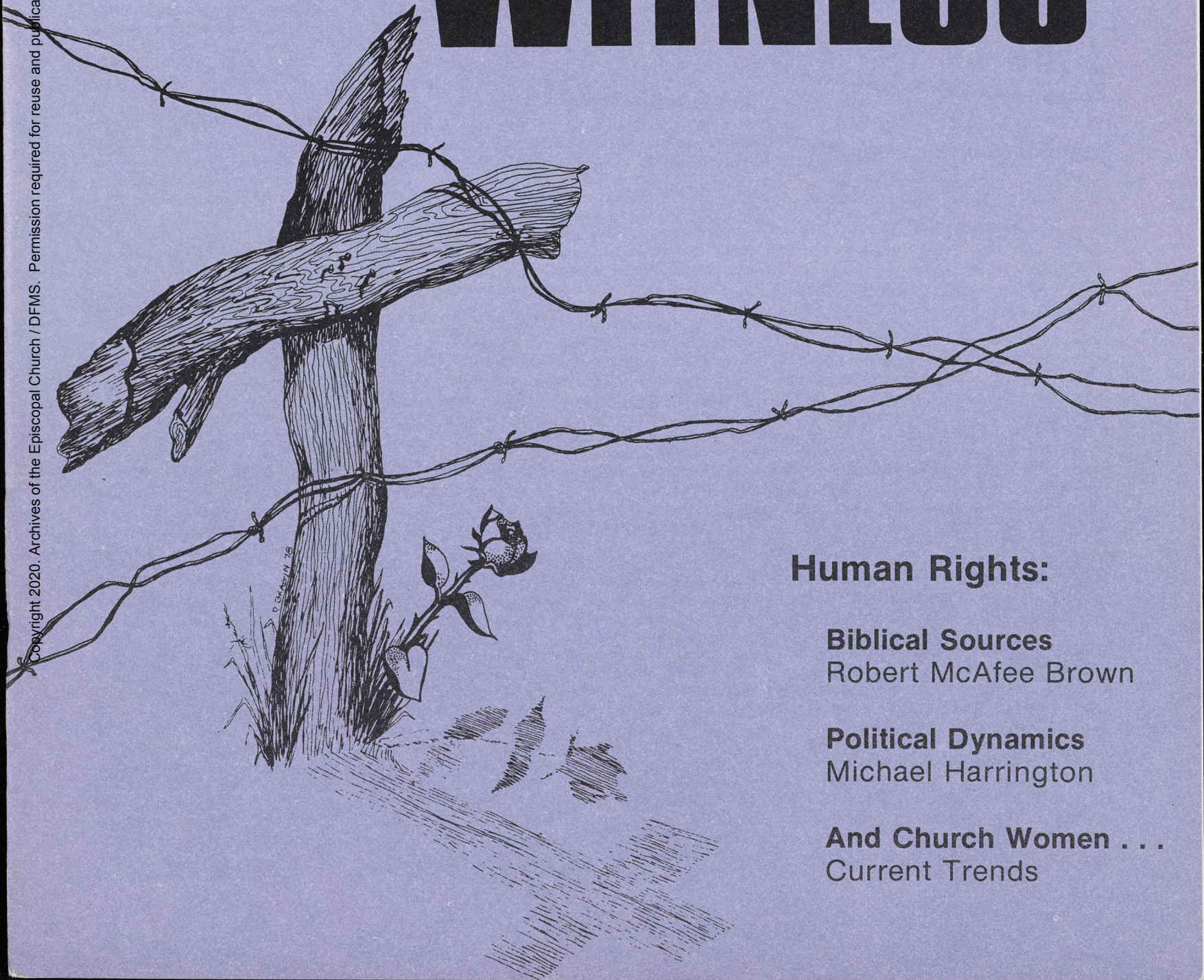


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THE WITNESS

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Human Rights:

Biblical Sources

Robert McAfee Brown

Political Dynamics

Michael Harrington

And Church Women . . .

Current Trends



Heyward Meditation Hopeful

Carter Heyward's meditation "The Enigmatic God" in the April WITNESS comes as a welcome reminder of the sermons of a generation ago, before God's death and other odd doctrines were offered to us as serious theology.

The Israelites' ability to perceive that *I am what I am* is a deeply descriptive name for God also enabled them to understand that human beings cannot define God, but merely suggest probable attributes which seem godlike to us.

Dare we hope that Carter Heyward's appreciation of the name, *I am what I am*, means that once more wisdom such as that expressed in the Book of Job and the Epistle to the Ephesians will be matters pondered by theologians?

Dare we hope that once again we of the laity will be guided toward deeper understanding by the quality of thought of Phillips Brooks, Evelyn Underhill, C.S. Lewis, St. Bernard and St. Catherine of Siena?

Frances A. Benz
Cleveland Heights, Ohio

Embarrassed at Stringfellow

I must in all seriousness protest the article by William Stringfellow which appeared in your February issue, entitled "The Embarrassment of Being Episcopalian." This article is not only illogical but uncivil. Whether or not one agrees or disagrees with the Presiding Bishop's stand on the ordination of women is of no consequence in his decision to treat the character of Bishop Allin, in print, as a gentleman. I would urge *THE WITNESS* to be more discerning in the future as to relative churlishness of its contributors.

I must also take issue with the content. I find it remarkable that those so long the champions of ecclesiastical license are now crusaders for "the law and discipline of the Church." Such a metamorphosis is hardly credible. Perhaps Mr. Stringfellow would have us believe that the law should only be obeyed when he supports it.

I concur that it is an embarrassment for many to be Episcopalians today. I rather think that this embarrassment is due less, however, to the actions of the Presiding Bishop than to the proliferation of such ill-mannered and ill-conceived diatribes as this.

The Rev. Jack E. Altman, III
Dallas, Tex.

Euthanasia Scene Set

The Rt. Rev. George W. Barrett made a benighted attempt at "similizing" in his abortion article (February WITNESS). He wrote: "A fetus is not a human person anymore than an architect's working drawings of a house are the house itself."

There is a basic, ethical insight that human life — all human life — is sacred. Surrender this once and other attacks against human life come quickly. Once a society gets by its legal qualms of having doctors end any form of life (liberalized abortion laws) it is hard to find any clear cut reason to rule out the same judgment for those declared incurable.

The fetus in a woman's body is human life. When two people bring about a pregnancy you have a human fetus. This is biological law. A baby is going to come out unless somebody does something.

Specific arguments for liberalized abortion are:

1. To prevent birth of defective children. Do only perfect physical specimens have the right to live?

2. Women's Lib argument — that a woman should have control over her own body.

Helen Seager in the same issue sees restrictions on abortions as part of a misogynist plot, God help us!

1. From the first moment of conception, tissues are developing which are completely different than the mother's. The developing child cannot survive alone until birth but never is it a part of the mother's body.

2. Every child has a right to be wanted. This has a fine humanitarian ring. But how can anyone possibly say, even before a child is born, that no one is ever going to want it or love it.

The scene is being set for euthanasia. Once the momentum is started, you will see committees formed to endorse a change in

the law. All the names will carry prestige and influence. Complicated, mind-numbing debates will be carried on in all the channels of communication until the ordinary citizen loses his confidence in the certitude of his judgment.

Once we settle on a basic pattern of legislation with regard to abortion, the campaign for euthanasia will come fast and hit hard.

Many are driven to abortion by poverty, illness, illegitimacy and economic burden. We must work for the removal of these conditions rather than destroying developing children.

James Connolly
Bellingham Center, Mass.

Orders NCC Guidelines

While reading the March issue of *THE WITNESS*, I bumped across your service of sending free copies of the NCC guidelines on what to do when the FBI knocks at your door. I would appreciate receiving a copy of this helpful document.

I also want to say how much I have enjoyed reading the first copy of *THE WITNESS* which I just received. I believe it is absolutely necessary for anyone who is working towards economic and social change to keep in touch with activities and trends of thought in the movement, and to keep a broad view of factors and bases necessary for change.

Sally M. Tarler
Decatur, Ga.

Of Rosados and Parables

I loved your "Meanwhile, in the Rosados' Homes" (February WITNESS).

I think one of the embarrassments to the Episcopal church should be that Margarita and Diana Rosado had to go on welfare because the church was too stingy with its money to take care of the families of those in jail so that they *didn't* have to go on welfare. It is like having your Ma and Pa at the poor farm because you won't take care of them yourself.

In the margin of my Bible beside Mark 7:9-13, I have written "taking care of elderly." I have now added, in red ink, "taking care of anyone in the church family" — for I think what Jesus said about *corban* in the first century applies in the 20th. And what the church sets aside "for God" in buildings and administrations, etc., it takes from what is needed to take care of people — especially people like the families of those who are in jail

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THE WITNESS

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Will It Play in Peoria?

Robert L. DeWitt

The Episcopal Church has a problem, and it is cold comfort to observe that it is not peculiar to that body alone. The problem is that the main body of church opinion is frequently at variance with a better informed, ethical approach — what *should* be done.

A few years ago, many leaders in the church and in the nation held deeply felt reservations about the Vietnam War long before they felt at liberty to express them publicly, such was the counter-force of public opinion. The same situation obtained in the '60s concerning the many facets of the struggle for racial justice. For some time now and probably for some time to come, that dynamic is at work again in the matter of the manifest injustices of our economic system.

Thoughtful and well-informed leaders are reluctant to say what they really think on that issue for fear of outraged indignation on the part of their middle class constituents. Just as in decades before, the slaughter in Vietnam went on mindlessly and racial subordination continued, so today unemployment and inflation continue to take their toll on a majority of our citizens.

Our American experiment in democracy felt that untutored human nature was unlikely material with which to build a sound body politic. Early on, the need was seen for an extensive, pervasive system of free public education to equip the citizenry for creative participation in the democratic process, because where there is no understanding, as where there is no vision, a dangerous threat to the people exists.

The soul of a church, as of a nation, arrives on the scene in a fallen state, in need of sanctification. Christian doctrine has long maintained that the church

has the proper right to interpret the Bible, that the church is our best means to discern the will of God. But how? By a referendum of the church membership?

Consider the question of homosexuality. Or the issue of compassion and concern toward minorities, the poor, the unemployed, those elements which make up the vast underclass of our urban areas. Is God's will for those issues, for those people, determined by taking a poll of the attitudes of church people?

Studies in recent years have demonstrated that one cannot expect any discernible difference between the attitudes of church members and non-church members. Until they have been educated on an issue, church people are no different from others. They reflect the same stereotypes, the same prejudices as their non-church neighbors.

It is here that we see the pertinence of the historic role of the bishop as defender of the faith, the apostolic charge to "banish all strange and erroneous doctrines." It is the vocation of the church to have a wisdom different from the wisdom of this world, and bishops are called to help the church gain access to that wisdom of the Gospel. Yet there is a considerable obstacle to the bishops' moving to banish those strange and erroneous prejudices and stereotypes, attempting to defend the faith against sexual and racial and class bias. That obstacle is their concern that Episcopalians will not agree with them, will be alienated from them.

Despite this difficulty, the bishop's responsibility is still to nurture his flock. What are the means whereby

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Biblical Sources Of Human Rights

by Robert McAfee Brown

"Christians have no corner on the issue of human rights. Furthermore, we have burned our share of witches, heretics, and other 'deviants' whose human rights were denied, and whose tortures were arranged in the name of the Bible by God-fearing men (one time when I think the sexist language is probably appropriate)."

Let me begin with some observations about human rights that all sorts of people share. I believe that such an approach represents a theology characteristic, for example, of *Gaudium et Spes* of Vatican II, with its consistent theme that "we must hear the voice of God in the voice of the times," and the Biblical recognition that, as Isaiah 10 reminds us, God can work through the pagan Assyrian to proclaim and exhibit the divine will, when the self-denominated "people of God" harden their hearts or stuff their ears with theological wax.

Concern for human rights is thus pre-theological or at least paratheological. One need not be a theologian, a Biblicist, a Christian, or even, in the conventional meaning of the word, a "religious" person, to be passionately concerned about human rights. Rather than being threatened by this fact, I think we ought to rejoice, in it, grateful that we can join hands with others far beyond our enfeebled and often dispirited Christian band.

The United Nations Declaration on Human Rights is an example of this. It is not a "Christian" nor an avowedly "religious" document; it rather selfconsciously seeks to avoid such adjectival charges. But we must certainly affirm with it that the rights it enunciates are to be guaranteed to all — life, liberty and security; protection from slavery and torture; equality before the law; protection from arbitrary arrest, detention or exile; the right to freedom of movement, to marry, to own property; the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion; freedom to hold opinions; freedom of peaceful assembly; freedom to vote in secret; freedom to social security; freedom to work, to equal pay for equal

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work; freedom to join a union; the right to rest and leisure, to education, to live in a supportive social and international order, and so on.

With different nuances, other declarations would affirm similar agendas. There are clearly some things on which most rational people are agreed, though different contexts may produce different emphases — a matter that is important enough for brief examination. In our western, democratic, capitalist countries, for example, we have put particular stress on *individual* human rights — the right of protest, of dissent, freedom of speech, of movement, and so on, and these have been and remain a precious part of our heritage. In other situations, more stress is put on *social* human rights for all — the right to food, clothing, shelter, education, and medical care, for example.

Part of our own task is to get over the often frenetic fear that concern for social human rights is “socialistic” in the pejorative meaning of that word, i.e., un-American. I think it is patently arguable that a baby born in Cuba today under the Castro regime has a better chance for a human life than such a baby would have had under the Batista regime, or would have today in Chile under the Pinochet regime. And yet we have opposed Castro for over 18 years and have supported, virtually sponsored, Pinochet since his illegal seizure of power.

Now, some may be getting restless because theological and biblical bases have not yet been indicated. But I have been trying to press the point that Christians have no corner on this issue. Furthermore, we have burned our share of witches, heretics, and other deviants whose human rights were denied, and whose tortures were arranged, in the name of the Bible by God-fearing men (one time when I think the sexist language is probably appropriate).

Let us go on, however, in the light of what we observe about the human scene today — that this is a time of gross violation of human rights and also a time when many people are rallying around the need to defend human rights, often at great cost. Let us go on to reflect on these realities, Biblically and theologically. What kinds of things could we affirm that would bring some important further emphases into the discussion and the action?

1. Surely one of the most important things we can affirm theologically and Biblically for an understanding of human rights is the conviction that every person is made in God’s image. This says many things. It says that each person is unique and precious, and the one who is unique and precious may not be tortured, starved, left

without shelter, denied a chance to develop the fullest capabilities, and so on. It says further that what is a right for anyone must be a right for everyone. If our children should not be denied milk, neither should children in Nicaragua, and if we support the Somosa regime we are denying the image of God in Nicaraguan children.

It says once again that to reflect the divine image is also to share, in ways appropriate to the creature, in the creative properties of the Creator. If God is creator, and we are moulded in God’s image, then being co-creators is part of the definition of who we are, called to bring the divine intention to fulfillment rather than to thwart it. And if that divine intention is love, then whatever thwarts love is to be condemned, whatever fosters love is to be affirmed and enacted. It should not be hard to draw some conclusions about what that means in the area of human rights.

2. It has sometimes been said that the one empirically verifiable Christian doctrine is the doctrine of sin. Particularly when we reflect on violations of human rights, we are made aware of the pervasiveness of human sin. Human behavior may shock us, but there is an important sense in which it ought never to surprise us — we should always be aware that human beings can stoop to unprecedented depths of depravity, and that when we see such activity in another we must acknowledge that it mirrors possibilities to which we ourselves could stoop.

We are wrong to call torturers “bestial.” As Dostoevsky pointed out long ago, that is an insult to the beasts. So if we reflect on the interrelationship between our world and our faith, we will recognize that there always need to be social structures that will deny to individuals the chance to abuse their power, and there will always need to be individuals who will deny to structures the chance to abuse their power. If a belief in the *imago dei* means that everyone must be invested with infinite worth a belief in sin means that nobody can be invested with infinite trust.

3. At different times in Christian history different themes have properly been stressed: grace and nature in the Middle Ages, justification by faith at the time of the Reformation, sin in the 1940s, and so on. Today the rallying theme that has emerged is liberation. Jesus came to bring liberation to the captives, freedom to the oppressed, and all the rest. It is hard to fault that as a central Biblical concern. So let us take it seriously. If liberation is meant for one, it is meant for all.

To be free means more in the Biblical understanding than just to be liberated from personal guilt, sin, and all the rest. It must also mean to be liberated from

structures of oppression, bondage and evil — what the Bible calls “the yoke of the oppressor.” It is not the full message of the Gospel that one has “found Christ” if one’s child is still starving, even more, if someone else’s child is still starving.

Stress on liberation is the theological side of the coin that says on the reverse side, “human rights,” but human rights defined in ways that get to the heart of the social, corporate dimensions of human existence, and challenge the structures — political, economic, sociological or ecclesiological — that deny full humanity to any people. We forget very easily that in the parable of the last judgment, it is the *nations* that are held accountable for failing to feed the hungry, clothe the naked and minister to the sick. Biblical faith will not give us the luxury of retreating into the private arena of individual rights for the relatively privileged; it will demand social rights for the poor.

4. To talk about “God” today is difficult for many people. Yet, the arena in which human rights are talked about (oppressed peoples, demeaned individuals, the wretched of the earth) is also the only arena in which the Biblical God can be talked about, or observed or responded to or known. It is clear, however little we like to admit it, that there is a bias in the Bible toward the poor, as those among whom God dwells in a special way. It is with victims that God is working, whether Israelites in Egypt, or Babylon, or Palestine.

When God becomes flesh it is as one of the *amha'aretz*, the poor of the land. The God of whom we speak and to whom we pray is a God who has identified with those who suffer. As I look at the world today, I have no difficulty affirming that the God of the Bible is with the tortured rather than the torturer; with the one who says “no” to Pinochet rather than the one who says “yes;” with the one who is in jail for political reasons rather than the one who did the jailing; with Steve Biko rather than with Vorster; with those who are hungry rather than those who are stuffed. Our understanding of God, our commitment, will be nurtured not by aloofness from partisan struggle, not by disengagement, but by partisanship, by involvement, since God is partisan and involved. To affirm torture, or Pinochet, or Vorster, or to be indifferent to world hunger, is “practical atheism,” a denial of the God of the Bible.

5. Other areas of Biblical and theological concern could be adduced: a belief in the church as the recipient of grace and as the community of those trying to embody the Jesus story themselves, must be a servant church, a remnant church identified with the needful, a

protagonist of human rights. The sacraments, which show forth a broken body and shed blood, must be seen as stern reminders that those nourished thereby must commit themselves to see that no more bodies are broken, and no more blood is shed, either in prison cells or through the “silent genocide” fostered by indifference to the “least of these” God’s children.

Instead of extending that exercise, however, let me conclude by trying to do something very briefly with what has been said so far. I am not willing to distinguish “principles” from “application.” I think they intermingle and mutually affect each other. So having started with our situation and moved to a Biblical perspective, let me now in the light of that Biblical perspective move back to our situation:

I think we need to develop a fresh capacity for anger. I am not talking about hatred, but anger, outrage, of the sort that characterized Amos, Jeremiah, Isaiah and Jesus in the face of injustice. We have been outraged not only by the details of the Steve Biko murder, but also by the fact that even in the face of the uncontrovertible facts the South African government has exonerated all parties from responsibility for his death. And for every Steve Biko we know about, there are hundreds, thousands, in South Africa and elsewhere that we do not even know about. Paul’s injunction, “Be ye angry, and sin not!” is clearly a Biblical word for our time.

Then, let us take sufficient account of a new dimension in the human rights struggle — *the rights of unborn generations* — who have the right to inherit an earth not contaminated by atomic wastes, or polluted streams, or exhausted resources for heat and food. The ecological issue must not be counterpoised to the human rights issue as though one had to choose between them. If “the earth is the Lord’s,” so are “they that dwell therein,” and vice-versa.

We must see more clearly how our economic structures often lead to denial rather than expression of human rights. A competitive economy breeds an attitude that renders the life of the competitor expendable; work life based solely on profit justifies dehumanizing those who threaten profit; an economy based on corporations accountable to no one beyond themselves means that human rights will not be taken seriously if they interfere with corporation goals — social systems designed for pocketbooks rather than persons will end up destroying persons for the sake of pocketbooks.

In concern for the victims of human rights violations, while it is important to be the voice of the voiceless, that

is not enough; *what must be done is to find ways to help the voiceless gain a voice of their own.* Put another way, our task is not to do things for the poor, but to empower the poor to do things for themselves. Otherwise we end up with a paternalism that demands those whom we mean to help; they are manipulated, object-ified, denied the chance to become full and responsible persons who can create their own destinies rather than being recipients of a destiny decided on by someone else, which is a clear denial of human rights.

Let us re-think the prohibition against "*interfering in the affairs of another nation.*" Granted that it can be self-righteous always to be looking at others rather than ourselves for violations of human rights, granted that we are not to tell Switzerland what its tariff policy should be or demand that Britain change its driving rules, there nevertheless comes a point at which human concerns override national autonomy — what is not beginning to be called "the Hitlerian exception." The torture of political prisoners is clearly one of those exceptions. But

perhaps the list of clear exceptions should be further extended: If children are dying of slow starvation because economic or political policies dictate that their parents shall not be granted a living wage, that too is torture. Worse than that, it is murder, the "silent genocide" that condemns millions to die annually as long as we stay on the sidelines. Perhaps more aggressiveness is needed by us in these areas; inaction may be a worse sin than moving overzealously.

Finally, let us remember that there is a connection between rights and duties. It is a duty to intervene on behalf of the rights of another if those rights are being violated. Indeed, it is a duty to act ahead of time in such a way that the violation is rendered less likely by our attempt to create a just society in which people will not need to torture in order to stay in power, nor foster unjust economic systems so that others will be unable to gain power. Maybe then justice *could* "roll down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream." That would produce a beneficent flood, requiring no ark. ■

The Price of Blue

For Beatriz Allende, daughter of the assassinated president of Chile, who died a suicide in exile Oct. 11, 1977.

Make no mistake about it:
exile is not freedom.
The suicide of a woman in exile
is suddenly comprehensible
to a woman on a swing, gulping the blue
air, pretending to possess the green
of late autumn grass in the public park,
hearing the incandescent prophet birds
shriek and whistle a coming winter,
tomorrow. She loved too dearly
not life, but freedom, the fire
that makes the body glow with
St. Joan's final passion. She loved
too dearly. Freedom, not life.
We often confound them. The blue air
of exile and the onion earth
of freedom; the habitat of joy and the soil
of regeneration. There are some prisons
we cannot begin again in or from. Some
blood we cannot rinse from memory's mouth. Some grief
that weights us down, inevitably and irrevocably
away from the strawberries and breakfast bread —
a final act, definitive, of love. She cut the cords
of bondage to fly towards freedom, home.



— Linda Backiel



Faces From Prison

by Philip A. Getchell

In my office, there is a row of photographs of political prisoners that I know and must not forget. This often seems a vain exercise in a world which increasingly accepts imprisonment, torture, and repressive harassment as the normal means for controlling and making populations "safe."

There are now more than 100 nations holding prisoners for no other crime than a dissident viewpoint. In such an atmosphere it is very easy to let these "prisoners of conscience" drift out of mind. We lament their luck, but again, in such an atmosphere we succumb to the easy doubts: "How can we know of the motives behind a distant arrest in Chile, or Brazil, or Korea? What can a church person in this country do about it even if he is sure of the motivation? Often it occurs that we might be neglecting more practical and equally needful projects closer to home."

The Rev. Philip A. Getchell, associate rector of Trinity Episcopal Church, Portland, Ore., saw service in the mission field in Brazil.

Yet in the midst of it all, there are imperative reasons for placing political prisoners in a special category. I am impelled to keep the prisoners' photographs and faces before my eyes.

Our Lord Himself was a political prisoner. Much of the life of the early church issued from dungeons and prisons. Great portions of the New Testament were written there. The early church accepted prison life as being absolutely normal as a consequence of faith and witness. Through history this pattern has persisted. Bonhoeffer, Ghandi, and Chavez and many nameless ones have produced theology and ethics, and the iron spirit necessary for future leadership in prison. As Christians we should be the least surprised of all men and women to discover that at this moment, in a prison cell, in some country of the world, the mind and spirit of a future leader is being shaped.

Apart from the lessons of our Christian history, there are simple reasons why this will be so. Future leadership and inspiration will emerge from the prisons because

these are the men and women that set themselves against the unjust systems that dominate their cultures. They inevitably draw the wrath of repression to themselves. But inevitably also, systems change, and such resistant moral courage carries leverage for the future. In addition, the prisoner, if he survives torture and long imprisonment, is often a different man or woman, less subject to fear and more sure of his commitments. Recently an 18-year-old Chilean girl reflected the galvanizing effect of this experience when she said, "We were blindfolded for long hours and I thought of Jesus — how Peter denied him — and then I grabbed the arm of a friend at my side and, crazy for joy, told her, 'No, we shall not deny him!'"

What is our relationship to all of this? Again, it is easy to let prisoners drift out of mind. But this need not be if we discover that it is often rather easy to help someone. This happened to me when the friends of a young Brazilian political prisoner that I knew said, "unless he is able to pay the cost of legal fees he will rot in prison for the rest of his young life." It was not difficult to raise the small sum necessary. That takes away a lot of excuses.

We also will not forget if we know some of the prisoners personally. All of us have observed the exiles and refugees that are appearing with ever more regularity in the cities of this country. Many of them come disabled or crippled by torture. My family took in a young girl after she had been subjected to the "parrot's perch" and other "technologically advanced modern torture techniques." Her crime was that of being elected secretary of her University student government in Northeast Brazil. At whatever level such persons enter the circle of your daily life, they will mark you and make you more likely to remember those still "inside."

Finally, one of the awakening experiences that keeps us from forgetting the world's political prisoners is the growing awareness in this country that we are actually very close to the whole syndrome of repression, illegal imprisonment, and torture. This does not require a sophisticated understanding of the current political scene or of the more complex relationships between such things as aid and our heavy role in training and then supporting foreign military and civilian police forces. The issue is closer at hand.

Studies undertaken at Stanford, Rutgers, and other American Universities indicate that Americans are not immune from the torturer's tendencies. Stanford University students were screened for emotional normality and given roles as guards and prisoners in a mock jail. The two-week study was aborted after six days

because it generated so much abuse and petty cruelty among the volunteers.

A cross section of the population in New Haven, Conn. was invited into a learning experiment where each person was asked to give small electric shocks to a second volunteer whenever he answered questions incorrectly. (The second volunteer was really an actor, the electric-shock button didn't work, and the experiment's real object was to test the button pusher's obedience to authority). Most volunteers allowed the authoritative experimenter to goad them into giving what they thought were more and more dangerous electric shocks even after the actor began to scream and plead for mercy.

This experiment was dramatized on a C.B.S.-two-hour special feature recently entitled, "The Tenth Level." "The Tenth Level" is the theoretical point in these experiments at which the "victim" is killed by electric shock. At the end of the program our conscience was salved somewhat by the information that only 60% of the Americans involved in such experiments continue to the "Tenth Level" whereas in Germany the figure was 80%.

As we become conscious of political prisoners, what specifically can we do? One of the most effective and proven avenues for helping these prisoners is through the well-known organization, Amnesty International. Amnesty supports an inter-church network of groups that simply write letters to the authorities in areas of intense repression. Does it help? The answer that inevitably comes back from relatives, the prisoners themselves, lawyers and organizations concerned in the various cases confirm that it does. They even include reports such as this statement from a security guard to a political prisoner: "You are not dead because too many people are concerned about you!"

More regularly, Amnesty International is beginning to mount larger campaigns as in 1975 in relation to repression in Uruguay. This drew massive international attention, and 350,000 individuals in 70 countries signed a petition that was delivered to Uruguay's Permanent Mission to the United Nations. Unquestionably this campaign influenced the regime (whose President resigned during this period in June 1976) and strengthened not only the hopes of the prisoners but the position of those that are striving for the return of democracy in Uruguay.

And so the row of photographs remains in my office. If as Dietrich Bonhoeffer suggested, the ultimate question for a responsible person is "to ask how the coming generation is to live," then assisting prisoners of conscience is a priority for Christians of conscience.



"I see the world politicizing the economy and economizing the power: Economic decisions are increasingly being made politically; political decisions are profoundly affected by economic power."

The Politics of H

I would like to develop some ideas on the politics of human rights in three different ways. First, I would like to discuss human rights as a political-economic concept, suggesting that there is not a separation between political and economic human rights; they are in the long run inseparable. Second, to relate that concept to the world outside the United States, particularly the Communist bloc and the Third World. And finally to consider the United States with regard to the politics of human rights.

First of all, is there a counter-position between political human rights and economic human rights? Sometimes one hears that we in the United States have *political* human rights and we criticize the Soviet Union for not having political rights. And then the Soviet Union turns around and says that we don't have *economic* human rights in the United States. It is as though it were possible from our point of view for there to be political human rights without economic human rights or from their point of view to have the economic without the political.

I suggest that that is wrong. In the modern world, there are no effective political human rights without concomitant economic rights; and similarly, there is no such thing as economic democracy without political democracy. And I would like to examine those two propositions.

In my opinion, political rights in and of themselves are precious. What is

Michael Harrington is author of *The Other America* and chairman of the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee. The above article is excerpted from his keynote speech in Scranton recently during a human rights conference, made possible by a grant from the Public Committee for the Humanities in Pennsylvania.

of Human Rights

by Michael Harrington

expressed in the Bill of Rights and the Constitution of the United States is one of the great acquisitions of the human spirit. Political rights are a tremendous gain for humankind and one of the great triumphs of capitalist society.

The revolution that brought capitalism into the world was not simply an economic revolution; indeed, it did not begin as a technological revolution at all. It was first and foremost a cultural and political revolution. The industrial revolution came after capitalism was underway for a couple of hundred years. And one of the gigantic triumphs of capitalism was the ideal of reason, the ideal of democracy, the concept of the self-determination not simply of nations but of individuals. (The concept that you get for example in the German classical philosophy — no law that I do not give to myself is worthwhile.) One does not recognize laws because of tradition or because of coercion, but because one's reason accepts the law and internalizes its rule. That is a tremendous stride forward in the worth and dignity of human beings.

But I want to point out that political rights are utterly incomplete, and that as time goes on into the late 20th century, that incompleteness becomes more and more perilous. Political rights are subverted and vitiated without economic rights.

Let me give some examples. When Jimmy Carter accepted the nomination of the Democratic Party in July of 1976, he said, "You've been hearing about tax reform all of your lives and you've never seen it. Now you're going to get tax reform, I promise you." Two weeks later he went to lunch at the 21 Club in New York (I assume all of you know it's not the tax reform club) with big businessmen, and in effect said to them,

"O.K., fellows, take it easy." And since he has been elected the main tax reform that I have seen him propose is an extension of the investment tax credit for business which will be terribly destructive for the Northeast, for industries in the Midwest, and will further federally subsidize the exodus of jobs out of the depressed areas in which many of us live.

Why did Jimmy Carter go back on that speech? I think it is because corporate power in control of the investment process in the United States requires any president who is elected by a majority of the people who are against corporate power to adapt to that power. I think that the economic power of corporations in this country is such that they can lose at the battlefield and win by forcing the candidate who defeated them to adopt the program that he defeated. Jimmy Carter's actions in economic policy are much closer to those of Gerald Ford than to the program which Jimmy Carter outlined in his acceptance speech. It is because corporations in this society are more important than workers and poor people, the minorities, people living in the Northeast and in the industrial Midwest.

The President's constituency is not the majority of the American people. He reflected who his constituency is when he said, "We will know how good my speech on economic policy is when we see the reaction of the market." That's the American electorate. And that's an example of the limitation of political democracy when you have economic inequality.

Second, I suggest that the welfare state in the United States does more for the corporate rich than for the poor. Interesting that when Carter went to

settle the coal strike, he had several phone calls placed. He didn't phone West Virginia, he didn't phone Pennsylvania. He phoned Texas! But the oil companies own coal, and that's the connection. So here is the President trying to deal with a coal strike, in which the workers were absolutely right and the bituminous coal operators were absolutely right and the bituminous coal operators were absolutely wrong, in my opinion. And in that situation the President is worrying about Texas oil men.

Now let me generalize. I would suggest that in America we do not have a system of free enterprise, but a system of corporate collectivism. We have a planning system which follows corporate priorities because corporations are in control of investments. And under such circumstances where we are moving towards collectivism (albeit to free enterprise rhetoric), economic and political rights cannot be separated. One has to have political rights to challenge economic power, or else find that it is not only the dollar that is devalued, it is the vote that is devalued. And millions of American people have decided that the vote is already so devalued that it is not worth casting in a presidential election. So the concept of political rights without economic democracy is at best a very limited proposition.

Now, what about economic rights? And here let me be critical not only of the United States but also get on to the Soviet Union. In the United States we have the cheapest, most mean-spirited welfare state in the western world. The only advanced industrial democracy in the world that spends less on welfare than we do is Japan. We are the *only* advanced industrial democracy in which a citizen does not have a right to medical

care. This is, to me, an unbelievable scandal.

Let me give you a very simple catechetical theory which I also happen to think is true. Where the state owns, controls, manages, directs the means of production, the decisive question is who owns the state. There is only one way for a people to own the state, and that is through the political democratic right to change the policies and personnel of that state at will. In a state of high economy in the absence of political rights, state property becomes the private property of a bureaucratic elite.

Therefore, in a state of high economy, in a Communist economy or a capitalist one, political democracy is not simply a matter of individual rights. Alexander Solzhenitsyn should have the right to say the foolish things he likes to say, in the Soviet Union as well as in the United States. But it is not simply a matter of individual rights. The only way the Russian people can ever have economic power over their means of production is through political democracy. There is no economic freedom in a state of high economy without political freedom.

I see the world politicizing the economy and economizing the power: That economic decisions are increasingly being made politically, that political decisions are increasingly profoundly affected by economic power. In the United States, in the Soviet Union — everywhere in the world — the problem is how to democratize power. Human rights are individual but they are also social; they are political but they are also economic. There is an inseparable unity; and if we fail to achieve that unity, then the 21st century, I guarantee you, will be a collectivist century — if the world doesn't blow itself up before then.

Now, what about human rights in a more practical way? First of all I would think that it is good for the United States to be talking in its foreign policy about human rights. In terms of Africa, it is providential that Andrew Young is the Ambassador to the U.N. because obviously on issues of South Africa, Rhodesia, etc. this country absolutely loses its soul if it does not stand up for

human rights. And we said we were going to. But the Swedish delegation for the U.N. came up with a proposal recently which was not terribly radical. They simply proposed a motion which said as long as there is apartheid, multinationals should not put *new* investments in South Africa. They did not say that multi-nationals should take their investments out of South Africa. Just "don't go in." The U.S. voted against that. So did West Germany, so did Britain, so did France, so did all of the countries that have investments in South Africa. There you get the economic reality.

Related to this, you can see the economic relationship of the human rights issue very dramatically in the case of Chile. We overthrew Allende by an economic blockade. We cut off the press, we closed off the markets, we deliberately weakened the economic position of a country which had

politically decided to take a certain course, and by economic subversion we were able to destroy a democratically elected regime. It seems to me that if we were serious about a commitment to human rights politically, a fine place for us to have to do penance would be for what we did in Chile.

With regard to the Third World, I think we are in great contradiction. We want the Third World to be democratic, but we act as though democracy is something that is possible and easy at any time, any place, and under all conditions. And the fact of the matter is that when people are starving, are in a struggle for survival, or when people are moving from tribalism to nationhood as in the case of Africa, or when people are in danger of being drowned by a demographic wave as in India and Bangladesh, we can't talk about democracy. If we are serious about political democracy in the Third World we have to follow an economic



Reporter: Mr. Gandhi, What do you think of Western Civilization?

Mr. Ghandi: I think it would be a good idea!
Quoted in *Fellowship* magazine

policy to make that political democracy possible. And we have not.

American prosperity is not dependent upon the Third World. It is simply a cruel convenience that we exploit the Third World. But the fact of the matter is we are taking money *out* of the Third World. The starving are supporting a nation in which there are many people worried about being too fat. A nation like the U.S. where diet is a national obsession is taking money from nations where people are in danger of starving. And so long as we do that we are not going to get human rights of any kind in the Third World. Of course, there even more than here, even more than in the Soviet Union, the economic and the political are closely intertwined.

What about the U.S.? Where are human rights here? Recently the **Wall Street Journal** had a whole series of discussions, not about *whether* there is going to be a recession, but *when*. That among businessmen is the big topic for discussion: Is the recession coming in '78, '79, '80? As long as our economy limps along with stagflation, with chronic high unemployment, with periodic recessions, we can solve no human rights problem in America.

Black people and other minorities in the U.S. receive on the average 2/3 of the White wage. We can't solve that problem under these economic conditions under which we live, because the Blacks are the last hired and the first fired as we all know, and their unemployment rates are double the Whites. We know that among Black youth unemployment rates in the urban ghettos are 40 and 50% higher than unemployment rates for the nation in the 1930's in our great depression.

An entire generation of young Black people and young Hispanic people as well are being denied their first economic contact with the society, being in effect declared superfluous.

What is the meaning of human rights for them?

The most important social movement of recent times in my opinion is the women's movement. However, women now get about 60% of what men get. There is no chance for women to have their human rights validated by this society unless we solve the economic problem. I think that for Blacks and other minorities as well, for the environment, for peace, for every progressive cause in the United States, we cannot get "rights" — those important human rights — unless we have a full employment economy.

But full employment economy is not easy to get in a society dominated by corporate power. To deal with these problems, structural changes in society are going to be required.

I do not think America is on the verge of a social transformation. That's quite obvious. But at a bare minimum we need something equivalent to the kind of reforms that Franklin Roosevelt carried out under the New Deal. Only we are now so much more developed, so much more corporate-dominated, that I am afraid that the economic reforms we need as a pre-condition for human rights are going to have to be much more profound than anything Franklin Roosevelt ever thought of. Maybe not socialism, but we are going to have to move in what I would call a socialist direction.

One final point. Today in this society we have a competition for "not enough." *There is no just solution to a competition for "not enough."* It is mathematically impossible. When there are too few decent jobs, then we see men fighting women, Blacks fighting Whites, the old fighting the young, non-trade unions fighting the trade unions. Everybody is going to maximize his or her advantage of minimizing somebody else's situation. That's not a "rights" situation. That's a Hobbesian situation of the war of each against all. I think we have to


have an ethical change in the United States — a social ethical change.

Let me end with what human rights are about, ultimately.

I would suggest that "the ideal" certainly will not be realized within our lifetime. I'm not at all sure if it will ever be realized. *The ideal is that no person born should be programmed because of the conditions of his or her birth.* And the fact of the matter is that in the year 1978 most people have their destiny decided at the moment they are conceived. To be born in India, to be born in Africa, to be born in the South Bronx means to have a fate imposed on you. But the ideal at the end of all the economic and political social change is a society in which all people can become the *best* of what they are intended to become. ■

**Gays
in the
Church
Speak for
Themselves**

- ellen barrett
- malcolm boyd
- ron wesner
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Women Priests: Good News And Bad News

What does the future hold for women priests and those women soon to be ordained priests in the Episcopal Church?

Recent reports received by THE WITNESS reveal good news and bad news. According to figures compiled by the Rev. Suzanne Hiatt, there are presently 122 women priests and 136 deacons in the Episcopal Church. Clergywomen reside in 74 domestic dioceses; dioceses reporting no clergywomen only number 19.

The majority of the women priests (40) are working as parish associates, assistants, canons, and helpers, with the next largest number (12) in college and hospital chaplaincies. Eleven were listed in charge of parishes or missions.

However, statistics released recently in "Women Ministers in 1977," a report issued by the National Council of Churches, showed that in churches which ordain women, women constitute just over 4% of the total clergy. The Episcopal Church which only began admitting women to the ministry in 1976, now lists 121 women priests of a total of 12,240, or less than 1%.

The study also revealed that less than half of the 211 major U.S. churches surveyed ordain women to the clergy. Of the denominations, 76 ordain women, 87 do not, and 10, including the Latter Day Saints and Jehovah's Witnesses place women in a special category. Thirty-eight churches declined to respond. Nearly 2/3 of



the women clergy are in Pentecostal churches or organizations such as the Salvation Army. Only 17.4% are found in major Protestant denominations.

Of the 10 major denominations that ordain women, only three did so prior to 1956: The American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A., the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ.

The author of this report, Constant H. Jacquet, Jr., editor of the *Yearbook of Canadian and American Churches*, also points out that since 1972, there has been a 118.9% increase in seminary enrollment of women compared with a 20.2% increase in male seminary enrollment for the same period. But he noted that due to declining high birthrates, membership and other social factors, the "absorption of new seminary graduates into local churches and their advancement is not promising."

While the Episcopal Church and other mainline Protestant denominations are presently experiencing an oversupply of clergy, the Roman Catholic Church is suffering from a severe shortage of priests.

The *National Catholic Reporter* revealed recently: "In 1966, the U.S. had approximately 59,000 American religious and diocesan priests, and 46,000 seminarians. Today . . . there are 51,000 active American priests and 16,800 seminarians . . . a net loss of 14% of the priests in 12 years and an astounding net loss of 64% of the

seminarians. The experts predict a net loss of 25% of the priests nationally by 1985, and no one has attempted to estimate where the seminarians will be by then."

Many Catholics are hopeful that this shortage will be the major catalyst in the current grass roots movement to ordain women in the Roman Catholic Church.

In the Episcopal Church, while there are many success stories concerning women priests, a few cases reported recently suggest a more ambiguous situation.

In Washington, D.C., for example, the Rev. Alison Palmer was invited by the Rev. Henry Atkins, vicar of the Community of the Advent, to preach and celebrate for the Community in a chapel at the National Cathedral. But Bishop John Walker ordered him to rescind the invitation because "what goes on in the Cathedral must reflect his (Walker's) policies for the Cathedral. Ms. Palmer is not welcome to celebrate and preach in this Cathedral because of her recent action in England, in contravention of the laws of the Church of England." This statement, read by Canon Michael Hamilton at the Cathedral service Feb. 18, referred to the fact that some months ago Ms. Palmer was the first woman priest to celebrate the Eucharist in England (at the invitation of a parish priest), but that she did so without authorization from church officials there.

On the other hand, whereas the Rev. Ms. Palmer was not allowed to preach in Washington, another U.S. Episcopalian, in April, became the first woman priest to preach in Westminster Abbey.

Canon Mary Michael Simpson of St. John the Divine Cathedral, New York, told some 700 worshippers that the church should stop treating women as second-class citizens. Canon Simpson was invited to England for a month-long preaching tour by the Christian Parity Group, an organization promoting the ordination of women priests. But Canon Simpson will not be celebrating the Eucharist while she is in England.

Finally, an incident in Chicago in March triggered the possibility that advances made in the women's ordination struggle at the 1976 Convention might be turned back by a backlash at the diocesan level.

The Standing Committee of the Diocese of Chicago withheld its endorsement of the Rev. Pamela Ann Mylet, a deacon seeking ordination to the priesthood by a vote of three in favor, two against, and one abstention.

Mrs. Mylet was informed that the sole reason for not recommending her was that she was a woman and that one clergyman and two laymen on the committee did not believe that a woman could be validly ordained a priest.

The Rev. Mrs. Mylet, who is chaplain assistant at Swedish Covenant Hospital and deacon assistant at St. Luke's Church, Evanston, had been recommended for ordination by Bishop James Montgomery of Chicago, the Rev. Thomas K. Ray, her rector, and a majority of the vestry of her parish.

Prior to Mrs. Mylet's appearance before the Standing Committee Father Ray had written a letter to the parishioners of St. Luke's, assuring the parish that it would not be placed in an "embarrassing or compromising position." He set guidelines which would govern Mrs. Mylet's functions as a priest: She would not celebrate at any Sunday Eucharists and would celebrate house Masses and weekday Masses only with clear and advance notice. Father Ray's letter was accompanied by a letter from Bishop Montgomery, which pointed out that he personally would not ordain women, but that he would authorize Suffragan Bishop Quintin Primo to do so on occasions when the Standing Committee gave its endorsement.

Mrs. Mylet has indicated she will continue to seek ordination to the priesthood. Her supporters have suggested that, in refusing to perform their duties under the National Canons, the dissenting and abstaining members of the Standing Committee have evidenced cause for their removal from that Committee.

Continued from page 3

that nurturing can be done? His own prayerful discernment, with other clergy and laity, of the mind of Christ on the particular issue at hand; clear preaching and teaching, the witness of his own personal involvement with and commitment to oppressed peoples on thorny issues; timely pastoral letters to his people setting forth the Christian dimension of the issues; a support group of clergy and laity which will be "the little church in the big church;" and finally the authority of his office which derives from the Gospel.

But what if, having done all these things to the best of his ability, the bishop finds his is still an unpopular cause? True authority is, in Tillich's lovely word, "theonomous." Its power springs from and is replenished by the moral integrity which it bespeaks. To follow the path of truth is undoubtedly in varying degrees to counter opposition, criticism and resistance. But this would seem a modest price to pay for having the church urged from its bondage to the world as it is toward a clearer glimpse of the world as it should be. ■



Maria Cueto

Maria, Raisa Find Church Employment

Maria Cueto and Raisa Nemikin resumed ministries in the church recently after having been jailed for more than 11 months for refusing to testify before a Federal Grand Jury in New York City.

Ms. Cueto, former executive director of the Episcopal Church's National Commission on Hispanic Affairs, has launched a Grand Jury Education Project under the auspices of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company, parent organization of THE WITNESS magazine and the Church and Society Network.

Ms. Nemikin, former NCHA secretary, began secretarial work May 15 at the National Council of Churches in the Dutch Reformed Church office under the direction of Arie Brouwer. Brouwer was one of the commission members appointed by the NCC to contact Episcopal Presiding Bishop John Allin to plead for restoration of the women's salaries and payment of their legal fees during their incarceration, a situation as yet unresolved.

Attorney Robert C. Potter of New York is representing the women in negotiations with the Episcopal Church administration.

Ms. Cueto's Grand Jury project, to run through September 15, will include:

- Consciousness raising among church and community throughout the country around Grand Jury abuse and the current status of reform legislation.
- Education of church communities concerning how government agencies have interfered with the social mission of the church, First Amendment rights, and caused a chilling effect in church work among ethnic groups.
- Discussion of present prison conditions and prison reform, using her own experience as a taking off point.

In recent developments, the last remaining prisoners jailed for contempt of the New York Grand Jury were released May 8 when the term of that Grand Jury investigating FALN bombings expired. An enthusiastic crowd including children, relatives, and supporters from church and community groups were on hand to greet Pedro Archuleta, a Chicano, and Andres, Julio and Luis Rosado, Puerto Rican brothers.

In all, nine persons — all but one of whom were connected to the NCHA of the Episcopal Church, had been jailed during investigations in Chicago and New York. The “Episcopal connection” was Carlos Alberto Torres, who served for one year on the commission and who is being sought by the FBI as a suspect in the bombings.

All those incarcerated claimed that the FBI investigation of the case turned into a “witchhunt” and had a chilling effect upon the work of the church and community groups serving Hispanics.

Some evidence of this was seen in the accumulated time — approximately six years — spent in prison by the nine. Supporters of the group stress the hardships upon families of those jailed, considering the income cut off during that time. (an accumulated two years of income for the Rosados alone), plus the hours of productive work taken away from community projects. Many families had to go on welfare, and the clinic which serves Hispanics in Tierra Amarilla and the Miranda school which serves Puerto Ricans in Chicago suffered severe financial and administrative setbacks, from which the latter may not recover.

Moreover, since the Grand Juries in Chicago and New York were almost immediately re-impaneled, there is a

possibility that those who have already been jailed may be re-subpoenaed to testify.

Ms. Cueto, in her new project, has made herself available to speak to church and community groups to explain in detail any of the facets of the Grand Jury investigation and its consequences on the Hispanic community. Coordinator of the project is Ms. Peggy Powell. For further information write to Grand Jury Education Project, Box 268, New York, N.Y. 10002, or call the Grand Jury Education Project answering service, (212) 868-3370 and ask for Ms. Powell, who will return your call. ■



Raisa Nemikin

Just What Do These Women Want?

by Mary Lou Suhor

What women do they must do twice as well as men to be thought half as good. Luckily, this is not difficult.

So reads a women's movement poster. I dunno, poster; sometimes it's very difficult.

Take the little situation we had at the Associated Church Press convention in St. Louis recently. Among issues debated by some 80 editors of Protestant Church publications was whether the ACP should meet jointly with the Catholic Press Association in Florida next year.

Some of the ACP membership had pointed out that Florida was a state which had not supported the Equal Rights Amendment for women, and asked that the site be changed; the CPA had determined to go on with the meeting anyway — with or without the ACP.

So it was that I found myself at an open hearing to discuss the matter. The board of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company which publishes THE WITNESS, had taken a position supporting the ERA and of non-participation in conventions in states which have not as yet ratified the amendment. Kay Atwater, promotion manager, and I had expressed that on the floor.

But to many ACP editors, the issue was fuzzier: Some were for women but against boycotts; others asked if the ACP could take a position on a "political" issue. One said that the ERA "was not a priority" with him; another opened his intervention with "It's hard for me to say this without sounding like

'some of my best friends are women,' but . . ."

As I listened to the rhetoric, it sounded much like what I'd heard during the Civil Rights struggle in my native Louisiana (an anti-ERA state) and during the Vietnam War. Why was I plunging into deep despair? The atmosphere seemed loaded with the unasked question, "Just what do these women want?"

Milt Ryder, editor of *The American Baptist*, offered one of the lonely male voices of solidarity with the ERA, saying that the women in his shop had voiced their pain and opposition to going to Florida. I tried to dig out of myself why I was hurting so much.

I recalled how, in 1977, when I attended the combined meeting of the CPA and ACP, it was such a great thrill to look around at the plenary sessions and see so many women. When I first started attending CPA meetings in the '50s, we were a handful at most. We had come a long way. But I thought of the scars some of us were carrying.

When I went to college, very few degree programs at my Catholic university were open to women — the most popular being education and medical technology. So I had to major in education and keep electing journalism whenever I had an option, to accumulate as many hours as though I had majored in journalism. Of course, none of the universities in Louisiana at that time were *integrated*.

Prior to that, there had been a citywide Spanish language contest in New Orleans for high school students. By some miracle I had won that contest, and the first prize was a full, tuition-paid

scholarship to the Catholic university I later attended. *That* was first prize if the winner was a "boy." But if the winner turned out to be a "girl," *the first prize* was \$40.

I remembered going with my father to plead my case. We were from a working class family. I was the oldest of five and I'd be working my way through college, at best.

I remember the two of us entering the "uptown" university, my father greeting the dean, hat in hand, apologizing for my sex, asking if the rules couldn't be bent. The good Jesuit father said they couldn't.

Over the years, I thought of the subtle, and sometimes not so subtle, ways my sisters had been sifted from the ranks of editorships. Somewhere along the way someone had told me, "No wonder you switched from Catholic to Protestant journalism!"

But no sooner had I arrived to be introduced to the Board of Directors of the ECPC as new managing editor of THE WITNESS than it was discovered that we would have to bend the rules. A 50-year-old by-law required that the managing editor had to be a priest.

In the "old days" — when I was in high school and college, I accepted these things as part of "life in these United States." I had shuffled out of the dean's office at the university with the same fatalism that many of my Black brothers and sisters had when getting onto streetcars and buses and sitting behind "For Colored Only" signs. And I was one of the *lucky* ones. I had *made* it. I looked

Equal Rights Amendment
Equality of rights under the law shall
not be denied or abridged by the
United States or by any state on
account of sex.

around the group of ACP church editors and noted that my Black brothers and sisters had yet to arrive in great numbers..

The women's movement did for me what the Black movement did for Blacks. It raised my consciousness and allowed me to see what scars I was carrying, where I was hurting, so that I could move beyond this "victim mentality" to understand why the ERA was important and why it is experiencing such a backlash. It also made me brave enough to share a few of these experiences at the ACP open hearing.

Another of my sisters at the meeting, Barbara Howard, associate editor of the *Saints Herald*, followed my testimony to say that she felt that we should have learned something from the Vietnam War, that in the things she had experienced as a woman she could begin to hear "with Black ears" what *they* were saying, and that a Christian group such as the ACP should be able "to deal with suffering in a creative way." I wish I could recapture her deep insights here, but I was shaking too much to write them down.

A straw vote which followed showed 25 in favor of going to Florida and 23 against. "You lose a few, you lose a few," I thought. But the Board of Directors of the ACP took this under advisement, exercised their leadership prerogative and decided *not* to go to Florida.

As it turned out, the 1979 meeting of the ACP will be in Toronto, in the country which sheltered so many U.S. conscientious objectors to the Vietnam War.

Continued from page 2

or in trouble with Caesar because of practicing their religious beliefs.

I like Diana's words (they should have been printed in red, or in heavier type) "This experience has also opened me up to the abuses other people are suffering in this society. I had read about them, but somehow didn't believe it. Now it is happening to us." Maybe this is what Jesus had in mind for the rich young man: to become poor in order to know what it is like to be poor, by giving all he had to the poor — as much for his own benefit from experiencing poverty as to benefit the poor.

Abbie Jane Wells
Juneau, Alaska

Likes Reduced Rate

Your last Renewal Notice, just received, is the first time I have noted the reduced rate for subscribers over 65. I retired Nov. 1, 1971 at the age of 65. I thought it only fair that I explain this since I am taking advantage of the reduced rate.

At my age, I consider it unwise to think too far in the future. Thus, I am enclosing a check for \$6.75 for a one year subscription to THE WITNESS. It is a very good magazine and I do enjoy the thinking of most of your contributors.

Mattie T. Beason
Louisville, Ky.

'Whelmed' by WITNESS

I have been reading THE WITNESS for a little while now. I graduated from the Episcopal Theological Seminary of the Southwest in May of '77, and was ordained a deacon in the Diocese of Arizona in June. I am currently participating in a program of C.P.E. at Austin State Hospital.

Sometimes you depress me. Sometimes you anger me. Sometimes you amuse me. But in the end you "whelm" me. I wonder how many dollars have gone into the publication of your magazine. I wonder how many pages of paper, and gallons of ink, have spread the words of different ideologies. From *The National Inquirer* to *THE WITNESS*, a lot of words and a lot of ideas have gone down. Perhaps, like so many of my generation, I am simply tired of each party, each cult, and each group, raising their shrill voices. To me, you are just another voice.

Since working at the hospital, I have come to realize that people don't care much what someone believes, as long as they can trust

that person to care, and stand by them in hard times. Personally, I don't worship Capitalism, or Socialism, or any system. I worship God in my brother and sister, the God who makes personal his care through Jesus Christ. I prefer the struggle of living to the spectator sport of criticizing bishops, and other human beings. The Episcopal Church is full of little groups, and big groups, all screaming for their particular point of view.

I will be a lot more willing to take THE WITNESS seriously when I see more of an attempt to represent the struggles of persons rather than the factions of different ideologies.

The Rev. Derrill B. Manley, Jr.
Austin, Tex.

Relief from Nuts & Bolts

I can't tell you how much THE WITNESS means to me these days. It is a continual reminder that I am for the moment almost entirely swallowed by the nuts and bolts of a new parish. In time I hope to be able to look beyond that to what the real mission of the church is again. You and yours are going to be in part responsible for keeping me on the track.

In any case, thanks for being who you are and for doing what you're doing. Without you a good many of us would be less well informed and far less able to respond creatively to our times.

The Rev. John Crocker, Jr.
Princeton, N.J.

Rejoices at Release

THE WITNESS for me is the "Conscience of the Church," keeping before us the challenging, prickly, troubling issues of the day. Where else in the publications of the church are these issues set forth as they are here?

I am particularly grateful for the reporting of the Grand Jury case of Maria Cueto and Raisa Nemikin, for otherwise I would probably know almost nothing about it. And I rejoice at their release!

Marguerite Hyer
St. Louis, Mo.

CREDITS

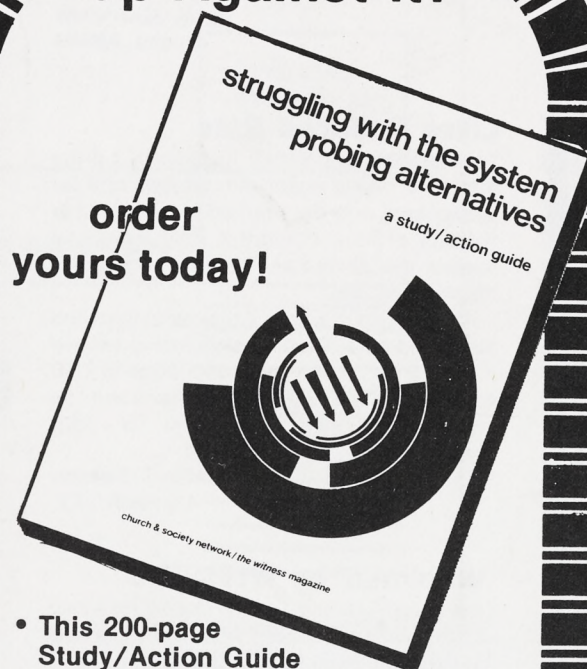
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