

THE Round Table

Autumn
1983

"...a path from where we are to where we should be." --- Peter Maurin

Responsibility and Law



WHY THIS ISSUE ?

The theme of this issue may seem an oddity to readers who know of the Christian anarchism tenets of the Catholic Worker tradition. But the Worker has always been a strong advocate of personal responsibility, the deeper value underlying Law. So we hope the issue will provide an illustrative interplay between law and responsibility. An unavoidable and immediate responsibility is Central America, so we have included two pieces on that topic: a photo essay and an opportunity for concrete action. We close with words from each of the three Catholic Worker houses.

We can think of no better way to begin than with these reflections from a person in prison.

Reflections From Prison

By Hardy Bevins

On the Law

I really don't agree with the law that stands now. I can understand the Legislature making stricter laws, but they should have more clarification. There needs to be something that would be more favorable to first offenders, youngsters and people who are not likely to get into trouble again, no matter if their first crime is curfew violation or murder. For there are people in prison right now who have had a history of violent crimes and have done time more than twice, and these same people have smaller sentences than I do.

Prior to my arrest, I had no record nor did I have any history of being a violent person. I made a mistake, and I believe I should pay for my mistake, but I don't think paying for the rest of my life is right. It isn't going to change what I have done so I can see no sense in it.

Since I have been here in the Missouri State Penitentiary, I have seen young guys like myself come in with sentences that are so long that it really makes no sense. In-

stead of rehabilitating someone, you are just storing people here who will never get out and who have nothing to live for. What is going to stop a man from continuing to do wrong with a sentence like life with no parole for 50 years? He has no respect for any human life because he doesn't have respect for himself. I also have a problem with police officers, lawyers and judges who have led people to plead guilty by using phrases that have more than one way of being interpreted.

On Non-Violence

I feel that if you have to hurt anyone physically - even if it is just slapping him, then I think it is best for you to terminate that relationship and stay out of each other's way. Non-violence is the real way because after you and someone else have beaten each other's brains out you still haven't settled anything - the problem is still there. You have just shown how ignorant you both were. I have much more to say, but I find it difficult to express myself clearly with pen and paper.

Hardy Bivens is currently serving 50 years without parole. He is 21 years old and has spent the last four years in prison. He may be reached by writing to: Hardy Bivens #39039, Box 900-3A-157, Jefferson City, MO 65102.

The Revolutionary Jesus

vis a vis

"LAW" in the Bible

By Allen O. Miller

"THE LAW" IN THE HEBREW BIBLE

The New Testament is the product of a revolutionary community of Jews who confessed Jesus of Nazareth to be God's Messiah in the context of a Roman establishment marked by tyranny, oppression and slaughter. Other communities of Jews were pitted against each other on the issue of how to understand and maintain the Jewish community of Torah in such a context; there were Sadducees and Pharisees, there were the Zealots and the Herodians, and there were the Essenes.

In Jesus' short ministry, he stood out as a "revolutionary" against two "establishments"-the Jewish temple and both the Sadducee and Pharisee interpretation of God's Law and against the Roman establishment and Caesar's imperial law.

Since the New Testament is a specialized commentary on the Hebrew Bible (what Christians call the Old Testament), we must first of all identify the source and significance of the Law in that larger context.

To understand the place of "the Law" in the original revelation in the life of the Hebrew people and in its specialized focus in the life of Jesus, it is necessary to identify the larger context of the Covenant (Hebrew-berith) which lies beneath the term "testament." Covenant is an ancient mid-East term for the relation between a benevolent king and his vassal people. The Hebrew prophets, spokespersons for YHWH in that culture, interpreted the relation of their God and God's people as an eternal Covenant.

The prophetic testimony is that God's love (chesed) and righteousness (tsedeg) are eternal and faithful, but that the people's loyalty is continually being di-

verted to false gods and idols of their own imagination and to practices of gross injustice. But God's continuing faithfulness and righteousness brings forth liberation and restoration (the Exodus and guidance to the promised land). It is in this context that the claim of God upon God's people takes on the form of LAW-the Ten Commandments received at Mt. Sinai and, as time unfolds, specific statutes and ordinances for every situation and relationship in people's lives.

"The Law"-commandments and ordinances-became the content of the Covenant structure, the rules of life in a responsible "covenant community." God's righteousness demands righteousness in each individual person and justice in their social relationships.

"TORAH" AND "MESSIAH" IN THE LIFE OF THE HEBREW PEOPLE

Bigger than "the Law" and including it is the "Torah," found in the Five Books of Moses. It is the awareness of God's faithful guidance of God's people throughout history that led the prophets to announce God's promise to raise up a "Messiah" to guide God's people and to bring about the fulfillment of the Covenant in Shalom-peace with freedom and justice.

The Apostles, who wrote the New Testament, are overwhelmed with the vision that in Jesus God has raised up a Messiah in whom God's word is fully incarnate and through whom God's Covenant has been renewed, not only for the original chosen people (am), but for all the other people (goyim-Gentiles).

JESUS CONFRONTS THE JEWISH ESTABLISHMENT

The New Covenant centers upon the Gospel of God's gracious justification of God's people and liberation from the powers of Sin, Death and Satan through the resurrection of the crucified Jesus. It plays down the current Pharisee teachings that God's demand for obedience to the Law is the only way to fulfill the Mosaic Covenant.

Sadly, the Pharisees and the followers of Jesus tended to talk right past each other! On the one hand, the Apostle Paul, originally a Pharisee, tends to depreciate the Law in contrast to the Gospel as God's

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new "Torah." The Pharisees, on the other hand, untouched by the messianic fulfillment in Jesus, deepen their call to full obedience to the Law.

Religion can be sold! It was so in Jesus' day and it is still so in our day. The roots of religion are embedded in our human need of and continuing quest for security. In practice, however, religion may function either to bind us back to God or to some idol which seems to offer more tangible and exciting promises of security.

When any limited special interest—a theological doctrine, a moral teaching, an economic enterprise, or a nation's security—is inseparably tied to some expression of religion, it becomes an idol! Idols can be sold and bought; but they really offer little, only what one imagines one wants.

Jesus decried the temple practices of his day; those making profits off people's religious interests he called "robbers." He also criticized those "who like to walk about in long robes and love to be greeted obsequiously in the market squares, to take the front seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets, who swallow the property of widows, while making a show of lengthy prayers." (Lk20:46-7)

Jesus, himself, neither depreciated the Law nor was bound by it. In the Beatitudes, he underscores and deepens the moral and political responsibility of his disciples. In the Sermon on the Mount, he re-interprets the central commandments of the Torah, not merely as condemning culpable acts of injustice and encouraging commendable acts of faithfulness, but going beneath the acts to the flawed motives in our hearts—anger, lust, enmity. In each case, the challenge is to replace our heart's pretension with fidelity to God and love to other persons.

Positively, Jesus goes to the heart of the Torah in raising up the first and great commandment: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." (Dt6:5) and declaring that a second is like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Lv19:18) It is to be noted that in rooting the entire Law in Love, Jesus affirmed that he did not "come to abolish the law and the prophets, but to fulfill them." (Mt5:17)

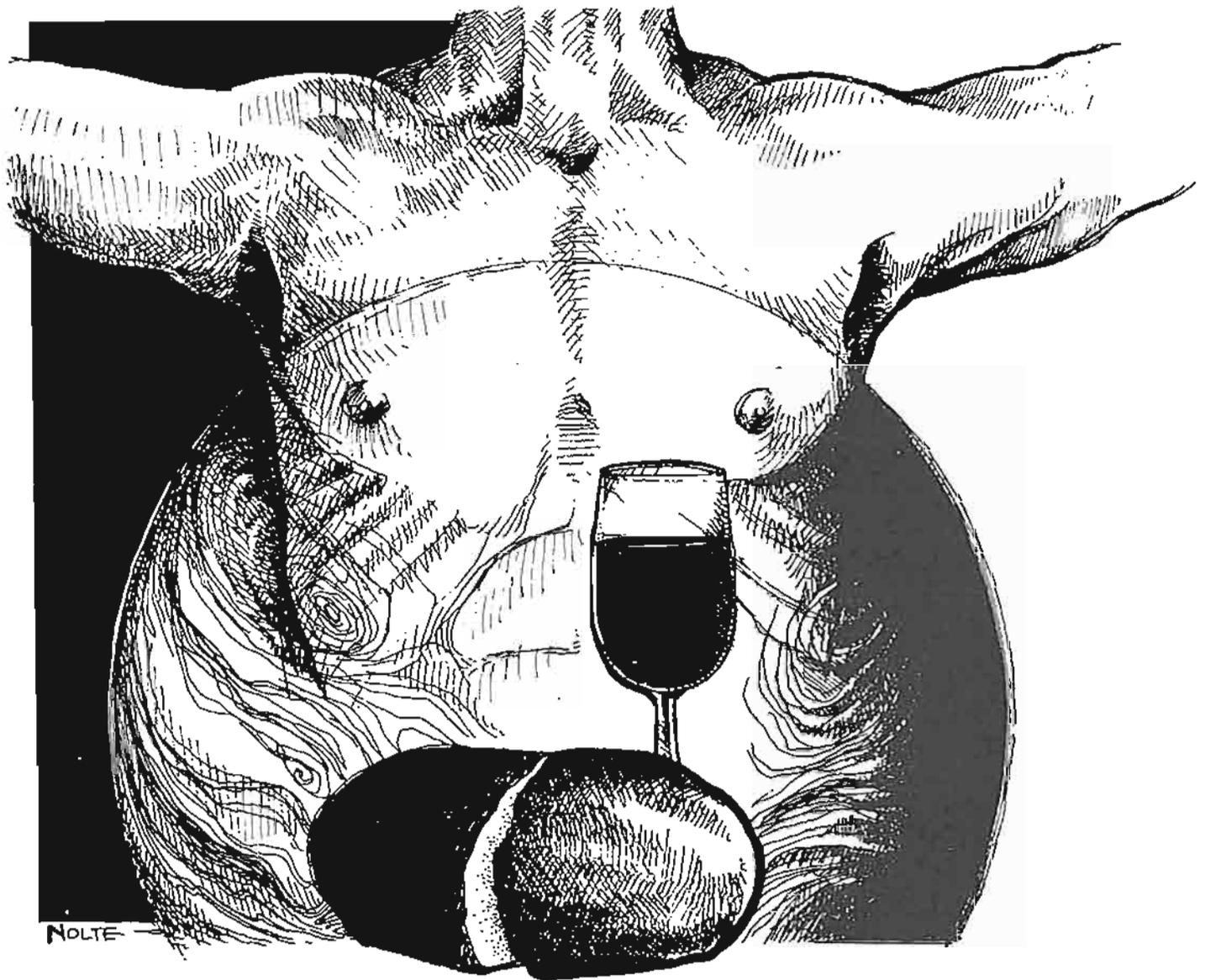
JESUS CONFRONTS THE ROMAN ESTABLISHMENT

Against the Roman establishment and Caesar's imperial law, Jesus quietly motivated a "people's revolution." He did it by filling the minds and hearts of the am ha aretz (the peasant people of Palestine) with a vision of the Kingdom of God—an eschatological promise of a world-community of Shalom. This vision has not only outlived

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the Roman Empire, but has survived the Spanish Empire and the British Empire, and may even outlive the American Empire!

When Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey's back at Passover time more than 1900 years ago, he was acting out a parable of the coming of the messianic age. By



riding on a donkey he was illustrating his sense of being God's servant, sent to identify himself with the poor and oppressed, broken and hopeless people.

At the outset of his public life, in the synagogue in Nazareth, Jesus read from Isaiah 61:

The Spirit of the Lord Yahweh has been given me,
 for Yahweh has anointed me.
 God has sent me to bring good news to the poor,
 to bind up hearts that are broken;
 to proclaim liberty to captives,
 freedom to those in prison,
 to proclaim a year of favor from Yahweh,
 a day of vengeance for our God.

(cf, Lk4:18,19)

Here was a humble lay person promising to bring to pass a whole cultural revolution that would be personal and social, economic and political in scope. The vision is clear and forcefully announced. The common lot of humanity, says Jesus, is going to be

changed: good news for the poor, release for captives, healing for broken hearts, liberation for oppressed peoples, and victory for all humanity.

Jesus' messianic vision and popular following made him a threat to both establishments-Jewish and Roman. Vis-a-vis the two major Jewish political extremes of his time-Jesus separated himself from both-the Herodians who played footsie with Rome and the Zealots who were committed to guerilla warfare as the way to political liberation from Rome. Ironically, Jesus was crucified because Rome took him to be a Zealot!

His martyrdom has been the paradigm of the sacrificial dynamic, which has empowered a stream of 20th century movements aiming to retrieve Shalom from a world broken by racism, sexism, and religious elitism, by technological, economic, and political tyranny. Witness: Mahatma Gandhi, Augusto Sandino, Martin Luther King, Steve Biko, Oscar Romero. Dorothy Day, et al.

Of Law and Moral Vacuity

By Patrick G. Coy

(Pat Coy and Rich Willms were tried for first degree trespassing at General Dynamics on Tuesday, September 20. They were not allowed to present a defense based on international law, even though expert witnesses were prepared to testify. At their trial they were forbidden to use the words nuclear war, war, nuclear weapons, nuclear freeze, defense budget, or like terms. Upon their conviction, the State recommended a thirty-day sentence and a \$300 fine--Ed.)

It is a sad day for a republic that purports to respect law and hold it sacrosanct when local courts refuse not only to respect, but even to listen to the demands and precepts of the larger corpus of law. This day, let the record show, is such a day of sadness.

Let the record show that this day, two simple, regular folk were denied their day in court. This day, two simple, regular folk became the victims of the collective terror that the nuclear arms race foists upon the earth each and every day.

We came today to argue the law. To say plainly and simply that the nuclear arms race is illegal under the precepts of international law. International law is the same branch of law that the U.S. Constitution has named as "the supreme law of the land." Unfortunately for all of us, both the state and the court have been so paralyzed by the regularity of nuclear terror, that now not even law can be argued in the courts of a land where children are taught that law is to be respected. Today the law itself has been deemed "irrelevant and immaterial." It is a sad day indeed.

This day, let the record show, the law has fallen victim to nuclear terror.

There is an old maxim in moral philosophy which says that if one wishes to know what a society truly values, one should study the laws of that society. That is to say that the mores of a given society are enshrined and codified in its laws. By refusing to allow us to argue international law - to argue the law - the court and the

state have created a sanitized moral vacuum. A vacuum wherein the pronouncements of the state, as well as the judgments of the court, ring hauntingly hollow in their emptiness.

This sanitized moral vacuum is merely a local, more particularized version of the larger global one which allows the arms race to inexorably march on, one step at a time, day by day. An arms race where the two superpowers combined, spend the equivalent of one-half million U.S. dollars per minute; and where nearly 300 million U.S. dollars per day are spent worldwide for nuclear weapons alone!...

The court evidences its collusion and conspiracy with the state by agreeing to keep the substantive issues of the law, its moral foundations, and nuclear weapons out of the courtroom. The evidence for this charge is the court's sustaining of the state's motion to disallow our defense and prohibit us from speaking of the nuclear reality. Our defense included witnesses whom even the court would have to term "expert" in the substantive issues at hand.

Now, I recognize that "collusion" and "conspiracy" are strong words which convey equally strong images. And I don't mean to suggest, Your Honor, that you have consciously entered into this collusion with the state. It is, in fact, the unconscious and unreflective nature of this collusion that makes it so very insidious. The collusion has its genesis in the fact that both the court and the state are so threatened by the veritably revolutionary truth that the nuclear arms race is illegal under the U.S. Constitution, that you both instinctively recoil and block its rather humble entrance into these chambers. You have been numbed, psychically and morally, as indeed we all have been in our own individual ways. Numbed, from the long years of living lives that we have made dependent on nuclear terror for "security."

And so, this day my friends, we sit in legal chambers which have been stripped of their meaning, for the court and the state have succeeded in divorcing the law from its moral foundations.

This day, let the record show, the law has been divorced from ethics.

I say that truth's attempted entrance into this courtroom was rather humble because the real guts of this action is the fact that Rich and I are two simple, regu-

Pat Coy, a new member of the Karen House community and threat to society, remains at large.

lar folk, trying to exercise some small bit of personal responsibility vis a vis the arms race.

I say humble because we stand in humble awe of those rare citizens of Germany, Austria, Poland and other European countries who, generations ago, tried to exercise some personal responsibility vis a vis the Nazi Holocaust. They, too, were simple, regular folk, who with a moral clarity informed by common sense, recognized that their own local laws and ordinances had suffered a radical cleavage from their moral foundations and were now serving to perpetuate the Holocaust. They deemed, therefore, that these local laws should give way to the larger body of natural law written in the hearts of each individual -- that law which proclaims the thundering truth that it was as wrong to be involved in the genocidal policies of the Nazis as it now is to refuse to do all in one's power to prevent the arms race from reaching its appointed finish line.

Again, I insist that this moral insight took no great, unusual degrees of ethical analysis. These were simple, regular folk, who more often than not were chewed up in the Nazi legal system. They, like us, were never given their just day in court. Consequently, they often paid high costs for their attempts to enact the supervening edicts of international law and natural law.

This day, let the record show, history repeats itself.

Put quite simply, the bottom line in all of this is, as the Psalmist tells us, "The earth belongs to God, and the fullness thereof". We have no right to destroy it, or even to threaten the security of it and its inhabitants -- both international and natural law disallow this. You see, Judge, we have not so much inherited the earth from our ancestors, as we have borrowed it from our descendants. It is a precious gift to be preserved and protected, for it contains the gifts of food, shelter, clothing, and these, along with the rights to adequate health care and meaningful work, belong to all of God's children.

While these rights are abrogated, while the judicial system refuses to protect them even though they be enshrined and codified into law, while the arms race continues to devour the resources necessary for the maintenance of these rights, my case cannot rest.

Although the closing arguments be complete, this day, let the record show, my case is not at rest.

An Interview

with Public Defender

Mary-Louise Moran

(Mary-Louise Moran is a Chief Trial Attorney in the St. Louis Office of the Public Defender, where she has worked for seven years. She has recently been elected to the Board of Governors, the governing body of the Missouri Bar. Bill Miller interviewed her for The Round Table.)

Q. Could you describe the people who need the help of a public defender?

A. People who don't have money. In my office the people are mostly black, but regardless of their race the similarities are that they are uneducated. Many come from single parent homes; most of them have some kind of alcohol or drug problem; very few of them are literate; and, in fact, quite a few cannot read or write . . . The people are, in general, fairly young. It's unusual to be above the age of, say, 25 and get accused of a serious crime; murder might be the single exception.

Q. What range of crimes do you defend?

A. In general we're going to get more of a concentration of the most serious crimes because these are the ones requiring the most money to defend and those accused would be the least likely to be able to have the money to post bond or hire an attorney.

Q. When the judge sets bonds, are they set according to the income of the accused?

A. No, they're not. They are not set according to an income guideline at all. As far as I can tell, they are set based upon the seriousness of the crime and the prior record of the individual.

Q. What if the accused can't pay their bond?

A. Then they contribute to the City Jail overcrowding problem.

Q. Do you see the Law as fair to poor people as it is with those who have money?

A. I think it's equally unfair to both. If it's possible to be more unfair to a person who is indigent, I think that's probably true. But it isn't because there is some adverse feeling toward the poor guy in the Law, but rather because he or she is the one most likely to have the lawyer who has many cases and many clients and many responsibilities at the same time.

For example, in a Public Defender situation -- this is the attorney who is in

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front of the judge on a daily basis, over and over again presents many of the same arguments -- sometimes I think it is very helpful for the clients if a new voice can present the same arguments to the judge because then the judge listens a little better. No matter how meritorious your claim, I sometimes get the feeling that the judge is thinking, "I've heard this all before," and blocks your argument out. That is unfortunate because some of them do have very good claims.

Q. So, you're saying, really the Law in itself is equally fair or unfair, but it's the circumstances around it -- the overload of work, number of cases, and the build-up that really creates the disparities and what looks like the inequality of so many poor people on bond in jail?

A. I think that's a correct statement. One of the things that is really horrifying, that occurs time and time again in my line of work, is the situation where a fellow who comes through on his first charge, who hasn't been able to make bond, and who hasn't had a lawyer assigned until he's spent some amount of time in jail. The prosecutor may come down and say, "Hey, I'll offer this guy 'time-served.'" All he has to do is plead guilty, take the conviction and he walks

out of Court." Most clients, under these circumstances, say, "Hey, I didn't do the crime, but I don't have the money to post the bond and I want to plead guilty so I can go home." And, of course, if the lawyer is feeling overworked and says okay, I'll take the easy way out and plead the accused guilty, the next time that fellow comes through the system, the State says, "Well now, you'll notice this man has a prior conviction," -- and can use that prior conviction against him so that the issue of punishment becomes a judicial issue rather than a jury issue. And judges, in St. Louis at least, are traditionally harder than the juries on sentencing. So it means that you are giving your client his first stripe and although that sounds good for him right there, it doesn't help him later.

I see very, very few clients who have never been arrested before. My feeling is that if you live in the City of St. Louis and you are young and black, you are going to get arrested at least once before you get to adulthood. And, if you've already had a prior when that cop arrests you, he's much more likely to apply for a warrant on the second time around rather than give you the benefit of the doubt.

Q. Could you say a little bit about the conditions at City Jail and the Workhouse?

A. We have any number of different committees studying that very issue right now I can't speak about them as compared to jail facilities in other states or even throughout other counties and cities in Missouri. But about the institutions where I have been here, they are terrible. At City Jail, the cells are crowded and narrow. There is a general attitude that these folks are animals -- and they are kept in kennels as far as I can see, over at the Jail and at the Workhouse.

At Central Holdover, which is the place where any person arrested is first confined, you will discover no mattresses, no showers, no telephones. If you have a pet you wouldn't allow it to be treated the way we house human beings at these institutions. And I don't think it is the administration's desire to treat these people worse than animals. I think it is a lack of money and an overcrowding of too many bodies being

kept together. Clients are saying they are subjected to all kinds of different abuses because of the close quarters and nobody has any privacy. All of those things contribute to the grave conditions there.

Q. What motivates you, year after year, to keep working as a Public Defender in the face of the difficulties in the lives of the people here? Are you somehow able to rise above them?

A. I don't think I'm able to rise above them. I think that, probably, I believe myself to be more effective year after year in dealing with their problems. I know more about resources I can turn to in the community for them. I know the judges better and what they can do for an individual and I think that this experience enables me to be a little more helpful. In that respect you take a certain job satisfaction and, as a result, you feel like you're still contributing.

Nazis, the Law and Us

By Harry James Cargas

Law during the Nazi regime is an example of what will happen when justice is tailored to the temporary needs of the state. From the position of "no punishment without crime" the legalists of the Third Reich went to "no crime without punishment." That dangerous inversion proved even more perilous to the populace when the Nazis passed their own laws to support their own ideologies. Most notorious of these were the Nuremberg Laws on Citizenship and Race (1935) through which German citizenship was withdrawn from persons of "non-German blood."

This was aimed primarily at the Jews and was in keeping with the much-quoted dictum of Friedrich Nietzsche: "Penal law consists of war measures employed to rid oneself of the enemy." Hitler scapegoated the Jews for a number of reasons, his hatred of them having been long and intense. The human conscience, Hitler stated, was an invention of the Jews for the purpose of enslaving others. Hitler's own conclusion regarding justice had little to do with individual moral responsibility, but was based on "what is useful to the nation."

Germans had, for a long time, been accustomed to the administration of the law in the name of the king, not of the people. When lawyers were coerced into following Nazi

Party demands regarding judicial procedures, they generally caved in the same way that sociologists and academicians did regarding theories of racial inferiority. The distinction between prosecutor and judge blurred tragically. Capital crimes increased from three to forty-six, with fourteen year olds being subject to execution. Alfred Rosenberg, called the leading exponent of Nazi ideology, insisted that "Punishment is...simply the separating out of alien types and deviant nature."

The lesson for the world, here, no doubt has to do with who it is that will determine just who is of an "alien type" or "deviant nature." Will conservatives inflict such judgment on liberals? Might racists have the upper hand? Will a moral majority outlaw a non-conforming minority? What can those with property, the wealthy--those who have access to the lawmakers--do to those who have nothing, the poor? How much impact can a growing military have on the laws of a society?

The German philosopher, Immanuel Kant, urged that we "Act only on that maxim whereby thou canst at the same time will that it should become a universal law." We can pray that all of our laws will stem from the desire of all citizens to act from such principles.

Harry James Cargas, of Webster University, is a leading authority on the Holocaust. Among his books on the subject are: When God and Man (sic) Failed, Harry James Cargas in Conversation with Elie Wiesel, and The Holocaust: An Annotated Bibliography.

Photos from Guatemalan Refugee Camps

Photos and Text by Mev Puleo

There are over 100,000 Guatemalan refugees in the southern-most Mexican State of Chiapas. I had heard of the "problem" in Guatemala before, but they became, for me, a personal and painful reality in early September, when I visited two camps and talked with the refugees.

What are they fleeing from? The Guatemalan army, guns, helicopters, napalm, fire-bombing, torture, and brutal massacre. What is their journey like? Days of walking through the mountains without food, hiding from soldiers ready to kill them; some die of sickness and hunger, while others give birth along the way. What is their life like in Mexico? The insecurity of indefinite status, continuing sickness and malnutrition, the ever-increasing strictness of the Mexican officials, and occasional raids from the Guatemalan soldiers - who come to threaten and sometimes kill. And who are these refugees? They are 60 - 70% children, many women and elderly, and some men. They are "indigenous", Mayan-descent Indians, who have suffered years of abuse and exploitation. They are now victims of their government's (U.S. backed) scorched earth policy, which is directed at wiping out any possible support for the guerillas; but, in the eyes of human rights groups and the United Nations, it is the slaughter and genocide of the indigenous population.



In the camps, eye infections, as above, thought to be result of bacterial weapons, are rampant. Hair loss, especially in infants, is caused by malnutrition.



From the start, our group thought we would not get into the camps, as the Mexican officials have been getting tougher at every turn: Detaining foreign visitors, taking film from those who take pictures, banning any political or religious meetings in the camps, dispersing some camps. Recently, church-workers from Chiapas have

one to look into the human rights atrocities committed by a government they so strongly support. To acknowledge these people as refugees would prove the persecution our government denies.



been harassed at the camps. People who work with Bishop Samuel Ruiz helping the refugees have been kidnapped and tortured. The camps are "off-limits" to any outsiders, including reporters, doctors, etc.

This strictness is a result of the fear of some in Mexico that the refugee camps are a source of "guerilla subversion" contaminating Mexico. The Mexican government has not yet given the refugees legal status -- no security of the terms or length of their stay. The majority of pressure to keep the camps closed and the status indefinite comes from the U.S. Administration, which obviously doesn't want any-

The most current serious allegation against the Guatemalan government is the use of bacteriological warfare against the indigenous population. The proof runs rampant, but no specialists have been allowed to enter the camps to confirm it. When we saw so many children with blood-shot infected eyes, we thought it was another sign of malnutrition, but both the eye infections and "black diarrhea" are symptoms now linked to the use of bacteriological weapons. In support of this claim: The symptoms are found in people and animals; they have not been experienced by the indigenous before the past year; and cases of both have been found in people and animals arriving at all camps along the border within the past year. People and animals have died with these rare symptoms, and at times with no symptoms at all.

The stories the people shared with us brought home the tragic and violent reality of Guatemala. One person told us: "The army arrived in our village and started shooting. We had heard what had happened in other towns, so we began our escape. But we saw them gather the people and herd all of them, including women and children, into the nearby estate. They threw on gasoline and then fire -- burning about 300 people alive! Only 50 or so survived, and we are here. Our village is burnt and dead."



The stories went on from person to person with little variation. Soldiers come, shooting at people, burning crops and huts, torturing and brutally killing many. When asked "Why?", one man looked at me bewildered and replied, "I don't know! They asked me about guerrillas and guns, but I have no weapons. . . only a machete that I use in the fields."

I was uncomfortably shocked to see such visible signs of malnutrition, which I usually reserve for further corners of the world.



Because of the arduous journey, few old people arrive at the camps.

There were some children suffering hair-loss from malnourishment, many children with bellies bloated from hunger, and many people with skin rashes, parasites and other illnesses.

Many of the refugees enter the camps severely malnourished. Many were internal refugees for months before leaving. The scorched earth tactics have left most possible food sources razed to the ground - crops, forests, etc. So most of the 1 to 10 day journeys to Mexico are made with no food. People eat only what they find in the mountains or starve.

While housing, clothing and medicine are poor and scarce, nutrition remains the most severe problem in the camps. There is aid available, but most of it is being blocked by both Mexico's internal policy and unofficial pressure from the U.S.A.

Mexico did not sign the United Nations' refugee treaty, which would allow the UN High Commission on Refugees to run the camps. The UN and other international groups still have made much food and money available, but only 10% of it is getting through to the refugees.

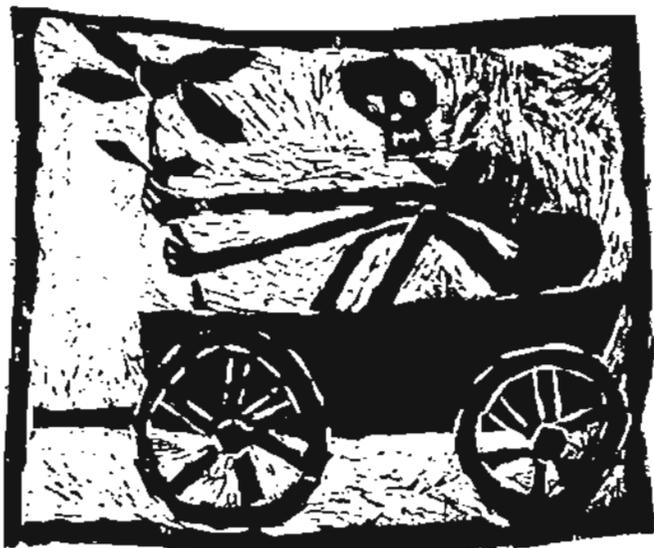


We were told that the best way we could help is to change US policy in Guatemala. Mexico can make limited improvements in its handling of the refugee problem, but its hands are tied if it doesn't want to jeopardize its relationship with the U.S. Further aid to the refugees will be blocked as long as Reagan wants to hide the repression supported by the U.S. abroad, and the refugees will continue to come as long as the persecution and genocide continues—committed by a government receiving millions of dollars in military aid from the United States.

Above, Camp Cuauhtémoc, only one mile from the Guatemala border. Below, inside a Camp Benito Juárez hut where a dozen people live.



Kevin Puleo, a student at St. Louis University, recently visited Guatemalan refugee camps as part of Los Niños, a not-for-profit group working with Latin American children.



Witness for Peace in Nicaragua

Witness for Peace has grown out of the experience of the many hundreds of North Americans who have visited Nicaragua since the triumph of the Sandinista revolution in 1979. Most of us have been impressed by the vital presence (unpublicized in the United States) of Christian along side Socialist ideals in the Central American revolution, and by the seriousness of the effort being made by the Nicaraguans to solve the problems common to poor countries. We support that effort even though our views may often differ regarding specific Sandinista policies. We are appalled by the new Vietnam War that is being unleashed upon all of Central America by the United States. We believe that this war is incompatible with the standards of justice of most of our people, that it is not in our national interest, and that it must be halted. As individual Americans willing to put our lives on the line for peace and justice, we believe that we can contribute a great deal toward diminishing the terrible toll that the war is taking in human lives.

The participants in Witness for Peace are peaceable and patriotic North Americans, most of us Christians and all of us believers in a universal spirit of love. We have long deplored the mindless, life-destroying military interventionism that is a key element in our country's foreign relations, and we have acted and spoken out against it when we could. But militarism is still unrestrained; and we have at last come to see the need for an unrelenting, nonviolent struggle against it by people capable of confronting the arrogance of military power

with the greater power of conscience of truth and of love. We are such people, and this is our covenant.

We commit ourselves to the struggle against violence as a tool of foreign policy by offering to go to Nicaragua to share the suffering that has for so long been inflicted on others in our name. Later, we pledge our determination to continue that struggle in other contexts, while we have life to give to it.

Several of our sisters and brothers will go to live in a community near the northern border of Nicaragua with Honduras in Autumn, 1983. Others will join them later on. There, in an area subject to almost daily attacks by the U. S.-trained and equipped contras, they will maintain a peaceful presence as co-workers of the embattled people of the region, and as observers reporting in detail the acts of violence that occur, until the threat of a war against Nicaragua ceases. They are people who speak good Spanish and have skills which can be useful in a rural Latin American community. They are in good enough physical, mental and spiritual health to face the rigorous and dangerous circumstances that await them. They are clear-thinking, well-informed, articulate people whose reflections on this experience of nonviolent resistance may be expected to have a powerful impact on Americans when they are disseminated at home. Their travel and maintenance expenses will be borne by the wide membership of Witness for Peace -- many of whom will, themselves, be traveling to Nicaragua week by week from our home towns to join the perma-



ment Witness team for a few days and then come back to talk about what they have seen.

Witness for Peace is a hopeful, prayerful, determined community of conscience which celebrates life and encourages a spirit of resistance to violence of all kinds. We invite you to join us, and suggest ways of doing so.

To join Witness for Peace is to:

1) Get informed, stay informed, and speak out every chance you get about what is going on in Nicaragua and the rest of Central America and the role of the United States there.

2) Get into the habit of serious reflection with other people concerning the moral basis for a new politics and a new foreign policy for our country. Many North Americans and Latin Americans alike are finding that a serious and open discussion of the Bible and its present-day historical context can contribute greatly to that kind of reflection.

3) Explore your own vocation for participation in Witness for Peace as a long or short-term volunteer in Nicaragua, or as an organizer and spokesperson in your community. Encourage others to do the same.

4) Commit a certain amount of time and a certain amount of money each month to Witness for Peace for as long as the permanent team remains in Nicaragua. This support should be contributed, if possible, through your



local support community. Witness for Peace is supported almost entirely by the pledged contributions of its participants (the budget of its national office is the sum of the pledges of local support groups), and by their hard work in carrying its message to our people through churches and community organizations.

Checks should be made out to Interfaith Committee on Latin America Peace Witness and sent to 4144 Lindell Boulevard, St. Louis, Missouri 63108. (Tel: (314) 531-8211.)

For further questions, contact the Interfaith Committee at the above address/phone, or Mary Dutcher, convenor of the Peace Witness Task Force of the Interfaith Committee, Karen Catholic Worker House, 1840 Hogan, 63106. (Tel: 621-4052.)

We intend that Witness for Peace serve the cause of fundamental change in our country by making a bold and unprecedented appeal to conscience. We urge that friends who are especially moved by this effort join us wholeheartedly, devoting a major portion of their available energies and resources to our work. But we urge that everyone remember that Witness for Peace is only one part of a very broad movement for peace and justice and an end to the arms race, and that every aspect of that movement is deserving of the support of all who love life.

Participating groups include Sojourners, Pax Christi USA, and the Interfaith Committee on Latin America.

Community Prayer:

AT CASS HOUSE

*MORNING PRAYER twice each morning except Sundays. First at 7:15 a.m., and again at 8:00.

*MASS every Wednesday at 7:15 p.m., every fourth Monday of the month at 8:00 p.m.

AT KAREN HOUSE

*MASS every Tuesday at 9:00 p.m., every Thursday at 9:00p.m.

Come pray with us.



☛ A FEW NEEDS ☚

- pillows
- canned goods
- vacuum cleaner
- coffee urn (60+ cups)
- 2-person cross-cut saw
- staple gun
- topsoil

From Little House



By Mary Ann McGivern, S.L.

Last Saturday Regina Birchem brought Irene Eckert over to tour the neighborhood. Irene lives in West Berlin and is touring the U.S. for three months to speak against putting the cruise and Pershing II missiles in Germany. She was fascinated by the Catholic Worker, asked lots of questions, and took notes. We walked through the neighborhood and several people posed for her camera; an older man who'd been in the Army spoke a little German with her and ruefully said he couldn't remember any more.

... I wanted to

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for me ...

Irene was very surprised the Catholic Church could be related to anything so good as she saw the Worker to be. Later, in a discussion of how Germans view the Soviet shooting down of the Korean 747, she proved every bit as suspicious of the United States as she was of the U.S.S.R. I felt very defensive of both the Church and the U.S. government-- which surprised me since I've done my share of criticizing both.

I think the root of my discomfort with Irene's criticism is that I love both the Catholic Church and the U.S.A., and I was aware she was criticizing both from the outside. Now, one dangerous thing about loving a group you belong to is that if I worked for General Dynamics, I suppose I'd love it, too. But love is also dangerous because it is redemptive. As well as I know the evils of our government, as much as I experience bad judgment and greed and sin within the Church, still I am part of both and I hope my resistance in love will change both them and me. So when I hear harsh criticism of these institutions from a non-member (a stranger who is seeking hospitality) I feel defensive. I want to explain their good points. For a moment when I was talking with Irene about the extent of CIA involvement in various covert activities, I wanted to withdraw from the whole discussion, say it was too big for me, explain I work on hospitality and economic conversion and resistance at General Dynamics; but I don't do analysis of spying and terrorism and global violence and paranoia and incitement to violence.

Yet I loved Irene. I think she loved me, too. We wanted to keep talking, hearing our differences, pushing each other to think harder. But Irene had a schedule to keep. Off she went to tour St. Louis and meet more people, and I went home to puzzle about my defensiveness, my desire to withdraw, and my resistance to criticism. The Soviets must feel this same defensiveness--and the Muslims--and certainly parents about their children.

A great joy of living at the Worker is getting to meet people like Irene. I visited Dorothy Day once on Staten Island and we were talking about favorite books. I named Kristin Lavransdatter and Dorothy said the author, Sigrif Undset, had stayed with her a few days and she was a lovely woman. A large portion of Dorothy's books is spent recounting conversations. It occurs to me now that one reason people want to visit Worker houses is that the

aura of hospitality, no matter how pressed and strained at times, sets a good stage for talk. The stranger, the one who loves different people than I love and different ideas and different places, becomes a member of the house and I become transformed.

But love is also dangerous

because it is redemptive.

Some of the press and strain at the Little House this past summer has been illness. B.J. was in the hospital for five weeks during June and July with a dislocated jaw. Bill was hospitalized for a week in August with a severe throat and mouth infection. Paul spent all of September in the hospital with Crohn's disease. Sharon stayed out of the hospital, but suffered a lot from four infected teeth and a severe allergic reaction to lidocaine--at which point she missed work and lost her job. Our new fruit trees died in the heat and so did three guinea pigs. Fleetwood had a tumor in his testicle and had to be neutered. We went through five refrigerators in our effort to find one that would work in the heat of the summer.

Recovery is slow when you've been seriously ill, but everyone's back on their feet now. Pat Coy and Mark Scheu moved in upstairs. Frances became a great-grandmother and one of her grand-daughters took her camping for a week in the Ozarks. Eligha is in the 9th grade at DuBourg, lives at the Jesuit Program for Living and learning (so does Delicia's son, Kent), and spends vacations and one weekend a month with us. We can all laugh at the misfortunes of summer now and hope that winter will be warm.

Mary Ann lives at the Little House on the Vacant Lot, works for Clergy and Laity Concerned, and is collaborating with Bill Miller on a book to be titled Hanging Around Hospitals.

From Karen House

By Tom Angert



Old homes more frequently than not present themselves to us as having character and uniqueness. No doubt this is heightened by the fact that most new homes impress on us the opposite appearance of sameness, lack of history, and prefabricated conformity, while aged ones, like Karen House, are decked by wrinkles of experience and badges of individuality. And aside from warped door jams, airy finials, flaking foundation stones, and the like, a home which was formerly a convent and remains the structural consort of the neighborhood historic landmark must compell the eye and imagination. It has exercised my eye and mind since I first saw the rose window across bulldozed lots and read "Pax Intranitibus" carved in the gothic arch overhanging the front entrance: a fine welcoming home, which, if one stays here awhile, may even assume in one's fancy a state beyond the unique construction of brick and mortar, wood and window.

Karen House almost seems to have a voice, guardian angel, or guiding genius; if you will. And I rest my claim for this not on the ethereal ghost that has appeared to some of the inhabitants, a benevolent smiling nun, but merely on the sense of an abiding good will remaining here while we transients come and go. Of course, it is only a whim to say the building talks. Rather, one may say there is a spirit, collective consciousness, the spirit of the Catholic Worker and of hope in the "Good News" which preceded and blossomed into the Catholic Worker, from which it will never be separated, being as it were subsumed in the message and Body of Christ. But, this could lead to long explanations and one may just as well decide to be fanciful and say this home talks. It talks in a recognizable way to those who make it their home, and the conversation is not one-sided.

What has the conversation been about? Toward the end of summer it had a very practical cast. The house communicated the need for cleaning and fixing. For two weeks the dwellers here did necessary things like scraping, cleaning, painting, small plumbing repair, floor waxing, and above all roach containment and control, as it is euphemistically known. All of this activity is something that never really stops, though for awhile it emerged from the background to the foreground and has since receded again. The success of this intensification in maintaining the house is naturally incomplete. Major things like a new roof and plumbing are beyond our resources at the moment, but they will be addressed. No doubt, the best part of the whole project was enjoying the work per se and the camaraderie of the volunteers in that spirit of inspiration which I like to think of, not without a detached smile, as the advocacy of the good-willed house.

Since the cool winds and shortening days of Fall have begun, what is the nature of the dialogue whispered to and from the wood ears and eloquent arches, the stones and the stained glass? I would suggest that it has been in tune with the harvest season, a season of paradox. Autumn, to give one example, brings to mind that "ripeness to the core" of Keats' poem. The full fruit of nature seen as a symbol of fruition and decay, the term of life, death, and the seeds of new life. The old paradox of mutability and stasis is the particular salience of Fall, though manifestly a problem of life in general. And without digressing into an exposition on the conundrums surrounding what we often call "time," I would simply say that Fall is an oxymoron itself, a seeming contradiction. Further, the benevolent voice

of this particular home--at core a voice of love--is also paradoxical. It speaks with what Chaucer aptly characterized as "dreadful joy." And so the talk of the house has been about the ripe fruit that has grown, our cause for joy and fear, all those many things for which we have reason to pray.

The community at Karen House has grown of late. There are four new members. Pat Coy and Mark Scheu who live down the street in the same building as the Ella Dixon Community, joined us on Wednesday, October 12. They are both well-known at Karen House, especially for their work at CALC and other peace and social justice groups. Harriette Baggett, who used to live at Karen House and who certainly never went far from the heart of the community, has returned to active membership in our group. Pat, Mark, and Harriette probably have a clear notion of the joys and fears their participation in Karen House entails. They already have greater experience or as much experience with the house as I do, since I've only been in St. Louis a short while. And though I don't wish to put words in anyone's mouth, I think I may say without offending that their joys and fears for the house and community are relatively the same as the

Karen House almost

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joys and fears of everyone here. At least I don't think they are radically different, though they may be radical. To put it another way, I think they share in (and have shared in for a long time) the fundamental spirit of love at Karen House.

The last new member of Karen House is named Kane, which I find to be particularly unsuited to him. Kane is homophonous with Cain who murdered his brother, and I can't hear Kane without thinking Cain. But Kane himself doesn't show any of those darker connotations associated with his name. He is naturally straightforward, unabashedly happy, and rambunctious. What else can you expect from a puppy? In spite of this divergence between the name and the behavior I don't really mind him being called Kane. It is, after all, preferable to Rover, Spot, or Lassie. The house, I am sure, welcomes him and the name itself may give rise to moments of recollection and thought.

Karen House has seen departures recently as well. Pete Rick has gone to Honduras to put her skills to work in the service of the needy. All of us miss her and pray for her safety and happiness. Her going, however, is more like an extension of the spirit of the house than a separation. We "endure not yet a breach, but an expansion, like gold to airy thinness beat." Too, Mary Jane Antuna has decided to enter the Initiate Process of the Community of Restoration and will be leaving us. We won't worry about her safety as much as Pete's, but will pray equally for her happiness, and will miss her.

While I've mentioned that the spirit, the fanciful voice of Karen House, is paradoxical, I only hinted at a resolution, a greater theme in which it is reconciled. We are joyous with the coming of our new members, hope that we will be able to do more for the poor and suffering, address injustice, witness for peace. We are fearful that we may lose some intimacy and personalism. We know we face conflict, and failures both personal and collective. In all our joys, fears, conflicts and failures we shall keep in mind Christ who is the "Pax" referred to on our front door. "Unless a grain of wheat..."



Tom Angert, who recently came to St. Louis from the bayous, plays a mean game of Pengo (though not so mean as his brother, Joe).

From Cass House



By Carol Donahue, C. P.P.S.

Cass House is once again in full swing after having been closed for six weeks during August and September. The ceiling in the front hall has been repaired, the TV rooms have been refurbished, as well as the men's dining room and dorm. Three second floor bedrooms were also redone. Thanks to all who came to help us with the cleaning and repairs.

We, too, have been refreshed, for we spent three glorious days of reflection on the meaning of Catholic Worker philosophy in our lives, as well as time just being together in a relaxing environment. We thank the Mercy Sisters for their generous hospitality.

At first we thought we were going to take in guests slowly so as to give ourselves time to get readjusted. Well, in less than

Carol Donahue, C.P.P.S., one of the founders of Cass House, has recently said "just one more year" for the fourth time.



two weeks the house was filled completely - it seems the Lord had other plans. We now have twenty-two children, seventeen men and thirteen women making their homes with us. The soupline dining room has had standing room only since the fourth day of reopening.

A special word of thanks goes out to all who have responded so generously once again by offering their time and talents to help with cooking, serving, and countless other tasks which are part of the everyday running of Cass House. An extra special thank you goes to Emmett McAuliffe, who has spent the last month with us helping do all the tedious jobs an extra person manages to collect. Here's hoping we haven't been too hard on this budding lawyer. Be sure to ask him about the special treat he found when he returned from his swearing-in ceremony.

No bit of news would be complete if we didn't add our list of needs to the column. At the present time we are in need of silverware, soup bowls, paper napkins, towels (kitchen), pampers, canned goods, salt and pepper shakers, a television, bedspreads (single) and bicycles and tricycles for the children. We can also use jobs of almost every kind for the guests who are sharing our home. We say thank you, in advance, for these items also.

The Round Table is the quarterly journal of Catholic Worker life and thought in St. Louis. We welcome responses from our readers. The people working on this issue are: Clare Bussjaeger, Mary Dutcher, Virginia Druhe, Delores Krinski, Mike McIntyre, Bill Miller, Larry Nolte, Pat Coy and Tom Angert.

ST. LOUIS CATHOLIC WORKER NEWS

THE ROUND TABLE

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