



## JOE GUMP

### Plowshares Political Prisoner

Joe Gump, 61, grew up in Chicago. In 1949 Joe was married to Jean (Dalton) Gump (also a profiled in this book). Together they raised 12 children. Joe was employed as an engineer making control panels for factories.

Once their children were grown, the Gump's lives changed to that of activism. In March of 1986, on Good Friday, Jean participated in a Plowshares action. The name Plowshares is derived from the biblical mandate of Isaiah to "beat swords into Plowshares." Plowshares actions are faith-based nonviolent acts of direct disarmament at first-strike nuclear weapons systems. At 5:15 PM on August 5, 1987, in Holden, Missouri, Joe Gump participated in a Plowshares action. The time was the exact time that the bomb was dropped in Hiroshima (8:15 AM, August 6, local Japanese time) 42 years previously. The action also coin-

cided with the Catholic Feast of Transfiguration.

Using tools of construction workers — sledgehammers and bolt cutters — Joe and his coworker Jerry Ebner began dismantling the Minuteman II missile silo K-9 near Kansas City, Missouri. Jerry and Joe also poured blood in the shape of a cross, to symbolize the global crucifixion these weapons represent, and hung banners to

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explain the theme of the action. They then prayed, sang, and waited for the military to arrive to arrest them.

One of the strong shapers of Joe's consciousness and his subsequent decision to participate in this action was the history of his German heritage. During the rise of Hitler people were not speaking out strongly enough to prevent the eventual

destruction Hitler caused. Why didn't people knock down Auschwitz? Why are Americans standing by as our government prepares for Auschwitz on a global scale? Joe felt he had to at least remove his consent and do what he could to begin the process of disarmament and try to prevent the real crime of global annihilation.

Joe and Jerry went to trial on the theme of "Is disarmament a crime?" According to international law and most moral and religious codes, the real crime is not disarmament, but the continued arms buildup with all the human costs that go with it.

At a mid-August court hearing they were charged with a two-count felony

indictment: conspiring to damage government property and destruction of government property—both federal charges. In a relatively open trial, the two were allowed to show a video film entitled "Hiroshima/Nagasaki: 1945." This video, which the two carried into the silo with them, contained footage of the immediate effects of the bombs dropped on the two cities. Judge Howard Sachs made it clear in his instruction to the jury that these things were ultimately irrelevant to the case before them. On October 22, 1987, the jury found them guilty. On December 11, Joe was sentenced to 30 months in prison.

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