

**Hospitality, Resistance and Self-Management:
A History of *Mutual Aid*,
The Newsletter of Brisbane's Catholic Worker Movement
(1981 – 2002)**

by
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RESEARCH PAPER

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Acknowledgements

This research paper had its genesis during my enrolment in *THEL619: Introduction to Theological & Philosophical Research* in Semester 2, 2020. During the early days of that semester, Val Noone's publication of *Dorothy Day in Australia* unexpectedly altered the trajectory of my research topic. After recovering from the shock that my exploratory subject had been "stolen," I was delighted to soon discover two boxes on the *West End Catholic Worker* in the *Dorothy Day – Catholic Worker Collection* at the Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin (USA). Phillip Runkel, the recently retired long-time archivist of the collection, genially and professionally answered my many questions and offered to digitize the boxes at an affordable, student-friendly, price. The digitization was somewhat of a gamble as I was unaware of its scope and contents until the results arrived by email. Expecting correspondence, financial records and ephemera, I was astonished to receive dozens of issues of a newsletter curiously named *Mutual Aid*. It only took a quick perusal for the decision to be made on my new research topic. I had inadvertently stumbled upon a treasure trove – a hitherto unknown to me lens into 1980s and 1990s Brisbane and the struggles, losses, victories and joys of an everchanging band of radical Christians practicing a lay American vocation in Australia.

I thank my facilitators in this discovery: -

- To Dr. Val Noone, for his kindly encouragement through our email exchanges and for publishing his worthy text just in time to prevent me from stumbling into a topic too broad for this research project;
- To Mr. Phillip Runkel, for his invaluable assistance in digitizing the *West End Catholic Worker* and *Mutual Aid* holdings at Marquette University; and

- To Dr. Gareth Wearne, for his encouragement and assistance in determining this research topic during my enrolment in *THEL619: Introduction to Theological & Philosophical Research*.

I also cordially thank the staff of the University of Queensland's *Fryer Library*, especially Belinda Spinaze. Having unearthed the incomplete collection of *Mutual Aid* at Marquette University, the task to find twelve missing issues stood before me. Hidden in *Fryer's* catalogue, without reference to the names of the publishing communities, was a journal named *Mutual Aid*. Arriving one Monday morning, naively unaware of their five-day notice requirement for accessing manuscripts, Belinda graciously excused my ignorance and permitted access to *Fryer's* holdings. Except for three issues, its collection was complete. To my relief, ten of the issues I was missing were held. Over the next few months, Belinda was of immeasurable assistance during my numerous visits. Thank you very much.

With the kind assistance of former *Brisbane Catholic Worker* and *West End Catholic Worker* member Jim Dowling, I was able to complete both mine and *Fryer's* collections. Thank you, Jim, for posting the two copies of *Mutual Aid* and trusting me to digitize and return them safely.

Thank you to the ACU library staff, particularly those at the Banyo Campus. Your prompt dispatch of numerous book loans, and processing of inter-library loan requests, was of immense assistance.

A huge thank you goes to my supervisor, Dr. Jo Laffin, who was of limitless support during my protracted completion of this project. Ever willing to answer even the most inane questions, Jo shared my interest in Dorothy Day and encouraged my ever-deepening exploration into the minutiae of Brisbane's *Catholic Worker Movement*.

Thanks to my sons and housemates for tolerating and encouraging my obsession with *Mutual Aid* and this project. Thank you for graciously accepting my never-ending excuses for household maintenance inaction. The doors that regularly stick or fall off their hinges will soon be repaired or replaced, and the jungle that has overtaken the yard will be tamed and transformed into a welcoming oasis.

Thank you to the communities that published *Mutual Aid – Two or Three Gathered in His Name*, the *Brisbane Catholic Worker* and the *West End Catholic Worker*. Thanks for your foresight in regularly forwarding copies of *Mutual Aid* to both *Marquette University* and *Fryer Library*. Your persistence has ensured that this valuable resource is available to researchers in perpetuity.

As a New South Wales resident during the 1980s and 1990s, the writers of *Mutual Aid* took me on a twenty-one-year journey through Queensland's political and social history. Thank you for blessing me with your passion and an understanding of the Bjelke-Petersen era that I had only previously perceived as a former "southerner." Your extensive writings on the three pillars of hospitality, resistance and self-management have nourished my spiritual journey towards living the *Corporal Works of Mercy* more authentically.

Finally, thank you Jim Dowling, Anne Rampa and Ciaron O'Reilly for so kindly encouraging me when I disclosed by email that I was researching *Mutual Aid*. I hope that this research paper does justice to your past and current endeavours.

Abbreviations

BCW	Brisbane Catholic Worker
Boggo Road	Boggo Road Gaol
CW	Catholic Worker
CWM	Catholic Worker Movement
DRO	Defence Regional Office
HOH	House of Hospitality
IWW	Industrial Workers of the World
MA	Mutual Aid
Two or Three	Two or Three Gathered in His Name
WECW	West End Catholic Worker

Introduction



Front Cover of Mutual Aid Issue 37 (Autumn/Winter 1993).

Source: Dorothy Day – Catholic Worker Collection, Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin (USA).

Its provenance concealed by deficient cataloguing, the only complete public collection of *Mutual Aid* (hereafter *MA*) is domiciled in the University of Queensland's *Fryer Memorial Library of Australian Literature*. Consistent with *Fryer's* remit to collect Queensland history, the 47 issues of *MA* provide a significant insight into the largely unexamined intersection between religion and radical political activism in Brisbane during the last two decades of the twentieth century.¹

Produced over a twenty-one-year period between 1981 and 2002, *MA* had four successive publishers, each continuing the newsletter's objective to chronicle a unique Australian experiment with Christian anarchism. Ciaron O'Reilly, *Two or Three Gathered in His Name* (hereafter *Two or Three*), *Brisbane Catholic Worker* (hereafter *BCW*) and finally, *West End Catholic Worker* (hereafter *WECW*) imbued the self-produced magazine with the Catholic faith of the groups' members and a fundamental commitment to performing the *Corporal Works of Mercy*.

Upon the formation of *BCW* in mid-1983, *MA* joined the long tradition of *Catholic Worker* (hereafter *CW*) community produced newsletters and newspapers. As the journal of the only Australian *CW* communities, *MA* is an important historical record of an antipodean attempt to live out an American model of lay Christian life. As the canonization cause of the

¹ The University of Queensland Library, "Special Collections", The University of Queensland, accessed June 13, 2022, <https://web.library.uq.edu.au/library-services/special-collections>. Catalogued as a journal, the publisher is listed as "Brisbane." The catalogue makes no mention of *Ciaron O'Reilly*, *Two or Three*, *BCW* or *WECW*. https://search.library.uq.edu.au/primo-explore/fulldisplay?docid=61UQ_ALMA21113373510003131&context=L&vid=61UQ&lang=en_US&search_scope=61UQ_All&adaptor=Local%20Search%20Engine&tab=61uq_all&query=any,contains,Mutual%20Aid&sortby=rank&facet=rtype,exclude,newspaper_articles,lk&facet=rtype,exclude,reviews,lk&offset=0

CW co-founder Dorothy Day continues, *MA* testifies to an important Australian link with the 89-year-old *Catholic Worker Movement* (hereafter *CWM*).

Hitherto there have been no published works on *MA*. Two books released in 2020, however, reference the Brisbane *CWM*. Val Noone's *Dorothy Day in Australia* is an absorbing study of Day's August 1970 visit to Australia. Personally involved in the tour's organisation, Noone's engaging and enlightening book is part memoir. In examining Australia's connections with the *CWM*, he devotes a paragraph to Brisbane's *CW* communities.² Kieran Finnane's *Peace Crimes* investigates a 2016 intrusion into the joint Australian and United States satellite surveillance base at *Pine Gap*. Among the five self-identified *Peace Pilgrims* convicted of trespass was former *BCW* and *WECW* member Jim Dowling and his son Franz. In her compelling account of the *Peace Pilgrims'* anti-military act of civil disobedience, Finnane briefly examines the Dowling family and its *CW* antecedents.³

This research paper will fill the gap in scholarship and examine how *MA* chronicled the three priorities of its producing communities. Following a chapter on the history and aims of *MA*, three chapters follow which expound and analyse the principles of hospitality and communal life; non-violent resistance; and building the new within the old. *Two or Three*, *BCW* and *WECW*'s existence as intentional Christian communities will be viewed through the lens of *MA*'s articles and the members' writings on the provision of hospitality to the poor and marginalized; resistance against unjust actions of the state and corporations; and self-managed work.

² Val Noone, *Dorothy Day in Australia* (Fitzroy: Mary Doyle & Val Noone, 2020), 117.

³ Kieran Finnane, *Peace Crimes: Pine Gap, National Security and Dissent* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 2020): 18-27; 112-118; and 238-244

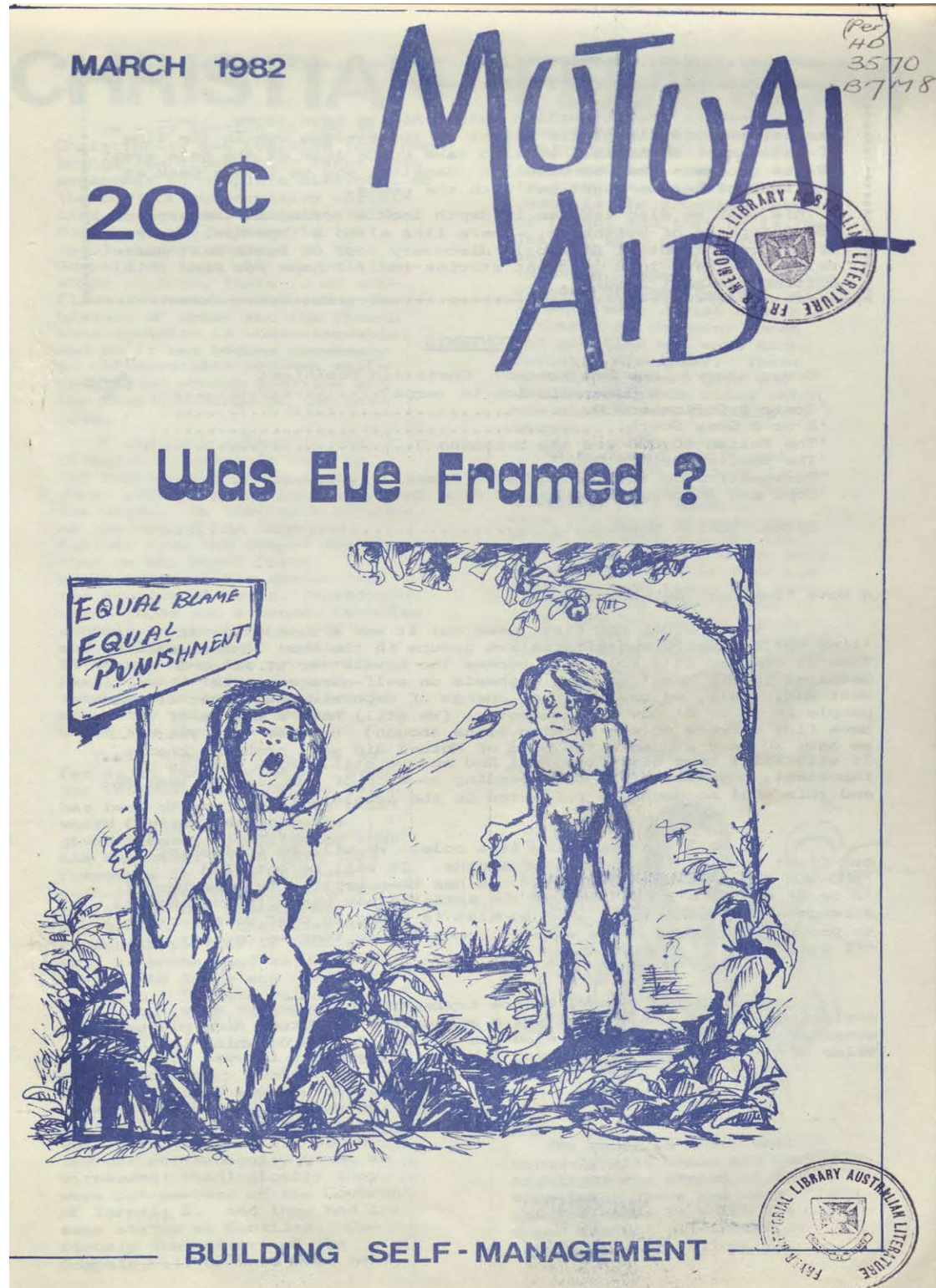
Only a selection of the dozens of acts of non-violent resistance reported in *MA* are examined. Similarly, only a small proportion of articles in *MA*'s twenty-one-year history have been discussed. Those considered have been chosen to highlight elements of the communities' philosophy or theology, and the way they were reported. The omission of a non-violent action or article is therefore not a judgement on its importance or validity. To the contrary, it evidences the need for further research and the future production of a more comprehensive critical history of the still active thirty-nine-year-old Brisbane *CWM*.

In respect of this paper's methodology, all forty-seven issues of *MA* were sourced, the majority from Marquette University's *Dorothy Day – Catholic Worker Collection*. Issues 1 to 10, which were produced by Ciaron O'Reilly and *Two or Three*, were accessed from the *Fryer Library*. The Call Number for *Fryer's* now complete collection is HD3570.B7 M8. Issues 12 and 13 were sourced from Jim Dowling. The complete contents of all issues were read, and an exhaustive type-written summary of all articles produced. A hand-written keyword index was then composed. This enabled the author to tease out and cross reference the issues most frequently discussed in *MA*. Although extensive research was undertaken on background issues, no oral histories were undertaken.⁴ An issue listing was produced and is annexed to this paper.

⁴ The author spoke briefly to both Jim Dowling and Ciaron O'Reilly at the January 26, 2022 *Invasion Day Rally* in Brisbane. A comment by O'Reilly on the source of *MA*'s title appears in Chapter 1. As a matter of courtesy, the author advised Dowling, O'Reilly and Anne Rampa by email that she was undertaking this research. She subsequently sought Dowling's assistance in obtaining copies of issues 12 and 13 of *MA*. With Dowling's help the numbering of *MA* was clarified and the number 44/45 assigned to an issue to account for an inadvertently missed issue number during the original production. Although issues are numbered up to 48, only 47 issues were produced.

Chapter 1

History and Aims of *Mutual Aid*



Front Cover of *Mutual Aid* Issue 5 (March 1982). Source: Fryer Library, University of Queensland.

The publication which would become the voice of Australia's sole CW community had its undistinguished start as a ten-page newsletter edited by Ciaron O'Reilly.⁵ First produced in June 1981, *MA* was collated and distributed by a small, informal group of activists bound together by their commitment to collective sharing and direct democracy.⁶ The newsletter's title was inspired by Russian anarchist Peter Kropotkin's 1902 collection of essays, *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution* (C. O'Reilly, personal communication, January 26, 2022).

Ciaron O'Reilly's radical Catholic perspective had its genesis in his Brisbane suburban upbringing. Raised in a house that backed onto the Gallipoli Army Barracks at Enoggera, O'Reilly witnessed the marshalling and training of Australia's troops for the Vietnam War from his backyard. His father, an Irish immigrant, was a strident republican who spoke frequently of the struggles in his homeland. The family's Catholic faith was practiced devoutly, and O'Reilly was schooled in the Catholic system.⁷

Sold at 20 cents a copy and printed, with a few exceptions, on a Gestetner duplicating machine, *MA*'s "midwife" was later identified as Bruce Corbett, a member of the *House of Freedom Christian Community* in West End. In a marriage notification printed in May 1984, Corbett was described as a "dear friend" of the community who had "printed *MA* since its birth".⁸ With the exception of Issues 18 to 21 which were professionally printed in tabloid

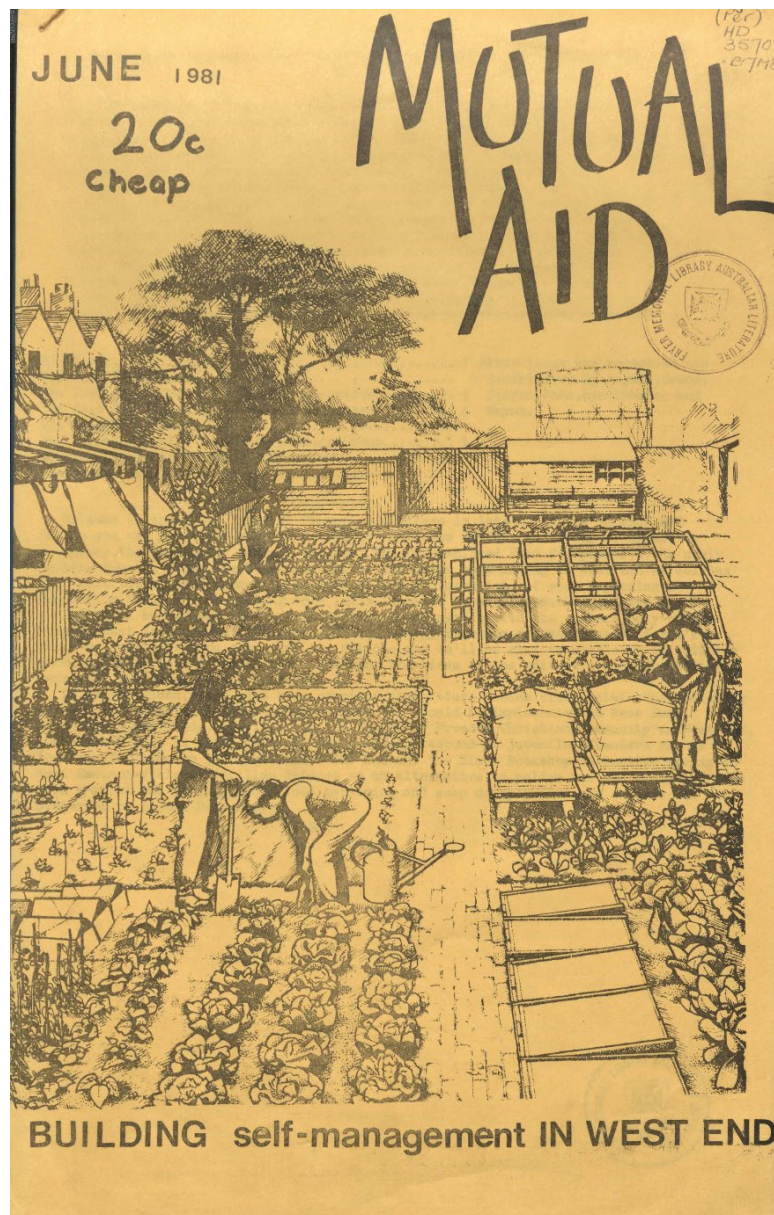
⁵ Ciaron O'Reilly, "Editorial", *MA* 3 (October-November 1981): 1.

⁶ Anonymous, "MA," *MA* 1 (June 1981): 1.

⁷ Andrew Bartlett, "Talking with Brisbane-Based Global Anti-War Activist Ciaron O'Reilly" (Radio interview, *Talking Zeds*, 4ZZZ FM, 14 October 2021), accessed May 14, 2022, <https://4zzz.org.au/program/talking-zeds/2021-10-14%2010:00:00>

⁸ Anonymous, "Married", *MA* 14 (May 1984): 14.

newsprint format, this arrangement appears to have continued until 1988 when WECW purchased the “primitive technology” of a used Gestetner for MA’s printing.⁹



Front Cover of Mutual Aid Issue 1 (June 1981). Source: Fryer Library, University of Queensland.

From its inception MA was avowedly anarchist although the phrases “direct democracy” and “self-management” were more frequently used synonyms for anarchism. In the Issue 1 article “What is Direct Democracy?”, Ciaron O’Reilly and Angela Jones outlined the primary characteristics of direct democracy. Equal distribution of both power and wealth, including

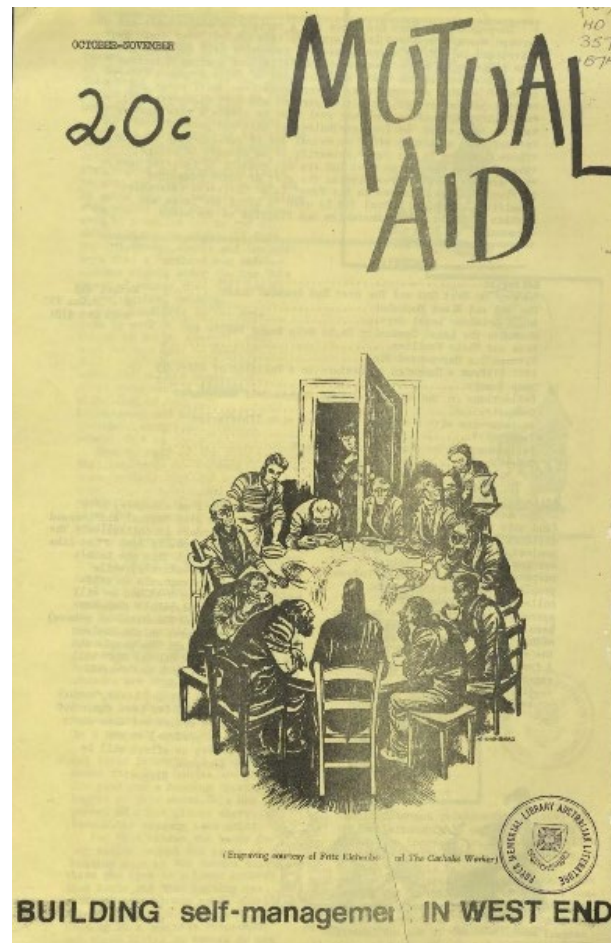
⁹ Jim Dowling, “Editorial”, MA 24 (Spring 1988): 1.

“equal wages,” was at its core and direct participation its central tenet. By voting, they argued, we have given our consent to governments to make laws and policies without our participation. Corporations make policy with neither our consent nor our participation. Trade and student unions make policy with consent of varying degrees but no participation. The alternative is general assemblies of both workplaces and communities in which workers and community members make all decisions and any delegates appointed have limited and strictly enforced mandates to merely communicate to, or negotiate with, similar general assemblies. Workplaces would be run on a collective basis with decisions made by the general assembly of workers. These workplaces would always be responsive and sensitive to the local community and its needs.¹⁰

Other than an article on the *House of Freedom Christian Community* in the second issue of *MA*, discussion of Christianity was absent in the newsletter’s inaugural issues. This abruptly changed with Issue 3. With Fritz Eichenberg’s renowned woodcut illustration “Christ of the Soup Kitchen” on its front cover, a new era in *MA*’s short history was evident. Writing in the editorial, Ciaron O’Reilly announced that *Two or Three* had “decided to take over” *MA* and that following Issue 3 it would be produced collectively. Whereas the first two issues had been produced by O’Reilly as an individual project with the assistance of local West End article writers, hereafter the newsletter’s brief would extend beyond self-managed West End activities. This would include both Christian and Humanist anarchist commentary on issues generally and “reports on non-violent direct action.”¹¹

¹⁰ Ciaron O’Reilly and Angela Jones, “What is Direct Democracy,” *MA* 1 (June 1981): 2.

¹¹ Ciaron O’Reilly, “Editorial,” *MA* 3 (October-November 1981): 1.



Front Cover of *Mutual Aid* Issue 3 (October-November 1981). Source: Fryer Library, University of Queensland.

In an untitled and starred box on the first page (hereafter *Aims and Means*), *Two or Three* is described as a “Christian (Anarchist/Pacifist) group.” MA “is used to bring the ideas and ethics of Christianity, Anarchism and Pacifism to the wider community.” Collective sharing and direct democracy, it was argued, “offer the only real hope to create a free society and in turn, avoid the (nuclear) holocaust that our present centralized societies offer us.”¹² Whilst not yet identifying as a CW community, hints of the movement’s influence are evident.

Aside from Eichenberg’s cover illustration, three of the CW co-founder Peter Maurin’s *Easy Essays* are reproduced. *Social Workers and Workers*; *Beyond Marxism*; and *State Capitalism*

¹² Two or Three Gathered in His Name, “Aims and Means,” MA 3 (October-November 1981): 1. The author has chosen to refer to this untitled section as *Aims and Means* in accordance with the longstanding practice of the CW newspaper. See The CWM, “Aims and Means of the CW,” CW, accessed June 1, 2022, <https://www.catholicworker.org/cw-aims-and-means.html>

appear without introduction.¹³ A failure to contextualize articles, poetry or graphics was occasionally evident in the early years of *MA*.

Omitted from Issue 5, the *Aims and Means* returned in an amended form in the following issue. *Two or Three's* commitment to the Kingdom of God was now at its core.

TWO OR THREE GATHERED IN HIS NAME is a group of christians (sic) who believe that to realise the Kingdom of God socially - is to bring about a society where the entire social fabric rest upon peoples' ability to love one another. We are anarchists, because we deny any earthly authority dominion over our lives, and acknowledge that all government rests upon violence and the denial of conscience. Our vision of the 'Kingdom of God' has no role for government, violence or order-giver/order-taker relationships in any form. We are inspired by the communal life without property practiced by the early church. We are pacifists because we recognise that no one is expendable in the transformation required to socially realise the 'Kingdom of God' – and that no one is completely closed to change.¹⁴

It was not until sometime prior to the seventh issue of *MA* in September 1982 that *Two or Three* leased a house at 238 Boundary Street, West End and became an intentional community. Ciaron O'Reilly, his older brother Sean, Jones, John Tracey, and Vic Hansom set out to experiment with hospitality, direct action, subsistence work, "stale bread and conflict dynamics."¹⁵ *Two or Three's* priorities were threefold – hospitality, resistance, and self-managed work. *MA* was a means by which the group could disseminate their principles, share experiences with those grappling with similar beliefs, and offer an alternative to the established media.¹⁶

By the tenth issue of *MA* in June-July 1983, *Two or Three* had ceased to exist. The newsletter became the organ of the new *BCW*. Containing three former *Two or Three* members - Ciaron O'Reilly, Sean O'Reilly and Jones – the community was also joined by Jim Dowling. Having decided to be "accountable" to the *CWM* and its 50-year tradition, the community

¹³ Peter Maurin, "Social Workers and Workers," "Beyond Marxism" and "State Capitalism," *MA* 3 (October-November 1981): 12.

¹⁴ *Two or Three Gathered in His Name*, "Aims and Means", *MA* 6 (June 1982): 2.

¹⁵ Ciaron O'Reilly, "Editorial," *MA* 7 (September 1982): 2.

¹⁶ Ciaron O'Reilly, "Editorial," *MA* 9 (April 1983): 2.

continued to reside at 238 Boundary Street. “The newsletter,” Ciaron O’Reilly stated, “will be an expression of our experience as a community living out the above principles.”¹⁷ These principles, as outlined in the *Aims and Means*, were both an amendment to and extension of those of its predecessor. After outlining a brief history of the CWM, the *Aims and Means* restate *Two or Three’s* principles from the sentence beginning, “Our vision of the ‘Kingdom of God’”. Surprisingly, the proclamation that *BCW* is anarchist was omitted. Added were *BCW’s* three priorities:

As a CW Community we attempt to

- 1) Offer Hospitality to the poor, homeless and afflicted. Not as a means of supplementing the welfare state but as a means of dismantling and replacing it.
- 2) Carry out Non-violent Resistance to Organised Violence. For example, direct resistance to state restrictions on human freedom, war preparation, the abortion industry etc.
- 3) Building the New Within the Old; replacing capitalist institutions with non-violent, self-managed ways of satisfying our needs (e.g. through co-operative work, collective gardens, “MA,” teach-ins, food co-ops etc.).¹⁸



Former members of BCW, October 2021, from left (wearing yellow) Jim Dowling, (centre) Sean O'Reilly, (wearing pink) Angela Jones & at rear (wearing black) Ciaron O'Reilly. Source: Ciaron O'Reilly Twitter account.

¹⁷ Ciaron O’Reilly, “Editorial,” *MA* 10 (June-July 1983): 2.

¹⁸ BCW, “Aims and Means,” *MA* 10 (June-July 1983): 2.

The printing format of Issue 18 of *MA* was a stark departure from the Gestetner produced issues previously. Although initially published on foolscap paper, size varied throughout *MA*'s run and included A4 and smaller formats. The more professional tabloid size newsprint of Issue 18 continued until Issue 21. Instead of the average 16-page newsletter, the tabloid editions were 8 pages. Gone were the *Aims and Means*. This professionalism, however, coincided with the disintegration of *BCW*. Ciaron O'Reilly's Issue 18 editorial revealed that the community had "decided to have time out". The hospitality house at 238 Boundary Street was closed and those remaining in Brisbane moved to *Justice Products*, the community's self-managed shop at 235 Boundary St.¹⁹ Sean O'Reilly had moved to Rockhampton as a student nurse and Jones was in Tasmania.²⁰ The group's disintegration was complete by Issue 21 in Winter 1986. In what was described as the "closing down issue of *MA*," Dowling advised that Jones was in America touring *CW Houses* and *Pro-lifers for Survival* members.²¹ The *BCW* era of *MA* was at an end.



Tabloid Style Page 1 of Mutual Aid Issue 18 (Easter 1985).

Source: Dorothy Day – Catholic Worker Collection, Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin (USA).

¹⁹ *Justice Products* is discussed in Chapter 4.

²⁰ Ciaron O'Reilly, "Editorial," *MA* 18 (Easter 1985): 2.

²¹ Jim Dowling, "Editorial," *MA* 21 (Winter 1986): 2.

Following an 18-month absence Issue 22 reappeared under the custodianship of the recently formed *WECW*. Having established a *House of Hospitality* (hereafter *HOH*) at 269 Boundary St, West End in May 1987, the *CW* movement in Brisbane was again operational. Dowling was the only former member of *BCW* and was joined by five others.²² Many would come and go over the next 15 years of *MA*'s existence, however the two constant members of *WECW* were Dowling and Anne Rampa. The couple soon married.²³ Although none who had first published *MA* were members of *WECW*, ties remained. Ciaron O'Reilly would continue to contribute articles to the newsletter from time-to-time and engaged in resistance with *WECW*. O'Reilly established the *Greg Shackleton CW* at St. Mary's Presbytery, South Brisbane in 1995.²⁴ His participation in the *ANZUS Peaceforce Plowshares* action at the Griffiss Air Force Base in Rome, New York (USA) on 1 January 1991 would see him imprisoned in America for 12 months.²⁵ This action, together with his *Jabiluka Ploughshares* action in the Northern Territory on 9 August 1998, was extensively reported in *MA*.²⁶

MA's passing following the printing of Issue 48 in 2002 went unannounced. Twenty-one years of radical Christian publishing was at an end. Reminiscent of the demise of *BCW* and *MA*'s 18-month hiatus, Issues 46 and 47 had been inexplicably published on professional

²² Jim Dowling, "Editorial," *MA* 22 (Christmas 1987): 2.

²³ Anonymous, Untitled page of wedding photos of Jim Dowling and Anne Rampa (3 December 1988). *Mutual Aid* 25 (Autumn 1989): 15.

²⁴ Anne Rampa, "Editorial," *MA* 41 (May 1995): 2.

²⁵ Anonymous, "ANZUS Peace Force Plowshares Community," *MA* 31 (Autumn 1991): 3; Anonymous, "ANZUS Plowshares Sentence," *MA* 33 (Spring 1991): 4.

²⁶ Anonymous, "Jabiluka Ploughshares: Voices in the Wilderness," *MA* 46 (Late 1988): 1. This predominately Catholic anti-war movement is usually spelt "Plowshares" in North America and "Ploughshares" in Britain and Australia.

tabloid newsprint. Issue 48's production appeared home done, albeit with a photocopier rather than the Gestetner of old.

Rampa and Dowling, together with their children, had left West End in 1999 and moved to the *Peter Maurin Farm* at Dayboro, north of Brisbane.²⁷ Established by WECW over the course of several years, it was initially intended as a retreat facility and experiment in Maurin's *Green Revolution* philosophies.²⁸ The last issues of *MA* had included a frequent lament over WECW's declining membership.²⁹ A final plea was made for more members in Issue 48. "The CW movement here in Brisbane," Dowling said, "is more than ever in need of people to join."³⁰ *MA* ceased publication before that call was answered.



Jim Dowling and Anne Rampa, together with three of their seven children and a hospitality guest, at Peter Maurin Farm, Dayboro, March 2015. Source: Catholic Leader.

²⁷ Jim Dowling, "Editorial," *MA* 47 (Winter 2000): 2.

²⁸ Steve Collins-Haynes, "Peter Maurin Farm: A Brief History," *MA* 47 (Winter 2000): 10

²⁹ See, for example, Jim Dowling, "Editorial," *MA* 46 (Late 1988):2.

³⁰ Jim Dowling, "Editorial," *MA* 48 (2002): 2.

MA's demise did not signal the end of the CWM in Brisbane. Dowling and Rampa raised their seven children on *Peter Maurin Farm*, continue to offer hospitality there, and remain engaged in the resistance movement.³¹ Several of their children established a *CW Community* in Greenslopes which provides hospitality at a new *Dorothy Day House*.³² This current iteration of *Brisbane CW* produces the newsletter *Love Against the Machine*.³³



*Yeliz Basafacan, Andy Paine, Amelia Tatham, Joe Dowling, Ratz, Franz Dowling and Rebekah Dowling
at Dorothy Day House, Greenslopes, January 2016. Source: Catholic Leader.*

Ciaran O'Reilly has similarly maintained his CW vocation. After spending many years overseas, he returned to Brisbane in 2019 to care for his elderly mother who has dementia. Together with maintaining his involvement in the *Plowshares* movement, O'Reilly has been

³¹ Kieran Finnane, *Peace Crimes*, 20 and Staff Writers, "Lenten Austerity Grows", *Catholic Leader* (13 March 2015), accessed June 13, 2022, <https://catholicleader.com.au/life/family/lenten-austerity-grows/>

³² Emile Ng, "Share house from Heaven", *Catholic Leader* (21 January 2016), accessed June 13, 2022, <https://catholicleader.com.au/news/share-house-from-heaven/>

³³ Anonymous, "Catholic Worker Response to Land Forces Expo", in *Workers Bush Telegraph* (undated post), accessed June 18, 2022, <https://workersbushtelegraph.com.au/love-against-the-machine/>

prominent in resistance to free the Wikileaks founder, Julian Assange. He spent extended periods camped outside the Ecuadorian Embassy in London in support of Assange.³⁴

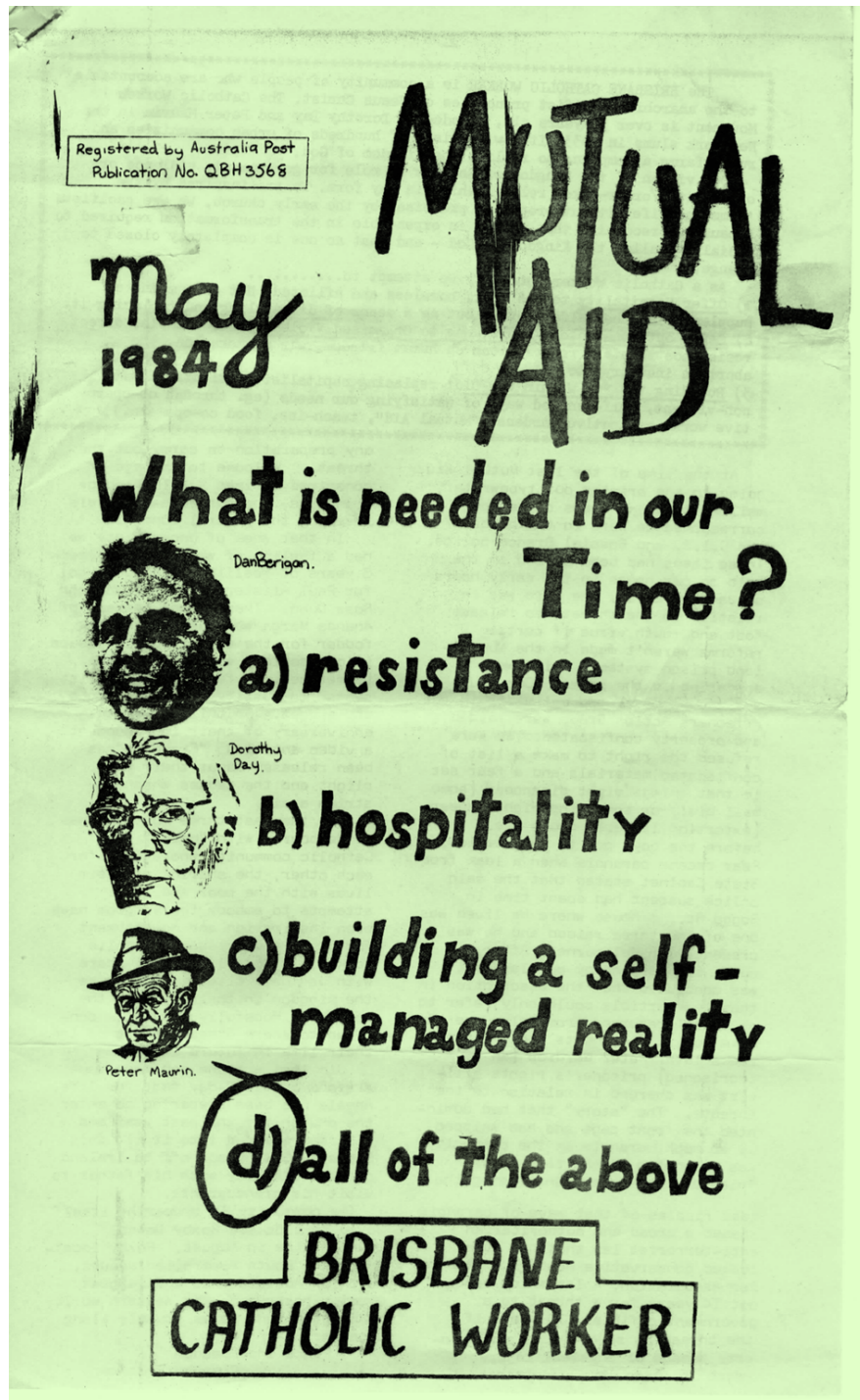


Ciaran O'Reilly at the Brisbane May Day Rally, May 2022. Source: Ciaran O'Reilly Twitter account.

³⁴ Andrew Bartlett, "Talking with Brisbane-Based Global Anti-War" and Lessons 4 Life, "Julian Assange: Ciaran O'Reilly outside the Ecuadorian Embassy in Solidarity", *YouTube* video, (December 28, 2019), accessed June 18, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=llekGf--XBs>

Chapter 2

Hospitality and Communal Living



Front Cover of Mutual Aid Issue 14 (May 1984).

Source: Dorothy Day – Catholic Worker Collection, Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin (USA).

A core feature of the *CWM* is its provision of hospitality to the homeless and poor. Within eighteen months of the publication of the inaugural issue of the *CW* in May 1933, Day and Maurin had established the first *HOH* in New York City. Through the pages of the *CW*, Maurin had implored readers to personally undertake the *Corporal Works of Mercy*. He had also beseeched the bishops to establish a *HOH* in each parish. When the poor sought food and accommodation from the *CW*'s office, its co-founders felt morally and spiritually compelled to act.³⁵ An accidental movement had begun and by 1940 there were more than fifty *HOHs* in America.³⁶

Prior to even adopting the *CW* moniker, the members of *Two or Three* had begun discerning a vocation to provide hospitality in West End. Jones and Ciaron O'Reilly travelled to Melbourne and Adelaide in January 1982 visiting Christian communities that shared their Christian anarchist and pacifist beliefs. In a two-page report published in Issue 5 of *MA*, Jones reported gushingly of the hospitality provided by a community in Brook Street, Richmond (Melbourne). The pair also visited the *Rock Christian Community* in Adelaide, together with Bill and Barbara Clements who had lived at the *New York CW* for 18 months in the mid-1970s.³⁷ Within six months of this expedition *Two or Three* had established their *HOH* at 238 Boundary Street, West End.³⁸ *MA* afforded the community the opportunity to outline the essential characteristics of Christian communal living and hospitality.

Drawing on his experience of living with *The Simon Community* in London for nine months, Sean O'Reilly discussed *BCW*'s hospitality in Issue 11. Opening with Peter Maurin's *Easy*

³⁵ Kate Hennessy, *Dorothy Day: The World Will Be Saved by Beauty* (New York: Scribner, 2017), 80-81.

³⁶ John Loughery and Blythe Randolph, *Dorothy Day: Dissenting Voice of the American Century* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2020), 3-4.

³⁷ Angela Jones, "Two or Three Goes South," *MA* 5 (March 1982): 6-8.

³⁸ Ciaron O'Reilly, "Editorial," *MA* 7 (September 1982): 2.

Essay Houses of Hospitality, O'Reilly addressed the tensions that Christians experience surrounding hospitality. "Hospitality is inconvenient," he said, and something which most avoid. Christians too frequently surround themselves with people who are "nice" and towards whom compassionate relationships are readily fostered. They infrequently experience the drunk - prostrate in vomit or experiencing the "D.T.'s" (sic). Having abrogated responsibility for the poor to the state, people no longer believe that hospitality to the needy is a personal obligation. Unlike the early Greeks who considered the poor to be "ambassadors of the Gods" and therefore deserving of our shelter, food and clothing, today we provide not from the heart but from the pocket. Giving money is an easier alternative than the physical labour and time required to individually care for people ourselves.³⁹

Sean O'Reilly's Christian anarchist perspective of hospitality accords with that expounded in the lengthy article "CW Politics" in the following issue. Printed without an acknowledged author, the article's style and terminology suggests an American origin. A similar but not identical article, "Aims and Purposes," appeared in the May 1982 edition of the *CW*.⁴⁰ Arguing for personal responsibility, the individual is urged to change conditions in any feasible way. Caring for as many as possible in houses of hospitality is preferred to the State's "impersonal charity." This is done not to "patch up the wrecks of the capitalist system" but rather in accordance with Catholic tradition which teaches that all possessions held beyond our bare necessities belong to those without such basics.⁴¹

It was never the intention of *WECW* to offer large scale hospitality in the manner of many American *CW* communities. Large bed numbers and soup kitchens were not offered

³⁹ Sean O'Reilly, "Hospitality," *MA* 11 (September 1983): 5-6.

⁴⁰ Anonymous, "Aims and Purposes," *CW* XLIX/1 (1 May 1982): 5, 7, accessed May 12, 2022, <https://thecatholicnewsarchive.org/?a=d&d=CW19820501-01.2.12&e=-----en-20--1-byDA-txt-txIN----->

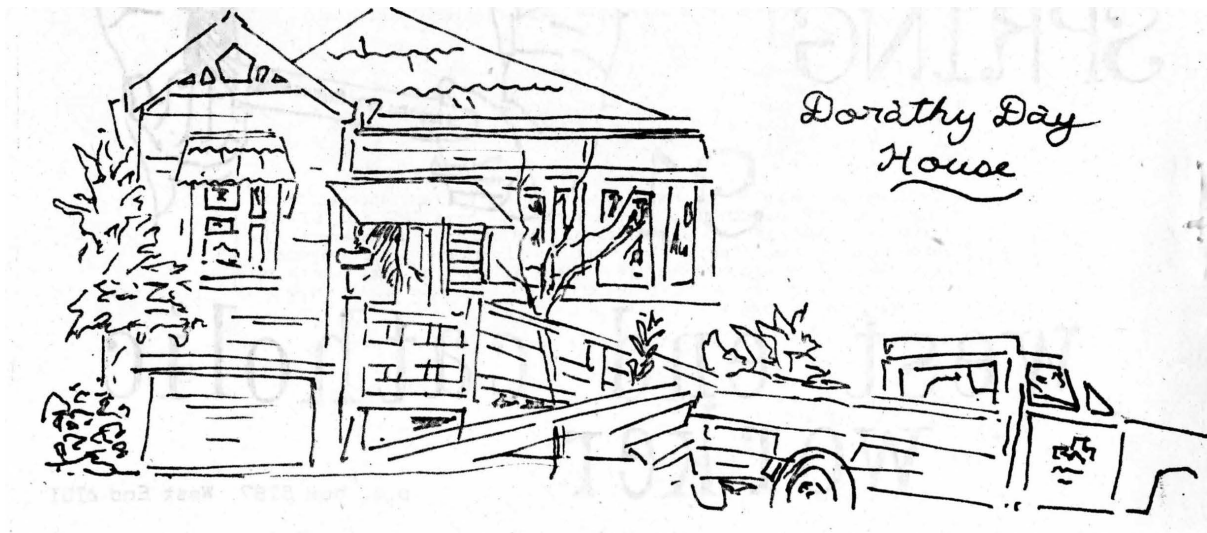
⁴¹ Anonymous, "CW Politics," *MA* 12 (November-December 1983): 7.

however the community always had at least two “Christ rooms” for guests. Celebrating 10 years of the CW in Brisbane in 1993, Dowling stated that in that time hundreds of guests had been hosted by the communities. Whilst many community members had come and gone, some residents such as Arnold (three or four years) and Eddie (four years and still present) had outstayed them.⁴² While there may not have been an easily categorized theology behind *WECW*’s hospitality, *CW* co-founder Peter Maruin’s personalist philosophy and its requirement to accept personal responsibility was at its core.

Writing in the Spring 1988 edition, Rampa described *WECW*’s hospitality as “the most easily understood, socially acceptable, and applauded part of our vision”. Rampa quoted from Jesus’ illustration of the last judgement in the twenty-fifth chapter of the Gospel of Matthew. The basis for the *Corporal Works of Mercy*, Christ’s call to “feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, visit the imprisoned, shelter the homeless, visit the sick and bury the dead,” is the central tenet of *CW* hospitality. The hospitality provided by *WECW* went beyond sheltering the homeless and included visiting those they knew in prison, psychiatric wards and hospitals; child minding; sharing meals; and providing transport or loaning their vehicles. They also tried, as best they could, “to give of our ‘excess’”. By reinstating personal responsibility and not consigning Christian obligations to the government, members were “exercising our love in a real and personal way.”⁴³

⁴² Jim Dowling, “1983-1993 Ten Years of CW in Brisbane”, *MA* 37 (Autumn/Winter 1993): 3.

⁴³ Anne Rampa, “Hospitality,” *MA* 24 (Spring 1988): 4-5.



Drawing of 269 Boundary Street, Mutual Aid Issue 33 (Spring 1991): 2.

Source: Dorothy Day – Catholic Worker Collection, Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin (USA).

An anonymous Issue 27 opinion piece asserted that a Christian's performance of the works of mercy afforded them additional opportunities for salvation. The performance of these acts of assistance by the state, "which acts as if it owns the poor," are of no salvific value. CW Houses of Hospitality permit individuals to personally feed, clothe and shelter the needy, bypassing the impersonal and meritless care of the state. Without frequently practicing these *Corporal Works of Mercy* salvation would be difficult to attain.⁴⁴

WECW acknowledged that Houses of Hospitality were not the panacea to homelessness. Issue 34 addressed the need to build private housing for the needy. Rampa examined gentrification in "West End/Brisbane: Who For Art Thou?" and bemoaned the rent rises and increasing homelessness. Having spent 1983 and 1984 in London prior to joining WECW, Rampa witnessed the destitution of the needy sleeping rough in the cold, foraging for food in bins, and sleeping under railway bridges in cardboard boxes.⁴⁵ Like Sean O'Reilly, she had

⁴⁴ Anonymous, "Radical Redirection," MA 27 (Spring 1989): 12

⁴⁵ Anne Rampa, "West End/Brisbane: Who For Art Thou?," MA, 34 (Autumn 1992): 4

lived for a time with London's *Simon Community*.⁴⁶ She was determined on her return to Brisbane not to see her home city experience such poverty. Quoting Isaiah, she proclaimed the prophesy of the new "Jerusalem" where "People will build houses and live in them themselves – they will not be used by someone else" (Isa 65: 21-22).⁴⁷ Recalling *CW* co-founder Maurin's personalist philosophy, Rampa stated that all are responsible for their fellow human's needs and this must not be left to governments. Discussing one of *WECW*'s favoured theologians, Water Wink, she agreed with his assertion that "our personal redemption cannot take place apart from the redemption of our social structures."⁴⁸ A plan for how this housing would be built was not discussed.

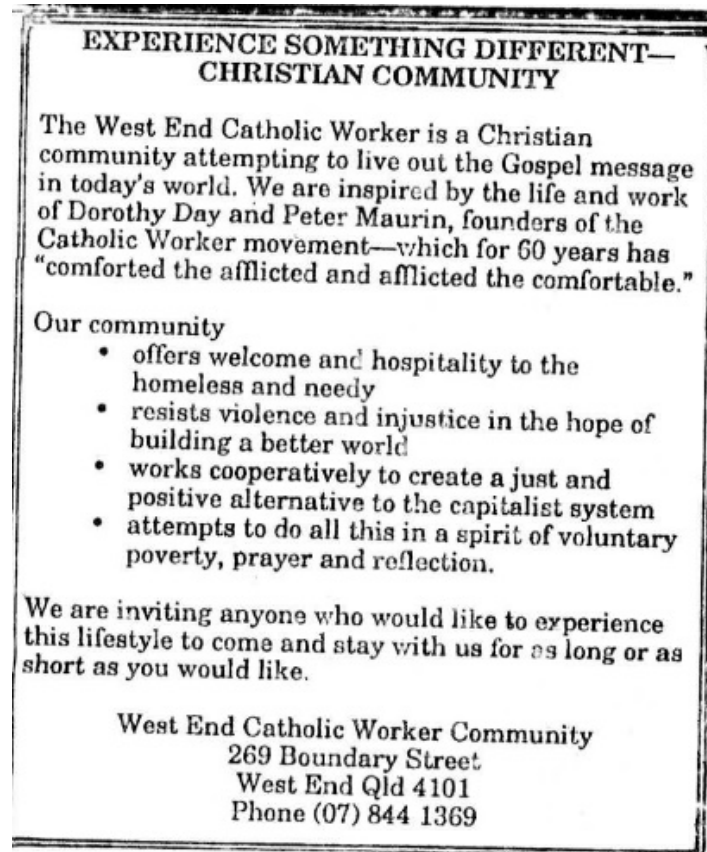
Joanne Merrigan's insightful article, "The Privilege of Solidarity," spoke strikingly to our powerlessness before the power of God. The author of several *MA* articles on illness and disability, Merrigan suffered from rheumatoid arthritis. Together with Anthony Gwyther, she undertook the first Plowshares action in Australia. Describing her dislike for the term "hospitality," Merrigan argued that like "charity," the word had been debased. "We are not called to be 'charitable' or to 'do hospitality'", she said, "we are called to live with the poor, to enter their suffering and their rejection." By doing so justice might be received by the poor, we may come to understand our need for God and "live in a manner befitting our common humanity." The poor have the support of God and are closest to God's Kingdom. As Jesus identifies himself with the poor, it is only through them that we may draw closer to Christ. Sharing our homes with the poor is therefore a great privilege.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Anne Rampa, "Have a Happy Life!," *MA* 43 (Spring 1996): 12.

⁴⁷ Anne Rampa, "West End/Brisbane," 4-5.

⁴⁸ Anne Rampa, "West End/Brisbane," 4.

⁴⁹ Joanne Merrigan, "The Privilege of Solidarity," *MA* 34 (Autumn 1992): 6.



WECW Community Advertisement, *Mutual Aid* 37 (Autumn/Winter 1993): 5.

Source: Dorothy Day – Catholic Worker Collection, Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin (USA).

The joys and strains of living communally in a CW HOH were discussed in *MA*, together with their “common purse” philosophy of community finance. From the opening of the first HOH at 238 Boundary Street by *Two or Three*, the resident members accepted no assistance from the state or wages from employers. They “gave up being wage-slaves, uni-students and dolies (sic)” to enter the experiment of Christian communal living.⁵⁰ Living on income derived from self-managed work, the community refused both to vote and to pay taxes.⁵¹ Self-employment permitted members to control the “means of production” on a collective and voluntary basis. Avoiding all interactions with government, even those financially

⁵⁰Ciaron O’Reilly, “Editorial,” *MA* 18 (Easter 1985): 2. A “dolie” (sic) refers to one who receives the dole, i.e., unemployment benefits.

⁵¹ Ciaron O’Reilly, “A Vision – A Community,” *MA* 20 (November 1985): 6.

beneficial like unemployment benefits, was a declaration that they would not co-operate with the state's domination and power.⁵²

Membership of the communities required the acceptance of voluntary poverty and the common purse. Akin to members of religious orders and following the example of the early apostles in *Acts*, all goods and money were held in common. Described as a “baseline” for membership, Dowling acknowledged it to be a “major stumbling block” for some. Capitalist society had fabricated the deception of independence and the lie that materialism and consumerism were commendable and satisfying.⁵³



Common Purse/Voluntary Poverty photo, Mutual Aid 24 (Spring 1988): 3.

Source: Dorothy Day – Catholic Worker Collection, Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin (USA).

Describing their domestic situation in 1995, Rampa provided some insight into the very cramped living conditions of the *HOH*. The three community members shared the house

⁵² Ciaron O'Reilly, "Editorial," *MA* 15 (July 1984): 2.

⁵³ Jim Dowling "Common Purse / Voluntary Poverty," *MA* 24 (Spring 1988): 3.

with Rampa and Dowling's then three children; Dowling's 78-year-old mother; and four guests. Rampa, Dowling and the three children were in one bedroom and the other community member, Paul Cooper, shared his room with at least one or two other people. Visitors were frequent and the door always open. The key to lock it had long been lost. Their sources of self-managed income, bread and soap making together with vegetable growing, made the home a hive of industry.⁵⁴

Offering hospitality to strangers had inherent risks and at times resulted in that hospitality's abuse. Sleep had been disrupted, items stolen, windows broken and lies told. Following Day's understanding that Christ is seen in the poor, Rampa once pondered "This is Jesus ??!! we ask ourselves. It doesn't feel like Jesus is supposed to, does it !??"⁵⁵ Rampa, who described her calling to live the CW life as a vocation, reflected on her unease at welcoming strangers once she had children.⁵⁶ Previously this had been unproblematic. Seven years in West End had made the guests and visitors familiar. Whilst still accepting the stranger, Rampa meditated on whether this hesitancy was a natural motherly instinct to protect her young or the sign of a faith deficiency. She struggled to welcome more passionately.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Anne Rampa, "Having Kids in the CW," *MA* 40 (January 1995): 6.

⁵⁵ Anne Rampa, "Finding Jesus in the Material World," *MA* 44 (Spring/Summer 1997): 13. As to Day, she wrote in 1964, "The mystery of the poor is this: That they are Jesus". Dorothy Day, "Mystery of the Poor", *The Catholic Worker* XXX/9 (April 1964): 2, accessed June 11, 2022, <https://thecatholicnewsarchive.org/?a=d&d=CW19640401-01.2.3&e=-----en-20--1-byDA-txt-txIN----->

⁵⁶ Anne Rampa, "Becoming an Alien ...," *MA* 29 (Winter 1990): 11.

⁵⁷ Anne Rampa, "Birthing and Children in the CW", *MA* 37 (Autumn/Winter 1993); 8.

Chapter 3

Non-Violent Resistance



Anarchy Graffiti, Cell 23, D Wing, 2 Division, Boggo Road Gaol. Photograph. 12 March 2022. Source: Vivien Fleming

While hospitality may have been the most applauded aspect of the CW vision in Brisbane, non-violent resistance was what the consecutive communities that published *MA* were most well known for.⁵⁸ Non-violent resistance is also known as civil resistance, non-violent action, people power or civil disobedience.⁵⁹ Frequently referred to in *MA* as actions, *Two or Three*, *BCW* and *WECW* engaged in hundreds of exercises against government, military and private industry activities considered unjust, oppressive or illegal. These actions included political rallies, street marches, boycotts, sit-ins, street theatre, mall speaking, fasts, vigils and blockades. This resistance was commonly against prohibitions on free speech, war preparations (the military industrial complex), war, the prison system and abortion.

MA commenced publication during the political era of the Queensland State Premier Joh Bjelke-Petersen. The National Party, in coalition with the Liberal Party, had been in government since 1957 with Bjelke-Petersen becoming Premier in 1968.⁶⁰ The 1971 South African Springbok's Rugby Union tour was a watershed in the use of the Queensland Police Force as a political tool. To avert planned protests, a two-week state of emergency had been declared. Hundreds of police were brought in from country districts and officers granted an additional week's leave. Thereafter, increasing restrictions were placed on the right of public protest in the state. Street marches were curtailed by strictly limited and enforced permits which saw hundreds arrested for peaceful protest. The period between 1977 and 1979 was the most restrictive and most resisted. Four hundred and eighteen people were arrested in a single day in October 1977, with a total of around 800 charged in the three

⁵⁸ Anne Rampa, "Hospitality," 4-5.

⁵⁹ Erica Chenoweth, "The Future of Nonviolent Resistance", *Journal of Democracy* 31/3 (July 2020):69, accessed May 14, 2022, <https://www.journalofdemocracy.org/articles/the-future-of-nonviolent-resistance-2/>

⁶⁰ Queensland Parliament, "Bjelke-Petersen, Johannes (Joh)", Queensland Parliament, accessed June 18, 2022, <https://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/Members/Former-Members/Former-Members-Register/Former-Member-Details?id=1543517032>

months until December 31.⁶¹ *Two or Three* came together as an intentional community just as the movement to permit free speech in the Queen Street Mall (hereafter *Mall*) began. Imaginatively referred to as *Permit Schmermit*, this was the first campaign that *MA* covered in successive issues.

A “Freedom of the City” protest planned for 15 September 1982 invited Brisbane residents, together with visitors and athletes of the forthcoming Brisbane Commonwealth Games, to the inauguration of a “Free Speech Mall”. A program of street speaking, busking, picketing, leafleting and postering was advertised in an act of civil disobedience in support of free expression. Warning of a “growing police state”, the action sought to use non-cooperation with the permit system as a means of non-violent direct resistance.⁶² Reporting on the protest in Issue 8, a colourful action was described in which protesters, dressed in a variety of costumes, marched through the *Mall* singing “Ten Smiling Marchers” to the tune of “Ten Green Bottles”. They had commenced the proceedings with a ribbon cutting to inaugurate the “Free Speech Mall”. This free expression, which had taken the “Committee of 50” months to organize, lasted 90 minutes. The protesters were met by the Public Safety Response Team and twenty-two were arrested.⁶³

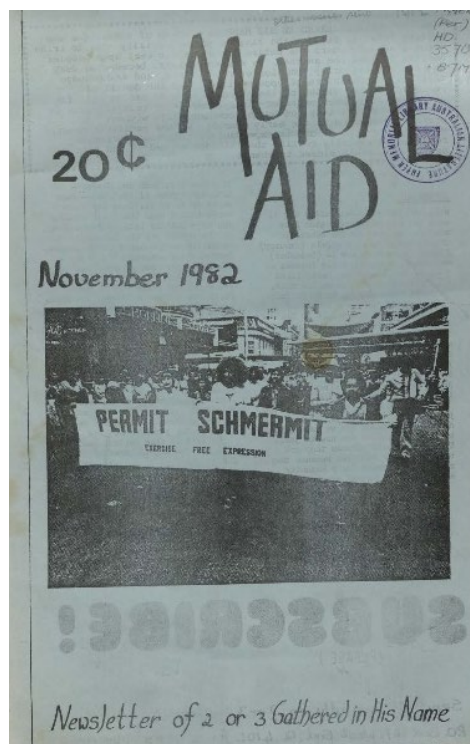
Almost all of *Two or Three*’s members, together with some friends, were arrested. An editorial spoke of their impending “big haircut on the hill” – a euphemism for imprisonment at the infamous Boggo Road Gaol (hereafter *Boggo Road*). Describing Boggo Road as “a pocket of fascism in our society”, Ciaron O’Reilly said that they did not desire gaol but rather

⁶¹ W. Ross Johnston, *The Long Blue Line: A History of the Queensland Police* (Bowen Hills: Boolarong Publications, 1992), 362-365.

⁶² Anonymous, “Why We Took Action on Sept. 15th”, *MA*, 7 (September 1982): 18.

⁶³ Ciaron O’Reilly, “Permit Schmermit,” *MA* 8 (November 1982): 3-4.

were led there by their craving for freedom's embrace.⁶⁴ Writing the day before his court case, Sean O'Reilly described the euphoria experienced from the action. For the next five days he was buzzing with excitement – not because he believed that the action would end the government or raise the political consciousness of Queenslanders, but because of the contact with fellow protesters and the bonds formed. The time spent in the Watch House after arrest cemented these bonds.⁶⁵ His brother Ciaron described the 24 hours there as the exploration of various permutations of “low-tech entertainment” – recitals of poetry, I spy, puppet shows, charades, songs sung in rounds like “Kookaburra Sits in the Old Gum Tree” and graffiti. The state's attempt to demoralize individuals by arrest was thwarted when confronted by 22 euphoric protesters.⁶⁶



Front Cover of *Mutual Aid* Issue 8 (November 1982). Source: Fryer Library, University of Queensland.

⁶⁴ Ciaron O'Reilly, "Editorial," *MA* 8 (November 1982): 2.

⁶⁵ Sean O'Reilly, "After September 15," *MA* 8 (November 1982): 5. A police watch house is a place of detention where an accused person is held pending their attendance at court, release on bail or transfer to a correctional centre.

⁶⁶ Ciaron O'Reilly, "Permit Schmermit," 4.

Sean O'Reilly indicated that he would plead guilty to the charge, notwithstanding having no feelings of guilt, and explain to the court that it was his Christian obligation to resist bad laws. Positive that his plea in mitigation would be disregarded by the magistrate, O'Reilly anticipated a fine with an attached term of imprisonment should he not pay. He had no intention of paying the fine as to do so would amount to "paying money for my own punishment."⁶⁷ All that O'Reilly predicted came to pass and he was gaoled for 13 days for his non-violent participation in the September 15 protest.⁶⁸

Arrest and subsequent imprisonment for non-violent acts of protest became the norm within the communities. Writing shortly after his fortieth birthday, Dowling stated that during his 13 years in West End there would have been few years, if any, that he had not spent time in prison or the watch house for non-violent acts of civil disobedience.⁶⁹

Ruminating on whether to pay a small fine on the charge of Disobeying a Lawful Direction to stop leafleting, original community member John Tracey stated that non-payment takes non-cooperation one step further. By accepting imprisonment, he was attempting to stand in opposition to oppressive relationships that were intolerant of dissent and human dignity. Fine payment was a "statement of complicity in the very system I have attempted to oppose." Moreover, it was an affirmation in solidarity with the poor who are unable to pay their fines and obtain freedom.⁷⁰ It was also suggested several times that being gaoled afforded members the opportunity to fulfil the *Corporal Work of Mercy* of visiting the imprisoned.⁷¹ Imprisonment, like hospitality, had a salvific value.

⁶⁷ Sean O'Reilly, "After September 15", 5.

⁶⁸ Ciaron O'Reilly, "Editorial," *MA* 8 (November 1982): 2.

⁶⁹ Jim Dowling, "Christian Witness: Grappling with Analysis, Faith & Fear," *MA* 42 (Summer 1995/1996): 5.

⁷⁰ John Tracey, "Laws; To Obey or Not to Obey, Fines; To Pay or Not to Pay," *MA* 6 (June 1982): 4-5.

⁷¹ See, for example, Ciaron O'Reilly, "Editorial," *MA* 12 (November-December 1983): 2.

MA's witness to voluntary penal servitude was at odds with a society in which imprisonment is viewed with shame. Editorials were replete with the latest news of members' seven, ten or 14-day stints in Boggo Road, or in later years, Wacol Correctional Centre.⁷² Articles bore headlines unashamedly referencing gaol terms served, for example, "Out of Jail and Back to the Mall".⁷³ A front cover featured the "Bogga Rd. Old Boys" seated on the front stairs of their home with a sign reading "WE'RE NOT REHABILITATED".⁷⁴ Prison letters from community members, or associates, were published.⁷⁵ Articles on topics unrelated to imprisonment were written from the cells of Boggo Road, Woodford Correctional Centre and Pecos, USA. Poems from non-member inmates were published and Ciaron O'Reilly's poem "Jail" appeared twice.⁷⁶



Photo from Front Cover of Mutual Aid Issue 9 (April 1983). Source: Fryer Library, University of Queensland.

⁷² See, for example, Ciaron O'Reilly, "Editorial," *MA* 8 (November 1982): 2 and Joanne Merrigan, "Editorial," *MA* 33 (Spring 1991): 2.

⁷³ Angela Jones, "Out of Jail and Back to the Mall," *MA* 9 (April 1983): 15. For reasons of personal preference this paper's author has used the traditional spelling "gaol" throughout. Although "gaol" was used occasionally, *MA* almost always used the spelling "jail." Quotes from *MA* retain the spelling as published.

⁷⁴ Cover, *MA* 9 (April 1983): 1. As seen here, Boggo Road Gaol was also occasionally referred to as Bogga Road in *MA*. In his history of Boggo Road Gaol, Jack Sim notes that "crims" from north of the Brisbane River used "Bogga" ("for reasons known only to them") and those from the southside, "Boggo". Both terms were well rooted. Jack Sim, *History of Boggo Road Gaol 1883-1999* (Sunnybank Hills, Brisbane: Jack Sim Publications, 2021), 11.

⁷⁵ See, for example, Peter Grant, "A Letter from Bogga Rd. Jail," *MA* 12 (November-December 1983): 11-12; and Moana Cole, "A Letter from a Syracuse Jail," *MA* 31 (Autumn 1991): 4-5.

⁷⁶ Ciaron O'Reilly, "Jail," *MA* 11 (September 1983):9 and *MA* 23 (Autumn 1988): 16.

From a spiritual, political and historical perspective the gaol reflections of community members are of particular importance. Given the paucity of attention paid to women's imprisonment, *MA*'s archives provide an insightful glimpse into their experiences in the women's division of the now closed Boggo Road. Meditating upon three weeks spent in Queensland's only women's prison, Rampa was mindful that this limited time was inadequate to properly perceive the experiences of long-term prisoners. Placed in maximum security because low and medium security were full, Rampa noted that what was adequate for a short term was deficient for women with long sentences. Constructed later than the men's wing, the women had flushing toilets and a shower in their cells. The men's divisions had no running water and only a can for ablutions. Medical facilities were limited and the prison officers harsh. Solitary confinement was a risk if orders were questioned. Unlike men, there was no chance of women being sent to a prison farm. Amidst this gloom Rampa could see Christ:

In the Brisbane Women's Prison is Jesus. He is there in the body form of every female prisoner just as surely (sic) as he is in the eucharist. He said "This is my body" (and) "Whatever you do to the least of thee my brothers and sister, you do to me." As so we have imprisoned Jesus, for faults of which we are corporally guilty, oftentimes (sic) for years.⁷⁷

In a later article on the advantages of breastfeeding, Rampa revealed that breastfeeding had allowed her to take her then 11-month-old daughter Marissa to prison with her. Serving a week for *Mall* speaking, Rampa stated that Marissa "quite enjoyed herself." The child spent more time with her mother than usual and had the benefit of many "aunties."⁷⁸

Community member Rachael Harrison spent time in Boggo Road three years after her first arrest. She described prison as a foreign environment and spoke of feelings of

⁷⁷ Anne Rampa, "Women Behind Bars," *MA* 24 (Spring 1988): 10-11.

⁷⁸ Anne Rampa, "Breastfeeding & Building a New Society in the Shell of the Old," *MA* 33 (Spring 1991): 14.

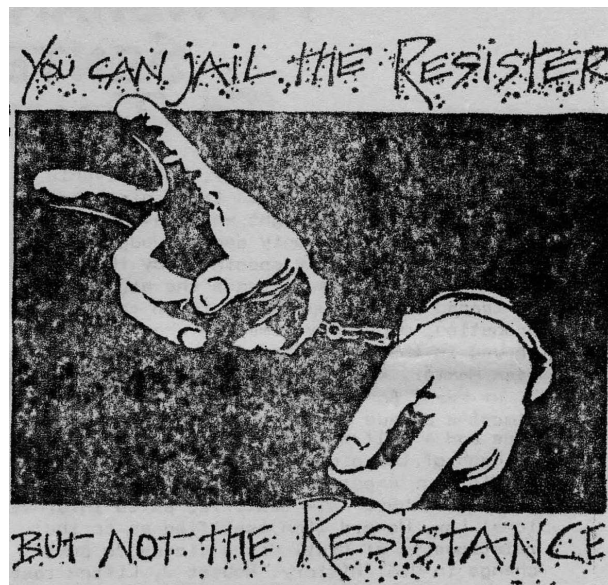
overwhelming powerlessness, frustration, and boredom. Drawing from Day's often repeated assertion that Christ is present in the poor, Harrison experienced an astounding revelation. Distressed by gaol's alienating conditions, she had searched for God's comfort. "I couldn't find him anywhere," she said, "most probably because it was a women's goal (sic)." After reflection Harrison recognized that she had indeed seen God. "I had found her and she looked like an ordinary woman who had a four-month sentence," she said. There were many of these women and Harrison was astonished that God's revelation was through such despised people. The friendship, knowledge and compassion that these women showed her was overwhelming.⁷⁹

Spiritual revelations were also to be found in the men's prison. Ciaran O'Reilly's "A Lenten Journey Through the Queensland Prison System" is a remarkable reflection. Beginning with background information on a hunger strike and rooftop occupation at Boggo Road following two incidents of prisoner shootings, O'Reilly details his journey from the City Watch House to Boggo Road. Sentenced to 10 days imprisonment in lieu of a fine for a peace witness against the U.S. *Hoel*, a nuclear armed warship, he described his time in the Watch House as a "desert experience". Locked down for 24 hours a day, with no access to exercise, heat, air or natural light, he experienced a sense of destitution. Having been advised the following morning that the Boggo Road prisoners were on hunger strike, O'Reilly reflected on the words of Mark 9:29 – "Some demons can only be cast out by prayer and fasting". Walking to his cell door he announced that he was now on hunger strike and made certain demands for prison reform. Although concerned that only his fellow inmates would be aware of his

⁷⁹ Rachael Harrison, "The Only Good Prison is an Empty One," *MA* 36 (Summer 1992/1993): 8.

action, he nonetheless considered that he was on a “path of powerlessness that Jesus had chosen.”

On the fourth day of his incarceration O'Reilly was handcuffed and driven to Boggo Road. Turning into the gaol's driveway he looked to 2 Division's roof and saw “the suffering servants of Isiah (sic) ... in a vigil that nonviolently spoke truth to well armed power”. On being transferred to 2 Division O'Reilly spoke of miracles that he believed occurred because of the solidarity of the prisoners with the inmates clinging to the Division's roof. In the exercise yard he experienced the exorcism of racism when its demons left and allowed the “skinhead (to) sit down with the black.” A deaf and mute Aboriginal's hearing was restored, and he spoke freely for the first time because fellow prisoners were willing “to learn his language.” O'Reilly likened the rooftop vigil to Christ's crucifixion – “For five days I lived under a rooftop crucifixion as the four men chose to endure rather (than) to inflict, to suffer rather than to cause suffering in the search for justice.”⁸⁰



Jail the Resister graphic, Mutual Aid 29 (Winter 1990): 15. Source: Fryer Library, University of Queensland.

⁸⁰ Ciaron O'Reilly, “A Lenten Journey Through the Queensland Prison System,” MA 23 (Autumn 1988): 14-16),

The writers of *MA*'s activism for justice and prison reform led to two police raids on their home. Members of *Two or Three* were surprised when a 6 a.m. knock on the door one Saturday morning was not the milkman seeking payment, but three members of Queensland Police's Criminal Investigation Branch with a warrant to search for illegal firearms. A week earlier the community had been visited by members of Special Branch, a division of the Queensland Police whose surveillance powers were regularly used for the political benefit of the National Party government.⁸¹ The community feared the potential for trumped-up terrorism charges because of the recent cases of Father Brian Gore in the Philippines and the Ananda Marga trio, Tim Anderson, Ross Dunn and Paul Alister, who had been falsely convicted of conspiracy to murder Robert Cameron, a leader of the neo-Nazi *National Front*. Media reports incorrectly portrayed these as convictions for Sydney's 1978 Hilton Hotel bombing.⁸²

Fears of a frame-up escalated when *BCW* became embroiled in investigations concerning a threat to release foot and mouth disease into feral Queensland livestock. The first of a series of letters post-marked in Maryborough, Queensland, was sent to Premier Joh Bjelke-Peterson in January 1984. "Economic ruin" was foreshadowed if the government did not accede to demands for prison reform within 12 weeks.⁸³ The light-hearted title chosen for

⁸¹ Ciaron O'Reilly, "When They Knock Your Milk Bottles Down", *MA* 9 (April 1983): 5; and Daniel Hurst, "Inside Queensland's Spy Unit", *Brisbane Times* (April 7, 2010), accessed June 7, 2022, <https://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/national/queensland/inside-queenslands-spy-unit-20100406-rpbg.html>

⁸² Ciaron O'Reilly, "When They Knock Your Milk Bottles Down," 5-6; and Michael Head, "Lessons for the 'war on terror'? 30 years since Sydney's Hilton Hotel bombing", *Alternative Law Journal* 33/2 (2008):97-98, accessed June 8, 2022, <https://journals-sagepub-com.ezproxy1.acu.edu.au/toc/aljb/33/2>

⁸³ Andrew Stewart, "Foot-and-mouth threat follows long argument over Queensland jails", *The Canberra Times* (January 24, 1984), accessed October 17, 2021, <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/116386148?searchTerm=Foot-and-mouth%20threat%20follows%20long%20argument>; Anonymous, "Foot-and-mouth threat: 5 more letters received", *The Canberra Times* (December 6, 1984), accessed October 17, 2021, <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/122532778?searchTerm=Foot-and-mouth%20threat%3A%205%20more%20letters%20received>; and Anonymous, "What the letter said", *The Age*

MA's report on yet another 6 a.m. Saturday raid, "Quick! Hide the Cow !!!!," belies how seriously they took the issue.⁸⁴ Comparing CW criticism of the Queensland prison system with attempts by the Ananda Marga trio to engage in some graffitiing, the article posited that the New South Wales frame-up was undertaken to increase the powers of both ASIO and other "secret police." Were the Queensland Police attempting to frame BCW to "help shore up the powers of a brutal and inhuman prison system?"⁸⁵

The non-violent resistance that so frequently landed the writers of MA in prison often encompassed elements of Catholic ritual and spirituality. This was particularly so in actions against wars or war preparation. In an extract from a brief presented to court, American Elizabeth McAlister described weapons of war as "objects of worship." The nation state acts as a "god" and creates idols that all are required to trust in and worship. This, McAlister argued, violates a Christian's freedom of worship and religion.⁸⁶ Confronting the state's "object of worship" with Catholic ritual was considered potentially efficacious. For added emphasis, these actions were frequently undertaken on Holy Days.

(January 21, 1984), accessed 17 October, 2021, <https://www.newspapers.com/clip/87245148/foot-and-mouth-disease-what-the/>

⁸⁴ Anonymous, "Quick! Hide the Cow !!!!," MA 13 (January-February 1984): 17. The report on the illegal firearms raid was similarly humorously titled "When They Knock Your Milk Bottles Down".

⁸⁵ Anonymous, "Quick! Hide the Cow !!!!," 17. Legal academic Michael Head argued that the Hilton bombing led to more than just an increase in ASIO's powers. Established in the 18 months following the blast were Australian Defence Force Special Air Service units, the Australian Federal Police and Crisis Policy Centres. State governments also established "para-military SWAT-style units." Michael Head, "Lessons for the 'war on terror'?" 97.

⁸⁶ Elizabeth McAlister, "On Obedience to God and God's Law," MA 13 (January-February 1984): 8. Former religious sister Elizabeth McAlister was married to Philip Berrigan, the American peace activist and former priest. At the time of writing, 44-year-old McAlister was standing trial for the Thanksgiving 1983 Plowshares action at the Special Air Command Base in Rome, New York (USA). Anonymous, "More Swords into Plowshares," MA 13 (January-February 1984): 6.

Members of *WECW* and *Dunameis*, a short-lived Christian community living at *WECW*'s *Justice Products* shop, engaged in an Ash Wednesday Action on 17 February 1988.⁸⁷ The communities had been undertaking a daily weekday morning vigil outside the Brisbane Defence Regional Office (hereafter *DRO*) since the visit of the U.S.S. *Hoel* warship to Brisbane in December 1987. The communities gathered at city square for a service. Reporting in *MA*, the anonymous author described the scene - "Burning police charge sheets from previous actions ... (w)e marked each other with ... ash in the traditional Catholic ritual."⁸⁸ The members then walked to the *DRO* stopping along the way at British Airways, the Commonwealth Government Building and Anzac Square. At the Commonwealth Government Building prayers of repentance were offered for victims and soldiers engaged in previous Australian military actions together with indigenous people still suffering the aftereffects of the Maralinga nuclear tests in the 1950s, and those now suffering because of uranium mining.⁸⁹

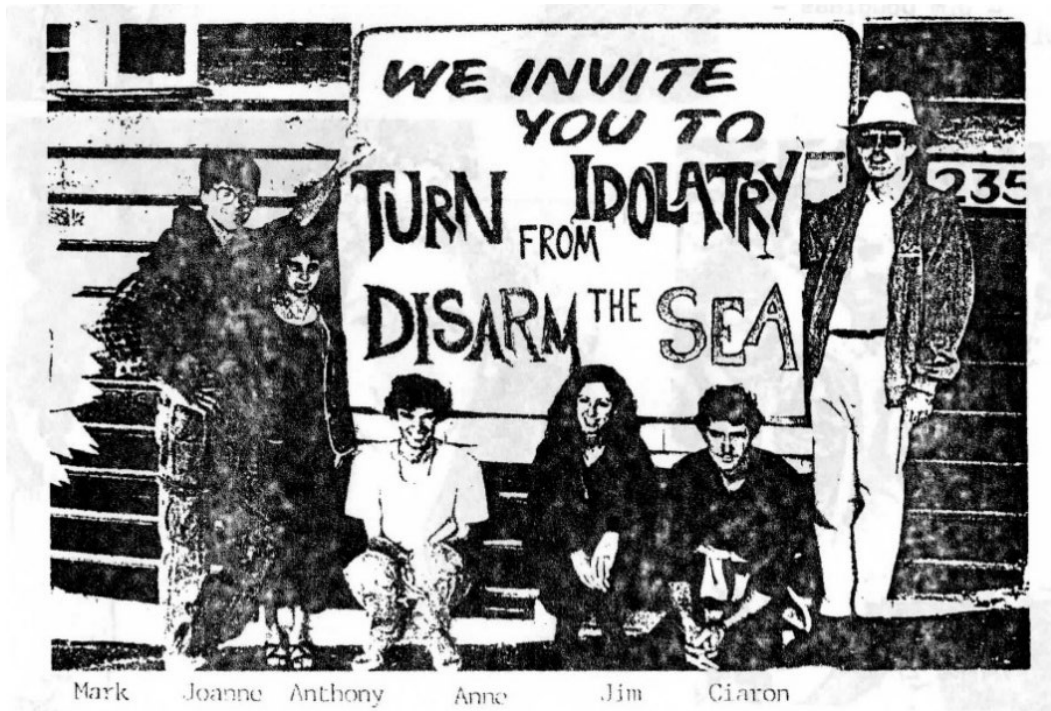
Arriving at the *DRO*, more prayers of repentance were offered on account of continued visits by United States warships and B52 bombers, some of which were nuclear armed. The building was marked with crosses from the ashes remaining and the entrance blocked by four people. Blockading the building for an hour, the group talked to employees and leafletted the office. Special Branch police arrived and upon refusing a request to move, the four blockaders were arrested and either dragged or carried across the street to awaiting police vehicles.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Anonymous, "Ash Wednesday Action", *MA* 23 (Autumn 1988): 13. *Dunameis* comprised former *BCW* members Ciaron O'Reilly and Jones, together with Jones' husband Mark White. Anne Rampa, "Editorial," *MA* 23 (Autumn 1988): 2.

⁸⁸ Anonymous, "Ash Wednesday Action," 13.

⁸⁹ Anonymous, "Ash Wednesday Action," 13.

⁹⁰ Anonymous, "Ash Wednesday Action," 13.



Turn from Idolatry, Photo, Mutual Aid 24 (Spring 1988): 17.

Source: Dorothy Day – Catholic Worker Collection, Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin (USA).

More unorthodox than WECW and Dunameis' prayers of repentance were three occasions when the MA writers and associates performed self-described "exorcisms." Although briefly discussed as a tool for political change in Issue 3, the first "exorcism" did not occur until community members boarded the U.S.S. New Jersey when it was docked at Fishermans Island, Brisbane on 17 September 1988.⁹¹ Joining a public tour of the vessel, the six members proceeded to the ship's fore-deck and gathered under a series of guns on the turret. Unrolling a banner that read "Turn from Idolatry: Disarm the Seas," they poured ash and blood on the gun turret and fore-deck and said prayers of exorcism. Restrained by US

⁹¹ Anonymous, "Exorcism", MA 3 (October-November 1981); 11. This was a report on the arrest of three American Christians following an "exorcism" of General Alexander Haig's State Department office on Holy Thursday, 1981. At that time Haig was U.S. President Ronald Reagan's Secretary of State.

Marines, they were arrested by Queensland Police and escorted from the wharf. They were later charged by summons.⁹²

This move towards more symbolic Christian ritual in resistance actions coincided with the arrival of two new *CWs*, Mark White and Anthony Gwyther. An American Theology graduate and Catholic convert, Mark White was sidetracked on the path to a PhD in the New Testament by a summer internship with the *Los Angeles CW*. There he met his future wife Jones who had travelled to United States following the dissolution of *BCW*.⁹³ White appears to have accompanied Jones back to Australia in late 1987 and resided in Brisbane for up to a year.⁹⁴ His sole article in *MA* was published in the same issue as Gwyther's inaugural one. "Casting Out Unclean Spirits" was a report on the U.S.S. New Jersey action and a theological reflection on the use of exorcism against demonized powers.⁹⁵

A former seminarian, Gwyther had been inspired by his readings of Liberation Theology during his priestly formation. Having met members of the St. Francis Christian community, an inner-Sydney household which provided hospitality to the homeless, Gwyther found his understandings of how one should live the Gospel diverging from those of his fellow seminarians. Leaving the seminary, he lived with the St. Francis community for three years. Upon learning of *WECW* Gwyther moved to Brisbane and joined the community.⁹⁶

Graduating in 1988 from the Catholic Institute of Sydney with a Bachelor of Theology,

⁹² The ashes were from previously burnt charge sheets and the blood, which had been carried in bottles, was collected at a "community eucharist". The manner of collection was not revealed. Anonymous, "Exorcism of the U.S.S. New Jersey," *MA* 24 (Spring 1988): 16.

⁹³ Angela Jones and Mark White, "Angela Jones and Mark White Interview", in *Voices from the Catholic Worker*, ed. Rosalie Riegle Troester (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), 236-237.

⁹⁴ Jim Dowling "Editorial," *MA* 22 (Christmas 1987): 2.

⁹⁵ Mark White, "Casting Out Unclean Spirits," *MA* 25 (Autumn 1981): 8-10.

⁹⁶ Wes Howard-Brook and Anthony Gwyther, *Unveiling Empire: Reading Revelation Then and Now* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1999), 270-274.

Gwyther completed his PhD at Griffith University, Brisbane.⁹⁷ His doctoral thesis formed the basis for his co-authored book with American writer Wes Howard-Brook, *Unveiling Empire: Reading Revelation Then and Now*, which was published in 1999.⁹⁸

With White and Gwyther's arrival a more nuanced approach to theology emerged in the pages of *MA*. Although devout in their Christian faith and mostly university educated, there had previously been no community members with academic qualifications in theology. Any theological views were largely gleaned through members' reading of the *CW* and books about the movement.⁹⁹ Gwyther brought an intense interest in the powers of the state and corporate interests to the community and promulgated the essential elements of what became his co-authored book, *Unveiling Empire*, through a series of articles in *MA*.¹⁰⁰ White and Gwyther also introduced the community to the American writer Ched Myers whose renowned text *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus* was frequently quoted.¹⁰¹ Similarly, the theological writings of American protestant theologians Water Brueggemann and Walter Wink arrived with Gwyther and White.¹⁰² Deeply scriptural and academic in tone, Gwyther's writings provided a theological basis for many *WECW* actions.

⁹⁷ Anonymous, "Ploughshares activist arrested", *Green Left Weekly* 26 (September 4, 1991), accessed May 18, 2022, <https://www.greenleft.org.au/content/ploughshares-activist-arrested>; Howard-Brook and Gwyther, *Unveiling Empire*, rear cover.

⁹⁸ Howard-Brook and Gwyther, *Unveiling Empire*.

⁹⁹ Angela Jones and Mark White, "Angela Jones and Mark White Interview", 236.

¹⁰⁰ See Anthony Gwyther, "A Vision of Imperial Rome: (Revelation 18:3-6a)", *MA* 44 (Spring/Summer 1997): 9-10 and Anthony Gwyther, "Global Capital as Empire: Reading Revelation Now (Part Two)", *MA* 46 (Late 1988): 3-4.

¹⁰¹ See Mark White, "Casting Out Unclean Spirits," 8-10 and Anthony Gwyther, "Review: Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus. By Ched Myers. Orbis Books, 1988", *MA* 28 (Autumn 1990): 5-7.

¹⁰² See Anthony Gwyther, "Christian and Imperial Reality A Biblical Approach", *MA* 25 (Autumn 1989): 10-12 and Mark White, "Casting Out Unclean Spirits", 8-10.

Chapter 4

Building the New Within the Old

Justice Products

192 Boundary St, West End
telephone (07) 38446 146



Justice Products aims to inspire people to consume ethically produced goods. We support local co-ops and producers, as well as providing an outlet for community projects based overseas. Our range of products reflects community-owned development. Justice Products operates as a voluntary collective.

Justice Products Advertisement, Mutual Aid 47 (Winter 2000): 9.

Source: Dorothy Day – Catholic Worker Collection, Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin (USA).

The leading phrase of *BCW*'s third priority, and the title of this chapter, entered the *CW* lexicon via co-founder Maurin. The expression, "to create a new society within the shell of the old," first appeared in Maurin's *Easy Essay Communes* in the 1 May 1934 issue of the *CW*.¹⁰³ It was repeated in almost a dozen different *Easy Essays* over the next decade, some of which were republished in the *CW* several times.¹⁰⁴

Prior to Maurin, the phrase had penetrated leftist consciousness as the last line of the Preamble of the *Industrial Workers of the World* (hereafter *IWW*).¹⁰⁵ Formed in Chicago, USA, in 1905, the *IWW* proposed "revolutionary industrial unionism" in which all workers would be members of large multi-industry trade unions. Revolutionary socialist change would be achieved not by armed or political struggle but rather, by a general strike. The capitalist system would fall away as workers gradually assumed control of the means of production in all industries.¹⁰⁶ During her time as a reporter for the daily New York socialist newspaper *The Call*, Day was a card-carrying Wobbly, the nickname given to *IWW* members.¹⁰⁷

It is unknown if Day introduced Maurin to the *IWW* or more specifically its Preamble. It is certain, however, that Maurin's understanding of "a new society within the shell of the old" differed markedly from that of the *IWW*. "Strikes don't strike me" was a phrase Maurin used

¹⁰³ Lincoln Rice (ed), *The Forgotten Radical Peter Maurin – Easy Essays from the Catholic Worker* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2020), 72.

¹⁰⁴ Lincoln Rice (ed), *The Forgotten Radical Peter Maurin*.

¹⁰⁵ Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), "Preamble to the IWW Constitution," Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), accessed May 29, 2022, <https://iww.org.uk/preamble/>

¹⁰⁶ Peter Cole, David Struthers and Kenyon Zimmer, "Introduction," in *Wobblies of the World*, ed. Peter Cole, David Struthers and Kenyon Zimmer (London: Pluto Press, 2017), 2-4.

¹⁰⁷ Jim Forest, *All is Grace: A Biography of Dorothy Day* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2011), 26-29.

frequently and stubbornly, Day recalled.¹⁰⁸ Well known was Maurin's unhappiness with Day's emphasis on unions and industrial action in the early years of the CW. He believed that the collective bargaining of unions merely transformed into capitalists the working class.¹⁰⁹ Rather than labour's industrial organization, Maurin's concern was with a "philosophy of labor." Influenced by the English philosopher and craftsperson Eric Gill, Maurin upheld the honour of manual labour and decried workers' alienation from the process of production.¹¹⁰ Although sharing a desire with the IWW and Marxists for workers' ownership of the means of production, Maurin's plan radically aimed at breaking labour's ties with industrialism. Crafts were to be reclaimed, factories decentralized, and assembly lines abolished. Quoting Gill, Maurin believed physical labour should be proclaimed and not shamed; honoured never degraded; and agreeable rather than arduous.¹¹¹ His proposal, which Maurin described as utopian, was rejected by some as medievalist, a term Maurin used at times as a self-descriptor.¹¹²

The communities that published *MA* utilized their newsletter to edify readers on its experiments in building the new within the old. No sooner had *Two or Three* formed its intentional community than the experiment with co-operative work began. With an article on the *Paddington Community Soap Co-operative* in the first issue, and an advertisement in the sixth, it is unsurprising that soap making was chosen as one of the community's first self-managed ventures.¹¹³ Described as "vegetarian" and initially sold for 40 cents a bar, "self-

¹⁰⁸ Dorothy Day, *Loaves and Fishes* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1963), 22.

¹⁰⁹ Dorothy Day with Francis J. Sicius, *Peter Maurin: Apostle to the World* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2004), 56.

¹¹⁰ Marc H. Ellis, *Peter Maurin: Prophet in the Twentieth Century* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2010), 110.

¹¹¹ Marc H. Ellis, *Peter Maurin: Prophet in the Twentieth Century*, 111.

¹¹² Dorothy Day, *Loaves and Fishes*, 23 and Marc H. Ellis, *Peter Maurin: Prophet in the Twentieth Century*, 137.

¹¹³ See Mal McKenna, "Soap", *MA* 1 (June 1981): 3 and Paddington Community Soap Co-Operative, Advertisement, *MA* 6 (June 1982): 15.

managed soap” advertisements appeared in numerous issues.¹¹⁴ A descriptor beginning “KEEP CLEAN WHILE CAPITALISM COLLAPSES” and concluding “NO DEAD ANIMALS: NO LIVE BOSSES” signaled the community’s anarchist work philosophy.¹¹⁵ Chutney, jams, and home-grown fruit and vegetables were also among *Two or Three’s* early industries.¹¹⁶ Wholemeal bread production became a staple of *CW* production. Initially made twice per week, on Tuesdays and Fridays, by 1995 80 loaves of bread were baked each Monday morning and home-delivered in the afternoon.”¹¹⁷



Self-Managed Soap Advertisement, Mutual Aid 12 (November-December 1983): 13. Source: Jim Dowling.

Writing in Issue 12, Dowling bemoaned that work had become “an expression of merely material desire”. Rather than being the gift intended, work had become debased and purely a means of obtaining the possessions that our materialist society had convinced us we needed. The 1970’s rallying cry of “Work – Consume – Be Silent – Die” was pertinent to a

¹¹⁴ Anonymous, “Bits and Pieces,” *MA* 9 (April 1983): 11.

¹¹⁵ Self-Managed Soap, Advertisement, *MA* 12 (November-December 1983): 13.

¹¹⁶ Anonymous, “Bits and Pieces,” 11.

¹¹⁷ Wholemeal Bread Advertisement, *MA* 12 (November-December 1983): 13; and Paul Cooper, “Living Life to the Full,” *MA* 41 (May 1995): 7.

societal obsession with the “mythical” joy derived from conspicuous consumption. With working lives adapted to profit rather than use, greed was now honoured and consumption our deity. Television had helped facilitate this worship. “Australians sit in awe before their living room altars,” Dowling said, “as a simple worker from Indooroopilly tries to win \$300,000 in the Tony Barber Evening Service.”¹¹⁸ In the same issue Ciaron O’Reilly described Toombul Shopping Town as a “temple of consumerism”.¹¹⁹

Echoing Peter Maurin’s disquiet with industrialization, Jenny Upton wrote of self-managed work as a panacea to the absence of fulfilment and creativity in the office and factory production line. Industrialism muted the spirit’s flowering and severed the relationship between work and its purpose as a glorification of God. Industrialization subverts education to its needs, Upton argued, and technology denies humans the right to control their own existence. Self-managed work enabled the community to work together and derive an income in a non-exploitative manner. Colgate-Palmolive, a major international soap producer, had close links with South Africa, Upton argued. Producing an ethical soap enabled the community to offer consumers with an alternative that did not support the “evil apartheid system.”¹²⁰

Income from soap making made a sizeable contribution to the communities’ income during the early *MA* years. As one community closed its successor resumed production. When production commenced in 1983, they knew of only one other vegetarian soap maker in Australia. Unconcerned with intellectual property rights, the communities freely provided their recipe to anyone who asked. By 1990, however, commercially produced vegetarian

¹¹⁸ Jim Dowling, “Work: Not Just a Job,” *MA* 12 (November – December 1983): 5. Dowling is presumably referring to the popular Nine Network programme hosted by Tony Barber, *Sale of the Century*.

¹¹⁹ Ciaron O’Reilly, “Cover Story,” *MA* 12 (November – December 1983): 4.

¹²⁰ Jenny Upton, “Self Managed Work,” *MA*, 24 (Spring 1988): 6.

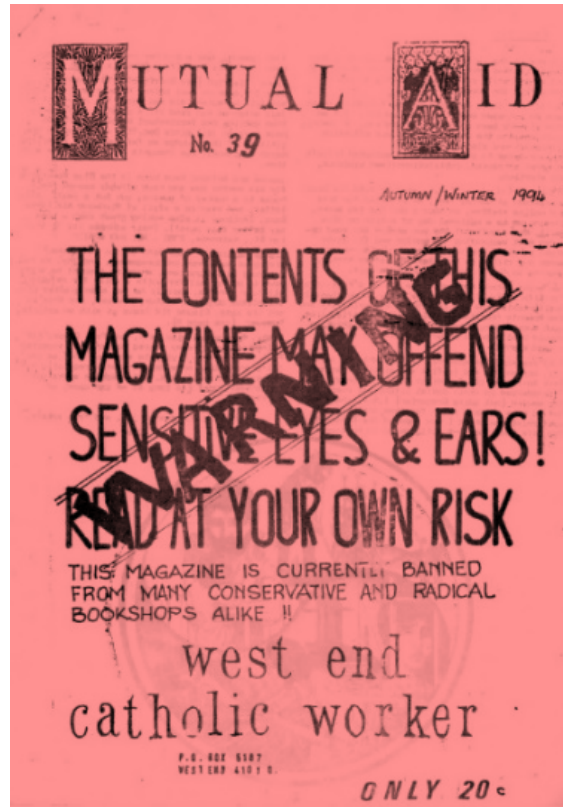
soaps entered the market and were sold by large health food shops. These diminishing returns were compounded by boycotts of *WECW's* soap in early 1996. Melbourne's *Friends of the Earth's* food co-operative, Sydney's *Alfala House* and the Brisbane's *Griffith University* co-operative all ceased purchasing soap for resale. Writing in the middle of 1997, Dowling said that it was *WECW's* pro-life activism that precipitated the boycott.¹²¹

Although the communities had a long history of feminist anti-abortion activism, by 1994 a degree of isolation between *WECW* and others on Brisbane's anarchist left was evident. With a startling cover bearing the words "THE CONTENTS OF THIS MAGZINE MAY OFFEND SENSITIVE EYES & EARS! READ AT YOUR OWN RISK," Dowling's editorial recounted a melee at the city's annual May Day rally. Rampa and another woman staffing the *Feminists for Life* table were subjected to what Dowling described as "righteous spitting, screaming, and leaflet and placard tearing." The *Women's Abortion Campaign* and the *International Socialists* disputed their right to be present during such a "sacred event."¹²² Together with numerous anti-abortion articles published in *MA*, Rampa's pro-life profile was heightened by Letters to the Editor in the independently published newspaper *Green Left Weekly*.¹²³

¹²¹ Jim Dowling, "Perfect Joy," *MA*, 44/45 (Spring/Summer 1997): 7.

¹²² Front Cover *MA* 39 (Autumn/Winter 1994): 1 and Jim Dowling, "Editorial," *MA* 39 (Autumn/Winter 1994): 2.

¹²³ As to anti-abortion articles, see Anne Rampa, "The Feminist Argument Against Abortion," *MA* 36 (Summer 1992/1993): 13-15. As to *Green Left Weekly*, see Anne Rampa, "Abortion," *Green Left Weekly* 100 (May 19, 1993), accessed June 3, 2022, <https://www.greenleft.org.au/content/write-106>



Front Cover of Mutual Aid 39 (Autumn/Winter 1994).

Source: Dorothy Day – Catholic Worker Collection, Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin (USA).

A series of blockades of abortion clinics in the mid-1990s appears to have precipitated the boycott of *WECW*'s soap. An unidentified person from Griffith University Co-operative gave this as their reason for ceasing orders. Moreover, rumours circulating in both Sydney and Melbourne alleged that Rampa had assaulted women at an abortion clinic. Dowling rebutted when he stated that a "fabricated assault charge ... was soon dismissed by the magistrate for being without substance." Rampa's letters to *Friends of the Earth* and *Alfala House* requesting a reconsideration of the boycott and explaining her version of events went unanswered.¹²⁴

¹²⁴ Jim Dowling, "Perfect Joy," 7-8.

Dowling acknowledged the irony of being boycotted when the communities themselves had long agitated boycotts against those producing and marketing unethical and exploitative products.¹²⁵ It was for this reason, and to encourage just working conditions by producers, that *BCW* had established the *Justice Products* shop in 1984.¹²⁶ Boldly announced with an eloquent front page drawing of the shop at 235 Boundary Street, West End, *Justice Products* was the most audacious of *BCW*'s self-managed employment endeavours.¹²⁷ Described as a "sign of hope", the shop aimed to showcase goods produced by those who controlled their own labour in a co-operative nonviolent manner.¹²⁸ After initially toying with the idea of establishing a tenants' union, the community opted for shop that would encourage consumers to no longer support exploitative multinational companies that ravaged the third world and spiritually killed first world workers. Goods sold included crafts and paintings from inmates of Queensland gaols; metal work and soap from local co-operatives; ethically produced tea and coffee; third world crafts; and books, magazines and political paraphernalia.¹²⁹ At various times *Justice Products* hosted folk music and poetry nights and a Monday Night Speaker Series;¹³⁰ It was the campaign venue for various non-violent actions and held Catholic masses and Christian liturgies. It became a meeting place for radical activists and an information hub.¹³¹

¹²⁵ See Jim Dowling, "The Boycott of Power and the Power of Boycott," *MA* 25 (Autumn 1989): 5-6.

¹²⁶ Jim Dowling, "Perfect Joy," 7.

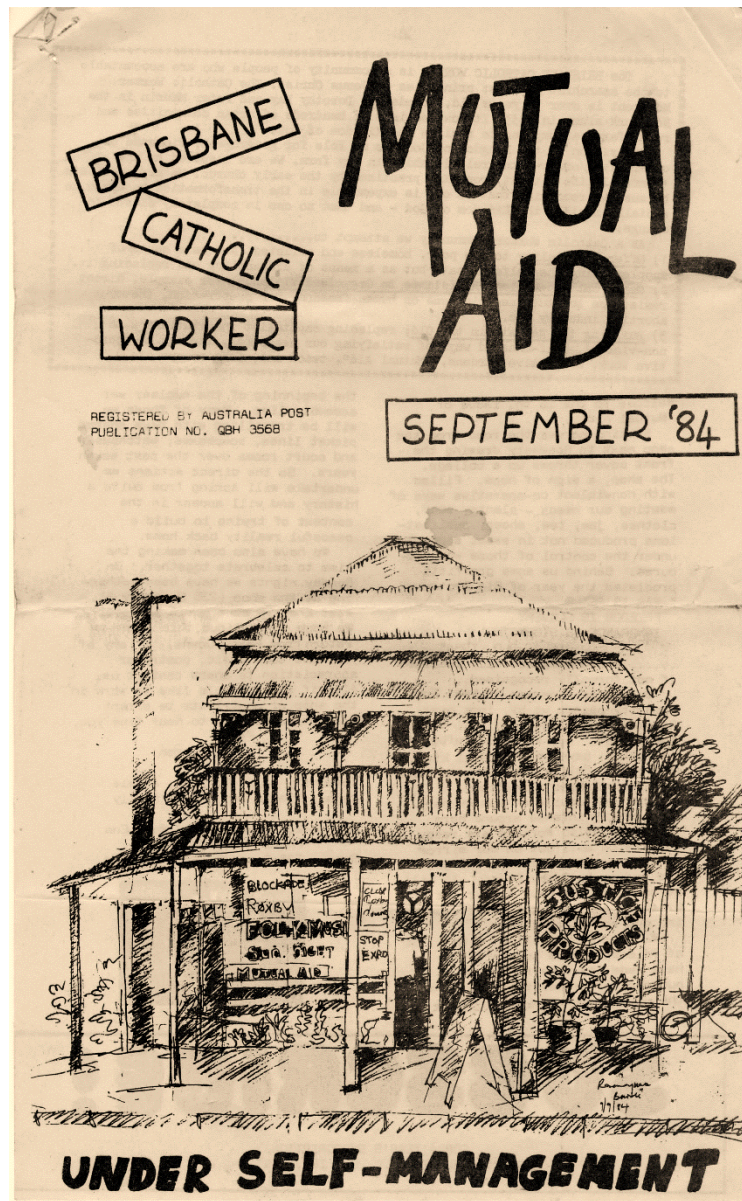
¹²⁷ Front Cover, *MA* 16 (September 1984).

¹²⁸ Ciaran O'Reilly, "Editorial," *MA* 16 (September 1984): 2.

¹²⁹ Angela Jones, "Cover Story," *MA* 16 (September 1984): 3-4.

¹³⁰ *Justice Products* advertisement, *MA* 25 (Autumn 1989): 6.

¹³¹ Anne Rampa, "Justice Products," *MA* 26 (Winter 1989): 15.



Front Cover of Mutual Aid 16 (September 1984).

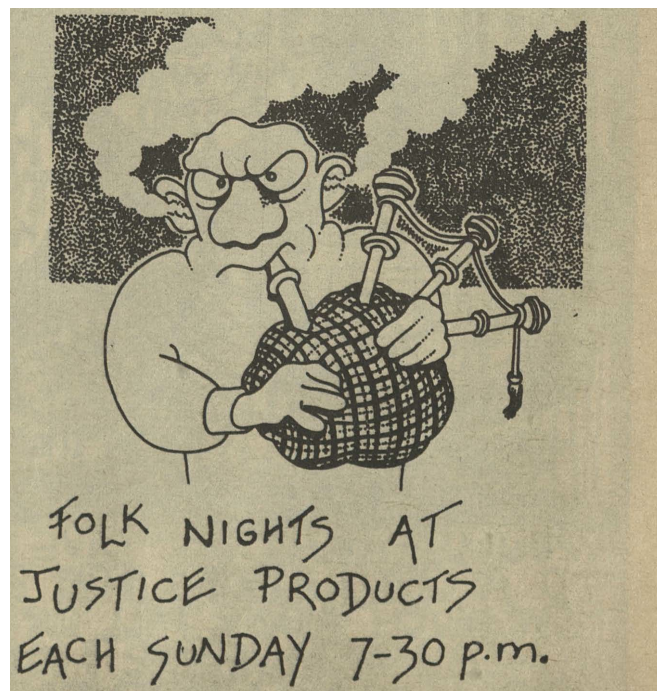
Source: Dorothy Day – Catholic Worker Collection, Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin (USA).

Justice Products' legal structure was never outlined in *MA* although management was undertaken collectively.¹³² For a time Brisbane's *CWM* did not operate the shop and it was run co-operatively by others.¹³³ Initially rent was subsidized by tenants who occupied the attached flat and contributed to the utility costs. Community members and friends provided

¹³² Rachael Harrison, "Justice Products, the Dream Continues ...," *MA* 34 (Autumn 1992): 3.

¹³³ This was presumably during the interregnum between *BCW* and *WECC*.

free labour by working four hour shifts each week, with stock orders, general maintenance and accounts undertaken by community members or the flat's tenants. Volunteers were offered a discount off stock. Without the "free gift of labour" of those who supported the shop's *raison d'être* *Justice Products* would not have survived.¹³⁴



Folk Nights at Justice Products Advertisement, Mutual Aid 19 (June 1985): 7.

Source: Dorothy Day – Catholic Worker Collection, Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin (USA).

From its beginning, *Justice Products* experienced a tumultuous relationship with its landlords and was not afraid to use *MA* to air its grievances. Readers were introduced Mr. and Mrs. Simonidis, the owners of 235 Boundary Street and four adjoining commercial premises, in the newsletter's first article on *BCW*'s new venture. Lease and bond negotiations were discussed in minutiae together with the eviction after only one weekend's trading of *Kropotkin's' Café*, an anarchist coffee house sharing the premises with

¹³⁴ Anne Rampa, "Justice Products," 15.

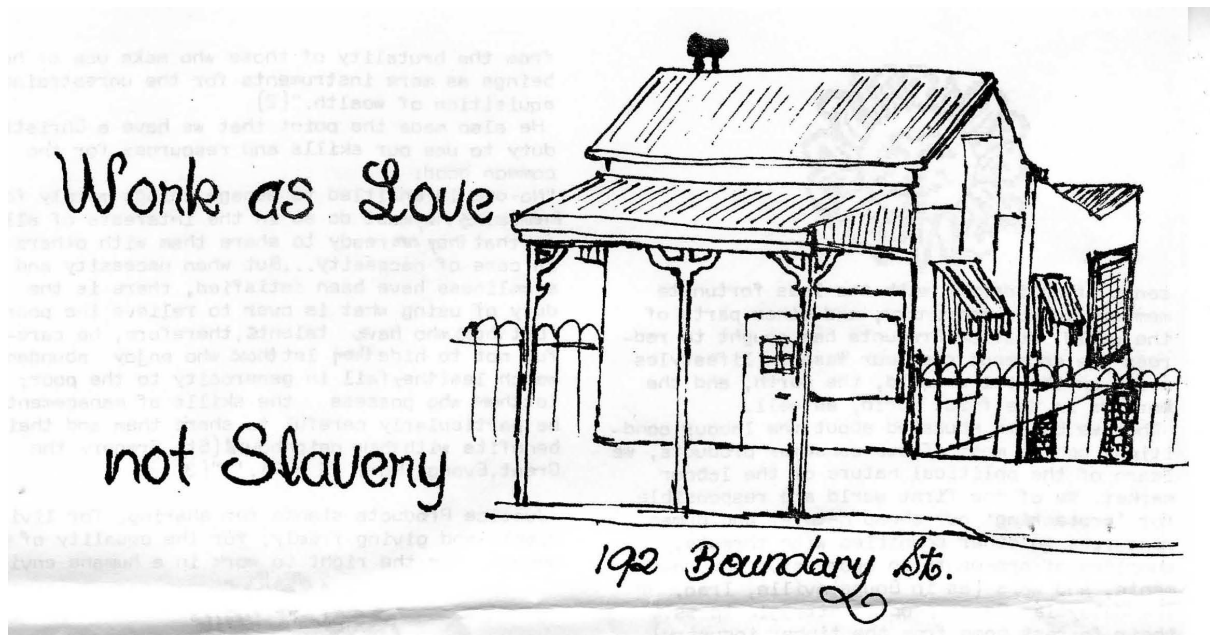
Justice Products. Further eviction threats ensued until a mutually agreeable lease and bond were signed.¹³⁵

After more than seven years of tenancy, relations between the Simonidis' and the *Justice Products* collective irretrievably broke down. Since its beginning, lease negotiations had been undertaken on *Justice Products*' behalf by Drew Hutton, a friend of the community most well known today as the former president of *Lock the Gate*, an anti-mining organisation.¹³⁶ Played out before both *MA*'s readers and residents of West End, failed negotiations on a rent increase led to the shop vacating the premises on 29 February 1992. The collective agreed that some of the flat's tenants could remain squatting in the premises. Five summonses were soon issued, four of which were served upon people who did not reside on the premises. Watched by a crowd of supporting West Enders, men with bolt cutters arrived a few days later in a vain attempt to remove the locks.¹³⁷ In what Dowling described as "true New York style ... resistance," the remaining tenants were finally evicted from 235 Boundary Street in April. Traffic was slowed for several hours as "all the furniture was strewn across the road."

¹³⁵ Angela Jones, "Cover Story," 3-4.

¹³⁶ Rachael Harrison, "Justice Products, the Dream Continues ...," 3.

¹³⁷ Rachael Harrison, "Justice Products, the Dream Continues ...," 3.



Work as Love not Slavery, Graphic, MA 35 (Winter 1992): 9.

Source: Dorothy Day – Catholic Worker Collection, Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin (USA).

Justice Products reopened in August 1992 in premises at 192 Boundary Street. Finding a new property was initially difficult as rents had increased markedly, and both a shop and adjoining residence was required to meet the rent. A solution was brokered through an imaginative use of crowd funding that freed *Justice Products* from the landlords' shackles. The property, next to the newly established West End Food Co-op, was purchased by way of a \$30,000 Archdiocesan Development Fund loan together with donations and interest-free loans. Every three months a name would be drawn, and a lender repaid \$1,000.00 of their loan. By mid-1992 *Justice Products* had raised \$62,000 in donations and interest-free loans.¹³⁸

Justice Products outlived both *BCW* and its successor *WECW*. Continuing to trade out of 192 Boundary Street, the *Justice Products* name remained until late 2011 when it was changed

¹³⁸ Anne Rampa, "Work as Love not Slavery," *MA 35* (Winter 1992): 9.

to *Just Earth*.¹³⁹ By 2014 *Just Earth* had moved around the corner to Vulture Street, West End and morphed into a coffee roastery and café.¹⁴⁰ It remained a “social enterprise” until its final closure in mid-2019.¹⁴¹



Justice Products Shop, Photograph, January 2011. Source: Just Earth Facebook page.

¹³⁹ Whether any members of the original CW communities or their friends retained an interest in *Justice Products* is unknown. Free web-based property databases provide no details on when 192 Boundary Street last changed hands. Anonymous, “Just Earth”, *Justice Products* Facebook page, 15 November 2011, accessed June 3, 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/Justice-Products-111045235581132/photos/302577749761212>

¹⁴⁰ Anonymous, “About Us”, *Just Earth*, accessed June 3, 2022, <https://justearth.org.au/cafe-hub/about-us> and Anonymous, “News Flash”, Spiral Community Hub, accessed June 3, 2022,

<http://www.spiral.org.au/?fbclid=IwAR2LISlx7miK6jV6s7MBcQVT7yCJBKNSxBbqvRI0ELk3QDE9vjfnsHI-Xoc>
¹⁴¹ Anonymous, “About Us”, *Just Earth* and Amelia, “Just Earth Café is closed – For Now”, *Just Earth* Facebook page, 14 June 2019, accessed June 3, 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/notes/485253512432300/>

Conclusion



2 Division, Boggo Road Gaol. Photograph. 12 March 2022. Source: Vivien Fleming.

In an era where Christianity is so frequently viewed as both conservative and regressive, progressive voices are absent. *MA* offered a revolutionary alternative and a radical reappraisal of what it means to be Christian. *Two or Three*, *BCW* and *WECW* rejected the presumption that the state protected society and instead advocated for the oppressed. The maligned were assisted and societal conceptions reversed. Rebutting the late century mantra of “Greed is Good,” the *CW*’s of Brisbane advocated voluntary poverty. Rather than being violent criminals, the rioting prisoners clinging to the roof of Boggo Road were metaphors for Christ’s crucifixion. Far from being protectors of the people, the state and its organs, the police and courts, were oppressors. Corporations killed both the bodies and souls of its workers and consumers. Self-managed employment in which workers collectively controlled the means of production was championed. The remedy to society’s ills was to be found in a profound discipleship in which individuals accepted responsibility for not just their own, but all others’ sins. It was not the responsibility of the state to feed and house the marginalised, but people personally. Restrictions to free speech, war mongering and abortion were to be confronted directly by everyone.

MA successfully communicated the three pillars of its publishing communities’ aims in an earnest but engaging manner. Hospitality, non-violent resistance and self-management permeated the newsletter’s pages in a forthright and unashamedly Christian style. *MA*’s commingling of anarchism and Christianity had as its precedent the newspaper which inspired its writers, the Day and Maurin co-founded New York *CW*. Although not established as a *CW* organ, its influence was soon evident and within two years its writers had committed to the *CWM*’s aims and purposes.

This research project is not a history of the Brisbane *CWM* although a comprehensive study is warranted. With its scope limited merely to the *MA* text, this project reveals only snippets from the first twenty of Brisbane *CWM*'s thirty-nine-year past. Information divulged in *MA* had been curated by members of the communities. Although alternative positions were at times published, *MA*'s audience were mostly presented with only the communities' perspectives. The voices of those who interacted with the *CWM* were absent and these are essential to understanding the movement's entire history. Oral history interviews with former members, most of whom are now in their sixties, are needed to present the movement's chronicle more exhaustively. It is this project's intention to provide a firm foundation for future research and writing on the Brisbane *CWM*'s history and its role in the movement's 89-year international history.

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- Page 1. Front Cover of *Mutual Aid* Issue 37 (Autumn/Winter 1993).
- Page 5. Front Cover of *Mutual Aid* Issue 5 (March 1982).
- Page 7. Front Cover of *Mutual Aid* Issue 1 (June 1981).
- Page 9. Front Cover of *Mutual Aid* Issue 3 (October-November 1981).
- Page 11. Former members of *Brisbane Catholic Worker*, (October 2021). Photograph. *Ciaron O'Reilly Twitter Page*. Accessed June 13, 2022. <https://twitter.com/CiaronOReilly/status/1449311898441158666>.
- Page 12. Tabloid Style Page 1 of *Mutual Aid* Issue 18 (Easter 1985).
- Page 14. Jim Dowling and Anne Rampa, together with three of their seven children and a hospitality guest, at *Peter Maurin Farm*, Dayboro, March 2015. Photograph. *Catholic Leader* (March 13, 2015). Accessed June 13, 2022. <https://catholicleader.com.au/life/family/lenten-austerity-grows/>.
- Page 15. Members of the current *Brisbane Catholic Worker* at *Dorothy Day House*, Greenslopes, January 2016. Photograph. *Catholic Leader* (January 21, 2016). Accessed June 13, 2022. <https://catholicleader.com.au/news/share-house-from-heaven/>.
- Page 16. Ciaron O'Reilly at the Brisbane May Day Rally, May 2022. Photograph. *Ciaron O'Reilly Twitter Page* (May 2, 2022). Accessed June 13, 2022. <https://twitter.com/CiaronOReilly/status/1520906453133164544>.
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- Page 21. Drawing of 269 Boundary Street, *Mutual Aid* Issue 33 (Spring 1991): 2.
- Page 23. WECW Community Advertisement, *Mutual Aid* 37 (Autumn/Winter 1993): 5
- Page 24. Common Purse/Voluntary Poverty, *Mutual Aid* 24 (Spring 1988): 3.
- Page 26. Anarchy Graffito, Cell 23, D Wing, 2 Division, Boggo Road Gaol. Photograph (12 March 2022). ©Vivien Fleming.
- Page 29. Front Cover of *Mutual Aid* Issue 8 (November 1982).
- Page 31. "We're Not Rehabilitated" from Front Cover of *Mutual Aid* Issue 9 (April 1983).
- Page 34. Jail the Resister Graphic, *Mutual Aid* 29 (Winter 1990): 15.
- Page 38. Turn from Idolatry, *Mutual Aid* 24 (Spring 1988): 17.
- Page 41. *Justice Products* Advertisement, *Mutual Aid* 47 (Winter 2000): 9.

- Page 44. Self-Managed Soap Advertisement, *Mutual Aid* 12 (November-December 1983): 13.
- Page 46. Front Cover of *Mutual Aid* 39 (Autumn/Winter 1994).
- Page 48. Front Cover of *Mutual Aid* 16 (September 1984).
- Page 49. Folk Nights at *Justice Products* Advertisement, *Mutual Aid* 19 (June 1985): 7.
- Page 51. Work as Love not Slavery, *Mutual Aid* 35 (Winter 1992): 9.
- Page 52. *Justice Products* Shop (21 January 2011). Photograph. *Justice Products Facebook Page*. Accessed June 13, 2022. <https://www.facebook.com/Justice-Products-111045235581132/photos/187082584644063>.
- Page 53. 2 Division, Boggo Road Gaol. Photograph. (12 March 2022). ©Vivien Fleming.

Please Note:

The front covers of *MA* Issues 37, 18, 14, 39 and 16 appearing on pages 1, 12, 17, 46 and 48 are colourised versions of monochrome scans. *MA* was published with solid coloured front and back covers. The exceptions were Issues 5 and 6 which appear to have been printed on a spirit duplicator. Covers were white and all text and graphics in Issue 5 were in blue and in Issue 6 brown.

For all issues the internal pages were white and, apart from Issues 5 and 6, the printing was black. All pages were printed double sided. The colours chosen for colourised front covers do not represent the colours as published. All other front covers appearing within are true reproductions from coloured scans. Graphics and photographs other than front covers have not be colourised. Those with a newsprint type hue are reproduced from colour scans and those in monochrome from monochrome scans.

Appendix

Mutual Aid Issues List

#	Date	Publisher	# On Cover	Front Cover Description
1	Jun-81	Ciaron O'Reilly individual project	No	Community Garden Drawing
2	Aug/Sept 81	Ciaron O'Reilly individual project	No	Community Garden Drawing
3	Oct/Nov 81	Two or Three Gathered in His Name	No	Christ of the Soup Kitchen - Eichenberg
4	Christmas/NY 81/82	Two or Three Gathered in His Name	No	Santa on Bum Rap
5	Mar-82	Two or Three Gathered in His Name	No	Was Eve Framed?
6	Jun-82	Two or Three Gathered in His Name	No	In Repression There is No East or West
7	Sep-82	Two or Three Gathered in His Name	No	Vote for Nobody
8	Nov-82	Two or Three Gathered in His Name	No	Permit Schmermit
9	Apr-83	Two or Three Gathered in His Name	No	We're Not Rehabilitated
10	June/July 1983	Brisbane Catholic Worker	No	The Revolution Will Not Be Televised
11	Sep-83	Brisbane Catholic Worker	No	USS Texas
12	Nov-Dec 1983	Brisbane Catholic Worker	No	Brick Wall with Peace/Women's Symbol
13	Jan-Feb 1984	Brisbane Catholic Worker	No	Turn Off Your Telescreens
14	May-84	Brisbane Catholic Worker	No	What is needed in our Time?
15	Jul-84	Brisbane Catholic Worker	No	Rich People Against Expo
16	Sep-84	Brisbane Catholic Worker	No	Justice Products - Under Self-Management
17	Dec-84	Brisbane Catholic Worker	No	No Damn Uranium - Mother & Child
18	Easter 1985	Brisbane Catholic Worker	No	Tabloid - Game Over Nuclear
19	Jun-85	Brisbane Catholic Worker	No	Tabloid - Easter at Watsonia
20	Nov-85	Brisbane Catholic Worker	No	Tabloid - Watsonia II The Court Case
21	Winter 1986	Brisbane Catholic Worker	No	Tabloid - Watsonia Goes to Trial
22	Christmas 1987	West End Catholic Worker	No	Black Madonna & Child
23	Autumn 1988	West End Catholic Worker	No	Boycott World Expo 88
24	Spring 1988	West End Catholic Worker	No	Dorothy Day
25	Autumn 1989	West End Catholic Worker	No	Australian Non-Buyers Guide
26	Winter 1989	West End Catholic Worker	No	Swords into Plowshares
27	Spring 1989	West End Catholic Worker	Yes	Gandhi Weaving
28	Autumn 1990	West End Catholic Worker	Yes	Bougainville
29	Winter 1990	West End Catholic Worker	Yes	Dorothee Soelle Poem; Plowshares graphic
30	Spring 1990	West End Catholic Worker	Yes	St Francis - Peace Without Victory
31	Autumn 1991	West End Catholic Worker	Yes	ANZUS Plowshares
32	Winter 1991	West End Catholic Worker	Yes	Christ crucified on a mining rig
33	Spring 1991	West End Catholic Worker	Yes	Bomber; Man with Plowshares hammer
34	Autumn 1992	West End Catholic Worker	Yes	Justice Products - Before
35	Winter 1992	West End Catholic Worker	Yes	Justice Products Re-Opens
36	Summer 1992/93	West End Catholic Worker	Yes	Woodcut Graphics - Mother, Child, Star
37	Autumn/Winter 1993	West End Catholic Worker	Yes	Dorothy Day & Peter Maurin

38 Spring 1993	West End Catholic Worker	Yes	Dorothy Day Spinning
39 Autumn/Winter 1994	West End Catholic Worker	Yes	The Contents of This Magazine May Offend
40	Jan-95 West End Catholic Worker	Yes	Grandmother & Child Eating Ice Creams
41	May-95 West End Catholic Worker	Yes	The New Local Order
42 Summer 1995/96	West End Catholic Worker	Yes	Mother & Child; Oscar Romero Quote
43 Spring 1996	West End Catholic Worker	Yes	British Ploughshares Women Acquitted
44/45 Spring/Summer 1997	West End Catholic Worker	Yes	Dorothy Day - Love Harsh & Dreadful
46 Late 1998	West End Catholic Worker	No	Tabloid - Jabiluka Plowshares
47 Winter 2000	West End Catholic Worker	Yes	Tabloid - "Freedom" Jason McLeod poem
48	2002 West End Catholic Worker	Yes	Choose Life

Total Word Count Declaration

I declare that the total word count for this research paper is 12,207. This includes the Introduction, Conclusion, Four Chapters and all Footnotes. This total excludes the Bibliography, Photograph and Graphic Credits, Appendix, Acknowledgements and Abbreviations.