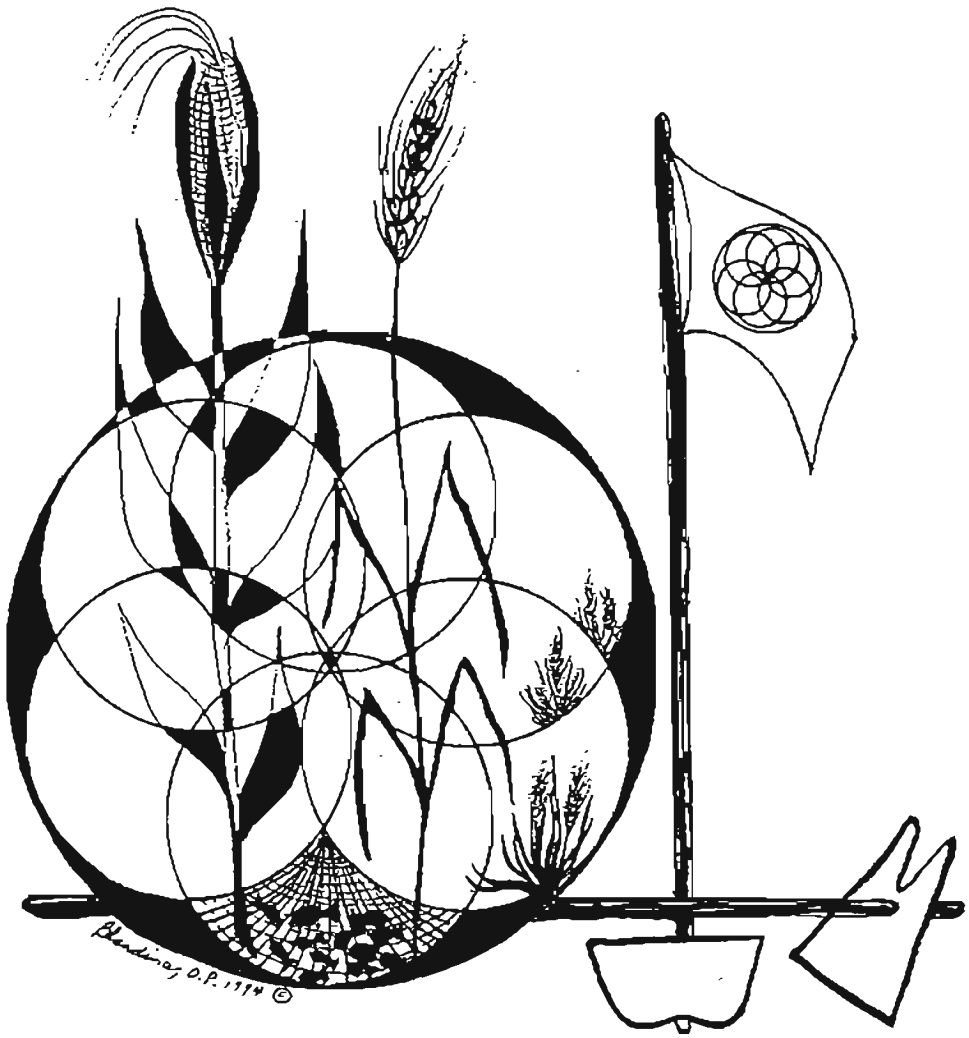
THE Round Table

Summer
1994

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

Non Violence In The



New World Order

WHY THIS ISSUE?

No one can argue that we have not seen tremendous changes in the world these past few years. Every few months we hear of events happening in countries whose names send us scrambling to our atlases to find their location. Even then our maps can't keep up with the changes.

In recent days we have suffered with the pain of Bosnia and Rwanda and celebrated the changes in South Africa. We feel frustration over events in Haiti and confusion over events in the former Soviet Union. We know the list will grow and change with every passing day.

In this issue, we chose to look at nonviolence in the New World Order. Mark Scheu explores the New World Order as he understands it in our present day. Outlining some basic changes in the world, including the collapse of the Soviet Union and the rise of economic rivals, he points out how the spectrum of world forces have been altered but not fundamentally changed.

Jim Douglass, in an article by Teka Childress, paints a very real picture of events from Sarajevo in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and in doing so calls us to nonviolent action to counter the paralyzed state many of us feel with suffering on such a grand scale.

In her article on Burma, Ellen Rehg talks of nonviolence as lived out by 1991 Nobel Peace Prize winner, Aung San Suu Kyi. Following the example of Mahatma Gandhi, Suu Kyi has challenged an oppressive government and continues to witness to her country and to the world while under house arrest.

In an article on winning our neighborhoods back from violence, Bill Ramsey talks of a new approach to the problem. Bill writes of the need to start over, to reconcile, to reclaim and to redeem our communities. Finally, Pat Coy discusses his experience with Peace Brigades International in Sri Lanka, an organization that allows "a safer political space in which to exercise human rights."

This proves to be a challenging issue. All of this is tempered with news from Karen House from the pen of year long veteran, Mitch McGee. Musings from the Little House are shared by Mary Ann McGivern. Both articles are reminders of the sacredness of the ordinary in our lives. To close, Bill Miller, in his Round Table Talk, reflects on the greater issue of suffering and his sense of how to live through the questions.

So, too, does this entire issue, with its heroes and heroines, challenge us to explore the greater issue of suffering. And in doing so, it is our hope you will come to an understanding that nonviolent solutions to fundamental human problems must be at the core of our creation of a truly New World Order. As a faith-filled people of God we are called to do no less. ✝

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PAX AMERICANA
THE NEW WORLD ORDER

by Mark Scheu

To understand the precepts and operation of the New World Order, one must first acknowledge the workings of the "old world order," the Cold War, which has been in place since World War II. George Kennan, head of the State Department's planning staff until 1950, wrote in 1948 in Policy Planning Study 23:

> We have about 50% of the world's wealth, but only 6.3% of its population. . . . In this situation, we cannot fail to be the object of envy and resentment. Our real task in the coming period is to devise a pattern of relationships which will permit us to maintain this position of disparity. . . . To do so we will have to dispense with sentimentality and day-dreaming. . . . We should cease to talk about vague and . . . unreal objectives such as human rights, the raising of living standards, and democratization. . . . we are going to have to deal in straight power concepts.

This memo accurately laid out U.S. policy objectives, although Kennan did not foresee that the U.S. government would, in an Orwellian fashion, pretend to favor human rights and democratization at home and abroad, but only as a cloak to pursue fundamental state power objectives. Noam Chomsky has demonstrated that the primary concern of U.S. foreign policy has been and is to create and maintain an international order in which U.S.-based business can prosper through the exploitation of material and human resources. This world domination was justified in the past, in the old world order, by the oft-proclaimed mission to defend the "free world" from Communism, usually the Soviet Union. Under this pretext a military-industrial complex was established in order to defend "free enterprise and democracy" in such places as the Koreas and southeast Asia, while national security states, fiercely opposed to "communist" infiltration, were established throughout Latin America.

OLD WORLD ORDER	NEW WORLD ORDER
East-West Rivalry	North-South Rivalry
Nuclear Threat	Low Intensity Conflict
Defense of Europe	War on Drugs
Economic Superpower	World Guardian
Age of Affluence	End of Affluence
Dominant Manuf. Industries	Service Industries
Domestic Social Conformity (1950's)	Domestic Social Collapse

If one can look beyond the system of indoctrination, the ideological system through which all such events are filtered for us by the media and educational institutions, one perceives another, more harsh and brutal reality. After the Second World War the two superpowers, the U.S. and the Soviet Union, settled into a system of global management – the "Cold War," in which the threat of the other global power was used to justify violence, subversion, and aggression in its own domains, thus ensuring the continued domination

Mark Scheu can be found in the park dodging in-line skaters on his bike.

of its respective sphere of the world. In short, the U.S. and the Soviet Union came quickly to need one another.

Then, however, a cataclysmic event took place -- the Soviet Union disintegrated. Virtually overnight the reason for feeding a bloated military ($300 billion per year), for the maintenance of a national security state, for the repression of dissent at home (McCarthyism, F.B.I. operations against domestic progressive movements such as the peace movement, the Black Panthers, the American Indian Movement) and abroad (especially Latin America), fell into disrepute with the collapse of the Soviet, i.e., Communist, threat. There immediately arose an expectation of a grand "peace dividend," as the gigantic military establishment could be at least in part dismantled, now that the need to defend Europe (at the cost of $150 billion per year) and pursue the arms race had evaporated. The monies freed from these obligations could be redirected to address pressing needs at home, to revitalize the economy, rebuild the infrastructure, recommit ourselves to meet the educational and health needs of the populace, and lift the growing number of poor (as poverty grew in the 1980's) back into the mainstream.

This of course represented a grave threat to the military-industrial complex. This cannot be overemphasized. It also represented a serious threat to those accustomed to positions of power and privilege. Their monopoly of power in political and economic institutions would only be threatened through this redirection of funds. The overriding aims of the nation state and the elites which control it had not changed (nor can we ever expect it to); the emperor's clothes had simply slipped for an instant. However, the pretext under which the fundamental aims of U.S. policy were to be pursued had to change in light of this and other world developments.

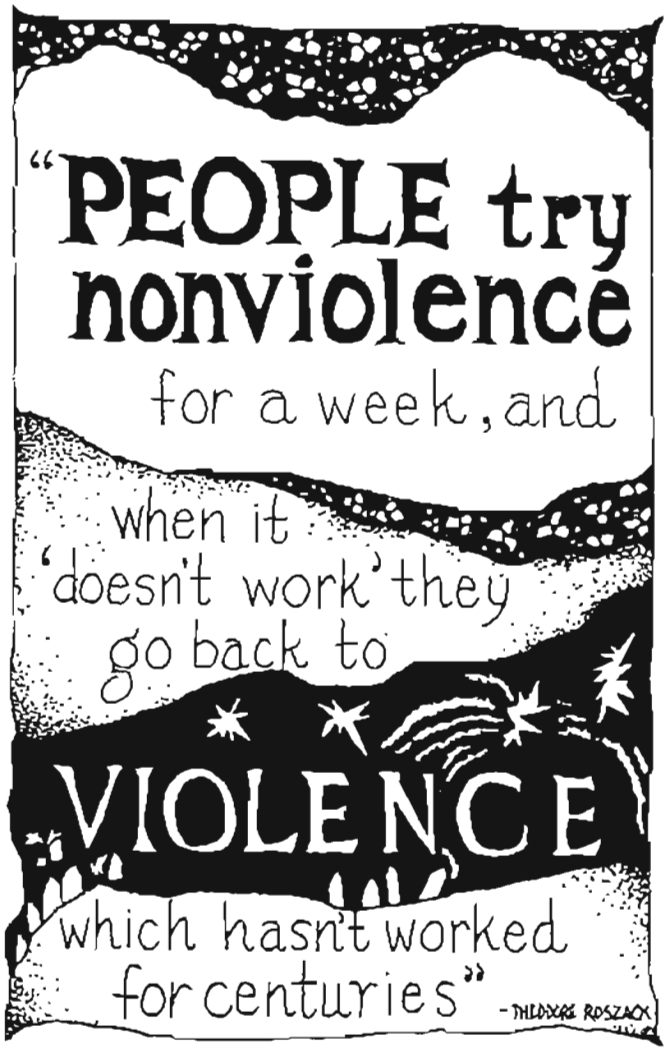
The military suddenly discovered new threats to the "American way of life." There were terrorists (usually Arab to draw upon American racial prejudices), like Khadafi, who had to be kept in their place. There were drug lords like Noriega (embraced by the U.S. administration in the past) who had to be brought to justice. There were heinous threats to the freedom of foreign states, such as Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait, which had to be met with overwhelming force (although much U.S. aid had flowed to Hussein while he was fighting Iran or repressing Kurds). The world which emerged with the collapse of the Soviet threat was suddenly bristling with mortal threats to American prosperity and to world peace and justice, and the U.S. was prepared to step into the breach and magnanimously undertake the role of a global police force. It's enough to make one's chest swell with pride. Unfortunately, however, the peace dividend would have to be indefinitely postponed.

Thus the key to understanding the transition from the old to the new world order is to identify the constants which are common to both, even though they are difficult to perceive through the obfuscation of an ideological system which disguises the principles upon which our government operates. This ideological system ensures that the populace remains passive, ignorant and apathetic. Thus, what in reality was a neocolonial invasion of southeast Asia by the U.S. and client states is propagated in the media and educational institutions as a heroic defense of S. Vietnam from attack by communist N. Vietnam. The casting out of a sovereign head of state (Noriega) who was once a drug lord built up by U.S. operatives is portrayed as an act of international retribution undertaken by the self-appointed guardian of global morality, the United States (even though this invasion was condemned by the U.N. and O.A.S.). The examples are too numerous to list in this essay.

In the course of this century U.S. capitalism evolved to a point where the so-called democratic process is dominated by a minority which control the vast amount of wealth and occupy key positions in the political, economic, and social institutions. Real democracy, meaning popular involvement in the formation of public policy, is considered a serious threat to this system of elite domination. Democratic forms, such as national elections, are tolerated as long as the economic, political, and ideological institutions are in the hands of those that can be trusted to act in general accord with the needs of those who own and manage U.S. society. As Chomsky has put it, our democracy is in reality a system of elite decision and public ratification.

The Cold War ensured the aggrandizement of these classes in the U.S. and justified the subsidizing of high-tech industries which met the military's needs for sophisticated weaponry. The chief rivalry used to keep the domestic population in check was East-West. The nuclear threat and the defense of Europe were the linchpins to the expansion of the military industrial complex and national security state. As long as the U.S.-dominated world economy was thriving, a modicum of this wealth would filter down to the general populace resulting in the growth of the middle class and the age of affluence, even though poverty persisted.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the rise of economic rivals the spectrum of world forces had been altered. No longer is the axis of global rivalry East-West, but North-South (although elements of this rivalry were present during the cold war as well).



Now it is the insecurity of the third world nations which represents a threat to our national security. General A.M. Gray, Commandant of the Marine Corps, made this statement before Congress in 1990:

> The underdeveloped world's growing dissatisfaction over the gap between rich and poor nations will create a fertile breeding ground for insurgencies. These insurgencies have the potential to jeopardize regional stability and our access to vital economic and military resources. . . . If we are to have stability in these regions, maintain access to their resources, . . . we must maintain within our active force structure a credible military power projection capability...

Despite the persistence of modernizing our nuclear forces, the emphasis is now on the development of forces capable of waging low-intensity conflict, and the ability to project limited but powerful forces at a moment's notice to distant parts of the globe, such as in the Gulf War. When the "Vietnam Syndrome" prevents us from intervening directly, as the U.S. populace does not easily tolerate large loss of American lives (loss of foreign lives such as the 100,000 combatants in Iraq is acceptable), we employ surrogate forces such as the Contras in Nicaragua to achieve our foreign policy goals.

In the realignment of world economic powers the U.S. is no longer the sole player on the field. Indeed, both Japan and a German-dominated Europe have successfully contested our previous economic monopolies. This has two consequences worth noting. First, the U.S. sustains its key role in world affairs through military might. The U.S. capitalized on the crisis in the Persian Gulf upon the invasion of Kuwait by forcing a military solution, even though a diplomatic solution was at hand. Thus was ensured a world order in which U.S. military power guarantees super power status. Of course by making U.S. military power crucial in any role the U.S. is to play in world affairs, the peace dividend is irretrievably lost.

A second consequence of the evolution of the new global economy is the constriction of the amount of wealth that is shared with the broader populace of the country. The wealth that is fed into the U.S. through the exploitation of the third world under the aegis of such institutions as the International Monetary Fund is increasingly monopolized and squandered by the corporate elite while poverty grows, the middle class shrinks, and urban centers further deteriorate.

This is the New World Order. Although the state system remains intact, the ideological system serves to dress up this reality so the populace remains passive and compliant. President Bush stated upon the occasion of explaining U.S. resistance to the invasion of Kuwait:

> What is at stake is more than one small country. It is a big idea: a new world order where diverse nations are drawn together in common cause to achieve the universal aspirations of mankind -- peace and security, freedom, and the rule of law.

This is of course sheer casuistry. The real aspirations remain as before: the ability of U.S. elites, based in the business community and in control of the state, to rob and exploit the human and material resources of the world. ✝

WARNING

Pentagon Censorship of News Obliterates Real Democracy. Long-Term Censorship Can Lead To Dictatorship. Welcome To The New World Order.

PEACE UNDER ARREST

THE BURMESE PRO-DEMOCRACY MOVEMENT

by Ellen Rehg

Today I suggest you perform this enlightening exercise. Peruse through your daily newspaper or watch the TV news, and notice what you do not see. Pick up any anthology in international studies, go through the library shelves in the travel or foreign studies section and look for what isn't there. Tune into the radio and amid all the reports on wars and violence in Bosnia, Rwanda, St. Louis or the Middle East, listen to what you do not hear. In the East Asian nation of Burma, the silence you hear is the sound of courage. It is the sound of the nonviolent resistance of the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize winner, Aung San Suu Kyi, who has been under house arrest, isolated from the rest of the world, in Rangoon, Burma, since July 1989.

Isolation is nothing new to the country of Burma. Silence has, in fact, been its biggest export for years. Before the nation achieved independence in 1948, its people had been without a voice in their own country since 1885 when the English colonized Burma; and later when the Japanese occupied the country during World War II. The legacy of colonialism may explain why, in 1962, when a Burmese general, Ne Win, overthrew the elected government to establish a brutal military dictatorship, his government adopted a stance of extreme isolation towards other nations. Although Burma has accepted foreign aid, they have severely limited communications between their citizens and the rest of the world. For years, tourists were limited to a one day stay in the country. Strict censorship of newspapers, books, magazines, films and music further isolated the people and surpressed criticism of the regime. The lack of any civil liberties, arbitrary arrests, long prison sentences and the use of torture has maintained the power of Ne Win.

Under military rule, the once solid Burmese economy slowly declined. Despite the natural resources of the country, its rich farmlands and highly literate population, Burma requested "least-developed country" (LDC) status from the U.N. in 1987. Its rice exports had dropped from 2 million tons a year in the early 60's to 20,000 tons in 1988. Per capita income dropped to $210 a year, forcing many Burmese to work several jobs and send family members into the streets selling fruit to make ends meet.

Ellen Rehg can be found in the park yanking her yapping dog away from early morning cyclists.

Meanwhile, the government waged continual "low intensity" wars with the various ethnic groups in the outer provinces of the country. The Burmese comprise the majority in the nation, but several other ethnic groups also are a part of Burma. Some of them have achieved relative autonomy from Rangoon thanks in part to the shadow economies based on illicit trade in heroin and smuggled goods and services. One of the world's largest opium crops thrives under local control in the mountainous northern regions. In the regions bordering Thailand, goods and people (often young girls for prostitution) are regularly smuggled across the border. The military has made a practice of forcing young Burmese men into the army to fight these ongoing ethnic conflicts, sometimes using these young men as human minesweepers.

It may be that three decades of political repression, coupled with economic decline finally proved too much for the long suffering Burmese in the spring and summer of 1988, when widespread demonstrations broke out. The unprecedented protests which swept the country and involved Burmese from all walks of life began with a small fracas between students and riot police in Rangoon on March 13, 1988. To quell a fight at a teahouse near the Rangoon Institute of Technology, police clubbed students savagely, killing one. Forty-one others later suffocated in a police van in which they had been detained and left to sit in the hot sun. In protest, students from the university took to the streets and were joined by the townspeople who were also angered by the police brutality. During the next five days, the protests spread, closing the University. Reports placed the number of people demonstrating at 12,000 to 15,000. Police response continued to be brutal. Over 200 people were killed as police fired into the crowds or even drove trucks into peaceful demonstrations. Those arrested were subject to beatings, torture, and in the case of women, repeated rapes.

But the government was unable to quell the mass demonstrations. They spread from Rangoon to at least 40 other locations in Burma. Students were joined by Buddhist monks and the secretly organized All Burma Workers Union which issued a general strike that shut the country down. The demonstrations only escalated in July of 1988 when General Ne Win resigned and called for a general referendum on Burma's political future. Although Ne Win's resignation was in name only as he continued to be the power behind the scenes, the call for a national referendum opened the way for people to organize for multi-party elections.

This was the context out of which Aung San Suu Kyi emerged as the leader of a nonviolent movement calling for human rights and democratic reforms and as a primary organizer of an opposition party, the National League for Democracy (NLD). For despite the call for a referendum, the government's brutal crackdown against demonstrators continued, and in fact, got worse. In the first two weeks of August 1988, thousands of protesters were killed, and so many were jailed that the prisons had to be emptied of criminals in order to make room for those arrested. Suspected leaders and organizers were picked up in their homes at night; during the day troops continued to fire into the crowds, in one case attacking the staff at Rangoon General Hospital. In September, 1988, a military council called the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) was formed to rule the country, the governing body that continues to rule to this day.

In August of 1988 Suu Kyi first appeared on the scene with an open letter to the Burmese government signed by herself and others advocating that a non-governmental commission be formed to make proposals on the political future of Burma. Her public entry into the national scene provided the popular movement an opportunity for much-needed direction and leadership. She described herself simply as "one of a large majority of people in Burma struggling for democracy [with the goal of doing so] without further violence or loss of life." As the daughter of Burma's beloved national hero, Aung San, Aung San Suu Kyi (who added her father's name to her own) could count on immediate name recognition and the affection of the people, somewhat like Corazon Aquino could in the Philippines. Her father, who organized Burma's first nationalist army and later entered political life, was assassinated in 1947 at the age of 32 along with six of his cabinet ministers. It was a great grace for the Burmese people that a woman of her family standing would also be a woman of moral courage, who spoke of her father and Mahatma Gandhi in the same breath. Unlike her father, however, she advocated nonviolent means to achieve a democratic Burma, and unlike Gandhi, the roots of her nonviolence lie in Buddhism rather than Hinduism.

It's difficult to piece together a "theory" of nonviolence advocated by Suu Kyi; instead one must look at her practice of it. She had only a year between her first public statements and her arrest in July of 1989. Most of her statements come from interviews or speeches given at rallies in which she campaigned for the NLD and spoke out against the violence and repression of the army. They are often directed toward the specific and pressing concerns of the moment, which, in the volatile atmosphere of a popular uprising, consume one's immediate energies and attention. All of her speeches were violations of the government's ban on opposition meetings and activities, and all took place in the presence of armed troops. (In the twisted

logic of military rule, multi-party elections were granted but people were not allowed to gather in political meetings.)

As she traveled throughout the country that year, she was subject to constant harassment and intimidation. When she toured southeast Burma in December 1988, she was preceded by army vehicles with loud speakers, blaring out a warning to all to stay away from her, a warning that was defied by the thousands who came anyway. The arrest of NLD workers in towns after she had held a rally was a common occurrence. According to Amnesty International, an estimated 3,000 political prisoners were detained between September 1988 and July 1989.

On one occasion her life was directly threatened. In April of 1989 in a tour of the Irrawaddy district, as she walked down the street with some followers, six soldiers jumped down from an army jeep and knelt in front of her, aiming their guns at her in firing position. She motioned for her supporters to wait on the sidewalk while she moved to the center of the road walking towards the soldiers. "It seemed so much simpler to provide them with a single target than to bring everyone else in," she said later in an interview. At that point a major revoked the shooting orders.

Despite this treatment, Suu Kyi expressed no animosity towards the army, choosing instead to appeal to them to refrain from terrorizing their own people. Her message of nonviolence called for discipline and unity, beginning with a reconciliation between the people and the armed forces, as a necessary step towards achieving a democracy in Burma.

> Let me speak frankly. I feel strong attachment for the armed forces. Not only were they built up by my father, as a child I was cared for by his soldiers... May I appeal to the armed forces to become a force in which the people can place their trust and reliance? May the armed forces become one which will uphold the honor and dignity of our country.

Yet she maintained that violence had no place in the public arena. After expressing sympathy for students who opted to join the armed insurgent groups based in the border areas, she stated,

> I don't believe in the armed struggle. In order to have free and fair elections, we must create the kind of condition in which elections can be free and fair, which means first of all people must be entitled to basic human rights and democratic freedom.

For Suu Kyi, freedom from the threat of violence is one of the primary requirements for a democracy to flourish, and it is the goal of establishing a democratic Burma which has been at the heart of the movement. Consequently, Suu Kyi acted in the manner in which all people have the right to act: openly speaking her mind criticizing the government, traveling around the country to build support, organizing rallies, conducting interviews. This is the work of nonviolent resistance in a nation in which one of the longest traditions is that of silencing and killing its opponents.

Aung San Suu Kyi's statements and actions show how very practical the way of nonviolence is. We often wonder if the practice of nonviolence is an effective way to resist systematic brutality and oppression, yet Suu Kyi's example shows that it is the only

way; only through these methods could she have campaigned as extensively and openly as she did as the foremost opposition leader. One may argue that it was her reputation as the daughter of a national hero that made her nonviolence possible. While it is true that her national standing protected her somewhat at the start of her campaign, it seems more likely that it was the support of the people and her own practice of nonviolence that prevented the army from simply doing away with her. She gave the army no pretext to kill her, and in the face of her popular support, they didn't dare do so arbitrarily.

Equally as important as Suu Kyi's nonviolent methods, her recognition of the moral components of resistance gave her campaign further strength. Her refusal to be cowed by the army's brutality showed the nation that nonviolence can face down guns and troops. Perhaps Suu Kyi's understanding of the paralyzing effects of violence explains why one of the basic human rights she called for is the freedom from fear. "It is not power that corrupts but fear. Fear of losing power corrupts those who wield it and fear of the scourge of power corrupts those who are subject to it." Fear creates barriers in the place of relationships, resignation in the place of hope. It disfigures the human spirit instead of sustaining it. For these reasons, Suu Kyi recognized that Burma needs more than a political transformation.

> A revolution which aims merely at changing official policies and institutions with a view to an improvement in material conditions has little chance of genuine success. Without a revolution of the spirit, the forces which produced the iniquities of the old order would continue to be operative...It is not enough to call for freedom, democracy and human rights. There has to be a united determination to persevere in the struggle, to make sacrifices in the name of enduring truths, to resist the corrupting influences of desire, ill will, ignorance and fear.

In 1990 her party won 82% of the vote in the national elections, despite her being under house arrest at the time; today Suu Kyi remains detained in Rangoon. With the military still in control, the movement is once again silent, but it has not disappeared. The pro-democracy movement is dependent upon the voices of the outside world to speak on their behalf. The Clinton administration has taken some steps in support of Suu Kyi. According to a March, 1994 New York Times article, the administration suspended all economic and military aid to Burma, imposed an arms embargo against the country, ended some low tariffs and blocked the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank from making loans to the country.

But the best way we can help to put pressure on Burma is to boycott those U.S. companies which are major investors there. Last fall, the Boston Globe printed an editorial in which they quoted from an article by Desmond Tutu entitled "Burma as South Africa". Tutu called for an international arms embargo as well as trade and investment restrictions against Burma. The Globe stated that "the most relevant testing ground for the lessons learned in South Africa is the Asian nation of Burma." Heeding Tutu's call, several organizations formed the Coalition for Corporate Withdrawal from Burma. The effort has focused on three companies that are the biggest U.S. investors in Burma: Unocal, an oil company which owns Union 76, Pepsico, and Texico. Amaco has already decided to divest itself of its Burmese holdings. Let's support the consumer boycotts against these companies until they divest in Burma. What is the sound of thousands of people not drinking Pepsi? It is the sound of support for Aung San Suu Kyi and the democracy movement in Burma.

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NEIGHBORS BEHIND BARS

by Bill Ramsey

Perhaps it was his eyes, a confused and frightened stare. Or maybe it was his age. He appeared younger than the other inmates with whom I shared a small holding cell. Something caused me to sit down next to him. He said, "You look like a lawyer, can you help me read these?", and handed me crumpled booking papers. I assured him that I was not a lawyer, but read through the papers.

He said that the gun had gone off by mistake, critically wounding two "girls" in a car that had pulled up next to the one he was riding in. Later, as the boasts of abuse of women with guns and crack escalated in the cell, he weighed in with "I wasted them two bitches". A few minutes later he was taken from the cell.

As he was taken, I thought to myself how he seemed to embody all the enemy images of those who would launch a "war on crime".... young, African-American, angry, and armed. I also thought of his fear, his confusion, and his lack of economic resources and wondered how they related to the fear, confusion and lack of community resources of those who would "lock him up and throw away the key".

I was jailed for refusing to pay for the U.S. wars on Nicaragua, Panama, and Iraq. I came out of jail last fall and reentered a society imprisoned by its fear of crime. With murder rates soaring (primarily among young male African-Americans), the public cried out for a "war on crime." Actually the rate of violent crime has fallen over the last year, but images speak louder than statistics in our body politic. The battle cries were heard in state legislatures and in Congress... "lock 'em up... three strikes and you're out... jail juveniles... truth in sentencing... add to the crimes punished by death... enter without warrants... build more prisons".

As in all wars, this war on crime is defined by what you can do to the other. It is sustained by an enemy image. It uses slogans to manipulate fears. It diverts massive resources and seeks the quick victory. Most of its soldiers realize that the sources of crime and our fear of it run deeper, but the priority is to secure the moment, not to redeem our times.

Living in an inner-city neighborhood with Cathy and our young children, I understand the drive to secure the moment. Working for a pacifist organization that urges us to consider the economic functions and racist patterns of the U.S. prison system, I also understand that buried in all the battle cries against crime are deeper yearnings for reconciled communities.

During antidrug marches in Walnut Park, we chant "Stop the Crack! We want our neighborhood back!" As I marched recently I thought of young men from East St. Louis in that holding cell last August. In the midst of all their banter about crack, guns, and abusive sex, there were more gentle moments as they talked of relatives, neighbors, and school friends and shared food with cellmates. It occurred to me that at a deeper level they too "wanted their neighborhood back".

Do those who seek to rid their streets of crime and those who are jailed in the process share a common sense of the loss of community? Could it be possible that we can find things to do with each other, rather than to each other? Are there ways we can collaborate to address the brokenness of our commu-

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Bill Ramsey can be found in the park dodging yapping dogs while he jogs.

nities? Are there solutions that we can apply in our neighborhoods that allow us to practice forgiveness, an essential component of nonviolent action?

If so, first we need to understand how we have hurt each other. Most readers of The Round Table do not need to be convinced that street crime is a dangerous and self-defeating enterprise. There was little confusion about that among my cellmates either. What we all need to understand better is the simple truth that prisons do not work. They neither protect the public, nor rehabilitate the prisoner.

If there is any demonstrated relationship between crime and imprisonment it is that prison fosters crime. Prisoners are not only schools for crime, but more profoundly, prisons are violent institutions that breed violent behavior. Inmates have months, years, and sometimes decades to absorb our society's contention that violence is the appropriate response when one believes he or she has been wronged.

The United States has the highest rate of incarceration in the industrialized world, and two-thirds of those in prison return to prison. Crime plagues our country to a degree unknown in other societies. In the last decade the number of people incarcerated doubled in this country, while the crime rate increased by 7.3%.

Who ends up in our prisons? One study found that 53% of low-income defendants received prison sentences, while only 26% of high-income defendants end up in prison. We like to think that only the dangerously violent offenders are imprisoned, but well over half the prisoners were convicted of crimes that did not involve violence. Mandatory sentences for drug offense (a strategy of the war on drugs) have filled federal prisons with nonviolent offenders.

African-American males are 6% of the U.S. population, yet they make up nearly 50% of the prison inmates. Nationwide, the rate of imprisonment for African Americans is nine times that for Euro-Americans. When time served is compared for similar offenses, including first time offenders, African-Americans serve far longer sentences than whites. Three percent of adult white males are under some type of correctional control. For African-American males the figure rises to 10%. Over 40% of African-American males between 18-35 years of age are either in prison or jail, on probation or parole, awaiting trial, or being sought on arrest warrants.

In other words, not only do prisons not work to protect communities or rehabilitate people, but they tend to reflect and compound (and ultimately serve to maintain) the very racial and economic inequities that foster crime. A 1983 study found that 47% of all those jailed were unemployed at the time of their arrest; 71% earned less that $10,000 a year. Forty-nine percent of all convictions were for property offenses and another 14% were for robbery, a violent, but economically motivated crime.

Inmates are mostly part of the "secondary labor market", working intermittently at low-paying jobs. As fewer manufacturing jobs are available, our economy increasingly relies on this large pool of temporary underpaid workers to fill dead-end service jobs. Meanwhile prison construction is one of the few growth industries left. Communities compete to host new prisons.

As the war on crime rushes forth, those who point to these economic factors as the cause of crime and advocate for prisoners' rights are scorned as "bleeding heart liberals". Despite evidence to the contrary, it is assumed that public safety and social justice are somehow at odds, and we must choose between them.

I am convinced that social justice is, in fact, a prerequisite for public safety. Our security in our homes depends on our willingness to get out from behind locked doors to work with the unemployed and underemployed for a new domestic economic order. If we want safe streets we need to get out on those streets and into boardrooms and challenge the racism which structures our housing, education, and health care systems against so many. Over the long-run it's the only way "we will get our neighborhoods back".

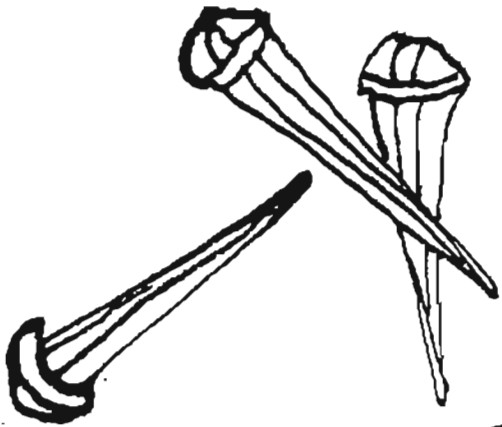
In my neighborhood, as we seek to secure the moment, a great deal of human energy is expended on efforts to report suspicious behavior. At one point we had a crime patrol with people devoting two hours of vigilance a week. A few years back the effort to hold absentee landlords accountable included letters suggesting

Can there be a just war? Can the conditions laid down by St. Thomas (with such a war) ever be fulfilled? What about the morality of the use of the atom bomb? What does God want me to do? And what am I capable of doing? Can I stand against state and church? Is it pride, presumption, to think I have the spiritual capacity to use spiritual weapons in the face of the most gigantic tyranny the world has ever seen? Am I capable of enduring suffering, facing martyrdom? And alone? Again the long loneliness to be faced.

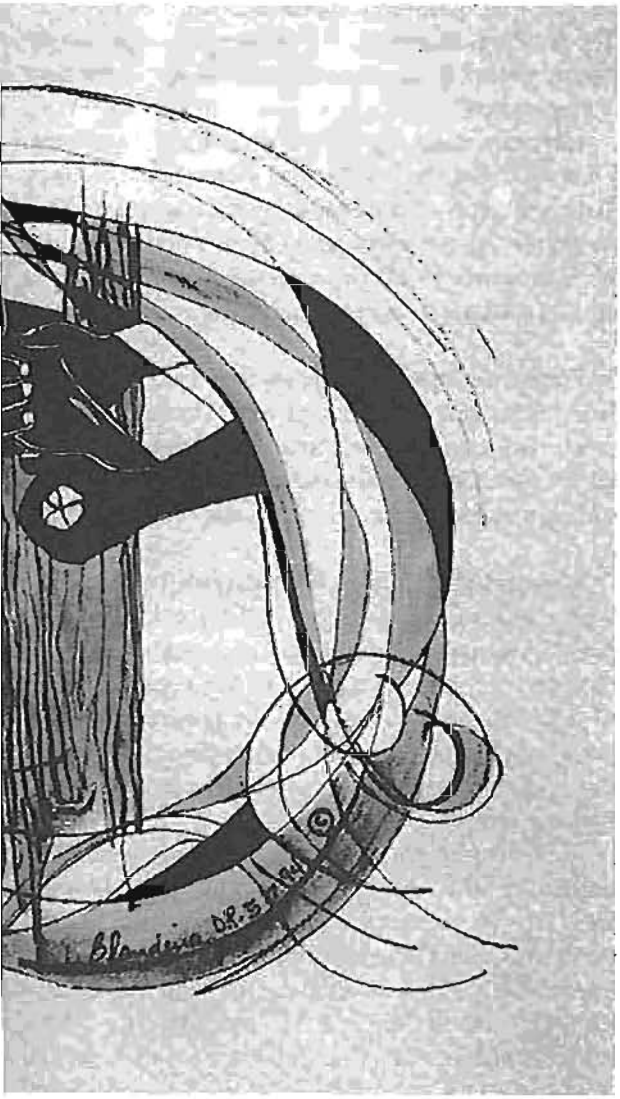
Dorothy Day – Radical Devotion, page 101

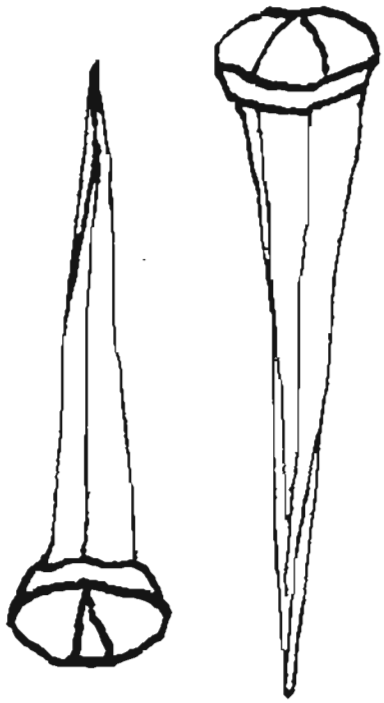
We say frankly, that we wish indeed the workers would lay down their tools and refuse to make the instruments of death. We wish that they were so convinced of the immorality of modern wars that they would refuse to make the instruments of those wars.

Dorothy Day – April 1941, Meditations, page 53



BAPTISM MANDATE: TO REMOV





The position of The Catholic Worker remains the same. We are Christian pacifist and try to follow the counsels of perfection. We are creatures of body and soul and as such have a supernatural destiny as well as a part to play in the temporal order. We firmly believe that our stand makes for the common good, basing our view on the philosophy of history which Peter Maurin as our teacher presents to us. We may suffer for this faith, but we know that this suffering will be more fruitful than any words of ours.

Dorothy Day – January 1941, Meditations, page 52

NAILS OF OPPRESSION

that families be evicted if any member had been arrested. Sometimes these efforts are "successful" and a "crack house" is closed down on one block, only to reopen on another. I worry about what it does to our attitudes towards our neighbors to focus so much on our suspicions.

I wonder what headway we might make against crime if all our collective energy were focused on a job development program in our neighborhood, an effort that built on the best in those whose economic circumstances make them susceptible to criminal behavior. There have been a few experiments in youth and women employment projects, but they have tended to flounder for lack of community support and financial
resources.

Better resourced economic development strategies have focused on luring enterprises back into the neighborhood, but I wonder if they succeed in employing people from the neighborhood. Could we use our "anticrime" energy to harness resources for a project that would enable the underemployed in our neighborhood to create their own jobs?

Every now and then I witness an arrest in our neighborhood. My mind runs back to the holding cell and I think of what the arrested person faces. What was the crime? Who was the victim? Do I even stop to ask these questions? What can be done once our relationships are so broken? Is there a way to restore what has been broken?

I have been encouraged to read of a nonviolent "experiment in truth" called restorative justice. People in Genesee County, New York and Langley, British Columbia are exploring this peacemaking response to crime. This approach does not counter a harm done by a new harm, but attempts to reconcile the victim, offender and the wider community. While restorative justice may have educational and rehabilitative side effects, its primary goal is to restore the brokenness that arises from the criminal act.

Japan has the longest experience with this response to crime. They have a two-track system of justice. The objective of the first track is to reform and restore the offender to the community. The process involves confession, repentance and absolution and is administered by police, prosecutors and judges who have the authority to drop charges and suspend sentences. The offender only goes to prison when this first track fails.

Japan is the only industrialized nation which has reduced both its prison population and its crime rate, including serious and violent crime. Since WW II, the number of offenses fell by 30% and the number of offenders decreased by 27%. Since 1963, homicide rates were reduced by 40%, robbery by 60% and rape by nearly 80%. Police do not report up to 40% of all apprehended offenders. Prosecutors suspend prosecution of convictable suspects in nearly a third of the reported cases and Judges suspend sentences in nearly 60% of adjudicated cases.

To justify such leniency, officials must be satisfied that the process of self-correction and community control has begun. The offender's acknowledgment of guilt, expression of remorse, and willingness to compensate victims is not sufficient. The family and community must accept responsibility to take steps to prevent future misconduct. Then the victim must express forgiveness.

Certainly, there are cultural attitudes and economic factors that affect the rate of crime and incarceration in Japan. But this expression of restorative justice seems to be a decisive factor. As communities in New York and British Colombia experiment with this approach we need to watch carefully and encourage similar experiments in our own communities.

Pretrial mediation, community based pre-crime problem solving, community partnerships with offenders and community oriented policing approximate the restorative justice approach to crime. Communities and agencies are recommending these approaches to crime in St. Louis. The problem is funding.

A couple of years ago a St. Louis task force on crime and violence recommended to the City that local residents be trained and hired to identify and mediate neighborhood disputes before they reach the point of violence. The City praised the idea, but did not fund the program. Modest "front-end" investments like these could replace the unrelentingly high human and financial costs of incarceration and building more prisons.

How could folks in my neighborhood experiment with restorative justice? Could we identify and train block mediators? Already some of this takes place informally. Could we offer to work with Congregations and Offenders Partnership Enterprise (COPE) to develop partnerships with inmates from our neighborhood? My next door neighbor once did this on her own initiative with a neighbor who was in prison. What could attempts at community oriented policing in my neighborhood learn from Japanese police practices?

The war on crime diverts billions of dollars warehousing people and building prisons. These same funds could be invested in a different model of justice, one that actually has proven itself to reduce crime and incarceration rates. Or they could be invested in projects that redress the economic and racial inequities that breed crime.

The war mentality of "do it to them" will not allow the room to experiment. Nor does the focus on the enemy out there who needs to be contained or eliminated allow us to explore our commonalities. It cedes little time or resources to healing the brokenness of our neighborhoods.

We need a gift from God, the equivalent of a year of Jubilee, a chance to start over, a time to reclaim and redeem our communities. If we can just set down the war long enough, take a collective deep breath, think about "the other" and allow the solutions to arise from all of us, then perhaps we will discover a patience with one another that surpasses our present understanding. Perhaps in the process we will get our neighborhoods back. ✚

"COME TO SARAJEVO"

by Teka Childress

> On Saturday, Feb.5, the day the market was bombed, Jagger and I were caught in downtown Sarajevo behind a fence between two open areas that were being hit by sniper fire. I shall always remember a small hunched-over woman in her kerchief and winter coat, perhaps 80 years old, trying with all her might to run faster than the sniper's bullets could find her. She made it as did the others around us... Later that afternoon Jagger and I visited the market. The dead and wounded had been removed. Rain was falling in the dusk. Blood and water ran together under my boots, as the blood and water from Jesus' side.
>
> Jim Douglass, Sojourners, May, 1994 "Blood and Water in Sarajevo"

For the last two years we have been hearing stories about Sarajevo like the one Jim Douglass relates above. To watch such horrors take place and do nothing to stop them destroys something in us. It would be as though, to use Jim's analogy, we were watching Jesus pierced again before our eyes.

Gandhi said that a votary of Ahimsa (nonviolence) is true to the practice of nonviolence if the spring of their actions is compassion. Those of us who strive to practice nonviolence too often settle for inaction over compassion. Why is this so?

Perhaps we feel overwhelmed or overcome by evil. Or we might not know what to do. (Human history has only just begun to teach us ways to respond nonviolently.) Or we might lack the patience, faith, and willingness to sacrifice that the way of nonviolence can require. We also might fear nonviolent means are ineffective because, since they do not involve force, their results are more often long-term rather than immediate and are for the most part out of our hands.

The fear that nonviolence is ineffective is probably the most compelling reason to doubt its worth. Particularly when it cannot prevent human suffering. (Not that violence has ever proven to prevent suffering!) Yet, we must never be callous when it comes to the least of sufferings much less the genocide of a people. This is why those of us who desire to follow a nonviolent path must actively prevent suffering whenever possible and must strive for and live out the

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Teka Childress can be found jogging in the park looking for Bill Ramsey.

willingness to share the fate of victims of violence and evil. We must be truly compassionate in our practice.

Jim Douglass has sought to practice compassion in response to the suffering in the former Yugoslavia. He visited Sarajevo, in Bosnia-Herzegovina, in August of 1993. At that time, the Islamic leader of the region, Imam Mustafa Ceric, when asked what message he would like Jim to bear said, "Come to Sarajevo". Adding to Sarajevans' pain from the war and "ethnic cleansing" is their feeling of being isolated and cut off from the rest of the world (including their loved ones who live elsewhere).

Jim accepted the invitation of Mustafa Ceric. He returned to Sarajevo in February of this year. He brought mail and news from loved ones to people in Sarajevo and he spread news of Sarajevans to others around the globe.

He left Sarajevo for Rome where he began 51 days of fasting and prayer in support of an interfaith pilgrimage for peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina by leaders of the faith traditions represented in Sarajevo. In Rome he invited Pope John II, to "Come to Sarajevo" and to come with Patriarch Pavle of the Serbian Orthodox Church (if he also would accept). Jim spoke with Roger Cardinal Etchegaray (President of the Pontifical Council for Peace and Justice) and learned that Pope John Paul II would very much like to go on a Pilgrimage to Sarajevo, Belgrade, and Zagreb, key cities of the Bosnians, Serbs, and Croats.

Jim continued his own journey and went on to Belgrade to speak with Patriarch Pavle and issue the same invitation. The participation of the Patriarch has been discussed among members of the Serbian Orthodox Church and they are interested in having him make a pilgrimage. Jim has also spoken to others of the Jewish and Islamic faiths about joining as well as other members of the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches. Jim made another visit to Sarajevo during the last week of May to continue his efforts toward making a "Pilgrimage for Peace" a reality.

Following are excerpts from the letter Jim Douglass sent to Pope John Paul II, on Easter day this year. The letter expresses well Jim's vision of what an interfaith pilgrimage to the region could be.

April 3, 1994
His Holiness Pope John Paul II
Vatican City

Holy Father:

The Lord is risen today and I hope and I believe you are going to Sarajevo in an interfaith communion of saints.

I believe these two realities are one. The Lord is risen! And so are we all in the realized vision of your interfaith pilgrimage to Sarajevo with Patriarch Pavle and Muslim, Jewish and other religious leaders, continuing with you in prayer and repentance to Sarajevo on the journey of faith which you began in Assisi.

When you and this interfaith community arrive in Sarajevo, Holy Father, you will be greeted with both hope and apprehension by the people of the city: hope because of who you are and what you can do to help them: apprehension because they fear that you like many other visitors will come and go to this city without seeing and being with them and without speaking out against the daily evils which continue to kill them.

I beg of you, Holy Father, do not leave Sarajevo and its sister cities, Belgrade and Zagreb, without repenting (turning) in the name of Christ and on behalf of all of humanity from the profound evil of "ethnic cleansing." You must cry out against this sin against God and Humanity with all the power that lies in you. "Ethnic cleansing" is a sin against our Creator and creation! In the name of God, it must be stopped and reversed!

What concretely would these words mean for the People of Sarajevo and all the people of the Balkans who they symbolize?

Sarajevans now live in prison. They literally cannot move in and out of their own city. Nor can they even travel to all of the neighborhoods within the city of Sarajevo. They are prisoners to the ideology of "ethnic cleansing" which says that Muslims, Orthodox Serbs, and Catholic Croatians cannot live together.

You must insist that God is the author of a unity among all peoples that no one can deny without blaspheming our very Creator. Therefore let all the people of Sarajevo have free access to and from their city and to all of its parts. Let them come and go with the same freedom which they had before the unspeakable evil of "ethnic cleansing" created walls and prisons in this city and land. Let all the people of Sarajevo, the Balkans, and the world enjoy the God-given freedom to live in their homes and travel to and from them without being expelled and walled out by rape, torture, and killing--sins and crimes that cry out to heaven.

Please say such words, Holy Father, and the entire city of Sarajevo will suddenly be one with you on your journey of faith and repentance...

During your time in Sarajevo, it is important where you, Patriarch Pavle, and the Muslim, Jewish, and other religious leaders go. Sarajevo is symbolic of the entire Balkan war. It is also a second Jerusalem. Mosque, synagogue, Catholic cathedral, and Orthodox church stand almost side by side on its streets. Your interfaith pilgrimage should go first in prayer to the mosque

and Orthodox church stand almost side by side on its streets. Your interfaith pilgrimage should go first in prayer to the mosque at the center of the old city, where over one hundred shells have exploded. Then the Orthodox church, the synagogue, and the Catholic cathedral should all be visited in prayer by a procession through the streets bearing the symbols of all four of Sarajevo's faiths: Muslim crescent, Catholic cross, Orthodox cross, and the Jewish Star of David. From the Catholic cathedral the procession would make a final stop one-half block away: at the scene of the February 5 bombing where Muslims, Orthodox, Catholics, and Jews died side by side...

For you and he [Patriarch Pavle] to travel, pray, and repent together in Sarajevo, Belgrade, and Zagreb would be a profound turn toward healing not only the divisions of this war but almost 1,000 years of division in the body of Christ. It would be a miracle. God gives us the power to work such miracles.

For 51 days, Holy Father, I have fasted and prayed in Piazza San Pietro and on a journey to Patriarch Pavle in Belgrade in support of you and him realizing such a vision with other religious leaders on behalf of us all. In the community of faith which has been one with me I end this fast today, Easter Sunday. We all thank God for your life and witness of peace. The Lord is risen. So are we all.

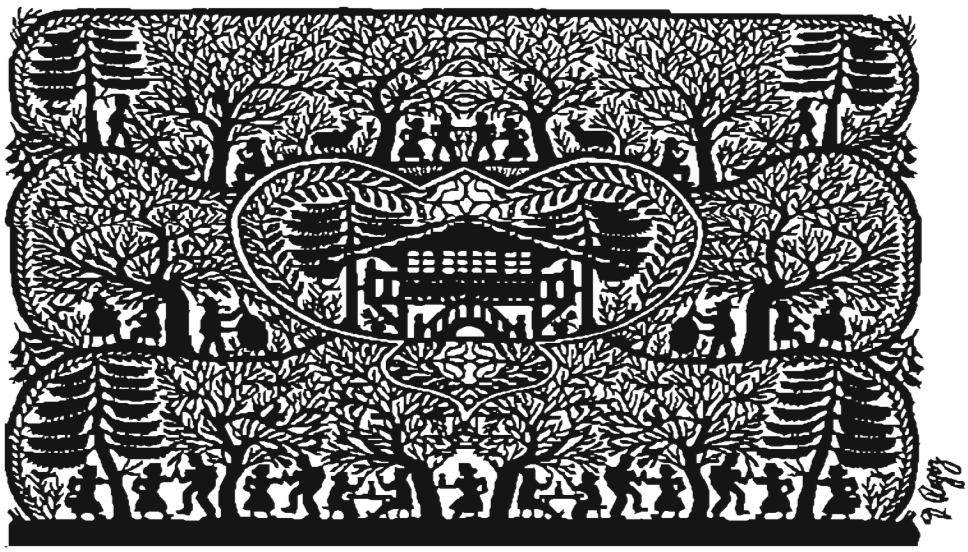
In prayer for your pilgrimage to Sarajevo,

Jim Douglass

If the Pope of the Roman Catholic Church, the Patriarch of the Serbian Orthodox Church, and members of the Jewish and Islamic faiths stood together in Sarajevo and denounced the "ethnic cleansing" occuring there, it would be a tremendous step toward dismantling the walls that have been recently erected to separate the people of Sarajevo who have lived together for centuries.

I remember when Jim Douglass spoke at Karen House shortly before returning to Sarajevo and going to Rome. He did not really know what his efforts would accomplish. He still does not. In fact, there are still many unresolved issues for the Pilgrimage as of the writing of this article. The task at hand is to ensure that any pilgrimage that is undertaken by the Pope and Patriarch and others truly reflects a spirit of repentance and desire for reconcilliation. Jim's hope is that the Pilgrimage can be expanded to visit sites which symbolize the wounds that each party in the war has received so that repentance can be expressed and healing can begin. Jim, without knowing the end result, has walked out in faith with a spirit of compassion, Due to his visiting St. Louis many of us were inspired to become active in support of the Fast and Pilgrimage. Thus in this city, a group of Muslims, Jews, and Christians has come together to support the Interfaith Fast and Pilgrimage and has recently turned its efforts toward welcoming and supporting refugees that are coming to St. Louis from the former Yugoslavia.

Please join us in these efforts. For more information on how you can become involved contact: the American Friends Service Committee office at 862-5773. This is one way (along with the many others we encounter in our daily lives) that we can make our practice of non-violence one of compassion. ✚



FROM ABROAD

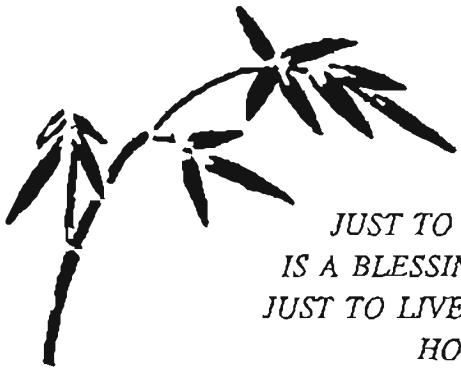
by Patrick G. Coy

In July 1993, I arrived in Sri Lanka to conduct a participant observation study of the work of Peace Brigades International (PBI). PBI is an international nongovernmental human rights organization that provides international observers and nonviolent escorts for threatened human rights organizations and activists in situations of high political violence. In order to study their work from the inside out, I completed PBI's training, and joined their team of international volunteers in Sri Lanka for three months.

Above everything else, Sri Lanka is a land marked by diversity. Tropical rain forests richer than any others left in Asia, mountains filled with waterfalls, tea plantations, and ancient Buddhist shrines, coastal beaches here and rice paddies there all contribute to a varied and beautiful landscape. And the diversity that defines the land extends to the people who inhabit it. The Sinhalese population (74%) is primarily Buddhist. The Tamils (18%) are mostly Hindus. Muslims (7%) and Burghers, Christian descendants of the Portuguese and Dutch colonizers, round out the population.

My work as an escort and international observer for Peace Brigades International put me in contact with Sri Lankans involved in humanitarian efforts, human rights documentation and promotion, and nonviolent organizing for social and political change. That work has put them in varying degrees of danger. Some fear violence or harassment from the Sinhalese-dominated government, others are targeted by a variety of paramilitary groups, and still others fear the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). What they have in common is that they have solicited Peace Brigades International to help them secure safer political space within which to exercise their human rights.

PBI escorts are always foreign nationals. The presence of unarmed international escorts is thought to function as a deterrent since violence directed at foreign nationals often brings much higher political costs than the same actions directed at local citizens. And in the event the deterrence fails, PBI is on site to document the violence, to publicize it, and to bring pressure to bear through its Emergency Response Network. Hundreds of people around the globe are signed on to the network and are committed to making phone calls or sending faxes or letters in an attempt to have the perceived injustice righted.



JUST TO BE
IS A BLESSING,
JUST TO LIVE IS
HOLY.

Abraham Joshua Heschel

Nonviolence has been an especially important ingredient in the recipe for political change of late. From Manila to Moscow nonviolent sanctions have helped bring governments down, stayed the hand of oppression and human rights violations, and created space for alternative political actors and parties to flourish. Yet the waging of nonviolent conflict has received even less attention. Although inherently limited due to the dynamics of nonviolence, outside third parties like Peace Brigades International may play meaningful roles in nonviolent political and human rights struggles.

Pat Coy, a former Karen House community member, can be reached on the internet at pgcoy@suum.acs.syr.edu

My preliminary research indicates that for at least some individual activists, the availability of international observers and nonviolent escorts is a significant consideration in the political choices they make regarding their activism. Some activists turn to PBI for accompaniment services that they cannot get elsewhere, and without which they might not choose to continue their work for human rights or political change.

A PBI client I frequently accompanied had filed a fundamental human rights suit in the Supreme Court against the government and a paramilitary group, claiming abduction, torture and false imprisonment. After filing the lawsuit, he received death threats and other harassments designed to get him to withdraw the suit. "I wrote to all the international human rights organizations and local ones, too," he told me. "Very few even answered me. I was so desperate. Those who did answer me said they could not provide protection... I had to carry on the case and at the same time I had to have some security to do so." This particular client was convinced his case "would not have been successful without PBI."

I also met and interviewed other threatened activists who made different choices. For example, one threatened Buddhist monk who came to PBI for assistance eventually turned down the team's offer of accompaniment. Following his release from prison, he had sought security by going partially underground; he decided that the presence of international observers would only heighten his visibility and decrease his safety.

Questions that go beyond the obvious issue of the effectiveness of nonviolent protective accompaniment techniques must be addressed in PBI's work and in future initiatives launched by others. These include issues of sovereignty, the role of nongovernmental actors in the international system, universal versus culturally-bound conceptions of human rights, and the apparent reliance upon the unequal power relations between poor and wealthy countries for protective accompaniment strategies to work.

Still, I am thankful for the opportunity to have walked alongside Sri Lankans of different ethnic and religious backgrounds who nevertheless share a commitment to justice and nonviolent struggle, and who are willing to endure tremendous sacrifices for that commitment. Most have absorbed setbacks and oppressions, but many continue their struggle unabated. Being in their company was a humbling and inspiring experience for me, whose citizenship and political liberties come at comparatively little cost. ✚

FROM KAREN HOUSE

by Mitch McGee

Recently I completed my first year of living at Karen House. I had dreamed of living at the Worker for some time, so my anniversary is a good chance to reflect on the experience a bit. I had wanted the chance of actually "sharing my home" with others, compared to my previous experience at Cass House when I came to the house to work, yet had my "escape" at my home in Overland.

There is a certain sacredness in sharing space with others who find themselves in such a vulnerable position. In a sense I find myself also vulnerable--unsure at times of how to attempt to help folks who may have tremendous needs. I often feel I have failed in providing that magical illusive solution to their problems, but hopefully having made an attempt is some measure of success. A bigger fear I have is failing to even try. I remember Virginia saying words to the effect that the hardest thing at times is how easy it becomes to say, "no". "No, we don't have space." "No, I can't help you."

An amazing lesson is that as you struggle to enter into a relationship on some level with folks who have been so wounded by life, you discover some of your own wounds along the way. It can become frightening. One volunteer said to me one day that coming here was hard for her. It made her realize how very little would need to change in her life to bring

Mitch McGee is responsible for Karen House's bloomin' backyard.

her to the point of needing to come here for help.

Of course there are also many joys living here. The children who come to stay have the ability to make any struggle it takes to keep going worthwhile. There is great excitement in those times when families have moved on to new homes. Other signs of hope for me are women trying (sometimes again and again) to put their lives back together by entering treatment programs.

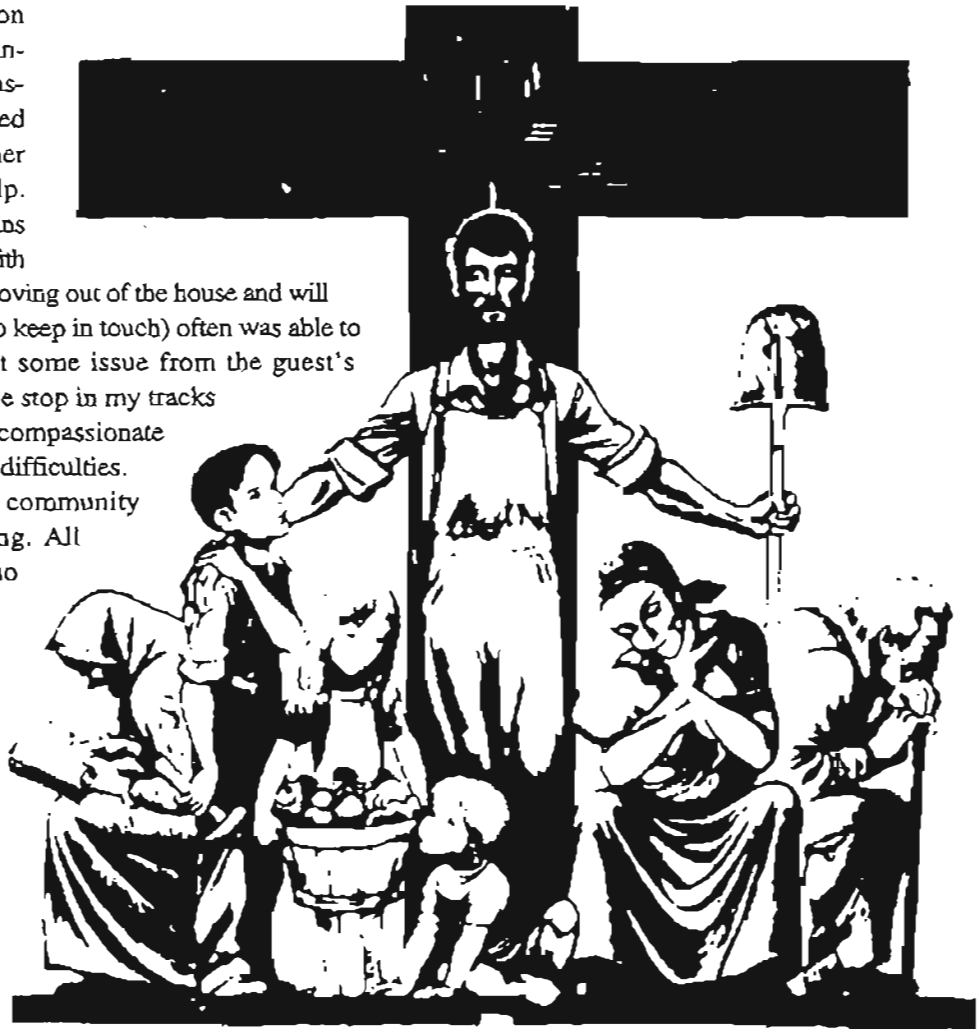
Community life makes it possible to live and share this space with others. The people with whom I live daily give me much in the way of hope and help me to continue. Each one is a gift in their own way. Becky has enthusiasm and definitely shows southern hospitality to the guests. She's always willing to share of herself and her nursing skills. Tim amazes me with the quiet way he goes about performing so many tasks in the house with no expectation of recognition for his efforts. Mark brings his wisdom and gentle humor to community meetings, on many occasions offering insight to community discussions. Teka is so dedicated to the house and to former guests who seek her help. She shows me what it means to enter into relationship with our guests. Kris (who is moving out of the house and will be missed, but promises to keep in touch) often was able to gently get me to look at some issue from the guest's perspective. She made me stop in my tracks more than once with her compassionate insight into some guest's difficulties.

The "extended" community also helps me keep going. All those wonderful folks who come in to take house, cook meals, do maintenance, or simply share time and prayer with us at liturgy, energize us with their enthusiasm and friendship. Since one of my tasks is to write the house thank you notes, I'm also reminded how dependent we are on the generosity of others.

Certain events of the past year stand out in my mind. One such event is Jim and Katrina and family moving to Washington. They may be far away, but are always near in our hearts. Another is of Jim McCracken's two month's living here and visits that followed. (Remember Jim, you're always welcome here!) Probably what stands out in my mind the most is Ann Manganaro's illness and death. Much time was spent by the community together—seeking strength and solace in one another. The memories of folks sitting and talking on Virginia's front steps are moments that showed me the value of community more than any other event.

As I look ahead to the new year there's excitement about more changes. New people are interested in joining the community. Annjie Schiefelbein promises to bring much energy and love to the house. It is wonderful to have her here on a daily basis instead of once a week. Scott Stauffer also moved in in June to get to know us and see about staying with us.

So as I look back on my year I can say it had its difficult moments. But, was it worth it? Most definitely.



FROM LITTLE HOUSE

by Mary Ann McGivern, S.L.

In my seventeen years at the Catholic Worker, I have received many gifts. My faith and hope have grown. My heart has not become calloused by knowing so many suffering people. Instead, I've become an easier mark for beggars and I accept what my neighbors give me as well as share what I have. For a long time I have been convinced that doing the corporal works of mercy is transformative. By feeding the hungry and visiting the imprisoned we become believers in Jesus and radical followers of the Gospel.

I mention this because last month a friend sent me a copy of the March New Oxford Review with an article by Ann O'Connor who is part of the Unity Kitchen Catholic Worker community in Syracuse, New York. The article was titled 'Dorothy Day's Crumbling Legacy–The Catholic Worker: Is It Still Catholic?"

NOR also included a review of Voices from the Catholic Worker, edited by Rosalie Riegle Troester. The reviewer, James C. Hanink, is a philosophy professor at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles. In the 1960's he worked at Thomas Merton Catholic Worker in Saginaw, MI.

Both Ann O'Connor and James Hanink have grave doubts about the current orthodoxy and the future of the Catholic Worker. I suspect my friend, who taught me in college many years ago, sent me the article because she fears I am in bad company and going to perdition. Other readers of the Round Table may have seen other critical writings from Unity Kitchen over the past three years, so I want to share some reflections on orthodoxy and anarchy with you all–and send them on to NOR for the editors' consideration.

First, O'Connor's piece is unreferenced. It is peppered with sentences like this one: "Many houses and individual Catholic Workers are in varying degrees of rebellion against one or more of the church's doctrines or disciplines. (p. 6)." What does that mean? She never cites a house or a publication or a person as a reference. She does quote statements from two unnamed individuals made in unnamed places in 1983 and 1987 about "seven persons in our community with seven different perceptions of all issues, particularly one as difficult as abortion..." (p.8) and "'women, laymen, and non-Catholics preside" at liturgies and sometimes the format of the liturgies is not condoned by the magisterium in Rome.'" (p.7).

Mary Ann McGivern, SL can be found in her garden seeking the truth and tending her roses.

So? Everybody from the twelve apostles to the U.S. Conference of Bishops has different perceptions. The best, including apparently this quotee, strive to clarify their perceptions by sharing them. About the liturgies, did some group pray the prayers of the Mass when no priest was present to insure that transubstantiation occurred? Did a woman preside while a priest was present to consecrate the bread and wine? Was it a service of tortillas and water to break a fast? Was it a Native American prayer service? Whatever, it apparently was a group of believers gathered in confidence that Jesus was with them. Bravo!

The unattributed issues in both the article and the book review are essentially women's ordination, abortion, and homosexuality. "Homosexuals and friends of the gay movement are an increasingly divisive influence in the Catholic Worker, with their demands that homosexuality be granted moral legitimacy." (p.7 of O'Connor's article). In his review, "Catholic Worker Voices: Authentic and Counterfeit", Hanink builds a case that the Worker is counterfeit on four brief quotes on hierarchy, women presiding at a liturgy, and not coming out too strongly on abortion for the sake of running the house.

Second, I think Hanink and O'Connor miss some of the essential points about the Catholic Worker. It isn't a franchise. Dorothy Day was crystal clear that anyone could use the name. There was not and is not any test of CW orthodoxy. That's part of the concept of Catholic anarchy, in the tradition of the anchorites and Francis of Assisi.

There are, and have been, a lot of houses with many former and current workers and we all say a lot of different things on different days. Indeed, the old joke is that our charism, is not teaching theology but moving boxes, preferably boxes another worker put away in that spot a day ago.

But, on the other hand, it is only by talking and writing that we will clarify our thought as Peter Maurin instructed us; and I trust the thinking of men and women who practice daily the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. Following Jesus by living poor with the poor opens our hearts to Jesus' teachings and helps us find ways to invite others to join us. I'm sorry these two critics are not intellectually rigorous in demonstrating whether there is a pattern of thought that runs through many Worker papers and shapes behaviors in the houses. But truly, my experience in St. Louis and at other houses is that the daily practice of prayer (whoever presides), voluntary poverty, and good works demonstrates a consistent love and a desire to do God's will. How much more orthodox can you get?

My third reflection is a wonderment that O'Connor and Hanink focus on issues of gender and sexuality. I think they would like to see the issues of CW papers devoted to sexual sins. We certainly have guests who have had abortions. And some of our community are homosexual men and women who desire to follow Jesus just as heterosexuals do.

It would be wrong to excoriate the guests and beyond my wildest imaginings to develop tests of orthodox sexual attraction.

Myself, when I want to make a round condemnation, I look where the money is. Is anybody making money from new forms of common prayer or being gay or providing fighter planes to Singapore? Comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable is how Peter Maurin advised us to choose our issues. He also urged that we announce, not denounce.

I am so grateful for the company of the Catholic Worker. I remember Phil Runkel's closing words at our 15th anniversary:
"As a result {of his job as CW archivist}, I've crossed lines at the Nevada Test Site and SAC headquarters, conspired with Peace Planters in Missouri, distributed the Catholic Worker at Union Square on May Day, and washed dishes and chopped vegetables at some of the best soup kitchens in the United States. I have also met some of the finest people one could ever hope to know. As the song goes, 'Who could ask for anything more?'" ✚

Bob Fitch

"Deliver us, Lord, from the fear of the enemy." That is one of the lines in the Psalms, and we are not asking God to deliver us from enemies, but from the fear of them. Love casts out fear, but we have to get over the fear in order to get close enough to love them.

Dorothy Day

Round Table Talk

by Bill Miller

"Our own hope had been that he would be the one to set Israel free." (Lk. 24:21)

So the dejected and discouraged travellers tell the "stranger" who joined them on the road to Emmaus of what they had hoped for from Jesus. But instead he had been taken from them and crucified. They felt terribly disheartened and let down and probably afraid for their own lives because they had been followers of this Jesus whom the authorities had put to death.

Many of us have experienced similar feelings this year with people we have been close to dying, becoming ill, being laid-off or facing other jolting disruptions or disappointments in how we had hoped things would work out.

How do we make sense of the suffering of people we are close to? Or our own? These are struggles that each of us faces. Dorothy Day shared some thoughts on this after going through a trying time with her family:

> A few years ago, visiting my daughter [Tamar], I was lying awake at 2 a.m., worrying because David had just lost his job and Tamar was about to have her fifth child. The former boss, who also owned the house they lived in, had come bearing oranges for the children and to tell them to move at once. What a strange juxtaposition of gestures! And I was torn between wrath and the necesssity to train oneself in loving one's enemies, hating the sin but loving the sinner.
>
> But then I thought, 'Thank God I have this suffering of joblessness and insecurity and homelessness together with others. This day, for the sake of the family, there are so many compromises. But we must learn to accept this hardest of all sufferings, the suffering of those nearest and dearest to us. Thank God for this training in suffering.' Accepting this made it easier at the time to go back to sleep. Since then there has been more of the same. Thank God for everything. (The Catholic Worker, July-August, 1953)

When it cannot be changed, there is something to the acceptance of suffering and not walking away or hiding from it. Many people I appreciate and admire have this quality of being able to "stay with" suffering, whether it be their own or another's.

Without such love, people can become a slave to suffering, getting trapped in the anguish, loss and pain of it all. With love, the suffering can be accepted and even transcended. When Ann Manganaro was dying last year, I was touched by how she was able to be loving through it all (and also how her family and friends loved and cared for her). How did Ann do it? I believe her love for people was grounded in her faith and hope in the love of Christ. This faith, hope and love helped Ann to live and die with such grace and integrity.

But confronting suffering leads us to ask questions of ourselves: How can we be loving through it all? Do we take our faith seriously, believing the love of Christ to be our sustenance, our hope?

These questions are not as intense as they may seem if we take the gospel story of the road to Emmaus as a lesson. There we see Jesus taking the initiative toward those who were fleeing from suffering and possible danger. As they walked along, the disciples had the meaning of Christ's suffering explained to them and then Jesus himself was revealed to them in the breaking of the bread. There was no great fortitude or struggle with faith on the disciples' part to earn Jesus' choosing them; they simply were a little bit open and welcoming. (Sure, come along and walk with us....Why don't you stay and have a bite to eat with us?) After Jesus vanished, the two immediately returned to Jerusalem, recalling how their hearts were burning as Jesus talked with them.

As we face hard times, maybe we can try to do our part to be open and welcoming; God will do the rest. And maybe someday we, too, will become a people who will be open enough to let God make our hearts burn with the understanding of Jesus' passion and how it plays out in our own lives. ✚

Bill Miller can be found in the park.

Mev Puleo, our good friend, whose photographs have often appeared in The Round Table, recently learned she has a malignant brain rumor. We invite you to join us in offering this prayer composed by Fr. John Kavanaugh.

Prayer for Mev

Good and Gracious God of all the heavens and earth. In Jesus Christ, our Savior, our brother and your Son, you have revealed the healing power of your love and your will that death be overcome. We pray that, if it is according to your will, your glory shine forth in the miraculous healing of Mev Puleo's incurable brain malignancy. With the intercession and solidarity of your servants, Dorothy Day, Archbishop Oscar Romero and Dr. Ann Mangavaro. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

House needs:

- Food
- House takers
- Beds and other furniture

OUR NEW BABIES!

Annie Rose McIntyre was born in April in London to Janet Gray McKinnis and Mike McIntyre.

Noah Francis Plato was born May 29th to Katrina and Jim Plato.

Nathaniel Owen Heagney was born June 3rd to Barbara Prosser and Philip Heagney

The Round Table is the quarterly journal of Catholic Worker life and thought in St. Louis. Subscriptions are free. Please write to The Round Table, 1840 Hogan, St. Louis, MO. 63106. Donations are gladly accepted to help us continue our work with the poor. People working on this issue include: Joe Angert, Margaret Boyer, Teka Childress, Kris Dennis, Mitch McGee, Bill Miller, Barb Prosser, Ellen Rehg, Mark Scheu, and Annjie Schiefelbein. Letters to the editor are encouraged; we'll print as many as space permits.

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