

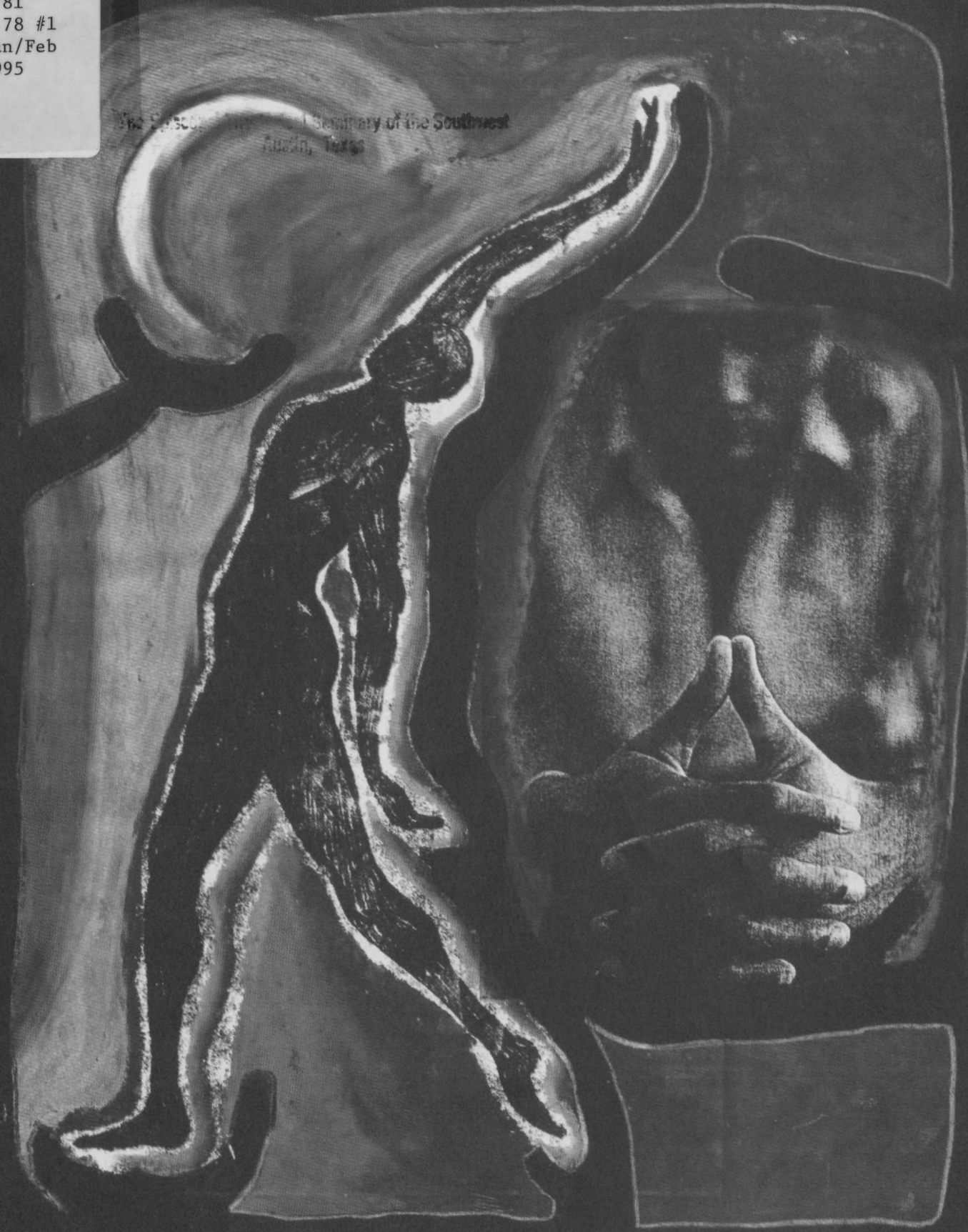
*The Witness*

# POLITICAL PRISONERS

Volume 78 • Number 1 • January/February 1995

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The Episcopal Diocese of the Southwest  
Austin, Texas



## Glamour

MANY THANKS FOR GOING WITH the nightmare re: Glamour and Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann's fabulous, original article "The witch, the actor and the Hebrew queen." (Good stuff on wicca.) Having finished reading, I was moved to paint my toenails a rich, bright Advent PURPLE (usually reserved for the grandchildren!) Blessings. (I am a Quaker.)

**Barbara Potter**  
West Buxton, ME

GLAMOUR — WHAT A PLEASANT and unexpected topic for the November issue!

**Lloyd Moyer**  
Montpelier, VT

AS AN ALTERNATE DEPUTY from the Diocese of Western New York, I observed the deliberations of the cognate Committees on Canons of the General Convention in Indianapolis from their organizational meeting August 22nd through the end of Convention.

Chancellor Johnson in her article (11/94) correctly gives herself credit for many of the substantive changes made in the Blue Book draft of the Title IV proposal. She is a significant voice for the victims in the disciplinary process of our Church. Without her contributions to the Title IV revisions accepted by the General Convention the document would be weaker.

She does, however, describe an atmosphere within the committees which does an injustice to the many women and men who served.

When she divides the committee up into those who were "protecting clergy... from ... bishops and victims" and a woman priest and herself, Chancellor Johnson gives herself too much credit.

A little humbleness and some credit to the other deputies is warranted.

These committees worked as diligently on their task as any committee has since the Prayer Book Committee of Minneapolis (which I also observed). They do not deserve to be described as participants in a battle. All 23 did a superb job, working together

to make the Episcopal Church a safer place.

**Michael E. Hartney**  
East Aurora, NY

## Witness praise

THANK YOU FOR CONTINUING to be on the edge of breaking oppression! My hope still is that one day there will be a global

community. Your magazine makes me realize others share my dream.

**Sally Swart**  
Birmingham, MI

You do great work! Every issue of The Witness is eagerly awaited and thoroughly read at our house! Blessings!

**Luella C. Bassett**  
Royal Oak, MI

## Classifieds

### Resource

*Christians and Homosexuality: Dancing Toward the Light* is an exploration of personal, biblical, and ethical issues. This new, expanded 5th edition is a collection of articles that have appeared in the pages of *The Other Side* Magazine. Included in this updated 64-page booklet are articles on what Scripture does and does not say about homosexuality, reading Scripture through gay eyes, gay and lesbian roles in the church, and more. Equally ideal for group discussions or personal reflection. Order yours today — Single copy \$5, 10 or more \$4 each, 50 or more \$3 each, postpaid. Write: *The Other Side* Book Department, 300 W. Apsley Street, Philadelphia, PA 19144.

### Volunteer Opportunities

Episcopal Urban Intern Program: Work in social service ministry, live in Christian community in Los Angeles, share in spiritual formation. For adults 21-30. Apply now for the 1995-1996 year. Contact: The Rev. Gary Commins, 260 N. Locust St., Inglewood, CA 90301. (310) 674-7744.

Volunteers are desperately needed to teach in all grade levels from K-11 in the five bilingual mission schools in the Episcopal Diocese of Honduras, Central America. Applicants need to be college graduates but do not have to be certified teachers or speak Spanish. School sessions run from September 1995 - June 1996. Contact C. Edgar Bryant, 506 So. East St., Apt. 305, Culpeper, VA 22701, 703-825-7393; or Beverley Allison, 703-832-5555.

### Workshop

Women Proclaiming: Research, Issues and Resources, March 13-17, 1995 with E. Lee McGee at the College of Preachers, Washington National Cathedral. Current research reveals that in adolescence women often "lose their voices" as they become aware of the risks of speaking out about what they know to be reality. What can support, empower, and amplify the voice of women preachers as they face such obstacles? Come explore valuable resources which can increase the creativity and effectiveness of women's voice and, thus, of women's preaching. Call or fax the College for more information: phone/202-537-6381, fax 202-537-5650.

### William Stringfellow

Readers with letters from or stories about William Stringfellow are invited to contact Bill Wylie-Kellermann, who is working on Stringfellow's biography with Andrew McThenia.

Contact Wylie-Kellermann c/o The Witness, 1249 Washington Blvd., #3115, Detroit, MI 48226; phone (313) 962-2650; fax (313)-962-1012.

### Classifieds

*Witness* classifieds cost 75 cents a word or \$30 an inch, whichever is less. Payments must accompany submissions. Deadline is the 15th of the month, two months prior to publication. For instance, items received January 15 will run in March.

When ads mark anniversaries of deaths, ordinations, or acts of conscience, photos — even at half column-width — can be included.

Letters



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by José Lopez

*Lopez considers political prisoners who are incarcerated for acts of conscience as well as others who are captive because of race or class.*

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*Alan Berkman doctors AIDS patients today — in the 1980s he spent years in prison.*

### 12 Jailed conscience by Camille Colatosti

*Examining three political prisoners, in three different revolutionary movements, Colatosti exposes a pattern of governmental repression.*

### 18 "Where's Uncle Frank?" by Tom Cordaro

*Frank Cordaro, a Catholic priest, is in jail again for nonviolent anti-nuclear activism — Angela wants to know why.*

### 20 Religious freedom: a myth for Native Americans

by Iron Thunderhorse

### 26 On being happy by Melanie Morrison

*In the midst of injustice and the need for activism, is it okay to want to be happy?*

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Cover: North American Political Prisoner by Tim Blunk. Art by political prisoners is being exhibited to support Mumia Abu-Jamal, a prominent African-American radio journalist and Black Panther leader in Philadelphia sentenced to death after a policeman was killed in 1981. Jamal, who maintains his innocence, was convicted by a nearly all-white jury, on the basis of confusing and conflicting evidence. Near the top of the execution list, Jamal's death warrant could be signed at any time. You can help by: 1) asking the Governor of Pennsylvania (Main Capitol Building, Rm. 225, Harrisburg, PA 17120) not to sign Jamal's or any other death warrants; 2) sending a tax-deductible check made out to the Bill of Rights Foundation, marked "Jamal," to the Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal, 163 Amsterdam Ave., No. 115, New York, N.Y. 10023-5001; 3) bringing the art show to your city — contact Mary Taylor, (201) 435-3244.

Back cover: Audre Lorde by Annie Cemmett and Jean Weisinger, SCW. A color poster of this image can be ordered from the Syracuse Cultural Workers by sending \$20 to SCW, Box 6367, Syracuse, N.Y. 13217-6367.



# Icons of resistance

by Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

Epiphany is an excellent season during which to consider political prisoners. It's a biblical season rife with government threats and murder. The couple who raise the Christ do so only by going underground and fleeing. The three kings, who look beyond traditional leadership for hope, also flee clandestinely lest their visit threaten the infant in whom all our hopes rest.

Christians in the U.S. may be naïve about the brutality of governmental power, but the Bible is not. By definition, the power of the state is death. When it's state-sanctioned, execution stands behind the authority of law. When it's not, clandestine assaults and murders can secure its power.

This issue, which is shaped around a National Council of Churches (NCC) book titled *Can't Jail the Spirit: Political Prisoners in the U.S.*, may be difficult for some, but it's timing is good both in terms of the church calendar and the electoral one. The next two years promise an assault on the values and programs to which *The Witness* is committed.

Headlines announce that some advocate ending government aid to dependent children, creating orphanages for children whose parents are alive and ending funds for Congress' minority caucuses and for National Public Radio.

Meanwhile, the right is also emerging on the streets. Friends who monitor right-wing radio shows remark that not only is

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



L. Whitehorn from a photo by Jennifer Beach

Mumia Abu-Jamal, to whom the cover is dedicated, is a radical radio journalist and former president of the Philadelphia chapter of the National Association of Black Journalists who is on death row in Huntingden, Penn. Interviewed by *The Village Voice*, Jamal observed, "The U.S. has embarked on a low-technology, low-skilled, high employment scheme that exploits the poor, the stupid and the slow via a boom in prison construction, America's sole growth industry. More and more Americans are guarding more and more American prisoners for more and more years."

the open-mike rhetoric hostile to women and children who can't fit in the free, white and 21 category, it is also erratic and quick to condemn the government.

The agenda for the next two years appears barbaric, predicated on the assertion that people who need something from society are at fault, asking for what they have not earned — consequently deserving of punishment.

I grow weary already anticipating the battles we will need to fight for seemingly obvious goals — like the feeding of our nation's children.

And I wonder where are those in the oppressed communities who could lead a movement with the courage of Malcolm X, Martin Luther King and César Chavez?

Odds are they are in jail.

Not all the activists in *Can't Jail the Spirit* are appealing. Some seem self-serving and it's hard to feel comfortable with people who employ violence through bombings and robberies. "No matter what it takes" has a clear moral imperative, but there are few people I would trust to exercise it.

But in the stories of these political prisoners is a hard-edged indictment of the system in this country. These are people whose concern about injustice is so keen that they are willing to be confrontative and to risk major consequences.

It's no wonder they make us uneasy. It's also true that, while the revolutionary movements are sometimes bound in by their own rhetoric, they are *always* misrepresented in the media. When the City of Philadelphia decided to dump plastic explosives on the homes of members of MOVE, we learned that their philosophy led them to feed rats and that they were difficult neighbors. Their political beliefs, which were threatening enough to attract the hostility of the administration and police department, never made the news.

*continued on page 6*

*editor's note*

Articles in this issue will outline the way that the prison population is growing exponentially, far outstripping the rate of imprisonment in other western industrialized countries. The articles will also examine the beliefs of some in the Justice Department and in groups like the Trilateral Commission who feel that democracy can't work when the economic pie is shrinking, and therefore recommend suppressing minority and special interest groups, isolating their messages and bullying their advocates.

Many political prisoners, defined in the book as those who have been detained "for beliefs, associations or acts advocating self-determination for oppressed people or nations," have experienced surveillance and harassment. Some have watched prosecution witnesses perjure themselves. Most are serving lengthy sentences — sentences that exceed the ones meted out to people who commit the same offenses without a political motivation.

In the 1970s and 1980s the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration sponsored studies that resulted in guidelines that advised police to know activists' names, faces, addresses and cars. Without distinguishing between those who were exercising their civil rights legally and those who were breaking the

law, they outlined campaigns of harassment and advised the police to prevail upon the city councils to require permits for demonstrations and then to authorize them only in low-visibility areas; likewise they asked the press not to "enflame" protests by covering them.

Their efforts are effective in making legal protests innocuous and militant ones heavy with penalties.

Of course, the impulse to cry out against injustice doesn't disappear, it just runs deep. In some cases it turns into mindless violence. In others it courses into an underground movement that surfaces only now and then. And when it does, good church people are at a loss. Even when the activists are committed to nonviolence, many church people hesitate to express support because they have broken the law. But when violence is a tactic, far fewer people support them.

Michael Yasutake, one of our board members who is director of the Interfaith Prisoners of Conscience Project at the NCC, is critical of our hesitation, objecting that we need to stand in solidarity with one another.

"With regard to the moral issue of the use of 'violent' or 'non-violent' means in the struggle for justice, various views exist," Yasutake says. "The so-called radi-

cal movements that would resort to armed defense or resistance against forces of injustice are not any more violent than any nation that resorts to armed conflict for national security. International laws such as of the U. N. maintain that the oppressed may use any means necessary for liberation, including the use of arms.

"The prevalent view of the dominant society in the U.S. is that nonviolent methods are the only appropriate means of social change. ... [Even though] many in the dominant society, including religious institutions, are not pacifists themselves — fully relying on armed police power for protection or on the brute force of the armed services in the name of national security."

This issue does not hope to seriously address the question of nonviolence *vs.* violence. Yasutake's comments here clearly conflict with Walter Wink's editorial in the December, 1994 issue. The questions raised are critical and we will examine them in the July/August issue on the 50th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima. It must be enough for now to indicate that most of the staff is committed to active nonviolence as a way of life, not simply a tactic. We believe, as Gandhi did, that nonviolence is not passive and that injustice requires action.

In this issue, we raise the names of several political prisoners. We raise them as icons into the injustice and cruelty that are woven through our American way of life. We raise them as people willing to move past liberalism to activism with cost. They also give us a way of examining the growth in our prison system — which happens, no doubt, in response to the American desire for quick and easy answers to deep social problems.

We raise these prisoners as potential leaders of the movements we so desperately need, who have been removed from society by design, often so quickly and effectively that we never learn their names.

## Stewart Wood will not face ecclesiastical trial

*The Witness* is glad to report that, by a vote of three to two, a committee of five bishops has determined that in ordaining a lesbian in a committed relationship to the priesthood last summer Michigan bishop Stewart Wood did not break church law.

In its report the committee said that church canons do not prohibit the ordination of non-celibate homosexual persons. While noting that a 1979 resolution of the church's General Convention states that "we believe it is not

appropriate for this Church to ordain a practicing homosexual person," a majority of the committee concluded that the resolution's wording did not clearly indicate an intention that this resolution be mandatory.

The committee had been appointed by Presiding Bishop Edmond L. Browning to investigate charges brought against Wood by six priests and 29 lay persons in Michigan who oppose the ordination of homosexual persons.  
— Julie Wortman



## If they come in the night

by Marge Piercy

Long ago on a night of danger and vigil  
a friend said, *Why are you happy?*  
He explained (we lay together  
on a hard cold floor) what prison  
meant because he had done  
time, and I talked of the death  
of friends. *Why are you happy*  
*then*, he asked, close to  
angry.

I said, I like my life. If I  
have to give it back, if they  
take it from me, let me only  
not feel I wasted any, let me  
not feel I forgot to love anyone  
I meant to love, that I forgot  
to give what I held in my hands,  
that I forgot to do some little  
piece of the work that wanted  
to come through.

Sun and moonshine, starshine,  
the muted grey light off the waters  
of the bay at night, the white  
light of the fog stealing in,  
the first spears of the morning  
touching a face  
I love. We all lose  
everything. We lose  
ourselves. We are lost.

Only what we manage to do  
lasts, what love sculpts from us;  
but what I count, my rubies, my  
children, are those moments  
wide open when I know clearly  
who I am, who you are, what we  
do, a marigold, an oakleaf, a meteor,  
with all my senses hungry and filled  
at once like a pitcher with light.

From *Circles in the Water* by Marge Piercy. Copyright © 1982 by Marge Piercy.  
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# “It can’t happen here”: political prisoners in the U.S.

by José Lopez

Since the social upheavals of the 1960s, the number of political prisoners in the U.S. has grown dramatically, with well over 100 behind bars today. The total number of prisoners has also spiraled upwards. These increases take place in a particular context — prisons are increasingly used as tools of counterinsurgency and population control by a U.S. government that faces serious economic, social, political, and military crises.

## Who’s in prison?

According to the Department of Justice, the number of prisoners in this country reached one million as of June 1994. The bloating of the imprisonment rate will continue in the context of the new “crime” bill.

In 1925, when the U.S. began keeping statistics, the imprisonment rate was 79 per 100,000. The rate stayed more or less constant until 1972, when it started to rise dramatically. Today the rate is 373.

Who is being swallowed up by this ever-expanding prison system?

In 1994, the imprisonment rate for black people was almost eight times higher than for white people. A 1979 government survey revealed that about one out

of every five black men would go to prison in his lifetime. The proportion is now closer to one out of every four.

In comparing international imprisonment rates, a recent study by the Sentencing Project found that while white people in the U.S. went to prison about twice as often as people living in Europe, black people went to prison at a rate that was five times higher than that for black people in South Africa under apartheid!

Meanwhile, outside the prison walls, people of color are trapped in deteriorating public housing projects, dropping out of schools at alarming rates, and losing their lives to drugs and violence. While the national unemployment rate is six percent, for blacks it is 20 percent. Seventy-five percent of black and poor youth are unemployed; 80 percent of black youth drop out of high school.

The number of women in prison has also increased enormously in the last ten years, at a faster rate than the number of men. These women are disproportionately black, Latina and Native American. Two thirds are under the age of 35 and 90 percent are single mothers. They are poor, with 85 percent reporting incomes of less than \$2,000 in the year prior to their arrest. Most are in prison for economic crimes. Of the few imprisoned for violent

crimes, the vast majority were convicted for defending themselves or their children from abuse.

## War on crime

President Lyndon Johnson launched the “war on crime” in 1965. He said, “We must arrest and reverse the trend toward lawlessness because crime has become a malignant enemy in America’s midst.” Congress responded by adopting the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act. The new law set in motion the involvement of the whole population in the fight against crime, from Neighborhood

Watch to police telephone snitch lines.

The government poured vast sums into militarizing the police. In 1974, the amount spent was \$15 billion. Today the amount spent on the criminal justice system is \$65 billion. Additionally, the system adopted euphemisms to ob-

scure the reality of the prison system and win the support of the general public. With a stroke of the pen the penal system became the “criminal justice system,” prisoners became “inmates,” and penitentiaries became “federal correctional institutions.” But the ultimate aim was still to contain people of color: population control.

Since 1965 there has been a series of studies and documents which have augmented the ideas outlined in the original crime law. In 1967, faced with waves of urban rebellion, Zbigniew Brzezinski wrote a series of articles in which he proposed the creation of concentration camps to contain black people.

In 1968 the Kerner Commission, cre-

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*Theorists insisted that since insurgency was a stable feature of the political landscape, governments must implement permanent low-intensity repressive strategies to “nip revolutionary movements in the bud.”*

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**José Lopez** is 1st secretary of the *Movimiento de Liberación Nacional Puertorriqueño* (MLN). This article is adapted from *Can’t Jail the Spirit: Political Prisoners in the U.S.* which can be ordered from Ellen Youniss, 59 E. VanBuren, #1400, Chicago, Ill., 60605 for \$14. Checks to *Can’t Jail the Spirit/Freedom Now*. Artist **Edward Bisone** lives in Santa Ana, Calif.



ated by President Johnson, concluded that the U.S. was moving into two separate societies, black and white, separate and unequal. The Kerner Commission projected that if demographic trends continued, that by the year 2080, a majority of people in the U.S. would be people of color.

Significantly, one of the Kerner Commission's members went on to develop the concept of "spatial deconcentration." This process involves driving the masses of poor people of color out of the inner cities to the outer cities, into more easily manageable pockets of population. We see this in the gentrification of every major city in the U.S., and the proliferation of black towns or unincorporated districts lacking basic social services, decent schools, sometimes even fire departments and paved roads.

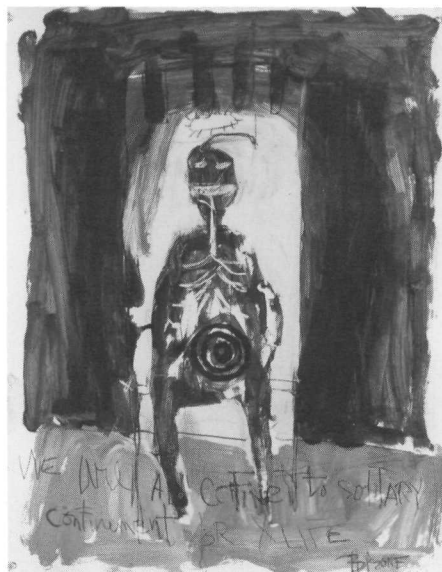
President George Bush's Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, Jack Kemp, promised to turn these horribly depressed areas into tax-free "enterprise zones" to take advantage of plentiful cheap labor.

### Counterinsurgency

The *Crisis of Democracy* was a major ruling-class policy statement on domestic affairs, written principally by Samuel Huntington and issued by the Trilateral Commission in 1973. The book described the U.S. political crisis of the 1960s and 1970s as being caused by the excessive demands of "ungovernable sectors" — black, Chicano and Native American movements, along with women and youth. "The demands on democratic government grow, while the capacity of democratic governments stagnates," Huntington said. "This, it would appear, is the central dilemma of the governability of democracy."

Huntington lamented that society had become too democratic: "There are potentially desirable limits to the indefinite

extension of political democracy." The Trilateralist remedy was more authoritarianism to insure "a more balanced existence."



*Condemned*

"We are all confined to solitary confinement for life."

Edward Bisone

In the 1970s, U.S. military and intelligence circles closely studied the work of Frank Kitson and Robin Eveleigh, two British colonels who articulated the need for permanent counterinsurgency. These theorists insisted that since insurgency was a stable feature of the political landscape, governments must implement permanent low-intensity repressive strategies to "nip revolutionary movements in the bud."

In this model, prisons serve as an important tactic to contain political leaders and organizers.

Recent studies support the understanding of prisons as tools for population control, for detaining the "undesirables." William Nagel, a well-known criminologist, analyzed many factors in various states to determine which factors were related to rapidly increasing imprisonment rates. He found no relationship between the crime rate (or violent crime

rate) and the imprisonment rate and no relationship between the crime rate (or violent crime rate) and the proportion of black people in a state.

However, he discovered a very strong relationship between the imprisonment rate and the proportion of black people. In other words, people go to prison in increasing numbers because they are black, not because of a rise in crime.

Two British criminologists, Steven Box and Chris Hale, found similar results. They concluded that people are sent to prison during times of economic instability, not because of an increase in crime, but because they are perceived as a threat by those who hold power in society. Johnson's mid-1960s war on crime, it should be recalled, was launched at a time when the U.S. was facing stiff economic competition from its allies and was facing an upsurge of national liberation struggles from Angola to Vietnam. In addition, there was fierce internal opposition at home, from the liberation movements of oppressed nationalities to the Vietnam anti-war movement.

In the 1980s, prisons no longer pretended to rehabilitate — while the federal and state governments spent more money on more prisons, guard towers and barbed wire, they cut educational and vocational programs. They said that crime was caused by bad individuals, the undesirables, rather than focusing on the social, political and economic roots of crime.

### Political prisoners

In the 1960s, as the Civil Rights and Black Power movements grew, the number of black political prisoners swelled and the prison struggle became a major part of the black liberation struggle. Political prisoners like George Jackson stated that prisons are an important tool in the government's effort to contain and destroy black people's freedom.

Although the government refuses to admit it, there are nearly 100 political

prisoners and prisoners of war in U. S. prisons today. They come from the Puerto Rican, Black/New Afrikan and Native American liberation movements. They include progressive Christians, white anti-imperialists, draft resisters, and grand jury resisters.

The movements that these people represent honor, love and respect them. Yet the government contends that they are criminals or terrorists and reserves for them, as well as for prisoners showing leadership and political direction, the harshest treatment.

### **Imprisoning women**

A control-unit facility for women was built at the Lexington Federal Correctional Institute in Kentucky in October 1986. Control units are designed to totally control the lives of the prisoners in them.

The Lexington facility was a behavior modification unit in which the Bureau of Prisons used sensory deprivation, extreme isolation, and sexual degradation to control the prisoners.

The director of the Bureau said that the conditions in the unit were necessary to provide adequate security for the women. He said their radical politics made them a threat to the community and "escape prone."

Other prison officials told the women that their only avenue out of the unit was to renounce their political associations, to repudiate a lifetime of political principle.

After a national protest campaign, in October 1987 the Bureau announced that it would close the unit, stating that it was not big enough to house all the women political "terrorists" in the country. In

June 1988, three of the prisoners sued the Bureau. A federal judge agreed that the Bureau had persecuted them for their political beliefs and ruled that they be transferred out of the unit immediately.

By August 1988, the Bureau had

opened a new federal prison in Marianna, Fla. It contained a special women's unit which the Bureau said would "continue the mission" of the Lexington Control Unit. In the U.S., roughly 25 percent of political prisoners are women.

### **Immigrants**

Immigrants are another group of "undesirables" the government is trying to contain. During brighter economic times, immigrants, mostly Mexican, were considered desirable because they were cheap labor for industrial production. Now, however, the government perceives them as undesirables taking jobs away from U.S. citizens.

In addition, the government fears that some immigrants, such as Palestinians, Central Americans, Haitians, and Irish Republicans, will spread the truth about the persecution in their homelands where liberation struggles are rising. And the government has tried to exclude immigrants from countries that are not allies of the U.S., such as Libya and Iran.

To control these immigrant populations, the government passed the Immigration Reform and Control Act in 1986 which stated that only immigrants who can prove that they have lived and worked in the U.S. may apply for residency and that it is illegal for employers to hire immigrants. As part of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's REX '84 program, mechanisms were placed and exercised for detaining thousands of immigrants, as well as North American dis-

sidents, if the government deems it necessary in the political emergency. A recent example illustrates all of this painfully well. When thousands of people rebelled in Los Angeles in May of 1992, following the racist verdict that let off the four cops who brutalized Rodney King, the L.A. police forces mobilized themselves and deported thousands of Mexicans and Salvadorans, many of them, it was later revealed, "in error."

And now we have Proposition 187 (see page 24).

### **Factories with fences**

Of course, the government's "war against crime" has a price. Currently it costs more to imprison a person for one year than to send him or her to Harvard University. While this country faces an economic crisis and has slashed basic social services for Third World and poor people, it has poured billions of dollars into the "criminal justice system."

Ominously, new plans such as prison-for-profit options are being developed. Warren Burger, former U.S. Supreme Court justice, has publicly called for the conversion of prisons into profitable enterprises. Using the slogan "Factories with Fences," Burger argues for the dismantling of present rules governing prisoner-made goods, the privatization of prisons and the making of prisons into profit-generating enterprises.

In the coming years, we may see factories, textile plants, foundries, and even high-tech industries springing forth in and around prisons. Already, the prison system contracts out prison labor to the state, military, and private industries, at near-slave wages. (Federal prisoners' wages begin at 22 cents per hour.)

The Bureau of Prisons intentionally builds walls of silence around its prisons in hope that the public will never learn about the people living within the prison walls, nor the BOP's brutal policies. The wall of silence must be torn down. **TW**



# A retrospective view: from prison to AIDS work

by Marianne Arbogast

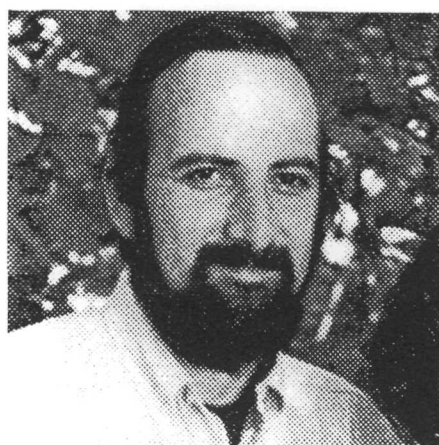
Alan Berkman is a physician who works with low-income AIDS patients in Manhattan, and a long-time political activist who served two prison sentences for his work with the Black liberation movement — once for refusing to collaborate with an investigation of the Black liberation movement and later for offenses including weapons' possession, bail jumping, and robbery.

While imprisoned at the maximum security Marion Federal Penitentiary, he learned that he had Hodgkin disease but was denied treatment.

During a recent telephone interview, Berkman observed that *The Witness* readership probably has serious concern about offering support to people who have used violence in their revolutionary activity.

"The one thing I know about myself and others is that we were motivated by a real deep sense of valuing everybody's lives, whether in El Salvador or Nicaragua or the U.S.

"In this country there is enormous acceptance of inhumanity. Even when the U.S. was waging the *Contra* war in



Alan Berkman

Nicaragua and thousands and thousands of people were being killed, it was reduced to a policy issue between the Democrats and Republicans. Many of us felt a sense of outrage that people's lives could be destroyed that way. We felt it couldn't be allowed to become just a debate for the political elite in this country.

"For me a certain ideology played a role that tended to glorify revolutionary violence. I don't glorify any violence at this point. At a human level, violence can be corrupting, no matter who you are and

what you want to do with it.

"But it's very dangerous to look at the decisions of the past with the eyes of the present and the ethics of the present. In the late 1960s there was almost a sense of civil war and strife. The FBI was trying to kill Black Panthers."

Berkman noted that while those in militant struggle may not have been totally right, pacifists have not demonstrated any dramatic success in ending injustice. "Nobody won — it's not as though the pacifist movement has taken over the U.S. and transformed it.

"When I was at Wounded Knee, some members of the Catholic left, whom I respect a lot, came to talk to the leaders, and said, 'We want to support you, we have the same commitment, but we don't believe in the use of force. We don't want to be in there with you and the guns.'

"The leaders said, 'We think the best thing you could do would be to set up an encampment in the no-man's land between us and the FBI. If the FBI killed one of you, there would be a major outcry; and if you kept them from shooting at us, that would be good.' But they decided the best thing they could do was to have a demonstration in an area removed from the center of conflict."

Sometimes, Berkman suggested, people insulate themselves from the gravity of the injustice and never feel the pain deeply enough to be able to understand why someone might want to rebel violently.

"One of the most dangerous things is that the government has eliminated knowledge of political people in prison, because to acknowledge political prisoners is to acknowledge that there continue to be real social struggles. There are wonderful people whose whole lives are being wasted in prison, and they really should be supported."

(Marianne Arbogast is assistant editor of *The Witness*.)

## Sponsoring a prisoner of conscience

Congregations and groups willing to sponsor a prisoner of conscience can consult with Michael Yasutake, director of the Interfaith Prisoners of Conscience Project of the National Council of Churches.

The commitment involves any of the following: convening a forum about

prisoners of conscience once a year; corresponding with a prisoner; making a pastoral visit once a year; contributing financially to the Prisoner of Conscience Project.

Yasutake can be reached at 2120 Lincoln St., Evanston, IL 60201; phone and fax (708) 328-1543.

# Jailed conscience

by Camille Colatosti

The Prisoners of Conscience Project of the National Council of Churches identifies over 100 political and religious prisoners in the U.S. Despite this identification, the U.S. government denies the existence of political prisoners in America. Many officials express a view similar to that of John Clark, the warden of the federal super maximum prison for men at Marion, Ill., who says: "While it's true that some of the inmates held here subscribe strongly to certain ideologies, they are not here because they hold those ideological beliefs. They are here because they have engaged in criminal acts."

Yet, a look at the circumstances surrounding the conviction of political activists, the alleged criminal acts, the specious evidence and the involvement of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) reveals a striking pattern. The arrests appear designed to halt, or at least interrupt, political movements.

Take, for example, the three prisoners described here. Each was a political and community activist leading a struggle that opposed dominant political and economic forces in the U.S. The FBI had targeted each for "neutralization." Each was convicted with suspicious evidence. And each received sentences far harsher than those received by criminals who committed similar acts, but who held no oppositional political views.

The stories should also be looked at in

light of the overall philosophy and approach of the FBI's counterintelligence division. Throughout its history and especially during the 1960s, the FBI had as its primary goal an end to progressive social and political movements in the U.S. A counterintelligence-related memo, dated October 24, 1968, and sent from Bureau headquarters to all field officers, makes the point. It reads: "Successful prosecution is the best deterrent to such unlawful activities [as dissident political organizing]. Intensive investigations of key activists ... are logically expected to result in prosecutions under substantive violations within the Bureau's jurisdiction."

The Bureau was not beyond illegal tactics to attain, or fabricate, information that would lead to the arrest of political leaders. The biographies below paint a striking picture.

## Leonard Peltier

Leonard Peltier may be the best known political prisoner in the U.S. This 46-year-old Anishinabe/Lakota Indian was convicted in 1977 of the June 26, 1975, killing of two FBI agents during a firefight on Wounded Knee at the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. A leader of the American Indian Movement (AIM), Peltier joined other activists who had occupied Wounded Knee, demanding a federal review of the treaty of 1868 guaranteeing the return of the Black Hills to the Lakota Sioux.

Pine Ridge had been a target of the FBI

since 1972. Tension between the activists and federal agents continued to build until June 26, 1975, when FBI Special Agents Jack Coler and Ronald Williams entered the occupied property and a firefight ensued. The fight involved more than 200 federal troops, and left Coler, Williams and AIM member Joe Stuntz killed. Leonard Peltier, and two other activists — Bob Robideau and Dino Butler — were charged in the deaths of the agents. No one was charged for Stuntz' murder.

Peltier feared for his life and fled to Canada. Because of this, the government tried Peltier separately from Butler and Robideau. The latter were tried first, together, in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and were found not guilty on the grounds that they had acted in self-defense.

Extradited from Canada, Peltier was

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*Each was a political and community activist leading a struggle that opposed dominant political and economic forces in the U.S. The FBI had targeted each for "neutralization."*

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tried in 1977 in Fargo, N.D. Judge Paul Benson refused to allow the jury to hear testimony of FBI misconduct. Peltier was found guilty on two counts of murder. His conviction has been upheld through two rounds of appeals, despite mounting evidence

of his innocence.

A review of the FBI's own documents proves that incomplete and inaccurate ballistics evidence was deliberately presented at the trial in order to establish Peltier's guilt. In 1980, Amnesty International concluded that even the most elementary standards of justice require that Peltier receive a new trial.

Following Peltier's 1985 appeal, Eighth Circuit Court Judge Gerald W. Heaney, who wrote the opinion in *U.S. v. Peltier* (1986), reflects the court's grow-

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**Camille Colatosti**, author of *Stopping Sexual Harassment: A Handbook for Union and Workplace Activists*, is a freelance writer in Detroit. Puerto Rican artist **Elizam Escobar** self-identifies as a political prisoner of war. His work is widely exhibited.



ing doubts of Peltier's guilt. As he writes: "There is a possibility that the jury would have acquitted Leonard Peltier had the records and data improperly withheld from the defense been available to him in order to better exploit and reinforce the inconsistencies casting strong doubts upon the government's case."

Despite this "possibility," Heaney denied Peltier's appeal, saying, "We are bound by the Bagley test, requiring that we be convinced, from a review of the entire records, that had the data and records withheld been made available, the jury probably would have reached a different result. We are not so convinced."

Prosecutor Lynn Crooks, in the 1985 appeal proceeding, admitted that "though the state had tried Leonard Peltier for first-degree murder, naming him from start to finish as 'the man who came down and killed those agents in cold blood,' it did not really know that this was true."

In early 1991, another AIM activist, Mr. X., came forward in an interview on the CBS television show 60 Minutes, admitting that he killed the men in self-defense. He wore a mask over his face and never stated his identity.

In a July 1991 interview in *In These Times*, Peltier expressed both relief and regret about Mr. X's confession. "I hope he's never identified. I don't want him to come forward completely, where he may end up going to prison. There is no guarantee I would be released even if he did. This is a good man who is very committed, still working hard for our people. If it had been left up to me, I wouldn't have even let him come out as far as he has now."

Moved by evidence from Mr. X and Eighth Circuit Court Judge Heaney, Hawaiian Senator Daniel Inoye asked President George Bush to commute Peltier's sentence. The president did not.

In November 1993, Ramsey Clark, Peltier's lead defense attorney, filed for

executive clemency. As of press time, Clark has received no response from the administration.

In December 1993, Peltier was again denied a petition for parole. The board disregarded the evidence in his favor and instead recommended that Peltier receive

clemency. As David Staiger, of the Leonard Peltier Support Network, states, "It's urgent that he get out. It's hypocritical. A government that claims to be a democracy admits that it doesn't have proof and yet keeps Peltier in prison. This says a great deal about what's happened to Na-



**Ghost dance leader**

Leonard Peltier

*"This painting represents the memory of all our people massacred at Wounded Knee. I dedicate it to Louis Irwin, my spiritual leader and good friend."*

15 additional years due to the "nature of his crimes."

The FBI still refuses to release nearly 6,000 pages of documents on the Peltier case. Supporters believe that some of these documents would exonerate Peltier.

On the 20th anniversary of the Pine Ridge fire, 17 years after Peltier was imprisoned for a crime he did not commit, 3,500 people gathered in Washington's Lafayette Park to demand that President Bill Clinton grant clem-

ency. As David Staiger, of the Leonard Peltier Support Network, states, "It's urgent that he get out. It's hypocritical. A government that claims to be a democracy admits that it doesn't have proof and yet keeps Peltier in prison. This says a great deal about what's happened to Na-

### **geronimo ji Jaga (pratt)**

Like Peltier, geronimo ji Jaga (pratt) was a leader of his community. Pratt headed the Black Panther Party Los Angeles chapter. An organization dedicated to increase the power of African Americans throughout the country, especially in the nation's cities, the Black Panthers supported a free breakfast program for children, com-

# Amnesty International's view

Amnesty International (AI), known for its worldwide human rights work, defines as a political prisoner "any prisoner whose case has a significant political element: whether the motivation of the prisoner's acts, the acts in themselves, or the motivation of the authorities." AI demands fair, prompt trials for all political prisoners, but does not take a stand on their political goals or methods, ask for special prison status (eg. exemption from wearing prison clothing), or necessarily advocate their release.

Within this broad category, AI recognizes a smaller group of prisoners which it designates as "prisoners of conscience." This group, for which AI demands immediate and unconditional release, comprises "people detained anywhere for their beliefs or because of their ethnic origin, sex, colour or language — who have not used or advocated violence." (Exceptions may be made for prisoners who have used violence in "clear and unambiguous instances of individual self-defense," or for prisoners who have used violence, but are not released after their sentences are completed.)

Recent AI literature acknowledges controversy concerning this restriction, and offers the following explanations:

1) The non-violence clause is necessary to attract broad-based support from people across the political spectrum;

2) Prisoners who have been involved in violence are not excluded from AI's advocacy. AI monitors trial procedures and sentencing of all political prisoners, works for the aboli-

tion of torture and the death penalty, and seeks an end to extrajudicial "disappearances" and executions;

3) As an organization, AI takes no position on whether violence is justifiable in political struggles. However, its 1992 handbook argues that AI would be applying a double standard if it insisted on non-violent treatment of prisoners yet maintained that prisoners who had made use of violence "should not be brought to justice";

4) If AI became identified in the minds of governments with particular opposition groups, its effectiveness — which rests on its impartial, outside status — would be undermined.

Although AI recognizes a number of political prisoners in the U. S., none are currently designated "prisoners of conscience." The most recent U.S. prisoner of conscience was a conscientious objector to the Gulf War; others have included a Central American sanctuary movement worker and the Wilmington 10 (civil rights workers and students convicted of arson and assault in 1972 on testimony extracted by threat).

Amnesty's 1994 report on its work in the U. S. focuses on death penalty cases, allegations of police and prison brutality, the forced return of Haitian refugees, and the government handling of the Waco incident. It includes reports on its continued monitoring of the cases of Leonard Peltier (see p. 12) and Geronimo ji Jaga (pratt) (see p. 12).

For further information write Amnesty International USA, 322 Eighth Ave., New York, NY 10001.

— Marianne Arbogast

munity education and health care.

More controversially, however, they also supported armed struggle and made a point of stocking and carrying weapons. This was one of several reasons why the FBI targeted the organization and made it a central part of its counterintelligence division (CID). In a September 8, 1968, *New York Times* interview, J. Edgar Hoover called the Black Panther Party "the greatest threat to the internal security of the country" and began issuing directives to destroy the party by whatever means necessary — including the use of spies.

William Sullivan, a former CID head, describes his agency's behavior: "We were engaged in COINTELPRO (counterintelligence program) tactics, to divide, conquer, weaken, in diverse ways, an organization." A target of COINTELPRO, the Black Panther Party was subject to a sustained and systematic FBI effort to divide leaders and factionalize the organization.

It was largely due to the effectiveness of the COINTELPRO campaign that, in 1972, ji Jaga was convicted of the 1968 murder of Donna Olsen, a white school teacher. The senseless murder followed a robbery on a Santa Monica tennis court. Ji Jaga's defense focused on the fact that, at the time of the killing, he was 400 miles from Santa Monica at a week-long Black Panther Party central committee meeting in Oakland, Calif.

Though the murder occurred in 1968, it wasn't until late 1970, that ji Jaga was arrested for the crime. He was sentenced, on July 28, 1972, to seven years to life in prison.

At the time of his arrest, ji Jaga was isolated from the majority of Party members and was, therefore, an easy target for the FBI. Due to factionalism, key party members refused to testify at the trial. A split in the party led to ji Jaga's expulsion — key party members stopped speaking



*Heuristica Uno, 1992*

Elizam Escobar

to him. The division in the BPP ranks occurred in 1970 when ji Jaga was jailed for two months before being acquitted of a stolen weapons charge. During those two months the FBI attempted to win ji Jaga over as a spy.

An FBI field report from the Los Angeles office, dated February 26, 1970,

states: "In view of Pratt's adamant expression of hatred toward law enforcement personnel in general, no consideration is being given to re-interview Pratt for the purpose of development as a PRI [informant]. It is noted, however, that constant consideration is given to the possibility of utilization of counterintel-

ligence measures with efforts being directed toward neutralizing Pratt as an effective BPP functionary."

Following the government's efforts to recruit ji Jaga, the Party required him to undergo a battery of loyalty tests. While he passed, he was still expelled on August 5, 1970.



Not until January 2, 1992, did five former leaders of the Black Panther Party break a 21-year silence to demand a new trial for ji Jaga.

"We were duped," said David Hilliard, the Party's former chief of staff. "Geronimo is innocent." Hilliard and other Party leaders — Kathleen Cleaver, Emory Douglas, John Seale and Harvey McClendon — all spoke up and confirmed that ji Jaga had been with them at the meeting in Oakland.

Ironically, the FBI surveillance data could clear up ji Jaga's whereabouts when Donna Olsen was murdered. But at the trial, the FBI lied, denying that the Party was being surveilled.

In 1973, anti-war protestors broke into an FBI office in Media, Penn., and found the proof ji Jaga needed. They discovered crucial COINTELPRO files verifying that the Black Panthers and especially ji Jaga, as the head of the Los Angeles chapter, were under constant surveillance. Indeed, upon taking the leadership role, ji Jaga was labeled a "key black extremist," by the FBI. The Bureau placed him on its National Security Index.

The FBI also made ji Jaga the subject of a personalized series of cartoons designed to make him a target of another black power organization in Los Angeles.

When confronted with this evidence, the FBI then admitted that they had been following ji Jaga but they now claimed to have lost the documents from the days surrounding the murder.

Likewise, Julius Carl Butler, a key witness for the prosecution in ji Jaga's conviction, stated under oath that he was not an informant. However, the Los Angeles FBI Field Office Informant report verifies that he was.

While in jail, ji Jaga learned from police that his wife, Sandra, eight months pregnant, had been shot five times and killed. He was not allowed to see the body

and the homicide was never investigated.

Analyzing the weak case against ji Jaga, Amnesty International concluded that a retrial was necessary.

During a 1988 parole hearing, Los Angeles Assistant District Attorney Diane Vianni went before the board to explain why ji Jaga should not be released. As she put it, "He is still a revolutionary man."

Ji Jaga's attorneys filed a motion for a retrial in the spring of 1991. Within 24 hours of delivering hundreds of pages and evidence, the Los Angeles courts issued a one-sentence ruling turning down the case. In December 1991, despite favorable recommendations from the prison staff and despite the decision of the city of Oakland to declare a "Geronimo Ji Jaga Pratt" day, ji Jaga was denied parole.

Experts believe that ji Jaga has served more time than murderers whose guilt was never in question. He has spent 22 years in a California state prison. As ji Jaga said on a CBS *60 Minutes* interview, "If I'd done the murder, I'd be out by now."

### Dylcia Pagan

Like Peltier and ji Jaga, Dylcia Pagan, a 48-year-old Puerto Rican imprisoned for her involvement with the Puerto Rican Independence Movement, was targeted by the FBI. In fact, Hoover's efforts to stop this movement led to the expansion of COINTELPRO beyond its traditional surveillance of the Communist and Socialist Workers Parties. In an August 6, 1960, document, addressed to Special Agent in Charge in San Juan, and entitled, *PUERTO RICO (SUBVERSIVE CONTROL)*, Hoover wrote, "The Bureau is considering the feasibility of institut-

ing a program of disruption to be directed against organizations which seek independence for Puerto Rico. ... In considering this matter, you should bear in mind that the Bureau desires to disrupt the activities of these organizations and is not interested in mere harassment."

Along with 10 other activists, Pagan was arrested on April 4, 1980, and sentenced to 55 years in prison for "seditious conspiracy."

Seditious conspiracy is a political catchall. José Lopez, the Director of the Puerto Rican Cultural Center in Chicago, explains. "The charge is used, technically, whenever two or more people conspire to overthrow the government of the United States."

The trouble is that conspiracy does not refer only to illegal acts, but to legal acts as well. Nor does it refer only to violence. Simply agreeing with an action that another party takes against the U.S. could be cause for a charge of seditious conspiracy. For example, U.S. citizens who applaud the bombing of a U.S. embassy abroad could be accused of conspiracy, even if they had absolutely no connection to the bombing.

The charge of seditious conspiracy allows the government to try people twice for essentially the same crime. A person could be convicted of the illegal possession of a firearm, for example. That same person could then be convicted of seditious conspiracy, as evidenced by the illegal possession of a firearm.

Sentences for conspiracy are steep, far longer than those for the act itself.

Thus it happened that Dylcia Pagan, a community activist and filmmaker from New York City, was arrested in Evanston, Ill. Lopez describes the situation. "Some

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*Simply agreeing with an action that another party takes against the U.S. could be cause for a charge of seditious conspiracy.*

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people in Evanston — a white, middle-class suburb — saw a group of Puerto Ricans milling around. They called the police. The police conducted a search and found firearms. The group was arrested.”

To understand Pagan’s situation, says Lopez, it’s important to understand the situation of Puerto Ricans in the U.S.

“Puerto Rico is definitively a colony of the United States. The relationship between Puerto Rico and the United States has not really changed since 1898. Many Puerto Rican youth who grew up in the 1960s and 1970s were inspired by movements for national liberation going on in Latin America and Asia. They were frustrated by their inability to make a major dent in the system. And so they too wanted independence for Puerto Rico.”

Lopez adds that struggling for Puerto Rican independence was considered illegal during this period, even when legal means were used to facilitate that struggle.

Pagan, who attended Catholic schools and was active in the arts, started offering ballet classes to neighborhood children when she was 15.

As an adult, Pagan came to political activism through community organizing. She worked in housing, health and education programs. During this time, Pagan says she believed that such programs would lead communities to “become self-sufficient and in turn acquire the power to affect change.”

But while employed by the city to assess community programs, she concluded that the programs reinforced dependency. Her enthusiasm for electoral politics ended with the same discouragement.

Later, while a student at Brooklyn College, she became a leader of the Puerto Rican Student Union Organization. This activity led to the formation of the Puerto Rican Studies Department and her participation in demonstrations and study groups concerning Puerto Rican inde-

pendence and socialism.

Pagan became a TV producer and writer who, in her own words, “attempted to create positive images of our people. ... To attain access to the media, the Puerto Rican Media and Education Council filed a series of lawsuits” against the major television stations. Pagan created films about the colonial situation in Puerto Rico. Pagan also edited a bilingual daily, *El Tiempo*.

“In light of my many observations, I decided to join the clandestine forces for the liberation of my homeland,” Pagan says.

When charged with seditious conspiracy, the defendants deferred to international law, which states that colonialism is a crime against humanity and that actions to stop colonialism are not illegal. The activists took the position that their political and military actions were done in defense of their war of liberation against U.S. colonialism in Puerto Rico. They believe that they should have been tried in an international court. Taking this position, they refused to participate in the trial, even to defend themselves.

The National Committee to Free Puerto Rican Prisoners of War recently submitted a pardon request to Janet Reno, along with a document to the Organization of American States. The document holds the U.S. responsible for harboring political prisoners, and is supported by a diverse group of political leaders in Puerto Rico. The National Committee also plans an ad in the *New York Times*. **TW**

To offer support to the prisoners described here, contact: The Leonard Peltier Defense Committee, PO Box 10044, Kansas City, MO 64111; The International Campaign to Free Geronimo ji Jaga (pratt), PO Box 3585, Oakland, CA 94609, (510) 635-7933; The National Committee to Free Puerto Rican Prisoners of War, PO Box 476698, Chicago, IL 60647, (312) 278-0885.

## Remembering Fred Hampton

*The Essence of Fred Hampton: An attempt to capture the spirit of a young man who influenced so many and pass it on those who didn't have an opportunity to meet him* is a booklet prepared by the National Council of Churches. Killed by police 25 years ago, Hampton is raised up in these essays as “a model for young people today when there seem to be so few models around.” Hampton was a Black Panther killed with Mark Clark in a pre-dawn raid in Chicago in 1969. The booklet sells for \$5 with proceeds going to the Fred Hampton Scholarship Fund. Call Joan Ebert at (312) 275-5410 or fax her at (312) 275-6359.

## Declaration of Life

Mercy Sister Camille D'Arienzo is championing a “Declaration of Life” statement which might save some from state execution. The declaration could function like a living will in which people leave their vital organs to others. This one would indicate that the deceased has requested that, if murdered, the person convicted not be executed “no matter how heinous their crime or how much I may have suffered.”

The statement is not legally binding but could influence the punishment a prosecutor requests or the judge’s sentencing.

“I see the rage, fury and fear on the subways and in the streets all the time,” D'Arienzo says. “But to legislate violence removes from people the responsibility to look for alternatives. The more I see violence, the more I am sure I don’t want it sanctioned.”

You can write to Camille D'Arienzo, RSM, at 263 Willoughby Ave., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11205-1487.

*short takes*

## Advent for Prisoners

by Paul Magno

Narrow gate, jail gate,  
Birth canal to authentic life.  
Gate of Calvary, show us in.  
Gate of Hananiah, Azariah, Mishael,  
receive us

Not unto the barren womb  
of Holy Mother State — all steel  
and concrete,  
To be born again, Americans into  
America,  
Bearing her stigmata:  
Torture and murder for hands,  
For feet, pillage and pride  
And for death's certificate, most  
mortally,  
Hate ensconced where hearts  
should be,

But into the life chamber  
of a true church,  
Cultivating innocence until it comes  
to term,  
Bearing us forth — viable at last,  
Sisters and Brothers to others' lives,  
No less  
No more.

(On the anniversary of Dorothy Day's  
death, 1984. Modified 1989.)

— from *Hauling Up the Morning/  
Izando la Manana: writings and art  
by political prisoners and prisoners  
of war in the U.S.*, edited by Tim  
Blunk, Raymond Luc Levasseur and  
the editors of Jacobin Books, Sea  
Press, Trenton, N.J.

## “Where’s Uncle Frank?”

by Tom Cordaro

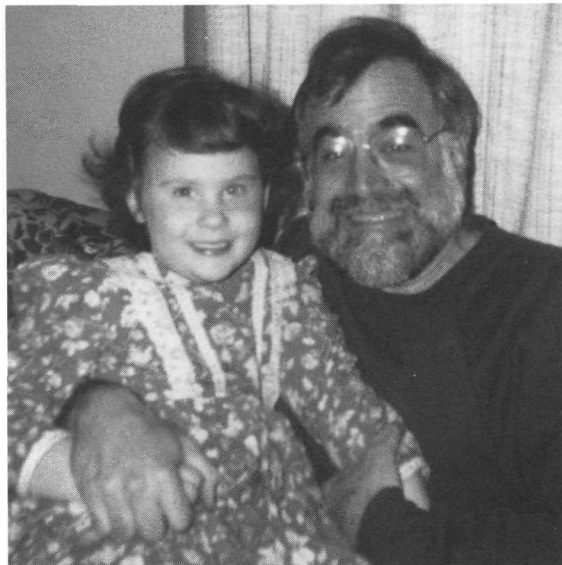
“Why is Uncle Frank in prison?” my seven-year-old daughter says as she looks up at me with a concerned and serious face. I had just told my wife Brigid that Frank had been given another six-month sentence for his repeated nonviolent witness at Strategic Command Headquarters — the command and control center for all U.S. Strategic Nuclear Weapons.

“Uncle Frank is in prison because he tried to stop the government from scaring people with big bombs,” I told her. Angela takes it all in stride. This is nothing new for this little girl who has witnessed her Uncle Frank (and sometimes her dad) going to prison. For her, protesting and going to jail — to “stop the wars” as she puts it — is all a part of the daily rhythm of life. Once again Frank will become part of

the litany of petitions we offer up in prayer at our evening meal.

This rhythm of life is something that my brother Frank has cultivated for nearly 20 years as part of what he calls “the resistance church.” As a diocesan priest

and a Catholic Worker from Iowa, Frank has been part of an informal nation-wide network of communities of Christians who have maintained a steady non-violent faith-based stance of resistance to the culture of death in the U.S. Frank



Angela and Frank Cordaro

and many others like him were risking jail time and speaking truth to power long before Ronald Reagan came on the scene and they have maintained their resistance

long after many others stopped worrying about the bomb.

This rhythm of life includes solidarity with the poor and a commitment to a simple non-materialistic lifestyle. Frank calls it the

path of downward mobility — a way for well-educated whites living in the First World to be faithful to the Gospel. It also

*Frank does not pretend to  
have all of the answers  
regarding strategies and  
tactics for bringing about a  
nonviolent world of peace  
with justice.*

**Tom Cordaro** is director of campus ministry at St. Augustine's Catholic Student Center, serving the University of Miami.



includes a good deal of humor, story telling and good times with friends and family. Frank has never been one of those somber prophets of doom. Celebration and laughter are all a part of the resistance lifestyle that Frank has cultivated.

Frank does not pretend to have all of the answers regarding strategies and tactics for bringing about a nonviolent world of peace with justice. He just seeks to be faithful to the call which he has been given. More than anything else that Frank does, his steadfast faithfulness to the Gospel of justice and his continued commitment to nonviolent struggle against the U.S. war machine stands as a witness of genuine Christian discipleship to me and many others across the country. I have learned a great deal from him over these many years. I love him very much. So does Angela. **TW**

## Hiroshima anniversary plea

The Smithsonian Institute considered commemorating the 50th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki with a look at the holocaust aspect of it.

Instead, under pressure from Congress and Veterans' groups, an exhibition of the Enola Gay, the bomber that dropped the atomic bomb over Hiroshima) is planned in a display titled "The Last Act: The Atomic Bomb and the end of World War II."

In hope of altering the tone of the exhibit prior to its opening in May, the 1995 Disarmament Coalition is requesting letters to Dr. Martin Harwit, Director of the National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 20560.

Copies can be sent to the 1995 Disarmament Coalition, 3047 Fourth St., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20017.

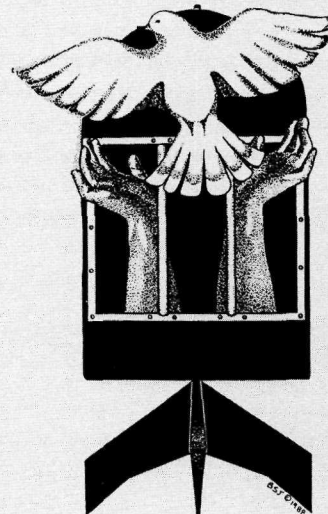
# The Nuclear Resister

In the late 1970s, Frank Cordaro led a nonviolence training session that led to a number of people getting arrested at the train tracks at Rocky Flats, where the U.S. tests its nuclear weapons.

One of those arrested was Jack Cohen-Joppa, who now edits *The Nuclear Resister* with Felice Cohen-Joppa. The two met after she had helped organize a women's action at the Pentagon. When five women were convicted and moved to a federal penitentiary despite their short sentences, she had a first hand motivation to help provide a support network for those arrested in anti-nuclear efforts.

They launched the newsletter in 1980. In an eight page tabloid that comes out eight times a year, they post the names of those in jail in the U.S. and Canada for anti-nuclear civil resistance, details about actions which have happened and locations of upcoming public actions.

In the November, 1994 issue, for example, articles deal with autumn protests involving arrests at the Project ELF transmitter (to communicate with nuclear submarines) in northern Michigan; at the Virginia offices of the C.I.A.; at the Fermi nuclear plant in Monroe, Michigan; at a utility company in Minneapolis regarding the storage of spent fuel; at the Israeli embassy in Washington D.C. concerning the continuing imprisonment of Mordechai Vanunu who alerted the international community to Israel's nuclear research [Witness 1-2/93] — former contributing editor Sam Day was one of those arrested; at the Applied Physics Lab at Johns Hopkins University; at the Air Force Association's arms bazaar in Washington D.C.; and at the Nevada



Nuclear Test Site.

Articles are brief and lively. Subscriptions cost \$18 annually.

"Over the last couple of years our subscriber base has declined so we are in need of subscribers who appreciate that for the movement's sake it's important to chronicle the resistance."

Asked if the *Resister* has a policy regarding actions that include violent protest, Cohen-Joppa said it does not. Noting that violent protests are much more common in other countries, Cohen-Joppa said *The Nuclear Resister* covers all protests that concern the manufacture, deployment and storage of nuclear weapons. In addition, they will cover some protests of U.S. foreign policy where nuclear attack is an implicit threat.

Subscriptions can be ordered by sending \$18 to *The Nuclear Resister*, P.O. Box 43383, Tucson, AZ 85733. Contributions of \$50 or more are tax-deductible if made payable to the Progressive Foundation.

— Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann

# Religious freedom: a myth for Native American prisoners

by Iron Thunderhorse

**T**ry to imagine what it would be like to be in a prisoner-of-war camp where only a small handful of people are Christians and the prisoners who are Christians are further separated from each other because your captors don't want any of you to congregate.

Every day you are subjected to ridicule. Your crucifix is confiscated and kept locked away. Your Bible is kept always out of reach. If you denounce your Christian traditions you can have anything you want. Religious leaders from all other religions are allowed to come into the POW camp regularly. You are under constant pressure to give up being Christian in order to enjoy the simple privileges that the "others" are allowed.

Let this feeling sink down deep into your bones, your heart and your gut. Each time you try to break the cycle of harassment and oppression the retaliation gets worse. Your oppressors rough you up and spread rumors against you.

If you could begin to imagine how this would feel, day and night, for 17 long years, then you have an idea of how it has been for me.

In 1978, after spending a year in county jails going through several criminal trials, I petitioned the District Court of Grayson County, Tex., for an injunction to keep the Texas Department of Correc-

tions (TDC) from cutting my hair because it had been a part of my religious practice for many years. Judge William Ralph Elliott issued a Temporary Restraining Order (TRO) to prevent TDC from cutting my hair.

I was taken to the TDC Diagnostic Unit on September 12, 1978. The reception area had been cleared. Along with Assistant Warden Billy Ware there were over a dozen ranking officers and inmates called "building tenders" (inmates who worked as guards), all carrying ax handles and bats. I was told to get in the barber chair. When I tried to produce the TRO, I was told, "You're in Texas now, Ol' Thang, we run this prison. Get your hair cut or get your head busted." I was beaten almost to unconsciousness.

While at the Diagnostic Unit I was asked what my race was. I said, "Native American" and they laughed, saying there are only three racial categories, black, white, and hispanic. They asked my religion and I said, "Native American shamanism" and they laughed again, saying, "There ain't no such religion."

I was assigned to the Ellis 1 Unit where I was interviewed by a major who told me that he hated Indians and jailhouse lawyers. "If you don't get your heart right, my boys will know how to handle it," he said.

Thus began a 17-year war, a holy war between the Texas prison system and Native American religious freedom. The first thing I did was prepare an appeal in the civil case which issued the TRO, but the court never received it. At the time, TDC was being sued by inmates for serious mail tampering.

In retaliation for my legal work the building tenders organized hit-squads and made several assassination attempts on my life. There were other inmates who rallied behind me and a series of confrontations developed. I was labeled a trouble maker and placed on death row, even though I wasn't sentenced to death.

Judge William Wayne Justice eventually abolished the use of building tenders and forced TDC to clean up its act, but TDC resisted. For the first six or seven years I would be given a haircut by force every few months until Judge Justice ruled that TDC could no longer use force against me. However, I was denied all visitation, commissary privileges, recreation privileges, etc. My typewriter was confiscated on several occasions because several of us organized to challenge TDC in the courts and in the media.

I was eventually placed in administrative segregation where I was kept out of sight and out of mind. I have spent 85 percent of my time in TDC locked away from others.

For a while TDC allowed me to have my medicine bag, ceremonial pipe, eagle feathers, etc. and in 1991 we formed a Native American Cultural and Religious Council. I was released into the Wynne Unit population with braids down to my waist. I was paroled in June of 1991.

My parole was violated in 1992 because I left a hospital without permission. I was charged with escape (although I was on parole and no warrant had been served on me) and given 20 more years.

I am now back in segregation after a year of solitary confinement and confrontations. As soon as I arrived back in TDC, officers of rank began harassing me, calling me "Thunderbolt," "Thunderturd." I was denied meals (unless I cut my hair) on several occasions. When these tactics failed, officers tried using force.

Last year, after the Religious Freedom

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**Iron Thunderhorse** is a writer, artist and shaman incarcerated in Beaumont, Tex. In his book, *Return of the Thunder Beings* (Bear & Co., 1990) he writes that he was convicted on false testimony because of his involvement with motorcycle clubs which the government was trying to disband.

Restoration Act was passed by Congress, TDC revised its religious policy. On its face it appears to give all inmates equal access to religion. The section on Native Americans allows inmates to have a sacred pipe, medicine bag, stone, shell, herbs, feathers, bandannas, etc. I made arrangements to have all these items sent to my unit so that we could practice our religion. The items were stored in the chapel. Soon after they arrived and I requested use of them, I was placed in segregated status and told I could not use them until I was released into population, which means that when I cut my hair, then I can have my religious freedom. The policy says nothing about being denied access to spiritual items for people in administrative segregation. Although it was the chaplain who advised me of this restriction, it was authorized by the warden. So much for separation of church and state.

In my culture (Algonquian) I hold the tradition of being a *powwau* which means "dream-power," alluding to the dream fasts we practice in ceremony to obtain divine revelations. I have been a spiritual leader of my people for over 30 years, and in our traditions only certain people who are trained after receiving a traditional calling are authorized to conduct our ceremonies. Numerous inmates have signed requests for TDC to allow me to work with prisoners leading the ceremonies, but TDC refuses. TDC does not know the fundamentals of Native American religions. They want to decide who can practice our religion and who cannot.

TDC spends a sizable budget each year for Christian inmates. Regular Christian revivals are the only events allowed. (TDC has to entice many inmates with football stars, magicians, and free soap and shampoo in order to get inmates to attend.) The TDC administration hasn't spent a penny on acquiring ceremonial items for Native American prisoners. I've

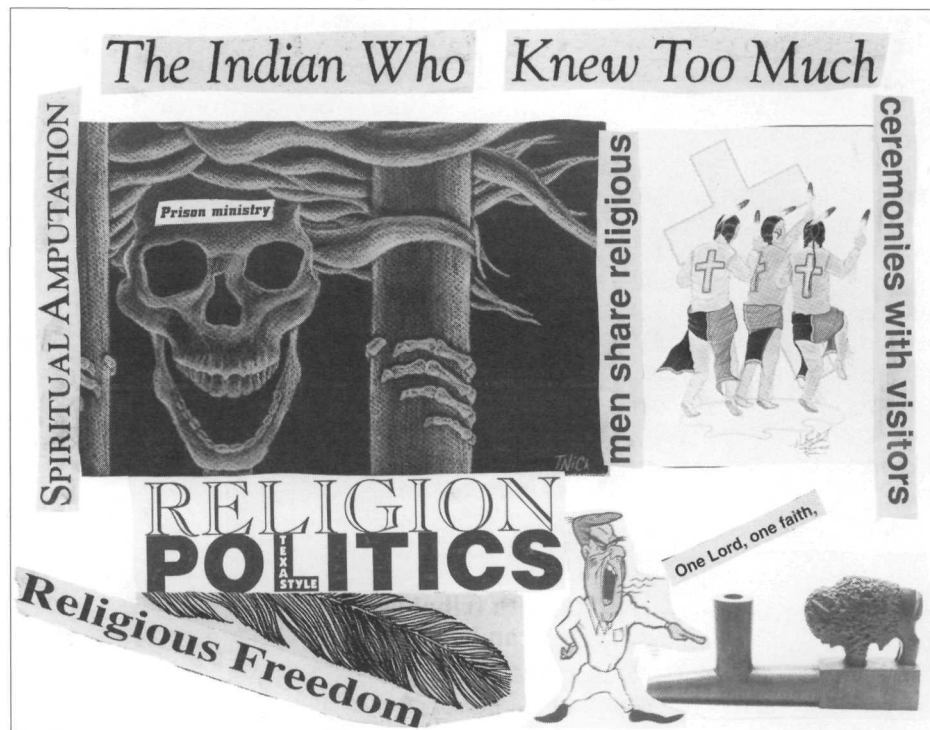
had to do this on my own.

I have yet to see a multi-cultural revival in prison in TDC. In other penitentiaries this is a common thing and each ethnic religion is allowed a special day of celebration.

I do not think or act like white people because I was raised differently. I feel

Glass Ministries, Texans Do Care, etc. and request that multi-cultural revivals be provided. Many Native Americans have accepted a hybrid form of Christian worship in their spirituality. It can be done by Christians as well.

Christians could also visit Indian communities, get to know them and invite the



like an alien who has lived on another planet for the past 17 years — cut off from my culture and traditions. Instead of taking advantage of my status as a spiritual leader allowing me to conduct ceremonials for other Indian inmates, TDC has tried its best to break my spirit and force me to worship their way.

Change can only take place if and when the Christian people themselves take action. I ask that all true Christians make good on their promise to end the wrongs and injustices done to Native Americans in the past 500 years.

Christians can contact the ministries which come into prison on a regular basis such as: Chuck Colson Ministries, Bill

elders to these multicultural revivals at the prisons so that they can visit the Indian prisoners, especially those in segregation who cannot attend the revivals. Since these elders have no transportation they should be helped so transportation is provided and they are welcomed.

By observing and participating in this way, Christians and the prison administration will see that our ancient traditions are not a form of devil-worship. People call the Great Spirit by different names and we each use our own symbols and instruments to honor the Great Mystery. But we are all saying similar things through traditions that have been handed down since the beginning of time. **TW**



# Global mission at the church's doorstep: no colonialism, please

by Jerry Drino

At the last hearing of the 1994 General Convention's committee on Program, Budget and Finance, Fred Vergara, Asian Missioner for the Diocese of El Camino Real, struck a deep nerve as he spoke in favor of restoring funding for Province 8's coalition for InterCultural Ministry Development (ICMD): "In Santa Clara County, Calif., there are no majorities. A hundred languages are spoken and the census tells us that only 14 percent of the population attends any religious services on a regular basis. If we were looking at Africa, the Episcopal Church would declare this a crisis of faith and rush to raise money to send missionaries into a potentially rich ministry field."

Vergara's comments spread through the committee like wildfire: a missionary field of immense proportions on the West Coast! Committee members had already heard much testimony from world mission activists decrying the Executive Council's recommendation that all national church overseas missionary programs be eliminated from the national church budget. Was the church losing its grip on mission? And what of the fact that the very thing which the Executive Council was advocating, a new structure of shared ministry and ministry coalitions, was exactly the structure that ICMD has been modelling since 1985.

In the end, the Program, Budget and Finance committee voted not only to fund ICMD at \$30,000 for each year of the new triennium, but to set aside \$210,000 as challenge money to encourage the rest of the church to follow ICMD's lead in

responding to the global community that is springing up, not just in the church's western dioceses (where an estimated five out of six persons moving in are of either Latino or Asian ancestry) but at every church's doorstep.

The challenge is great. Throughout this country, in every urban and metropolitan center, if not in every community and village, American Indians, Hawaiians, African Americans, Asian Americans, Latino Americans and EuroAmericans are pushing against each other and changing each other's lives. Very few in the dominant culture, including those in the Episcopal Church's pews and pulpits, greet this phenomena with open arms. But if the Episcopal Church wants to be *embraced* by peoples who historically have not participated in the life of the church or have always been objects of "mission," *it will fail to make the leap*. The purpose of intercultural ministry, meaning ministry that is shared by equal partners, is not to transfuse new blood into an old body. Intercultural ministry is aimed at creating something new — it means literally dying to the old (in which EuroAmerican values, culture and persons systematically dominate) and trusting that what God deems essential will come back in some form, but not as we determine it.

Cornel West has said that white supremacy has not only had the effect of marginalizing ethnic and racial groups, but of homogenizing cultures and the ethnic heritage of European immigrants. The heart of racism is not just the threat to people in power of those who are different, but the buried and latent pain of ancestors who were forced to commit cultural suicide in order to be assimilated into the dominant white American norms — the vehement reaction of whites and the middle class of immigrant groups against the threat of the loss of their place and privilege in society that we see today is an indication of how

deep this wound runs. If the implications of white supremacy are not addressed head on and kept on the table in every dialogue around intercultural ministry development, any real mission and ministry in a diverse society is doomed to become another colonial effort.

What would a truly intercultural church look like?

In more ethnically diverse areas, churches that used to be mono-cultural would at the beginning assume an identity more like that of a cathedral with multiple ethnic congregations that would share resources but operate separately. As first-generation immigrants become comfortable in this new country or as congregations who are recovering their ethnic identity reach a sense of stable identity, the enterprise would become one of building a united congregational identity based on a Pentecost model of diversity. In less ethnically diverse areas, churches that continue to be mono-cultural would begin to use at least two languages in worship and congregational life to signify their commitment to valuing diversity.

But part of the difficulty in developing a truly intercultural church is that our ordained church leaders have been trained and are being trained for a mono-cultural world, a world that no longer exists. ICMD, in partnership with provincial ethnic commissions, commissions on ministry, the Church Divinity School of the Pacific and national church staff, has spent years in hard dialogue at the grassroots level trying to assess how to retool present church leadership with the skills that will be needed in diverse congregations. Clergy will need to be prepared for team ministry in which they play the role of something like a mini-bishop, focussing on developing leadership for perhaps as many as six different cultural groups within the congregation (there is a parallel with rural areas where one priest might be working with several small congregations separated by many miles — in intercultural ministries the distances are cultural, not spatial). We may be at a point where seminaries must acknowledge that they can no longer claim to be able to provide



all the training all the ordained leadership in the church need, although they may be able to provide important types of training — and it might be that for some persons it would be better to ordain them sooner and train them longer, with seminary training coming later in the process.

In an effort to explore these issues, the Board for Theological Education has entered into a three-year partnership with ICMD and a task force of seminary deans to produce guidelines on complementary ordination theological education. In addition, ICMD and congregational

development staff from the national church have collaborated to produce an annual consultation on "Starting and Sustaining Ethnic Specific and Multicultural Congregations" in which congregational teams received advanced training. Based on these consultations, ICMD and the Church Divinity School of the Pacific have begun offering an introductory summer course titled "What Happens When Your Neighborhood Changes But Your Church Has Not?"

The future of the Episcopal Church lies not in recruiting minorities to revitalize its

membership, but in acknowledging that ministry must authentically emerge from the community. The power of the dominant society to assimilate minority and immigrant population has too often been replicated in the church. It is time to die to the old and let a new mission and ministry emerge. No old wine skins, please.

— Jerry Drino is executive director of ICMD and rector of St. Philip's Episcopal Church in San José, Calif., an intercultural parish where there are six primary languages spoken.

## A growth strategy for this already ethnic church

Province 8 has adopted Mark MacDonald's 1994 booklet, *A Strategy for Growth in the Episcopal Church: Joining Multiculturalism with Evangelism*, as a major resource in revisioning the mission and ministry of the Episcopal Church in the West. In it, MacDonald, who directs the Native Ministries Training Program in the Diocese of Minnesota, offers a growth strategy for the Episcopal Church based on the premise that "the Episcopal Church is, in fact, an ethnic church," reflecting the dominant American culture's English heritage.

"It must be admitted," MacDonald says, "that the ethnic identity of many of our congregations hinders the participation of members of other ethnic groups."

The growth strategy MacDonald offers encompasses 12 principles:

**1. Evangelism should be an important criterion for evaluating the church's activities.** "If our congregations do not grow we must face two questions: First, are we really committed to evangelism? Second, are we really helping people?"

**2. Evangelism and theology must test each other.** "We must not only make more disciples, but better disciples."

**3. Authentic evangelism addresses questions of inclusivity and justice.** "Without multicultural

ministry evangelism is not Christian."

**4. One important goal of evangelism is the development of new congregations.** "The most successful evangelism is congregationally based."

**5. Congregational development should be culturally sensitive.** "Congregations that are made up of many ethnic groups should be encouraged ... [however] most people want to hear the Gospel in their own language and in the context of their own culture."

**6. Congregational development should be sustainable.** "Congregational development and ministry are now dictated by norms of the dominant group within the church. These norms ... require more money than is available ..."

**7. Leadership development should focus on lay ministry.** "The primary responsibility for bringing the Gospel to others rests with the laity."

**8. Lay ministry development should focus on small group ministry.** "Developing this model is a matter of urgent concern for our ethnic minority congregations, because in most cases they have not found ways to actively involve their lay members in the pastoral and evangelistic mission of the church."

**9. It will be necessary to develop different forms of training for ordained leadership.** "For those from other ethnic groups [than EuroAmerican], the present formation process for ordained ministry is a very effective program of acculturation.

But [acculturation] ... often precludes effective leadership in the communities in which they will carry out their ministry."

**10. Liturgical inculturation should be encouraged.** "Inculturation means more than the translation of texts into different languages."

**11. New structures must be developed to encourage mission activity among ethnic minority groups.** "When it comes to this new style of congregational development, one size does not fit all."

**12. These structures must allow each group to control and develop its own program.** "If multicultural evangelism can be done in a structure which balances autonomy with connectedness to the whole church, we will be setting the stage for a new era of bringing the word of God's salvation and healing to the world."

*Copies of MacDonald's booklet, published jointly by ICMD, the Episcopal Diocese of Minnesota and the Office of American Indian/Alaska Native Ministries of the Episcopal Church, can be obtained from ICMD for \$3, including shipping and handling. There is a 20 percent discount for study groups, vestries or bishops' committees which order one for each member of their group. Call ICMD at 408-251-8621.*

— Julie A. Wortman



# Cross-cultural queries in light of Proposition 187

by Michael Wyatt

Prompted by the fact that the three Episcopal dioceses of the Bay Area in California were considering several active lay ministers in various local Latino congregations for ordination to priesthood, the School for Deacons of the Diocese of California began a new program in 1992 for Cross-Cultural Ministry Development aimed at providing these candidates with the necessary formal training. Classes were held on Saturdays, making it possible for the eight Latino/Latina students who opened the program to attend without quitting work or stopping their involvement in their own parishes.

In the first year, the new students took two courses in Spanish (worship and homiletics) and two in English with simultaneous interpretation through headphones (church history and Scripture). The division seemed obvious: the students were already involved in Spanish-speaking liturgies, but Bible and history were "content" courses, so it would be enough to transmit that content.

The storm broke over church history. The Latino/Latina students found a recounting of the vagaries that led to the Reformation and the peculiarities of the Anglican solution insensitive and arrogant. In addition, the class format reduced them to auditors — although the faculty insisted they were welcome to participate, the fact that they had to depend on an interpreter and sit together off to the side of the room reinforced a sense of marginalization.

The latent message, intended or not, was "you must assimilate; our story will become yours." The Latino/Latina students not only heard this as condemnation of who they were, but denounced it as a useless response to the immediate needs of struggling congregations.

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In addition to teaching at the School for Deacons, **Michael Wyatt**, who was raised in South America, serves as Chaplain at San Francisco State University.

The second year of the program was far more experimental. An extended course in evangelism and theology, taught in Spanish, took up half the school day. In it, active Latino ministers came and talked about their congregations and their programs. This was coupled with readings in liberation theology and hispanic (U.S.) theology. A course in pastoral care, also taught in Spanish, explored the application of the Book of Common Prayer to Latino understandings of family and crisis and sacrament. New Latino/Latina students were placed directly in this second-year program, as a way of stabilizing them and enhancing a sense of mutual support in what might become a network of Latino/Latina clergy.

The question remained, "Should they take classes in English?" We administrators of the program answered, "Yes," reasoning that, at least for the foreseeable future, the Latino/Latina students' participation in the larger activity of our denomination would depend on their ability to follow and contribute to a discussion being held in English and dominated by Anglo-American cultural assumptions. Political realism should be part of their preparation, not as assimilation, but as crosscultural skill. It also seemed necessary that the Anglo students hear questions raised from socioeconomic locations that are figuratively off their map.

Much of our work has been cast in a new light by the passing of Proposition 187, a measure that bars undocumented immigrants in California from access to health care and education. Too often the church comes across as if it agreed with this kind of coercive and exclusionary action. Local ordination to specific congregations, for example, can seem an attempt to contain and reduce the impact of immigration. In the remainder of this article I want to explore two areas in which lively questions still trouble us.

Take the question of the institution and

its inheritance. What, for example, does a prayerbook in translation mean? Years ago, the prayerbook was the "symbol of unity": you might find high or low churches, but all had a prayerbook in the pew. But what if it conjures up the blind rigidity of colonists, who imported chaplains and wool cassocks into the tropics, knocking aside what they found to set up what they thought should be there? The prayerbook today is a symbol for many of the imposed unity of imperialism.

In the secular academic world, the battle still rages over the "Western Canon," that is, the foundational texts authored by dead North European males — certainly Shakespeare and Goethe, but perhaps Thomas Cranmer, too. Under the guise of "cultural literacy," some have argued that the Western Canon should not be learned because it is superior, but because it was formative of the present dominant culture, a culture with which all should be equally conversant. However, others have insisted that alternatives must be set in place, which has led to the establishment of ethnic studies departments and so-called multicultural programs — the parallel in the church would be alternative liturgies and training programs.

The problem is that nothing has been solved by alternative liturgies and training programs — no fundamental structural change has been brought about. These alternatives simply force the question, where is the core? Alternatives ostensibly opened up for ethnic groups end up being drawn on by liturgical tourists and evangelical prospectors from the bored barren mainstream, who hail them as the church's hope for revitalization. David Rieff, in *Harper's* (August 1993), points out that "multiculturalism" itself is both the result of and a stimulus to transnational corporations, who convert the world into a marketplace for ethnic artifacts and universally available mass-produced items.

The question then becomes: Is the role of the alternative track to supplement or to subvert? to fill in the gaps or offer resistance? Behind this, of course, lurks the uneasy question of funding: If the



training of ethnically specific clergy is an investment, how soon will the returns be expected? What are the interests of those who provide the funds? Guerrilla troops must forage for themselves; they cannot expect the palace to feed them.

The second question raised by our experience at the School for Deacons has to do with the training of ministers: What identity are we forming? To speak one another's language is not enough. Bilingual classrooms actively raise the question of cultural transmission: Who are the students to become? Tensions over the official language on ballots for elections also raise questions about how citizens are to recognize each other, if no longer by common language. Is a liturgy in Spanish, for example, designed to ease the arrival of a refugee or to help someone in the Southwest reclaim a heritage? The concern of immigrants and of families who look back over many generations in this country are not the same; in fact, they may move in opposite directions. For immigrants, the use of Spanish is often thought to be not a choice but a necessity until fluency in English is achieved — a primary wish may well be for help in understanding the dominant culture in order to establish a level of comfortable competence. But for the Chicano, the use of Spanish is a sign of endurance and resistance, an inheritance held on to with pride. In some cases, Spanish is relearned as part of the rediscovery of this submerged identity.

Offering a worship service in Spanish cannot possibly address both the immigrant and the reconstructionist: those who are trying to figure out the dominant culture and those who are trying to resist it. And this is not even to mention the mutual suspicion and jealousy that can arise between the two groups based on the illusion that one enjoys what the other cannot: cultural security and clarity.

We at the School for Deacons work with these questions and wonder. We know that we discover the answers person by person and that much, for the sake of God's reign, is being planted today which we trust God will bring to a full harvest.

## Reflecting on the queries by Hartshorn Murphy

Michael Wyatt raises several interesting questions for those of us who struggle with the "evangelistic emergency" that the church faces.

Firstly, the question of the transmission of culture through educational process. The true value of these alternative tracks is not simply that they transmit the same core curriculum in other languages. Rather, it is that they intentionally circumvent the impartation of an alien seminary culture (read: the dominant culture) to non-EuroAmericans by keeping them in their own communities. As we begin to acknowledge the contributions of other cultures and tribes to sacred experience, we discover the answer to Wyatt's question "where is the core?" by asserting the existence of many cores — the EuroAmerican strand is but one of many that make up the rich tapestry that is the human experience of the Holy. Fundamental structural change occurs not, as he rightly suggests, by adding competing stories, but by broadening the story to reflect the whole truth. Eurocentric "cultural literacy" has been experienced by others, apparently including the Latinos/Latinas at the School for Deacons, as exclusivity.

Secondly, Wyatt claims that "nothing has been solved by alternative liturgies and training programs" except as titillation for bored mainstream voyeurs. But from whose perspective is this true? If each tribe is free to engage in the evolution of liturgy (*the work of the people*) that speaks to their deepest spiritual selves, these forms will, of necessity, reflect, not obscure, their cultural needs. For the first generation (focused on survival), native language and custom may be preferred. For the second generation (assimilationists), liturgies in English with native custom may fulfill a need. For the third

generation (reclaimers), worship may well return to the use of native languages but reflect a cultural hybrid in ceremonial.

Such a liberating movement will ultimately cause the dominant culture to re-discover their ethnic and tribal individuality so tragically silenced and subsumed into a generic, American identity. Our denominational fear is that of the loss of the unifying principle (the Book of Common Prayer). But in this church, I believe, there are more essential commitments we share, namely, our Christology, the centrality of the Eucharist, the discipline of authority grounded in scripture, reason and tradition, an English historical legacy and our diversity itself as part of the whole wide Anglican Communion.

Finally, Wyatt asks: "If the training of ethnically specific clergy is an investment, how soon will the returns be expected?"

This concern reminds me of the arguments surrounding affirmative action. To expect African-Americans, four hundred years in slavery, to reach parity after one generation of half-hearted affirmative action, is ludicrous. The same is true of alternative tracks.

Already, there are those preferring the language of "complimentary" tracks because to compliment something is necessarily to recognize the existing thing as normative, preferable and complete within itself. The danger ever lies in our tendency to replicate the existing process in other languages, rather than to explore true alternative roads to the same goal. Unless the alternative tracks being experimented with enable a more competent lay and ordained leadership to emerge, we are setting people up for heartbreak and failure. To the extent that these new, cheaper and experimental programs are but refurbished wineskins, they are already not prudent.

—Hartshorn Murphy is Archdeacon of Los Angeles.

# On being happy

by Melanie Morrison

**I**n junior high and high school, I had a friend named Mary Jo. Being very good friends, we told each other everything we experienced at home, at school, at parties, and on dates when we had them. Everything. We imitated the voices and gestures of teachers and parents so that no detail of the story would be lost and especially during these theatrical performances, we would laugh ourselves silly.

Mary Jo and I also had serious times. When I stayed overnight at her house and we talked until the wee morning hours, a particular subject would frequently take hold of us. We even had a name for these conversations. We called them DTs. Destiny Talks.

In those late night hours, when we were convinced that every person in the world besides the two of us was sound asleep, we considered such questions as: What is life about, anyway? What will be asked of us down the road? Will we have the courage to respond? What or who will we become? Deeply spiritual questions actually, although we didn't often speak in explicitly spiritual terms.

Mary Jo and I shared our respective dreams, fantasies, and hunches with each other — about living alone, finding a life partner or having children; about writing a great novel, getting elected to Congress, living in foreign countries, devot-

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**Melanie Morrison** is co-pastor of Phoenix Community Church in Kalamazoo, Mich., and co-director of Leaven, Inc., in Lansing, Mich., which offers resources, workshops and retreats in the areas of spiritual development, feminism and sexual justice. This article will be included in *The Grace of Coming Home: Spirituality, Sexuality and the Struggle for Justice* to be published by Pilgrim Press. Artist **Claudia Bach** lives in Sarasota, Fla.

ing ourselves to some great social cause.

It was a serious game we played. We assumed that this thing we called destiny actually existed. It was a given, not entirely ours to create, and yet we believed it was within our power to discover if only we worked hard enough at it. This thought was both compelling and repelling. Just imagine, we said to one another, if we fail to discern our true destiny and pursue the wrong course!

As I remember those conversations, Mary Jo and I had one basic difference in the way we articulated our dreams. She said, "Most of all, I want to be happy. Whatever I do, whoever I am with, I want to be happy." Although I didn't express it aloud to her, I found that sentiment somewhat frivolous. Already in junior high, I had appropriated the belief that happiness isn't something you strive for.

The past couple of years, I have reflected on my skepticism about being happy. In my spiritual world view, meaningful is okay. Productive is good. Doing something to change the world is *very* good. If, while doing meaningful, productive, socially responsible things, you find a little happiness — more power to you. But happiness is a by-product at best. A superficial goal at worst.

Now, in my case, it is not so simple as saying that I was the product of a Calvinist work ethic. H.L.

Mencken once defined a Calvinist as a person who is haunted by the thought that somewhere, someone might be happy. I do not come from a joyless,

humorless family that didn't value playfulness. But I think I inherited the assumption that if you strive for happiness, you will become materialistic and narcissistic.

I tend to identify things like destiny and spiritual depth with words or phrases like: openness to change, struggle, wrestling, being in labor, ferment, sensitivity to suffering, compassion, solidarity. Not a lot of happiness in that list. I've come to see that it is I who make happiness frivolous by not giving it sufficient room in my life. As a person whose spirituality has been much more activist than contemplative, I don't need to be told: In God's name, do something!

The psalmist said it this way: "Be still and know that I am God." Lao Tsu put it another way: "Practice non-action. Work without doing. Magnify the small, increase the few. See simplicity in the complicated." And Jesus said: "Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet they are cared for. Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these."

But another objection surfaces within me: Is it okay to be happy when a brother or sister is in pain and when there is so much unhappiness all around; so much

violence, so much suffering?

One of the people who has been a teacher for me is Etty Hillesum, the Jewish author who died at the age of 29 in Auschwitz. Etty believed that our human vocation, our

spiritual calling, is to safeguard that little piece of God that is found in each of us — to make a safe dwelling place for God to be at home in this world. She believed our

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*Is it okay to be happy when  
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suffering?*

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vocation is to help God, not other way around. And she believed that no pain or joy ought to be discounted because it is too small. By listening to and deeply feeling every pain, every joy, we are not self-indulgent in some unspiritual way, says Etty. Quite the contrary, she insists. By attending to every pain and joy, we come closer to God who is within each of us.

I find it so moving that just before Etty's train pulled into Auschwitz, she flung a postcard from the train window that was later discovered by a farmer. On it she had scribbled: "We have entered the camp singing." She knew what lay ahead. It was not denial that had her singing. It was her resistant, victoriously joyful self that refused to let her humanity be crushed. For then the enemy would have truly won. I am likewise moved by her prayer, written during a bleak winter of German occupation and persecution: "The jasmine behind my house has been completely ruined by the rains and storms of the last few days, its white blossoms are floating about in muddy black pools on the low garage roof. But somewhere inside me the jasmine continues to blossom undisturbed, just as profusely and delicately as ever it did. And it spreads its scent round the house in which You dwell, oh God. You can see, I look after You, I bring You not only my tears and my forebodings on this stormy, grey Sunday morning. I even bring You scented jasmine. And I shall bring You all the flowers I shall meet on my way, and truly there are many of those. I shall try to make You at home always. Even if I should be locked up in a narrow cell and a cloud should drift past my small barred window, then I shall bring You that cloud, oh God, while there is still the strength in me to do so."

Etty is one of those teachers, like Jesus and Lao Tsu, who remind me at what cost I do the splittings, saying that feeling deep pain means I ought not feel deep joy. Or that being happy will somehow be a

rel he has seen that day, he is grinning at the sheer wonder of it all.

One of the challenges of being, and staying human, is to take life seriously without taking ourselves so seriously. As Emma Goldman said so many years ago:

"If I can't dance, I don't want to be a part of your revolution." If there is no room left for dancing, for singing, for laughter and celebration—in the midst of all our work and efforts and struggle, then we have become grim and joyless. If we can no longer be surprised by joy, it is a sign that even our best intentions and good causes have gone sour. Because joy and happiness aren't things we can plan, calculate, organize, create, or demand. They can only be received and savored or passed by and lost.

Like the intense happiness of being fully alive, of sensing a deep connectedness with earth and sky and water, of forgiving and being forgiven, or the delight of skin on skin.

Through the ages, the commonwealth of God has been pictured as a feast with much dancing and singing and joy. Communion is, among other things, a celebration of that commonwealth time when barriers will be removed and all people will eat together at the table of life.

Some years ago, while living in the Netherlands, I had an experience of communion I shall never forget. I had been asked by Piet and Gelda to perform their wedding. Piet worked at Rainbow House, a group home for developmentally disabled teenagers and young adults. Piet and Gelda had invited the residents of Rainbow House to the wedding. But shortly before the wedding, we learned that some of the parents, did not want their children to participate because membership in their church involved being able to recite the Heidelberg Catechism

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**House of dreams**

Claudia Bach

barrier to recognizing injustice. Those are false splittings. Can my fretting add a single hour to my span of life? Can my long face really do anything to reduce another's pain?

During a visit from Dutch friends, Riet told of holding her grandson Peter on her lap. He is four and loves to climb up and snuggle with Riet. Recently he asked her: "Grandma, do you know what is the bestest thing in the whole world that people can do?" "What Peter?" asked Riet. Putting his cheek next to hers softly, Peter replied, "Skin on skin!"

Before it was shamed out of us, we naturally had the capacity to feel pain as pain, injustice as injustice, happiness as happiness. You know the sheer wonder that can overcome a child who is beholding something of beauty—a magic stone, the veins of a leaf, or the music of a warbling bird. Little Nathan who lives down the street from me cannot talk yet, but he is repeatedly pointing to things. He wants me to see. And he turns to me beaming. Even when it is the 14th squir-



# Maximum security prison to open

A maximum security, "control unit" prison in Florence, Colo., which activists have long dreaded and protested, has just been completed. Costing \$60 million, the new facility, which is part of a four-prison complex, was custom-built for 416 prisoners deemed the most predatory, disruptive or escape-prone in the nation's penal system. Although the prison sits at the foot of the Rockies, none of the inmates will have a view of the mountains or of anything else except the sky.

In effect, the prisoners in the Florence control unit are under permanent "lockdown." Each cell is an isolation unit, larger than industry standards because a prisoner spends all but an hour or so of each day here. Staggered cells make eye contact between prisoners impossible. In addition to the standard barred door there is a windowed steel door intended to muffle voices. Prisoners eat in solitude.

Inside, the minimalist furnishings are designed to defy a prisoner's destructive urges — an immovable bed, desk, stool, and bookcase are all made of reinforced

concrete; the built-in shaving mirror is polished steel. A wall device eliminates smokers' access to matches or lighters. Plumbing for a toilet and shower can't be flooded — the shower is controlled by guards who monitor a prisoner's every move, including his access to a 12-inch black-and-white television.

To leave the cell, the prisoner must don leg-irons and chains and be accompanied by guards.

After three years of such segregation, if an inmate has stopped "misbehaving," he will be slowly reintegrated into the general prison population, scrutinized every step of the way for signs of trouble. The theory is that if a prisoner is starved enough for human contact and a change of scenery, even the most recalcitrant will toe the disciplinary line.

During the past 20 years the population of the nation's jails and prisons has increased fourfold. The completion of the new Florence facility heralds the beginning of new Federal spending intended to spark billions of dollars more in prison construction. The imprisonment rate in

the U.S., now five times that of Western Europe's, is expected to continue to rise.

A newly formed coalition of groups opposed to control units like the one in Florence — the National Campaign to Stop Control Unit Prisons — is urging the U.S. Bureau of Prisons not to begin incarcerating prisoners at the Florence facility. The coalition and other prison watchdog groups like the Committee to End the Marion Lockdown based in Chicago, Ill., say that isolating prisoners in maximum security control unit lockdowns only generates a sense of rage, hatred and alienation among prisoners — some, they say, could go insane. They advocate for programs that educate prisoners and teach them employment and social skills.

In addition, some anti-control unit activists fear that the purpose of the new Florence facility and other maximum security permanent "lockdown" prisons such as the one in Marion, Ill., is not just to contain prisoners who have tried to escape or to kill prison staff or other inmates, as the Bureau of Prisons has claimed.

"Many are sent to Marion because they have written 'too many' law suits, participated in work stoppages or pursued their religious and political beliefs," say members of the Committee to End the Marion Lockdown.

"Currently, there are more political prisoners incarcerated at Marion than at any other penal institution, despite the fact that it is one of the smallest prisons. A 1985 Congressional study showed that 80 percent of those incarcerated at Marion did not have the level six security rating that is supposedly the threshold criterion for being sent there." **TW**

— Julie A. Wortman (*This report was drawn from an October 17, 1994 New York Times report and press information from the Committee to End the Marion Lockdown.*)

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and, unless you were a member, you couldn't receive communion.

When we heard this, we decided to scrap the idea of communion because it was unacceptable to us that these young people would have to remain seated and watch while the rest of us came forward. But at the last minute, the parents relented.

One by one, members of this congregation came forward — friends and family of Piet and Gelda. Most received the bread and cup with a serious expression, nodding silently.

Then the residents of Rainbow House came forward. Their faces were

beaming. When I offered them the bread, they exclaimed loudly and gestured: "oooh, aaaah ..." Some of them took the bread and held it, examining it from different angles, smelling it, fingering it, putting it tenderly to their lips before eating it.

As they returned to their seats, they ran to Piet and Gelda and covered them with hugs and kisses, making a terrible, wonderful racket in the otherwise silent sanctuary. And I knew I had, at last, experienced what a communion service is supposed to be: a love feast, a passionate, sensual celebration of what the African American gospel song calls "that happy day." **TW**

# The fall of the prison

by Laura Magnani

**The Fall of the Prison: Biblical Perspectives on Prison Abolition** by Lee Griffith. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1993, 228 pp.

It isn't a popular topic these days — talking about being kind to prisoners, much less abolishing prisons. In fact the nation is opting for wholesale madness in its prison-building binge, at the expense of every other government-funded program. Prison building is the new military spending and industries are jumping on the bandwagon of high-tech security contracts and new domestic weapons systems. Into this dismal arena comes Lee Griffith's wonderful, if controversial challenge. He does for criminal justice advocates what Ched Myers does for peace advocates: provide a biblical framework for faithful action.

Griffith covers the landscape, drawing from an exhaustive bibliography that crosses disciplines from history to criminology, through biblical and theological studies and even contemporary alternative press sources. This interdisciplinary approach is refreshing but, at some point, the reader may feel carried away by Griffith's easy narrative style. The biblical chapter contained no tedious textual analysis — no extensive exegesis — prompting the

question: Does he make his case? The truth is that the texts are remarkably unambiguous. The Good News proclaims release to the captives. We see it, among other places, in terms of the concepts of sabbath and jubilee, or in Jesus' invitation to be in prison with him (Matthew 25). Both testaments present a consistent picture:

"The Bible does not present the prison as simply one of many social institutions ... The Bible identifies the prison with the spirit and power of death ... As such, the problem is not that prisons have failed to forestall violent criminality and murderous rampages; the problem is that prisons are *identical in spirit* to the violence and murder that they pretend to combat." (page 106)

The flaws in Griffith's analysis are minor, but two are worth mentioning. When he talks about prisons as big businesses he uses dated material from California about the lobbying done by the Department of Corrections to keep the industry flourishing. The formidable lobby-

ing in the last 15 years has come from the guards' union which is the second largest contributor to state campaigns. They contributed nearly a million dollars to re-elect the Governor and over \$100,000 to pass Three Strikes laws.

Such measures will keep prisons with us for a long time.

Secondly, Griffith repeats the error of most prison historians that Quakers were

responsible for developing the penitentiary in Philadelphia in the 1790s. Individual Quakers were actively involved, but the organization actually responsible was among the first ecumenical efforts in the country. The Pennsylvania Prison Society, as it is known today, was chaired by the Episcopal bishop and made up of people of many Christian denominations. (See *America's First Penitentiary: A 200 Year Old Failure*, AFSC, 1990.)

However, these are small, mostly academic details. What is amazing is the amount of material Griffith digests and reorganizes for conscientious seekers. Unlike 99 percent of other writers in this field, Griffith accepts no simple solutions — "no cheap grace." He spells out the pitfalls of prison alternatives, quoting David Rothman: "Innovations that appeared to be substitutes for incarceration became supplements to incarceration. On restitution, he writes that "the most meaningful restoration is not property but right relationship." He spells out the ways in which well-meaning church workers have tinkered with reform over the years with the ultimate result of perpetuating an evil system.

If the biblical message is clear, the road to discipleship is as risky and "foolish" as ever. "There are no alternatives to prisons. There are only alternatives to the ways in which we victimize and cage each other." We can only get there by experimenting with a new kind of truth, and expecting these experiments to be a lifelong endeavor. I hope *Witness* readers will read this book and take up the call Griffith so eloquently sends out. **TW**

*"The Bible identifies the prison with the spirit and power of death. The problem is that prisons are identical in spirit to the violence and murder that they pretend to combat."* — Lee Griffith

Laura Magnani is Criminal Justice Program Coordinator for the American Friends Service Committee, Pacific Mountain Region.

In 1980, while Seiichi Michael Yasutake was director of counseling at the YMCA Community College in Chicago, one of the counselors on his staff was arrested, tried and convicted of sedition, and sentenced to 98 years in prison. As he cleaned out the desk she had abruptly vacated, Yasutake was disturbed and perplexed.

"She was a very effective counselor," he says. "She had never told me she was part of the Puerto Rican independence movement. I knew nothing about Puerto Rico."

After visiting Carmen Valentin in prison, Yasutake began to work with others who were active in support of her and her cause.

Now director of the Prisoners of Conscience Project sponsored by the National Council of the Churches of Christ, he has become an outspoken advocate of the rights of political prisoners in the U.S.

People imprisoned for acting on their political beliefs are subject to longer sentences, harsher conditions, and more harassment than other prisoners, Yasutake says. Labeled as high security risks, they are often denied ordinary contact with family and friends and isolated in the nation's multiplying maximum-control units.

"Middle-class church people do not believe that these abuses are going on, or tend to think the government is justified," Yasutake says. "They will accept any excuses for 'security.'"

Yasutake's wariness of such excuses has strong personal grounds. At the outbreak of World War II, his father — a poet and prominent leader in the Japanese-American community in Seattle — was torn from his family and sent to an internment camp in Texas. Shortly after-

*"Middle-class church people do not believe that these abuses are going on."*

— Michael Yasutake



Seiichi Michael Yasutake

Bill Wylie-Kellermann

## Asking for church solidarity

by Marianne Arbogast

wards Yasutake, then 21, and the rest of his family were uprooted from their home and imprisoned first in Washington, then in Idaho.

In Washington, they were housed in "quickly built barracks at a county fair camp 30 miles south of Seattle," Yasutake says. "There was not much privacy. There were partitions between families in barracks, but you could hear everything."

His parents, and one sister who had been born in Japan, were classified, along with many others, as "enemy aliens." Although anti-Asian immigration laws prohibited their becoming U.S. citizens, "the media would talk as if they were not naturalized by preference," Yasutake says.

After a year and a half, Yasutake and his sister were released when they were accepted at the University of Cincinnati. Soon afterward, however, a government agent was sent there to interview students

of Japanese ancestry. When he asked Yasutake if he would be willing to fight in combat for the U.S., Yasutake — who had adopted a pacifist stance — said no, and was expelled from the school. (Years later, the former dean met him at a conference on Teilhard de Chardin, and apologized for carrying out the army order.)

Yasutake's pacifist convictions had been shaped by experiences in both the U.S. and Japan.

"Before the Second World War broke out, I went to Japan for a year and a half. I observed the rise of militarism, and was able to see firsthand the propaganda against the western powers. I saw that both the Japanese and the U.S. governments would lie about each other and conscript young people for military service and then slaughter each other. I knew both countries were wrong."

Still, he was shaken by the expulsion.

"I was very worried," he recalls. "My

Marianne Arbogast is assistant editor of *The Witness*.



mother and younger brother were still in the camp, my other brother was in the U.S. army, and my father was in the FBI concentration camp. I was worried the FBI might do something terrible to my father."

He found counsel and support from Joseph Mitsuo Kitagawa, a Japanese-born Episcopal priest and member of the Episcopal Peace Fellowship, who had been with Yasutake's family in the Idaho camp and led them in worship.

Yasutake was able to resume his studies, first at Boston University, then Seabury-Western Seminary in Evanston. In 1950, he became the first Japanese American to be ordained an Episcopal priest in the midwest.

After serving as a curate at St. Paul's in Chicago and then working with the Christian Social Relations department of the diocese, Yasutake became rector of a suburban parish. There he joined and hosted a group promoting open housing, which had been denied meeting space at the YMCA and other area churches. But he also "came to understand how wrong the majority of people could be," Yasutake says. "The people I was serving were the kind of people who were throwing rocks at Martin Luther King."

Last year, Yasutake earned a fifth degree black belt in *kendo*, Japanese fencing, which he had practiced in his youth and resumed 15 years ago. As an adolescent, it was a "way in which I was identifying myself with a kind of 'samurai' tradition," he explains. Today, he does it

"to stay youthful doing something I'm good at." But beneath an unassuming manner, he retains a warrior's fierce dedication.

The people for whom he fights "are willing to suffer the consequences of imprisonment, being killed, or denied the chance to bring up their own children, for the sake of what they believe," he says. "It is the kind of commitment we as the people of God are called upon to practice. There cannot be change in society without a lot of sacrifice."

Yasutake visits prisons around the country, working to build support for prisoners and to raise awareness of both prison conditions and the motivations of those who risk imprisonment.

He frequently asks churches to "sponsor" individual prisoners.

Recently, he says, the rabbi of a sponsoring synagogue convinced Janet Reno to override a prison decision not to allow Susan Rosenberg, an imprisoned activist who had worked with the Black Panthers and Puerto Rican independentists, to visit her dying father.

But Yasutake believes that sponsorship "is often more helpful to the congregation than it is to the prisoner."

"The issue of political prisoners describes the situation in society like nothing else does. They are key signs that point the way to what we need to do. It is a dangerous thing when the church goes along with the government labeling these people as criminals."

He is critical of Amnesty

International's policy of restricting its "prisoner of conscience" designation to prisoners who have not used or advocated violence.

"Amnesty International did not adopt Nelson Mandela as a prisoner of conscience, because he believed in using force," he says. "But if you were not supporting Nelson Mandela, you were supporting the white power structure."

Despite the outcome of the November elections, Yasutake feels that "more and more people are becoming aware of human rights and racism on a deeper level. There is more potential than there was when I started doing this work."

Currently, Yasutake is working to obtain permission for Human Rights Watch workers to inspect the Westville Maximum Control Complex, near Michigan City in Indiana. So far, permission has been denied, but reports of abuse have mobilized church and media support of the inspection.

In 1990, the General Convention of the Episcopal Church passed a resolution introduced by the Interfaith Prisoners of Conscience Project, calling for a moratorium on maximum-control-unit prisons. This year, Yasutake brought a resolution calling for amnesty for Puerto Rican political prisoners, but it was defeated in committee.

"We need to work on things like that," Yasutake says. "The church has to stand on its own feet and examine its role in society. It has to ask many hard questions of the government."

**TW**

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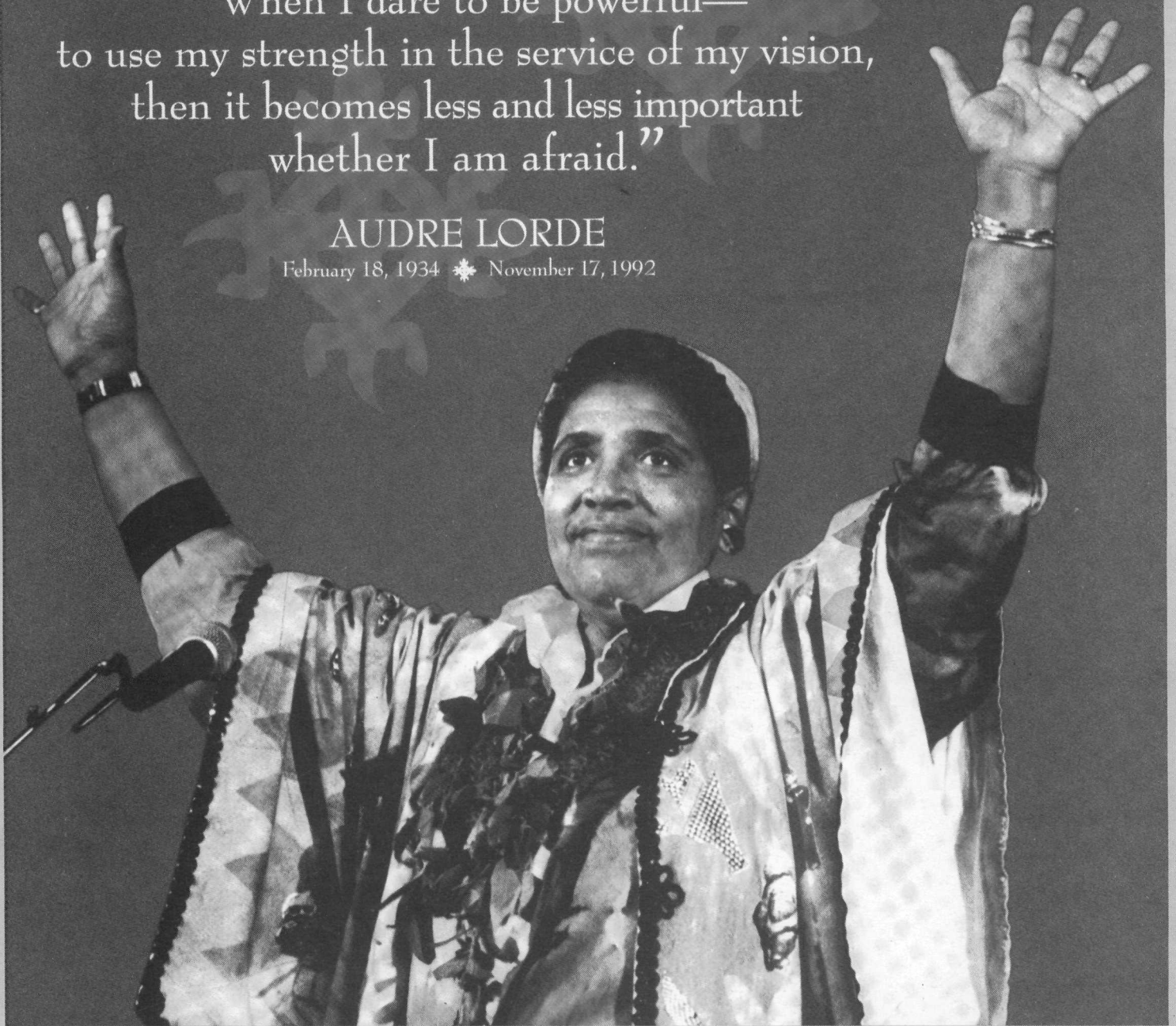
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