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Jerry McKnight
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Dear Jerry:

Thank you for your great letter with the wonderful news that your book will be coming out in December. That is a grace to hear. Before commenting on your letter, let me first make a request. Will you consider me as a possible endorser of your book by contributing a blurb for publicity purposes?

I ask that for two reasons. The first is purely selfish: I want to read The Last Crusade soon -- before its publication in December. As you know, I've already been waiting for that privilege for a year. Secondly, I am guessing from the flyer that The Last Crusade will be an extremely important book for many people to read. I would like to encourage that process with an endorsement, if you think it would be of help.

I will enclose a vita so you can get a sense of whether or not my support would be helpful to you. I am not well known but I might be able to encourage a somewhat larger audience from people in the Christian peace and justice movement, which I think would be important.

If you feel a possible blurb (no guarantee until I actually read the book) from me would help, I wonder if you could please ask the people at Westview to send me a pre-publication copy of your text as soon as possible. That would indeed be a grace.

I agree with you wholeheartedly that the Ray rifle testing supported by Judge Brown "has fallen into the clutches of politics". I have driven up to Memphis to attend all four of Judge Brown's hearings. There is a war going on there. Every effort possible has been made by the state, other judges, the media, and the federal government in the wings to discredit Brown and suppress his efforts to discover the truth of the matter.

As for Pepper, I agree that he has made major mistakes -- for example, identifying Billy R. Eidson as dead and then getting ambushed by the appearance of the live Billy Eidson on "Turning Point". (But the more basic question remains: Did Eidson command a rifle team in Memphis on 4/4/68?) Too much of Orders to Kill is based on unidentified sources, some of which may have been government disinformation. But I don't fault Pepper for his intention or effort. I have read all of Marc Perrusquia's articles (sent to me by Memphis friends who clip them). I think he writes within the editorial boundaries of a newspaper that is anti-Pepper and has come out strongly against Brown.

I deeply appreciate your recommendations of sources. I do have Harold Weisberg's Never Again! It was in its pages that I met you (page xxv)

and your Poor People's Campaign manuscript (page xxvi). I will definitely return to Never Again! -- as you suggest, a very important book by Weisberg's positing a possible military involvement. I hold the greatest respect for Weisberg's work. Besides Never Again!, Frame-Up and Case Open are also on my shelves.

Your letter encourages me to continue my present direction of studying JFK's conflicts with the Joint Chiefs (and the CIA). I have Newman's Vietnam work, Fursenko's and Naftali's One Hell of a Gamble, the Purcell-Galbraith first-strike article, and Reeve's Profile in Power. I'll have to get Schlesinger's Thousand Days. After reading your letter I rummaged through my old New Yorkers and re-read more carefully your recommended Rhodes piece, "The General and World War Three" -- very helpful.

I'm working my way through the recently issued Department of State Foreign Relations volumes. Extremely important is Vol. VI, Kennedy-Khrushchev Exchanges. Also Vol. VIII, National Security Policy 1961-63; Vol. X, Cuba 1961-62; Vol XI, Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath. These volumes document at length your contention about the JFK-military (and CIA) conflicts.

My long-range project is a book tentatively titled Witnesses: Martin, Malcolm, JFK, and RFK in Light of the Fourth Gospel. All of that is way beyond me right now. I am a beginner in every dimension of my subject.

In addition to the vita, I'll enclose for you a speech, an interview, and an article that bear on these matters and may interest you.

I support and encourage you in your next important project, on the Warren Commission, just as I hope -- once again -- to read and help publicize your already completed The Last Crusade as soon as I possibly can. Please do let me know if you would like me to help with a blurb.

Thanks again for everything, Jerry. May peace be with you on every step of your way.

Gratefully,

Jim

Jim Douglass

encl.

Vita: James Douglass

Jim Douglass has written four books on the theology of nonviolence: The Nonviolent Cross (Macmillan: 1968), Resistance and Contemplation (Doubleday: 1972), Lightning East to West (Crossroads: 1983), and The Nonviolent Coming of God (Orbis: 1991). With his wife Shelley he co-authored Dear Gandhi: Now What? (New Society Publishers: 1988). In 1992 The Nonviolent Coming of God received the Pax Christi Book Award given jointly by Pax Christi USA and the University of Notre Dame. It also received the First Place Award for Spirituality Books given by the Catholic Press Association.

From 1963 to 1965 Jim Douglass served as a theological advisor, on questions of nuclear war and conscientious objection, to Catholic bishops at the Second Vatican Council in Rome. He then taught theology at Bellarmine College, Louisville, Kentucky (1965), the University of Hawaii (1968-69, 71-72), and in the Program for the Study and Practice of Nonviolence at the University of Notre Dame (1969-70).

In 1977 Jim and Shelley Douglass helped found Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action alongside the Trident nuclear submarine base near Seattle, Washington. In the course of the nonviolent campaign to stop Trident, Jim Douglass served a year and a half in jail for acts of civil disobedience. The Douglass' and Ground Zero developed an extended community of people in 250 towns and cities vigiling by the railroad tracks of Trident nuclear weapons shipments.

In September 1989 the Douglass' moved to Birmingham, Alabama, where they are now members of an African-American Catholic parish. From Birmingham Jim Douglass has taken part in a series of peacemaking journeys to the Middle East, including peace walks through Israel, the West Bank, and Jordan and a pilgrimage to Iraq soon after the Persian Gulf War. In 1993 the Douglass' founded Mary's House, a Catholic Worker house of hospitality in Birmingham for homeless families.

In August 1993 Jim Douglass made a pilgrimage to Sarajevo where he met with religious leaders and carried messages between Bosnian families in the U.S. and their relatives trapped in the city. He followed up this initiative with a February 1994 journey to Zagreb and Sarajevo to build support for an interfaith pilgrimage of world religious leaders to Sarajevo. Mirko Pejanović of the Bosnian Presidency gave his government's support to Douglass for the Interfaith Pilgrimage. Reis ul-ulema Mustafa Cerić, head of the Islamic community in Bosnia-Herzegovina, gave Douglass a letter to deliver to Pope John Paul II asking the Pope to join Cerić "in bringing together all the world's faiths in Sarajevo, center of faith which has become a center of suffering and death."

From February 11, first day of Ramadan, to April 3, 1994, Easter Sunday, Jim Douglass fasted in Rome and Belgrade in support of Pope John Paul II, Patriarch Pavle of the Serbian Orthodox Church, and Muslim, Jewish, and other religious leaders joining in a pilgrimage to Sarajevo. Douglass met six times in Rome with Roger Cardinal

Etchegaray, President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. Cardinal Etchegaray told Douglass that Pope John Paul supported his fast and that the Pope hoped to go not only to Sarajevo but to Belgrade and Zagreb as well. In an hour-long meeting on March 10, 1994, in Belgrade, Patriarch Pavle told Douglass that he wished to join the Pope in such a pilgrimage. A partial realization of the Interfaith Pilgrimage was blocked at the last moment in September 1994 when Pope John Paul was forced by threats of retaliation to other parties to cancel his trip to Sarajevo, where he had hoped to meet with Muslim and Serbian Orthodox Church leaders. The Pope finally succeeded in making such a trip to Sarajevo on April 12-13, 1997.

In Summer 1995 and Spring 1996 Jim Douglass returned twice to Iraq. He delivered medicines to children's hospitals in Iraq in open noncooperation with the United Nations sanctions that have killed over 500,000 Iraqi children.

Jim and Shelley Douglass have received the Adin Ballou Peace Award from the Unitarian Universalist Peace Fellowship, the Martin Luther King Award from the Fellowship of Reconciliation, the Paul Beeson Peace Award from the Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility, and the Pope Paul VI Teacher of Peace Award from Pax Christi USA.