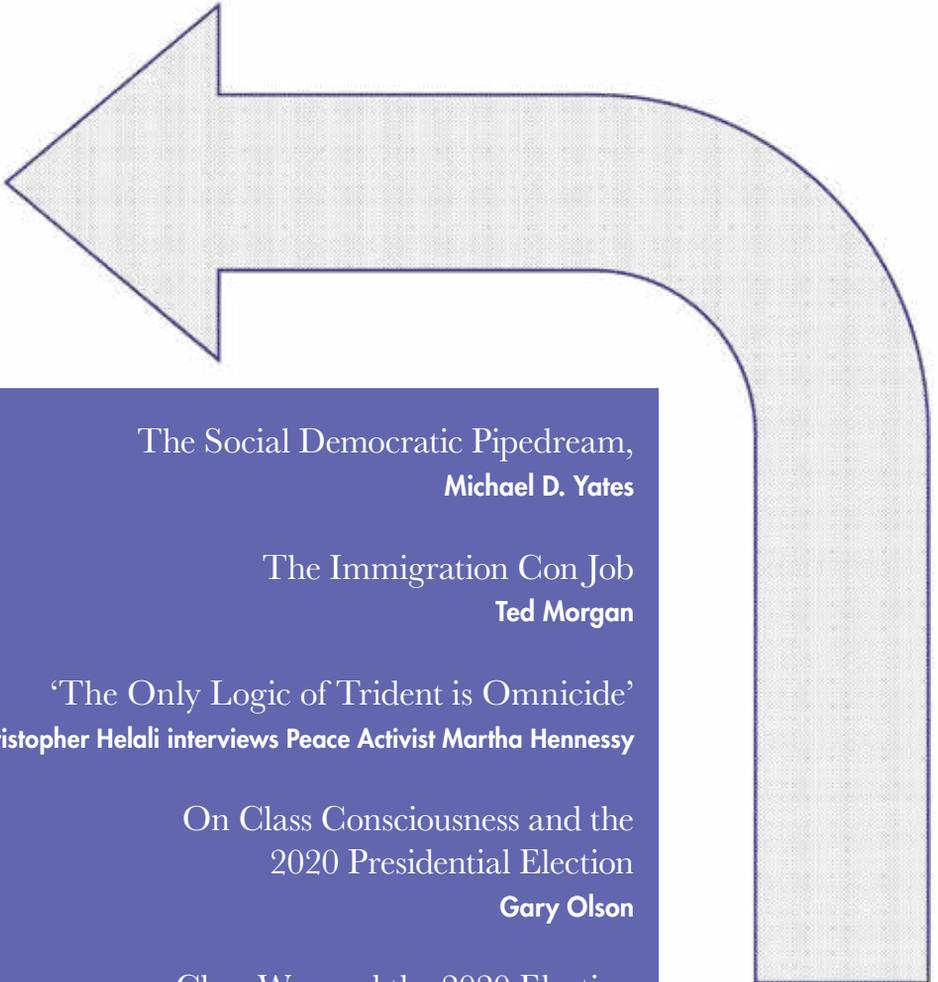


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# Left Turn



The Social Democratic Pipedream,  
**Michael D. Yates**

The Immigration Con Job  
**Ted Morgan**

‘The Only Logic of Trident is Omnicide’  
**Christopher Helali interviews Peace Activist Martha Hennessy**

On Class Consciousness and the  
2020 Presidential Election  
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Class War and the 2020 Election  
**Alex Fischer**

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## Notes from the Editor

President Trump’s targeted assassination-by-drone of Iran’s top commander, General Ghassem Soleimani, on January 3, 2020, vastly increased the risk of deadly military confrontation with Iran. Fortunately, Iran’s de-escalatory response in the form of missile attacks against US military bases in Iraq killed no US soldiers thereby allowing Trump to choose not to further escalate the confrontation. Predictably, however, a dominant narrative emerged quickly among the mainstream media talking heads and politicians from both parties, with a few exceptions, that amounted to a little more than cheerleading for a state-sponsored assassination of a senior foreign leader. *(continued on page 64)*

# ‘The Only Logic of Trident is Omnicide’

CHRISTOPHER HELALI INTERVIEWS PEACE ACTIVIST MARTHA HENNESSY

**M**artha Hennessey is a longtime anti-war activist and the granddaughter of Dorothy Day, the co-founder of the Catholic Worker Movement. She is 62, a retired occupational therapist, and grandmother of eight. She has been arrested and imprisoned protesting nuclear power, war, the use of drones, the torture of prisoners in Guantanamo and other prisons, and the use of starvation as a weapon of war in Yemen. She has traveled to Russia, Egypt, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Jordan, Palestine, and South Korea to understand the effects of war on other peoples. She divides her time between her family farm in Vermont and volunteer work at Maryhouse Catholic Worker in New York City.

*Can you describe how you, Elizabeth McAlister, Carmen Trotta, Patrick O’Neill, Fr. Stephen Kelly S.J., Clare Grady, and Mark Colville (Kings Bay Plowshares 7) joined together and decided on this action? What was the collective purpose of you all coming together for this action which coincided with the fiftieth anniversary of the martyrdom of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (April 4, 1968)?*

We have known each other over the years as friends because of the Catholic Worker communities but also something that Phil Berrigan started called the Atlantic Life Community and we would often meet in New York, Philadelphia, or Camden, New Jersey. The Plowshares movement began in 1980 so the purpose of us coming together was to keep that tradition alive of protesting the nuclear bombs. Liz being Phil’s widow, she just turned 80, it was her last chance to do such an action. She had done one in the mid-1980s at Griffiss Air Force Base in upstate New York. Fr. Steve Kelly, this was, I think, his fifth Plowshares action. Mark Colville had done at least one previously. They were all very committed to this movement. Many of them live and work in houses of hospitality, caring for the homeless. What brought us together and the particular timing of our particular group, I would just simply say the Holy Spirit somehow got a hold of Steve Kelly. He initiated things. He and Liz had been doing some discussion. I had corresponded with Steve when he was in the SHU (Segregated Housing Unit) out in California with his last action and last imprisonment. I had a connection with him that really made me think deeply about the nuclear arsenal.

I’ve traveled to these places, Korea, Iran, that have been called the enemy of the US. I’ve met incredible people in these incredible places. I’ve been to Russia three times. It just was so clear to me that the world over we’re all just people trying to take care of our families [and] educate them. War was just the absolute antithesis of life. When I was 14 years old, my brother Eric was drafted. He attended Vermont Technical College for one semester, dropped out and was immediately drafted into the military. [He] was sent to Vietnam [and] saw combat. It was 1969 when we were on the streets of New York protesting the Vietnam War. So, I think my whole life was pretty much preparation for joining this particular group and participating in what we call the Kings Bay Plowshares.

You know, we really didn't have a site picked out until the very end of our discernment process. We did a lot of studying, a lot of prayer. We are all Catholics. We do the daily readings [that] the universal church reads around the world simultane-



*United States Trident II (D-5) missile underwater launch. Source: U.S. Department of Defense.*

ously. [We] thought about how those readings, the New Testament readings were the word for what we were to do two thousand years after the death of Christ. If we're gonna call ourselves Christians, if we're gonna call ourselves Catholics, what does discipleship to Christ look like in the 21st century? So, it was like translation, looking at what was said in that context, in that time, and applying it in our own time. Stuff was very clear to me. It all resonated for me.

Of course, with the fiftieth anniversary of the state killing of Martin Luther King Jr., I believe it was a state killing, just like JFK and RFK, we wanted to acknowledge King's life, King's work, and King's sacrifice. But we also wanted to tie in what the nuclear arsenal really represents in terms of white supremacy [and] empire building. Dr. King worked very hard on the domestic level with the civil rights movement. The red lining of an entire race of people in this country, completely oppressing them with regard to education, housing, [and] medical care. The apartheid of the United States.

King came up against that, and then he extrapolated beyond that. [King] tied the racism at home with the wars abroad. We wanted to show that all of these issues we're faced with today climate collapse, racism, oppression, poverty, war, advanced capitalism, all of this is held together with the keystone, the capstone, of nuclear weapons.

We've kept them very well hidden. We supposedly have not used them since Hiroshima and Nagasaki. I would challenge that notion in terms of what happened to the Marshall Islands people. They were bombed. The Nevada desert test site, that's the most bombed spot on earth. Nuclear weapons have taken an immense toll over the decades, both with the research and development and the cost and the pollution. We've got the Hanford Site, we've got the Savannah [River] site. We have so many sites, Oak Ridge, where the contamination is significant. The cleanup is impossible. The storage is unresolved. That was the weapons systems to target.

Kings Bay became the obvious target for a couple of different reasons. The Trident system, nuclear sub system, is the most deadly and efficient system on earth. I mean, they can strike anywhere on earth within 15 minutes. They've got enough firepower to kill the world several times over. Kings Bay specifically had not been targeted by peace activists. Kitsap out on the West Coast, the sister naval base to Kings Bay, houses eight Tridents. Kings Bay houses six. Kitsap had a Plowshares action in 2009, Oak Ridge 2012, and Kings Bay in 2018.

*Tell us about the action you all took on April 4, 2018 at the Kings Bay naval submarine base in the U.S. State of Georgia. What happened that night?*

[It took] nearly two years of spiritual discernment, planning, preparation, education, and study of the issues, weapons systems, and current geopolitical situation. We were in the middle of the discernment when Trump was elected into office. I stepped out of Maryhouse November 9, 2016, and the streets were totally silent. It was as if everyone understood "My God how did this happen? What's next?" These world events certainly played a role and they just kept escalating as we prepared ourselves.

So, we had to get ourselves out to the base after dark so that we wouldn't be detected. The two issues that I do have with this kind of resistance is the secrecy and the so-called "destruction of property." But we can clarify that with some of the comments Dan Berrigan made about "what is property?," "What's proper to man?," and "Are nuclear weapons proper to man?" It's not property. I also have the rationale [that] I worked for twenty-five years as an occupational therapist. I paid my taxes. I own that base. I'm responsible for that base, helping to build it and the weaponry. So, I had to go there. I had to go there with this particular group of people who had come together. We had prepared together.

One of us cut the lock on the gate and we walked through. It's a 17,000-acre naval base. It's huge. So, we chose a remote area in which to get in. We walked, we walked, and we walked and it was very quiet. There were stars overhead. The beautiful pine forests of Georgia. I mean, it's an incredible sight. I don't know the native peoples who were displaced by building the site. It was given to the U.S. military by Jimmy Carter in 1979 and developed since then. We had to find our way to these different areas and it was not easy. With many of these Plowshares actions, we have somehow found our way to where we need to go. You know, without a lot of knowl-

edge. It's like doors open. If you step up to this task of going to these places of great sin, doors open. It happens, it works. We never saw anyone until we broke up into three different groups.

Three people went to where we thought were the nuclear warhead bunkers. Then the other four of us went together to a different site and then split up at the other site that contained this missile shrine. A display that the public actually goes in and visits where the different mockups of the weapons system, as it was getting more and more refined, more and more deadly, more and more huge, and more and more expensive. They had these mockups out here to display and brag about this so-called evolution of the weapons system, a devolution! Two folks went there and myself and Clare Grady went to the actual administrative building that houses the whole nerve center of running the whole base.

We did see people working at the administrative building. By the time we got there, it must have been midnight. I posted an indictment on the door. I don't think it was the main door. We weren't sure what was where, but we found a door. The indictment talked about the Nuremberg principles, the US Constitution, the rule of law that has made these weapons illegal. We've put up crime scene tape. We put up a banner, "The ultimate logic of Trident is omnicide," basing that on King's words, "the ultimate logic of racism is genocide." We left a book there by Daniel Ellsberg called *The Doomsday Machine: Confessions of a Nuclear War Planner*. It was in a nice little neat Ziploc bag and we set it in the middle of a painted heart on the sidewalk. We wrote "May love disarm us all," "Love one another," "Disarm now."

Then Clare and I walked over to the Missile Shrine where our companions, Patrick and Mark also wrote on the mockup missiles, "Idolatry, blasphemy, disarm now." They hung the Martin Luther King Jr. banner with his beautiful face on it and that quote, "The ultimate logic of racism is genocide." They poured blood. We poured blood, too, on the threshold. The iconic, symbolic disarmament of the Plowshares movement is to pour blood as a means of stating we are not to shed innocent blood. We are to shed our own blood before we shed innocent people's blood. It's an act of contrition and atonement.

At the missile shrine we hammered on them. They weren't necessarily missiles themselves, but it was a nonviolent symbolic disarmament of the nuclear weapons system. I think one of the most significant visual logos that came out of that action was the Strategic Weapons Facility Atlantic logo, and it had a picture of the Trident submarine horizontally and the Poseidon three-pronged spear running vertically.

It was a cross! That was not lost on us. Someone put blood on it. That logo went out to the world because we were also carrying GoPro cameras and cell phones. We took these pictures and sent them out right away. So that was a very strong visual of the Trident logo with blood on it dripping down from it.

Then we just simply sat and waited. Meanwhile, there were cars coming and going, and they completely ignored us because everyone was attending to the bunkers. The three folks had to cut fences. We had not cut any fences to get where we went. But the bunkers obviously have several sets of fences. They penetrated two of the three, I think.

When it came time for us to be intercepted, the base personnel just simply walked up to us. He wasn't armed. He wasn't yelling. He knew who we were. He knew what we were, what we were up to. Peace activists, nonviolent peace activists. We were sitting there. We read our statement. We did the daily readings. We prayed. We just



*Plowshare blood on the logo of the Strategic Weapons Facility Atlantic at Kings Bay Naval Submarine Base.  
Source: Kings Bay Plowshares*

sat and waited. He walks up to us and says, “you realize you’re in a bit of trouble here now, don’t you?” He was very laid back. He was very professional. He was very good about training to base soldiers who were there to assist him.

Meanwhile, over at the bunkers, they quickly realized what they had on their hands. One of those peace activists says “We’re Americans. We’re unarmed. We come in peace. We mean you no harm.” That was the first thing they said. So, there was no mistaking the situation. They had their banner [which] said “nuclear weapons, immoral, illegal.”

They ended up taking the opportunity to do a drill, follow the protocol of what they would do if they’re under siege. So, they took advantage of the fact that these peace activists were there. They had guns and they did certain things that were not done with us. They made them lie on the ground. They made them step back. “Three steps, stop! Step back, three steps, stop!” It’s all described very well by Carmen Trotta and some of the other news casts.

So, it was a very long night. Then we spent probably four hours with our hands handcuffed behind our backs. We had not slept all night. It was painful. It was difficult, but it was glorious. It was fun. You know, I don’t mean to use the word fun in a facetious way or in a taunting way, because this all is very, very serious stuff. But there was joy in what we did and a liberating sense of having done it and gotten it behind us. And no one was hurt.

*When you entered the naval base, you brought an indictment with you. Can you explain what the indictment said?*

Essentially, it indicts the President of the United States, the captain of the base, and I'm forgetting the third entity. Then we had 'whereas' on all of these bullet points, whereas the Nuremberg principles state that when you know that your government is committing illegal acts or war crimes, you as a citizen are responsible to stand up, say something, and do something. We also in the indictment cited the U.S. Constitution Article 6, Section 2, where the supreme law of the land are these treaties. We have the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which has been violated for the past 20 years. Every five years, the U.N. goes through this sham of an exercise of reviewing the NPT. Nothing changes. Meanwhile, the IMF treaty has been violated and the new START treaty is probably going to be violated.

So, we just simply tried to cite the laws that have been put in place to protect the world from nuclear holocaust and to hold someone accountable to this development of this kind of arsenal. I firmly believe that Russia under Gorbachev said to Reagan, "let's disarm." The corporate pressures on Reagan. They wanted Star Wars and now we have Trump talking more about Space Force. Reagan understood what Gorbachev was saying and was thinking deeply about why can't we do this together? But then the corporate interests got to him and he simply walked away from it. So, I believe on more than one occasion, the Russians have advanced proposals to get out of this insane arms race. The Russians know what war looks like. They lost 20 million people. Most recently Putin, I believe, you know you can't hear this in the mainstream media, but Putin was saying we will start these talks for New Start unconditionally, let's begin to revisit this. Donald Trump doesn't even have to bother to respond. I mean, he doesn't even bother to say no. It's just like, "of course, we're not doing that."

Where are the legislators? Do the legislators, number one, understand the cost of these weapons and the danger of these weapons? How much damage one bomb can do now as compared to 1945? These legislators are rubber stamping the budgets. I mean what did we just pass. \$737 billion budget, giving free rein to the military and the corporate interests. I'm quite convinced that this recent behavior on the part of the Trump administration of executing a top military official of Iran, they've got the go ahead. They've got this huge budget to work with. I also feel like the killing of Khashoggi, we're constantly upping the ante. We cross one threshold and then we cross the next threshold. I see that happening. The use of drones was crossing a threshold similar to the atomic bomb. I mean, you're unleashing a technology that may not be retrievable. So, it's outright outlaw behavior.

*One of the banners you had on the base read "The ultimate logic of Trident is omnicide." Tell us about the struggle against nuclear weapons. What does it mean to live in a nuclear world?*

What does it mean to live in a nuclear world? Well, I was born in 1955, so we were definitely sitting under the desks at some point in time right around the Cuban Missile Crisis. I clearly remember that. I clearly remember the killing of John F. Kennedy. I was standing in line outside the school. I was eight years old. Of course, I grew

up in a family with Dorothy Day, my grandmother and the Catholic Worker, where we were acutely aware of what was happening in the world.

Dorothy, of course, in 1945 had written this scathing article about the dropping of the bomb. She talked about breathing in the dust of our Japanese brothers and sisters in the fog of New York. She understood the mystical body, we are all one of another. So, I grew up with that. So, my understanding was from a very early start. Dorothy also handed me the book John Hersey's *Hiroshima*. I read that as a kid and



*Illustration 5: Banner, indictment, spray paint, and crime scene tape at the Kings Bay naval submarine base. Source: Kings Bay Plowshares.*

that just changed my understanding completely and permanently of what nuclear meant. My conception and birth occurred when we were still doing atmospheric testing out in the West and in the South Pacific. So, I mean, I was literally exposed in utero [and] as a young child to fallout.

What does it mean to my kids? They didn't hear about it the way I heard about it. It was not a living memory of the Cold War and this huge fear of the United States

and Russia facing off as they were. Very dangerous times, the 50s and 60s. I think being a nuclear state has incredibly corrosive effects on all of us at every level. Whether my adult kids are aware of the size, the potential, the cost of this arsenal, they don't have any fresh memory of Nagasaki, Hiroshima and what that means. But it's corroding us. Martin Luther King Jr. certainly talked about that. The destructiveness of this practice. This constant practice and culture of violence, fear, greed and hatred. You keep practicing it and you keep refining it to a more and more horrific level.

I think we've seen that with what we did to Iraq and then Libya, Afghanistan and now this recent threat of thinking that you can lie to the public, you can lie to the people, and you can just waltz into this. Use these weapons. Donald Trump talking about using fire and fury in Korea. We flattened North Korea in the 50s. That was a horrific war crime. I think probably we have been softened up one generation after the next. We committed horrific war crimes in WWII. The Nuremberg trials only went so far because we understood we would be next for the firebombing of whole cities in Germany and Japan.

We got away with it. We got away with the Korean War. The Vietnam War things shifted a little bit. The public realized what was happening. The horror, the visuals coming out of Vietnam. We weren't allowed to see the visuals of 1991, Operation Desert Storm, the burying of soldiers alive in trenches. I remember listening on NPR 1992, whenever it was, "we're shooting, they're like sitting ducks. They're like fish in a barrel. We're just shooting them like fish in a barrel." They had Saddam Hussein's soldiers, kids. No chance of survival. I did have a friend's son who was sent over there. He described what was going on. I worked at the V.A. Medical Center some years after that. You know the Gulf War syndrome. What was that? These anthrax immunizations, supposed vaccinations, in conjunction with burn piles, in conjunction with oil fields burning. How could these men not come back horrifically damaged?

*The use of depleted uranium?*

Yes, the burn piles included. The Iraqis call it enriched uranium. We call it depleted uranium. So how do we fool ourselves? How do we lie to ourselves about what we're doing? Where are the world courts? Where is the U.N.? Where is the Security Council? Where's the rule of law? We are the sole rogue nuclear superpower. With that comes a heavy, heavy price for the whole population, our psyches, whether we understand it or realize it or not.

*All of you belong to the Catholic Worker Movement and you are the granddaughter of Dorothy Day, the co-founder of the Catholic Worker Movement. What is the Catholic Worker Movement?*

That's quite a story in and of itself. The Catholic Worker started in 1933, May 1st of 1933, which was, you know, IWW's Labor Day. You know, the freedom of the workers. All this talk about capitalism for the workers and socialism for the corporations. I mean, all of this was coming into question. Dorothy was indoctrinated by a French peasant by the name of Peter Maurin. Dorothy was a journalist just like her father and brother. She was a writer. They started the newspaper and they called it the Catholic Worker newspaper. They handed out the first issue in Union Square on May 1st of 1933, the height of the [Great] Depression, the height of the ecological disaster of the Dust Bowl, the horrible agricultural practices out west. The utter dis-

placement of thousands of people from the land. I mean, internally displaced persons because of economic [and] ecological collapse. It was a horrific time. Catholic Worker was birthed at a time of great crisis.

The paper was to be the instrument of the voice of the homeless, the workers, the workers who were unemployed, the workers who were on strike. The order of the day had to be questioned. Peter brought to Dorothy the teachings of the church. The Catholic Church has what are called Catholic social teachings. Peter Maurin called that the “dynamite of the church” and that the clergy was stuffing it in a box, sitting on it, and not letting it out to do what it should be doing. I mean, there are encyclicals written *Rerum Novarum*, written 1891, talking about the workers do have a right to organize, to take care of themselves, to feed their families, and to have decent living conditions. Peter Maurin talked a lot about “the dignity of work.” The whole industrialization of the labor force came at a horrible human and environmental cost. The full speed ahead with this mechanization, burning of fossil fuels, putting children in factories, throwing everybody off the land, [and] causing starvation.

Dorothy, as a young journalist in the 19 teens and 20s, was writing about working families starving in America. So, the Catholic Worker was born out of all of those



*Dorothy Day (left) with a young Martha Hennessy (right). Source: Jim Forest.*

desperate, desperate needs. Peter instructed Dorothy on Catholic social teachings. The paper reflected worker’s rights, the dignity of each person, and the respecting of everyone’s individual human rights and how the capitalist system violates all of that. So, in the thirties, she was addressing the capitalist economic system that wasn’t working. She was also addressing Hitler. She saw that happening. There was this luxury liner called the S.S. Bremen, a German ocean liner. It would dock in New York Harbor twice a month. In 1936 she went out there and it was all about the elite,

the American elite, rubbing elbows with Nazis. Dorothy went out there to picket and protest this developing fascism in Europe. She saw it happening. She understood what it meant. Tried to report on it.

In the 1940s, it was all about war again. She stood out against WWII. I think there were maybe 30 communities by then. We call them houses of hospitality. Part of Peter's program was houses where you care for the poor based on a very, very old model of pilgrimages where people were traveling in medieval Europe. The Middle East has this hospitality where you don't leave someone out in the desert. You take care of them. This was part of the programs providing food and shelter for the homeless. It certainly started with the paper and not with houses of hospitality until Dorothy was galvanized to start providing beds when she had two women visit her once who were homeless. [They] we're just riding the subways, just had no place to go. Then a few weeks later, one of the women came back to her and Dorothy said, "where's your friend?" She said she threw herself in front of a subway. So that just was so horrific that Dorothy immediately rented an apartment and just started trying to provide housing for people.

During WWII, there were about 30 houses in most of the major cities around the country, in the poorest of neighborhoods where they had soup lines, clothing rooms, a bed for a certain number of people. We couldn't house them all. I mean, she talked about being accused of trying to put a Band-Aid on a cancer, which is exactly what she was faced with doing this work. In the 40s, she spoke out against WWII. She spoke out against the Spanish Civil War. She understood every war that occurred in her lifetime to be unnecessary.

With WWI, my grandfather had a nervous breakdown about being drafted into that kind of service. I'm trained as an occupational therapist. That was the beginning of aerial bombardment, which was a whole new technology which superimposed a whole new kind of trauma on the human psyche. So, the shell shocked had to be worked with out of WWI and that impacted both my grandmother and my grandfather. They were young people. So, every war that she witnessed, she understood it to be profiteering, unnecessary.

In the 50s, her readership was cut in half. People condemned her for writing in the paper against World War Two because that was the supposed "good war." She saw how Hitler came into being. With the complicit help of the elites of Europe and America. She witnessed the sending Jews back to their death from U.S. shores. In the 1950s, it was the McCarthy era and the Cold War. She started with the air raid drills, refusing to go underground. June of 1955, a month before I was born, they were arrested sitting out at city park benches saying, "we're not going underground where we'd be going to our deaths in the subways." You can't survive a nuclear strike on Manhattan Island. She said this is psychological warfare and we're not participating. So, they did that for six years, 1955 to 1961. Each year the protests grew in size. Finally, in 1961, New York City called off these air raid drills. This duck and cover charade.

In the 1960s, the Catholic Worker was addressing the Vietnam War and the homelessness. I mean, she directly correlated war and poverty. You know, the more money you spend making these corporations rich and Eisenhower laid it all out, warned us what was to come. Dorothy, of course, understood all of this. So, the op-

position to the Vietnam War, the Catholic Workers were some of the first to publicly burn their draft cards. It was the only voice coming out of the Catholic Church against war, pacifist voice. She got it in the neck from the bishops and the cardinals for taking the stance that she understood Jesus had taken.

Of course, you know, my memories of her are very strong with the 60s and 70s. She died in 1980. I was twenty-five years old. We would go down to the Catholic Worker, we would spend our summers at the Tivoli farm. It's a university, the Catholic Worker University. It's where you go to learn about what your own needs are and what your own shortcomings are. Everyone goes to this community with need and everyone comes with your prickly edges about not having willingness or the strength of heart to share and to be with the most destitute.

So, I grew up with this incredible sense of what it means to look at the suffering of others. Much of the homeless are veterans, traumatized veterans, the mentally ill whose families can no longer take care of their mentally ill members. Dorothy simply said "do what needs to be done at hand." Living in the Lower Eastside of New York, the Empire State of the U.S. Empire, and seeing the destitution, the suffering, she responded with the Catholic social teachings and a program. It still goes on today. There are probably 200 communities around the world, New Zealand, Germany, England, Belgium. I forget where they all are, but there are communities everywhere.

*How does your faith inform your activism? Here I want you to speak about how your conception of Christianity is different from the Christianity of Trump, Pompeo, Pence, and their ilk.*

Yes. George W. Bush calling himself a Christian. I was raised Catholic and, you know, my mother and my grandmother, Tamar and Dorothy, they were very kind, intelligent, compassionate people. Loving kindness is what I learned from them. The Catholic social teachings are all about love thy neighbor as thyself. The message was clearly there for me as a child in the Catholic Church. When Dorothy converted or was baptized as an adult, she didn't have a full understanding of what she was entering into. She saw that the church was complicit with the capitalists and that they weren't taking care of the people. She despaired of that. She was in socialist circles before she converted. Finally, she came to a place of understanding what true Catholicism meant, and that brought together her skills as a journalist, her newfound faith as a Catholic, and her socialistic understanding of what needed to be done to take care of people. It turned out to be an incredibly beautiful model in her hands and Peter's hands.

I was fully aware of social justice within the context of Catholic faith. But then my father left the family when I was six. He was very tormented by mental illness and alcoholism and a head injury as well. He couldn't take care of nine children. My mother and father followed the Catholic doctrine to a T. And it just led them to a place where he had nine children and utter poverty. So, he left the family when I was age six. My mother just kind of drifted away from the church. I mean, she was raised Catholic. Dorothy was not. It's a very distinct experience being raised Catholic or converting as an adult. I kind of feel like I have had both experiences. I was raised Catholic, but then we drifted out of the church in my teen years. I was acutely aware of peacemaking. We were on the streets protesting Vietnam War. I had that activist bent, but I had walked away from the faith base of it.

So, then I had to go through a conversion experience. My first arrest, political arrest, I've only had political arrests, no criminal arrests, was in 1979 at the public service office building in Manchester, New Hampshire, protesting Seabrook Nuclear Power Plant. I understood nuclear power, nuclear weapons to be two sides of the same coin, the same industry. That was my first dipping my toes into the water of arrests. I mean, I knew that Dorothy was arrested for the air raid drills and then her last arrest being in California with Cesar Chavez in solidarity with the migrant workers.

So, 1979 was my first arrest. I served three months in prison and my son was two years old at the time. It was a traumatic experience. Most of the inmates were people who were in Special Ed, had special needs, and weren't attended to. [They] didn't have proper educations, came from poverty, violence. All of this prison complex [is] totally preventable. That was a real eye opener for me. Now I did that before Dorothy died. She died the next year.

Then I just worked for 20 years as an occupational therapist raising my kids, and then I just had this tremendous epiphany. I guess it started with Dorothy's induction into the National Women's Hall of Fame in 2001. She was inducted with maybe eight other people and then 9/11 happened. That induction ceremony was postponed till 2002. She was given this award and the family was contacted and they said, will someone come and receive this? None of us wanted to do it. My mother couldn't do it. I said to myself, this is important. You need to pay attention to this. What is this? What can you do about this? That was my internal dialogue. So, I wrote a three-minute speech. I presented it at this event and my life went downhill from there.

Nothing but trouble from then on out. Essentially, what my 3-minute speech said was "we're beating the war drums. We're about to invade this tiny country. You know, what is this colossal war machine? If you really do admire Dorothy Day, you don't support war!" I instantaneously polarized the audience. I thought to myself, "Oh, my God! what is this dynamite I'm sitting on?" I couldn't go back. My eyes were opened. The scales fell from my eyes.

Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Rosalynn Carter were two of the inductees. After I gave this speech, when the speech was over and everybody was leaving, Bader Ginsburg darted up to me, grabbed my hand, didn't say a word, and then was gone. I thought, oh , you know, I've got this soapbox . I better use it. Rosalynn Carter came up to me, shook my hand and said, "thank you for saying what you said." So here we have a former first lady and we have a Supreme[Court] justice telling me you better do something in so many words.

So, I don't know what happened next.

### *The Iraq War*

October 2002 and then March of 2003. I remember exactly where I was standing in my house listening to NPR with George Bush threatening for days on end. The Iraqi people like totally not knowing when the bombs were going to start dropping. I thought, what kind of world is this?

*I remember I was at a Boy Scout camp and the newspaper came "Shock and Awe." I just remember my heart sinking because also on the trip was my father. As you know, we are Iranian*

*Americans. So instantly, again, the drumbeats of war, the country next door. It's our people! It's the Middle East!*

My uterus actually contracted when they said the bombs are dropping. So, 2003, watched that debacle. 2004, my son joins the military. I am in absolute psychic agony. It was as much pain as watching my sister die of melanoma. I was just beside myself. I started a correspondence with Dan Berrigan. Dan had just lost Phil. Phil had died two years earlier. Dan was still mourning his brother's death. It was Dan who started to open the door back to my faith. What did my baptism mean?

So, my son joined the military that year and by some amazing divine intervention, he couldn't breathe during physical training and he was out. I had to pay attention to that. I had to pay attention to what that meant. That wasn't just some little coincidence. Then on Dorothy's birthday, November 8th, 2004, we invaded Fallujah. We used white phosphorus, outlawed illegal chemical weapon. We used depleted uranium in Fallujah. The birth defects coming out of there years later, 30 percent live births, severe birth defects. I worked in Amman, Jordan, as an OT in 2013, my last OT job, and we were hearing what was coming out of Fallujah. I was working with special needs kids. The horror, the crime, and the horror.

That galvanized me, this destruction of this city on my grandmother's birthday. Just something inside me just wrenched. It was also the season of Advent, and I found myself praying for the first time in my adult life. The local church that I had been confirmed in as a little kid was holding this art show. I just was looking in the local weekly paper and that kind of thing just caught my eye. I don't know how or why. I said, oh, I'm going to make something for this art show. I made a triptych icon. It was the Holy Family's flight into Egypt, Giotto's painting. I put all these little litanies around it. Mothers of Vietnam, Forgive us. Mothers of El Salvador, Pray for us. Mothers of Fallujah, it just went on and on. This fell out of me. So, I gave the icon to the church and it was sold at this art fair.

Things just started clicking into place from then on out. I left the school district where I had been working in the spring of 2005. One of the special educator's sons was entering the priesthood, seminary. The school where I worked was rented from the local Catholic church. The special education teacher said to me, "go see Father Ernie, go talk to Father Ernie, who's right next door in the rectory." You know, I was totally uncomfortable. The Catholic Church has done such wrong, you know, politically and in my mother's life. I went to talk to Father Ernie and he said, start praying the rosary. He was very hands off. I went to him and said to him, "Oh I'm from the Catholic Worker, Oh, Dorothy Day, Oh, you know, I am from this legacy." I was just like moaning. What does this mean to me? I couldn't make head or tail of where I was going with this background and where it was leading me to. He just said, "Oh start praying the rosary." He was very laid back, very hands off, very decent. So that was just like a blessing. These blessings just kept happening that drew me deeper and deeper in. I mean, I could've met like a really nasty priest and been scared away very easily. My faith was so tenuous anyhow.

Then I took a job in Hawaii in the fall of 2005, and it was there that I started going to church, the little ohana that I had rented from a Filipino family. She was Catholic. She'd left the crucifix in there. I put a picture of granny next to the cruci-

fix, started going to church, and then all hell broke out in my soul. I was just sitting there weeping, weeping, and weeping every time I went to church, every Sunday. I did nothing but weep. I had to go through this process of grieving. I mean, I was homesick, too. I left home. But that was an incredible experience. I mean, here you have Hawaii, the most remote piece of soil on Earth out in the middle of the Pacific, a military outpost of the US empire and a corporate colony, Dole Pineapple. I mean, the whole history of Hawaii is something to be studied. How they brought in the labor, who they brought in as overseers, who they brought in as laborers, how the Polynesians dealt with it all. We also had Marshall Island folks who, you know, I saw this little girl they weren't saying it was exposure to depleted uranium, but like extra digits, organs outside the body cavity. The nuclear fallout is just everywhere. Many of these families, the fathers were in the military exposed to God knows what on the islands themselves. There are all kinds of unexploded ordnance. The US with its war games, just an incredible history. So, each step of the way, God put me in just the right place at just the right time to prepare me.

Two thousand eight was the year my mother died. I attended what's called a Father Hugo retreat. Those were famous in the 1940s where Dorothy would attend. Every year she would make the whole community attend. I grew up hearing about how horrible the Father Hugo retreats were from my mother because she was forced to attend. Then I went to it and I actually loved it. It was father Hugo's nephew who was giving the retreat. I was totally nervous about meeting him. He was totally nervous about meeting me because I was one of Dorothy's grandchildren. It was a great retreat. I loved it, but I didn't get to share it with my mother because she died in March and I attended the retreat in July. I said to her in January, "I'm going to a father Hugo retreat!" She looked at me like I was nuts, but she didn't say anything. She knew that I was going through this conversion experience, that I was returning to the church. She was very good about not saying anything bad about it. She understood even though she had left the church herself. So, 2008 was a very powerful, significant year.

Then I went to the Catholic Worker Farm in London, England. I kept skirting around Maryhouse. I had not gotten into Maryhouse until 2004. I attended to Dorothy's funeral, 1980. I never set foot in the house for 24 years. Then I went to the London Catholic Worker. I started visiting Maryhouse in '04 and then I did an internship at the London Catholic Worker in '08 after my mother died. It was there that I had a spiritual director who said to me, "Write down all the times that you think God was speaking to you in your lifetime." This whole panoramic sequence fell out of me starting at age three, sitting on Dorothy's lap. So all of that further solidified my faith. Then I started volunteering part time at Maryhouse 2010. That was horrific. It was really hard. Very horrific. Very difficult for me. The community just, you know, a lot of mental illness in the house. A lot of blurring of the lines between volunteers and guests. It was really tough. But I stuck with it. I stuck with it. Going to church, I came back to Maryhouse for two reasons. St. Benedict, by the way, I was born on the feast of St. Benedict July 11th. Dorothy was a Benedictine oblate. So, I said to myself, I'm going back to the Catholic Worker to work and to pray. I mean, I love to work. I was trying to learn how to pray. So, I stuck it out. It was over the course of those years

that I got to meet all the folks that ended up acting with. The rest is history in terms of how I ended up in a Plowshares action.

*What is the history of the Plowshares Movement?*

Founded by Phil Berrigan in 1980. The first one was in King of Prussia, P.A. They hammered on some Mark 2 nose cones at a G.E. plant in King of Prussia. That was the beginning. There have been over one hundred actions since then. Most of them on military bases but some of them at corporate headquarters where the weapons are produced. The whole system is, you know, every congressional district in the US has a piece of that pie. It's just all little components. Everything's compartmentalized so nobody can see the end product as it becomes. So, there have been various actions at various sites. As I said earlier in '09 at Kitsap, 2012 at Oak Ridge, Los Alamos is another location. Newport News, Virginia, huge, huge corporate military project.

Many different people have participated, non-Catholics, atheists. But this particular group of ours were clearly Catholic. It just came together in a way that worked out. There are several books written that document all the different actions up to a certain year. It needs to be updated. You know Isaiah 2:4 "they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks and nations shall study war no more." So that was Phil's vision of "from within." We had to resist the empire of the United States and the empire of the US Catholic Church. It's about self-disarmament. You don't go through this process without realizing that you've got to face the war in our own hearts. Dorothy talked about the revolution of the heart. This is where it has to begin. Phil clearly understood that.

Catonsville 9 was a precursor to the Plowshares Movement. The burning of draft cards during the Vietnam War. Plenty of studying to do to learn more about the Plowshares movement. Some people feel that it's faded and it's ineffectual. But we keep trying.

*I would disagree. Your actions prove that it's very relevant, that it's very here, present and necessary. Can you describe the ongoing court case, and what happened during the trial?*

So, we were put on trial in October. We were stripped of any meaningful defense, international law, justice – necessity, justification – necessity, religious beliefs. So, we pretty much walked into the courtroom without any kind of a defense. We had to work with a jury who was not allowed to learn anything about the context of what we did and why. They were able to convict us under two hours on 24 counts, which amounts to about discerning every four minutes per count. So, you can imagine what that looked like in deliberations. The judge, of course, completely orchestrated what occurred in the courtroom.

Federal court has done this multiple times to many of the Plowshares defendants. So now that was in October and she said 30 to 60 days presentencing investigation report gets put together. That's where they put together all those criteria for this point system to determine how many months of prison you deserve based on your family life, your past, criminal history, all of those factors get looked at. So those reports have recently been finally trickling in. So, I don't know. I think that my sentencing hearing will be the end of February or something like that. We do want to go in together to

be sentenced together, but we think that the reports are being staggered as a way of breaking up the dates because we have supporters coming. Over 200 people came for the trial and the same thing would happen with the sentencing hearing. But we're not sure what that's going to look like.

I was convicted. I'm now a convicted felon. I was convicted of three felony charges, conspiracy, depredation of government property, destruction of naval property, something like that, and trespass, which is a misdemeanor. So, I don't know. I am looking at supposedly 20 years, but I think after this presentencing report, it's more like 18 to 24 months. Then, of course, we look at it even further and some of the things that they have put in there can be refuted very easily. They're just really padding it to try and give us the maximum. It was a nonviolent disarmament action. I mean, trespass. So, we'll see. It's all unknown and it's all part of the waiting. The patience, the waiting, the listening to the tiny voice of God in all of this. You know, two years of my life, nearly four years of my life now have been taken up by this. It's just an exercise in faith.

*As an Iranian-American I think it is very important to hear your perspective on Iran since you have been to Iran. Given the current situation what would you tell the people of Iran? How do you feel about the situation?*

My first thing would be, I love you. I visited Isfahan, Shiraz, Yazd, Tehran. I visited those incredible sites that somebody is saying they're going to bomb, which is a total war crime. I mean, how much more can we violate the rule of law and each other? I met so many Iranians who love the United States. It's not the government they love. It's democracy. They recognize democracy. Let's not forget Mossadegh in 1953. You know, right now they're talking about the revolution and the hostage taking 1979. Their minds can't even go back. They can barely go back that far. Never mind 1953. I would say to the Iranian people, "I'm so sorry. I am so, so sorry."

*What can people do to help support the Kings Bay Plowshares 7 and, more importantly, how can they contribute to the anti-war and anti-nuclear movement?*

You can always go to the web site, <https://kingsbayplowshares7.org/> and learn more. There is a donation button. We've had a wonderful support system with all of this. We have to put our bodies out there. We have to take the risks. We have to pay attention and we have to open our hearts. I think that Democracy Now! is one of the best outlets for journalism nowadays. Stay informed with alternative media that is, true journalism. Jeremy Scahill, Intercept. So, educate ourselves, realize that we're all at risk. We're all in this together. We're all one another. Any tiny little bit that any one of us can do from where we stand is helpful. I mean, that's the best we can do. I'm not saying go out and do a Plowshares action; any small contribution makes the difference. I've been doing this canvassing for Bernie Sanders. Not that I believe in the political system. I think it's totally corrupted. But, you know, get involved. Be aware. Stay awake. Don't be brain dead.

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*"...U.S. presidents have used our nuclear weapons dozens of times in "crises," mostly in secret from the American public (though not from adversaries). They have used them in the precise way that a gun is used when it is pointed at someone in a confrontation, whether or not the trigger is pulled. To get one's way without pulling the trigger is a major purpose for owning the gun."*

—Daniel Ellsberg in the introduction to his book  
*The Doomsday Machine: Confessions of a Nuclear Planner*

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The Kings Bay Plowshares 7. Left to right: Elizabeth McAlister, Fr. Stephen Kelly S.J., Carmen Trotta, Mark Colville, Martha Hennessy, Clare Grady, and Patrick O'Neill. Source: Kings Bay Plowshares.