

Forbidden Book: Thomas Merton's *Peace in the Post-Christian Era*

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In the summer of 1998, checking bibliography in the University of Toronto library system, I discovered that the University of St Michael's College Library had copies of several Merton mimeographs in their Rare Books collection. I was particularly interested in *Peace in the Post-Christian Era* (PPCE), Merton's book on the issue of nuclear war which had appeared only in mimeograph. Having carefully traced the parts of it through the Breit and Daggy bibliography,¹ I thought I knew what the copy would look like, and was surprised to find that the mimeograph in St Michael's library was different from the Breit and Daggy description.

Had Merton written two different versions of it? Using the published letters and journals, I worked out a timeline which showed when he might have done so (he made no direct mention of a rewrite anywhere). Through textual comparison with the mimeograph, I was able to ascertain how much of it had been published in articles and later in books such as *Seeds of Destruction*,² *The Nonviolent Alternative*³ and *Passion for Peace*.⁴ I could not explain, however, why the Breit and Daggy version (as I had assembled it) had only 93 pages, whereas the mimeograph had 138 pages, and why some of the sections of the mimeograph were not recorded at all in Breit and Daggy.

The Chief Librarian at the John M. Kelly Library, St Michael's, suggested that an exchange of copies might be arranged with the Thomas Merton Center at Bellarmine University in Louisville, so that I could delve more deeply into this apparent mystery. Through the good offices of both libraries, and with the approval of the Merton Legacy Trust, the trade of copies was done.⁵

What I expected to see when the copy arrived from the TMC was a 93-page mimeographed "short version" of *Peace in the Post-Christian Era* which matched the Breit and Daggy description. What was actually in the parcel was not a different version of the book, but a copy of the complex haystack of material which Merton had handed to the long-suffering typist who had made the mimeo-

graph. I had been wrong about the possible existence of a shorter version. There were in fact about 170 pages (although the last page was hand-numbered 93), held together by various numbering and lettering systems, bristling with inserts and even whole extra chapters developed on the fly, all bearing signs of haste and also a monastic thrift about both text and paper. For some reason the bibliography had been based on this manuscript rather than the mimeograph made from it, and the manuscript is so complicated that it requires a copy of the mimeograph and the original articles to help decipher it. Thus this notoriously "forbidden" book had not been fully documented. My investigation had also shown that the book's history was an intriguing one, told only partially in the biographies and analyses I had read. The chance to evaluate a neglected Merton manuscript was an amazing opportunity, and examining it provided far more interesting insights than I had could have anticipated from any comparison of versions.

In treatments of Merton's life and writing, *Peace in the Post-Christian Era* is a rather shadowy piece about which certain ideas linger: the description "unpublished" is the principal one. There are oft-quoted self-deprecating remarks Merton made, as though he had given up on it, and a rather triumphant passage in his journal which has been interpreted to mean that he did get to publish the whole thing after all, in *Seeds of Destruction*. This is not the case: the story is much more complex. A recent article in *The Merton Journal* reports a discussion at a "Pilgrimage to Prades" tour: "in '63 the Pope himself published the encyclical *Pacem in Terris* and Merton became free to write openly again."⁶ As we shall see, exactly the opposite happened.

In order to focus more sharply on *Peace in the Post-Christian Era* in this account, I have not described all the other writing Merton was doing at the same period of his life, since many good accounts exist.⁷ Masked by the other myriad details of his writing, the story of Merton's defense of the book looks scattered, random; without the other details it looks almost obsessive in its determined return to the subject time after time.

Textual comparisons and word counts indicate that approximately 45% of the text does not match with any of the published articles. Merton did not simply bridge together a few articles already written, but worked in a great deal of new text, and after its appearance in mimeograph he fought for it for the better part of two years and managed to salvage part of it with great difficulty.

In this study I hope to show that an accurate description and history of *Peace in the Post-Christian Era* deserve a place in the Merton canon.

Why Write about War?

Why was a monk (and famous spiritual author) commenting on social questions? There is a sound monastic and clerical tradition in respect of that kind of writing, in which well-known monastics and mystics wrote letters to the great and powerful, often with complaints about the ethics of their actions. Merton already had his exemplar: in 1953 he had written a Foreword to a translation of letters of Bernard of Clairvaux addressed to a wide variety of people, including the politically powerful. Merton remarked that although Bernard's letters were often angry, there was another side to his character: "gentle and longsuffering ... tender as a mother," and concluded "perhaps our own century needs nothing so much as the combined anger and gentleness of another Bernard."⁸

Whether in imitation of Bernard or not, Merton began to write and collect letters which he ultimately published in mimeographed form. He had set himself the task of "getting into contact with the others most concerned" in the autumn of 1961.⁹ William Shannon marks the year of Merton's greatest activity against nuclear war as "The Year of the Cold War Letters" (October 1961 to October 1962)(*PPF*, 6). It is certainly true that Merton put his most intense efforts into peace writing during this time, but it seems also to be generally accepted that after the activity of that year, Merton (understandably as a result of repeated refusals from Superiors) abandoned his writing against nuclear war and let the issue drop. This assumption needs to be tested not only against Merton's writing but also against his actions during and after that year. Merton's tenacity was well-known when he felt conviction over an issue. Challenged directly, he tended to fall back and seemed to acquiesce; when changed circumstances offered a new opportunity, he took the initiative again.

Contemplation and Activism

On August 22, 1961, Merton had used a book by Christopher Dawson, *Understanding Europe*, to help articulate a mission for himself:

I have a clear obligation to participate, as long as I can, and to the extent of my abilities, in every effort to help a spiritual and cultural renewal of our time. This is the task that has been given me, and hitherto I have not been clear about it, in all its aspects and dimensions. ... This for the restoration of man's sanity and balance, that he may return to the ways of freedom and of peace, if not in my time, at least some day soon. (*TTW*, 155)

In Merton's situation in 1962 "action" had come to mean his own kind of activism on current issues like nuclear war (and the need for the abolition of all war) "Primarily of course by prayer. I remain a contemplative" (*TTW*, 175). His journals in 1961 are full of entries about writing in a time of crisis, from August 29, 1961: "I have been considering the possibility of writing a kind of statement—'Where I stand'... There is *no other activity* available to me" (*TTW*, 157), to November 25, 1961: "Yesterday afternoon at the hermitage, surely a decisive clarity came. That I must definitely commit myself to opposition to, and non-cooperation with, nuclear war" (*TTW*, 182). On October 29, 1961 he recorded, "Yesterday I finished an article on Peace: Christian duties and perspectives. Discussed it a little with the novices, which was a good idea. It will certainly not please many people" (*TTW*, 174). The article, later twice rewritten, was the first in a series which would come to be associated with *Peace in the Post-Christian Era*.

Whatever the hesitations and arguments against writing, there were equivalent forces pushing Merton to act: in many of his letters from the early 1960s, particularly those published in *The Hidden Ground of Love*, one theme repeatedly cropped up: his worry about what appeared to be the moral passivity of American Catholics, who were content to accept the lead of the Church even on questionable moral issues like the threat of nuclear annihilation inherent in the Cold War. To Etta Gullick he wrote:

...it is absolutely necessary to take a serious and articulate stand on the question of nuclear war. And I mean against nuclear war. The passivity, the apparent indifference, the incoherence of so many Christians on this issue, and worse still the active belligerency of some religious spokesmen, especially in this country, is rapidly becoming one of the most frightful scandals in the history of Christendom.¹⁰

Power versus Influence

Merton never had any official power in the hierarchy of the Church, but as a well-known author, he had traded power for influence: he wrote to two Popes, to the sister-in-law of the U.S. President, to a U.S. Secretary of State, to the mayor of Hiroshima, to a Zen master and several Muslims—in short, to anyone with whom he wanted to share communication. During his inner debate about writing for peace, he had recorded a dialogue in his journal:

A monk said to Joshua—“What is the way?”

He replied: “Outside the fence.”

The monk said, “I mean the great way: what is the great way?”

Joshua replied, “The great way is that which leads to the Capital.” Remember this in this war business, please. Stay on the way where you now are and don’t get off it to run all over the countryside shouting “peace! peace!” But stay on the great way which leads to the Capital. (*TTW*, 176)

How was one to stay on the great way and also outside the fence? In 1954, writing *The Last of the Fathers*, Merton quoted advice from a letter of Bernard of Clairvaux to William of Saint Thierry, advice which Merton later passed on to Daniel Berrigan (also in trouble because of his activism for peace):

But putting aside what both of us wish, as it is right we should, is safer for me and more advantageous for you if I advise you as I think God wishes. Therefore I say hold on to what you have, remain where you are.... Do not try to escape the responsibility of office while you are still able to discharge it...¹¹

Merton’s advice to Berrigan was:

...if you get yourself censured or kicked out or something, even though a benevolent bishop may eventually with many sighs grab you just before you hit the left field fence, you will spell out too unmistakably for comfort that the Church is plenty conservative and still profoundly asleep in some areas where she ought to be most awake. (*HGL*, 77)

In other words, stay where you are, do what you can, and remember that you are seen as a representative of the Church. The irony is, of course, that you cannot leave without jeopardizing your influence.

Eventually, when writing about criticism of his peace book from E. I. Watkin in September 1962, Merton once again painfully confronted the same choices, and said in his journal:

[Watkin] asserts he would listen to *no* authority against conscience on this issue. But my position loses its meaning unless I can continue to speak from the center of the Church. Yet that is exactly the point: where is that true center? From the bosom of complacent approbation by Monsignors? (*TTW*, 244-245)

Even influence had its price, and Merton would come to know that more and more as time went on. As in the case of William and of Berrigan, to be most effective he had to stay put.

Whence the Title?

February of 1962 found Merton debating the place and influence of Christianity on the wider culture. Bruno Paul Schlesinger had sent him an essay by George Tavard; Merton remarked in a letter of February 10, 1962:

I agree, too of course, as anyone with eyes and ears must inevitably agree, that "Christendom" has ceased to exist and that we are *bel et bien* [well and truly] in the post-Christian era." (*HGL*, 544)

The term "post-Christian" could be seen as the philosophic nexus of Merton's turn to the world. As an idealistic young man, in a 1941 letter to Catherine de Hueck Doherty he had speculated about whether there could be a "completely Catholic government," and even went on to say that he imagined Vatican City as a place where "politics would be, all down the line, subordinated to salvation" (*HGL*, 5). By the time he wrote his "Peace book" he knew more about what was to be expected from politics and the relative place of the Church in the world. The use of the term "post-Christian" automatically put the viewpoint of Merton's book in a larger world where the Church was no longer the focal point. The Chris-

tian philosophers Merton was reading might have been able to get away with such a title, but its use by a religious was risky (it would be absolutely guaranteed to annoy the Abbot General).

Merton only directly attributed the source of the term “post-Christian” once, in a small pamphlet he wrote for the Sisters of Loretto: “Christian dissent is all the more essential as we enter what C. S. Lewis has called the *post-Christian era*” (italics Merton’s).¹² C. S. Lewis had described the term in his 1954 inaugural lecture at Cambridge, in which he spoke of the era as follows:

roughly speaking we may say that whereas all history was for our ancestors divided into two periods, the pre-Christian and the Christian, and two only, for us it falls into three - the pre-Christian, the Christian, and what may reasonably be called the post-Christian. [...] [T]he second change is even more radical than the first. Christians and Pagans had much more in common with each other than either has with a post-Christian. The gap between those who worship different gods is not so wide as that between those who worship and those who do not.¹³

Lewis did not believe that the onset of this “new age” meant a mere “relapse into Paganism”: on the contrary, the possibility of a simple historical reversal did not exist:

that Europe can come out of Christianity “by the same door as in she went”...is not what happens. A post-Christian man is not a Pagan; you might as well think that a married woman recovers her virginity by divorce. The post-Christian is cut off from the Christian past and therefore doubly from the Pagan past.¹⁴

Merton was later to admit that the phrase “post-Christian era” might sound provocative.¹⁵ The idea is reworked and more clearly articulated in *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander* (and by 1966 when it was published, Merton had done some careful alterations to his language):

The Church is now in a world that is culturally “post-Christian.” (Theologically, one cannot really speak of a “post-Christian era.” The “Christian era” is the time of the end, the last era ...) Tvard’s

idea is that, by turning to the world and working with those who are not explicitly Christian, we can perhaps in our convergence with them bring about a resurrection of basically Christian values in secular culture.¹⁶

The Published Articles

In a letter to Daniel Berrigan, December 7, 1961, Merton demonstrated that his internal struggles about this writing had continued to evolve into action:

I am getting out an ingenuous, wide-eyed article on peace in the Christmas *Commonweal* [the article was later deferred to February 1962] ... I have been asked to write for *The Nation*, and may perhaps do something on "Christian Ethics and Nuclear War." Laying down a barrage all around, and then when the smoke clears we'll see what it did. Probably not much. (HGL, 72)

In his journal, the interior debate went on:

About peace. Maybe the best is to say quickly and wisely and fully all that I have to say, all at once, and then let the blow fall. [...] No point in saving up the ammunition for later, there may be no later. (TTW, 187)

By the beginning of 1962, the Merton's "barrage" was in place. In short order several essays made it through censorship and were published; one in particular (ominously) would be refused:

- "Nuclear War and Christian Responsibility" in *Commonweal* in February, followed by controversy and a rewrite in *The Catholic Worker* in May-June 1962, called "We Have to Make Ourselves Heard." This version was later to be used as the basis for "Peace: A Religious Responsibility" in *Breakthrough to Peace*, and as a framework for *Peace in the Post-Christian Era*;
- "Christian Ethics and Nuclear War" in *The Catholic Worker* in March, before it had passed the censors (resulting in another rewrite, published as "Religion and the Bomb" in *Jubilee*, in May 1962);
- "Red or Dead: Anatomy of a Cliché" in *Fellowship* in March 1962, and included in a Fellowship pamphlet;
- "Christian Action in World Crisis" in *Blackfriars* in June 1962;

- “Target Equals City,” a mimeograph Merton started mailing to friends in about February 1962, although it was not otherwise published in his lifetime. It appears that this article in particular got him into censorship trouble.¹⁷

By the spring of 1962 Merton had at hand carbon copies (and in one case a mimeograph) of various versions of all of these articles: textual comparison with the manuscript makes it clear that he used these as a basis for the book *Peace in the Post-Christian Era*. The book had been requested: in a letter of March 4, 1962 to Jay Laughlin, Merton wrote “Macmillan offered me a ten thousand dollar advance for a book on peace, after the recent *Commonweal* article.”¹⁸

Breakthrough to Peace

As if it were not enough to be embroiled in writes and re-writes, Merton had also suggested another project in a letter to James Laughlin, his friend and publisher at New Directions, at the end of October 1961: “An idea has occurred to me for a [New Directions] paperback for next spring, on Peace. It could be a kind of anthology...” (TMJL, 183). Laughlin was enthusiastic about the idea, and Merton began to gather articles by other authors, casting his net wide in order to get as many well-known contributors as possible. The anthology would eventually be called *Breakthrough to Peace* and would contain a long article by Merton (the fourth rewrite of that first article of October 1961) which he also used as a framework upon which to build *Peace in the Post-Christian Era*. Because the gestation of *Breakthrough to Peace* was more or less simultaneous with that of *Peace in the Post-Christian Era*, some editors of Merton material have confused the two.¹⁹

Editing *Breakthrough to Peace* was an important formative experience for Merton. The roster of authors and range of themes in the book could hardly have been faulted, which makes it seem even stranger that the Cistercian Abbot General would later tell Merton not to write about nuclear war because he knew nothing about the issues.²⁰

Dating the Mimeograph

Merton did not generally make it easy for scholars and bibliographers by systematically referring in his journals to what he was writing. The journal reference to the article he read to the novices

finally dates the essay initially called "Peace: Christian Duties and Perspectives" to October 29, 1961 (TTW, 174). In Merton's lifetime this version of the article was available only as a mimeograph. Gordon Zahn included it in *The Nonviolent Alternative* and wrote a footnote about its similarities with "Peace: A Religious Responsibility."²¹ William Shannon, in his introduction to the essay "Nuclear War and Christian Responsibility" refers to the piece published by Zahn as "fairly close to the original [i.e. "Nuclear War and Christian Responsibility"], but toned down a bit."²²

The earlier dating in Merton's journal of that first essay shows that the order of events was in reality reversed, making a little more evident that Merton was not necessarily carrying on a course of "toning down and diluting" his ideas in order to get the censors' approval. It is important to recognize the date order of the essays in the context of his friends' later arguments about whether he had "gone far enough." The article "Peace: Christian Duties and Perspectives" came first and was elaborated in a string of re-writes ("tuned up" rather than "toned down," one might say).

As to the exact time when Merton wrote *PPCE*: there is negative evidence in the relatively small amount of other writing he did in April of 1962: he had been averaging 14 journal entries per month at the time, but for April there are only four. Similarly, in March of 1962 he wrote 24 letters, in May another 21, but in April only ten.²³ Two of his letters further identify the time he was working on the manuscript. To Abdul Aziz on April 4 he wrote: "I want to write a book against nuclear war and am engaged in this now" (HGL, 52). On April 12 he wrote to the atomic physicist Leo Szilard that he wished "to devote a notable part of the royalties of a book I am currently writing, on peace, to your cause."²⁴ By April 29, he was able to write to Jim Forest "I have been trying to finish my book on peace, and have succeeded in time for the ax to fall" (HGL, 266). The only direct mention of the book in Merton's journal at the time is an April 26, 1962 entry: "I read to the novices in a conference a bit of the Peace ms - on Machiavelli - and Teller" (TTW, 215).

How Merton Worked: the Evidence of the Manuscript

The manuscript of *Peace in the Post-Christian Era* is a palimpsest incorporating layers of writing and editing built up over months. To construct the book, Merton used a carbon copy of one version

of "Peace: A Religious Responsibility," physically disassembling it into parts, and then inserting parts of other essays into it as chapters, keeping the whole together by writing a large new page number with a circle around it in the upper right corner of each page, the last being 93.²⁵ It is evident that the Breit and Daggy bibliography used the pagination of this manuscript rather than of the mimeograph made from it.

Merton edited the material extensively and carefully. A good deal of new text was written in on the blank facing pages of the carbon-copied parts. Careful textual comparison indicates that Merton sometimes even used carbons of different versions of the same essay. Each represented a stage in the development of a particular article, and in the end nothing perfectly matched anything else (the carbons vary in some details from the published versions). That Merton had more than one typist is indicated in the varying typewriter pitches and different page-numbering styles used by individual typists. It is possible to detect, for example, that he used pages from two different versions of "Peace: A Religious Responsibility" and that each of these differed somewhat from the published versions of the essay.

Matthew Kelty recounts that as a novice he had experience as Merton's typist:

He'd assign me to type stencils for him. That was his work style. He used to write out, type out his articles, and then revise them, I think in red, and then revise them again in black, and then we would type it out on a stencil and mimeograph it, and then he would send it out to a lot of his friends.²⁶

In addition to recycling material he already had, Merton also added whole extra sections after he had done his initial 93-page layout: a five-page insert to page 61 (numbered 61a, 61b etc.), in order to further discuss theological views of war; a new chapter at page 77 (77a through 77g), to discuss the scientists' views of nuclear strategy, describing particularly the contrast between the ideas of physicists Leo Szilard and Edward Teller.²⁷ After his circled page 82, he interpolated two whole chapters with pages numbered 82a through 82q (using as a foundation the Blackfriars essay "Christian Action in World Crisis"²⁸), which may have been included late in the process because of censorship delays with the original essay.

There is evidence in the manuscript that Merton carried the piece around with him and worked whenever he got the chance. In the case of the manuscript page 12, he typed an initial paragraph, removed the page and put it into a different typewriter to continue, then edited the whole by hand.

The manuscript looks as though it had been done in bursts of great speed and energy. It also shows an organizing intelligence which kept the many seemingly ramshackle parts from collapsing into chaos.²⁹

New Material

It is important to note also that there is a central section of the book which was not based on previously published articles. That this section was new is demonstrated by the quality of the copy in the manuscript, which is either in handwriting or in Merton's error-prone rough draft typing style. It became evident later that this was a part of the book which Merton did want to publish (and it was probably the same part which later caused criticisms from his friends). There is evidence in Merton's notes on the first page of the manuscript of a pre-existing draft or outline called "Peace-A Christian Responsibility," the parts of which evolved under the following headings:

- "Can We Choose Peace?"
- "The Christian as Peacemaker"
- "War in Origen and St Augustine"
- "The Legacy of Machiavelli"

In the manuscript, these involve an 8-page section "Can We Choose Peace?" and a section of 19 pages, numbered in the draft 8a, 8b, etc., up to 8s, following on page 8 of the section called "The Christian as Peacemaker." These are unmistakably in rough draft form, but show evidence of having been edited after the initial writing.

These newly-written parts of the book set the peace question in the framework of Church's traditional view of the just war, and in the context of Christian morality. What Merton did subsequently showed that he had not forgotten which parts of the manuscript came from copies of existing articles, and which he had written specifically to place the crisis in terms of Christian history.

The Abbot General's Order

On April 27, 1962, Dom James Fox handed Merton a letter dated January 20, 1962 from the Abbot General of the Cistercians, Dom Gabriel Sortais, requesting that Merton no longer write on the issues of war and peace. Along with this was a refusal by a censor³⁰ and a request that Merton not send him any more articles of the kind. Merton wondered what was to become of the "book that is practically finished for Macmillan." Dom James seemed "inclined to let the book go through and be censored at least, then published if passed." Merton flirted with the idea of giving up on the whole thing, and wondered what was God's will in the matter.³¹

The element of time in enforcing the ban is noted by William Shannon in *Silent Lamp*: Dom James delayed notification from January to April of 1962, allowing Merton to publish several key articles (*SL*, 222-23). The Abbot must also have given Merton permission to mimeograph the text, using monastery labor. It took the rest of April and May and part of June, to finish typing the mimeograph stencils, and even then the Abbot could have stopped it at any time. Dom James may simply have been providing what seemed a reasonable safety valve, perhaps seeing no harm in a limited distribution of copies.

As soon as he had received the order about peace writing, Merton immediately wrote to Dom Gabriel on behalf of the book, explaining that it was a rewrite of articles already censored (but with additions and changes), asking that he at least be allowed to submit it to the censors.³² Dom Gabriel's reply did not arrive for a month, and in that time Merton still entertained hopes, although he did inform J. Laughlin and Jim Forest that his peace writing had met resistance.³³ In a letter to Ernesto Cardenal on May 22, 1962 Merton was still hoping that he could send royalties to Leo Szilard to help with his peace movement.³⁴

The reply from Dom Gabriel arrived on May 26, 1962, and left no doubt that Merton was to give up the idea of the book and "de vous abstenir désormais d'écrire sur ce sujet de la guerre atomique..."³⁵ ["That you abstain from writing *from now on* about the subject of nuclear war" (Italics mine).] Merton wrote to the General on the same day, saying "I accept your decision joyfully" (*SCH*, 144), (although he still could not refrain from trying to defend it again in the letter) and confirmed this in his jour-

nal entry of the day (TTW, 221). As he had done before in other circumstances, Merton said it was a relief, but the matter was far from over.

Obedience, Censorship and Publication

The situation was drifting in an extraordinary direction: Merton was about to become a well-known writer against war who was not allowed to write against war. It was a decade when people were demonstrating, marching in the street with banners, burning draft cards, spending time in jail. Marching out the front door of the monastery and joining the peace movement on the street was not an option Merton was considering, but he found his own way: in the end, his "banner carried in the street" consisted in being silenced and letting people know about it, meanwhile making sure as many people as possible saw the "forbidden book." Contact through correspondence with an ever-widening circle of friends had given Merton an informal channel which he would greatly need as time went on.

Merton was by 1961 fully experienced at dealing with Dom Gabriel's strictures. When the Abbot General told Merton not to write about Teilhard de Chardin's *The Divine Milieu*, Merton wrote in his journal

I have *no obligation* to form my thought or my conscience along the rigid lines of Dom Gabriel. I will certainly accept and obey his decision, but I reserve the right to disagree with him. (TTW, 65)

When confronted by Superiors, Merton tended to give way; however, when he had assimilated a subject so thoroughly as this one, he could not automatically stop thinking about it, and it inevitably emerged both in his writing and in his actions. In this struggle there was also an interior process of growth going on. Mott's biography notes that Merton's knowledge of his own vulnerability and need for approval made the decision to try to publish the peace material even more difficult (Mott, 368). An additional factor in the problem was Merton's concern for the Church itself. Whereas another writer might have responded to the publication ban with wounded *amour-propre* and indignant demands for free speech, Merton's main worry was what the ban meant in terms of the way the Church was regarded.

As to whether the ban had upset him or not: by June 4, Merton seemed to have adopted a sort of devil-may-care attitude and said in a letter to W. H. Ferry, "I am not sore, not even very much interested any more...Have been going back to Origen and Tertullian" (*HGL*, 212). When Merton went out of his way to say he did not feel something, it often meant that he did, but was too overwhelmed at the moment to be able to sort it out. His letters to Robert Lax were usually more honest, although couched in a private language:

I have been silence. I have been nacht und nebel for my war book....I have been put in the calabozo. I have been shut up in a tin can. I have been shrewdly suppressed at the right moment. I have been stood in the corner. I have been made to wear the cap. I have been tried and tested in the holy virtue of humility. I have been found wanting and tested some more. I have been told to shut up about the wars, wars is not for Christians except to support.

Hence my dear Charlot the laments in the current Jubilee is my finale. It comes a little agent with too big an overcoat and false glasses with a copy of contraband war book in about six weeks. Nobody to print, nobody to show. Just read the dmn war book.

Lax replied in kind:

am thanking you for the book of thoughts on you-know-what.
very good, strong, powerful, well-thought-out bk. [...]
ora (plenty) for nos intransigeants.
it is the time of the mop.³⁶

Merton went on to obey the direct order from the Abbot General in the most literal and careful manner possible, warning editors and friends not to publish any of his writing on nuclear war after the ban, especially noting the phrase "from now on." He clung, however, to the pieces which had been passed by censors as if they were still to be allowed because the ban was a matter of timing.

Criticism from Friends

Merton mentioned in letters to Catherine de Hueck Doherty and John Heidbrink that the mimeograph stencils had just been finished when the order to stop writing had arrived, saying "I will run off a few copies anyway and friends can see it."³⁷ In a letter to James Laughlin, he said "the Abbot General vetoed it... The Peace Book³⁸ will be mimeographed shortly" (*TMJL*, 207-208). The mimeographed copies were ready in mid-June of 1962, and Merton sent copies immediately to his "peace friends," including Jim Forest, Daniel Berrigan, Etta Gullick, Dorothy Day, John Harris, Sister Emmanuel de Souza e Silva and Charles S. Thompson, the publisher of *Pax Bulletin* in England.³⁹

As to his own opinion of his mimeographed book, Merton was as usual self-deprecating. A statement to Jim Forest in a letter of July 6, 1962 has been generally adopted as Merton's definitive judgment of his book and his intentions for it. Responding to Forest's comments about his apparent equivocation in order to please the censors of his order, he said:

I was bending in all directions to qualify every statement and balance everything off, so I stayed right in the middle and perfectly objective, and so on, and then at the same time tried to speak the truth as my conscience wanted it to be said. In the long run the result is about zero.[...] My feeling is that it is not worth the trouble to do anything more with this book. Let it die. There is plenty of good stuff coming out now...⁴⁰

The way Merton embraced the criticisms of *Peace in the Post-Christian Era* indicates that they may have been ironically comforting to him: recognizing that the book was not perfect made its suppression less painful for the author. At the time, he was only allowed one chance to get it right. If the book had gone through a normal editing and censorship process, some of its problems might have been ironed out. But as Merton said in a September 1962 letter to E. I. Watkin, "It did not even get to the censors, so I did not have a chance to find out if what I said accorded with the teaching of the Church" (*HGL*, 579). For the Church's purposes, the book simply did not exist, while for Merton's purposes it was only a mimeograph, and thus "unpublished." As those who manned the guns at Fort Knox might have said, it flew under the radar.

It also turned out that regardless of what Merton had said about the book, he did not stop mailing it, promoting it in letters, and trying to get another chance at rewriting it.

More Copies

By July 7, 1962, when Merton wrote his self-deprecating letter to Jim Forest, there were only "about a dozen" mimeo stencils left (*HGL*, 269). In early August Merton mentioned to John Heidbrink that he was going to "run off a few more copies and will send you half a dozen" (*HGL*, 409). There had been a few occurrences on other fronts to encourage him.

At the end of August 1962, copies of the anthology *Breakthrough to Peace* arrived from the printer, and Merton at last got a chance to rejoice a little: "I am glad of it and proud of it. What I wanted to do last August, I have done. I have taken my position, and it is known" (*TTW*, 240). Through the summer of 1962 Merton had also been working with Thomas P. MacDonnell on *A Thomas Merton Reader* for Harcourt, Brace. He noted in a letter to W. H. Ferry that he had

all the most outspoken stuff concentrated in one place so that if they didn't know before, the Squares will know now that I am on the other side of some fence. (*HGL*, 213)

Merton put most of "Religion and the Bomb" in the *Reader*, renaming the first part of it "May 1962" as if to memorialize his own silencing.⁴¹

In September, 1962 Merton learned from Jim Forest that the National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy (*SANE*) were doing their bit by re-mimeographing the text. Merton nervously hoped they would be careful about publication (*HGL*, 270). He lamented again in his journal about being powerless if he could not write, and even thought about the writing as a sort of last will, in the context of his own death: "Now is the time to give what I have to others, and not reflect on it" (*TTW*, 249, 253).

Along the way, Merton had also gained another supporter and friend in Leslie Dewart, a philosophy professor at St Michael's College, University of Toronto, to whom he sent a copy of the second printing. Dewart noted the arrival date of the mimeograph on the cover of his copy "August 27, 1962," thus giving us further evidence for the date of the second run of the mimeograph.

Witness to Freedom includes a section of text (WTF, 288-293) which Merton sent to Dewart in the hope that it could somehow be worked into the book Dewart was developing, *Christianity and Revolution-The Lesson of Cuba*.⁴² Dewart used the text and other parts of their correspondence to craft a dialogue between the two of them, which he thought might be used as an appendix to his book. Merton approved of Dewart's work: "This appendix is great, and really packs a wallop." He went on to describe in careful detail how much Dewart could quote directly from him (WTF, 293-294). The appendix was not included in Dewart's book, but eventually appeared as an article in *Continuum* under Dewart's name, with a title that echoed that of Merton's mimeograph, and characterized the essence of the debate between them: "A Post-Christian Age?"⁴³ Dewart was so careful in the way he used Merton's text and his name, that the article has escaped the bibliographers.

The Pressure of Events

Merton had need of the extra mimeograph copies he had made up in August. Two events of October 1962 brought the issues to life again. One was the Cuban Missile crisis; going back and forth to Louisville, Merton heard bits of the story and worried over it, not only because the world had come close to nuclear war but also because he feared some might feel an indecent sense of triumph at a "cold war victory" (TTW, 260ff.). The other event was the beginning of Vatican II on October 11, 1962. Merton's friends Jean and Hildegard Goss-Mayr were preparing a submission on peace for the Council. He concentrated on plying them with information, including copies of *Peace in the Post-Christian Era*, calling it the "most complete text I have written" on the subject and asking if he should be sending copies of things "to any bishops."⁴⁴ Not wasting another opportunity in his campaign to convince the General, he added: "Incidentally I suggest you go see our Abbot General, Dom Gabriel Sortais, and give him a strong push in favor of my writing about peace," and went on to give advice on the right way to handle Dom Sortais (HGL, 327-328, 330).

At Christmas 1962, more copies went off, to Abdul Aziz and Edward Deming Andrews among others.⁴⁵ Mailings to a wider circle of friends indicated that Merton now felt that the peace writing had a central position in his work, no matter what his superiors thought, and that he should share it with all his friends. He even recommended to Jacques Maritain that mimeography might be a good way to publish Raïssa Maritain's *Journal*: "Through a

little book of my own on peace, whose publication was forbidden, I can vouch for the fact that private circulation goes much further" (CFT, 35). In February of 1963 he sent a copy to Maritain, and in the accompanying letter made it evident that he was still smarting from the Abbot General's rebuke that his defense of peace

"fausserait le message de la vie contemplative" ... a hateful distraction, withdrawing one's mind from Baby Jesus in the Crib. Strange to say, no one seems concerned at the fact that the crib is directly under the bomb. (CFT, 36)

The tone is reminiscent of his Christmas message sent to Lax in their usual code, where humour hid despair:

as for me my dear Charlot I sit in my hutch mimeographing forbidden books with the help of fifty-nine uncouth Albanian novices all highly irregular and dissipated ready for the most desperate acts. For the rest our situation is too awful to be described.⁴⁶

Pacem in Terris

Merton's journal entry of April 23, 1963 recorded that Pope John XXIII's encyclical *Pacem in Terris* had been read in the refectory at Gethsemani: "The document is in every way sane, lucid and admirable" (TTW, 315). In his peace articles and in *Peace in the Post-Christian Era*, Merton had quoted all the papal statements he could find which might be interpreted as condemnations of nuclear war; there were Christmas messages and other speeches, but up to that point no definitive papal statement on war. When *Pacem in Terris* was published, Merton wrote to Abbot General Sortais, to request that he be allowed "to recast this book [PPCE] while commenting on *Pacem in Terris*" (SCH, 166). He once again aired his reasons for doing so. This time the answer was not long in coming. In both his Journal (TTW, 317-318) and a letter to Dewart, Merton records Sortais' answer,

categorically refusing me permission to publish *Peace in the PCE* and ordering me to drop all thought of doing so, with or without comments on the encyclical. His reasons: I am a contemplative monk and my business is silence and solitude. Besides that, ... the encyclical ... does not deprive a nation of the right to acquire nuclear weapons and arm with them for its self-defense... And

finally I am just incompetent anyhow and my opinions are of no value since I don't know what I am talking about in the first place.[...] [T]he book goes on the shelf. (*WTF*, 286)

This was the third time the General had specifically stepped on Merton's peace writing. Merton consoled himself by writing a letter to Ethel Kennedy, sister-in-law of the President of the United States, on May 14, 1963:

I wrote a book on peace which the Superiors decided I ought to bury about ten feet deep behind the monastery someplace, but I still don't think it is that bad. I mimeographed it and am sending you a copy, just for the files or, who knows, maybe the President might have five minutes to spare looking at it. If you think he would, I will even send him a copy. (*HGL*, 447)

As time went on Merton still had not forgotten about his "unpublished" book, and mentioned it in a letter in January 1964 to Bishop John J. Wright, who had been enthusiastic enough about it to circulate it among some of the *periti* at Vatican II. Merton, encouraged, had offered more copies and commented "Even though the book is not published, I am happy to think that the work was not wasted" (*HGL*, 609). It had been two years since Merton had started in on this work, and his efforts on its behalf had resulted only in reinforcement of the ban.

Seeds of Destruction: A New Crisis

Merton did have hopes that at least some of his peace articles and letters might be published in a new book of essays for Farrar, Straus, Giroux, to be called *Seeds of Destruction*. In March of 1964, however, he experienced yet another rebound effect of the dispute with Dom Sortais in 1962. To Naomi Burton Stone, he wrote on March 3:

..the unthinkable has happened. [...] A letter from the new Abbot General [Dom Ignace Gillet] came in concerning the articles on peace in *Seeds of Destruction*. ... [He] dug out all the correspondence, had a meeting with the definitors, and said that these articles are not to be "republished" in book form and implicitly in any other form [...] Hence [...] we have to take out the articles on war. I am sick about this... (*WTF*, 142-143)

So sick, in fact, that Merton went on to question his own vocation and wondered if it was all “the most monumental mistake” (*WTF*, 143). The sorrow expressed in his journal entry of the day was clearly not just because of his own feelings but because the ban provided a “grim insight into the stupor of the Church, in spite of all that has been attempted, all efforts to wake her up!” and once more stating “I cannot leave here in order to protest since the meaning of any protest depends on my staying here.”⁴⁷

This was the low point in Merton’s struggle over his peace writing. Within three days he had become more philosophical, and was able to write to Dom Ignace saying that he was “dropping this type of work” and assuring him of his “genuine loyalty and obedience” (*SCH*, 209). Merton was still sore and sad enough about it all to mention the problem in letters to Jim Forest, Leslie Dewart and W. H. Ferry.⁴⁸

What were the articles Merton wanted to use in *Seeds of Destruction*? A letter in the research files of William H. Shannon answers that very question. The letter is from Robert Daggy, and it describes

the first ‘uncorrected proofs’ of *Seeds of Destruction*. In the typescript Merton had inserted the mimeograph and cut pages from three articles written in 1962—he makes it plain in the first proofs that these articles appeared almost without change just as they had appeared in journals. They were:

1. “Nuclear War and Christian Responsibility,” *Commonweal* 75 (9 February 1962)
 2. “Religion and the Bomb,” *Jubilee* 10 (May 1962)
 3. “Christian Action in World Crisis,” *Blackfriars* 43 (June 1962)
- [...] one set of proofs has these three totally removed—the other set still has them with (Naomi thought in Bob Giroux’s handwriting) the notation “Kill pp.36-59”⁴⁹

So Merton had gone back to the original text of three published articles, hoping that what had passed the censors once would do so again. He had not attempted to use the rewritten versions which appeared as chapters in *Peace in the Post-Christian Era*, or any of the newer, uncensored material there, but his care over the censorship issue had been for nothing. Two years into the dispute there still seemed to be no hope that Merton would ever be able to publish these articles in book form.

What saved the situation was the intervention of Robert Giroux. Merton said in his journal,

[A] call came from Bob Giroux in New York. It appears that the problem of publishing *Seeds of Destruction* is being finally resolved. (Giroux wrote to the General and got a settlement. One essay on war may be printed if I will "transform" it.) (DWL, 107)

What the "transformation" required is noted in Mott's biography: Merton "could write about peace, not war—he was not to show pessimism" (Mott, 400).

"the real heart"

Over an astonishing ten days between June 2 and June 12, 1964, as he described to Leslie Dewart, Merton rewrote

about a third of [*Seeds of Destruction*]. The earlier stuff on the bomb which had been permitted is now no longer licit and I have to do it all over, writing about peace without treating the question of the bomb. I suppose the next thing I can do is write about marriage without referring to sexual love. (WTF, 297)

When he needed a new, full-length article, Merton knew just where to find the basis for it in the PPCE mimeograph. By October 1964 Merton had told Jim Forest that he had "no more copies [of *Peace in the Post-Christian Era*], but the essence of it is going to be in my new book..." (HGL, 282). This indicates that by June he probably had only his personal copy left, and it is likely that he used that. If he followed the same pattern with "The Christian in World Crisis" as he had with *Peace in the Post-Christian Era* (bearing in mind his usual thrift about text) he would simply have pulled out pages 6 to 16 and 29 to 49 of the mimeograph (text which he knew had never appeared elsewhere), made his annotations, written the new material around them, and handed the revised whole to the typist.⁵⁰ The items he used were the section "Can We Choose Peace?" and those which treated of philosophical and theological tradition, "War in Origen and St Augustine," "The Legacy of Machiavelli" and "The Christian as Peacemaker."

My textual comparisons showed that he did not extensively edit the recycled material, but fitted it up with new sections to change the focus. There is a very small overlap with "Peace: A Religious Responsibility" at the beginning, but the rest came from

the parts of the manuscript which had not been published elsewhere. The shape of these particular parts of *Peace in the Post-Christian Era* must have remained in Merton's mind over the two years of ups and downs about the book. He called the new article "The Christian in World Crisis: Reflections on the Moral Climate of the 1960's."⁵¹ It contained an entirely new concluding section called "The Reply of *Pacem in Terris*."

He described the new article to Gordon Zahn in a letter as "a long rewritten piece on *Pacem in Terris*, basically the same as [*Peace in the Post-Christian Era*] but without controversy on the bomb, just peace peace" (HGL 653). The comment and others like it may have led to the idea that (as the Mott biography states) Merton published the whole of PPCE in *Seeds of Destruction* (Mott, 400).

Finally, a month after he had submitted the new article for censorship, there was a jubilant entry in the journal. *Seeds of Destruction* was to go ahead with the new article, so "the real heart of the forbidden book, *Peace in the Post-Christian Era*, is to be published after all" (DWL, 127). The evidence of the mimeograph text shows us that the term "the real heart" was literal. Merton had torn out of the mimeograph the crucial pages which he needed.

New details of the censorship story have come to light in an interview with Dom M. Laurence Bourget published in *The Merton Annual* 12. Interviewer Jonathan Montaldo's questions pursued the story of the relationship between Dom Gabriel Sortais, his secretary Father Clement de Bourmont, and Merton. Dom Bourget gives a highly nuanced description of each of these men from his personal recollection, and his assessment is invaluable to anyone pursuing the censorship issue. The interviewer's question had been whether Father Clement had been "an 'enemy' of Merton's literary career," as Merton and others had suspected (Mott, 374). Father Clement's better command of the English language meant he was in a position to comment to Dom Sortais about works in that language, and he was secretary to both Dom Sortais and Dom Gillet. What had been his involvement in the final chapter of the censorship story?

As it turned out, Dom Bourget had inadvertently intervened, without knowing what was involved, at a crucial moment. Called into Dom Ignace Gillet's office in July 1964, he was handed a manuscript, with the request:

'Would you read this text of Merton and tell me if you find anything objectionable in it? We have no time to send it to the Censor because the printer is waiting for it to complete a book.'

I did read the text very carefully and returned it promptly to the General with the comment, 'Far from finding anything objectionable in it, I find what it says is pure Gospel!'

Dom Bourget finishes the anecdote with the comment

What still mystifies me, however, is that at that time (July 1964) Fr Clement was still the General's secretary and I now wonder if I was only called in because he happened to be absent from Rome. The ways of Divine Providence indeed!⁵²

The new article also developed a life of its own: part of it was later included in a pamphlet called *Therefore Choose Life*, published by the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions for the New York conference on the papal encyclical. An edited version of the pamphlet was reprinted in the *Saturday Review* in a special section on February 13, 1965: "*Pacem in Terris*, Commentaries by Robert McAfee Brown, Norman Cousins, Everett E. Gendler, Thomas Merton, and Hermann J. Muller." Merton's essay was called "The Challenge of Responsibility."⁵³

A Burnt-Out Case

Merton's "demonstration" had certainly cost him, to the point that he considered whether his vocation might be at an end. He had thought and written a great deal about the authenticity of the interior life. The struggle to work for something he sincerely felt was morally right and just, but which had put him into direct conflict with his Order, had hollowed him out. The pain of living the internal conflict comes out in a remarkable passage in an August 1964 letter to Daniel Berrigan, where Merton describes himself:

As a priest I am a burnt-out case, repeat, burnt-out case. So burnt out that the question of standing and so forth becomes irrelevant. I just continue to stand there where I was hit by the bullet. [...] [W]ord will go around about how they got this priest who was shot and they got him stuffed sitting up at a desk propped up with books and writing books, this book machine that was killed. [...] When I fall over, it will be a big laugh because I wasn't there at all. [...]

I am sick up to the teeth and beyond the teeth, up to the eyes and beyond the eyes, with all forms of projects and expectations and statements and programs and explanations of anything, especially explanations about where we are all going... (HGL, 84)

The Fate of the Mimeograph

When the Merton Center received the manuscript of *PPCE*, it was not treated as most holograph manuscripts are, but was bound in a cover and given a tentative date “[1962?].” Manuscripts are nowadays not treated in such a way, but the practice in the 60s seems to have been to bind them.⁵⁴ This may have been the reason that the bibliography entries in Breit and Daggy were done on the basis of this bound final draft, which has a much more imposing appearance than the rather flimsy mimeographed copies, especially since the work had never been published.

The mimeograph had done what Merton wanted: it carried a message out under the radar, and assured the fact that the text itself would survive somewhere. However, the fatal flaw in the strategy of defining the work as “unpublished” (and thus removing official attention from it) was that it worked all too well. “Unpublished” came to mean unpublishable. The controversy defined the book, as the suppression helped define the author. In the end, only relatively few readers were able to judge the full text for themselves. Later editors republishing Merton’s peace material passed over *Peace in the Post-Christian Era*: after all Merton had both criticized it and also said he had published the “real heart” of it. It was simpler to reprint the articles it was based on. In the end, time passed it by, and the work virtually disappeared from the Merton canon.

As for the text itself: the careful “objectivity” for which the author’s friends criticized him is more than offset by Merton’s passionate involvement in the issues. He had been caught for a time between two forces: his “peace friends” who hoped he would be more activist and extreme, and his Church connections who thought that writing about nuclear war was not fitting for a monk. As always he had tried to find the line by which he could communicate with everyone. In doing so he demonstrated an astonishing breadth of argument: who but Merton would have been comfortable discussing Origen, Augustine and Machiavelli in one chapter and Leo Szilard and Edward Teller in the next? Some sections of

the book are eerily prophetic of the international situation four decades later, and we need to hear again that the just war does not include pre-emptive strikes.

Who can now gauge the effect that this work had, even in mimeograph? In its time it had made its way to quite a few readers, some of them undoubtedly influential in the course of historical events. The appeal of a "forbidden book by Thomas Merton" must certainly have been a factor in making readers curious about it. Copies circulated among the *periti* at Vatican II. There is an intriguing observation about one of them, in a footnote in James Forest's *Living with Wisdom*: "Bob Grip tells me that he came upon a copy of *Peace in the Post-Christian Era* on a window sill in the library of the Vatican's North American College in Rome."⁵⁵ Merton must have sent a copy when he wrote to Leo Szilard: it is still on file as part of Szilard's papers at the University of California at San Diego.⁵⁶

Aftermath

Having developed contacts at Vatican II through friends and mailed mimeographs, Merton had busied himself behind the scenes in regard to the document called "Schema XIII" which dealt with the Church and modern war. He wrote an "Open Letter to the American Hierarchy" which was published in 1965 in *Unity*, *Worldview*, and *Vox Regis*.⁵⁷ Once more, he stated the themes that had carried through the forbidden book, especially as regards the moral indefensibility of nuclear war on any grounds, and the Christian necessity of "choosing peace" (*WTF*, 88-94).

Merton's position on war had enough currency that Archbishop George Bernard Flahiff sent him a copy of the relevant text from the draft Schema in Latin. Merton demonstrated his usual versatility by commenting on the Latin text and offering suggestions (*HGL*, 246-248). Once vilified for allegedly defending pacifism "against the Church," Merton could now offer advice at least in the tempering of text. In the final irony, the man forbidden to write about nuclear war was now consulted as an expert.

With this we have come full circle. Worry about the apathy of American Catholics and the need to make the issues clear had led to Merton's determination to write what he could, regardless of obstacles. His ability to publish had been severely limited, but he had done what he could. During the same time period he had written many other things, focusing on varied subjects, to the ex-

tent that this particular thread almost vanished into the fabric. Indeed it had not disappeared but rather had become part of him, and in the end, regardless of the ban, one of the primary things he is known for is his writing about peace.

The manuscript of *Peace in the Post-Christian Era* begins with the author's note to himself and his blessing on the book. This essay ends there:

+

Xtian Action

- 1) Towards change—prophetism
- 2) That men may be masters of things and not mastered by them
- 3) Recognition of new situation—understanding meaning and creative value of crisis.

Notes

1. Marquita Breit and Robert Daggy, *Thomas Merton: A Comprehensive Bibliography*. (New York: Garland Publishing, 1986). The bibliography does not list *Peace in the Post-Christian Era* as a separate item (as though it were a book) but lists only articles associated with it. The list of articles is incomplete, and the pagination is that of the manuscript, not of the mimeograph.

2. Thomas Merton, *Seeds of Destruction* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1964).

3. Thomas Merton, *The Nonviolent Alternative*, ed. Gordon Zahn (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1980); subsequent references will be cited as "NVA" parenthetically in the text.

4. Thomas Merton, *Passion for Peace*, ed. William H. Shannon (New York: Crossroad, 1995); subsequent references will be cited as "PFP" parenthetically in the text.

5. My thanks to Louise Girard, Chief Librarian, and Noel McFerran, Head of Public Services for the Kelly Library, and Thomasine O'Callaghan, Merton Legacy Trustee, who helped carry out the exchange at a time when the Director of the Merton Center in Louisville was ill.

6. Larry Culliford, "Pilgrimage to Prades," *Merton Journal* 9.2 (2002): 40.

7. Among the best of these is William Shannon's account in *Silent Lamp* (New York: Crossroad, 1992), 218-223. Subsequent references will be cited as "SL" parenthetically in the text. Shannon's account focuses on the development of the *Commonweal* article "Nuclear War and Christian Responsibility" and comes to a close with Dom Gabriel Sortais'

writing ban (223). Other excellent accounts by contemporaries are: Jim Forest, "Thomas Merton's Struggle with Peacemaking," 15-54; and Gordon Zahn, "Thomas Merton, Reluctant Pacifist," in *Thomas Merton: Prophet in the Belly of a Paradox*, ed. Gerald Twomey (New York: Paulist Press, 1978), 55-79.

8. Foreword by Thomas Merton in Bruno Scott James, editor and translator, *St Bernard of Clairvaux Seen Through his Selected Letters* (Chicago: Regnery, 1953), v-viii.

9. Thomas Merton, *Turning Toward the World: The Journals of Thomas Merton* Volume 4, 1960-1963 (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1996), 176; subsequent references will be cited as "TTW" parenthetically in the text.

10. Thomas Merton, *The Hidden Ground of Love: The Letters of Thomas Merton on Religious Experience and Social Concerns*, selected and edited by William H. Shannon (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1985), 349; subsequent references will be cited as "HGL" parenthetically in the text. See also: to Dorothy Day, 139; to Daniel Berrigan, 71; to Jim Forest, 271.

11. Thomas Merton, *The Last of the Fathers* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1954), 34-35.

12. Thomas Merton, "Loretto and Gethsemani," in *The Springs of Contemplation* (Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, 1992), 206. The date for the pamphlet is given as "the spring of 1962" on p. 202.

13. C.S. Lewis, "De Descriptione Temporum" in *They Asked for a Paper* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1962), 14.

14. *Ibid.*, 20.

15. Letter to Jean and Hildegard Goss-Mayr, January 15, 1964, *HGL*, 332.

16. Thomas Merton, *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday 1966), 197; subsequent references will be cited as "CGB" parenthetically in the text. Merton further works out the definition in a footnote when describing the philosophy of Sartre, 301.

17. The progression of articles which were the foundation of *PPCE* is listed and charted in Patricia A. Burton, *Merton Vade Mecum* (Louisville: Thomas Merton Foundation, 2001), 162-164.

18. *Thomas Merton and James Laughlin, Selected Letters* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997) 196; subsequent references will be cited as "TMJL" parenthetically in the text.

19. As for example in a note about a letter to Mark Van Doren, January 18, 1962: "J [Laughlin] was here... We have pretty well planned the peace book." Thomas Merton, *The Road to Joy: The Letters of Thomas Merton to New and Old Friends*, selected and edited by Robert E. Daggy. (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1989), 44. The peace book was misidentified by the editor of the letters as *Peace in the Post-Christian Era*; Merton was working with Laughlin on *Breakthrough to Peace*, but did not do so on *PPCE*, as it never got to a stage where a publisher saw it.

20. *Breakthrough to Peace: Twelve Views on the Threat of Thermonuclear Extermination* [with essays by Herbert Butterfield, Norman Cousins, Allan Forbes, Jr., Jerome D. Frank, Erich Fromm and Michael Maccoby, Howard E. Gruber, Joost A. M. Meerloo, Thomas Merton, Lewis Mumford, Walter Stein, Tom Stonier and Gordon C. Zahn] (New York: New Directions, 1962). Merton is not listed as editor but only as a contributor: he was worried that his difficulties with censorship would jeopardize publication (see *TMJL*, 194).

21. Gordon Zahn (editor) in *NVA*, 12.

22. *PPF*, 38. See also the chart indicating the order of essays involving *Peace in the Post-Christian Era* in *Merton Vade Mecum*, 162.

23. *Merton Vade Mecum*, 30-31.

24. Thomas Merton, *Witness to Freedom: The Letters of Thomas Merton in Times of Crisis*, selected and edited by William H. Shannon. (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1994), 49-50; subsequent references will be cited as "WTF" parenthetically in the text. Szilard had been one of the physicists who developed the bomb, but afterwards campaigned against nuclear proliferation.

25. See "The Book That Never Was: Thomas Merton's Peace in the Post-Christian Era," on file in the Merton Center at Bellarmine University. The author of the present essay did this detailed analysis in 1998, and included a colour-coded map of the manuscript, describing the various components in detail.

26. Matthew Kelty OCSO, "Looking Back to Merton: Memories and Impressions; An Interview," conducted by Victor A. Kramer, edited by Dewey Weiss Kramer *Merton Annual* 1 (1988): 58.

27. This section, which demonstrates the author's ease with contemporary material as well as traditional teaching, has never been published anywhere.

28. The article was missed in the Breit and Daggy bibliography: pages from the middle of it formed the basis of two chapters of the book: "Christian Perspectives in World Crisis" and "Christian Conscience and National Defence."

29. The black and white photocopy of the manuscript I worked on initially does not show how the editing was done; the original manuscript has corrections and edits in different sections in pencil and ballpoint pen in black, blue, red and green, indicating that the carbon copied parts had generally been edited at least twice, sometimes oftener. Each pen colour represents a "layer" of editing within a part of the manuscript, and some sections show several colours, indicating several reworkings.

30. The censor specifically rejected "Target Equals City," as Merton later reported in a letter to Daniel Berrigan in *HGL*, 74.

31. All quotes in this paragraph from *TTW*, 216.

32. Thomas Merton, *The School of Charity: The Letters of Thomas Merton on Religious Renewal and Spiritual Direction*, selected and edited by Patrick Hart OCSO (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1990), 141-143; subsequent references will be cited as "SCH" parenthetically in the text.

33. To Laughlin (April 28, 1962), *TMJL*, 200 ff; to Forest (April 29, 1962), *HGL*, 266-268 (a particularly poignant assessment of his situation).

34. Letter to Szilard (April 12, 1962), *WTF*, 49-50. Letter to Cardenal, Thomas Merton, *The Courage for Truth: Letters to Writers*, selected and edited by Christine M. Bochen (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1993), 133; subsequent references will be cited as "CFT" parenthetically in the text.

35. Michael Mott, *The Seven Mountains of Thomas Merton* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1984), 379; subsequent references will be cited as "Mott" parenthetically in the text.

36. Thomas Merton and Robert Lax, *When Prophecy Still Had a Voice: The Letters of Thomas Merton and Robert Lax*, edited by Arthur Biddle (Lexington KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2001), 237-238.

37. To Catherine de Hueck (June 4, 1962), *HGL*, 19; to John Heidbrink (May 30, 1962), *HGL*, 408.

38. "The Peace book...": Merton here refers to *Peace in the Post-Christian Era*, misidentified by the editor of Laughlin's letters as *Breakthrough to Peace*, which was published by New Directions, not mimeographed.

39. All references in *HGL*: to Forest (June 14, 1962), 269; to Berrigan (June 15, 1962), 74; to Gullick (June 16, 1962), 353; to Dorothy Day (June 16, 1962), 145; to Harris (June 8, 1962), 398; to Sister Emmanuel (June 18, 1962), 188; to Thompson (July 19, 1962), 573.

40. To Forest, *HGL*, 269; Merton reiterated these comments in a letter to Henry Miller (July 9, 1962), *CFT*, 275.

41. Thomas Merton, *A Thomas Merton Reader* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1962), 288-297.

42. Published by Herder in 1963: see *WTF*, 282 and 288-293.

43. Leslie Dewart, "A Post-Christian Age?" *Continuum* 1:4 (1964): 556-567.

44. *HGL*, 329-330. His largest shipment to the Goss-Mayrs included *Breakthrough to Peace*, one copy of *Peace in the Post-Christian Era* (by air, with others to follow by sea), and separate copies of "Target Equals City" and "Red or Dead."

45. To Aziz (December 26, 1962), *HGL*, 53; to Andrews (December 28, 1962), *HGL*, 38.

46. Thomas Merton and Robert Lax, *A Catch of Anti-Letters* (Kansas City: Sheed and Ward, 1978), 7.

47. Thomas Merton, *Dancing in the Water of Life* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1997), 84; subsequent references will be cited as "DWL" parenthetically in the text.

48. To Forest (March 16, 1964), *HGL*, 279; to Dewart (April 24, 1964), *WTF*, 295; to Ferry (May 27, 1964), *HGL*, 217.

49. Letter to William H. Shannon from Robert E. Daggy, June 13, 1986.

50. Merton treated a mimeograph of the "Cold War Letters" in the same way: a copy in the library at St Bonaventure University describes loose pages with editorial markings. "All pages have edge holes to accomodate comb binding." web.sbu.edu/friedsam/mertonweb/mimeos&photocopy2.htm

51. Thomas Merton, *Seeds of Destruction* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1964), 93-183.

52. Bourget, Dom M. Laurence, "Thomas Merton: A Monk Who 'Succeeded': An Interview by Correspondence," conducted and edited by Jonathan Montaldo *Merton Annual* 12 (1999): 45, 48.

53. Thomas Merton, "The Challenge of Responsibility," *Saturday Review*, 13 February, 1965, 19-30.

54. Paul Pearson, Director of the Merton Center in Louisville, reports that several of the original manuscripts of Merton's books were bound.

55. James Forest, *Living with Wisdom*. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 223 (footnote 241).

56. <http://orpheus.ucsd/speccoll/findaids/science/szilard>, at the Mandeville Special Collections Library, listed in the Register of Leo Szilard Papers among the items sent to Rare Books or General Collections.

57. It reappeared when the question of nuclear weapons recurred in the 1980s, when it was reprinted in the *National Catholic Reporter* as "Merton Plea on Nukes: 'Avoid Fine Moral Distinctions'," (29 April 1983).