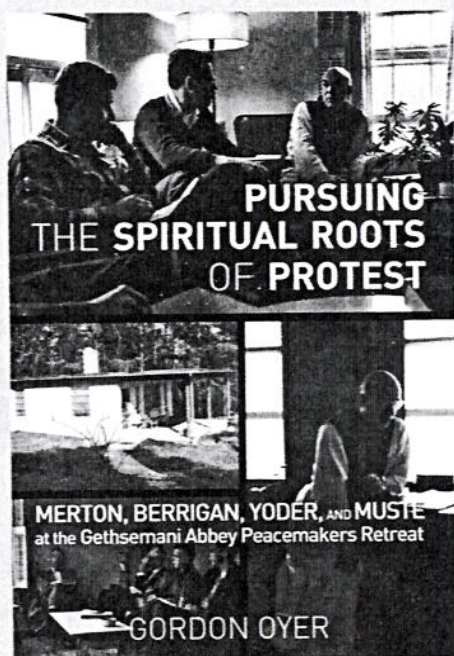


approached through the personal lens, this book spans continents and generations with stories from the construction of the Panama Canal to the site of former slave holding on the West African coast to post-war exodus in Vietnam. When presented together, these pieces tell us something new about the society we live in and challenge us to reconsider what we think we already know.

The challenge with any anthology is that not every piece will live up to the best in the bunch, and *Dismantle* is not without its weak moments. However, the bulk of the work is stunning. If the question is whether the voices in this collection are worth listening to, the answer is a resounding yes.

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**Pursuing the Spiritual Roots of Protest: Merton, Berrigan, Yoder, and Muste at the Gethsemani Abbey Peacemakers Retreat**

By Gordon Oyer

Cascade Books, 2014, 298 pages (paper), \$33.00

Reviewed by Mark Meade

Gordon Oyer's new book about a 1964 retreat Thomas Merton hosted with a small group of key peacemakers shows how Merton wove together both the rootedness of tradition and a radical call to action.

Merton called the retreat "The Spiritual Roots of Protest." The origin of the word "radical" comes from the Latin for root. The protest movements of the 1960s may have been in many ways a break with the past, at least a break with recent history, but part of Merton's wisdom was bridging the urgent energy of early Christian and early monastic roots with an emerging future in peacemaking. *Pursuing the Spiritual Roots of Protest* will appeal not only to readers of Thomas Merton and those interested in the history of peace movements from a half-century ago, but to today's practitioners of nonviolent activism.

One fascinating element of Oyer's book concerns the politics of peacemaking. A meeting of a number of busy leading peacemakers at a remote monastery in Kentucky does not happen without some careful coordination. In the person of John Heidbrink, a Fellowship of Reconciliation staff member, FOR's role in facilitating dialogue across faith barriers is made evident.

At the same time, by today's standards, the challenges of diversity are clear to the modern reader. No women were present. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Bayard Rustin were invited but were unable to attend because of King's acceptance of the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo. In the end, it was a group of white Christian men. However, until this time, Catholic and Protestant peace activities had very little coordination. In a sense, FOR's then-Protestant leadership had attempted to see that Roman Catholics "got on board" with their program, but the authentic dialogue fostered by the retreat broke through prejudices held by Catholics toward Protestants and vice versa.

It is interesting to read how Merton subverts the retreat's agenda in order to challenge the participants to think about the "why" and the "by what right" of protest. Merton – not as organizer, but as host – was able to make it a true dialogue,

not just a program.

Readers will also be struck how Merton connected the peace conversation to diverse sources of inspiration, such as the model of Muslim-Christian solidarity of Louis Massignon and a forward-thinking conversation centered on technology (with help from his friend at the retreat W.H. Ferry). Merton's notes reflect the profound respect he discovered for A. J. Muste in hearing his words of wisdom from decades of thought and activism. Merton and others were also clearly impressed by John Howard Yoder, then a rising star among pacifist intellectuals.

Oyer completes the book by bringing the conversation into the present. A younger group of nonviolent activists and thinkers address the legacy of the retreat. Theologian and activist Ched Myers, one of those contemporary peacemakers, writes: "One of the biggest aspects of that gathering, in my opinion, is how Yoderian Anabaptism, Catholic radicalism and Protestant political theology began to converge really for the first time. In many ways that synergism has been the greatest development for faith based activism since '64. Now all of us are in some sense 'children' of the conversation that began at Gethsemani..."

As the peace movement continues to grow and incorporate the fresh ideas and struggle with the challenges brought by new partners in protest, *Pursuing the Spiritual Roots of Protest* will be a valuable resource to discover how we came to be and who we are becoming. It charts both successes and failures of trying to increasingly become inclusive and embrace diversity in peacemaking organizations.

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**Here on the Edge: How a Small Group of World War II Conscientious Objectors Took Art and Peace from the Margins to the Mainstream**

By Steve McQuiddy

Oregon State University Press, 2013, 336 pages (paper), \$24.95