The sixties

The Witness

Volume 77 • Number 1 & 2 • Jan./Feb. 1994

Communion of saints/ancestors

I FOUND THIS TO BE AN exceptional issue in every way, and one that will bear reading again every All Saints' Day to give us fresh insights into the sacred meanings of this most practical, yet most Holy Feast.

William Davidson
Retired Episcopal Bishop
Loveland, CO

THE NOVEMBER *WITNESS* evokes in me the need to write to you and thank you for it and express my gratitude to Philip Newell for his beautiful *Saints in the Celtic tradition* and to Bishop Gumbleton for the profile of Franz Jaegerstaetter — whose witness to Our Lord is now known and will continue. Lastly your own article: *The blood of the ancients* made your parents alive in Christ our Lord for physical death cannot separate loved ones.

Our eldest son Robert Willoughby Corrigan died Sept. 1 1993 in Dallas, Tex. He was 65. He had Parkinsons for some years but in his last year a new disease struck him. He had been Dean of the School of the Arts of the University of Texas in Dallas and Professor of Dramatic Literature in the graduate school.

Elizabeth and Daniel Corrigan
Santa Barbara, CA

THANK YOU FOR THE HOPE in the November issue.

Mary Fisher Andrews
N. Waterford, ME

IN THE EARLY 1970S, as Anita Bryant was preaching her message of fear and hatred, a group of us in Salt Lake City, Utah, set out to organize a combined Integrity/Dignity Chapter. Two years earlier I had been formally excommunicated from the Mormon Church of my childhood for being gay. I had moved on to the Roman Catholic Church by way of the Newman Center at the University of Utah. Now as we were setting out to organize Dignity the word filtered down to us that our bishop not only had forbidden any priest to celebrate Mass for us, he was looking for a way to excommunicate us. I really envied my Episcopal brothers and sisters. Their bishop, Otis Charles, not only encouraged them, he also spoke out against Bryant's hatred.

The day of the Dade County election, Bishop Charles asked all of the churches in his diocese to pray for the defeat of hatred and injustice. I remember sitting in St. Mark's Cathedral after hearing the results of the vote. It all seemed too much to deal with. Bishop Charles sat down next to me, gave me a hug, and reminded me that no matter what anyone said God was on the side of justice and that I should never give up on God.

Otis and Elvira Charles did more for this gay man than they can ever know. I never gave up on God, but I did give up on the Roman Catholic Church. For the last nine years I have been "married" to the man who is now Pastor of the Metropolitan Community Church of Baltimore. Elvira's example as a thinking, loving, laughing, challenging pastoral spouse has been one of my best role models.

I pray God's choicest blessing on both dear friends. The battle is not yet over. I look forward to the great work they'll be doing.

Michael Totten-Reid
Baltimore, MD

Animal rights

A SUPERB ISSUE! Fr. Linzey is well known to and respected by many animal rightists. Our Church is painfully silent about "the innocents." Our Prayer Book has *not one prayer* devoted to non-humans! Thanks for speaking out!

Mary K. Rouillard
Ford Edward, NY

I SAID A PRAYER OF THANKS, when I read the October issue, that *The Witness* has finally gotten into the struggle for animals. Hang in there — keep it up.

Ginny Shannon
Kennett Square, PA

WHAT AN INCREDIBLE ISSUE of *The Witness* (10/93). I just discovered your magazine in the library of the church I've attended for over 50 years.

Janet Lovejoy
Carlisle, Mass.

New subscriptions

PLEASE SEND me a one-year subscription. I learned of you through your ad in "Utne Reader." I value my current subscriptions to "The Other Side," "Sojourners" and "The Plough" magazines. I'm an attender of Church of the Brethren and work for peace, social justice, and *not* taking ourselves so seriously.

Hoyt Maulden
Herndon, VA

I LOOK FORWARD TO receiving the Advent calendar — the illustration with the sheep and the conga line was enough to make me want to subscribe! I can't wait to see what the rest of the illustrations look like! Thanks for this special gift subscription promo.

Linda Strohmier
Seattle, WA

IT IS TIME FOR ME TO RETURN to *The Witness*. Being a first-time delegate to General Convention, I will need all the good help I can get!

Brian Thom, Rector
The Church of the Ascension
Twin Falls, ID

SOME YEARS AGO as an ordination gift one of my colleagues sent me a subscription to *The Witness*. I *loved* it then yet chose *Christianity and Crisis* as the journal to rest with and be informed by. I look forward to now being a subscriber to *The Witness*, espe-

Witness Awards

The Episcopal Church Publishing Company is seeking nominations from *Witness* subscribers for three awards to be presented during the General Convention in Indianapolis in August.

The awards are named in honor of William Scarlett, Bishop of Missouri from 1930-1950 and founder of the Church League for Industrial Democracy; Vida Scudder, prolific writer, educator and socialist; and William Spofford, an early and long-time editor of *The Witness* and labor activist.

Nominations should be sent by March 15.

cially because I find it helpful to think thematically and I enjoy religious artwork.

Deborah Adams
Standish, ME

In response to our promotional brochure

[We mailed a letter inviting subsc riptions to all Episcopal Clergy and former *Christianity & Crisis* subscribers. In response, several hundred new subscriptions have come in. We also recieved some vitriolic letters.]

YES! YES! YES! I was pretty impressed when I saw names like Carter Heyward, Rosemary Radford Ruether, Dorothee Solle — and oh, yes! Walter Wink and Manning Marable. But even before I saw all those names, and others, I saw what instantly — and completely — convinced me. "*The Witness* is not Anglican! It is a radical left, pagan, new age, feminist, propaganda rag!" And Dorothy Granada — I knew her when!

Casey Davis
Houston, TX

REMOVE MY NAME from your mailing. Future mailings will be considered as harassment.

Richard Watson
Newfield, NY

DROP DEAD.

Unsigned

PLEASE REMOVE MY NAME from your generic mailing list of Episcopal Clergy. I have read your publication and neither like it or agree with it. Moreover I do not like what you seem to stand for.

It is my view that the Church is currently being driven by a minority who latch on to whatever the latest secular cause happens to be. It might be women's "rights" or the homosexual scene, or racism or something else. The problem is that the leaders of these causes are so one-sided and if one disagrees with anything they say, one is branded racist or homophobic or whatever. There are actually some black people, for example, that I wouldn't like if they were snow white because it has nothing to do with color but personality. And I figured that out years ago.

But your publication seems to aid and encourage this onesidedness and this is why I don't want it. I'd rather read comics for laughs.

While it is true that there is ample evidence in the New Testament that Our Lord ministered to the poor, the sick, the lame, the outcast, et al; it is also true that he did not write one sided editorials or promote placard waving demostrations for some popular cause. What he did do was feed people's souls. I fear that your publication only feeds people's frenzies.

So I have no use for your magazine. Moreover I hate to see this trend in the Church toward jumping on every bandwagon that gets organized to support some small group that wants their 15 minutes of fame, fleeting as it may be.

What you could be doing is proclaiming the Gospel. The Gospel is that Jesus died for those who oppose abortion as well as those who want to use abortion for a birth control device. Now that would really be radical. It would also be something no one else is proclaiming in any publication I have read. It would be a refreshing change. And it would be so New Testament!

I hope this little essay convinces you to remove my name from your list.

Alwin Reiners, Jr., Rector
St. Paul's Episcopal Church
Hanover Courthouse, VA

PLEASE REMOVE MY NAME from your mailing list. I consider (and have for years) your magazine to be perverting the morals and order of the church and many of your articles border on the obscene. Years ago I registered it with the Post Office as obscene and have not received any communication from you until this. It is obvious from the label that you have purchased (or been given) the mailing list of *Episcopal Life* (which I class with your publication).

Please remove my name and so inform your source!

Lewis A. Payne
Coon Rapids, MN

NO SALVATION OUTSIDE THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

Unsigned

Classifieds

Conference

THE COLLEGE OF PREACHERS at the Washington National Cathedral is pleased to present, **Preaching in a Pluralist Society with Kwasi Thornell and Floyd Naters-Gamarra, March 7-11, 1994.** This conference will address how the preacher can effectively bring the Gospel message to the pluralist society in which we live. Are there differences in sermon preparation, content or style when preaching to a pluralist community? What aspects of culture and ethnicity should be included in delivering the Word of God? What resources are available to assist preachers in this task? These are among the issues to be examined with two clergy who speak to their particular communities with power and sensitivity. For more information, call the College at 202-537-6380.

Wanted

L'ARCHE SYRACUSE is an intentional Christian community where persons share their lives with persons who have developmental disability. We need mature Christians to share our life. We offer community, growth and benefits. For more details, call Robert at 315-437-9337.

Video

LIVING MEDIA IS A 60-MINUTE VIDEO that helps people who have traveled to the Third World in a human rights or outreach capacity to work with and influence the U.S. media. Tapes are $11.49 from GW Associates, 702 South Beech, Syracuse, NY 13210.

Classifieds

Classifieds now run in *The Witness.*

A section titled "Cloud of Witnesses" will provide space for photos or tributes on the anniversaries of the deaths, ordinations, acts of conscience, whatever.

The cost for ads is 75 cents a word or $30 an inch, whichever is less. Payment must accompany submissions. Deadline is the 15th of the month, two months prior to publication. For instance, an item received January 15th will run in the March issue. If you wish to include a photograph we can run them at half-column width, if you prefer.

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Since 1917

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Find the cost of freedom

by Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

We can change the world,
rearrange the world,
it's dying, if you believe in justice
it's dying, if you believe in freedom
it's dying to get better.

— Chicago, *Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young*

When Clinton's bid for the presidency raised questions about whether he had smoked marijuana or avoided military service in Vietnam, a whole generation was invited to apologize for its youth.

A sudden disjuncture between our lives in this society — where we are now the teachers, the politicians, the responsible adults — and some of our early convictions seemed to be thrown into light.

Something weighty was in the balance — something was coming due. Would we at least keep silent so that it can be presumed that we are sorry?

A number of books and movies about the sixties have been released. Fashion experts are trying to resurrect bellbottoms. But most media references to the sixties have them safely packaged — an era of rebellion and youth culture.

Movies like the Big Chill have been disappointing because there is a middle class, upwardly mobile feel to the plot line and a way in which the sixties seem to have offered nothing more than a promiscuous backdrop to some long-lived friendships.

But the music. ... Some part of me walks out of the theaters wakened from a long sleep. The music throbs in my footsteps and I feel like I could lean off a high building and fly. The cellulose images fragment, but Janice Joplin, Bob Dylan, the Stones, CSN&Y — they tap a root power that will not go away.

Jay Stevens writes in *Storming Heaven*, "Strip away the decade's thick impasto of sex, drugs, rebellion, politics, music and art and what you find is a restless imperative to change, a 'will to change,' and one that could be as explanatory for the latter half of this century as Nietzsche's 'will to power' was for the first."

I have to believe that part of the problem in locating the will of the sixties now is that the root ran so deep that many of its demands have been adopted into mainstream society and commercialized.

On one hand, it's good that some of the cultural assumptions about women, people of color and ecology have changed. On the other, the packaging these ideals get in T.V. sit-coms puts a pejorative spin on something we hold sacred.

It's hard somehow to keep our vision clear when corporate supermarkets sell whole grain foods in recycled boxes. It's the right thing in the wrong wineskin. When we worked at food coops we knew that "People not profit" was the motive and that the food was revolutionary, anticipating even then the horrendous genetic engineering of food that is now showing up (unlabelled) in our grocery stores. But cruising the health food aisle right next to toxic detergents, and overpackaged, processed food equivalents — like garish blue, artificially-flavored popsicles is disjunctive. There's no whole cloth here just a drive to sell what people will buy for profit.

Beyond the ways that the opulent capitalist system has twisted sixties' ideals (which we see extending through the early seventies) to fit its own aims, there's a second weight and that is how much fear we have buried with the sixties.

I was forged in an era when people committed to justice were assassinated. The Kennedys and Martin Luther King start the chain but it goes on and on and on. In a real way those are the guideposts of my generation's life. There are ways in which we can never be naive about the deadly force behind the United States' commitment to protect corporate interests and white supremacy. It throws our analysis into high relief and that's a gift.

But deep down, outside the scope of our ideals, I wonder if there isn't a barely audible voice that says, "Don't let me die. I'll demonstrate outside the federal building, but I won't let the heat applied to the system ever reach the point again where gas and fire hoses, dogs and bullets are turned on human beings."

The articles in this issue give me chills.

Over and over again, good people quite consciously applied blazing heat to the system. They sat at lunch counters even when they had been forewarned that vigilante white youth were coming. They strategized and trusted one another even as government informants moved among them. They went up against the U.S. military machine. People died.

The stories are familiar. The telling of them is not new. They just bring the time back to life without the commercial gloss society applies. They ask us whether we could do it again. They invite us, if nothing else, to make sure our children know the sixties were serious not fashion.

And no, we won't apologize. TW

editor's note

Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann is editor/publisher of *The Witness*.

Staying power

by Carter Heyward

[The Witness introduces editorials by our contributing editors in this issue. The reflections may be within the theme.]

I am one of those fortysomething people who are grateful for the sixties. I'm thankful my spirituality, my experience and understanding of the world and God, has some tenacious roots in that period, I'm grateful for what the sixties taught me and lots of other folks about values and priorities and dreaming *big* dreams.

Three decades later some folks, including lots of sixties people, deride that moment in our recent past as a poignant one of dreams that either could never have been realized ("the age of Aquarius") or already have been (as if racism were a thing of the past). This repudiation is either a dismissal of the power of a dream or the failure to make connections between what was achieved during that turbulent decade and what was not. For people who lived during this period, or who have met it mainly through media and oral tradition, to disavow the sixties as hopelessly idealistic and culturally chaotic, or as a long ago time which is no longer ours, is to turn away from a wellspring of our most sacred power to participate in shaping our own historical moment, today.

For history is a movement, not a collage of separate pieces that can be judged apart from one another. Like Rosa Parks and Martin King and Malcolm X, we too are dynamic organisms whose lives cannot be either lived fruitfully, or assessed fairly, apart from the broader sweep of history and the communities of sisters and brothers who came before us, who will come after us, who are with us now. The meanings of the sixties do not lie behind us but rather are ours to create, for the value of a historical moment is not inherent, self-evident or static. We are creating the meaning of the sixties in the relation between then and now, them and us, ourselves and our forebears and our children.

Rather than finding a place to stand in history that is somehow "ours," a moment in which we are comfortable and from which we draw our spiritual strength through memory, or nostalgia, or repudiation, we need to help each other find ways to move and bend and change together. This is the church's spiritual work, our ethical foundation as Christians. We need to be learning, theologically, to experience time itself as movement in the life of all that is human, creaturely and divine, forever changing and always in relation to whatever has been already and whatever will be.

In the movement of God, the sixties are not over and done, and they never will be. We who are here now, in this moment, are creating the pastoral and prophetic significance of that decade by how we are living our lives today. We ourselves are responsible for whether the sixties will be remembered largely as a decade of cynicism, violence and pipedreams or as the sacred moment of a dream of justice that was and still is possible.

But to keep the dream alive, we, like Martin, must let it grow and change and become whatever it needs to become to include the well-being of those whom we didn't remember in the sixties — women and children of all colors and cultures; gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people, disabled people, the earth and its many creatures, Native people, Asian-Americans, Palestinians, most poor people and the many, many others left out of a nation's struggle for justice being waged primarily in black and white.

Thanks to Martin Luther King, Jr. and other prophets that were seeing further as the decade wore on in the context of Vietnam — a despicable war that was wearing us down — the sixties brought progressive Christians to the brink of recognizing the spiritual bankruptcy of advanced capitalism. For the next 30 years, our political economy would advance globally. Purely for profit, it would be tightening up *economic* structures of racial, sexual and class exploitation that most white middle strata liberals had barely noticed during the sixties. And this brings us to the nineties, in which every ethical issue in our life together — in the U.S. and thought the world, from healthcare to sexual violence to rainforests to children dying of hunger, is defined politically and addressed economically primarily in terms of how it upholds, or threatens, the advancement of global capitalism. What in this world are we Christians to do about this treachery? What *can* we do in the nineties?

If the sixties are alive in us as an inspiration, then we progressive Christians are being called to dream, and to let our dreams grow bigger and to make no peace with those who would thwart the dreams of a world in which *all* God's people and other creatures are sister and brothers, friends in the sacred Spirit that is our power to keep on keepin' on. We should remember however that we too are failing to see fully who is left out in this moment. Let us pray that we can live and work, struggle and celebrate, humbly, grounded forever in an openness to all that we cannot see. TW

Carter Heyward, a contributing editor to *The Witness*, is a theology professor at Episcopal Divintiy School in Cambridge, Mass.

Into History

by Joan Aleshire

to my daughter

A child then, you knew less
than we — but not by much —
what the cloud was, filling our ground-floor rooms,
stinging our eyes, burning our skin.
You understood less why that neighbor
let loose such an expression of his rage
into our yard, and those of the other
"hippie nigger lovers" on our block.
When the police came, after months
of observing, he cowered in a bedroom
filled with guns and swastika stars.

One end of the street dead, the other
exposed to Smith's hurtle of cars,
fruit and fish markets in Spanish and
English, cut-rate furniture emporia,
botanicas and corner bodegas, gypsies
in storefronts, locations for prescription
and non-prescription drugs — the short block
would vibrate, whatever wind blew
through the city, the country in those years.

The night after the murder in Memphis,
we heard it in the pavement, feet
pounding up from Smith, pausing, thudding
on again, not in the patterns of tag
and stickball the kids carried out
in daylight, but a pace now bold,
now furtive under the vapor-light moons.
A whistle at a distance, a footfall
up close — through the slats
of the front-room blinds I saw
a human shape add itself to the shadow
of our van in front. A man or boy
set down the TV he must have carried
with difficulty, even on adrenaline,
out of a smashed window on Smith Street,
balanced beside it, crouched like a runner
waiting for the gun to start.

I called your father to watch with me;
you were asleep in the room I thought
serene: high-ceilinged, facing the backyard.
I thought it a cloister, though really
you had no distance from all the workings
of that house. One then, your father and I
stared as the street was caught at both ends
by pincers of blue light, slamming doors,
shouts. In the middle the boy — did I mention
his dark skin? — tried to surrender or make
a reflexive run. At least six white cops raised
their fists, their nightsticks
over their heads, over his, and brought them down.

Your father ran outside cursing; I was close
behind, with Mrs. Mas from next door.
Mrs. Kelly from up the block was yelling —
all the accents on the same words to stop
hitting the boy who had rolled himself small
and still they got in enough strikes
to his close-shaved head that his groans
came from us. Mrs. Mas was crying to God
in Spanish then, but your father began
a boxer's dance, taunting the cops, until two
turned from their business and threatened
to take him too. Loud, foul-mouthed —
always someone in authority would see
the danger in him, something unbound.

That night he thrilled us all, yelling insanely
for sanity in the murky night, all his rage
turned out. You ask what I remember
of then, the moments that blur
into one length we call *history*
from a distance. What's clear to me: a man
putting his head out the door, on the block,
calling the cops the motherfuckers
they were, without being asked, without
having to. Not letting those blue arms
come down unimpeded — that was someone
I loved.

Joan Aleshire is a core faculty member of the Warren Wilson MFA Program for Writers in North Carolina. She lives in rural Vermont where she operates a small community library, translates Russian poetry and writes. Aleshire has published two collections: Cloud Train, *Texas Tech Press, 1982, and* This Far, *in the* Quarterly Review of Literature, *1987.* Into History *is reprinted from the* Quarterly Review of Literature: 50th Anniversary Anthology, *ed. Theodore and Renee Weiss, Princeton, NJ 1993.*

SDS, SNCC and the Communist Party: an interview with Michelle Gibbs

The following is an interview with Michelle Gibbs, an American artist living in Mexico. Gibbs, who was active in Students for a Democratic Society, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and the Freedom School Movement, was raised by communist parents. Her own political commitments and those of her parents span the century. We interviewed her recently when she had a show at a Detroit gallery.

Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann: Tell me about your experience of the 1960s.

Michelle Gibbs: I was 13 years old when the sixties began. My mother and I had just moved from Chicago (in 1959) to southern California. Coming from a political family, the sixties for me were simply my generation's awakening to the same things that my parents had experienced 30 years previously.

My father left the Communist Party in 1960. He did not leave in 1956 or 1958 (during the McCarthy purges). For him, the straw that broke the camel's back was the International's position on the revolution in Algeria — which they defined as a civil war in France. For him that was the ultimate racist betrayal, so he — along with many other black people, especially internationally — found themselves breaking ties with the Communist Party.

It was a very pivotal sort of question for me, because in the sixties many people of my generation were just discovering Marxism and the organizations that sustained themselves under that banner. But I had already reached a point, by the age of 14, of being disillusioned with that particular international franchise. So for me the sixties were continuity *and* an opportunity for a new beginning to rethink what fundamental social change really meant.

In 1961, my father died. He had a cerebral hemorrhage. Up until that time I had been primarily focussing my attention on the arts — music, visual arts and literature. With his death and with the first stage of the Civil Rights Movement, I found myself painting picket signs; I traded in the piano for the guitar.

Michelle Gibbs

We were desegregating Woolworth's. I joined SNCC [Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee], as well as SDS [Students for a Democratic Society] in 1962 and remained active in both organizations until 1966. This paralleled the years that I was at university.

Everything was working in sync: the institutional setting encouraging us to ask, experiment and learn and the social setting of the ferment of the times. I became involved in the Freedom School Movement. While everybody else was registering voters, we were doing freedom schools. That became very important in 1965 when Watts erupted and the major task was to channel that angry energy into some creative redefinitions of who we are and what we wanted to imagine about how our world could be.

I should also say that being from an interracial family, my attitude toward nationalism was much more complex than my contemporaries; so it was very fortunate that I was no longer a student in 1966 when SNCC had its big split, because I would have had to leave anyway. Nationalism has never appealed to me, because of my organic experience of growing up. I don't think it's a very useful purchasehold on the world, even though I understand it as a defensive reaction.

J.W-K.: Tell me about where your parents came from and how you came to be.

M.G.: My mother was the youngest of four daughters and the only one born in the United States. My grandmother, Fanny Rabinowitz, was born in Estonia of a slavic, gypsy kind of mix. She was very radical for her day and age. She left for the United States from Vilna, Lithuania where — having left her first husband — with her three daughters, she worked as a seamstress. She was hiding 1905 revolutionaries during the repression; the soldiers were on her trail. She took the boat with her three daughters as a divorced, single woman and wound up in Chicago where she met my mother's father, who was also from Vilna working as a sheetmetal worker and was very active in the Workman's Circle.

They were both Jewish. My mother's side of the family grew up in Chicago, although their cultural memory was not limited to Chicago. The Jewish culture that they kept alive was the culture of the ghetto and of the diaspora. The culture

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Michelle Gibbs left Detroit in 1980 disillusioned by the extent of the damage done by the auto industry layoffs. She and her husband, George Coleman, spent two years in Greece, then settled in Grenada, from which she was deported during the U.S. military intervention. They now live in Oaxaca, Mexico.

was international which allowed them to remain radical throughout all the twists and turns of the Zionist movement and a variety of other more reactionary forms of Orthodox Jewish culture.

They were anarchists and by the time my mother, who was born in 1909, was 18 or 19 years old, she joined the Young Communist League. She was one of the more conservative members of her family. My Uncle Sal was an anarchist and went into hiding because he didn't want to fight in World War I.

J.W-K.: Were any of them practicing Jews? Did the faith ...

M.G.: Ethical culture, ethical culture.

Now my father's side: My father was born in Fort Worth, Texas in 1906. He was the oldest in a family of five. His family always talked about themselves being African and Indian and it wasn't until I found myself in Grenada in 1980 that I realized — because I was recognized as a Gibbs by the Gibbs of Grenada — that the Indian they were talking about was *West* Indian. And he didn't know either. Typically enough, he never knew his father.

He left home when he was 13 because he came home from school one day and opened the door and saw his mother — my grandmother, Estelle — getting raped by one of the white men she was doing laundry for. He said, "If I'm not going to kill somebody, I'd better leave." And so there is the radical disjunction in terms of his knowledge about where he came from and the less he knew about it, frankly, from his point of view, the better.

When he left at 13, he worked his way around the country and by the time he was an adult, 19 or 20 years old, he was working as a stevedore, a dockworker, in Seattle. He got organized into the Communist Party in the context of a general strike. Then he went into organizer's school and wound up in Cleveland.

In 1929, he finds himself being sent to Chicago to organize unemployed councils and that's how my parents met, putting evicted people's furniture back into their houses and fighting the cops in the late 1920s and early 1930s.

J.W-K.: When were you born?

Civil rights activists, trying to integrate a lunch counter in Jackson, Miss., in 1963, are pelted with food by white locals. Fred Blackwell via AP/Wide World Photos

M.G.: 1946. They lived together for about ten years before my father convinced my mother to get married. That was around 1941, after he had spent three years in the Spanish Civil War along with all the other male members of my family.

J.W-K.: So you arrived — and even before you did — housing must have been a problem.

M.G.: It was always a problem, always. That was the worst aspect of my growing up. It was a combination not only of what we were doing, but who we were, how we looked.

If my mother would rent an apartment, they'd say "Sure." Then the two of us would show up and they'd say "Sorry." We wound up living in store fronts, next to the gypsies, mostly on the south side of Chicago. We couldn't find jobs either, so we wound up having to go into business for ourselves and do that in a way which allowed us to maintain community ties. I grew up in the back of what used to be called variety stores. You know, basic household goods, school supplies, notions, that kind of thing.

J.W-K.: Say something about the background checks and government harassment you experienced.

M.G.: A common policy of employers was to do checks on their workers. If you were engaged in activity they found reprehensible, they let you go. That's the pattern, a very simple pattern.

My mother was a bookkeeper. She was the only one in her family who finished high school. My parents always

encouraged me to do whatever I felt I could do, while telling me that I'd better be serious about it because I'd have to be twice as good as anybody else to get anywhere. I took everything they said very seriously, so I excelled in a lot of things. And at every point that I was recognized for my excellent achievements, whether that was being chosen as a red feather kid, a Community Chest representative, winning an essay contest or doing a prize-winning poster and getting a scholarship to the Art Institute of Chicago, they'd publish your picture in the newspaper along with the names of your parents and your address. Every time my mother would come into work the next day after something like that happened, her boss said "Oh, is this your daughter?" and of course she would say, "Yes" and they would give her her check.

J.W-K.: How did you sort that out? Did your parents help you?

M.G.: They were very honest! They said this is the world. We're sorry, this is the world that we have to live in and we have to know how to live in it. It's not our fault. We didn't make it. That's why we have to change it.

J.W-K.: A lot of people whose parents were politically active talk about being neglected ...

M.G.: I was not neglected. I never had a babysitter. Where my parents went, I went. In the forties and fifties the government had numerous agents specifically in the Communist Party and people's spouses were turning in reports. You had to be very security conscious. If anything, my parents were over-protective, because they were scared to death. You know, "Be sure to tell me where you're going, how I can reach you and when you are getting back," because everything between here and there is called threat with a capital T.

Within that context they were very careful not to make me fearful, because it was clear that we couldn't hide. They were very committed to giving me the maximum exposure to the maximum amount of choices that they could create, so that I was always with a varied group of people.

J.W-K.: What about the McCarthy times? From your vantage point, what did it look like? What was happening to your friends who were communists?

Military police, backed up by Army troops, throw back anti-war demonstrators at the Pentagon during a dmonstration in October, 1967. AP/Wide World Photos

M.G.: A lot of politically committed people 1) were losing jobs 2) were changing their names, 3) going into hiding — if not to jail or getting deported. (There were a lot of naturalized citizens who were the backbone of the radical movement in the United States. Bringing European consciousness and experience with them, they fueled the Left movement. McCarthy was busy getting rid of them — sending them back to where they came from with all deliberate speed). And so a lot of very close family and friends were either lost to us or in jail.

J.W-K.: Did people give up their political commitments?

M.G.: No, my family, no, not at all.

J.W-K.: Others?

M.G.: In some cases. The unfortunate thing is that for people who did decide that it was necessary to take the step of going into camouflage — a lot of them became Unitarians — they did not pass on the memories of the best part of their commitment to their children.

I had good friends in high school in California, whose parents (I know from my mother and some other people who were in the older generation) had been active but whose children had no idea what they had been through. Although the children were very committed, they had nothing to base their feelings on, so they had to reinvent the wheel.

J.W-K.: And even when these people watched their children going into struggle, they didn't come up with the history and offer it to them?

M.G.: Well, a spotty history, a spotty history. There was an important book that came out called *The Quarter Century of UnAmericana*. It chronicled the anti-Communist propaganda war from World War II through the early 1960s. There were materials available that they could direct their children to, without personally saying "Oh yeah, that was us!"

J.W-K.: It's hard for me to fathom.

continued on page 12

Stop children, what's that sound?

Black Panthers were murdered in their sleep, a civil rights worker was gunned down in her car, an American Indian Movement member saw his wife and kids burned to the ground in their home, activists of every sort heard rumors and received unsigned notes, notes threatening their safety, breathing rumors of sexual affairs and broken confidence.

It was the sixties and everyone would later learn that the U.S. government had a role in all these situations. Federal agents were wiretapping, opening mail, engaging in "disinformation" campaigns, hiring violent informers and agent provocateurs or working in tandem with vigilante groups.

In the mid-1970s when the role of the U.S. government was exposed, the public outcry forced Congress to curtail and monitor the political surveillance police.

But, lest citizens breathe easy, it is important to note that surveillance files — which traditionally document the movements of people interested in changing the policies of U.S. government or industry, generally constitutionally protected efforts — have been maintained throughout the century. When public police abuses result in public outcry, the surveillance efforts are simply passed into the hands of private investigators. Sometimes the same file boxes are carried from one location to the other. Occasionally the investigators themselves switch their public hats for private ones, never leaving the work undone.

Offering a quick history of this legacy, George Corsetti, an attorney who successfully sued the State of Michigan for the release of the "Red Squad" files in the mid-1970s, explains that from the start government police forces have been most interested in the protection of property and the establishment of order on behalf of the rich.

During World War I, Woodrow Wilson initiated all-out surveillance of Germans in the U.S., many of whom were socialists and labor organizers. Ostensibly his concern was over the number of "foreign spies." But at the close of the war, "J. Edgar Hoover, who had been responsible for compiling information on enemy aliens during the war, took over the newly created General Intelligence Division," according to Corsetti. "And Bureau authority was expanded to include investigations of anarchists, Bolsheviks and others advocating change in the government."

Public spying efforts at the beginning of the century culminated in the Palmer Raids in 1920. On one night, Bureau and Immigration agents, aided by deputized American Protective League veterans, arrested 10,000 people nationwide.

Public outrage constricted the public spying apparatus but for the next decade the private/corporate network went into overdrive.

Finally, in the mid-1930s, Congress convened hearings. The La Follette Committee reported that the list of corporations implicated in spying and harassment read "like a blue book of American industry." Private police had wiretapped phones, read personal mail, confiscated union literature, intimidated and physically abused union organizers. In addition to private police forces, the committee examined vigilante "citizen committees" established by industrialists "to do to labor on industry's behalf what the individual employer could no longer do legally."

With the private sector spy network exposed, the task shifted back into public hands. Franklin Roosevelt resurrected the FBI under the leadership of Hoover.

This trend continued through the early 1970s, culminating in the constant harassment of those active in the freedom struggle and the anti-war, women's and gay liberation movements. Literally millions of files were established and thousands of lives disrupted.

Finally, with Watergate, public outrage again restrained the government's surveillance apparatus. But in 1973 a study of demonstrations for the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration advised police: "Know their faces, addresses, cars, telephone numbers. Know the goals, strategy, and tactics of their organizations, the numbers of members, the level of their funding, and the sources of their funding."

In the early 1980s, University of Michigan social science professors were working on a similar study for the Justice Department. They were to interview participants in "collective disorders." The study targeted fast food workers trying to organize a union, Chrysler workers who vandalized an assembly line when they heard they would be laid off and Iranian demonstrators.

Lois Mock, coordinator of the Justice Department study, speculated that it might help cities formulate ordinances that would regulate protests, "so that people can't just go call a demonstration." Cities might require permits and advanced notice of the purpose of and numbers expected at a rally. She added that cities might experiment with ordinances that would put "limitations on the media."

With more subtle applications of social control the crude methods of the Klan may be less necessary to those most invested in perpetuating the current economic arrangement. But at hand, as they have been throughout the century, are vigilante groups; the private investigative agencies and provocateurs; the local police and their informers and the federal agents. — J.W-K.

continued from page 11

M.G.: It was horribly schizophrenic, absolutely!

J.W-K.: Your parents gave you their beliefs and commitments. What accounts for the fact that you didn't rebel against your parents by rejecting their values?

M.G.: I *liked* their values! I still do. Their values have yet to be realized.

J.W-K.: Your work with SNCC and SDS was part of trying to realize their vision. What did you do next?

M.G.: I went to graduate school. I had a Woodrow Wilson and went to Brown (1966-1970) for a doctorate in American Studies. We founded an organization called the New University Conference, a national organization of socialist teachers committed to a variety of projects which obviously involved activism against the war in Vietnam and a whole redefinition of the academic universe. I was also on the national steering committee of Resist, helping draft dodgers and doing GI coffeehouses. What brought me to Detroit the first time was that we [at Resist] organized the Winter Soldier hearings in 1969. The Winter Soldier hearings were the first public testimony of returned Vietnam veterans who made the American public aware of the atrocities being committed in the name of the American government.

J.W-K.: And you decided to move to Detroit in 1970?

M.G.: I wanted to leave the United States in 1969. I was in Washington, D.C. A lot of my friends whom I worked with very closely, like Ralph Featherstone, were getting blown up by the government for simply saying what was on their mind. I said "Right, I'm going to be next — not me, no thank you." So I was ready to go to Tanzania and get a *real* education. Instead, I came to Detroit in 1969 and met a variety of people who were engaged in the organization of the most longstanding and exciting wildcat strikes since before World War II. [During that time the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement (DRUM) struck Chrysler's Dodge Main plant and the League of Revolutionary Black Workers was created. A succession of strikes directed against racist practices and challenging capitalism followed at a variety of plants.]

Detroit was also one of the only major cities in the United States at the dawn of the 1970s which maintained a growing and principled multi-racial movement and that was critical to me. So the combination of the multi-racial community aspect of the movement and the line-centered plant base of the movement convinced me that it was worthwhile giving the United States another chance to see what we could do in Detroit. So I came to Detroit, because it was the only context in the United States in which we could work.

Because the movement was based in the south — it was possible to sustain community. It was possible to give a political voice to all those strengths that had allowed people to survive so long. That's something that students from the north learned from those that they went to help. If we can't all come up together, ain't none of us coming up.

J.W-K.: And?

M.G.: And there was an internal split in the League of Revolutionary Black Workers — one part became the Black Workers' Congress and the other part became the Communist Labor Party (which to my way of thinking was more of a sect than a movement). I got involved in the Congress. Then — I don't want to get into this because it's very convoluted organizational history — but to make a long story short, Ken Cockrel, Greg Hicks, Ted Spearman and I were purged from the Black Workers' Congress and went on to found the Labor Defense Coalition.

We felt the primary problem in the early 1970s in Detroit for the black community took the form of STRESS [Stop Robberies Enjoy Safe Streets, a decoy police unit that was responsible for shooting members of the black community point blank]. We were doing the State Emergency Committee and other things. We helped elect Coleman Young who forced at least some initial reforms in the Police Department and got the pigs off our back for a minute.

I continued to work with Ken Cockrell in one form or another until 1980. I was on the steering committee of DARE (Detroit Alliance for a Rational Economy). And in the mid-1970s, because I was tired of the male chauvinism of the movement, I had become increasingly committed to the women's movement nationally. So I spent a lot of time outside Detroit working in the women's movement and a lot of time inside Detroit fighting the cops.

J.W-K.: Any thoughts on what we could have done differently in the 1960s?

M.G.: I think much of the energy of the sixties was fueled not so much by commitment as it was by charismatic leadership. And to the extent that those charismatic leaders were ego-driven and encouraged a similar style of behavior, I think it was self-defeating.

What happened after the heroic period of the early sixties in the south is that, to my way of thinking, individuals — pri-

marily male — rose to prominence in ways that they understood the media would appreciate and that in turn produced not only styles of behavior, but styles of organization and internal conflicts within organizations.

An offshoot of this particular problem as I see it, was that, many people felt that personal transformation could wait. Eldridge could beat up Kathleen but when we get on the barricades we're all together. Well that doesn't work. I mean, that kind of personal-political schizophrenia builds in an internal conflict which is psychologically self-destructive.

Now there is the other portion of the sixties movement, of course, which goes by various names — the hippies, the rainbow people, the alternative lifestyle movement — which went to the other extreme and said that personal *expression* is everything and the structures will follow. That resulted in some very pristine enclaves, usually in the country, which may have saved some people from madness, but — in terms of overall effectiveness — only communicated a desire for personal pleasure at the expense of the body politic. Its expression in sexual terms is one of the things that has produced the AIDS epidemic.

JWK: Say a little more about that, because at the time the idea was that active sexuality was a rebellion against ...

MG: ... proletarianism, anybody over 30, Protestant repression, the Calvinist ethic, all those kinds of things. Fine, we went too far. They were rebelling against everything except the cornerstone of capitalism, which is individualism!

JWK: How does one rightly deal with individualism? What's the alternative?

MG: Well, most of the people in the world do not believe in individualism and don't have the luxury or even the idea that this is how people should act. In the early days of the sixties — and because the movement was based in the south — it was possible to sustain community. It was possible to give a political voice to all those strengths that had allowed people to survive so long, without the vote and on plantations with no health care, because they had that fundamental sense of needing to care for each other if they were going to survive. That's something that students from the north learned from those that they went to help. If we can't all come up together, ain't none of us coming up. TW

Right to kill?

Let us ask ourselves honest questions. How many Americans have not assumed — with approval — that the CIA was probably trying to find a way to assassinate Castro? How many would not applaud if the CIA succeeded? ... Have we not become conditioned to the notion that we should have a secret agency of government — the CIA — with secret funds, to wield the dagger beneath the cloak against leaders we dislike? Even some of our best young liberal intellectuals can see nothing wrong in this picture except that the "operational" functions of [the] CIA should be kept separate from its intelligence evaluations! ... Where the right to kill is so universally accepted, we should not be surprised if our young President was slain.

—I.F. Stone in his *Weekly* immediately after Kennedy's assassination, as quoted in *The Nation, 11/29/93*

Marketing War

All foreign policy post-Vietnam has been in terms of Vietnam, of resolving one or another sometimes very specific, sometimes quite general questions raised by the Vietnam War. One of the stunning consequences of the Vietnam War was that most Americans were reluctant to see American troops go abroad to fight for dubious causes.

To overcome that reluctance the Reagan and Bush administrations consistently offered, as a kind of homeopathic medicine, a little dose of war to get people used to it. That's what Grenada was. Grenada tested press censorship. It was totally successful. You go in to Jones Beach, some little resort place. You overwhelm it with force. You keep the press out. And you succeed. We don't know what's going on in Grenada now, what we've done there.

Panama was another instance, the bombing of Libya another. And of course the Gulf War brought the possibility of testing out everything that the military and the Republican administrations had learned from Vietnam.

What you do is market a war. Never mind what it's for. So we saw a war being marketed on TV, in an MTV mode. Each network had its own logo for the Gulf War, its own music, its own jump cut. ...

You kept the peace movement ashamed by reminding them that they didn't support our boys in Vietnam. Here you had numbers of people of the Left saying, 'We're against the war but we support our boys.' Of course you don't want American soldiers to die, you want them to come home. But to say you support our boys but not the war is such a schizophrenic statement that it could only disable the Left.

Then you terrify the press. The press lost the Vietnam War. Not only do you censor it, but you scare them. The result was the worst reporting of any war that could be imagined.

— Marilyn Young, author of *The Vietnam Wars: 1945-1990*, interviewed by David Barsamian, *Z Magazine, 11/93*

short takes

No Draft! No War!

by John Bach

[John Bach has the distinction of having served the second longest prison sentence for refusing to serve in Vietnam. He He was 21 years old in 1969, when his sentence began. He was released in 1972. The following is his account, written to a friend in 1970, of how he spent some of his time in the Allenwood Federal Prison Camp in Pennsylvania.]

The State of Connecticut recently sent me eight dollars as a reimbursement for clothing which was "lost" while I was in a state jail. After 13 months, forms filled out in triplicate and notarized, and a series of claims and letters, I finally received the check from the Department of Claims for the State of Connecticut. I had appraised the clothing's value at ten bucks, so the eight didn't disappoint me. Anyway I felt a bit hesitant about spending state money on myself. It was so nice and unexpected of Connecticut to reimburse me, the least I could do was to share the good fortune.

The day after the money was received, circulars were distributed: "Announcing: A Gala Celebration; the First Annual Allenwood Bastille Day Festival. July 14th, Tuesday. Before the news or maybe right after the news; between the dorms or (in case of a croquet match) behind dorm #5. Ice cream, cookies galore; limited cokes. Contests, prizes, surprises. A good time for all is guaranteed. Sponsored by the Department of Claims for the State of Connecticut."

The word did spread and interest was generated. Nobody was too sure what the hell a "Bastille Day Festival" was, and besides which circulated announcements

John Bach

originating outside the Control Center are unheard-of and strictly prohibited. The Quatorze Juillet arrived, ten bucks of ice cream, cookies, and cokes were liberated from the commissary, verbal invitations to all passers-by were given, and the goodies were opened. One quick verse of the "Marseillaise" was sung (badly, but it was Bastille Day after all). It was predominantly a C.O. [Conscientious Objector] affair — who but those "crazy fucking kids" would do something like that anyway? — but there was a good cross-section of blacks, Cubans, Puerto Ricans, Italians, and even one Black Muslim whom I've gotten to know pretty well.

It was a beautiful little affair: the weather was perfect, right out in the open, everybody sharing the limited refreshments, men who didn't ordinarily get together were rapping; a good rejuvenation of community spirit among men who were being systematically divested of all communally oriented activity.

In the center of the camp, willingly under the scrutiny of the hackery, good vibrations were emanating and other guys came over to see what was going on. The event was continued long after the food gave out; a touch football game, sustained conversation — a sense of community, of togetherness, of commonality was definitely discernible and that, too, was realized on everyone's part. Those who were looking for a chance to open up found others listening to mutual problems and sharing personal strengths. Things of this sort are not supposed to happen in prisons which are run on the premise of inmate disunity, and the authorities were noticeably upset. It was a joy-giving affair and a number of us with some over-view were thrilled to see the members of various cliques, normally self-segregating, getting together. What would have been a less significant event in the street took on major proportions in an environment where men who showed any community concern faced stern repression. What a trip! And, if only for an hour or two, how effete and unimportant our imprisonment appeared. Men realized they could still be men, open and to some extent freed from the prison expletive which decreed No Brotherhood.

I was called in to the Control Center the next morning, and asked if I had "organized" the "compound meeting." I was told that it was strictly prohibited and if it happened again I would be subject to harsh disciplinary treatment.

I was once asked by a correspondent whether incarceration had given me a new perspective on freedom. I remember answering that in even the most constrictive of environments resistance is always possible, and as long as that flame remains intact the free man can never be shackled or scarred. There's more truth in that than I realized at the time. The fact is, I am a free man, and I've gained yet one

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John Bach is currently a father and a house painter in Hartford, Conn. He's a regular, if unwelcome, visitor at the U.S. Navy installation (from which nuclear submarines are launched) in Groton, Conn.

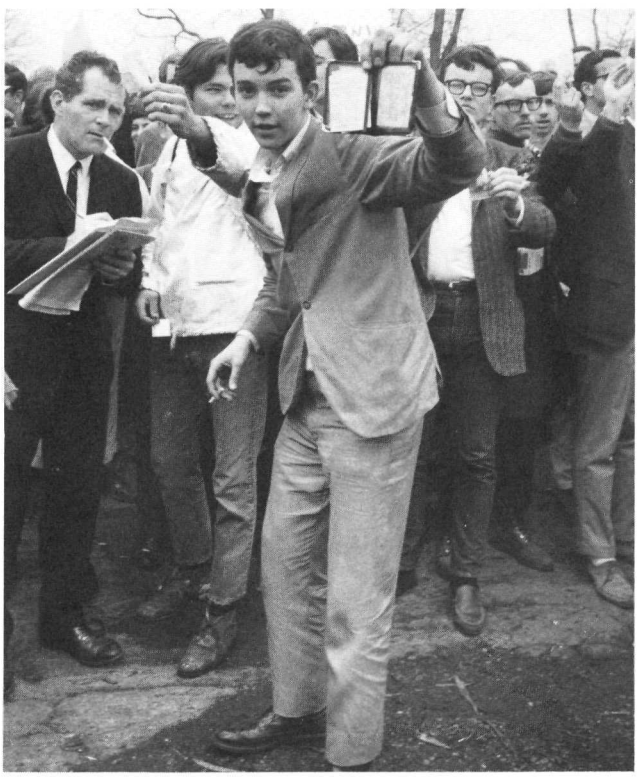
more insight into Thoreau, Gandhi, King, Nehru, and others. There are times when my joy is irrepressible.

But there is another side to the proverbial coin.

"April," wrote T.S. Eliot, "is the cruelest month." "Amen," I say. Just when you think you've got it licked, just when you've settled down into a winter's schedule, started on improving your French, doing some serious writing, teaching and seeing progress, re-reading Shakespeare — a play every two days; just when you think you got it licked, just when things seem to be cracking right along, Father Sun appears for the spring solstice and the omnipresent renaissance hammers home the fact that you're living your life up against the wall, and that only a dog would tolerate such an existence.

There's a record player here accessible to the whole population. Saturday afternoons have always been a very peculiar period of time for me. It was a time for reflection: remembrances of things past, of good times, of easy time, of stirred memories through association — music as the catalyst. Saturday was the one afternoon when a few of the C.O.'s and druggies could liberate the record room from the "Temptations-Supremes" contingent, and for a few hours groove to folk music and hard rock: the music with which we identify, the music which encompasses, music through which we commune. It's all there: Dylan, Baez, Stones, Beatles, Joplin, etc., more than enough to provide a long afternoon's digression with a good deal of pleasant variety.

Talk would be sporadic, not much conversation, most communication would be limited to the seconds between cuts and in between record changes. A familiar record of three years ago would bring with it as many different and colorful memories as there were listeners in the room. A time for shared happiness among the four to ten brothers who took part in the weekly ritual. For me, and I'm sure for the others, the music evoked memories of the times most enjoyable; times when we were the happiest; times of almost wild mental freedom. I think that's the way associative memory is formed:



A draft card burning in Central Park on April 15, 1967.
AP/Wide World Photos

the event will put a stamp on the accompanying music. Most of us had hitchhiked — a whole cerebrum of experience and associative memory. Only the most poignant remembrances surfaced. So we would talk, laugh, share. But there was, at the same time, indisputably, a specter present.

At times the music continued, undisturbed by lengthy silences; a tonal atmosphere permeated the room and was recognized by each. We all sat — on chairs, tables, the floor — almost all looking down at his shoes, an inscrutable frown or grin on each face. Music brought memories, memories of what we were now deprived of. The beautiful associations were turned back upon us. Each was fully conscious of the infinite absences (wives, girlfriends, horizons). There was no self-pity, no bitterness about being in prison, just a pervasive feeling of what was being missed.

Examples: for me parts of Dylan brought memories of a warm bed and an exceptional woman at Sara Lawrence. Some Beatles paint late night pictures of doing papers in Wesleyan; The Grateful Dead stirs memories of my Haight Ashbury trek; the throbbing beat of the Stones is an inner implosion of myself in all directions.

One Saturday afternoon there were only two of us present. We played a cut which I had heard live in Haight Ashbury, and during the next recording my mind flashed back to some beautiful rapping sessions Chris and I conducted while stoned. The other guy left the room for a moment to get some more cigarettes. I settled back, closed my eyes, and memories flashed by. I became very aware of a change that broke over me like a slow, cold wave. I was alone. I found a pack of Camels under a table and I smoked four in rapid succession. They got me quite high; I was bound into the music and memories; I could hear every separate instrument in spite of the frenzied pace at which they were played. Haight Ashbury came back; Susan came back; Chris came back; the European vagabondage came back. Prison came back. The expected train of thought came: "Two years, Oh, Jesus Christ, two more years — all that time." TW

Black power and church reparations

by Paul Washington

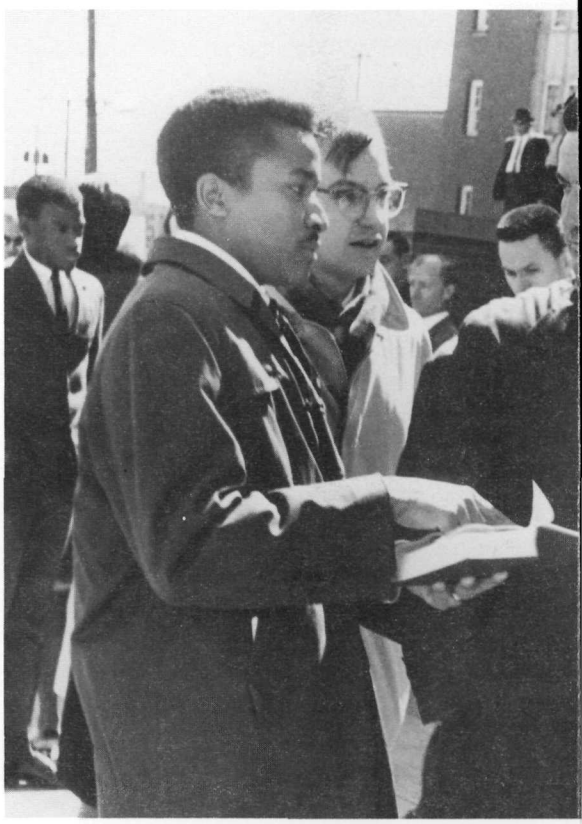
The next phase of the Black Power movement was inaugurated early in 1969, when James Forman, a civil rights veteran of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, walked down the aisle of New York City's Riverside Church during a Sunday service to demand a payment of "reparations" to black Americans. The case for reparations had been made in the document called "The Black Manifesto," which used the language of socialist revolution ("revolution which will be an armed confrontation and long years of sustained guerilla warfare inside this country") but presented what amounted to a modest proposal for reform based on the undeniable fact that exploited black Americans needed capital: "for the establishment of cooperative businesses ... a Southern Land Bank ... publishing and printing industries ... a research skills center.

"We the black people assembled in Detroit, Michigan for the National Black Economic Development Conference are fully aware that we have been forced to come together because racist white America has exploited our resources, our minds, our bodies, our labor. For centuries we have been forced to live as colonized people inside the United States, victimized by the most vicious racist system in the world. We have helped to build the most industrial country in the world."

Both the Manifesto, with its frightening rhetoric, and Forman's dramatic challenge to white church-going America had tremendous shock value. The media was more than ready to publicize this campaign for as long as members of the Black Economic Development Conference (BEDC) could keep walking down church aisles, forcing white church people to struggle with their consciences. Was this extortion, plain and simple, or was it a prophetic call to move beyond charity to a just sharing of resources with those who had been shut out of the system for so long? I heard it as prophecy.

Surely something was owed to a people who had been enslaved, set free, yet never given the "40 acres and a mule" they had been promised as their stake in the economy. Instead they had been further exploited under all the many forms of racial discrimination to this day. Now was the time to pay what was owed to those whose labor had first been stolen from them and then systematically undervalued for generations. The debt should be paid with no strings attached, in order to enable black control of economic and social institutions in the black community. If the church could not understand the moral basis of this claim for reparations, it seemed clear to me it would once more be rejecting the prophets in its midst. ...

On May 1st, James Forman had gone to the Episcopal Church Center in New

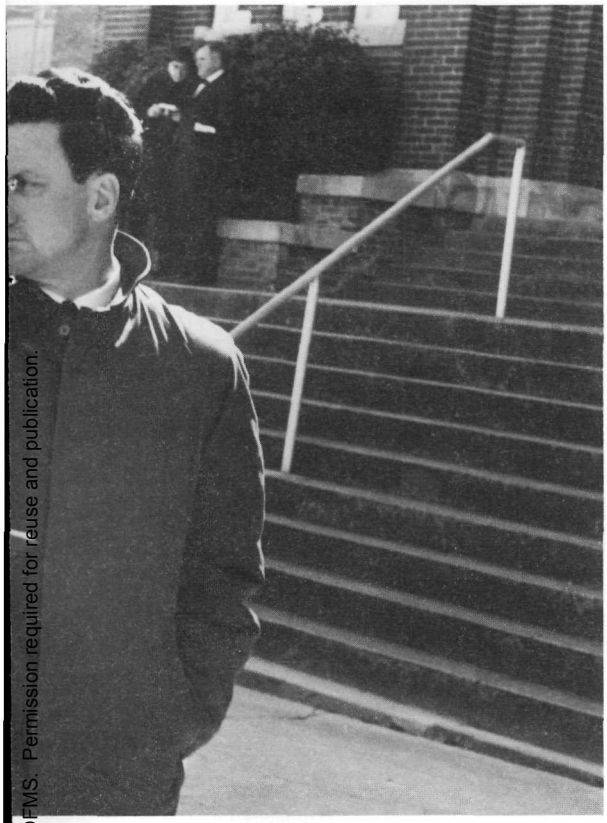


Students attempting to integrate a Methodist church in Ja policy prohibits segregation.

"We are demanding of the white Christian churches and Jewish synagogues which are part and parcel of the system of capitalism, that they begin to pay reparations to black people in this country. We are demanding $500,000,000 from the Christian white churches and the Jewish synagogues. This total comes to 15 dollars per nigger."

— The Black Manifesto, *issued, April, 1969*

Paul Washington is an Episcopal priest, participant in the freedom struggle and was host of the 1973 ordination of women at the Church of the Advocate in Philadelphia. An expanded version of this article will be included in his book, *"Other Sheep I Have": The autobiography of Fr. Paul M. Washington* which will be released by Temple University in May, 1994.



ackson, Miss. in 1966 point out to an usher that Methodist

Jim West

York City to present the Manifesto's demands. On May 13th he wrote to Presiding Bishop John Hines demanding 60 million dollars, plus 60 percent of the church's profit on assets each year, along with an accounting of the total assets of the Episcopal Church in all its dioceses. John Booty, in *The Episcopal Church in Crisis,* writes about the siege atmosphere that developed among church leaders as "plans were made, in cooperation with civic officials, for dealing with the possibility of unfriendly occupations of churches and church offices." [Booty, p. 61] By contrast, Bishop DeWitt suggested a positive response to the demands: Why not mortgage the Episcopal Church Center itself to raise a significant amount of money for the purpose? And as for the demonstrations, disruptions, and occupations of sacred places, why not value them as modern day examples of the prophetic acts we so cherish in the Biblical tradition? The bishop's enthusiasm is evident in his description of this movement years later:

"And then came the Black Manifesto, and its demand for reparations for generations of injustice done to Black people by Whites. It was a bold, imaginative effort. And bold and imaginative was the local spokesperson for the Black Manifesto, Muhammed Kenyatta. I will never forget when he intruded into a communion service at Holy Trinity, Rittenhouse Square. After interrupting the service and speaking to the demands of the Manifesto, he strode to the altar and picked up the alms basin. He flung the money on the floor of the sanctuary, dramatizing the sacrilege of a religious offering to God which belied and denied the weighty matters of the Law of God, such as racial justice. That was religious poetry acted out, worthy of a Jeremiah." [*Witness,* July, 1984, p.7.] Perhaps I don't need to add that the Rev. Cuthbert Pratt, Rector of Holy Trinity, did not appreciate the poetry. ...

Presiding Bishop John Hines called a special convention of the Episcopal Church for August 31-Sept. 5, 1969, in Notre Dame, Indiana. The convention was to deal with more than just the issues being raised by BEDC. At the 1967 General Convention in Seattle it was decided that more frequent meetings were needed "in this age of ceaseless change." It was the late 60s. A war was going on overseas, there were racial rebellions in the cities, and issues of justice were being raised within the church by racial minorities and by women.

Now was the time to pay what was owed to those whose labor had first been stolen from them and then systematically undervalued for generations.

As an elected deputy to General Convention from the Diocese of Pennsylvania I was in Seattle in 1967, where I was deeply impressed by the leadership of John Hines, who had gone out into the streets and neighborhoods of the cities which had exploded, in order to listen to the people there describe their own hopes and fears. The General Convention Special Program (GCSP), which was authorized in 1967 to give grants to community organizations to assist them in achieving some degree of political and economic power, had my full support. It had the flavor of a new age in which each person would know that he/she was a child of God and entitled to the good things of God.

Yet, when the Executive Council of the Episcopal Church issued its "Response to the Manifesto" on May 21, 1969, indicating that it would simply continue the work of GCSP, I believed that was not enough. I went to Notre Dame as a deputy, committed to assist Kenyatta in his demand for recognition of BEDC by the church and the payment of reparations to that body.

Matters quickly came to a head at the Sunday night opening plenary session when Kenyatta seized the microphone from the chairman of the Committee on Clergy Deployment as he was making a committee report. A tussle ensued, involving the Presiding Bishop, who tried to take the microphone back.

I was late for this plenary session, having been in a meeting of the black caucus of the convention. We were discussing the refusal of the chairs of the two houses of convention to place a report

dealing with the reparations issue early enough on the agenda to allow it a full hearing. A small group of us, including Barbara Harris and the Rev. Jesse Anderson, Jr., entered the top level of the stadium together.

Looking down to the stage below, we saw Kenyatta taking the microphone away from the Presiding Bishop. We immediately descended to the floor level alongside the stage. Never before and perhaps never again in the history of the church will we see a presiding bishop tussling with a dashiki-clad black man in a plenary session of a general convention!

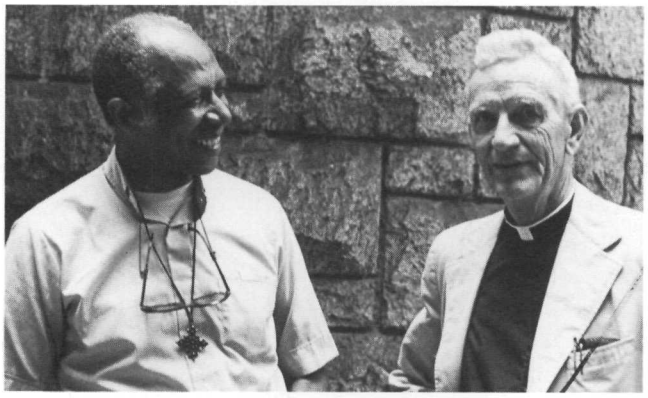
Jesse Anderson, Sr., ascended to the platform and addressed Bishop Hines. He said that Washington was a deputy to this convention and he asked for permission for me to speak. I was totally unprepared to speak in the midst of this confusion — nay, chaos — and I turned to young Jesse Anderson and asked him in desperation: "What must I say?" He quickly replied: "Call all black people to leave this convention."

Meanwhile, Bishop Hines was putting the question to the joint houses of the Convention there assembled: "Shall we allow Fr. Washington to speak?" After a quick show of hands, he immediately ruled that the answer was Yes, and I had the floor.

Never before in all my life had I been called upon to muster up the authority of voice, the power of spirit, and the stature (in that moment I grew from 5'9", 155 lbs., to 7', 290 lbs.) to move people to an action which no one had time to cerebralize. If they had, they would have thought about how blacks had waited a lifetime in the church to be deputies to General Convention, and now here was a Fr. Washington commending them to leave the place for which they had longed!

I can remember only saying : "White people cannot set the agenda for this church. Black people must set the agenda for this church and for this nation. And since you refuse to deal with our agenda, I have no choice but to call upon all blacks to leave this convention."

With that said, I stormed from the platform and started climbing tier by tier to the top level of the stadium to the exit. This was the loneliest and the longest walk of my life.



Paul Washington and Bob Dewitt, advocates of church reparations to African Americans.

Barbara Harris was at my left, the two Jesse Andersons and a few others followed, but I was pleadingly asking myself, "Will the blacks follow? Lord, will they follow?" If they did not, the name of Paul Washington would have gone down in disgrace. He dared to presume to lead and found no followers! But young Jesse Anderson and his father were looking to the right and to the left and commending: "You all come, come! Get up, come!" It was a dramatic, moving moment. Enough so that some felt impelled to move out with us.

Not only did enough blacks follow, but some whites also. We had precipitated a crisis, enough of a crisis to cause Bishop Hines and the Rev. John Coburn, chairman of the House of Deputies, to meet immediately after that joint session and decide to place our issue on the agenda the very next morning.

In an open hearing on Monday, the convention discussed the recommendations of a committee chaired by John Coburn which said that BEDC should channel any requests for money from the Episcopal Church through the GCSP, which had been established for that very purpose. That seemed reasonable enough to some, but it did not meet the approval of the Union of Black Clergy and Laity in the Episcopal Church (UBCL) or other supporters of BEDC. After all, BEDC was not coming with requests but with demands for reparations, and in an amount that would be beyond the capacity of GCSP.

UBCL spokesperson, the Rev. Joseph Pelham, asked that $200,000 be given immediately to BEDC and that a process of dialogue be established leading to making further church resources available, and that this be done in a way that did not reduce the church's responsibility to fully fund GCSP.

The $200,000 would be for administrative and devel-

The final action of the special convention on this matter was to vote the $200,000, not as reparations but as seed money. The story that appeared in the Chicago Tribune on Thursday morning had the sub-heading "Church Unit Votes Reparations." It appeared that Thoreau was right when he said that "a moral minority can precipitate a revolution."

opment expenses of BEDC nationally, — seed money, in effect.

Discussion from the floor revealed strong support on the part of some, including a white lay delegate who said he acknowledged the debt and was making a personal pledge of $1,000.

Opposition came from those like Bishop Stuart Wetmore of New York, who said, "Jim Forman is seeking our guilt money. ...We should not play the game of trying to buy him off." Others expressed confusion about BEDC. Was it a reliable organization? Was it violent, as the prologue to the Black Manifesto seemed to indicate? (Kenyatta had said that people could write their own prologue using biblical texts to replace James Forman's words.) What would the people back home make of the delegates' actions here in Notre Dame? How could they understand what was going on here?

The final action of the special convention on this matter was to vote the $200,000, not as reparations but as seed money. The money would not even go directly to BEDC but would be channeled through the National Committee of Black Churchmen, a group with recognizable and respected members from various Christian denominations.

In spite of all this maneuvering, the story that appeared in the Chicago Tribune on Thursday morning had the subheading "Church Unit Votes Reparations." It appeared that Thoreau was right when he said that "a moral minority can precipitate a revolution." For the Episcopal Church to have voted to respond even to the tune of $200,000 because of a moral imperative it was forced to confront by a miniscule Union of Black Clergy and Laity did seem revolutionary to some.

The session of convention held on Tuesday evening was the most remarkable of all. It was a time of debate on BEDC and related issues when Black convention delegates announced our intention to remain silent. Joseph Pelham said: "We have made our positions quite clear. This is your debate. We will sit and listen and watch very carefully." The result was a session during which white delegates experienced a relationship with black church members never known before. At the close, I had been selected to rise and speak a final word on behalf of the black delegates.

I told the white people in that hall that in all love and gentleness we had offered them an opportunity to rise up as men of God, but that they had been afraid to love, afraid of freedom, afraid to be beautiful. I told them that I pitied them. In their dealings with me it was as if they had tried to squeeze me a little bit too hard and I had slipped through their hands.

They still had a chance for greatness, I said. If they took it I knew it would mean they would go home to be crucified, but in doing that they could follow in the steps of Jesus.

After Notre Dame there was backlash in the church. Even the appearance of the church yielding to the reparations demand caused some to leave the church and others to cut their giving to the church's national programs. John Booty explains the motives of the critics: "Some of those reacting against Notre Dame revealed strong racial prejudice. Others were reacting to what they saw as rampant liberalism." [Booty, pp. 61-2] But neither liberals nor conservatives were pleased with the outcome. The demand for reparations had been neither accepted nor clearly rejected. The desire in the hearts of many to take seriously the commands of the Bible as framed in the Prayer Book's call for restitution was frustrated on the one hand by fear and racist attitudes and on the other by the limitations of the instrument that had been offered to enable restitution for acknowledged injuries and wrongs. TW

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Revolutionary art

by Blaise Tobia and Virginia Maksymowicz

It has become a cliché to speak of the period we call the "Sixties" as a time of revolution, but the visual artworld, certainly, was in turmoil. Artists were searching for new ways to connect their work to contemporary issues.

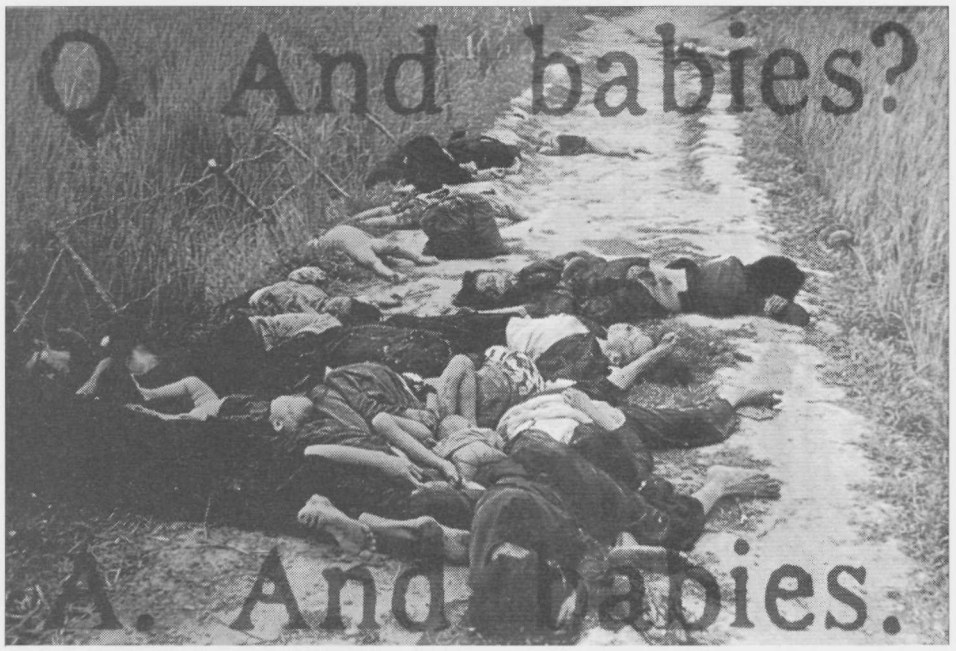
In retrospect, two seemingly opposite approaches to artmaking have become particularly emblematic of the sixties' struggles. One strove to bring mainstream culture into the museums; the other strove to move art out of the museums into the arena of everyday life.

Andy Warhol was perhaps the best known of the artists who chose the first approach. His "Pop Art" Brillo box sculptures and Campbell's soup can paintings became as ubiquitous in the halls of culture as the original products were on the supermarket shelves. What had begun in 1962 as a deadpan comment on the state of contemporary painting became a critique of consumerism on all levels.

Warhol's commentary on the political and social milieu of the decade became even more blunt when he applied his matter-of-fact, repetitive style to images of electric chairs, car wrecks and the JFK assassination. "Pop art's indifference to humanity seemed most shocking when it dealt with the human figure," observed art historian Irving Sandler in *American Art of the 1960s*, "It was perverse enough when it focused on objects; worse, on commodities ... but unforgivable when it equated man with a soup can."

In contrast, some activist artists, not satisified with exhibiting on the sheltered walls of galleries and museums, began collaborating to bring their images to a wider public. In 1969, one group came together as the Art Workers' Coalition. Much of their activity centered around confronting the powerful museums, galleries, critics, art magazines and collectors that they perceived as getting in the way — "intervening," in Hilton Kramer's words in the *New York Times*, "between the production of a work of art and its meaningful consumption." Perhaps their most successful circumvention of this regulated system of distribution took place through the efforts of their poster committee. Frazer Dougherty, Jon Hendricks and Irving Petlin combined an army photograph of the 1968 My Lai massacre (taken by R.I. Haeberle for *Life*), with words taken from an interview about the carnage by Mike Wallace with a Vietnam veteran — the question "And babies?" — hovering in red at the top. The soldier's reply, "And babies," underscores the bloody image. The widely disseminated poster became a well-known icon for the anti-war movement.

Ironically, the Museum of Modern Art now holds in its collection examples of both Andy Warhol's soup cans and the Art Workers' Coalition poster: Ironic, first, because so selective an institution was forced to legitimize grand-scale images of commercial products as the high art of the decade; second, because, at the time of its issuance, the poster had been considered too blatantly political for co-sponsorship by the museum, which flatly refused to associate its name with the project. TW



Poster by the Artworkers' Coalition, 1970

Courtesy of the artists

art and society

Blaise Tobia and **Virginia Maksymowicz,** Philadelphia artists, edit the Art & Society Section of *The Witness.*

Indianapolis '94

Still addressing sin

by Julie A. Wortman

Sparked by Arizona voters' refusal to approve a state holiday honoring Martin Luther King, the 1991 General Convention held in Phoenix was to have been an occasion for the Episcopal Church to acknowledge and address its own institutional racism. But — except for loud grumblings over allegedly "pagan" elements in a worship service led by native peoples — sex, not racial and ethnic differences, generally commanded center stage at that long, hot, controversy-ridden gathering three years ago.

Some, in fact, suspected this was not accidental. An evening plenary session on participants' racial attitudes was nearly knocked off the schedule entirely because of what were identified as logistical problems. And, although a "racism audit" of bishops, deputies, delegates to the triennial meeting of Episcopal Church Women and others indicated that most were very willing to fight white racism, the audit also revealed that significant numbers were flatly reluctant to acknowledge racism's presence in, or importance to, the Episcopal Church.

Still, several strong anti-racism resolutions were passed in 1991. Based on a theological statement developed by the church's fledgling three-year-old national Commission on Racism that called white institutional racism one of society's "idols," deputies and bishops condemned the practice of racism as a sin. Another resolution urged greater racial diversity in the membership of church bodies and the creation of diocesan anti-racism commissions or committees. A third asked the church to make combatting institutional racism an Episcopal Church priority for at least the next nine years.

Unlike the church's programmatic, grant-making response to the demands for racial justice and empowerment in the late 1960s, the focus in Phoenix was institutional reform and confessional repentance, a shift responsive to reactionary claims that social-justice concerns are too political and "issues-oriented" for God-fearing folk to take seriously.

"Our work is not a program," stresses Richard Aguilar, the Commission on Racism's co-chair. "Racism is ultimately a spirituality issue. It is an alienation that inhibits us from being God's people."

Emmett Jarett, president of the Episcopal Urban Caucus, a group formed in 1980 to address the needs of city people and parishes, agrees. "The life of prayer and working for justice is one life," he says. "We want to get away from the typical liberal attitude that we shouldn't mention Jesus — Jesus is in the midst of the social-justice struggle."

The Caucus will be using its 1994 Assembly in Charlotte, N.C., this February to develop an "Anti-Racist Spirituality," which it plans to publish in time for the 1994 convention. A featured speaker will be English "community theologian" Kenneth Leech. The group is also working on defining racism in a way that includes, in addition to African Americans, Hispanics, Asians and native peoples.

As for what type of anti-racism legislation to expect in Indianapolis, Aguilar expects a lot of collaboration between groups focusing on such matters as environmental stewardship, economic justice, women, and cities as a result of networking efforts begun last summer.

"Passage of a resolution can give you space to operate," says Henry Atkins, Episcopal Chaplain at New Jersey's Rutgers University and another member of the national racism commission. "If we hadn't passed a resolution in Phoenix urging dioceses to form their own anti-racism commissions, the diocesan consultations our commission did this past triennium would not have happened."

Since Phoenix, the Commission on Racism has consulted with more than 80 of the 99 domestic dioceses on how they can begin their anti-racism efforts.

Still, only about 50 dioceses have gotten much beyond the initial organizational stage, says Sarah McCrory, the commission's other co-chair. Based on a survey of newspapers published in 57 dioceses, she has the impression that "about 20 are doing something, 20 are piddling around and 10 to 15 don't believe [racism] is an issue." McCrory, who characterizes herself as "a typical white southern lady," says her own home diocese of Upper South Carolina is doing very little to address institutional racism because there, as in many

Indianapolis '94?

Every three years (or triennium) the Epsicopal Church's bishops and elected lay and ordained diocesan representatives (called deputies) convene in "General Convention" to address the vital matters before it, from ailing church finances to strategies for economic justice. The next General Convention will be held this year in Indianapolis, Ind., from August 24 until September 2.

The commissions and committees (called interim bodies) appointed to implement the decisions made at the 1991 General Convention (held in Phoenix, Ariz.), and the church's elected Executive Council (which acts on matters that come before the national church between General Conventions), will report on their work and offer resolutions that stem from that work for action. Bishops, dioceses and diocesan deputies may also present resolutions for consideration.

As currently structured, the General Convention meets in two separate legislative bodies, the House of Deputies and the House of Bishops. As with the U.S. Congress, resolutions must pass in both houses in the same form before becoming an official action of the church.

As with any such meeting, numerous groups and persons throng the corridors and vigil at the edges of the debate in each house, agitating for support of their positions, views and concerns. Special panels and presentations are sometimes made to joint sessions of deputies and bishops as a means of sharing information or provoking thought and discussion.

dioceses across the church, "not many people have a consciousness of institutional white racism."

Atkins says another stumbling block is that most diocesan leaders lack the tools needed for addressing racism effectively.

"Most bishops really want to address the issue, but most dioceses do not have people with the analysis of what needs to be done. Social-analysis types are thought of as fringe types in most places, so they are not part of the planning of anti-racism strategies. There is also an unfortunate estrangement between the church and groups that are engaged in the struggle — like the NAACP, for example."

But Atkins and others do see positive results from the anti-racism "training" work some dioceses, notably Massachusetts and Los Angeles, have begun.

"Anti-racism training has three stages," Atkins explains. "First, the training helps people expand their awareness so that they understand that we are talking about more than individual prejudice and bias and that it is not true that all we need to do is clean up our individual acts. Then comes the stage of moving to concrete action, whether it is paying attention to the music in worship, the artwork on the walls or spending your money on minority contractors. The third stage is evaluating how well you've done."

Most everyone seems to agree that if anti-racism efforts are to succeed, the focus has to be on congregational attitudes. The national racism commission's Aguilar points to his own experience serving as a parish priest in the southwest border community of Brownsville, Tex., in 1988. He arrived in town to find that there were only two institutions in Brownsville that were not bi-lingual and bi-cultural — an Episcopal Church and a Presbyterian congregation located across the street from it.

"White church members refuse to accept the reality that in this society we are not all white," Aguilar says. "If we don't address what separates us, we're not being faithful — we're not being one in Christ, we're being broken."

Some thoughts on racism as the church approaches General Convention

by Diane M. Porter

"DO YOU WANT TO CHANGE? DO YOU REALLY WANT TO CHANGE?"

Those words of Dean David Collins have played over and over in my head as if a tiny compact disc had been implanted in a memory cell during the 1991 General Convention in Phoenix. He issued that challenge to the joint session of bishops and deputies during the report back on the racism audit that almost didn't happen.

As a society we want quick, instant, painless, effortless solutions to long-term problems — witness the quick-weight-loss diet craze. An instant drink or a magical tea taken three times daily for two weeks and whamo! — all the years of fat are instantly gone. The same is exactly true of the way we want to work on racism — we want to eliminate years of conditioned learned behaviors in an instant — the you've-got-20-minutes-on-the-agenda-for-this-racism-thing—and-don't-go-over-it-because-we-have-more-important-things-to-cover-OK? syndrome. Or, the we-had-a-multi-cultural-experience-last-week-and-it-was-wonderful syndrome.

But just the same way as those instantly lost pounds creep back on, sometimes in amounts greater than before, without long-term conditioning and retraining, those instant multi-cultural experiences quickly fade in real-life settings.

"DO YOU WANT TO CHANGE?" In the Episcopal Church the answer is obviously "Yes," especially if it can be effortless. Yes, we want to change, but it's like our every Monday-morning diet, without a real commitment to change, we will continue to work at racism in fits and starts. Dieting requires giving up some of the very things that got us into the condition that we are in and those are often our most favorite foods — and anti-racism work means a serious commitment to giving up some favorite things, mostly privilege and power.

Diane M. Porter

We as a church are confused between working around multi-cultural development issues and working on anti-racism. I am often told that we don't need a racism commission or committee because we are working on multi-culturalism. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Appreciating the diversity that exists within our church is a noble goal, but it is also another manifestation of the racism within our institutional life because as long as those in power only treat the surface problems of acceptance, the root causes of racism remain — and that root is deep.

Many in our church live in a state of denial about racism. When I receive a letter asking, "Show me racism or give me a concrete example of racism," I know that deep denial abounds. I am unwilling to believe that in 1993 someone needs to be shown an example of racism.

Our church is also still essentially looking at racism as a black-and-white issue, leaving our Asian, Native American and Hispanic brothers and sisters invisible — and more troubling yet, our church wants people of color to solve the problem or at least to make the problem go away.

"DO YOU WANT TO CHANGE?" Still, there is some good news in all of this. We would expect the Episcopal Urban Caucus to focus on racism, but their uniting with the church's Peace and Justice Network is a hopeful sign of widening the circle of people committed to change. The Presiding Bishop has been unwavering in his personal

support and in holding up the theme throughout this triennium. His voice will be strengthened when the bishops' pastoral teaching on racism is issued. Several dioceses from coast to coast have taken the challenge seriously and have devoted serious time and attention to working through this issue. The Province I synod (New England) spent an entire weekend on "Unlearning Racism." And the United Thank Offering has sought out assistance in exploring racism, as has the Episcopal Church Women.

But perhaps for me the most hopeful sign is one single letter. I am in correspondence with a priest in the deep south who after writing a damning letter has sent two follow-ups, opening a dialogue — and I sincerely believe that this man wants to change. Maybe like the biblical housewife, I have found my lost coin.

DO WE WANT TO CHANGE? I think some do. Until I became serious about dieting I didn't know how good I could feel and this church won't know how good it can be until it rids itself of institutional racism.

DO WE WANT TO CHANGE? Yes, but let's make the new challenge for the coming triennium, "ARE WE WILLING TO DO WHAT IT TAKES TO CHANGE!"

— Diane Porter is senior executive for program and executive of Advocacy, Witness and Justice Ministries at the Episcopal Church's national headquarters in New York.

Victoria Matthews elected Canada's first woman bishop

Matthews at a press conference with Terence Finlay, Bishop of Toronto.
Anglican Journal/Ron Cole

Victoria Matthews, 39, was elected suffragan bishop of Toronto on Nov. 19, 1993, making her the first woman bishop in the Anglican Church of Canada and the Anglican Communion's fifth woman bishop.

Matthews was ordained to the priesthood in 1980 and has been serving All Soul's Church in north Toronto for the past six years.

Vital Signs

Fasting in El Salvador

by Henry Atkins

In November my wife, Treadwell, and I travelled to El Salvador, where our daughter, Hannah (a second-year seminarian), was fasting with a group protesting the renewed activity of death squads in El Salvador.

From Nov. 1 to 23, the group fasted in *La Iglesia San Antonio* in the Department of Chalatenango. They included farmers, housewives, ex-*comandantes* of the *Farabundo Marti* National Liberation Front (FMLN), Roman Catholic priests, a member of the National Legislature, and various solidarity workers from Latin America, the U.S. and Europe.

Elections are scheduled to take place in El Salvador in March, 1994, and the renewed death-squad activity appears to be, in part, an attempt to create an environment of fear which will keep the poor from registering to vote.

In the last week of October there were four killings in five days. Two of the victims, Francisco Velis and Heleno Castro Guevara, were leaders of the FMLN, now a legal political party in El Salvador. Velis had recently been chosen to run for the National Legislature in the upcoming elections. He was shot on a main street in San Salvador as he took his daughter to a day care center. Guevara was found in his pickup truck on a rural highway, shot to death. A married couple who were former guerrilla soldiers were also among those killed. The woman had been breast-feeding her baby.

On Nov. 15, we drove into San Salvador as thousands of Salvadorans were coming into the city to protest the renewed death-squad activity. Many of the people who were on the fast in Chalatenango made the hard two-hour drive to the Saviour of the World Plaza.

The next day, Treadwell and I returned with our daughter to the church in Chalatenango. That night was the anniversary of the assassination of the Jesuit priests and their housekeepers. Jon Cortina, S.J., one of the hunger strikers and a priest with a long history of ministry among the poor in Chalatenango, spoke of the need to speak the truth, saying that God loves truth, but that to speak truth in El Salvador is dangerous.

I spoke that night of the ongoing need for a theology of solidarity. When people go on hunger strikes to protest death in El Salvador, we are called to join in whatever way is possible for us. To be in solidarity with the poor means that we see the world as our parish.

The hunger strikers were overjoyed at news that some people in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Washington D.C. and New York City were engaging in solidarity activities. "We are not alone," they said.

On Tuesday, Nov, 23, a U.N. proposal for investigation of the death squads was accepted by the ARENA government, and the fast ended.

— Henry L. Atkins, Jr., is Episcopal Chaplain to Rutgers University.

Ecu Takes: Racism

United Church of Christ

Madison T. Shockley II, pastor of the Congregational Church of Christian Fellowship, United Church of Christ (UCC), in Los Angeles, and a member of the UCC's Commission for Racial Justice, offers this perspective on how his denomination is addressing institutional white racism:

The Commission for Racial Justice of the United Church of Christ is a major part of our denomination and a major focus of ministry. The Commission was established in the 1960s during the civil rights movement to address and combat racism both within the church and in society at large. It is most known for Ben Chavis, who was assistant executive director while he was in prison, then was executive director from 1985 until this year, when he became executive director of the NAACP.

Our General Synod last summer passed a resolution calling for the UCC to become a multi-racial, multi-cultural church, laying claim on embracing and increasing the diversity of the church — which statistically is not very diverse. It's probably 85 percent Anglo and 15 percent "other" — and that's generous.

The resolution represents a commitment of resources to the development of additional representation of African-American, Latino, Asian and Native American communities, both in congregations and leadership development.

The other main thrust of the Commission has been addressing environmental racism — a term coined by Ben Chavis. We continue to hold conferences on the patterns of the location of toxic waste dumps in communities of people of color. A study published a few years ago showed that there's an even higher correlation between toxic waste dumping and race than between race and poverty.

Apathy and moral fatigue are always the obstacles to progress in these areas. There is a moral fatigue in the struggle against racism in society at large — people are sort of tired of hearing about it. Our church is a mainstream church and reflects society at large.

But I feel optimistic about making progress on racial justice within the church, and that our church will continue to advocate for racial justice in the society at large.

American and Southern Baptists

Ken Sehested, Executive Director of the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America, offers this view of his denomination's anti-racism commitments:

My congregation is dually aligned with the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and the American Baptist Convention (ABC). The ABC represents the northern cousins who split in 1845 over the issue of whether missionaries could have slaves.

Both the Southern Baptists and the American Baptists have an extraordinary number of people of color aligned in congregations. There are four or five thousand African-American congregations aligned with the Southern Baptist Convention.

The SBC has operated on the homogenous growth principle, which, in effect, is the blessing of racism as a principle for church growth development. It's the principle that "like attracts like." They go into neighborhoods, creating Hispanic or African-American or Chinese-Mandarin congregations, using their natural inclination to band together as minorities in a dominant white culture.

None of them have been integrated into the leadership of the denomination. In the SBC there is still a deep paternalism at work. There is a very weak formal polity and a very potent old boys' network.

I worked on a project this year in which we discovered that after the bombing of the 16th Street Church in Birmingham, Ala., in 1963, a resolution was brought to extend sympathy to the congregation, and for the Executive Committee to encourage churches to contribute to a fund to rebuild the church. This very modest resolution was voted down and a substitute resolution was passed, that basically said "racial conflict is bad." Our conference was held in Birmingham this year, and the current pastor of 16th Street was the conference preacher. We had a signature campaign, and collected $5,000 to turn over to him.

The reactions to our campaign showed that many people have a profound misunderstanding of the notion of repentance. There is an attempt to say that any rehearsing of that history is bad for us, that recalling it is going to do more harm than good.

The American Baptist churches have done a much better job of integrating people of color into leadership. There have been some pretty strong affirmative action goals over the last 12 years.

More than half of the presidents of the American Baptist Churches have been people of color. A significant number of ranking positions in the denomination are filled by people of color.

In American Baptist life there was a sufficient cross-racial constituency of folk willing to take the risk of having "strangers," so to speak, come into leadership positions in the congregation. There were sufficient numbers who said, we're going to have to elect people of color into positions of leadership even if they don't have high visibility, even if they haven't come up through the pecking order. There has been a very courageous attempt to leap over structural boundaries.

I do sense that the devastation that hit Los Angeles and prompted smaller rebellions around the country acted as a wake-up call.

Last year the Baptist World Alliance created a Special Commission of Baptists Against Racism. The reaction was very powerful among people of color here and around the world. It hit a nerve that was sore and raw.

Two liberal splinter groups from the Southern Baptists have both approved statements confessing complicity with racism.

What happened in Los Angeles stirred the embers of Baptist life and I'm hopeful it will move us forward at least a little bit.

Witness to murder

by Gloria House Manana

We are in a procession evoking the Middle Ages: a pageantry of opulent vestments and banners, redolent incense, abundant candles, appropriately majestic hymns — ritual rooted in an ancient faith that if one touches the holy image, one touches Spirit. It is the installation of Jonathan's icon. With the others I wait my turn to approach, happy that the church has recognized the significance of his sacrifice.

Close now to the painting, I contemplate Jonathan of the one-dimensional flatness prescribed by iconographic conventions, and pictures full of Alabama sunlight flood my memory: Jonathan, turning in to the freedom school yard, broad smile of camaraderie towards us; a slender, fast-moving figure, graceful, sophisticated; focused, determined energy; children accompanying him through the Selma housing project, their voices singing freedom songs; his car racing along hot Alabama blacktops.

Jonathan Daniels was one of that army of hundreds who, moved by a sense of personal responsibility, left universities and comfortable, safe environments in the north and south to join the freedom movement. Jon's life and death are icons of an era and of the choices made by freedom workers of his generation.

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In 1965, Selma was still a center of movement activity. The brutality of the Montgomery march, the murder of Viola Luizzo, and the countless incidents of injustice and physical assault had not succeeded in killing the people's spirit. The Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) was organizing voters for the Democratic Party, and the Students Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), whose Alabama office was in Selma, had begun to develop independent political parties in several nearby counties. Though it had been a century since slavery, Selma was still starkly segregated — two towns in effect, hot, slow, unattractive. Nevertheless, movement culture was thriving: enthusiastic attendance at mass meetings, powerful, church-rocking music, and the children — magnificent in their role as bright, spunky muses of revolution.

I had come south with a group of students from the Bay Area to set up a freedom school for Selma children. We found a house to rent on St. Ann Street, bordering the housing project. Brown's Chapel, the site of most civil rights meetings and mobilization, was nearby. I met Jonathan at Alice West's home in the housing project, where movement activists gathered to relax.

Jonathan was delighted to have a fellow Episcopalian with whom he could begin to integrate the local Episcopal church. He suggested that we take several of the children with us on Sundays, and this we did. However, the parishioners remained hostile, refusing to receive the sacraments with us or after us. They were a pathetic lot, priest and congregation, holding on to the past. I think they might have regretted painfully their rejection of Jonathan when they heard just a few weeks later that he had been murdered. They would never have an opportunity to extend the love he deserved as one of their most courageous sons.

Jonathan and I also became involved with the SNCC project in Lowndes County, twenty miles from Selma, at the invitation of Stokely Carmichael (now Kwame Ture, a former chairperson of SNCC, and presently head of the All African People's Revolutionary Party, a socialist organization). He had taken us to meet the families and to attend the Sunday mass meetings in this county, where African-Americans were 90 percent of the population, but owned only five percent of the land, and where the white elite was notoriously vicious. (Interestingly, Lowndes was one of the Black Belt counties that W.E.B. DuBois studied at the turn of the century. Very little had changed in the long interim between DuBois' work and SNCC's.)

Soon I was teaching in the freedom school in the mornings, and working with the SNCC staff in Lowndes in the afternoons and on weekends. Jonathan was with us frequently, and a friendship developed among us. Toward the end of the summer, the Lowndes freedom organization planned to picket a grocery store in Hayneville, the county seat. Jonathan participated in this demonstration, along with about 30 of us, including SNCC workers, local teenagers, and a Catholic priest from Chicago, Father Richard Morrisroe. After a few minutes of picketing, we were arrested, herded onto a garbage truck and transported to the county jail. This was a small, two-story structure, the ground floor flooded with filthy water which we had to wade through to get to the cells. The men were put into upstairs cells, while the three women, Ruby Sales, Joyce Bailey and I, were locked in a cell on the first floor. We found the sink crusted with dirt, the faucet not working,the toilet stopped up. The stench was overwhelming. Here we spent two weeks, singing freedom songs so loudly that the men could hear us upstairs and join in. Enduring these circumstances, we felt strangely vindicated when we heard that there was

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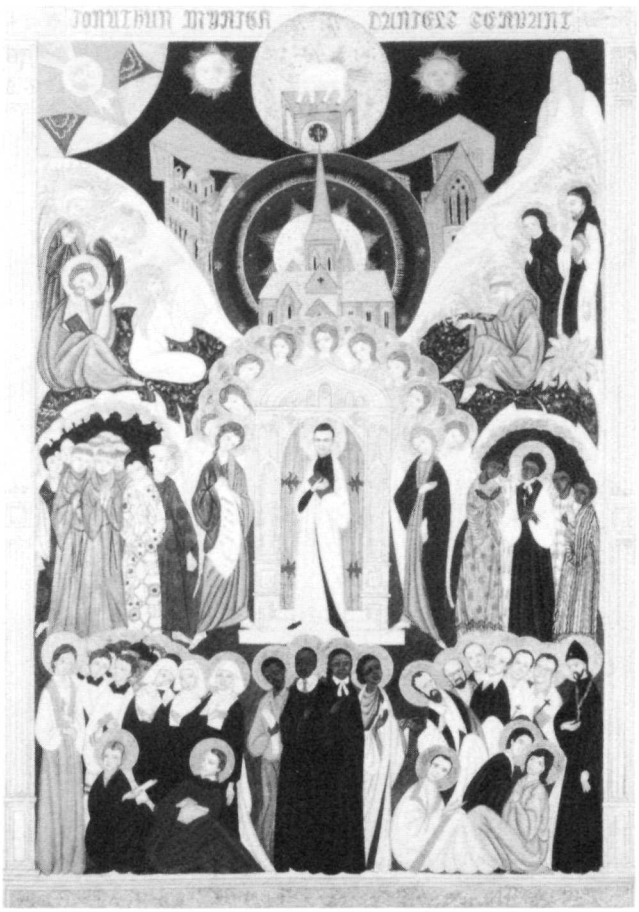
a major rebellion occurring in Watts, Los Angeles, the first of the urban uprisings that would sweep the country during the sixties.

One day a guard came to tell us we were being released. This surprised us, as we had not been informed by the SNCC office that our bail had been paid, or that arrangements had been made to pick us up. We were more than reluctant to leave, fearing what might await us outside, but the jailers forced us away at gunpoint.

Some of the youngsters in our group suggested that we head for the nearby store to buy cold drinks and snacks, a well-received idea given the bacon rind, beans and dry biscuits we had been offered daily in the jail. As we turned onto the main Hayneville road toward the store, we heard gunfire. We were horrified to realize that the shots were coming in our direction. The teenagers scattered quickly, knowing their way around the county better than the rest of us. We others fell to the ground, not knowing what else to do. Jonathan, who was closest to the gunman, was murdered right there under our eyes. Father Morrisroe was shot in the back, wounded so critically that it was years before he walked again.

In those moments of terror, we thought we all would be killed. When the gunfire stopped, Ruby Sales, Jimmy Rogers (a SNCC staff member) and I ran up and down that road trying to get help for Father Morrisroe. People would not come out of their homes and shops to help. It seemed a very long time before an ambulance arrived and Ruby and I dropped, exhausted, into the SNCC car that had come for us.

Several of us travelled to Keene, N. H. for Jonathan's funeral. Then, still in shock, I returned to Selma. The summer was over, and I was due in Berkeley to resume my job as a teaching assistant in the French Department and continue my graduate studies. I packed and flew back to California, but could not stay. My heart was now with the Lowndes, Selma and SNCC communities and the work there. I apologized to Professor Calame, an Algerian, then Chair of the French Department, who said his own experience of the Algerian revolution helped him understand what I was doing, and I was back in Alabama within a week. Silas Norman, then head of Alabama SNCC, hired me as a SNCC field secretary, and I remained in Lowndes County for two years.



Icon of Jonathon Daniels by Alexander Gassel
courtesy of Episcopal Divinity School

The man who killed Jonathan and caused Morrisroe such prolonged pain was never punished. At his trial we learned that he had been deputized before the shootings, and was carrying out a plan to kill the two whites in our group, for whites who dared to align themselves with the freedom movement posed threats to the illusions, fears and privileges of racist southerners. Our expulsion from jail had been the first step of the murderous set-up, concerning which the local white community had been alerted.

Almost 30 years have passed since our stay in Hayneville Jail and the trauma of seeing Jon lying dead and Father Morrisroe moaning in pain a few feet away from us on a curiously deserted main road in Lowndes County. No one turns back to a life of indifference to human struggle after experiences like these — and there were so many such experiences for freedom workers. At the end of SNCC staff meetings, we used to form a circle and sing the freedom songs, the most moving of which was this affirmation of struggle in spite of loss:

We have walked through the valley of death
We had to walk all by ourselves
But we'll never turn back
No, we'll never turn back
Until we've all been freed
And we have equality.
We have hung our heads and cried
Cried for those who, like us, have died
Died for you and died for me
Died for the cause of equality.
But we'll never turn back
No, we'll never turn back
Until we've all been freed
And we have equality.

TW

Sixties' culture and mysticism

by Ken Leech

The sixties were not a kaleidoscopic misadventure. We owe them the renewal of social conscience over such issues as nuclear weapons and racism, the ecology, feminism, and especially the mystical revival, the new concern with consciousness, as well as some more ambivalent developments — the Jesus movement and the resurgence of the occult.

What we witnessed, often obscured beneath the widespread interest in psychedelic drugs, was a new spiritual quest which had been, for the most part, forced into unorthodox channels and which, with some exceptions, bypassed the mainstream churches.

That quest emerged from the ruins of a decayed Christianity and a vulgar materialistic culture. For a time it was sidetracked into drugs - as one would expect in a society where drug use was endemic - but by 1968 we were seeing a shift away from drugs to a concern with inner exploration, with mysticism, with the occult, with personal and political liberation. Many young people were looking afresh at eastern spiritual traditions. Spirituality seemed to be on the increase everywhere —except perhaps inside the churches.

Of course, mistakes were made in the sixties. One of them was that sections of the church succumbed to the cult of "relevance" in spite of the warnings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

No one saw the dangers of "relevance" as a criterion, or of the neglect of ascetical discipline, prayer and worship, more clearly than Bonhoeffer did. Much sixties religion turned its back on transcendence — just at the point at which many outside the church were thirsting for mystery. As it simplified its liturgies and became "relevant", the hippies turned to kaftans, bells and incense and read *The Cloud of Unknowing.*

For all their naiveté, the hippies of the late sixties had begun to see through the vulgarity and sham of the affluent society. We did not hear their message, and we got Thatcherism, the most crude postwar version of the worship of Mammon. It was, and is, like its American equivalents a climate in which fundamentalisms of all kinds are likely to flourish, for the private religions are part of capitalism's success story. But it is a climate which is alien to true spiritual values, one in which those who seek to pursue both the path of contemplation (which occupied the spiritual seekers of the sixties) and the path of social justice (which occupied many Christians in the same period) will find themselves increasingly swimming against the tide. TW

Haight-Ashbury Elaine Mayes

Kenneth Leech is an Anglican socialist, priest and widely published author. Photographer Elaine Mayes works in N.Y.C.

Church people in the struggle

by Joe Agne

Church People in the Struggle: The National Council of Churches and the Black Freedom Movement, 1950 - 1970, James F. Findlay, Jr., Oxford University Press, 1993. 255 pp.

Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote his "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" in 1963, the same year that the National Council of Churches (NCC) established its Commission on Religion and Race. One urged religious leaders to risk controversy to be faithful and the other provided a vehicle to do so.

Findlay recounts the role of the NCC and its member denominations in the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, Mississippi Summer, the Mississippi Delta Ministry, and church response to the Black Manifesto issued in 1969.

He is frank to acknowledge he is writing about denominations in which European Americans dominate. Extensive use of NCC archives and interviews with active participants bring fresh insights to these struggles. (Although the book would have been strengthened by interviews with other persons active in the era who could offer an assessment of the NCC role, such as black church activists who were not active in the NCC and civil rights workers in secular organizations.)

There is ample data here on the church's collusion with the U.S. government even while the church engaged in the Civil Rights struggle.

In a startling revelation Findlay documents that the General Secretary of the NCC, at the request of J. Edgar Hoover's office, provided the FBI a list of all participants in orientation sessions which preceded Mississippi summer. Included were names and addresses of students, SNCC [Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee] and CORE [Congress on Racial Equality] staff, local African-American citizens of Mississippi, and other participants, including NCC staff, thereby placing all their lives in jeopardy.

This book probes what some want kept secret. Robert Spike, executive director of the NCC Commission on Religion and Race until January, 1966, was murdered on October 17, 1966. There is considerable evidence of the federal government's role in Spike's death, yet local police suggested that his death was related to his bisexuality. Their charged assailant was released on a technicality.

The murderer of Robert Spike has never been legally determined and to date significant investigation into his death has been successfully chilled by homophobia. Consequently, the life and work of Robert Spike has been smeared. The expansive telling of his courageous ministry is truly a gift.

James Findlay suggests the NCC's elitist leadership, out of touch with local followers, was the reason the churches' coalition with movement groups could not endure. He misses additional possibilities.

The liberal church was no less racist, just differently racist, than the structures it sought to change. Conservative racism seeks to control white institutions. Liberal racism seeks to control colorful institutions. Black Power insisted that white leaders become followers or at least colleagues. White leaders abandoned the anti-racism struggle and used their learnings to develop European-American dominated movements related to disarmament, students, peace, justice for women, ecology, etc.

Moreover, it was not "followers" that church leaders were unable to deliver to the movement. Many local people were more involved than national church leaders. Rather, it was (and is) a raw economic and cultural power in the established protestant church that could not be delivered. This power is not always evident, but African-American leaders felt betrayed when it was not forthcoming. They held European-American activists responsible for what they never had the power to deliver, even if they thought they could.

But significant change does happen when the church joins its strength with activist movement groups. James Findlay provides a valuable reflection on the making and breaking of a justice coalition 30 years ago. Knowing the stories of those on whose shoulders we can stand will help develop new coalitions for a new time. His book counters those who keep erasing the lives of faithful people of color and anti-racist European-Americans from the available historical accounts, leaving us to imagine there are no sturdy shoulders around. Indeed there are. TW

Joe Agne is a staff member of the NCC's prophetic justice unit and staffpersont for the racial justice working group at the National Council of Churches.

And it's 1-2-3- what are we fighting for?

by Marianne Arbogast

"We were the generation that saw the four children killed in the church in Birmingham," Richard Feldman, 43, says. "I knew two of the three civil rights workers killed in Mississippi in the summer of 1964. We watched as the civil rights movement turned into rebellion in Watts, Detroit, and Harlem, and eventually turned into government murder — when Mark Clark and Bobby Clark of the Chicago Black Panthers party were killed in their sleep.

"We had the sense that it was critical to make choices, that we couldn't be on the sidelines."

Feldman arrived at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor in 1967. He was quickly drawn to the radical politics of Students for a Democratic Society. He campagined for Eugene McCarthy and went to the 1968 Democratic Convention in Chicago.

Revolution felt within reach.

"The sense of internationalism was very significant," Feldman says. "We were attuned to revolutions around the world."

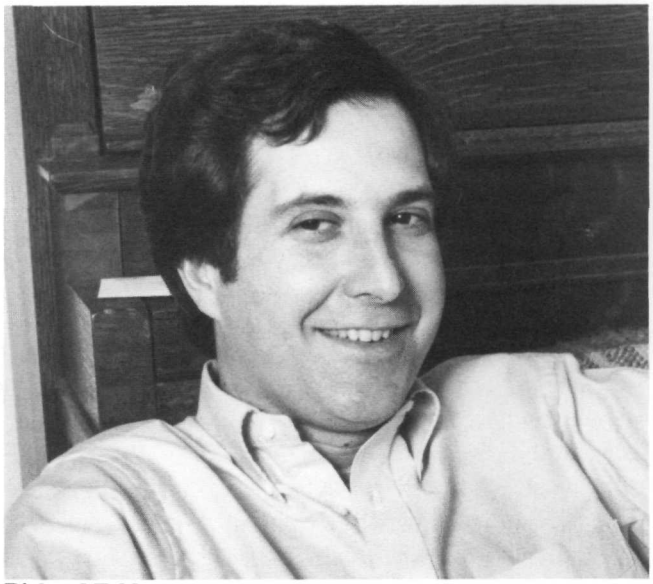
Feldman shared a small Ann Arbor house with 13 other students.

"Some people were there on Tuesday, some on Wednesday, some on Thursday ... Everyone was involved in some kind of politics or music or political theatre. School became less and less important; politics was all-important.

"We spent most of our time planning demonstrations, going to demonstrations, or bailing people out of jail."

He recalls flooding the steps of university buildings with catsup (to look like blood) when Dupont, a napalm manufacturer, sent recruiters to the campus; taking over and trashing a ROTC building; and continually seeking to engage other students in conversation.

"We spent most of our time planning demonstrations, going to demonstrations, or bailing people out of jail."



Richard Feldman Dwight Cendrowski

"We spent a great deal of time having discussions, trying to educate ourselves about racism, reading Franz Fanon. We tried to give support to each other, as we thought about what the future of our lives would be like. We were breaking with thinking that what was important was middle-class security, getting a job."

Often this meant breaking personal ties as well.

"To define ourselves as revolutionaries, we believed we had to reject our entire past," Feldman says. "Many rejected their family and history and relations with relatives — except when we needed bail money."

For a time, Feldman believed he had to renounce his Jewish identity in order to be in solidarity with Palestinians.

His own parents were proud of his commitments, yet frightened for his safety and his future. When he announced to them that he was going to Cuba, both told him it would kill the other. He changed his plans and stayed in Ann Arbor. Several months later, his father came to court when Feldman was sentenced for civil resistance actions. It was the last time Feldman saw him.

"He died 25 days later," Feldman says. "I'm not sure what the relationship of all my activity was to his death."

Feldman graduated early with a degree in political philosophy, with the support of radical professors who awarded him some 60 credits for independent study.

He moved with friends to Detroit "to do real revolutionary work. "Detroit had the important tradition of the Black Power movement, the labor movement, and a lot of community organizing."

Marianne Arbogast is assistant editor at *The Witness*. Photographer Dwight Cendrowski lives in Ann Arbor, Mich.

In River Rouge, they published a newspaper called *Down the River,* distributing it in high schools, parks, and Burger Kings. They took films on racism and Vietnam to schools and community centers.

Contact with white working-class citizens led Feldman to modify his social and political analysis.

"I clearly had a romantic view of workers in revolution and politics," he says. "I learned how deep the culture of racism was in eight- and ten-year-old kids who were talking about 'spear-chuckers.' "

In 1971, Feldman took a job at a Ford truck plant, with plans for radical organizing. He put out a newsletter and helped lead walkouts over health and safety conditions. But after several years, he found himself facing a vocational crisis.

"I was painting underbodies, with paint dripping in my eyes, and thought it was a great sacrifice for the revolution," he said. "But I realized the information in our newsletter would be something the very corrupt plant chairman would be talking about six months later. I thought, if I don't have the opportunity to be part of a movement, if all I'm going to be is a reformer, then I might as well go to law school and give up the struggle."

Feldman considers himself fortunate at that time to have met Grace and Jimmy Boggs, leaders of NOAR (the National Organization for an American Revolution). He saw them offering "very principled politics. In the sixties we were only interested in building a protest movement, but if we were going to rebuild society, work was important, family was important, community was important.

"In the auto plant, people were making $15,000 and didn't care about a revolution. I saw that talking about socialism wasn't enough, that we needed a vision of where to go."

Feldman wrote for NOAR, and traveled to cities across the country to organize leadership around NOAR principles.

Feldman remained at the Ford plant and recently served as their union representative for three years.

In 1987, he wrote a book called *The End of the Line: Autoworkers and the American Dream,* a series of interview with auto workers which raise some of the questions he feels are crucial.

"What are our hopes and dreams for our kids? How can you raise children to have self-esteem without access to a credit card and the shopping mall? How can we build economies without relying on the global economy?"

The questions are personally vital to Feldman, who married Janice Fialka, a social worker , in 1979, and is the father of two children.

Feldman sees hope in the birth of organizations like SOSAD [Save Our Sons and Daughters], which he calls "the first challenge in the city to the culture of capitalism and materialism.

"They saw that stopping the violence had to be joined with the struggle against kids believing they needed $150 tennis shoes, or jackets with fur, or gold chains."

Feldman has worked with teens, helping plan the "Detroit Summer" project that has engaged young people in neighborhood projects for the past two years.

"I believe this generation has to be given the opportunity to define the issues and the struggle" for today, Feldman says. "I think it's going to be around rebuilding the cities."

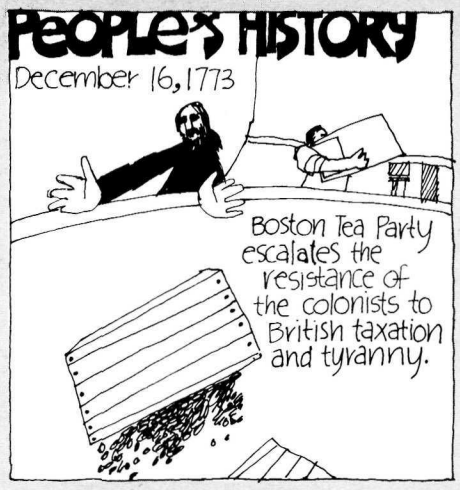
Detroit Summer participants "had wonderful political discussions in the evenings," he says. "A question that's coming up is, what's the equivalent of getting arrested or going down south to fight the Jim Crow laws? We can't set the agenda for them; it has to emerge from involvement."

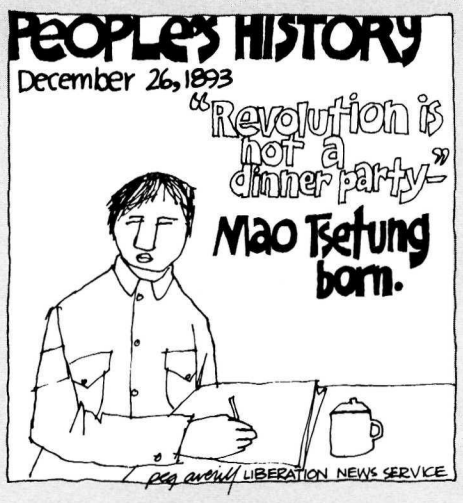
But Feldman imagines scenarios like the takeover of an abandoned city plant, to create jobs and serve the community.

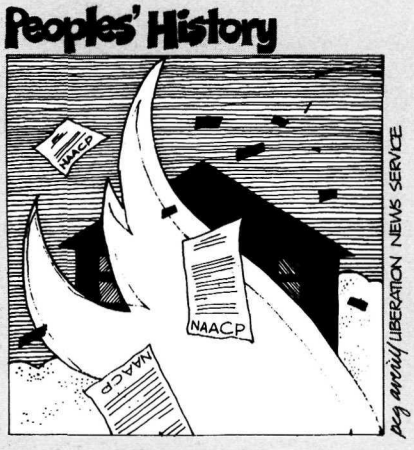
"People don't believe the myths anymore — that if their kids go to school they will get good jobs, that the corporations have to come back home, that we have to build big hotels downtown. There's no agenda out there except the agenda we create.

"I think it's quite possible that in the next year or two we'll see pilot projects, initially funded by the cities — for example, abandoned factories turned into greenhouses to produce food for the local market, or small factories to provide materials like glass and lumber to rehabilitate homes."

"I think we're on a threshold, that we can create a movement that can make changes that will provide a future in the cities," Feldman says. TW

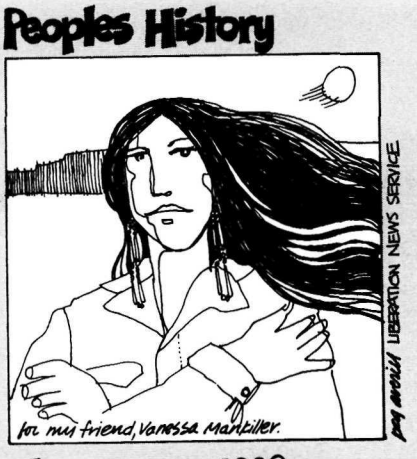






December 25, 1951
Harry T. Moore, president of the Florida NAACP, and Harriet Moore murdered when their home is firebombed on Christmas.

This material comes from a variety of sources including the Wisconsin People's History calendar, the Massachusetts People's History calendar, the War Registers League and Guardian calendars and lists compiled by Liberation News Service.



November 20, 1969
Indians of All Tribes occupy Alcatraz Island for preservation of Indian culture; stay 19 months.

March issue:

The shifting left

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