purges referred to by Mr. della Cava occurred much later, after I had left Brazil.

Finally, Mr. della Cava attributes to me *in quotation marks* a phrase which I do not recognize at all. Perhaps it is a garbled version of my speech to the Brazilian National War College on May 5, 1964. I mentioned four developments during the previous year encouraging to the cause of freedom in the world: the Sino-Soviet dispute; large-scale Soviet wheat purchases; the successful presidential elections in Venezuela; the Brazilian revolution. I said that the Brazilian revolution was probably the most important of these four—an event which "may well take its place alongside the initiation of the Marshall Plan, the ending of the Berlin blockade, the defeat of Communist aggression in Korea, and the solution of the Cuban-missile base crisis as one of the critical points of inflection in mid-twentieth century world history."

Subsequent history has obviously not borne out that statement in any positive sense. From the negative point of view, I then believed (and still believe) that had Goulart succeeded in becoming a populist dictator, he would have been pushed aside promptly by one of his more able and more radical allies, as General Naguib had been displaced in Egypt by Colonel Nasser. There were several candidates who openly spoke of themselves as would-be "Fidel Castros" of Brazil. Given the size and location of Brazil, such a course of events—evidently hypothetical, but not implausible—might have made all of South America an area of left-wing totalitarian regimes.

Since moving to Baltimore in mid-1967, I have not followed events in Brazil closely. As I have written elsewhere, I consider my greatest failure as Ambassador my inability in 1965 and 1966 to persuade President Castello Branco to undertake the building of a new kind of political infra-structure, for which he had an unrivaled opportunity. The recent depressing cycle of growing urban terrorism and arbitrary

(*Continued on page 398*)



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# TAKING FR. BERRIGAN SERIOUSLY

A quarter of a century has passed since the United States dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. To save American lives. On the anniversaries of those two shameful days American planes will most likely be dropping bombs on Asians. Again, to save American lives.

Twenty-five years ago, *Commonweal* wrote:

"For our war, for our purposes, to save American lives we have reached the point where we say that anything goes. That is what the Germans said at the beginning of the war."

What can we write today?

America has learned to live with the bomb, and at most to worry, only occasionally, if we are spending too much on its care and feeding. Will America learn to live with its Asian wars, its garrisons semi-permanently posted around the edges of the empire? There will be some limits to the enterprise, of course: "costs" must be kept to such-and-such number of American lives and an unspecified number of Oriental human beings; the President can only invade neutral countries for up to 60 days without consulting Congress; puppet governments interested in bombing raids on neighboring territories must apply to the Pentagon at least two weeks in advance; all massacres should be reported promptly. After that, no questions answered.

There are a sizable number of Americans who are not resigned to this destiny for the country they love. They are the troublemakers who continue to spread the rumor that there is a war being waged by the United States in Southeast Asia and that this war is horrible, futile, and unjust.

These foolhardy souls are loosely associated in what is called the "peace movement," though *movements* might be a more accurate term, since aims and methods vary widely. Between now and November, the peace movement will be the subject of much speculation and the object of much advice. The fire lit by the Cambodian invasion smolders and promises to flare up with the opening of the school year and the Congressional elections. The direction of the movement remains undetermined, however, at the same time that the combination of Mr. Agnew and the hard hats has provoked fears of "backlash."

Some advice is obvious, e.g., defiling the American flag or offending people's sexual proprieties is not the best opening gambit for persuading

them to oppose the war. On the other hand, the problem of backlash is complicated by the fact that the peace movement aims not only to persuade but also to resist, that is, to refuse acts of complicity with a war process it holds immoral. It has thus been involved in counseling conscientious objectors, draft resistance, tax strikes, and aid for deserters. Having already been compelled by conviction to hand such hostages to the custodians of traditional patriotic sentiment, the antiwar activists are aware that the question of backlash is in large measure out of their hands. When the Vice President makes political mileage out of attacking NBC, CBS, the New York *Times,* Averell Harriman and Senator Mansfield, clearly there are limits to what may be gained by going "respectable." The only really safe thing to do is nothing—which is the most unthinkable course of all. Faced with the awfulness of the war, one does what one can.

Which brings us to the matter of Daniel Berrigan.

There are various ways of not taking Daniel Berrigan seriously. The easiest is to dismiss him, his brother and the other destroyers of draft files at Baltimore, Catonsville, Milwaukee, Boston, Philadelphia and Chicago, as "kooks" or "romantics." Their actions presumably spring from some personality defect that separates them from the run of commonsensical men: egomania, a terrible naiveté, a psychotic sense of guilt, take your pick. Besides the fruitlessness of such an analysis which depends on facts which can never really be known, what is known about the Berrigans, unfortunately for the theory, is that they are exceptional individuals with a sense of humanity, irony and modesty about what they are doing which distinguishes them not only from many others who claim the title "revolutionary" but also from most of the "commonsensical" men who rule us.

There is, however, another, more sophisticated way of not taking Daniel Berrigan seriously. Which is to follow his exploits vicariously while avoiding one's own responsibilities, to nod admiringly at his words, and then to return him to that corner niche conveniently reserved for plaster saints. If the FBI were smarter than it is, it would not capture Father Berrigan, it would canonize him. There is no other weapon so lethal.

Father Berrigan is far too significant a figure to be dismissed in either of these ways without risking great loss. He, and his brother Philip, are calling for a moral revolution, a regeneration that is based on the personal conversion of individuals through acts which break them off from established powers of the world and which link them, through suffering and the fate of being outcast, with the poor and the oppressed. Now that message is not exactly "political," as we have come to understand politics in the age when ideologies are supposedly outdated. The Berrigans' message is sometimes mysterious, incomplete, paradoxical; and we confess to suffering something of a "metaphor gap" with Daniel Berrigan when he writes of future political change as putting on a "new garment," creating "a new mankind." Their message, to the scandalizing of some and the embarrassment of many, is however very much the message of the Gospel; and the problems they present, mystery and metaphors and all, are precisely the problems the Gospel presents.

We do not want to dismiss Daniel Berrigan, nor to canonize him, nor to co-opt him. We wish to respond to him from our own position, agreeing and disagreeing, hoping that the dialogue may prove useful to the antiwar movement and the church.

1. The war in Vietnam is not merely a mistaken policy or an error in judgment, but a crime. At the time of the Dreyfus affair, Charles Péguy wrote that the struggle was not only over the fate of a man but over the soul of France; he did not want to see his nation exist in a "state of mortal sin." Everyday politics, it has always seemed to us, cannot be conducted in specifically religious terms without risking religious wars; but whatever theologians may be doing with the category of mortal sin these days, the force of Péguy's remark applies to the American war in Vietnam. The appropriateness of civil disobedience and dramatic protest actions must be judged accordingly.

2. Moderate liberalism, is not *enough.* Even to resolve the basic problems of housing and environmental control, which the Nixon Administration has put on the agenda, let alone perform the radical alteration needed in America's outlook toward its own and the world's poor, or to fulfill the promises implied in our affluence, the country will have to go beyond what are currently offered as liberal measures.

3. Those planning to bring about profound change in this society had best prepare themselves for the long-haul; open themselves to suffering; strip themselves of illusions; arm themselves with hope.

4. By no means are all of America's institutions corrupted beyond repair. Our notions of constitutional government, of civil liberties and due process, of human dignity and equality, and even the faulty judicial and governing bodies which serve these notions, remain among some of most precious gains of recent centuries. No social regeneration can escape the past, can begin with a *tabula rasa;* and these institutions will be the kernel of whatever regeneration America is capable of.

5. Repression in America is neither an accomplished fact nor inevitable. It is not worth compromising away all one's principles to avoid repression; it is worth *some* compromises. Conspiracies and sects flourish in a state of repression; widespread moral regeneration has a much better chance under the sign of moderate liberalism. It is not true that repression is the night before the dawn. After Nazism, one gets, not Utopia, but East and West Germany.