

It's Time for Civil Disobedience

It's Time to End the Nuclear Nightmare

Do the recent action and trial of the Transform Now Plowshares call us to follow their profoundly moving example?

Transform Now Plowshares—Megan Rice, Greg Boertje-Obed, and Michael Walli—were recently convicted of felony trespass and sabotage for their civil disobedience at the United States Nuclear Processing Facility in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. They face steep prison terms for their intention to stop Oak Ridge's capacity for manufacturing death.

Surely the example is of three sincere and dedicated non-violent people who take as their mission the job of trying to save the world from total destruction.

What is stopping so many of us who are actively engaged in the movement for peace and justice from disobeying laws that protect the death factories that are nuclear power plants and nuclear weapons facilities?

Who, exactly, *is* trespassing when non violent citizens are *convicted* of trespassing at a DEATH FACTORY like Oak Ridge OR other military OR nuclear installation? The trespassing law that *protects* nuclear death factories should be examined. The death factories are trespassing on all of us. *The death factories are violating our right to life.* It doesn't matter that Oak Ridge or other nuclear installations resides on so-called "private property." Every single day that the Oak Ridge death factory facility operates, it enables death. It has *nothing* to do with *life*.

Yet, our Declaration of Independence assigns our right to *life* as the *primary* right, even before liberty, even before the pursuit of happiness. "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all people are created equal and are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

The right to *life* and not the threat of *death* is the foundation of the law in this land. The so-called "private property" protection pales with the fundamental value of the right to *life*. Nothing in the eloquence of United States law *legitimately* protects any death factory. Which legal concept is more important: the right to life or the right to property? Legal protection of property amounts to a national disgrace and, when the law protects death factories, the law perpetrates crimes

against humanity.

Should laws that foster death be observed or breached?

Isn't it more important that we embrace laws that ensure the survival of future life on this planet? Should we not be willing to risk consequences of the short-sighted legal system that may result if we break unjust laws? Shouldn't the Transform Now Plowshares be our inspiration and our guide?

How does one compare damage to property done by Transform Plowshares to the destruction of life constantly occurring at *every* nuclear power plant and weapons facility? What about the violation of life caused by uranium mining inherent to devastating nuclear endeavors?

Imminent danger has never been more imminent. The time for procrastination is long past.

“There are two types of laws: just and unjust,” writes Martin Luther King, Jr. in his letter from Birmingham Jail. “One has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws. An unjust law is no law at all.”

Rereading the MLK entire letter reminds us with clarity and energy that we are *required* to meet unjust laws with civil disobedience

I do hope WILPF women will become leaders in endeavors of civil disobedience in their local communities, in their states, in their country, and in their world. As WILPF together, united and in solidarity, let us go forward in profound civil disobedience and inspire others to join us.

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