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## Review of "The Scandal of White Complicity in US Hyper-Incarceration: a Nonviolent Spirituality of White Resistance"

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repressed religious imagination broke into the light at the Second Vatican Council, but we simply couldn't tolerate its freedom and vitality" (208).

*Notes from the Underground* builds on and yet surpasses its author's award-winning books: *The Spirituality of the Diocesan Priest* (1997); *The Changing Face of the Priesthood* (2000); *Sacred Silence: Denial and the Crisis in the Church* (2002); *Faith That Dares to Speak* (2004); and *Freeing Celibacy* (2006). Moreover, it stands with other benchmark journals concerning Vatican II and its reception, testimonies such as Yves Congar's *My Journal of the Council* (2012); Thomas Merton's *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander* (1966); Joan D. Chittester's *Women, Ministry, and the Church* (1983); and Jean Sullivan's *Morning Light: The Spiritual Journal of Jean Sulivan* (1988).

Given its five themes, this "Spiritual Journal of a Secular Priest" is a prophetic testimony to how far the Catholic Church has yet to travel if it is to realize its full reception of Vatican II. As this book witnesses to vibrant Christian discipleship, it simultaneously points to the dark side of the pontificates of John Paul II and Benedict XVI: the effort by some ecclesiastical officials to micromanage the faith and the beliefs of God's people. Although the book was completed well before the papal election of Jorge Bergoglio, S.J., on March 13, 2013, it conveys an ecclesiology, anchored in Vatican II, with strong similarities to Pope Francis's vision of the Church's nature and mission. C.'s book is a timely summons to a new phase in our reception of the council and its teachings.

*University of Notre Dame*

ROBERT A. KRIEG

THE SCANDAL OF WHITE COMPLICITY IN US HYPER-INCARCERATION: A NONVIOLENT SPIRITUALITY OF WHITE RESISTANCE. By Alex Mikulich, Laurie Cassidy, and Margaret Pfeil. Content and Context in Theological Ethics. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013. Pp. xvi + 203. \$85.

This book should be read, studied, and even prayed over by every white US theologian. Its somewhat misleading title and outrageous price, however, practically guarantee that it will not get the audience and attention it demands and deserves.

The title suggests a scope far narrower than the breadth of issues actually discussed here, since "Hyper-incarceration [the imprisonment of African American and Latino men in numbers far exceeding their percentage of the general population] is not simply one issue among others. [It] is the latest reincarnation of the relationship between white domination and subordination of people of color in the United States" (32). Thus, hyper-incarceration serves as the focal point for this detailed, interdisciplinary analysis of the ways our society generates and maintains white supremacy.

It is our most enduring and dominant, yet most invisible, social sin: "America's original sin," as James Cone calls it.

The three authors are white Catholic theologians who address their white colleagues. (Full disclosure: Mikulich and Cassidy received their doctorates from my institution, but were never my students.) Each is the primary author of two chapters, yet their shared antiracist commitments and their close collaboration make for a well-developed argument and a genuinely integrated whole.

The introduction, mainly by C. and M., maps the book and explains the necessity of the category of "complicity," if Catholic moral theology is to deal adequately with white supremacy. The traditional category of "cooperation" overlooks racism as a social system that affects every aspect of life. However well-intentioned white people may be, they still enjoy advantages based solely on the perceived color of their skin. The result is an inescapable "entanglement with oppression" (9) that demands ethical reflection and appropriate action.

M.'s two chapters focus on "Structure." The first shows how whites dominated and controlled blacks during slavery. After 1865, lynching kept blacks "in their place," that is, the bottom. Imprisoning people of color in disproportionate numbers is only the latest means of social control. His second chapter outlines the ways and means of white dominance today. Legalized methods of segregation maintain whites' nearly exclusive access to quality education and employment networks, while blacks become poor and are kept poor by systems against which they have no recourse. Isolated from significant encounters with people of color, whites take whiteness and its ways as normative. Thus their dangerous illusions of superiority and entitlement go unchallenged.

C.'s two chapters on "Culture" delve into the intrapsychic workings of white supremacy, since racism is also a "symbol system of meanings and values attached to skin color" (91, quoting Bryan Massingale). She dissects the image of the "dangerous black male" from its origins in slavery and Nat Turner's revolt down to the present, where it is needed to justify imprisoning so many black men. To learn this history is to awaken to our responsibility to confront and dismantle the subconscious images that shape our actions and reactions. Her next chapter details "the cultural production of evil" (Emilie Townes). Early rap music and the culture of hip-hop were genuinely prophetic and empowering. Black artists named the pain and called out the culprits. Too soon, though, the music was co-opted and twisted to recompose the dangerous black male criminal image in new keys.

From these accounts of our social sin emerges the question of the last two chapters on "Spirituality" by Pfeil: what can and should we do? To understand hyper-incarceration as neoslavery and "the New Jim Crow" (as Michelle Alexander names it) means that theologians cannot continue

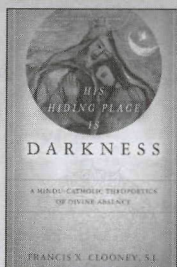
business as usual. Aided by King, Merton, and Day, P. meditates on the Beatitudes to sketch a spirituality for our time. This is the inner work that provides the solid basis for the outer work discussed in the next chapter, since the Beatitudes, as P. reads them, shape a life opposed to white ways of being. Such a life, she warns, may entail embracing poverty and accepting imprisonment. Yet the details of a nonviolent oppositional strategy are still to be discovered. As she rightfully insists, antiracist whites must become allies with and learn from the victims of white supremacy. Even now, though, white complicity can and must be made “visible” by the kind of analyses provided here. Whites must learn the painful lessons of how their undeserved power and privileges were conferred on them—and lament their inability to escape them.

The extensive notes offer many excellent resources for the further necessary theological work. Yet much of the book’s transformative potential will go unrealized until the publisher gives us a more reasonably priced edition.

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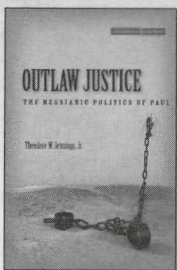
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