospel with one or the other of them.

Thomas Merton, *Faith and Violence*

With the lynching of Martin Luther King, Jr., blacks lost their last link to the spiritual ground of their foreparents. Despite his deficiencies, King had a vision which was not wholly political. He did not advocate a battle against oppression for the sake of victory, but for the creation of the "beloved community." With his death, that vision evaporated.

In its stead came a wholly political definition of the black experience, and nowhere was this better exemplified than in the writings of the black theologians which began appearing at the end of the sixties.

If God is not for us and against white people, then he is a murderer, and we had better kill Him.

Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation*

Cleaver's dictum of "You're either part of the problem or part of the solution" was nailed to the Pearly Gates and black theologians made ready to barricade God in the Throne Room until He agreed to certain non-negotiable demands.

Black theology represents an attempt to reconcile the politics of race and religion, to replace the crown of thorns with a black beret, and have Jesus carry a rifle instead of the Cross. (Calvary becomes a military emplacement, I assume, and the Garden of Gethsemani sounds like a perfect spot to lay an ambush.)

Black Theology must realize that the white Jesus has no place in the black community and it is our task to destroy him. We must replace him with the Black Messiah . . . a messiah who sees his existence as inseparable from black liberation and the destruction of white racism.

Cone, *Ibid.*

The same self-righteousness exemplified by black political radicalism is found in Black Theology. It is a dangerous attitude, because it assumes that the fact of one's socio-economic condition gives him the right to do anything in the effort to relieve that condition. As such, it is not the expression of a desire for political freedom, but a cry of frustration and despair. Black Theology is the wail of those who perceive themselves as damned, though they cannot tell themselves that they are.

Fanon asserted that the people did not need to know the truth, because they were truth. One knows what Fanon is trying to say, but his way of saying it bestows infallibility on "the people," raising them to the level of God. Black Theology attempts to do the same when it asserts that "God is Black" (Cone), or that God is a "white racist" (William R. Jones). Such assertions, however, represent the ultimate refusal to accept the limitations of finiteness.

We are not God, and how that knowledge has chafed at the soul of Western man since Constantine. Not only are we not God, we cannot understand Him, or even perceive His will clearly, and we hate that! Thus, from the

earliest days of the Holy Roman Empire to contemporary black theology, religious leaders have assured us that God is on our side, i.e., part of the solution, which only we have. ("Praise the Lord and pass the ammunition," I sang around the house during World War II, until my father made me know, in forceful terms, that one could not do both.) Christians have consistently praised the Lord, however, and claimed His sanction for the targets of their ammunition. Black theologians are not breaking with tradition, but merely joining it. What is there to distinguish them from the priests of the eleventh century, who claimed that God wanted Europe to go forth on a Crusade and cut the throats of the infidels? What is the difference between the black theologians and the clerics of the Inquisition, except that blacks do not control a theocracy?

Whenever we become absolutists about God and the way He moves in history, we perpetrate violence. Violence is not an act; it is an attitude which seeks to deny that others, particularly those who oppose us, also carry the truth. It is the denial of the authenticity of another human being, and we cannot do this, even if that other person is pressing the tip of a knife to our throats. If I deny the authenticity of another, I deny it in myself.

Black Theology attempts to speak to the condition of oppression, but it cannot do this if it defines blacks as oppressed and whites as oppressors. Oppression is not something which is done to the weak by the powerful. It is a political relationship, and it only becomes the hallmark of being if existence is defined as political.

. . . black people cannot live according to what ought to be, but according to what is.

Cone, *Black Power and Black Theology*

The question is, however, is "what is" what we think it is? Are blacks oppressed? Or do they just think they are because they accept the current political definitions of "what is?"

Even if one accepts the current notion that people are either oppressed or oppressors, black theologians reveal a self-righteous myopia by their inability to admit that blacks do not fit neatly into either category. After all, blacks, including theologians, paid their taxes which bought bombs which killed Vietnamese. Blacks helped buy the bullets Lt. Calley fired into the bodies of one hundred twenty Vietnamese men, women and children. Black troops fought in Vietnam. Ask a Vietnamese widow if blacks are oppressed. I listen to my students talk about black oppression and watch them leave class to get into their Torinos, Mustangs, and GTOs, any one of which represents three years wages to a Bolivian peasant. Yes, I am supposed to believe that a people who enjoy the fruits of imperialism are oppressed. I don't see any blacks selling their cars to protest the exploitation of the Third World, that same Third World with which so many blacks identify.

By the mere fact that blacks live in America, they must accept that they are oppressors of the Third World and grateful beneficiaries of imperialism. To read the black theologians, however, one would believe that all the color TV sets and Cadillacs in America were owned by whites. Black theology is shameful because its spokesmen want us to believe that blacks are without sin. "Let he who is without sin cast the first stone," said Jesus, and lo! black theologians started chunking rocks a mile a minute. Black theology cannot be regarded seriously as long as it denies that sin is also a part of the black experience.

To define black people as oppressed is to venture into unreality, for it is incumbent upon the oppressed to accept responsibility for their oppression. No one is oppressed who does not agree to it. There is always the alternative of death. That is an option most of us cannot even consider, but what else are we to learn from the lives of the saints if not that to die, while witnessing to authenticity, is to live eternally? Thomas A' Becket chose death, because it was the only means he had of affirming the primacy of God over the State. (Come on, Billy Graham. We're counting on you.)

When a people choose to define themselves as oppressed, they choose to live by the world's definitions. And when theology speaks in the language of the world and seeks to merge itself with the world's definitions, it has become an instrument of the very oppression it claims to oppose.

With a black perspective, eschatology comes to mean joining the world and making it what it ought to be.

Cone, *Ibid.*

Though I'm not sure what eschatology is (ain't it the name of one of them new, natural cereals?), I hope it doesn't mean "joining the world." It should mean affirming, with every breath, God's order in the world. But to do that is to venture into uncertainty. In fact, it is to live in the vortex of uncertainty, for who can say with assurance what God's order is? And because we cannot, it is easier to be self-righteous, to set ourselves on God's throne and utter "divine" truths. To become part of God's order, however, is to accept pain, suffering, struggle. Ultimately, it is to live, not by dogma, doctrine, or theology, be it black, Barthian, or Tillichian. (Watch yourself, Julius. You're beginning to sound like a theologian.) It is to live in complete and total dependence on God. It is to live by faith.

That is impossible, however, as long as we want to know why God does what He does, as long as we think we have a right to know why God does what He does. What God does is His business and if He thinks I need to have a reason, He'll provide it. If not, He won't. In either instance, my way is clear: To be a vessel for the Divine Will. I am to be Abraham, carrying my son up the mountain to be sacrificed, not questioning why God commands it, or even hesitating in my step.

It was the death of faith which created black theology, which led blacks to think of themselves as oppressed. My slave foreparents did not so define themselves, but sang, jubilantly, "If anybody ask you who I am, tell 'em I'm a child of God." They knew all there was to know and didn't have to go to seminary to learn it, either. But if black theology is a good example of what comes out of seminaries, a lot of folks just might be better off back in the cotton fields.

IV.

The contemplative . . . maintains alive in the world the presence of a spiritual and intelligent consciousness which is the root of true peace and true unity among men. . . . The basic reality is being itself, which is one in all concrete existents, which shares itself among them and manifests itself through them.

Thomas Merton, *Faith and Violence*

Non-violence has been misused consistently through American history as an instrument of political expression. Secular non-violence can never be anything more than passive resistance. *Satyagraha* is an active affirmation of God's order. It is questionable if this can be done in a political context, or for political ends. Our vision of the world allows us only to see political and economic problems. Poverty is not, however, a social problem to be solved by governments; it is the natural consequence of our failure to affirm Being. Social problems cannot be solved through political means, because every social problem is an indicator of our alienation from the Ground of our selves.

Non-violence, therefore, is not something which exists unto itself. It is simply one component of the contemplative life, i.e., a life rooted in the Ground. Non-violence did not fail in the sixties. We failed non-violence by using it as a technique. We used non-violence, not because it was our spiritual language, but because we thought it would be effective. We thought that Bull Connor and Sheriff Jim Clark would lay down their cattle prods and billy clubs in the face of our refusal to retaliate. When we got out of the hospitals, Bull Connor was waiting, his cattle prods recharged with a Sears battery. So, we repudiated non-violence.

In a world dominated by technique, in a world in which the value of every action is judged by its effectiveness, it becomes necessary to do that which is *useless*. It may have been correct for Gandhi to posit his non-violence on changing the heart and soul of the adversary, but in our technique-poisoned society, we cannot be non-violent solely because we think it will have a salutary effect on the adversary. We have to consider the very real possibility that it won't, because we are living in a world of which Father Alfred Delp, the Jesuit priest executed by the Nazis, said: "Modern man is not even capable of knowing God." (Perhaps the greatest proof of this is the recent appearance of the

charismatic movement within every denomination. From the Jesus freaks to Roman Catholics speaking in tongues, we are witnessing an epidemic outbreak of religious emotionalism, as if God is a feeling. The charismatic movement is both the expression of an intense longing for God, and an indicator of an incapacity for knowing Him. That is a harsh judgment, for who am I to judge the religious experiences of others? I am no one, yet, being prone to religious ecstasy, I must take to heart the warnings of St. John of the Cross about religious emotionalism. It is only in the dark night of the soul, when all signs of God's love and presence are absent, that one can be purged of religious experiences based in the senses. To even desire emotional religious experiences is spiritual gluttony, according to the Spanish mystic, making an end out of a means. If we need and seek emotional religious experiences, we will never live a life of faith, which means to love God when He refuses to make Himself known, to trust His will even when it seems to bring us only suffering.)

I think Father Delp is correct: People in contemporary Western society have lost the capacity to love God. Thus, if we see non-violence as a technique to bring about change, we are choosing despair, because our non-violence will change nothing. (It is interesting to note that the Crucifixion did not affect the Israel of that time. Except for a small group, life went on as it always had. By our standards, Christ was ineffective. However, we do not now use the world's standards to evaluate the life, crucifixion and resurrection. Why, then, do we insist on using that standard to judge our own lives?)

Christ lived and acted in the cosmological dimension, and if non-violence is to be true to itself, it can only exist in the same dimension. Political violence cannot be met with non-violence. Racism cannot be confronted with blackness. Evil must be confronted with one's authentic identity as a manifestation of "the good news," and if the purveyors of evil do not cease, continue to sing your song.

We are so oriented to technique and social action, however, that we cannot center our lives around wanting to love God with all our heart, soul and mind. Only by doing so, however, can we begin to know that pain, pleasure, joy, sorrow, oppression and freedom are mere thoughts, having no existence outside the perimeters of our minds. Only a life centered in contemplation can lead us to understand what Jesus meant in the Sermon on the Mount: "... be the children of your Father which is in Heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." (Matt. 5:45) This is the cosmological dimension of human existence, that place which is beyond the dualities of violence and non-violence, oppressed and oppressor, black and white. It is that place where the unity of existence is not only perceived, but lived, for we are to be like the rain, letting our love fall "on the evil and on the good, the just and the unjust," and if the

crops come up, do not rejoice. And if crops fail to sprout, do not despair. It is given to us to exemplify the love which, as St. Bernard said, "loves because it loves." Whether it is effective or not is God's concern alone. The Resurrection tells us that it will be. However, our faith is so weak that we do not really believe it. We want to see the fruits of our labors. We are so concerned about living in the Promised Land that we can't get out of the wilderness. Indeed, we might already be living in the Promised Land, and can't see it for the trees.

We are called upon to be saints. That is the message of the Sermon on the Mount (which the black theologians studiously avoid). In it, Jesus speaks with terrify-

ing simplicity: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect." Is that what frightens us? Is that why we try to recruit God to lead the revolutionary vanguard and join the women's movement? Is that why we get all tangled up in eschatologies and apocalypses? Is it because Jesus told us in the most simple, straightforward language ever used what it is we are to do with our lives? "But that's hard, Jesus. Be Perfect? Hey, man! Lighten up! It's easier to be black, white, male, female, a theologian, man, than to be perfect like God." But that is precisely what Jesus said: Be ye therefore perfect. And he wouldn't have said it if it wasn't possible.

So what're you waiting for? Go, and be perfect □

NON-VIOLENCE AND METANOIA

James W. Douglass

James W. Douglass is completing a book on Jesus and contemporary man. His earlier books include *The Non-Violent Cross and Resistance and Contemplation*. He has taught at Bellarmine College in Louisville, Kentucky, the University of Notre Dame, and the University of Hawaii.

The end of the world, non-violence, and the Catholic Worker were all introduced to me one morning in the spring of 1957 in a freshman English class at the University of Santa Clara. Herb Burke, our professor, passed out an article about a group of people in New York who had refused to take shelter during a compulsory civil defense drill. Instead of going underground, these people, 29 of them as I recall, went into Central Park where they awaited arrest for being in the open. They said that to go into a shelter, assuming a hydrogen bomb was about to explode overhead, was not only futile but immoral: It was to say *yes* to the sin and crime of preparing for nuclear war. Better to go to jail, and they did.

With the other members of the class, I argued furiously against the witness of the people in the park and Herb Burke's persistent suggestion that they were right in their disobedience to the state. A friend in the class was disturbed to the point of later consulting a priest on the matter, who relieved his conscience by saying that Pope Pius XII had ruled out conscientious objection as a moral option for Catholics. I saw no priest but continued to brood over the people in the park and in jail, whom I now identified as Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker community. (There were others with them but Dorothy's and the CW's leadership was evident.) By walking into Central Park that day, on their way to jail, the Catholic Worker community had generated a non-violent force of truth whose waves eventually hit Governor Rocke-

efeller's office (the civil defense drills were stopped as the numbers in the park multiplied) as well as more remote points like our classroom in California. For myself, the most immediate effect, once my arguing subsided, was a sudden, burning awareness of a two-sided reality: That humanity in the nuclear age was living at the end of time, and that a life based on conscience was a real possibility.

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That first encounter with Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker put me in living contact with a tradition whose richness has deepened for me over the years—the tradition of faith and suffering love, at the center of the Church and extending through centuries of martyrs ("witnesses") to the cross of Christ. As I began reading *The Catholic Worker*, I recognized a community living out the Gospel, whose professions of non-violence represented the life of Christ in the America of the '50's: a life of voluntary poverty in service to the involuntarily destitute, a life of following Providence, of practicing the works of mercy, of resisting a warfare state with non-violent civil disobedience; a life and way corresponding to Jesus' cross. My introduction to non-violence, through the Catholic Worker, was therefore an experience embodied in a community of faith, with the global context of an impending nuclear end of time.

It was also in the pages of *The Catholic Worker*, four years later in 1961, that I saw Thomas Merton's first published words on the moral issue which had taken hold of my own life and writing, the issue of nuclear war. Merton had written a stark poem, "Chant to Be Used in Processions around a Site with Furnaces," a

string of apocalyptic images recalled with satisfaction by the commander of a Nazi death-camp—a detailing of the system's clean efficiency for Jew's and the Nazis' perfect obedience to it, then the final stanza:

Do not think yourself better because you burn up friends
and enemies with long-range missiles without ever seeing
what you have done.

Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker had introduced me to non-violence in a community of faith. Tom Merton, in his intense essays of war, peace, and non-violence which followed the appearance of his "Chant," showed the contemplative dimension of non-violence, that dimension of inner unity which made deep sense of the fact that a Hindu, Gandhi, could be the greatest modern example of the way of Christ, the way of suffering love to the point of death and transformation. Non-violence in deed, said Merton, was nothing more than a living out of a non-violence of the heart, an inner unity already experienced in prayer, as Gandhi had emphasized in rejecting the more popular concept of non-violence as a political tactic. Gandhi's non-violent doctrine of *satyagraha*, or truth-force, like the non-violent cross of Jesus, was based not on effectiveness but on faith—involving a renunciation of the fruits of action in simple obedience to God's will, a loving, unifying will which in a world of injustice took one inevitably to one's cross.

Tom Merton's contemplative life and writings gradually revealed to me the most radical dimension of non-violence, that inner unity in silent prayer without which non-violent tactics were liable to descend from truth-force to *duragraha* (a biased, manipulative strategy), as happened increasingly in the civil rights, peace, and campus demonstrations of the 60's, from there to drain away finally in sporadic violence and mass apathy.

A few days before he was assassinated,
Gandhi had said to a friend: "Have nothing to do with
power."

Merton's life was a paradigm of that politically scandalous tenet of non-violence, a continuous following of a spiritual instinct which withdrew him from even the most subtle forms of spiritual power—so that in 1968 at a critical point in resistance to the war, which Merton himself suffered intensely within, his final pilgrimage was not to a courtroom or a jail, as I and others wished then, but to points beyond Vietnam in search of an inner fire whose exact meaning for us remains unclear today.

In reflecting now on what it means for me, as a Catholic college student of the late 50's-early 60's to learn non-violence from Dorothy Day and Thomas Merton, I feel the immense grace of the Gospel tradition conveyed by their lives—and in Merton's case, the grace of those other spiritual traditions from the East which he was absorbing into a universal Christ. Because of their lives, I knew non-violence less as a strategy for social change than as the force of truth and love which had become real in them, and could become real in others, from the Reality at the Gospel's center.

But even given the profound gift of that Gospel perspective on non-violence, I found in my own life that each act of non-violent resistance to the war which I joined in during the late 60's raised for whatever community I was in, and for me personally, the ever-more-urgent question of impotence before and within an overwhelming evil. We knew too little in our lives of the powerless power of Christ in Dorothy Day and Thomas Merton. In our acts of resistance, we were brought back again and again to the need for a deeper base, or for a rock outside the world on which to stand. The deeper question in the face of our government's violence was not one of becoming more effective against it but of reaching that inner point out of which one could respond more fully, more deeply, more unitedly, to the visible and invisible nature of evil. The suffering from the war continued to be so overwhelming that one clearly could and had to go deeper, infinitely deeper, in one's life toward an unrealized center of grace out of which an altogether new and transforming kind of non-violence could then arise. The Gospels called such a possibility *metanoia*. Tom Merton's writings gave clues on what *metanoia* might mean for us. I sought it by withdrawing to my home in the mountains of British Columbia for a year and writing the book *Resistance and Contemplation*.

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I believe that "non-violence reconsidered" after the experiences of the 60's can only mean the continuing search for that far deeper center of the inner dimension of non-violence, which would be expressed less in action than in transformation, whose discovery is the spiritual (and political) imperative of our nuclear end-time, and toward which I believe Tom Merton was somehow pointing in his journey to the East.

It is an event which occurred in March 1972, however, after the writing of *Resistance and Contemplation*, which has underlined for me that "lesson of the non-violence of the 60's" which I learned first from Dorothy Day and Tom Merton, the absolute need for *metanoia* at a depth which, for the sake of self-survival, we would rather not even glimpse or sense. The event which brought the lesson home was the pouring of blood on top-secret electronic warfare files in Pacific Air Force Headquarters, Hickam Air Base, Hawaii.

The Hickam action was one of the most miraculous events I have experienced in a life which I can honestly understand only as a series of miracles. I think the use of the term "miracle" here is accurate in the sense that the realities overridden providentially at Hickam would be regarded by almost all of us as being at least as binding on our freedom as are physical laws. Yet, in spite of that miraculous aspect of Hickam, the same event has in retrospect opened up a darkness in myself which is a deeper need for *metanoia* all over again. It is necessary to speak of the first aspect of Hickam to get to the second.

Our way of access to the top-secret files of Pacific Air Force Headquarters was through a series of opening gates, doors, and file drawers at the base: The first opening occurred one day when a friend and I, while driving to the base in preparation for a demonstration in front of it, got into the wrong lane of traffic and instead of being stopped were waved through the front gate by the security guard despite the fact that our car displayed no security sticker. Surprised and encouraged, we drove further to the Headquarters Building, and I tried to enter it from a side entrance. No one stopped me. In spite of the electronic eyes scanning the hallways and signs warning of the possibility of search at any time, I was on that occasion able to consult a wall directory and explore that area of the building briefly, again without being stopped.

A week later, on a second visit to the Headquarters Building, I was stopped in a hallway: by a sergeant who instead of asking for my credentials (for which I had made no preparation) asked if he could help me. I told him, yes, that I was looking for the Electronic Warfare Wing. He courteously escorted me to it, then went about his business, leaving me free to explore the corridors of that specific part of Pacific Air Force Headquarters responsible for the electronic battlefield in Indochina.

That was the extent of our inside knowledge, a knowledge of certain entrances and corridors, when seven of us went into the different wings of Pacific Air Force Headquarters on the afternoon of March 2, 1972. We had planned our action as a "leafletting invasion" of the Headquarters Building, one step in a continuing Lenten campaign of non-violent resistance at Hickam. On the eve of our leafletting invasion, two of us, Jim Albertini and I, decided to carry blood as well as leaflets, on the almost inconceivable chance that top-secret papers might somehow become accessible to us in high security offices we had never set foot in.

On the following afternoon, I was escorted again through the building by an Air Force sergeant, this time bearing a sealed envelope I had given him (which contained our statement on the war) addressed to the specific office I wanted to enter, the Program/Planning Division of the Directorate of Electronic Warfare. It was in that office that I was left alone, standing before the desk of a major who had been given the envelope by the sergeant and was taking it to his commanding officer. And it was there that I saw for the first time, behind the major's desk, a metal filing cabinet with the words "Top Secret" printed across the top. There was a large lock on the filing cabinet, but the lock was open and the second file drawer slightly ajar. I took the container of blood from my briefcase and poured it over that drawer of file folders, then opened the top drawer and continued pouring blood on it until I was thrown to the floor and choked for what seemed a long time by the major.

The successive opening up of Pacific Air Force Headquarters' gates, doors, and files, after a graceful Reality put us in the wrong (right) lane of traffic, was what made

it possible for us to break through the public silence of Hawaii's militarism during the year of the most intense bombing of Indochina. In that year, in our Lenten campaign at Hickam and in our trial and noncooperation with the sentence, we explored and experienced what Gandhi termed "experiments in truth."

Yet it is the second aspect of the Hickam action, its personal darkness in the midst of grace, which brings me back to "the lesson of the non-violence of the 60's," the still deeper need for *metanoia*.

In the case of Shelley and me and our marriage, the question we faced concerning acts of non-violent resistance to the war which risked long prison sentences was never, whether or not we should be involved in them, but rather the more specific question: In particular situations of risk, which of us should be involved? The source of that question was our responsibility for our children, and our feeling that in any specific arrest situation only one of us should take part, so that the other would remain free to be with the children. But we both felt deeply the suffering of the war and the need to act.

In the Lenten campaign at Hickam, we had agreed that she would take part in civil disobedience first, in an action bearing a relatively low-risk arrest penalty. We also agreed that if a way appeared in the campaign for a higher-risk action involving access to top-secret materials, I would take part in that action. But on the eve of the Hickam "leafletting invasion," Shelley was home with the children, while the final planning session took place elsewhere. It was at that session that Jim and I decided to carry blood, to be used in the event we had access to top-secret materials. When I returned home from the meeting and told Shelley, she felt that I had violated our agreement that she would act first, and that my acting now would foreclose any action of hers. I thought our agreement had meant the higher-risk action could come when an opening appeared, which was remote at any time and should be prepared for the following day. We now recognize that the agreement was ambiguous enough for each of us to understand it differently, but then we saw only our own sides. After we had argued the point for hours, I resolved to go ahead with the decision I had made at the planning session, in spite of Shelley's thinking it wrong.

That resolution is what I have had to recognize as the deep violation of convictions and feelings in the person I love most. Because of it, Shelley has been forced since that day to live a dual existence regarding the Hickam action, believing deeply in the action itself and supporting me for it, while knowing herself that I went ahead and did it without our having resolved a deep conflict between us. She has lived lovingly and truthfully through that situation created by me, but not acknowledged in my heart and mind until more than two years after the event. The fact that she has come out on the other side of that violation of her still somehow believing in our marriage and in non-violence, has shown me the Gospel's

center again, as I once experienced it from Dorothy Day and Tom Merton.

□ □ □

Metanoia is not simply a "change of mind," as it translates literally from the Greek. In its Gospel sense it means a change of heart and soul, an imperative continually arising from Reality itself if we wish to choose the fulness of freedom. The possibility of that full freedom coming into being for me in the non-violence at Hickam was lost by my hardness of heart toward Shelley the night before. But there were other forces at work in our community and at Hickam, and I believe it was because of them that a grace-filled way opened up to the files—because of the uncompromised non-violence of the other six members of our invading group, particularly Jim Albertini, a brother who simply embodies the Gospel, and Rose Brennan, our sister who fasted quietly and to exhaustion the full 40 days of Lent while continuing to work full-time in our office and to vigil, leaflet, and demonstrate as much as anyone. Reality opens to such lives. Thus Hickam opened its gates and its files.

Non-violence reconsidered means a recognition in *metanoia* that the darkness of faith has to be complete for the *satyagrahi* when she/he chooses life. That darkness is the way of self-renunciation and the cross taught by Jesus and Gandhi, the continuing way of the Catholic Worker. On the eve of the Hickam action, when both Shelley and I felt profound, and we thought conflicting, convictions about acting for life, the way of *metanoia* would have been begun by my opening to her concern regardless of its consequences to my own. And had there been such an opening—in looking back now—there was the further, unrecognized possibility of our deciding to act together the next day at Hickam, in the total darkness that would have meant for us and our children—the kind of decision we did in fact make together later, when we decided we would both non-cooperate in court with our

judge at the risk of simultaneous imprisonment. In reflecting now on that as a possibility of Hickam as well, I believe that such an earlier joint decision in faith would have taken us at the beginning to an inner center where a transforming non-violence could have simply taken over our lives in Hawaii.

Our concern for our children was genuine, and short of the Gospel: There *is* a Father who is Mother and who lives at the heart of faith's darkness, who cares and responds as Jesus said. That One is one with the human family, a big community. There are many in whom that One lives as the fulness of love, who cares and would have cared for our children, had the darkness of faith taken us to that darkness of fact. In fact, it has not (in our noncooperation in court, the judge backed away from jailing us) but perhaps we are more open to that darkness now than we were at first. *Metanoia*, the Gospel reminds us, is an urgent but continuing possibility—and through it, the continuing possibility of a non-violent Love to transform the world.

Tom Merton at the conclusion of one of his last works, *Mystics and Zen Masters*, cut through our non-violent postures in the West and identified precisely the arrogant weakness of our hearts. He questioned there "the Western acceptance of a 'will to transform others' in terms of one's own prophetic insight accepted as a norm of pure justice." He suggested to non-violent activists:

Is there not an "optical illusion" in an eschatological spirit which, however much it may appeal to *agape*, seeks only to transform persons and social structures *from the outside*? Here we arrive at a basic principle, one might almost say an ontology of nonviolence, which requires further investigation.

It was that further investigation into an ontology of nonviolence which Merton was engaged in when he died in Bangkok in 1968. But the inner, transforming power of his life had already been given to us.

Tom Merton, Dorothy Day, and Shelley Douglass, I thank you for your lives □

NON-VIOLENCE AND VIOLENCE IN APPALACHIA

James G. Branscome
and
James Y. Holloway

Branscome is a free-lance writer who is also on the staff of Highlander Center, New Market, Tennessee. He is a member of the editorial board of *Katallagete* and at present is writing about the impact of the Tennessee Valley Authority on Southern Appalachia. Holloway is editor of *Katallagete* and teaches at Berea College, Kentucky.

I.

One or two moments of reflection are all we need to remind us that non-violence in the 60's passed by Southern Appalachia.

What follows are a few more reflections on *why?*—one section by an Appalachian who came to what the law considers "maturity" during those years; the other by one who came to maturity during the Second World War in one of Appalachia's southern-most, urban-industrial counties, and passed the most recent decade in a college devoted to "the education of the youth of the southern mountains."

They include reflections on non-violent movements, the history of southern Appalachians, and the Gospel, taking focus on what happened as many Appalachians tried to "resist" (a verb now in currency among a certain kind of intellectual outside our region) a multi-dimensional invasion by the industrial-technological complex that has increasingly dominated life in the United States since the end of the Civil War. We admit to some theses in what follows, so we put one before you at the outset because of the subject-matter of this issue of *Katallagete*: for all its witness to truth and otherwise

beneficent consequences to other regions and peoples in this nation, we believe that non-violence *as a movement* in the 60's came in the form of yet one more intrusion by mainline, upper-income white Americans against the non-mainline low-and-non-income (albeit, white) Appalachian Americans who wanted only to be (but couldn't be) left to themselves because of what the multi-dimensional industrial-technological complex has been doing to this region for fifty years.

The one certain human consequence of that industrial-technological invasion threw a multitude of fiercely independent, culturally and economically secure people into a totally new form of servitude and dependence upon the politics and especially upon the economics of the State and its industrial-technological complexes. So we do not believe it possible to understand "non-violence and violence in Appalachia" in any other context than this one. Just so, there is a related thesis: the pervasiveness and efficiency of that industrial-technological invasion of our region, and doubtless, other regions. As Goethe said somewhere about the Church, the American complex of which we speak also "digests everything." Even non-violence. Even violence. To suit its own metabolism.

The Appalachian story about non-violence in the 60's is instructive, therefore, not only for what happened or didn't happen: perhaps more to the point today and for the last decades of this century, non-violent movements must try conscientiously to grasp the meaning of the experiences of southern Appalachians with non-violence

as a "movement." We have read much of the literature about non-violence in the 60's. We know and consider ourselves to be the friends of many of its practitioners. We were and even are "non-violent" in a measure about specifics. Say, war. One of us received a "CO," a Caesar-designation given by an Appalachian draft board in response to the argument that, not being a member of an "historic peace church," convictions about God and Jesus yet forbade "the taking of other lives to solve political problems." The other did patriotic chores a couple of decades earlier with a lot of reservations but without basic resistance to serving them out; his suspicions about the idolatry of modern political practices were confirmed into convictions by experiences with the Cold War, educational maneuverings, a bit of political acting, and trying to listen to the Scriptures. His first introduction to non-violence as a "movement" came second-hand but was nonetheless important personally: some faculty and students at a northern graduate school which enrolled him (and from which at the time, without good cause, he was abroad) marched down a hill from their classrooms and chapels, past white and black ghettos, and on into the downtown, business and educational center—witnesses to their support of the eight black children seeking admission into the public schools of Little Rock, Arkansas. To the report of this march, he responded that had he been there he would have hoped for the courage to run along the sidewalk beside the procession and chunk pebbles at them.

O.K. Perhaps this is not the sort of thinking that non-violent movements are made of. But for a fact, we don't know. We don't know, that is, that "movements" are the crunch of what we mean when we say "non-violence." At least, in our time. The option with the draft board was there for others to try, and, no doubt, some did, and failed. The case was not about "selective conscientious objection" to the war in Vietnam, but that Jesus fulfilled the Sixth Commandment. As the old draft counsellor would express it, "there is only one line to Caesar in this sort of thing, whether in the form of a 'CO' or into a minimum-security federal penitentiary. Caesar is Caesar. To think and act otherwise is either sentimental or high-strung; usually, both." That is to say, probation, light sentences, no sentences, famous or notorious lawyers pleading a media-engorged trial—it is all played out on the State's turf. The question is how seriously one takes Caesar. So what we mean is not "movement" in the sense of mass-actions. Rather, individually. Specifically. Concretely, in circumstance.

So we'll see. At this juncture, we ask only that those interested in the subject of this issue of *Katallagete* consider (perhaps, as Karl Barth would say, even "consider *well!*") the experiences and reflections of certain Appalachians with non-violence and violence in recent decades.

II.

James G. Branscome

Consider Appalachian mountaineers. They are the "new world barbarians," Arnold Toynbee said—the only barbarians in history ever to attain civilization and then lose it. If they do not repent from their whiskey-crazed feuding, they should "perish," the *New York Times* said in a 1913 editorial. They are "Yesterday's People" said the Reverend Jack Weller in a recent book by that title, a book that Appalachians rank as the most vicious and discriminatory ever written about them. Robert Coles, in a long review-article praising it, called the book "useful and affecting" and said it "belongs in the hands of all those—in the government, in the foundations, in the professions—concerned with the region." Writing last summer in *Southern Voices*, a journal of the Southern Regional Council, freelancer Lawrence Wright wrote that the people of Harlan County, Kentucky, had "lost the civilizing instinct to clean their nests." Not long ago the *Washington Post* refused to carry one episode of the "Doonesbury" cartoon strip on the grounds that it was "entirely too pointed and overstepped the bounds of decency;" yet that Watergate-expose newspaper carries without censure Al Capp's "Li'l Abner" comic strip summing up hillbilly culture as "not readin, not worryin, not bathin!"

So one sits here in Appalachia thumbing through six fat manila folders that make up an "Anti-Hillbilly File," while the nation's media rush to Charleston, West Virginia, to paint a local textbook squabble—which in fact had to do with the local control over schools more than anything else—into a new mural of the "monkey trials." Except this time, they mixed in coal miners as the dummies instead of William Jennings Bryan. Why these half-truths, innuendos, downright lies? Why, especially, from the world's, the nation's, the South's, "best" in media, academia, and the ministry of Jesus Christ? Why is it that otherwise sane people believe and write that mountaineers are the most apathetic people in the world, and yet somehow manage to believe and write that they are also the nation's most vicious and violent-prone people? Why "Bloody Harlan" and not also "Bloody Delano" and "Bloody Wounded Knee" and "Bloody Selma" and "Bloody Detroit" and "Bloody Attica?" and "Bloody Boston?" Why is it that Appalachians alone carry the burden of the violence *done against them?* And while suffering the stigma of being violent barbarians, why must they also suffer the spirit-and even life-choking propaganda (modern man's most eerie addition to violence) directed at their psyche?

The phenomenon is especially puzzling because mountaineers have performed most of their violent acts at our nation's urging. In fact, at its command. It was mountain folk who contributed to the winning of the Revolution with their victory in decisive battles at Kings Mountain and Guilford Court House. It was they who

gave victory to Andrew Jackson in New Orleans, and rushed into the battles of 1812 and the Mexican wars. It was they, alone of Southerners, who flew the Union flags over their courthouses during the Civil War, displaying their loyalty to the nation, and put no less than 250,000 hill folk on the Yankee side in that battle. Only the industrial East exceeded mountaineers in total number in Teddy Roosevelt's charge into Cuba. In both World Wars, many mountain counties found draft boards unnecessary. West Virginia led the nation in per capita Vietnam deaths. Twenty-five West Virginians per 100,000 population were killed in that war, compared to seventeen for 100,000 nationally. These Ulster-bred settlers and their ancestors—haters of kings, bishops, and all those in authority—have reaped only scorn as their reward. Instead of plaques from the Pentagon, they get platitudes such as this one recently intoned by a major at Fort Knox: "They're awfully prone to desert and go AWOL." No matter, at the nation's call, they have learned and practiced violence.

Despite the myths, and excepting their true-grit Americanisms in doing-in the Indians, mountaineers hung up their guns during the peace.

Appalachian counties, until the invasion of the industrial-technological complex, had among the lowest homicide rates in the nation. The people who had escaped into the hills to avoid tyranny were hardly interested in creating their own tyranny. So they wrote at Watauga, in eastern Tennessee, the first Constitution ever drafted by American-born whites. Even before the New England abolitionists were born, mountaineers were publishing anti-slavery newspapers and operating an underground railroad. Eli Embury was publishing the *Emancipator* in Elizabethton, Tennessee, even before William Lloyd Garrison had reached puberty. When the times demanded, mountain folks displayed an unusual talent for breaking away from the federal states and forming their own with names like the State of Franklin and West Virginia—all without slaughter. And despite their modern liberal and out-door dramatists detractors, the first U.S. Census showed them to have more reading and writing ability than their neighbors to the east. The Watauga Declaration, signed before the Revolution, contained the "X's" of only two men. Mountaineers, the facts indicate, have only one unforgivable trait: they never have and probably never will believe that "America" is a failure.

It should be pointed out, of course, in the interest of keeping the records straight, that the region is not a monolith, either culturally or economically. Its development has varied tremendously from one part of the mountains to the next, depending upon geography, availability of natural resources such as coal, timber and water, and historical circumstances such as early settlement patterns and the choosing of sides in the Civil War. But the major factor in creating the complex social, economic and political problems of today came with the

gradual industrialization of the area over the past eighty years or so. The reaction of mountaineers to industrialization and technology is one of the most misunderstood and untold stories of American cultural history. It is in this encounter where mountaineers, for the sake of survival, have been forced to move against violence, mostly to lose.

The general rule is, the more industrialized a particular area has become, the more the people seem to be like the rest of Americans. But in Appalachia, there is a surfeit of evidence that the people hang with resolution to their uniqueness. Not the least of the reasons to account for this is the fact that Appalachia today is still primarily an agrarian region, where the way of life developed throughout the 200 years of pioneer settlement retains a strong and lasting hold upon the people. Whatever the public profile, coal miners contribute only three percent of the mountain's labor force.

Historically, the first white settlers were the frontiersmen or "grazers," who talked of "elbow room" and who wanted no neighbors nearby. What they were saying in economic terms was that they needed a great deal of woodland to maintain profitably their large herds of cattle and hogs which ran wild in the woods, living off nuts, roots and undergrowth. For more than a century the main source of income for these first residents was livestock. In the middle 1800's, an estimated 81,000 head of swine, alone, came through the Cumberland Gap from east Tennessee and east Kentucky.

Hard on the heels of these early settlers were the agricultural farmers who sought out the major river valleys where land could be cleared for larger farms. To maintain these farms, some capital and a large labor force was needed, so many of these early farms had slaves. With these settlers came the merchants and storekeepers, providing the essentials and luxuries which could not be produced locally. Also, in this second migration came the educated individuals who could operate the schools and academies, which sprang up wherever communities were large enough to pay a teacher and provide a building. For the most part, both groups of settlers were of similar origin, being British, Scotch, Irish, with a sprinkling of Dutch or German.

By the middle 1800's, Appalachia was still essentially an agricultural economy, and even that economy had a limited effect on the land. For example, in 1860, only one-fifth of the total land surface in North Carolina was cleared and in use. In Tennessee, the figure was 23 percent. Kentucky had 31 percent. These figures reported the figures for the entire state's area. In the rougher, mountainous, regions only isolated patches of land were under cultivation.

The first industrial incursions into the mountains were tenuous ones. Railroads were built into the major river valleys and along the mountain ranges to larger market centers, or to sources of coal and timber. Along the foothills, where waterfalls marked the Piedmont plain, tex-

tile mills were established to take advantage of cheap water power. By 1890, the industrialization of the area was well underway.

But the process was a gradual one. Geography, local politics and a lack of knowledge about the interior slowed the advance of most businessmen. In fact, in the early 1900's, when Horace Kephart, in Boston, was trying to find the most remote spot in America, he chose western North Carolina because he could find little in writing or detail on maps about that particular area. When Kephart came South, he found the timber and coal companies had already begun major operations. In fact it was from 1890 to 1930, that the timber companies managed to strip away the greatest hardwood forest on the American continent. By the late 1930's, only isolated stands of virgin timber on the most remote slopes of the southern highlands had escaped the saws of the timberman. In the mountain coalfields, mining was already a major operation, marked by bloody strikes and harsh living conditions.

In the highlands of western North Carolina, people managed to keep their traditional family holdings, while taking jobs in the mills and factories built along the larger waterways. In this area, as is true in most of the Appalachian region where people continue to live and work on farms, the traditional mountain culture remains clear and visible. The people have ancestral roots and their stories, parables, and music are keyed to a long and stable relationship to the land around them. Family ties and neighborhood attachments may date back through several generations. The pace of life is still based upon a time cycle of seasons or years. The eight-hour day is still a minor factor (but an increasingly important one) in the development of values and lifestyles in many mountain counties.

In the coalfields of central Appalachia, industrial development took an entirely different turn, and the result has been a reaction by the people quite distinct from that of other rural areas. In central Appalachia, most of the land is owned by land-holding companies or coal companies. Railroads were built into mine locations, and these companies built entire towns or coal camps to house the thousands of workers needed to run the mines. Gradually over a period of years, local mountaineers were lured down from their farms to the camps by the glitter of high wages and material benefits. Unscrupulous land speculators and coal operators cheated early settlers out of their lands by convincing them to sign away their landed heritage for a few dollars during periods of hard times or personal financial crisis. Other thousands of workers, particularly blacks from Alabama, Georgia and Mississippi and their families were brought in by railroad cars to work the mines. The result is the most densely populated rural area in the country, where it is quite common to find three or four thousand residents strung out along a narrow hollow or roadway. In

these settlements, most of the people are now dependent upon coal mining or government subsidy for income.

And for three million "economic refugees" (*migrants* in conventional parlance) who simply to survive have been forced to leave the mountains because of the great push of the industrial-technological invasion since World War II, there are the jobs in the sweatshops and on the garbage scows of the North and Midwest. (Those who believe sweatshops exist only in the South are wearing the same blinders that prevent them from recognizing racism in Senator Kennedy's Massachusetts or in the New York State of vice-president-designate Rockefeller.) No matter: the point is that mountain folk have more than their share of the Northern and Midwestern jobs that take off fingers, poison livers, eat up lungs, etc., etc. Also, to survive they must eat the "baloney" and "hog-dogs" stuffed with the sodium nitrate and sodium nitrite that troubles the Ralph Naders (but not the FDA) jammed between slices of the Wonder Bread non-bread of chemical compounds—three, in some cases only two or one generation removed from those quaint ole originators of the Organic Food Movement celebrated with such commercial success in *Foxfire* and *Organic Gardening and Farming*. And there is nothing unusual about this phenomenon—for Chicanos, Blacks, Indians, are also economic refugees in our cities and also eat the puffed chemicals known as "bread," because they too are unable to pay the price for the "organic" stuff their grandparents and parents raised as their staff of life. (If the non-violent movement wants a community of "poverty," and in many instances "enforced" fasting, here are ones for their picking.) Perhaps the only difference is that, among all these other groups in the stream of migration, loosed by the American complex, which today seek out a rock of survival, studies show that the mountaineers still yearn to return to the region from which they came.

Despite the fact that migrant families may be a thousand miles from home, they retain the old family structures and the same highly personalized relationships to the people around them. It's not uncommon to talk with a migrant who still defines "home" as the hills of east Kentucky or Tennessee despite the fact that he may have lived in Detroit or Chicago for the past twenty years. So perhaps the clearest "anti-American" declaration, however unarticulate it may be, is the six-hour traffic jam that blocks I-75 South each Friday evening at the Cincinnati bridge, when "these damned briars, ridgerunners, and hicks" pile into the junkers headed for Kentucky, and points south. There is no other trek "home" like this outpouring of transplanted mountain laborers headed back to the hills.

It was this industrialism that took the weapons obtained in the nation's wars off the racks and set mountaineers to fighting, for the first time, America itself. When coal miners demanded a decent wage and a union, they got Pinkerton guards, coal-company goon-

squads, the National Guard, and even Billy Mitchell's bombers. When mountain textile workers organized, women were shot in the back by North Carolina industrial barons at Marion and Gastonia. America had taught them that violence was the answer to disputes. It was inevitable that when America itself invaded Appalachia, mountaineers responded with the weapon they knew best, taught them by America's best. Thus, a once peaceful mountain county, Harlan, made itself a reputation in 1938, at the height of United Mine Workers' organizing, with its seventy-five murders that year. No matter that most of the murders were committed by coal-company gun-thugs in the hire of Eastern "industrialists," Harlan became "Bloody" and its coal miners, not the companies, took forever the stain of the charge. No matter, too, that 120,000 coal miners—most of them mountaineers—have been killed in American mines, and more than 1.5 million have been maimed and disabled by coal company and government "violence" in failing to provide a safe working environment. No matter. Blame the miners and not the Mellons for "losing civilization." Send in missionaries to urge non-violence on mountaineers. And let them run the schools, colleges, and churches, with company blessings, and then send in the sociologists to "study" how the victim was at fault. They are "Yesterday's People."

Despite the missionary propagandizing ideologies, mountaineers have stuck by America's formula for settling disputes. Modern mountain strip mining is a case in point. With few exceptions, mountain people opposed the strip miners in every community where strip mining has occurred. But the coal operators usually control the news media. So word of their opposition rarely moves beyond the local community. In east Kentucky, for example, most opposition over the past ten years had been influenced by the Appalachian Group to Save the Land and People, a grassroots organization of small landowners centered in Knott County, Kentucky.

The story of the Appalachian Group is worth telling in detail in any account of "non-violence" and "violence" in contemporary Appalachia. In 1965, Sturgill and Kelly, the two main strippers for the Tennessee Valley Authority in east Kentucky, moved their Kentucky Oak Mining Company and Caperton Coal Company into the Lotts Creek section of Knott County. Immediately they met firm opposition from local landowners. Lotts Creek is in a long narrow holler with several branches winding off the main stem. Several hundred people live along its meandering course, most of them tied together by blood kin or long friendships. Lotts Creek flows into Troublesome Branch. The people along the creek soon showed the strippers that Troublesome was an accurate name for the area.

Kelly's and Sturgill's first trouble came when they moved onto Amos Ritchie's land near the head of Lotts Creek. Ritchie himself was away in military service involved in Vietnam, like many men who grew up in the

area. While involved in his patriotic duty he appointed "Uncle" Dan Gibson, an 81-year-old retired logger, carpenter and Old Regular Baptist preacher, to oversee his land. Gibson, although in his eighties, retains the strength of his early days spent as a logger and millwright. When the strip miners crossed onto Ritchie's land boundary, Dan Gibson and his neighbors turned them back.

After frantic radio calls from the strippers to the local sheriff's office, fourteen state police and a deputy sheriff were sent up to the mine to arrest Dan Gibson. But Dan Gibson refused to leave his post, defiantly sitting in the open space with his rifle, until a neighbor was able to bring a message that friends were positioned in the woods around the mine, and would protect the land of his commission. At that point Gibson surrendered his gun and allowed the officers to move him to Hindman, the small county seat twenty miles away, where he was jailed. During the next two hours, armed mountain men and women filled the small town. County officials, ever quick to detect a change in the political wind, slipped out of Hindman, leaving only the jailer to contend with the large crowd which gathered outside his office. Dan Gibson was released that afternoon by the jailer. The charges against him were dropped.

This incident marked the public birth of the Appalachian Group. Local meetings had been held earlier, but word of Gibson's "resistance" to strip mining spread through the hills of east Kentucky. Over the next few weeks, requests for meetings began to trickle in by phone, mail and by word of mouth.

Money was always a problem. The Appalachian Group held turkey-shoots, auctioned off quilts, pies and cakes, and passed the hat at every meeting. Money went for gasoline to visit other communities. No one was paid to help the Group organize. Membership cards cost one dollar, but if someone didn't have the dollar there was always another person who would chip in to get the card.

But in the hills around Lotts Creek, the stripping went on, much of it on land owned by large absentee holding companies. The next major confrontation came several weeks later on the land of Ollie Combs, which held his widow on a twenty-acre tract where she lived with her bedfast son, an army veteran rendered completely a cripple in arms and legs by an automobile accident shortly after his discharge, and twin boys who no longer attended public school. Caperton Coal company (owned by Sturgill and Kelly) attempted to force their way onto her land. The "Widow Combs" (as she became known across the state) lay down in front of the bulldozers and was promptly hauled off to jail.

The "lay-in" confrontation with the dozers was a court of last resort. To "strip" the ridge above her home (sociology would call it a marginal dwelling) would mean the literal destruction of their refuge from the outside world; the refuge left her by her husband's

death. The spring rains after the first stripping would wash the earth, naked of its protecting trees and foliage, away as mud and silt to destroy her home. In essence, putting her at the mercy of America's institutions intended for those powerless to resist America's complexes and institutions. And that is what her body before the bulldozers was. Not gesture. *Against* the inexorability of the American complex of technology-industry-law-banking-politics-military. All that, the widow meant to reject when she lay between her home and the dozers. From the beginning to the end, "non-violence" as we think about it had nothing to do with what she did. It was a matter of her boys, the home left her and them by her husband, against an annihilation into a face-less face, an integer in some state institution for the face-less faces, the integers digested by the movement of contemporary America. Her body was all she had, for it was who she was.

The point of Mrs. Combs is that she did not "have" to do it. No. Something in or about her (what "it" was we dare not even try to describe) found her free to reject even the hopeless violence of "the law" as she sought to overcome the necessity of violence visited on her sons, her refuge, her. As if the hopelessness, the totality of the specific, immediate, concrete violence she faced could only be measured by her freedom to reject its specificity and immediacy with her body. No ideologies of violence or non-violence or even *satyagraha* against an abstraction of "environmental destruction" or even "State" (perhaps by this time a redundancy in her subconscious forged by the thrust of her life-time). Rather, freedom to overcome violence's inevitability—concretely where she lay. Not abstractly against ideas, theories, analyses, position-papers, "organizing meetings," and law-suits by the ACLU, Common Cause and the Sierra Club.

Maybe Mrs. Combs is closer to the New Testament paradigms of "resist not evil" than "movements" of non-violence which, because they are movements, must "keep all options open"—even the option of not openly opposing violent resistance to evil that "tragically," they say—yet inevitably, necessarily—produces the very violence that they oppose so passionately, yet so abstractly. *"Ye have heard that it has been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also."*

With her, at the confrontation lay-in, was a newspaper photographer, Bill Strode, who was also arrested. Widow Combs spent Thanksgiving in jail, and photographs of her smuggled out of jail by the newsmen focused national attention upon east Kentucky strip mining. Throughout, the Appalachian Group stood guard in her absence to protect her land, and her boys.

Little known to the press and so to the world beyond the confines of Knott County, a small-scale war flared up in the hollers surrounding these incidents. Fighting

between the farmers and company gun thugs went on almost without ceasing for six weeks in late 1965. It has flared sporadically ever since. One Lotts Creek resident recalls a gun fight between farmers and guards in which "you could sweep up a double bushel of rifle shells the next morning on almost any ridge." Several times company guards mounted machine guns on the back of trucks and used them to patrol the mines. But to little avail. Forced into a strategy of retreat by constant snipings, Sturgill and Kelly tried to mine at night, but sharpshooters shot out headlights on their machines. At one point steel plates were welded to one bulldozer to protect the operator, but no one could be found who would drive the home-made tank. That plan was abandoned. During one hectic week, Kentucky State police were sent into the mine as escorts. But their commander, after being pinned under his police cruiser all night by snipers, called his men off the mine.

The Appalachian Group has never claimed credit for these actions, preferring to say instead that they are willing to defend their land against anyone who tries to destroy it. No one has ever been arrested for taking part in any of these "fire-fights."

Despite their lack of influence in the courtroom and the unwillingness of any state officials to publicly defend them, the Appalachian Group has had some success. The strippers pulled out of Lotts Creek for quieter places in 1966. Over the past few years, members of the Appalachian Group have begun to reach out beyond their own communities. Many now feel that strip mining anywhere in the Appalachian mountains is bad. In 1970, a series of demonstrations began against strip mining, stopping overweight coal trucks, holding marches, motorcades, press conferences, meeting with Congressional leaders and escorting civic groups on tours of mined areas. The most dramatic act occurred in February, 1972, when twenty women from the Appalachian Group stopped a stripping operation in Knott County by going to the mine-site and standing in front of the machines. The demonstration ended in violence. Company employees began to threaten the women, and as night approached the women decided to move off the mine. Their fears were well-founded. Below them, at the base of the mine, four male supporters, who had remained there to monitor the actions of the coal company, were surrounded by a group of men, beaten with pistol barrels and thrown off the mine. Non-violence, it seems, is not for the mountains.

If the strip-mining movement seems headed toward a non-victorious end for mountaineers, part of the blame must be assigned to the poverty-war era radicals who urged "non-violence" on the movement. Thanks to the Appalachian Volunteers—a million dollar, middle-class invasion of the region in the 1960's—organizing by the Appalachian Group came to a halt. By getting themselves arrested for "sedition," and focusing the anti-stripping battle onto themselves, the "AV's" made the

times hard for the Dan Gibsons' and Widow Combes' who did not want to be "investigated" by the Kentucky Un-American Activities Committee. While their "organizations" scurried frantically to draw up statements of non-violent principles, the "AV's" finished off that early phase of the anti-strip mining effort in a public squabble about whether they should fire a "staff-member" (from outside the region) who had decided to tell the newspapers that he was refusing to go to the war in Vietnam. Whatever the merit of this particular non-mountaineer's convictions, and all considerations aside that his draft refusal only moved another young mountaineer into his place, the squabble began the final touches on the decline of the Appalachian Group. As noted earlier, the Group has since come out of its eclipse, but the organization is not the same. The strip mine battle was ended by those who were not the victims of the hellish process, i.e., people who had not learned from the America of their history that non-violence was fine everywhere—everywhere, that is, except where America is *serious* about invasion.

The prospects for Appalachians un-learning American habits do not seem bright. A year-long organizing battle by the UMW in Harlan County ended in success for the union in August, but only after the death of a 23-year-old coal miner. Until that time, both the Duke Power Company and the UMW were at a standoff—with Duke, machine guns daringly mounted in its offices, standing down unarmed coal miners who were told by their Union to eschew violence. But Duke unleashed violence, and the coal miners prepared to reply in kind. The age-old formula worked again. The union won a contract and the media had another "Bloody Harlan, they've-lost-their-civilizing-instincts" story.

In the non-coalfield areas, men like General William Westmoreland of Vietnam and General Lauris Norstad of NATO gather to golf at \$100,000-plus condominium-resorts in the North Carolina Blue Ridge. It's all a part of the latest invasion of the mountains by "second-home" dwellers and resort builders. And with the current TVA and Corps of Engineer dam battles, mountaineers are talking about taking up arms to settle the matters that seem impervious to legal and political action. The environmentalists and consumer activists are urging them to non-violence. One suspects that pacification and containment are the name of the games that both the helpers and the exploiters are playing. Maybe, the Appalachian reasons, the thing to do when you are being annihilated by America is to fight, not squat. In America today maybe it is not a matter of deciding on violence or non-violence as a movement. Appalachian experience indicates that all segments of the population—liberal and otherwise—will cooperate to paint the most peaceful as the most violent.

The name of this game is Al Capps' Daisy Mae, not the Widow Combs.

III.

James Y. Holloway

The starting-point for the reflections which follow is the uncertainty expressed in the introduction to this essay: "We don't know that 'movements' are the crunch of what we mean when we say 'non-violence.' At least, in our time." What may be the heart of the matter in the struggle against violence today begins—not necessarily chronologically—with who we are, where we stand, individually, specifically, concretely, in circumstance, about the violence in ourselves against those who are nearest to us. Not the decisions of a movement. Rather, each one deciding in one's own guts and head, not letting one's glands juice out a "group decision" after song, speeches, testimonies and more songs. Rather, one, and by one: here, and there.

Maybe then a signal to Caesar? A signal passed into State (that is, Caesar's) policies? Doubtful, although it would be foolish to foreclose that possibility. In any case, Ellul's notions on the violence of the State as State, about "violence as necessity," confirms too much of my experience to believe seriously that non-violence either ought to or can undertake to transfer a movement's convictions into Caesar's policies. It is a confusion of realms: of Caesar's, and Christ's. (After all, what State so recently bathed in the teachings of that greatest disciple of non-violence just entered the community of "atomic devices"? Will anyone urge that that event nullifies the greatest disciple's teachings?) The State might just here and there glimpse in a refracted way witnesses to non-violence, and might therefore be influenced to moderate its policies of violence. Sociologically, it would be ridiculous to deny that possibility. And that is to the good, so long as the State's moderation of overt violence does not produce in its wake a more subtle yet more effective form of violence by the State's dehumanizing dependences and soul-crunching propagandas. But it never means that Caesar is "converted," or "transformed," or even "humanized," only that a witness at one time was an exception faintly heard by the State. In any event, such objectives can never be the goal of non-violence, for non-violent witness must always reckon with the opposite possibility: that the State today can digest non-violent witness and spew it out whenever and however to suit State purposes.

Ellul again: "the order of violence cannot be brought under moral judgement." (I underscore that Ellul's *Violence: Reflections from a Christian Perspective* is essential reading for this issue of *Katallagete*.) So the struggle against violence in our day is a specific and unique one; immediate to us: in bedroom or bar; with son, daughter, darlin' companion, even wife; in cocktail lounge, classroom, shop, committee-meeting, supermarket, coffee-break, telephone call, hospital, bait store. We cannot be against violence or anything else—and certainly not in any "movement"—unless we recognize the almost limitless varieties and possibilities of violence in

ourselves. Only then do we recognize the almost limitless varieties and possibilities, and shapes, forms and levels of violence which rage outside and against us.

The struggle against violence today becomes a parable, but in fact a parable impossible to be by "doing" anything: only *being*, called by parables which are beyond us and which, therefore, most of us know only through the witness of others. Jesus: yes. Gandhi: yes. Others: yes, for we have seen their witnesses. A parable lived rather than actions "done," against all forms of violence—therefore a parable difficult to be in today's communal or community phrasings. Perhaps in our time only "incognito" (as Kierkegaard would phrase it; and on this see Ellul's *Hope in a Time of Abandonment*). The struggle against violence begins immediately and concretely where and how we are with the others nigh unto us at this moment, for it is only here that we experience violence for what it is in truth, in fact. It is only here that we have the basis for rejecting the many, subtle and effective violences which silently yet ever so deadly make our *selves* and the ones who are nearest to us into abstractions, blanks, integers which buy soap or compute missile trajectories. There is no genuine struggle against violence in a wider context, in a movement context, unless the apprehension of and the temptation to violence is overcome in our selves and against our neighbors. Otherwise, the wider context, the movement context, against violence becomes only one more abstraction that itself becomes violent.

The struggle against violence today—against, that is, the many ways our age has devised to debase, use, prostitute, make less-than-human and murder us and those who are nearest to us—that struggle must always be concrete, unique to us and to where we are, and has nothing to do with Caesar's multidimensional schemings. Or rather, it ought not to have anything to do with what the State or any other complex is, or what they try to do to us. Instead, it has to do with who and how we are with the others who are nearest to us; with who we see in those who are nigh. When we see in the one who is neighbor only an abstraction, a blank that walks and talks but is not with and in us since we are not with and in him, then we see in the neighbor only those multidimensional, well-known abstractions of racism, poverty, Vietnam, ecology, Watergate, inflation/deflation. And we react accordingly with those well-known violences which are characteristic of the policies of political mesianism. We see in the one who is nigh to us the States' abstraction of him, so we debase him, pollute him, use him, commit adultery against him, kill him—in racism, poverty, Vietnam, ecology, Watergate, inflation/deflation: And there is no struggle against the violence in ourselves and against our specific deeds of violence against those who are near.

And thus does the latent totalitarianism of the State become actual, because the one bulwark against political mesianism renders to Caesar the things that are God's. The ones who are near us become abstractions of the

State, or the media, or of education, psychiatry, group-therapy, assorted liberation efforts, economics, technology and movements. We join enthusiastically with our bodies and our money in their judgement about what "to do" about the abstractions by more legislation, investigations, anti-personnel missiles, Chevrolets-for-America, Masters-and-Johnson, Burger Kings and Ban-Roll On.

Such is the quality of our age in which the struggle against violence takes place: the violence of "doing" something, *being* no-thing.

The confession at the outset of these reflections is, that from personal experiences and encounters in the 40's and 50's as well as the 60's, to this day I do not know what non-violence means as a movement.

When this is said, however, it becomes necessary to emphasize again what was urged some paragraphs back. This is not to condone, excuse, justify, say less, wink at, violence which in *any form* necessarily diminishes in *any way* one's humanity. For one thing, the past thirty years demonstrates how the complex which now energies America "digests" (that is, assimilates) violence so efficiently. (What I mean, as an example, is the final insignificance for those most intimately concerned, of the ghetto rebellions and far Left desperations of the mid-and-late 60's.) More concretely, for another, what is meant is that Christ defines our humanity (not we, his). It is Jesus in us and in those nigh to us who rejects the State's abstraction of us, and our neighbor. He is God's gift which frees us from the grip of violence's necessity—and especially the necessity to justify, as a sanction of Christ's, violence by the State or The Revolution.

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Reflection on violence and non-violence in Appalachia and America in the 50's and 60's endures few conclusions or certainties. A few notions, perhaps, but no convictions. One notion is that in the 60's, non-violence cannot be dissociated from "movement." That movement-characteristic is basic to an understanding of our age, and therefore, of non-violence. No movement, no reality. Saul Alinsky put it well: in our day the only movement without a strategy is a bowel movement. Movements in our age are strategic movements because they are mass-based, founded on numbers of individuals somehow "organized" into a movement. By definition movements cannot build on individuals as *unique* individuals, but only on *the* individual abstracted into "leader" and "cause," and recent experiences are replete with the fate of such "movements." Movements today are the way body deodorant commercials, men's fashion in clothing, "mass evangelism" and political mesianism must move. The larger the number, the better the movement, the more likelihood of successes with "the masses." From civil rights, anti-war and environmentalism, to Common Cause, Women's (or Gay or Whatever) liberation, stack heels and flared

jeans and the current President's banalities about thrifty-shopping-solving-inflation/deflation ("WIN"), a movement is judged by the density of its mass.

Even the non-violent movement which, by its very movement-quality, could do and did violence to persons within it as well as outside it. And it is no justification to invoke at this point the exciting but totalitarian dictum that to make an omlet eggs must be broken. Such justification is itself violence; and the metaphors contradict.

We know, but few of us talk seriously about those occasions when piously proclaimed non-violent actions calculated the degree of violence they might provoke to further "the cause"—the syndromes of Cuban-missile-crisis blockades, Gulf-of-Tonkin resolutions, ones not by any means limited to the Kennedy and Johnson National Security Councils: what we do we are doing only to bring "peace." Or: violence within the non-violent movement. We know of those anxious, hurting souls cut adrift from traditional cultural moorings who were whipped sometimes against themselves into a kind of trans-actional decision, the consequences for which they were wholly unprepared when the movement moved elsewhere. "Turn in my draft card? Burn it? Right on! Beautiful! Beautiful People! We Shall Overcome!" But what about those same anxious souls after different songs began to be sung by the movement? What about their humanity in the wake of the movement's next trans-action? When there is no one, in prison or out, to touch, hold hands with, sing and rap with, smoke with, *be* with? Ain't that violence done to one's humanity, and by the movement's *movement*?

Put the same notion another way: the individuals who straightway come to mind when we think about non-violence in the 60's are the leaders or the famous names in the "movement." Those non-violent martyrs (that is, *witnesses*) among the Buddhists in Vietnam who burned themselves up are the exception who prove the rule. As, for a fact, are those young and old in the United States who in solitude also immolated themselves in the early days of that war. Who even remembers that such witness took place? Or when? Or where? What were their names (and so hard to remember the "foreign" ones)? Who were they? Why did they "do" what they did—when the movement didn't? Such is the characteristic of our age—a characteristic which must be overcome if non-violence is to be non-violent.

There is, moreover, no reason or justification to ignore, minimize, reject or scorn the real, long and painful sacrifices visited on those individuals who were involved. The point here is to speak about another—let us say, "sociological"—level, and to suggest that much of the non-violence as movement in the 60's (like psychiatry) was made up of those who could afford it in the coin of our realm: financial security and (alas!) education. Yes: we know and do not forget those experiences of now-enshrined marches, rallies, voter-registration drives, sit-

ins, swim-ins, worship-ins, confrontations, etc., etc., which are correctly invoked as part of the non-violent movement of the 60's. But it is to say that what "moved" that movement across the South trickling into Appalachia in the 60's, was not Gandhi's "little people," but the educated, middle-and-upper income, financially secure, mostly but not always white-skinned. Where were those among us who *because* he possessed the coin of the realm in such abundance could be with and teach the "little people" about Jesus and *satyagraha*?

And by "little people" is meant not blacks only but especially the red-necks and peckerwoods. By "little people" is meant not only those mountain folk with a long tradition of political and economic radicalism, but the ridge-runners, the "yesterday's people" who drink too many Cokes and eat too many Twinkies and Ho-Ho's. Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer of Sunflower county, Mississippi, Mrs. Ollie Combs of Lotts Creek, Kentucky, have and had no coin of our realm. The exceptions here (say, Harvard graduate Robert Moses Parris—and where is he?) also prove the rule. Alas, A. J. Muste and Dr. King (like Debs before them) had to spend out their careers among the radical white intellectuals. The social and cultural and political intransigence of "little people" were more than the non-violent movement could handle because the movement possessed so much of the coin of the realm. The coin brought into the struggle sought to transform the "little people" into left-to-liberal, middle-income political activists; that is, into movement-people. To don in the manner of costume the accoutrements of poverty with denims and workshoes served only to focus attention on the burlesque of middle-income whites imposing their peculiar insecurities and desperations on those they had come "only to help." It also betrayed their ignorance of the wisdom of the "little people," who always recognize a costume by the ones who wear it—the ones who today, in the very same costume of denim and workshoes can be found in colleges, universities, discotheques, and country clubs, or, stuffed into stack heels, satin double-breasts or Afro-wigs, as the occasion demands.

This phenomenon—speaking now sociologically—requires further comment because it sheds a twinkle of light of the "movements" movement from Civil Rights to Poverty/Appalachia, to Vietnam, to Third World Revolutions, to Eco-catastrophe, and to Watergate. The common and decisive *movement* in the "movements" belongs to the State, and *not* to the movement. The coin with which the "movement" purchased its understanding of itself and its struggle was issued by the realm of Caesar. It was Caesar alone who could redeem the coin because it was coin from his realm which provided the education, owned the turf, set the conditions. Such is the foundation of Caesarism, not the gift of freedom which grants the strength to reject and oppose violence because it recognizes violence in terms not defined by Caesar. That is why we should and cannot expect a call today from any religious or secular movement-citidal

for a massive and "non-violent" outpouring into Boston, Massachusetts of the same mass which marched bravely and resolutely from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, less than ten years ago, or winged its way down on credit cards from Massachusetts, Connecticut and New York to Albany, Georgia eleven years ago. To emphasize once more, the question is not those individuals who marched (or today do not march), but of the citidels of the "movements" which sounded the call.

The song asks, "Where Have All the Young Loves Gone?" Well, a few spit on the shells that we once recognized as John Ehrlichman or H. R. Haldeman. But it is the State police and National Guard (and a mayor's call for federal marshals) who go today into Boston, and whatever "prayer" there is comes from the lips of their chaplains.

Do we then acquiesce, for our selves and our babies clutching to their dolls and stuffed animals, in the walk naked into the showers to emerge cleansed for the coke incinerators? Who knows? If it comes to that, it becomes not a matter of acquiescence, but acceptance: Caesar's realm; or Christ's? Anyway, the hard evidence of the past thirty years is not coke incinerators, but behavior modification, political pacification, Gulag archipelagoes, prison and political investigations and reforms, television commercials, fashions, styles, movements of dissent grinding out thirty-five year old establishment propagandists, and education in the most free of societies becoming indoctrination into political and economic techniques. *There* are the doors to stand in; the ditches to go down in. It is a matter of acceptance: Caesar's realm, or Christ's.

Movements. We move *one* way (Civil Rights), another way (Vietnam), another way (Appalachia), another way (eco-catastrophe), another way (Watergate) . . . as our white, affluent hides are at stake. And that, too, dancing to the tune piped by the State, paid with our coin of its realm, because we have become with our movements the property of Caesar.

The point is the sociological one. Who would ignore the individual costs in witness, discomfort, sacrifice, lives? Goodman, Chaney, Schwermer, Luizzo, Reeb, Daniels, Morrisroe, Evers, King. (And we note none in our litany are Appalachians, because the "movement" passed Appalachia by.) The crushing point is that even when we speak of martyrs today, we speak forthwith sociologically, because their non-violent witness is inseparable from movements.

That is why, as we observed at the beginning of this essay, we are certain that what happened in Appalachia in the 60's must be taken seriously by the non-violent movements today, and tomorrow. But the "moral" of this sociological notion can be grasped only by the individual,

concretely, where his specifics put him immediately with others. So the sociological is left—with each reader as individual.

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And wind this up with one or two comments on what seem to be some Gospel material pertaining thereto. Possibly the most obvious is the most obscure to our age: that the good news in Jesus is not a movement. The good news does not come to us as or in a movement, certainly not as or in a non-violent movement. Such is the Gospel's testimony. It assumes violence in the course of things, and so begins and ends with Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. The gift of freedom in Jesus—yea, even and especially today the *freedom* (resurrection) from violence's necessity (the crucifixion). This gift comes from God to us with the utmost specificity, individuality, concreteness. Not in movement, religious crusade, group-therapy political activism or trans-action—an emphasis that cannot be made too often today because of the almost total movement-character of the Church and the churches and Jesus-people in our time. God in Jesus is not a movement by today's definition. When the gift of God in Jesus calls, we are summoned as individuals (with and by our *name*) into His name, His Body; not into a movement, for the call is God's doing, not our strategies. That vocation from God, therefore, has nothing necessarily to do with time or spatial proximity, and in fact casts us closer to St. Paul, even Jesus, than to Gerald Ford, the Shah of Iran, Billy Graham or Judge Sirica. Otherwise, God's gift of vocation is no call to discipleship, to witness to his gift of freedom (resurrection) from violence (crucifixion). Otherwise, it is a summons to a crusade, to a movement: be "saved" by doing as we do, as our movement-crusade-people do. No: we are who we are by God's gift, which frees us of that violent necessity of prostituting others by today's violences into the image of ourselves in our movements.

Perhaps this is why so much softness and sadness attends reflections on the non-violent movements of the 60's. That vision which thrust open our horizons however briefly for a glimpse of "the beloved community" became in ambition for the movement only one more twentieth century nightmare like unto the crusades which the history of our civilization knows so well. So its captains and lieutenants become now hard-boiled pastors, Congressmen, and church, State, educational and organizational strategists who know only to await Caesar's next "move" in yet one more attempt to "convert" or "humanize" the State with the gumdrops of silly movement-moralities. It is the old confusion of realms: of Caesars, and Christ's. That is what is soft.

What is sad is the non-violent movement's present hopelessness. For at the outset there was so much hope, and vision. Compounded in sadness is the Christian's non-violent hopelessness, expressing itself, sometimes

even acting out, "theologies of violence" which have become only one more hopeless expression of trust that Caesar and his policies will free us from violence's necessity. It is sad, pathetic, for Christians to fret as *Christians* about "who is Gerald Ford?"

Alert to the almost limitless possibilities for violence in our society, the Christian seeks a word from his ground of hope, so to grasp the real dimensions, complexities, subtleties of violence today—but violence seen in the light of God's hope: that is, in God's good news

to us—to everybody, you, me, Fidel Castro, Richard Nixon, the starving babies in Africa—in Jesus. For in that hope, and in that hope *only*, is the Christian's (and thereby, the world's) *only* cause for non-violence.

And it throws a sense of humor otherwise absent into our predicament.

Let's re-read old John's sermon to "the multitudes" who came to him in search of a "movement" to save them "from the wrath that was to come."

Let's re-read the Beatitudes

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TO BEAT THE DEVIL (In Three Parts)

James Herndon

James Herndon teaches in the public schools in San Francisco, California. He is the author of *The Way It Spozed to Be* and *How To Survive in your Native Land*.

I.

I awoke yesterday morning to a loud Whump! Whump! coming from somewhere down the road. The Whump continued regularly as I got dressed and came downstairs—clearly a large machine of some sort had been brought into the village and that meant I would have something to do later on, namely, to go and see what it was.

On my way down to the store, I could see it over past the wharves. It was a huge well-digger, perhaps fifty feet high, certainly bigger than anything else around except for the church. It was whumping away in someone's backyard, watched by a nice crowd of observers; I planned to join them.

As I came out of the store I was greeted by Charley and another small boy. They were both dressed up—Charley had on a clean yellow shirt, pressed shorts and a new captain's cap. Charley is four years old, going on five.

We're going to Harry's birthday, Charley said. I said that was nice, and all, and Charley said, Harry's seventeen. Then, after a pause, I think Harry's fifteen. I said I didn't know Harry. You see that? he said, pointing down the road at the huge machine. Yeah, I said. What's it doing, digging a well? *Drilling* a well, *drilling* it, he said. Oh right, I said, *drilling* a well.

Yeah, said Charley. That's Harry's birthday present! What is? I looked around.

That! The Well-Driller! Yeah, that's what Harry got for his birthday!

You could see that Charley thought that was a hell of a present. So did I, and I said so. Charley then told me that Harry was 20 feet tall. Then he said that he thought Harry was 17 feet tall. Yeah, Harry's a real big monster! he said, very pleased about it.

I asked him what he got Harry for his birthday. He held up two sticks, one in each hand. One was a short, pointed stick. The other was a long, weather-beaten piece of lath. We're taking these, he said, indicating the other boy, who hadn't said a word. This is Harry's knife (holding up the short stick) and this is his gun.

Now for me, a forty-five year old man spending a few weeks in a tiny village in Nova Scotia, the one certain thing is that there is some kind of a party, for Charley's mother has gotten him dressed up in a yellow shirt. But Charley, at four going on five, a permanent inhabitant of the village, is part of a world in which persons of his acquaintance can get a fifty-foot whumping well-driller for a birthday present. It's also a world in which that same lucky person will be happy to receive two old sticks for his birthday, along with, of course, the Driller.

Obviously it's also a world inhabited by a teenager named Harry who has been telling Charley a lot of good information from time to time, and it's a world in which sticks can become guns and knives (and as easily become sticks again) and one in which certain things aren't clear, like Harry's height and age, and so must be tried on with other people, in this case with me.

It's a world, among other things, which many serious adults like to investigate and analyze, particularly with regard to questions of imagination and reality. But for teachers, or for people interested in how schools ought

to be, what is important is only to see and agree that it is, in fact, Charley's world.

His world, the one in which he lives and grows and learns; he experiences it, invents it, and makes sense out of it at one and the same time, and it is what he is going to bring along with him when he comes into the school. At the school there is no good reason why a few other items couldn't be brought into that world—items like measuring and naming and lettering—brought in simply and naturally as if you got those items for your birthday. They could be brought in in such a way that they belonged to Charley, as the Driller belongs to him, as the names for sticks belong to him, because they belong to his world, his field.

Probably, however, the school will insist on Charley's leaving his world behind. The school seems to believe that a great change will have to take place in Charley's habits before he can do any learning about some special items which the school will begin to call *work*. At best the school will see his world as merely useless or in the way—one in which he has not been taught anything, not seeing that it was always full of teaching (Harry's, for instance) and teachers. He'll be asked to accept the fact that certain parts of his world are important (for naming and measuring and lettering have always been part of it) but only in an environment so strikingly different that he will see them as belonging, not to him, but rather to the school. He'll be asked to accept the fact that these things are very difficult, and can only be mastered through denying what he knows of his own world.

But I insist that exactly the opposite is true. In Charley's own world, the things the school wants to teach him are minor details, easily mastered by everyone within their daily lives. (Harry, for example, would be a good person to teach Charley to read.) Moreover, it's not a world made of unattached bits and pieces, where you bring some along and leave the rest behind. It's a whole thing, indivisible. No world, no Charley.

So the decade's list of school-reforms or innovations or methodologies or structures or techniques really doesn't interest me any more. Can you imagine someone trying to devise a method to get Charley to learn to be creative? If you can, then you can probably get interested in something on the list; help yourself. I regard them all as false, and based on a falsehood.

No world, no Charley.

II.

November, 1974

Dear Holloway:

I remember Edgar Friedenberg telling me, a couple of years back, that everyone in America now knew everything about the misery and failure of schools, and so there really wasn't any reason to write about them (or

about the war, or racism, or poverty, or violence) anymore.

It was a little elegy for dead movements. Perhaps that is actually why I don't seem able to write anymore about such things—after all, who would write when there is no reason to do so? Still, something else may be involved. I recall when we talked, in Macon and up at your place, about writing something for *Katallagete* about schools and violence, that I felt my usual mixture of apprehension and excitement. Apprehension, because it might just be that nothing good would come out of it, and excitement because I always hope that through writing something will happen and I'll learn something. A kind of magic which I really depend on.

But I can see that there is really nothing to be learned about this matter of violence. Awhile back I had started to write this stuff about Charley, and at one time even planned to write a kind of bitter history of the "school movement" and attach it to old Charley. "The school movement failed," I recall writing once or twice, "for the same reason that all movements fail in America—because it moved away from its real work into bitterness and vanity." Sure thing. Or the notion of *change*—the movement figured to *change* everything, I'd say, and "when it became clear, after all the protests and conferences and writing and alternatives over some ten years, that for some odd reason nothing had changed at all, the people had nothing left to do but to blame each other and become angry, apathetic and forlorn." Well, sure.

Nothing to be learned at all. The violence of the school lies in the simple fact that it requires the child to deny what he knows of himself in favor of what the school knows about him. What the child knows is true, and what the school knows is a lie. But that is exactly what I knew when I was Charley's age—just about exactly what I said to myself then, as one can imagine. *This joint is doing violence to my spirit!* I've even taken a good deal of comfort and pleasure, in recent years, from the perception that I am as perfectly connected with myself as I was when I was three years old—that in all matters pertaining to *politics* (whatever involves the relations between individuals and society) I am the same as I was and know the same as I did, then.

When you called the other night, I said I wasn't able to write about this because it wouldn't come out nice and easy like I wanted it to. Just take a look at that last sentence of the preceding paragraph, for proof of that. Coming out nice and easy is when you learn something. When I was little, I never quite accepted the school's description of myself, because it was a lie, but I also couldn't quite reject it either in favor of my own description. I was always in between, not fish or fowl. It's not much different now that I'm teaching in a school. But when I was fourteen I began to play in dance bands (we called them)—of course, still going to school and dealing with all those matters of description

—and it was really quite a different story. All the band was asking me was *Do you want to play?* and *Can you play?* and I knew *I was dying to play*, and figured I could. You could answer questions truthfully. It was the first real joy I ever felt about such matters, and I learned that there was such a thing as joy, and never forgot that, either.

And so that was really, and is really, all she wrote. You can't just go on and write nice and easy about no school violence, because (unless you just agree to fall into rhetoric and a kind of stiff bullshit) you have to (or it looks like you have to) get involved with the story of your life in the world.

It comes down to this: violence can be analyzed all right, but it will only turn out that I will write badly about it, very likely involve myself in that same violence as I write, and what I write will be uninteresting, because everyone has known all about it since they were three. But joy can't be analyzed a-tall.

So? So I'm saying that one knows what violence is, and one also knows (if one has been lucky) what joy is. It's a matter of knowing the difference between violence and joy. You-all keep trying to inform me about *Resist Not Evil* (or combat not evil, however it goes) but I'm only talking about as how you don't have to *put up with* evil. On account of you know the difference.

The fact is that you, old Comrade Holloway (I have no hesitation in saying that) with the willing connivance of my sweet Comrade Arpine, got me into this. It remains to be seen whether or not you can get me out.

Love,
Jim Herndon

III.

Walking home late after a few drinks at Gino and Carlo's bar, my wife and I began the kind of typical argument we begin after late visits to Gino and Carlo's. It started as we walked through the Broadway tunnel, where in any case you have to walk single-file, and by the time we came out of the tunnel we were dug in solidly enough in our separate positions so that we continued one after the other, calling out our sporadic attacks all the way home.

Inside our flat, I walked straight down the hall to the kitchen; Fran, my wife, headed for bed. I planned to sit in the kitchen, drink cooking sherry, and brood. It was a real plan, with plenty of precedent. I'll drink up all the cooking sherry and brood, I might well have said to myself.

As I turned on the light, I was astonished to see the rather skinny rear-end of a man sticking out of the pantry door—a man in a brown suit and hat, bending down and apparently searching for something on the floor. He straightened up, and I saw he was holding a brandy bottle. Backing out of the pantry, he bumped his head hard against the light-fixture.

He stood there for a moment with his back to me, leaning against the door-frame and nodding his head thoughtfully. Perhaps he was brooding. Then he turned around and began to speak without hesitation or introduction.

"Rummage around in pantry for brandy," he said. "Find cooking sherry, find wine bottles re-filled with olive oil, find nasty Mexican liqueur, find kid's rubber dagger. Finally find brandy bottle, half-full. Back out of pantry in triumph and bump head hard on light."

He said this with an air of checking an inventory list. I recognized him at once as the famous writer, dead now these several years.

It was a subtle moment. There was the obvious question, but I felt that asking it, just like that—I didn't want to become one of his own brash characters chortling, "Well, well! The night the ghost got in!" or something like that, so I simply said, "There isn't any brandy in the pantry. Just some sherry and that Mexican stuff."

I thought it quite a decent opening, but he didn't offer to explain anything. Only, "Must be brandy. Must be in pantry. All wrong otherwise."

"You—brought the brandy?" I asked, trying again—even pushing it a bit, I thought.

"Found it," he corrected me, and sat down at the table. "Now then—wife trying to get to sleep in the bedroom, check?" sounding like an airplane pilot.

"Roger," I said, and, feeling that I was getting on to him, continued with a statement that we'd been to the bar, moreover a bar where we met friends, furthermore that some of these friends were writers, even poets.

"And our quarrel," I looked at him, and he nodded quickly three or four times in assent, "was about whether or not I should have paid the cable-car fare about four hours before. Naturally I didn't pay it because the conductor never came to collect it."

I got excited about it all over again, even waving my arms, I believe. "And she said it was my responsibility to make sure I paid for us. And I said it was my duty only to be willing to pay when and if asked. My commitment was to the real situation, I told her, which was demonstrated by the existence of the conductor whose sole *raison d'être* was to collect fares—to present himself and ask for cable-car fares!"

As usual I could remember my own arguments better than I could hers. I suppose it may have been the trite French phrase—she is fond of French—or, more likely, the casual, cheery whistling I started up which in turn led her to call me, among other things, a neurotic cheapskate.

"Well," I concluded, "it's not the famous Donald Duck/Greta Garbo debate, but . . ."

"Ca suffit," he said, and then, "Let's have a glass for this brandy now."

I made two large drinks and sat down opposite him at the table. He took a drink, and set down the glass half-empty. I thought of several questions, but before I

could think how to phrase them, in view of my lack of success with the first, he said, "Now then!" in what seemed to me a particularly complacent and officious tone of voice. Considering the circumstances I felt that was too much, and forgot my role entirely.

"You say *now then*?" I asked rather heatedly. "What about *me* saying a little *now then*?"

He nodded again, the brooding kind of nod this time, and took another drink, setting down the glass empty. "May we have another?" he asked. I got up and made them.

"No doubt you'd like an explanation," he said, while I was still at the sink with ice and the rest. I came back with the drinks and handed him one; he took another large swallow. "I make these visits," he said. "When the circumstances are right, I make 'em. That's about all there is to say."

I waited. We drank. "Well . . ." he began, and then, "Hmm! . . ." taking another drink, and then, "At the last instant of my life," nodding to himself, "at the last possible second—it just came to me . . . well, of course actually I'd resolved, planned to try it a long time before—with my last breath, therefore, I said loudly, or I believe I said loudly, 'Now wait just a goddam minute, you!'"

He looked at me to see how I took it. I was impressed. "A desperate and courageous stroke," I said, back in character. And? Wild horses couldn't have dragged that *and* out of me. He answered it anyway.

"And I died immediately. Imagine having that on record as your last words. Well, no doubt that seemed very ironic and comical in some circles—I personally think it quite understandable—and it was subsequently conveyed to me . . . don't ask me *how*," he said, holding up his hand rather impatiently it seemed to me, "you don't know how. But pretty damn clearly conveyed, I'll tell you that! It was conveyed to me that I'd be making visits. No doubt some one has to."

"What for?" I asked. "What's supposed to happen?"

"How should I know?"

I got up to make our drinks. The brandy was running out, and I wondered if it would replenish itself. Apparently the question was to be not how, but why he was here, and he was leaving the answer to me. I brought the drinks and went into the bathroom, stalling for time as much as anything. Coming out, I flushed the toilet, and with its dying rushes came Fran's voice from the bedroom. "Jim! You should come to bed! It's late!" That was predictable and normally would have found me muttering to myself and doggedly pouring another sherry; as it was I said nothing and looked into the kitchen to see him chuckling. I hadn't done any thinking, of course, so it came as a surprise to me that I knew the answer.

"It must be the story," I said. "A friend of mine, David Pass, told it to me."

Then I wondered, why not Dave? It was his story—but probably the circumstances had something to do

with it. On the other hand, if the brandy was a circumstance he was manufacturing them to suit himself, so what about that? It's none of my business anyway, I thought, and then realized I'd spoken the last phrase aloud. He didn't appear to notice it, however, and I began.

"Park M_____ is a private housing development at the western end of the city. The park is built over some sand-dunes. The trees planted there wouldn't normally grow there. On one side of the development is Lake M_____, which is an artificial lake containing planted rainbow trout which you can most efficiently catch with balls of Kraft processed cheese. That describes the development too, I think, which is composed of tower apartments.

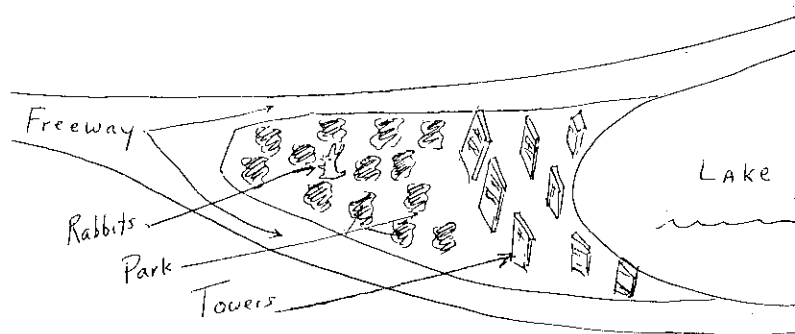
"On the other side of the area runs a freeway which was built about the same time as the towers, making the entire tract something of an island. A short time ago it was discovered that in the park part of Park M_____, a colony of rabbits had been marooned."

"Marooned?" he asked, with some surprise. "How's that, marooned?"

I began to explain the geography again, but he decided it might be best if I drew it out. There was an old letter on the table, so I turned the envelope over and began to make a map. As I drew, he got up himself to make our drinks. I noticed that he slammed the ice-box door hard, and then dropped the ice-tray in the sink which, being new and made of thin stainless-steel, made a terrifying clatter.

"What *are* you doing in there?" came Fran's voice, ringing down the dark hall and sounding in the white, bright kitchen like a clarion-call to duty, sobriety, memory—all those y-words, I thought uneasily, inimical to 3:30 in the morning, magic brandy and . . . "Come to bed! It's late!"

He watched over my shoulder as I finished the map. I began explaining it to him, writing in labels and drawing arrows. "So here's the lake, the freeway, another freeway . . ." and I went on until it was finished and looking like it does here.



"Now here," I said, "is where the rabbits are marooned."

I drew in a rabbit, and was about to make another one when I noticed the look on his face and stopped. "Would you rather draw them in yourself?" I asked.

"I can't draw anything that small. Just leave them," he said.

We looked at the map. "Well, it wasn't very long ago that the Directors of the tract found out about the rabbits. Shows the people there didn't mind them at all. Probably met them on the steps to their towers when they came out in the morning, or maybe they went right out in the park to see them. *Proves* they didn't mind, because this tract had been there several years before Directors found out about the rabbits, and they had to be there all the time. Shows nobody complained, I mean. They couldn't have just come in from somewhere else for the same reasons they couldn't get out now—they couldn't swim the lake, and they couldn't get across the freeway. No doubt rabbits had already found that out by trial and error."

Suddenly I felt melancholy, thinking about the rabbits hopping across the freeway. I rubbed my hand over my face. It *was* late. I felt I was getting drunk.

"Trial and terror . . ." I muttered.

"Come, come!" he said sharply.

"Sorry." I left my head resting on my hand. "Ought to go to bed," I said. "Go to bed, get up, start new day . . ."

"Snap out of it!" he said intensely. "Think about Professor Schwerdtfeger!"

I tried to remember Professor Schwerdtfeger.

"Think about Mongolians walking across Bering Strait millions of years ago . . ."

One of *his* professors, I remembered dimly, always trying to prove something, telling painful stories in the cold living room, late, nothing left to drink, the wife calling out, morose, *vindictive* Professor Schwerdtfeger . . .

"Not millions," I said. "I don't want to hear about them. Doubt whole story anyway."

"... millions and *millions* of years ago," he continued inexorably, "the wives trying to get something to grow in those icebergs and chewing on sealskins, going to bed early every night while the men stayed up late drinking acorn wine and oversleeping every morning, doing all the worrying for the race about history and magic and god, all those little things, Professor Schwerdtfeger used to say, just those little, simple things! And when the wives yelled 'Come to bed!' they got out the old bull-roarers and Zoom, Zoom, Zoom! Open their yaps just once and Zoom!"

"Old Zoom-Zoom!" I cried enthusiastically, falling into character. "There he is now, sneaky rat, tap-tapping down the damn corridor bringing me trick puzzles that don't work, damn wire-nails won't ever come apart . . ."

"The story," he interrupted calmly. In answer I held up my empty glass. Hell with role. Caution. Y-words,

Sneaky . . . sneaky rat Zoom-Zoom! He took my glass without a word and presently came back with both our glasses filled with cooking sherry. We both nodded now.

"Well, the Directors couldn't go them rabbits. Puzzle is, why not? I mean, why not? People in towers didn't mind them. Sat in their towers every morning and watched them, probably they couldn't wait to get home from their jobs to see those rabbits in the park. They probably *loved* . . ."

"All right," he said. "But the Directors?"

"OK. So they put out some poison. But the people in the towers complained that their dogs and cats ate up the poison. It's the kind of place where you can have well-behaved pets, but not children. You can imagine what happened about the time the first Siamese cat got a slug of that poison.

"So the Directors withdrew the poison and set out traps. Of course that was stupid. Not only did the Siamese cats get in the traps, but one day a kid got caught in one, and then there was a law-suit which was hushed up—even though the boy wasn't supposed to be in there, everyone considered it to be a bad scene. Trapping kids, hell of a note. Kid probably sneaked in there to get a look at real rabbits."

He'd left the sherry bottle on the table and we filled our glasses, emptying it. "The story doesn't really end," I said, and immediately felt depressed again. Why didn't I ever know any stories that really ended?

"I mean," I said hurriedly, afraid he might bring up the Bering Strait again, "the rabbits are still there. So next the Directors decided to organize a hunt. Their publicity man got into it, I imagine. Idea was for the city to issue special, temporary hunting licenses to the men who lived in the towers, who could all get out their Browning shotguns or *buy* Browning shotguns if they didn't have any, and on a certain day they'd have a hunt for the rabbits. Good advertising too—special hunt only for residents of . . . Directors probably very happy with publicity man, kill two birds and all. Big, special occasion; have cocktails, Palace-Hotel chef for European hunt-breakfast, wear boots, probably invite famous disc-jockey . . . sounds like grand idea. Sporting event. However, city so far refuses permits for hunt. Probably lots of rabbit-lovers in this city. Probably."

I felt I was telling the story all wrong, missing the note of triumph.

"Those rabbits are still there," I said. "Directors no doubt trying to pressure the city or thing of something else. But as of now, those rabbits are still there."

We finished the sherry. I got up and found the Mexican liqueur in the pantry and poured us both some. It was dark-brown and thick; we took sips of it.

"Late," he said. "Terrible, terrible Mexican liqueur."

"Terrible," I agreed.

Abruptly he said, "Whats the point? Late. Time for the point."

I was ready for him. "Point is," I said, "point is, those

rabbits are still there. Symbol. Not cheese-ball-eating rabbits either. Point is, not easy eradicate the real, even for Directors."

He got up, shaking his head. "Late," he said. He picked up the empty brandy bottle, went out to the service porch and dropped it down the garbage chute. We heard it bouncing and clanging all the way down. Fran padded down the hallway to the bathroom. She was really still asleep. The toilet flushed loudly and she came out. "Stumbling around in there," she said, without conviction. "Come to bed."

We waited, motionless and silent, until we heard her getting into bed. Then he said, as if there had been no interruption, "Spare you classic worry about whether or not brandy bottle still here in the morning. *Know* thrown down garbage chute."

He had begun striding about the kitchen during that last statement. Suddenly he stopped and chuckled, a kind of happy, surprised chuckle, as if he'd really thought of something during that striding. "Note easy eradication of real brandy bottle," he said, and with

that he picked up his glass and downed the Mexican liquor.

"Pretty good story. Worth trip. Only the point . . ." he began that slow nodding, brooding on it. All at once he stood still, looking right into my eyes.

"Those rabbits," he said firmly, "are living in a fool's paradise."

With that he smiled a smile of incredible brilliance, so that I really had to lower my eyes to the table. When I raised them he was gone, walking down our long hallway in the dark. I heard the toilet flush loudly, cutting out any other sound.

I had a dream later that night in which hundreds of rabbits were crossing the Bering Strait, hopping from ice-floe to ice-floe. As I watched, one rabbit stopped, pulled out a gold watch and looked at it intently. Then Fran was shaking my shoulder.

"You were saying 'Terrible Professor Schwerdtferger,'" she told me, "Terrible, terrible Professor Schwerdtferger" □

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