

Tribute to Dan Ellsberg for June 10, 2021 Membership Gathering as CFPA presents him with Lifetime Achievement in Peacemaking Award

I am honored and feel very privileged to be presenting tonight's Award for Lifetime Achievement in Peacemaking to Dr. Daniel Ellsberg, on behalf of CFPA.

Over the past 40 years, CFPA has incorporated honoring peacemakers at each annual Membership Gathering. Many of them were volunteers who were unsung heroes and labored in the trenches largely unnoticed. I'm glad we've incorporated honoring such "rank and file" peacemakers, usually about 3 each year. As a society, we are good at honoring military and war heroes. We're not very good at honoring peacemakers.

Tonight, we are excited to honor a world-famous peacemaker who has dedicated most of his adult life to anti-war and anti-nuclear-weapons activism.

Dan Ellsberg first came to prominence in 1971 when he released the top-secret Pentagon Papers that proved that what the US government was telling the American people about how well the Vietnam War was going was utterly false. In 1973, Dan was charged under the Espionage Act and faced a possible sentence of 115 years in prison. A highly deserved Olaf Palme award given in 2018 recognized his "exceptional moral courage."

That is the first thing that really stands out for me out as extraordinary and exceptional about Dan: his moral courage. Untold millions became aware of the US government's massive deception about the Vietnam War because of Dan Ellsberg. As a result, the winding down of that war accelerated and it finally ended in 1973.

My own life trajectory was strongly impacted, and I became passionately involved in the peace movement—starting in the fall of 1968 and continuing in my peacemaking ministries over the past 51 years. Dan's moral courage inspired me to act with greater courage and take more risks in my peace advocacy.

I've also been deeply impressed with Dan's steadfastness and deep commitment in his lifetime of anti-war and anti-nuclear leadership. In 1978, Dan accepted my invitation to speak at a national conference of Mobilization for Survival in Des Moines, IA. I was amazed that he came to the heartland, hardly a mecca for the peace movement, to speak for only travel expenses—no honorarium.

Dan's willingness to speak for relatively modest sized organizations continued to impress me. Soon after the start of the Iraq War, Dan came to speak for an earlier annual CFPA Membership Dinner on a Sunday in Princeton. He stayed an extra day to speak for a luncheon at Princeton's Program on Science and Global Security, and I asked if he could speak that morning at the kick-off for a new CFPA chapter in Monroe Township, NJ. He agreed, and the leaders of this new chapter said they "fell off their chairs" to hear that he would speak for a fledgling local chapter. He drew an overflow crowd of 200, and we were all thrilled.

Last August, Dan graciously agreed to speak for CFPA's annual Hiroshima/Nagasaki Commemoration. It was a webinar format due to the pandemic. What really impressed and inspired me was the moral clarity of Dan's conscience compared to his fellow nuclear war planners. They were fully prepared even in the 1960s to use US nuclear weapons, despite the official Pentagon estimate that an estimated 600 million children, women, and men would die—as Dan said, the equivalent of 100 holocausts.

This past February, we co-sponsored a webinar with Massachusetts Peace Action with Dan discussing his latest book, *The Doomsday Machine: Confessions of a Nuclear War Planner*. This is an outstanding, deeply researched book, and I highly recommend it. His continued effort to educate and activate the public about the unimaginable dangers of nuclear war shows his resolve for his actions to make as big of an impact as possible in favor of concrete steps toward a world without nuclear weapons.

Finally, I want to close this tribute by saying how deeply impressed and inspired I was to recently read in the NY Times that, at the age of 90, Dan has again engaged in dramatic and risky whistleblowing by releasing top-secret documents about how seriously the US considered using nuclear weapons against China in the 1958 Taiwan crisis—despite believing that it would likely lead to the USSR using nuclear weapons against the US homeland in retaliation.

The Times said that Dan may again face charges with long jail sentences for this action. But at 90 years old, his humanitarian and moral commitment to the struggle for global nuclear weapons abolition remains exemplary!

*Presented by the Rev. Robert Moore
CFPA Executive Director*