



BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN
NUCLEAR DANGERS & A SAFE,
SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

December 2020

HALF A CENTURY OF WORK TO PROTECT A WORLD AT RISK

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

Margaret Mead

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Dear Friends,

Helping prepare this commemoration of fifty years of struggle for social change has been for me a profoundly emotional experience.

It is quite remarkable—I repeat, quite remarkable—to see what a small group has helped accomplish through commitment and hard work in battles against powerful interests:

- enough bomb-grade uranium to make hundreds of nuclear weapons removed from scores of insecure facilities from which it could have been stolen or diverted;
- the ending of plutonium production for nuclear weapons in the U.S. and Russia;
- the prohibition of ocean dumping of radioactive waste internationally;
- the abandonment of plans for orbiting reactors;
- blocking a proposed radioactive waste dump at Ward Valley that could have contaminated the nearby Colorado River for thousands of generations;
- the closure of five unsafe nuclear facilities; and much more.

We honor those who worked so hard with us to help make those victories for peace, justice, and the environment possible. The work was difficult, the odds were long, and the opposition powerful.

When life gets complicated, I often am reminded that it basically comes down to which Golden Rule one chooses to live one's life by. The first is: "Whoever has the gold makes the rules." The other Golden Rule, of course, is to do unto others as you wish others to do unto you; in short, to love one another. That means fighting the powerful on behalf of the powerless; trying to end war, poverty, and the destruction of this beautiful planet.

Kahlil Gibran defined work as "love made visible." If one loves this planet and the people and other creatures that live upon it, one must work to defend them. Such work is love made visible.

Having the right ideals is not enough. One must live by them, one must put them into practice by hard work for justice, and one must be willing to pay a price.

There is a real cost if we are to follow the second Golden Rule, the true one. It may not involve 27 years in prison, as faced by Mandela, or assassination, as was the fate for Gandhi and King, but a price there is nonetheless. And refusing to pay that price, declining to pick up that burden, condemns to continued suffering those whom we could have helped.

continued on reverse

If you will permit me a few personal words, having worked with Bridge the Gap for five decades, since its inception. I look over the 50 years and see the effects of those years. Indeed, as the old movie line goes, “it is not the years but the mileage,” and there are a lot of miles on me. These hard struggles against powerful interests take a lot out of one. And, as some of you know, I have had to also contend with a fair amount of physical pain and personal loss.

One does not escape a lifetime of battles without a lot of wounds. But I would far rather have battle scars than be untouched because I had sat on the sidelines of struggles for a less suffering world.

Lincoln, in a speech in 1859, said of his longtime adversary Stephen Douglas, “He is so put up by nature that a lash upon his back would hurt him, but a lash on anybody else’s back does not hurt him.” Unlike Douglas, I feel the lash on the back of the slave, the napalm on the child, the ache of the hungry. I cannot shake it. And I cannot stand idly by. Those of you who have helped and supported Bridge the Gap over the years have been kind to have accepted these aspects of my character that have placed me on the margin of a society that is often focused on material things.

The covid-19 pandemic has made us all more acutely aware that it is not given to us to know the number of our days. Looking back over 50 years of our work, I overflow with gratitude for all who played a role in it, and want to thank you.

Do not misread this—I hope for twenty more years of fighting the good fight. But it is a good moment to acknowledge and express gratitude for all who helped, and to express some awe at what we together have accomplished for a world in need of protection.

If you can help us continue the work, we would be very grateful.

Peace, and other responsibilities,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Dan", written in black ink.

Daniel Hirsch

*Contributions can be sent to:
Committee to Bridge the Gap, PO Box 4, Ben Lomond, CA 95005
or made via PayPal or credit card on our website, committeetobridgethegap.org.*

Committee to Bridge the Gap is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization; donations are tax-deductible.