Dismantle The System

Kings Bay Plo worship 7 update p. 7

“Dismantle” by Becky McIntyre

Imperialism, Racism, White Supremacy, Capitalism, Massacre, Patriarchy, White Theology, Politics, National Colonialism, Empire
INJUSTICE IS BUILT INTO THE FABRIC OF OUR INSTITUTIONS

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By MATT HARPER

The guilty convictions of Derek Chauvin robbing George Floyd were not justice. They did not transform any structures. They did not end police violence. They did not bring George Floyd back to his children. In fact, Derek Chauvin became the sacrificial offering of Police Chief Medaria Arradondo, the Minneapolis Police Department, and the “justice” system at large. Why? Because power knows it is better to pin the sins of institutions onto individuals—in this situation, to uphold the theory of the “bad apple”—in the hopes of both quelling the growing power of those demanding radical change and lulling us back into a slumber.

And though this verdict is not the “victory” anyone deserves, still, it must be celebrated for what it is: a small step toward individual accountability for those who uphold white supremacy and, maybe, precedence for the future deterrence and convictions of state violence.

As a Catholic Worker, I have long bemoaned the filthy rotten system, to paraphrase Dorothy Day. As an abolitionist, I have no illusion that our current structures and systems will EVER bring about the world where all receive the justice God demands for them. Injustice is built into the fabric of our institutions.

But our protest has to be more comprehensive than prophetic witness alone and deeper than purity politics (where we value having “pure” principles over concrete impact). We need new ways to dismantle all systems of harm (our economic system, our political system, our legal system, and more).

That said, we must not dismiss the possibility of working within these systems, with an integrity that honors our values and does not lose sight of the complexity of the injustice around us. Strategically leveraging the avenues available to us, wielding them against themselves, might be a part of the required work we need to celebrate and pursue.

Let us be clear: our systems have made non-participation an impossibility. On the moving train of empire, I am conflicted, continually reaping the benefits of its violence, no matter what I suggest or where I sit. What does it mean to reject militarism while also consuming goods intrinsically connected to U.S. imperialism? What does it mean to condemn capitalism while also accepting many of the things it provides? What does we admire did their work from within: Grace Lee Boggs, St. Oscar Romero, Ella Baker, Martin Luther King Jr., Dolores Huerta. They may have advocated for a transformed world, but they used the imperfect world available to them to make that happen.

We need all the tools. We need to see the possibility of all that is before us and not just their limitations. We need a nuanced understanding of what our systems do and offer so that we can wield them with skill.

This does not mean we blindly engage as our culture encourages, or that any use of systems is inherently a productive way forward. We can hold the tension that “the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house” as Andre Lorde so wisely offered, while also holding that something as small and random as a shoe can break the cog of a machine and halt an industry. Archimedes said, “If you give me a lever and a place to stand, I can move the world.” So, let us be bold and imaginative in seeing what levers we have access to and where we can put them.

Most of the classes I took in my 22 years of education did not challenge the status quo. They did not sharpen my lenses nor instill in me the skills needed to build power and create change. But it was in those spaces of learning (some of the more diverse spaces of my earlier years), that seeds were planted. I am who I am today because I had a few substantive teachers and mentors who invited me to be transformed. I learned much in those spaces because a few radical, justice-oriented people chose to step into them and tend to me.

When Carlos Montes of Centro CSO in Boyle Heights referred to himself as a “revolutionary reformist” on May Day this year, it was with the insight that while some reforms give more resources and power to the systems that harm our people, others (non-reformist reforms) strip power and resources away from them. Can we be wise as serpents to discern the difference? Can we, like Jesus and the Plowshares activists, wield our values AND the precepts and structures of our world to do good and defend life? A legislature full of Alexandria Ocasio-Cortezes would shift our political system.

When Pedram, a volunteer and friend of the LACW, joined Black Lives Matter Los Angeles to bring lawsuits against the Los Angeles Police Department for their actions
Thismaxim, in the United States of America? Many, if not most, people either do not recognize this fact, or simply refuse to accept it, choosing instead to live in denial. Yet reality is it, and it did not begin with the Trump regime, nor will it end with the Biden regime. As a society it behooves us, as scripture articulates, to have “eyes that see and ears that hear,” adopt at comprehending what is hidden in plain sight, to understand those matters that have become a dangerous threat not only to our society, but to the world as well. Every Gomorrah, if anyone not familiar, is a scholar and cultural critic. One of the founding theorists of criti
cal pedagogy in the United States, he is best known for his pioneering work in the areas of critical pedagogy, media studies, and critical theory. Giroux’s excellent and extensive writing has won him national and international attention, and he has written for a range of public and scholarly sources. He has written more than 70 books; published more than 500 papers; and published hundreds of chapters in others books, articles in magazines, and more. In the American Nightmare, Giroux clearly articulates the utterly dysnaptic situation in which we find ourselves, and the changes that must do before it is too late. He painstakingly records and critically engages us at this point and what must be achieved to gain control from the authoritari
anism that has gripped our nation.
In last year’s protest, he took a tool created for protecting power and used it against that power. This work has required the LAPD to change policies and procedures for prison abolition, but they have also provided some real changes to those individuals harmed by police, they disrupted the momentum of a violent system, and the LAPD must do before it is too late. He painstakingly records and critically engages us at this point and what must be achieved to gain control from the authoritari
anism that has gripped our nation.

Not only were we able to redirect billions of dollars from jails into mental health, housing, and more, but we now have a principal team of people fighting for prison abolition in LA. Though I would have loved a real-Damascene conversion by my own politics, I am glad people met me where I was and invested in the slow work of my transformation. And we do not need all of the people to form; there is a group in Erin Chenoweth from Beats in the Parks studying hundreds of movements over the last century, it only takes 3.5% of a group to create a movement that resolve quickly. As the book progresses, it leads to greater unravel with the Church that is hell-bent on riding the world of anything out of its control and deemed herey.

This quick-paced chronicle is crammed full of facts of the Crusades, clothe dying, faithful, and everything in between. Intertwined in historic medieval events and camesses of religious figures, Giroux introduces the reader (if not for the first time, then certainly other than to a depth introduction) to the Beguines. The Beguines were semi-monastic women that lived outside of reli
gious community and carried out the works of mercy. Their movement grew organically throughout Western Europe in the 13th-16th centuries. It is remarkable how this small female-led revolution was able to form in a time when women had little to no rights. Hollywood does not think the world of 800 years ago dif
ers much from the world we live in today, “I believe the bold witness of a courageous few will be the most familiar, particularly given the remarkable parallels between their era of the Crusades and our own.”

As I learned more about them, the Beguines, the Begums, the Nuns, I became more familiar to, closely mirroring today’s Catholic Worker movement. The movement, they created a variety of callings and work: taking in the dying, educating girls, caring for the poor in their midst, cultivat
ing land, weaving, and brewing beer to name a few. They defined the world in a way that does it all, and seemingly tirelessly. From my own time at the LACW, of the book seemed like a fairy tale of what an ideal community could be, with only a touch of internal conflict. For example, as we work on consens
sus decision-making at the LACW, part of me wants to go to the 13th century and live.
The following article and graphic originally appeared on scheidt.com on March 2, 2021. Reprinted with permission.

By CHRIS HEDGES

The two million deaths that have resulted from the ruling elites mishandling of the global pandemic will be dwarfed by what nations will regard as a global catastrophe that awaits us, already baked into the ecosystem from the failure to curb the use of fossil fuels and animal agriculture, preserving new pandemics, and migrations of billions of desperate people, plummeting crop yields, mass starvation and systems collapse.

The science that elucidates this social death is known to the ruling elites. The science that warned us of this pandemic and others that will certainly follow, is known to the ruling elites. The science that shows that a failure to halt carbon emissions will lead to a climate crisis and ultimately the extinction of the human species, and most other species, is known to the ruling elites. They cannot claim ignorance. Only indifference.

The facts are incontrovertible. Each year’s mortality rates have been hotter than the last. In 2018, the U.N. International Panel on Climate Change released a special report on the systemic effects of a 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) rise in temperatures. It makes for very grim reading. Soaring temperature rises — we are already at a 1.2 degrees Celsius (2.16 degrees Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels — are already baked into the system, meaning that even if we stopped all carbon emission today, we still face catastrophe. Anything above a temperature rise of 2.5 degrees Celsius will render the earth uninhabitable.

The Arctic ice along with the Greenland ice sheet are now expected to melt regardless of how much carbon we reduce in carbon emission.

A seven-meter (23-foot) rise in sea level, which is what will take place once the ice is gone, means every town and city on a coast at sea level will have to be evacuated.

As the climate crisis worsens, the political constructions will tighten, making public resistance difficult. We do not live, yet, in the brutal Orwellian state that appears on the horizon, one where all dissidents will suffer the fate of Julian Assange. But this Orwellian state is not far away. This makes it imperative that we act now.

The ruling elites, despite the accelerating and tangible ecological collapse, mollify us, either by meaningless gestures or denial. They are the architects of social murder.

The elites thrive in this system, as long as they serve the dictates of what Louis Mumford called the “megamachine,” the convergence of science, economy, techics, and political power unified into an integrated, bureaucratic structure whose sole goal is to perpetuate itself. This structure, Mumford noted, is antidemocratic and scientific, “to life-enhancing values.” But to challenge the megamachine, to name and condemn its death wish, is to be expelled from its inner sanctum.

The massive resources allocated to the military, which when the costs of the Veterans Administration are added to the Department of Defense budget come to $826 billion a year, are the most glaring example of our suicidal folly, symptomatic of all decaying civilizations that splinter diminishing resources in institutions and projects that accelerate their decline.

The U.S. military—which accounts for 38 percent of military spending worldwide—is incapable of combating the real existential crisis. The fighter jets, satellites, aircraft carriers, fleets of warships, nuclear submarines, missiles, tanks and vast arsenals of weaponry are useless against pandemics and the climate crisis. The war machine does absolutely nothing to mitigate the harmful and expensive mini-environments that sicken and poison populations or make life unlivable.

Air pollution in this nation already kills an estimated 200,000 people a year while children in decayed cities such as Flint, Michigan, are damaged for life by contaminated drinking water.

The prosecution of endless and futile wars, costing anywhere from $5 to $7 trillion, the maintenance of some 800 military bases in over 70 countries, along with the endemic fraud, waste and mismanagement by the Pentagon at a time when the survival of the species is at stake is self-destructive. The Pentagon has spent more than $67 billion alone on a ballistic missile defense system that few believe will actually work and billions more on a series of dead weapons systems, including the $22 billion Zumwalt destroyer. And, on top of all this, the U.S. military emitted 1.2 billion pounds of carbon emissions between 2001 and 2017, twice the annual output of the nation’s passenger vehicles.

A decade from now we will look back at the current ruling class as the most criminal in human history, willfully dooming millions to death, millions of people to die, including those from this pandemic, which dwarf the murderous excesses of the killers of the past including the Europeans that carried out the genocide of indigenous peoples throughout the Americas, the Nazis that exterminated 12 million Jews, the Stalinists or Mao’s Cultural revolution. This is the largest crime against humanity ever committed.

It is being committed in front of us. And it is one that we are willfully being herded like sheep to slaughter.

It is not that most people have faith in the ruling elites. They know they are being betrayed. They feel vulnerable and afraid. They understand that their misery is unacknowledged and unparalleled to the global elites, who have concentrated staggering amounts of wealth and power into the hands of a tiny cabal of rapacious oligarchs, to undermine demagogues such as Donald Trump.

Social divisions benefit the ruling class, which has built media silos that feed packaged hate to compete with demographics. The greater the social antagonisms, the less the elites have to fear. If those griped by poverty, solidarity becomes numerically superior—nearly half of the U.S. electorate rejects the ideological ruling class and embraces conspiracy theories and a demagogue—the elites will accommodate the new social configuration, which will accelerate the social murder.

The Biden administration will not carry out the economic, political, social or environmental changes we need. It will save us. The fossil fuel industry will...
Bursting Bubbles

By Maggie Miller

The end of the world is near. Some say it is always near. We are biding our time, biding our time, looking for an exit, a beginning, a change. But is there really an end to our suffering? Are we ever truly free from the forces that keep us imprisoned? We may think we are, but what if we are not? What if the forces that hold us back are not just external, but also internal? What if we are the ones who are keeping ourselves trapped? What if we are the ones who are preventing ourselves from being free? What if we are the ones who are preventing ourselves from being free? What if we are the ones who are preventing ourselves from being free? What if we are the ones who are preventing ourselves from being free? What if we are the ones who are preventing ourselves from being free? What if we are the ones who are preventing ourselves from being free? What if we are the ones who are preventing ourselves from being free? What if we are the ones who are preventing ourselves from being free? What if we are the ones who are preventing ourselves from being free? What if we are the ones who are preventing ourselves from being free? What if we are the ones who are preventing ourselves from being free? What if we are the ones who are preventing ourselves from being free? What if we are the ones who are preventing ourselves from being free? What if we are the ones who are preventing ourselves from being free? What if we are the ones who are preventing ourselves from being free? What if we are the ones who are preventing ourselves from being free? What if we are the ones who are preventing ourselves from being free? What if we are the ones who are preventing ourselves from being free? What if we are the ones who are preventing ourselves from being free? What if we are the ones who are preventing ourselves from being free? What if we are the ones who are preventing ourselves from being free? What if we are the ones who are preventing ourselves from being free? What if we are the ones who are preventing ourselves from being free? What if we are the ones who are preventing ourselves from being free? What if we are the ones who are preventing ourselves from being free? What if we are the ones who are preventing ourselves from being free? What if we are the ones who are preventing ourselves from being free? What if we are the ones who are preventing ourselves from being free? What if we are the ones who are preventing ourselves from being free? What if we are the ones who are preventing ourselves from being free? What if we are the ones who are preventing ourselves from being free? What if we are the ones who are preventing ourselves from being free? What if we are the ones who are preventing ourselves from being free? What if we are the ones who are preventing ourselves from being free? What if we are the ones who are preventing ourselves from being free? What if we are the ones who are preventing ourselves from being free? What if we are the ones who are preventing ourselves from being free? What if we are the ones who are preventing ourselves from being free? What if we are the ones who are preventing ourselves from being free? What if we are the ones who are preventing ourselves from being free? What if we are the ones who are preventing ourselves from being free? What if we are the ones who are preventing ourselves from being free? What if we are the ones who are preventing ourselves from being free? What if we are the ones who are preventing ourselves from being free? What if we are the ones who are preventing ourselves from being free? What if we are the ones who are preventing ourselves from being free? What if we are the ones who are preventing ourselves from being free? What if we are the ones who are preventing ourselves from being free? What if we are the ones who are preventing ourselves from being free? What if we are the ones who are preventing ourselves from being free? What if we are the ones who are preventing ourselves from being free? What if we are the ones who are preventing ourselves from being free? What if we are the ones who are preventing ourselves from being free? What if we are the ones who are preventing ourselves from being free? What if we are the ones who are preventing ourselves from being free? What if we are the ones who are preventing ourselves from being free? What if we are the ones who are preven...
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as he watched a protest against
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and remind me of the blessings of
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burning bush and a mysterious pillar

the women create for themselves.

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tion to the others than, “You’ll see!”
building for the property to start a new
school. It is an empowering read for

to a shared human community…
encounter the pain of others and
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the imagination, the war on truth,
and the attack on democratic public
spheres that the power and horror of
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On April 13, in a brief hearing in federal court in Tacoma, Washington, Fr. Steve Kelly, S.J., appeared in person with his attorney Blake Kremer and was sentenced to time served and released without conditions for violating his supervised release for a 2017 trespass conviction at the Kitsap-Bangor Trident nuclear submarine base. However, Fr. Steve had to report to the probation department in Georgia to begin his three years of supervised release for his part in the April 4, 2018 plowshares action at the Kings Bay Trident submarine base.

Mark Colville, the last of the Kings Bay Plowshares 7 activists to be sentenced was sentenced on April 8 to 21 months in prison. With 15 years in prison already served, he should be released in about four months with statutory good time. He must self-report by June 8 to MDC, Brooklyn.

Also, on May 5, The Kings Bay Plowshares 7 activists were recipients of the 2020 Paul University Bergann-McAlister Peace Award. It was a Zoom event that included the debut screening of a new documentary: The Berganns: Devout and Daring. It presented in great part and in full, the Berganns and Liz McAlister. If you have the chance, it is well worth your time to view.

For more info see the Kings Bay Plowshares, their website-kingsbayplowshares7.org, and nakgerecister.org

CATHOLIC AGITATOR / 7
We are in need of disposable razors. Also, CANES—used or new. And backpacks—used or new. Thank you. Many blessings.

Many of our hard-working volunteers have blessed us over the years, but with each Catholic Agitator issue printed, our mailing list dwindles. We need, and would greatly appreciate, your assistance scattering seeds of faith that these works of mercy might carry on no matter what crises sweep the world. Please help us keep growing by sharing this issue with someone, or e-mail info@lacatholicworker.org if you do not yet receive this newspaper or if you need extra copies to hand out. Thank you.

If you have fruit trees, specifically citrus fruits, on your property and have an excess, our kitchen guests would certainly appreciate whatever you will not use, especially during this pandemic. Citrus fruits help strengthen the immune system. Please consider donating. Thank you. Many blessings.

The Los Angeles Catholic Worker, founded in 1970, is part of the international Catholic Worker Movement founded in 1933 by Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin. We are a resistance community that operates a free soup kitchen on Skid Row, a house of hospitality in Boyle Heights for some of our unhoused friends from the Row, and publishes this bi-monthly publication – the Catholic Agitator. Visit our website - https://lacatholicworker.org and Los Angeles Catholic Worker on Facebook.