

Ground Zero

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Appeal for Sanity in the New Year

By Leonard Eiger

Not so Happy New Year! The arms control/abolition community got a stocking full of coal last month, and yet we all made extraordinary efforts to reduce the threat of nuclear war last year.

In a gift to the Grinch, the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) went from being opposed by every House Republican in July to being overwhelming approved by both Republicans and Democrats in December (by a vote of 477 to 36).

Responding to criticism from progressives about the Democrats' failure to find their backbone, and in a brilliant outburst of doublespeak, House Armed Services Committee Chairman Adam Smith (D-Wash.) called the compromise NDAA "the most progressive defense bill in the history of the country."

The House version, voted on in July, contained a prohibition on the deployment of the (already completed) "low-yield" W76-2 Trident tactical nuclear warhead (good idea!). The compromise version passed in December allows deployment of the W76-2. (Very, very bad idea!)

Smith previously said, "We do not view nuclear weapons as a tool in warfare... It makes no sense for us to build low-yield nuclear weapons." But hey, things

change, and politicians seem to change their positions as frequently as they change their socks.

If we are not outraged, then something is very, very wrong. The Trump administration is working to increase the existing probability of nuclear war, and doing an excellent job of it. And aside from a minority of Democrats (who we should heartily thank) who voted against the compromise NDAA, the majority of Dems rolled over and played dead right on cue in time to see that the Pentagon (and of course its corporate partners) will feast heartily in the new year.

Pulling our nation out of legally binding nuclear weapon treaties is bad enough, but deploying the W76-2 is a sure recipe for (nuclear) disaster.

Short of blockading the Pantex Plant in Texas, from where the W76-2 warheads will be shipped (and possibly very soon) by Safeguards Transporter trucks to both the Bangor and Kings Bay Trident submarine bases, there seems to be little anyone can do to stop their deployment.

One thing is certain; deployment of the W76-2 warhead on Trident II D5 ballistic missiles will signal a watershed change in our nation's nuclear weapons stance.

Appeal... continued on page 2

The Trident nuclear weapon system is the most survivable leg of the nuclear triad (that includes bombers and land-based missiles), and is considered the chief U.S. deterrent against surprise nuclear attack. The Navy itself states that Trident's sole mission is "strategic deterrence."

Trident missiles currently carry some combination of large strategic warheads – the W76-1 (100 kilotons) and W88 (455 kilotons). The W76-2, a low-yield variant, is estimated to have a yield of 5 to 7 kilotons. Just to make things really interesting, Trident submarines will deploy some combination of all three warheads, thereby combining strategic and tactical nuclear weapons. Does this sound confusing? Consider the following scenario.

Tensions increase dramatically after a bloody skirmish between U.S. and Russian special forces in a former Soviet republic. The Russians launch a missile strike from Russian territory against a city controlled by U.S. forces. Initial intelligence reports indicate, based on the devastation and radiation detected near the impact site, that at least one missile contained a nuclear warhead.

The President of the United States orders a limited retaliatory strike of Trident missiles carrying "low-yield" W76-2 warheads against the Russian missile site from which the earlier strike was launched. The USS Nebraska, an OHIO Class "Trident" ballistic missile submarine, receives the launch orders. Minutes after the crew validates the orders, a single Trident II D5 missile loaded with W76-2 warheads is on its way toward its Russian target.

The Russians have no way of knowing what warheads are on that missile. All they know is that their radar has detected a U.S. submarine-launched missile. As nuclear weapons expert Jeffrey Lewis, Middlebury Institute of International Studies, has said, "All the Russians are going to see is that a missile that only carries nuclear warheads is heading towards Russia [and would most likely retaliate with powerful long-range weapons]... Russian policy, as [President] Vladimir Putin has said many times, is not to wait for it to land."

By now you've probably guessed the inevitable outcome. Within less than an hour the full-scale nuclear war (resulting from the initial exchange of "low-yield" nuclear weapons) would be over. End of story (and civilization as we know it)!

As a number of experts, including retired military officers, said in their 2018 letter urging Congress to reject the "low-yield" Trident warhead, "Nuclear war cannot be controlled. Perhaps the biggest fallacy in the whole argument [for the "low-yield" warhead] is the mistaken and dangerous belief that a 'small' nuclear war would remain small. There is no basis for the dubious theory that, if Russia used a 'low-yield' nuclear weapon and the United States responded in kind, the conflict could stay at that

level."

There is no logic that justifies deploying a "low-yield" nuclear warhead on Trident. I can only imagine the concerns among naval personnel who will have the ultimate responsibility to launch missiles armed with the "low-yield" warhead should the order be given. In that regard I want to remind our brothers and sisters in the Navy of Ground Zero Center's "Appeal to Navy Personnel," which asks them to "Refuse to engage in nuclear annihilation!"

As the Appeal states, "We have learned that we share a common concern with members of the armed forces—that the use of nuclear weapons would lead to unimaginable destruction to innocent populations and to our planet." And so we invite Naval personnel to engage in an open and meaningful conversation about our common concern and how we can work together to prevent the unspeakable.

This is no pipe dream; this is about ensuring a future for the children of today and tomorrow. It is about humanity's very survival. Please join us. Contact us at info@gzcenter.org, or send letters to Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action, 16159 Clear Creek Rd. NW Poulsbo, WA 98370. Read the Appeal to Navy Personnel at <https://www.gzcenter.org/2019/03/31/appeal-to-navy-personnel/>.

Leonard Eiger serves on the Stewardship Council and chairs the Communications and Outreach committee.

MLK Day Ground Zero Actions January 18 and 20

Join Ground Zero at GZ House (16159 Clear Creek Road NW, Poulsbo WA 98370) on Saturday, January 18, at noon for a potluck, followed at 1:00 PM by a brief vigil (no arrests) at the Main Gate of Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor. See www.gzcenter.org for more information.

On Monday, January 20, Ground Zero will take part in the annual march in Seattle to honor MLK with banners and flyers. We will gather at noon on the knoll just south of 23rd Ave and E. Jefferson, next to Garfield High School. See www.seattlemlkcoalition.org for details. To help Rodney Brunelle with assembling and assigning banners, contact him at rodney.brunelle@gmail.com.



Pacific Life Community Retreat will be in Port Orchard

By Elizabeth Murray

This year's Pacific Life Community (PLC) retreat will offer nuclear resisters the opportunity to network with Washington state-based grassroots climate change activists, explore PLC's deep roots with the Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action, and participate in a group action at Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor affirming the Community's desire for a nuclear weapons-free future.



Abby Brockway (pictured with her daughter Sienna) will speak about her use of civil disobedience to call attention to oil trains. *Photo courtesy of www.pcusa.org.*

The PLC 2020 gathering — to be held at the Pilgrim Firs retreat facility in Port Orchard, WA (<http://pilgrim-firs.org/>) February 28 through March 2 — will take place on the heels of the sentencing of the Kings Bay Plowshares 7, which is expected in either late December or early January.

This will thus be an especially serious time of reflection and discussion by nuclear activists everywhere on the risks

of nonviolent resistance and whether they will continue to dare to “go there” — that is, to take actions that bear the possibility of harsh consequences, including prison time.

A panel of those who attended the Kings Bay Plowshares 7 trial earlier this year will convene to share their witness of the court proceedings and discuss the implications for activists inherent in these developments.

In order to help chart the way forward for nuclear activism while applying the lessons of Gandhian satyagraha (Truth-force) philosophy that helped form the basis of the early Pacific Life/Ground Zero Communities (and which eventually made possible the revival of a Peace Pagoda now being constructed!) PLC 2020 will screen the “The Arms Race Within,” a film that explores the foundational beginnings of these enduring communities built by Robert and Janet Aldridge as well as James and Shelley Douglass. PLC organizers anticipate the film will spark meaningful discussion ahead of the planned Monday morning action at Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor.

The PLC organizing committee is also pleased to announce that Steve Dear of Eugene, Oregon — brother of well-known peace activist John Dear and an accomplished peacemaker and climate activist in his own right — will be the keynote speaker at PLC 2020. Steve will discuss the struggle against nuclear weapons, militarism and climate change, as well as important linkages that can strengthen and unite these resistance movements.

To help broaden PLC solidarity networks with fellow Earth Protectors, PLC 2020 will host Abby Brockway (of

the ‘Delta 5’) and Larry Morrell, executive director of the Sound Defense Alliance on Whidbey Island (www.sounddefensealliance.org). These two will form a panel to educate participants on the environmental threats posed by Growler jets and oil trains.

On the lighter side, The Irthlingz Duo of Orcas Island will be providing musical accompaniment to our PLC weekend with their uplifting, inspiring and environmentally-socially aware music. Please see their website at <https://www.irthlingz.com/>

To register for PLC, or for more information please click on the following link: <https://www.gzcenter.org/event/pacific-life-community-gathering-2020/>

We hope to see you there!

Elizabeth Murray a member of *Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity (VIPS)* and the *Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action*, where she serves as *Member-in-Residence*.

Pope Francis Again Condemns Nuclear Weapons

By Rodney Brunelle

Speaking from Nagasaki's Atomic Bomb Hypocenter Park on November 24, 2019, Pope Francis acknowledged how “One of the deepest longings of the human heart is for security, peace and stability.” But rather than helping us to realize this natural human desire, “nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction... seem always to thwart it,” the pope said. To make this a reality - “A world of peace, free from nuclear weapons... calls for involvement on the part of all: individuals, religious communities and civil society, countries that possess nuclear weapons and those that do not, the military and private sectors, and international organizations,” the pope said.

Later on the same day in his address from the Peace Memorial in Hiroshima, Pope Francis again stressed the immorality of nuclear weapons when he said, “With deep conviction I wish once more to declare that the use of atomic energy for the purposes of war is today, more than ever, a crime not only against the dignity of human beings but against any possible future for our common home. The use of atomic energy for purposes of war is immoral, just as the possessing of nuclear weapons is immoral, as I already said two years ago.”

We know with repentant hearts the catastrophic humanitarian and environmental suffering inflicted on the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. Apart from these atrocities and the decades-long threat of total annihilation, we have to acknowledge the resources wasted

Pope Francis... continued on page 7

Ground Zero Activist Appears in Court

“Conscientious Protest” Recognized by Federal Judge

By Glen Milner

On October 23, Peace activist James Manista appeared in U.S. District Court, Western District of Washington, in Tacoma, Washington. Manista was charged with crossing the federal blue line onto federal property at the main gate of the Trident nuclear submarine base on May 11, 2019.

Mr. Manista was the only demonstrator to enter federal property on May 11. Mr. Manista later stated, *“Encouraged by the heroism of protestors and filled with a hope we can respond rationally and creatively to the threatening curse of planetary horror, I carried my banner asserting nuclear weapons are immoral (to produce, stockpile, and use) onto the ground of those most likely to need reading it and taking its message to heart.”*

At the same May 11 demonstration, eight other peace activists blocked the main gate entrance to the Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor on the Kitsap County side of the blue line with banners that read: *“Disarm Trident, Deploy Peace”*, *“Congress Wants \$1 Trillion for Nuclear Weapons”* and *“What Will Be Left for Our Children?”* The demonstration commemorated the original anti-war message of Mother’s Day, which calls for the abolition of war and militarism.

Mr. Manista was charged with [U.S. Code § 1382](#), *Entering military, naval, or Coast Guard property*, subjecting him to a possible 6 months in jail and \$5,000 fine. James Manista pled “not guilty” at his arraignment on September 4, 2019, in U.S. District Court in Tacoma.

On October 23, Mr. Manista changed his plea in the courtroom to “guilty” and read an impassioned statement explaining his opposition to nuclear weapons. The Navy prosecutor recommended a \$50 fine for James Manista’s act. Magistrate Judge Theresa Fricke accepted Mr. Manista’s guilty plea and stated, *“I will lower the recommended fine in recognition of defendant’s conscientious protest”* and lowered the fine to \$25. James Manista agreed to pay the \$25 fine, \$10 mandatory fee, and \$30 for processing the case.

At the same time as the hearing in Tacoma, [Plowshares peace activists](#) who entered the other Trident nuclear submarine base at Kings Bay, Georgia on April 4, 2018 were also in federal court in Brunswick, Georgia. The members of the [Kings Bay Plowshares 7](#) face decades in prison for their nonviolent direct action at the East Coast Trident submarine base.

On October 23, Mr. Manista stated in the courtroom in Tacoma, Washington:

“After study and prayer, I concluded our nuclear policy of Mutually Assured Destruction is an irrational delusion which, by accident or intention, will inevitably one day annihilate all life on earth—an omnicide where neither we nor roaches nor viruses survive. We have ignored this for close to 75 years as if, cowed and lulled by our country’s militarism, we slept on an ever costlier, ever larger pile of dynamite, trusting that diabolical MADness to prevent our obliteration. But we have seen ingenious systems fail and we know fissile materials have been misplaced, lost, or stolen. For decades we presumptively feared it would be a maniac from some other country who might topple the Jenga tower of worldwide death. I decided I could no longer by silence be complicit in this risk of the

greatest conceivable evil.

“Heartened by the heroism of protestors like the Plowshares 7 and my fellow Ground Zero colleagues, and filled with a hope of responding rationally and creatively to the prospect of planetary horror, I had a banner made asserting “Nuclear weapons are immoral” (to produce, stockpile, and use) and displayed it on the ground of those most likely to benefit from reading it and taking its message to heart. I did not just trespass on the base which—without my banner—I had no cause to do—but with it I finally and publicly answered the duty of my conscience and exercised my right of free speech where the federal government seemed not to want me to.



James Manista, at center, with supporters before his federal hearing in Tacoma. Photo by Joanne Dufour.

“Your honor has the opportunity—as do all—to join the community resisting nuclear madness. Declare the money, genius, and effort we have so far expended out of fear a moral waste. Declare we could have aided the world to have cleaner water, wider education, more hospitals, and all manner of economic development instead of spreading a debilitating fear of impending doom.

“Through our well-intentioned wizardry we led nations to the precipice of nuclear despair. By courage we can lead them safely away to begin the tasks of justice for a peaceful world.”

At the end of the hearing on October 23, Magistrate Judge Theresa Fricke told Mr. Manista, *“I respect your First Amendment protest and your firmly-held beliefs.”*

Glen Milner has worked with Ground Zero since the days of White Train resistance. He lives in Lake Forest Park with his wife Karol.

The judiciary “precluded truth-telling in the courtroom” Kings Bay Plowshares Activists Convicted

By Jack Cohen-Joppa

“...You are the hope you have arrived to find.”

So ended a brief message that Fr. Steve Kelly wrote from jail last month to be read to more than 100 friends and supporters. We had travelled from across the United States for a Festival of Hope on the eve of the trial of the Kings Bay Plowshares in coastal Brunswick, Georgia.

While many of us hoped for their acquittal, Steve reminded us that hope in the nuclear age comes first from building community, and hope is sustained every time we act together for a nuclear-free future.

The 70-year-old Jesuit knows something about sustaining hope in hard places. This time, he’s already been in jail for over a year and a half. He was arrested with six other Catholic nuclear abolitionists – Mark Colville, Clare Grady, Martha Hennessy, Elizabeth McAlister, Patrick O’Neill and Carmen Trotta – in the wee hours of April 5, 2018, inside Submarine Base Kings Bay. There they cut fences and used hand tools, paint and human blood to condemn nuclear weapons and carry out symbolic acts of disarmament.

The Kings Bay Plowshares joined a nearly 40-year tradition of more than 100 nonviolent direct actions where participants give form to the Biblical prophecy of Isaiah and “beat swords into plowshares.” Five of the seven took part in earlier Plowshares actions and have spent time in federal prison – in Steve’s case, more than ten years.

Kings Bay is the home port for six (of 14) U.S. Trident nuclear-powered submarines. In a perverse double-down for doom, the Georgia base also regularly services Great Britain’s allied fleet of four Trident nuclear subs. The U.S. Tridents can each launch up to 24 Trident ballistic missiles bearing multiple nuclear warheads. Each packs five to thirty times the punch of the bombs that destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Each submarine carries the potential to destroy life on earth as we know it.

Legal wrangling over a novel defense strategy delayed this trial longer than any previous Plowshares trial. Four decades of defending anti-nuclear resistance in federal court have resulted in binding legal precedent against any defense based on necessity, lesser harm, in-

ternational law or the unconstitutional establishment of a state religion of nuclearism.

Trying a new tack, the Kings Bay Plowshares sought a reduction or dismissal of charges based on the 1993

Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA). RFRA mandates that government must show a compelling interest and employ the least restrictive means to curtail legitimate expressions of religious faith and practice. RFRA has notoriously been used to defend employers who won’t provide health insurance that includes contraception as a family planning option, and by businesses refusing to serve gay couples.

In pretrial briefs and testimony, Catholic clergy and theologians provided expert support for the legal arguments that a talented volunteer team of attorneys prepared for the defendants.

After final oral arguments in August, Federal Judge Lisa Godbey Wood found that the defendant’s religious beliefs are sincere and deeply held. However, she ruled that the government’s compelling national security interest outweighs their liberty to break into the base for such religious acts.

In a final memo issued just 60 hours before trial, she cut the heart out of their defense. Wood wrote that there is nothing important to be learned about “the defendants’ subjective beliefs about religion and the immorality and illegality of nuclear weapons,” and further that “testimony and argument on these topics creates the danger of unfair prejudice, confusing the issues, misleading the jury, undue delay, wasting time, or needlessly presenting cumulative evidence.”

Thus she forbid the proposed trial testimony of Professors Francis Boyle (International Law) and Jeannine Hill Fletcher (Theology), and Roman Catholic Bishop Joseph Kopacz.

Steve’s message for those gathered at the Festival of Hope addressed this outcome. “We engage the judiciary in the courtroom, one of the more dangerous rooms in the Pentagon. The judiciary at the District, Appellate Circuit and Supreme level have precluded truth telling in the courtroom so that in the words of Daniel Berrigan, a nu-



The Kings Bay Plowshares 7 chose the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., to answer his call to combat “the triple evils of militarism, racism, and materialism.”

Photo courtesy of www.kingsbayplowshares7.org.

Kings Bay Plowshares... continued on page 6

clear holocaust will be legal.”

The trial began on Monday, October 21, with jury selection and opening statements.

While the Catholic faith of the defendants could not be avoided on the stand, the court rigorously enforced its prohibition on any testimony suggesting that faith gave religious, moral or legal justification for their actions. Francis Boyle told a reporter, “This is a kangaroo court with a rubber stamp and a railroad all put together.”

Clare Grady’s opening statement at the end of the first day pushed the limits, and earned a threat from the judge. “I am going to require you to follow my rulings” about a defense of necessity or religious freedom. Other-

“Kings Bay is nice and clean and you never see the blood. All we did was make it more visible.”

wise, she would impose “alternate arrangements for your participation in the trial.”

The prosecution took the second day. The direct actions that led to the arrests were laid out for the jury in testimony and physical evidence.

Four large plastic crates and a wheeled cart overflowed with tools, backpacks, jackets, banners, prayer books and more, all wrapped and tagged. A section of cut fence had been removed, rolled up and brought into court, bound by large zip ties.

The government’s lengthy show and tell was all about what and how, but no why, considering the defendants had already stipulated to all of the evidence and their actions. Heavily featured in the government’s case were edited videos from GoPro cameras that two of the defendants wore that night. Projected on a large screen above the defendants, we watched their actions, listened to their conversations, and when the defense presented its case we heard their prayers.

One camera recorded Patrick and Mark approaching the prominent Strategic Weapons Facility Atlantic sign and display of life-size missiles erected like a shrine inside the base. They struck the Trident D-5 missile replica with a hammer cast from melted guns, and removed the sign’s illuminated letters.

Clare and Martha joined them after their work at the administration building. There they’d secured the entrance with yellow crime-scene tape, marked the insignia with blood and hung a banner stating “The Ultimate Logic of Trident is Omnicide,” echoing Dr. Martin Luther King’s observation that the ultimate logic of racism is genocide. The group had consciously chosen the 50th anniversary of his assassination to take action against what he identified as the “evil triplets” of racism, militarism and extreme materialism. They posted an indictment of Trident’s violation of international law and left a copy of Daniel Ellsberg’s book, *The Doomsday Machine: Confessions of a Nuclear War Planner*.

The other camera showed Liz, Steve and Carmen as they cut fences to reach the brightly lit road between the

final pair of fences that surround the nuclear bunkers. We heard them greet the armed responders, “We come in peace, we mean you no harm.” They held a banner with four bold words: NUCLEAR WEAPONS. IMMORAL. ILLEGAL.

The defense presented their case on the third day of the trial, with the testimony of 6 of the 7 defendants, who addressed the why. Over repeated objections, they struggled to stay on the approved script while parrying the prosecution’s relentless, often sarcastic dismissals of their active conscience as simple criminal intent. Still, each shined in moments of testimony.

Patrick O’Neill acknowledged that they’d used “high drama” to make their point about first-strike nuclear weapons. “I draw a correlation with Jesus cleansing the Temple... like smashing the golden calf in the Hebrew Bible.”

The symbol of blood used to mark a sidewalk, insignias, and the missile shrine, he explained, “has clear meaning in the context of faith... The blood of sacrifice of Jesus and the everlasting covenant. And blood symbolizes what happens in war... Kings Bay is nice and clean and you never see the blood. All we did was make it more visible. It was already there.”

In testimony later, he described theirs as prophetic action: going to a place of sin, and addressing it.

Martha Hennessy, the granddaughter of Dorothy Day, who cofounded the Catholic Worker movement, spoke of how her grandmother’s early public condemnation of nuclear weapons influenced her own views. She reflected on her Catholic belief that “It is not enough to attend Mass. I also have to show I care through my works that this is what I know.”

Carmen Trotta’s passion could not be muted on the stand. He said that they went to Kings Bay, from where one quarter of the U.S. nuclear arsenal is deployed, to deliver a sacrament and begin the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy.

Of the property damage, he said, “We wanted you to see the outrage of God.”

Clare’s testimony began with the influence of her parents and their Catholic faith. “It’s not enough to just talk about Jesus. Our whole lives are about learning to understand that God is love.” One of her purposes was to take responsibility for the weapons, and withdraw her consent in action.

She was asked to define the word omnicide. “It’s a word that didn’t exist before the nuclear age – the death of all living things. We had no word to describe the possibility.”

Mark Colville spoke of his decision, at age 19, to form a life around voluntary poverty, in community, among the poor. “My religion says faith is a lie without action. Faith is expressed in deeds, not words.”

Government witnesses referred to a missile display, but Mark told why they called it a shrine. Like a shrine,

he said, the site is arranged to provide honor and give reverence to missiles.

Why had he painted “idol” and “blasphemy” on them? Because they place other than God at the center of earthly life. Idols are to be smashed.

He described their actions as more than symbolic, but also sacramental: actions which call into reality that which is not yet real.

In her testimony, Liz addressed the centrality of prayer to the group’s planning. Her attorney, Bill Quigley, opened an evidence box to hold up the banner Liz, Steve and Carmen had displayed near the bunkers. What did those words mean?

“The nuclear weapons at Kings Bay are poison and illegal,” she said. “If you understand the kill power – if they aren’t illegal, they ought to be.”

“I need to witness against these weapons for the sake of the children and grandchildren,” she concluded.

Fr. Steve Kelly, representing himself, was the only defendant who did not testify nor offer an opening or closing statement. Instead, he quietly and prayerfully listened to the proceedings.

Any suspense about the outcome of their trial was short-lived. The jury of 12 returned within two hours, convicting the seven on four counts each – misdemeanor trespass and three felonies: destruction of government property; depredation of government property on a military installation, and conspiracy. Each faces a maximum of up to 20 years in prison, but taking requisite factors into account, maximum terms are not expected.

Pre-sentencing reports and recommendations for sentence will be prepared before a sentencing date is set, possibly in January. Six defendants have been released with curfew and travel restrictions; Fr. Kelly is not eligible for release due to an outstanding federal case from an earlier protest at Sub-Base Bangor.

After the verdict was announced and jurors dismissed, a single voice rose in the overflow courtroom, joined by a growing chorus:

“Rejoice! Rejoice! Again I say rejoice!”

The halls and stairwell filled with song as six of the defendants, their attorneys, family members and supporters departed to join others outside, while Steve Kelly was returned to the local jail.

Together, we embodied the hope we came there to find.

Jack Cohen-Joppa and Felice Cohen-Joppa are editors and coordinators of the *Nuclear Resister*, providing comprehensive information about and support for imprisoned anti-nuclear activists since 1980. For more information about the Kings Bay Plowshares, including their biographies, legal documents from the case, and how to support them as they await sentencing, visit kingsbayplowshares7.org. Originally published on November 10, 2019 by *Beyond Nuclear International* at www.beyondnuclearinternational.org.

and the illnesses and deaths directly caused by the nuclear weapons industrial complex. “The money that is squandered and the fortunes made through the manufacture, upgrading, maintenance and sale of ever more destructive weapons are an affront crying out to heaven,” declared the pope.

PROTECT ALL LIFE was the motto chosen for Pope Francis’ Apostolic Journey to Japan and it was a recurring theme in his addresses, speeches and homilies. Pope Francis repeatedly stressed that protecting ALL life and providing peace and security for ALL, will be realized only through true global solidarity, honest collaboration and sustained effort from ALL. Threats of nuclear annihilation will only continue to frustrate humanity’s deep seated longing for peace and security, according to him.

The pontiff stressed how the Catholic Church is committed to continue “working to support the principal international legal instruments of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, including the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.” The Vatican was one of the first nation states to ratify this United Nations treaty in 2017. Currently there are 80 signatories and 34 nations have already ratified it.

The mere possession of nuclear weapons has been unequivocally declared immoral by the leader of the world’s more than 1.2 billion Catholics.

Here in Puget Sound, which is home to the largest concentration of this nation’s deployed nuclear weapons, local Pax Christi members are encouraged that Pope Francis’ recent and repeated calls to rid the world of nuclear weapons will inspire local Catholics to conscientiously consider the pope’s prophetic teaching and help them decide what action they can take.

According to Deacon Denny Duffell of Pax Christi Northwest, many members locally were moved by the pope’s words in Japan, as well as by a recent article, [“Pope Francis Condemns Nuclear Weapons: So Why The Silence?”](#) by Tony Magliano. In response, members here are preparing to reach out to the bishops and priests of the archdiocese, urging them to respond to and promote the pope’s outreach to the world.

In the 1980s, former Seattle Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen inspired broad ecumenical resistance to the nuclear armed Trident submarines at Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor on Hood Canal. In Archbishop Hunthausen’s words, “Trident is the Auschwitz of Puget Sound.”

Is it not time for all faithful Catholics - bishops, priests and laity- here in Puget Sound, home to enough nuclear warheads to destroy Creation dozens if not hundreds of times over, to heed Pope Francis’ leadership and to follow in the prophetic footsteps of their former local archbishop?

Rodney Brunelle is a member of Pax Christi and leads the overpass banner effort for Ground Zero in the warmer months of the year.

GROUND ZERO

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arrived to find.”*

— Fr. Steve Kelly

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What in the World is Going On?

By Bernie Meyer

In memory of Mahatma Gandhi's 150th birthday, which took place on October 2, 2019, Ground Zero member Bernie Meyer traveled to India in September and October. This was the 15th year in which Meyer traveled to India and portrayed Gandhi for audiences there. He returned to the United States to participate in the 50th commemoration of the 1970 massacre at Kent State University.

On January 30, the 71st anniversary of Gandhi's assassination, Meyer will present about his travel experiences and the current crises humanity faces. He wants to share the both deep realities and the wonders of good tidings of love. The presentation will take place at 7:00pm, January 30, at New Traditions Fair Trade and Café. New Traditions is located at the corner of 5th Ave. and Water St. in downtown Olympia.

Peace Pagoda Construction Continues Through the Winter

By Rev. Senji Kanaeda



Work on the Peace Pagoda site has begun in the three months since the Ground Purification Ceremony on August 24. The task of compacting the ground, pictured above, was just completed before a heavy winter rainfall.