

225 N 70<sup>th</sup> St, Seattle WA 98103 206-789-5565 <http://www.wwfor.org>

***WWFOR** seeks to replace violence, war, racism and economic injustice with nonviolence, equality, peace and justice. It links and strengthens FOR members and chapters throughout Western Washington in promoting activities consistent with the national FOR statement of purpose. WWFOR helps members and chapters accomplish together what we could not accomplish alone.*



## A Braver Angels Workshop

**Western Washington Fellowship of Reconciliation (WWFOR) invites members, supporters, and others who want to develop communication tools and skills in difficult conversations to register for a 3 hour Braver Angels workshop. This “Depolarization Within” workshop will be held online, Saturday, July 17, 2021, 9:30 am to 12:30 pm (west Coast) Workshop Fee: Donations to Braver Angels accepted.**

Who Can Attend? Anyone interested in examining their own inner polarization and learning strategies to disagree without condemning or ridiculing others.

Goals:

- How to be critical without demonizing, dismissing or stereotyping large swaths of the population.
- How to be more aware of their own “inner polarizer.”
- Strategies for intervening constructively in social conversations with like-minded peers when these conversations veer into contempt and ridicule for people who hold other political views.

An introductory sample of concepts: [Braver Angel video presentation on the WWFOR website](#), listed within the 2021 Spring Assembly.

**Registration:** Click here [Depolarizing Within - Standard \(WA / WWAFor\) - Open to Public Registration, Sat, Jul 17, 2021 at 9:30 AM | Eventbrite \[https://www.eventbrite.com/e/depolarizing-within-standard-wa-wwafor-open-to-public-registration-154152196369\]](#), information David Lambert: [lambertdavid39@gmail.com](mailto:lambertdavid39@gmail.com). You can also contact WWFOR at 206-789-5565.

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## Why North Dakota Wheat Farmers Needed a Public Bank – and Why We Do, Too

by Stoney Bird

North Dakota wheat farmers had had it. Mill owners, grain elevator operators, and railroads, mostly based in Minneapolis, had them at their mercy and their own state government, whether under the Democrats or Republicans, was not stepping up.

So, the farmers took the bit in their teeth.

They formed something called the Nonpartisan League. The League took North Dakota – and many neighboring states and Canadian provinces – by storm. To get the word out the League sent out organizers who were paid commissions each time they signed up a new member of the League and who were issued the newest thing in communications gear – a Model T Ford – so that they could traverse the wide prairies from farmhouse to farmhouse.

Their mascot? A goat, bearing a sign on its side saying, “You can’t get this goat” or “We’ve got the governor’s goat.”

And they had a gifted cartoonist in the person of John Miller Baer who later became one of North Dakota’s Congressmen. (see next page)

From a standing start in 1914 the League controlled the selection of candidates enough in the open primaries so that they took over the governorship, both houses of the state legislature, and the state supreme court by 1918. The legislative session that year was the shortest in North Dakota history. The League legislators just sat down and adopted their program one item after the other.

Here is what their program included:

- A state-operated grain-grading system – grain-grading had previously been conducted by representatives of the mills, presenting an open temptation for false grading often succumbed to
- A state-owned grain elevator
- A state-owned wheat mill
- A state bank deposit guarantee program
- A state highway commission
- Tripled money for education
- New railroad regulations
- Women’s suffrage for presidential and municipal elections
- New tax structure – shifting taxes “from industry and enterprise to privilege”

- Mandatory hail insurance
- Workers’ compensation
- Expanded rights of initiative, referendum and recall
- And the Bank of North Dakota, which would lend to farmers on relatively easy terms.

**This was a revolution – carried out by strictly legal and peaceable means.**

Often smeared in their time as “utopians” and “socialists”, the small-scale wheat farmers who constituted the bulk of League members – and most of the population of the state – had no thought that the state should take over the economy. They had no desire to get rid of capitalism or of private property. After all they were small-scale capitalists and property-owners themselves. They just wanted to temper the excesses of the laissez-faire system so that more than a few could prosper and, as economists delicately say, accumulate.

In this they succeeded, and one of their many lasting achievements was the state bank that is still there.

### What a Public Bank Could Do for Us in Washington

What distinguishes a public bank from any other? For one thing it is owned by one or more government entities at one or more levels rather than by shareholders. (Note: the so-called “Federal” Reserve is not a public bank in this sense. It is owned by the big banks.)

Because of its ownership, a public bank is not by law required to make as much money as it can – though it must of course stay in the black. Instead, it can make investments in the public interest even if they do not make the maximum possible return. For example, it can conduct its operations in countercyclical fashion, lending more during downturns to avert harm to families and businesses and lending less during upturns to avoid bubbles.

Another way that a public bank can support the public interest is by lending to our governments at more favorable rates. And since a public bank would be owned by one or more public entities, any profits that it makes from handling the public’s money would be returned to those entities instead of flying off to a private-sector bank’s private shareholders.

The people of North Dakota saw these ideas operating during the 2008 collapse. Unlike nearly all private-sector banks in the United States and around

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the world, the Bank of North Dakota **increased** its lending during the Great Recession. The result was that North Dakota suffered fewer foreclosures, fewer bankruptcies, and lower unemployment than any other state.

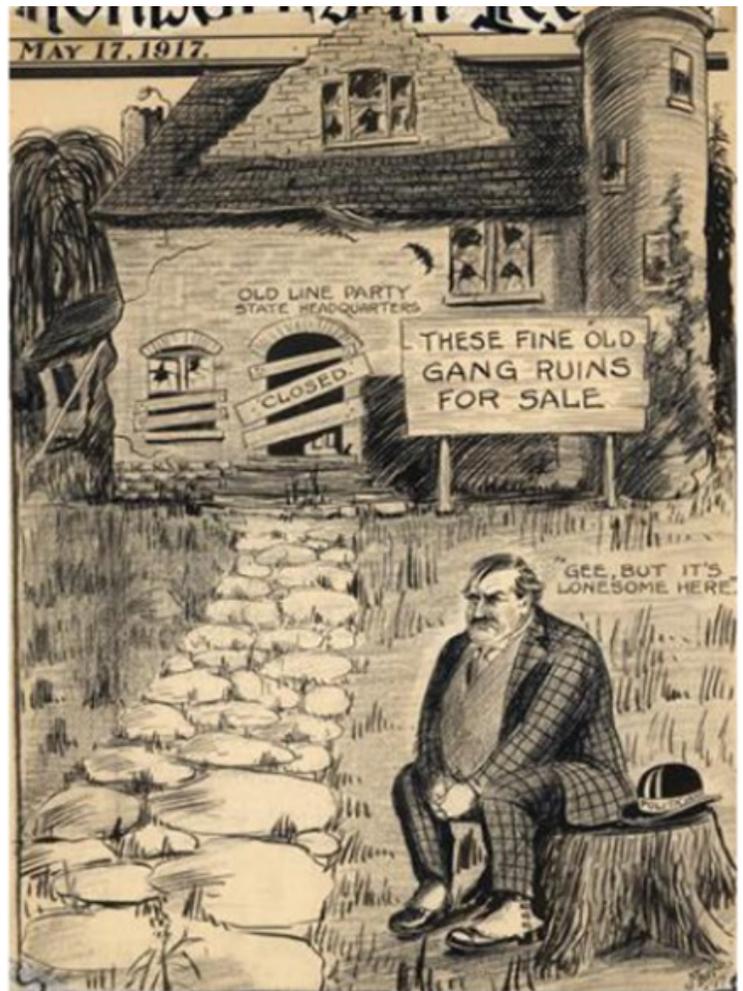
One of the Bank's mandates is to support community banks in North Dakota by making partnership loans with them, stepping in to help when a local bank does not have the wherewithal to fund a project all by itself. As a result, community banks are thriving in North Dakota. There is a higher percentage of community banks in that state than anywhere else in the country. Elsewhere they are being swallowed up year after year by the Wall Street megabanks.

In Washington state last year, the League of Women Voters of Washington decided to support the formation of a public bank after a specially assembled League Task Force assessed the idea. The League then formed a Public Bank Advocacy Committee and has been actively promoting the idea in the legislature and to any others around the state who will listen. (Your writer is one of the Co-Chairs of the League's Advocacy Committee.) The League could take up this issue because it had adopted a position on privatization in 2011 which said that an activity should be privatized only if the public interest was served thereby.

In the Washington state legislature, Senator Hasegawa has been championing the idea of a public bank since the 2008 financial collapse. Not so incidentally, two of those who urged Senator Hasegawa onto this pathway back at that time were the present editor of the Pacific Call, John Repp, and his wife, Cindy Cole. Mike Yarrow set up the original meeting. In 2018 the legislature commissioned the UW Dan Evans School to study the idea of a cooperatively owned public bank and come up with a business plan. The business plan was published last year and was the basis of Senator Patty Kuderer's SB 5188 in this year's legislative session. That bill came within a hair's breadth of passing, failing only because the legislature ran out of time. That bill can be seen as a step towards a public bank for our state. It proposed an expanded revolving fund for public projects but did not have a mandate to charter a bank.

Many of us are not used to the idea that banking can be conducted in any way other than in private hands, but there is no inherent reason why this is so.

With a public bank, stewardship of public funds would be handled in such a way that the cost of financing public projects would be about half as what they cost now, and any profits would be returned to the public treasury. The financial capacity of our state and local governments would be greatly increased. At least one banking institution in our state would be able to act in countercyclical fashion. That is efficient public finance. That is what a public bank can offer.



1917: An unhappy "Old Gang" politician laments the loss of power to the farmers and the NPL.

**One Economist's Call for Greater Government Activism in the Economy**

Paul Romer, a 2018 Nobel Prize winning economist, is now calling for government activism after spending years teaching the "market" must be "free". In his Nobel address, he noted the "progress gap" in the United States: "a decline in life expectancy; rising "deaths of despair" from suicides and drug overdoses; falling rates of labor participation for adults in their prime working years, from 25 to 54; a growing wealth gap and increasing inequality."

The New York Times Friday, May 21 2021, B1, print version

**Mother's Call to End War**

by Tom Ewell

One of the great, passionate statements opposing war was created by Julia Ward Howe following the Civil War and delivered on September 11, 1870, as an "Appeal to Womanhood Throughout the World." Her initiative led to a commemoration of Mother's Peace Day in 1872, and President Wilson eventually established America's official commemoration of Mother's Day in 1914, again as our country was about to absorb the reality of the terrible carnage of WW I. It is well to remember that Mother's Day originated as a declaration against war.

Howe's declaration stated in part: "We will not have great questions [of war] decided by irrelevant agencies. Our husbands will not come to us, reeking with carnage, for caresses and applause. Our sons shall not be taken from us to unlearn all that we have been able to teach them of charity, mercy, and patience. We, the women of one country, will be too tender of those of another country to allow our sons to be trained to injure theirs." From the bosom of the devastated Earth a voice goes up with our own. It says: "Disarm! Disarm!" The sword of murder is not the balance of justice. Blood does not wipe out dishonor, nor violence indicate possession. As men have often forsaken the plough and the anvil at the summons of war. Let women now leave all that may be left of home for a great and earnest day of counsel. Let them meet first, as women, to bewail and commemorate the dead. Let them solemnly take counsel with each other as to the means whereby the great human family can live in peace, each bearing after his own time the sacred impress, not of Caesar, But of God."

I would like some day to again see us honor Mother's Day as a time for all mothers - and all their sons! - to rise up, as Howe envisioned, to deplore the pain inflicted by war. It could also be an annual opportunity to express with great sadness that the world, particularly the U.S., continues to condone and prepare lavishly for war and allow its industries to make massive profits from arms sales that are considered a cornerstone of the American economy. It might be a time to promote a deep resolve to prevent wars in the future such as creating a cabinet position for a Secretary of Peace. During the current surge of spending for infrastructure and human needs, we are now seriously beginning to engage in a critical discussion about how the Pentagon squanders precious funds and resources that will be needed to support the Biden administration's proposed billion-dollar programs.

There is a close, often unspoken, association between war and motherhood. I heard an Iraqi war veteran give a speech a number of years ago about his participation in that war. He said that although he could speak to large audiences about his experience, he admitted that sadly the one person he could not share his experience with was his mother. And we really do not need to ask why. And I am told that a most common call from the wounded on the battlefield is not surprisingly "Mama, Mama!"

It is becoming abundantly clear that the world is tired of war. On February 15, 2003, for example, "the day the world said no to war" in the largest protest in human history, some 10-15 million people in over 600 cities across the globe, marched to stop the U.S. led invasion of Iraq. But it often seems surprisingly difficult to effectively engage in conversations or write about the tragedy of war. There is a preference to somehow tolerate the horrors and turn instead to giving attention to the valorous sacrifices of our soldiers. But for those who have known war, those who have fought in it, those who have paid the price for its economic and environmental impact, for those who have witnessed the death and the physical and psychological injuries created, war is personal, especially for the mothers and wives of a wounded or dead soldier.

So now that Mother's Day has become primarily a sweet opportunity to honor mothers with flowers, candy, and gratitude, it seems awkward to recall its original intent. Whether or not Mother's Day will ever again be commemorated as a day for lament about the tragedy of war, in any case it is important to heed and honor Julia Ward Howe's powerful summons to "Disarm! Disarm!" and work to abolish the terrible evil it represents. Perhaps as women continue to rise in leadership in our nation and across the globe, they will be more adept and committed to guiding us away from the folly of war into a greater into a greater commitment to examine the origins of war and work to prevent it.



**Julia Ward Howe**

## Racism is the cause of America's lack of a good healthcare for all system

by John M Repp

America is the only wealthy country in the world that does not insure, guarantee, and pay for most of the health care in the country. In addition, our total healthcare costs are about twice what most wealthy nations pay. As a result of these sad facts, hundreds of thousands of people have to declare bankruptcy every year here because of the medical care costs. It is a disgrace and a national scandal. The question is why is this so?

Thom Hartmann just completed a new book on American healthcare in his Hidden History series. I quote one of his findings: "in my research (I) found that literally every single effort to provide Americans with a national healthcare system, from the late 19th century right up to the passage of Medicare in 1965, was opposed by white southern conservatives who repeatedly and openly bragged they were against it because they didn't want any such benefit to go to Black people."

After the Civil War and the end of Reconstruction in 1877, the former slave states reformed as a powerful voting bloc in Congress which was segregationist and racist. This voting bloc was first a Democratic Party bloc. For example, they prevented the good national legislation of the New Deal from applying to most black people. More than half of the black work force was excluded from the original Social Security law, because the law denied coverage to farm workers and maids. With the civil rights movement achieving the passage of the Civil Rights and Voting Rights laws in 1965, the bloc became Republicans and have remained against a single-payer system ever since.

In 2010 Obamacare finally brought health insurance to 20 million black people, but even then, the former confederate States refused to participate in the Medicaid expansion, which is how the law expanded coverage, again excluding many blacks. Trump, when running for President in 2016 promised healthcare for all, but it was a broken promise.

The most recent public health scandal, the Covid-19 pandemic in the United States, continues to show the negative effect of racism on our country. I quote Thom Hartmann again: "So the answer to the question of why, at year's end, the United States has about 20% of the world's Covid-19 deaths, but only 4.5% of the world's population, is pretty straightforward: (Trump and) the Republicans chose to be just fine with Black people

dying, particularly when they could blame it on Democratic Blue-state governors."

On April 7, 2020, the New York Times and the Washington Post reported that black and Latinx population in the US were dying at a rate more than twice the White population. Adding to the malicious incompetence during the very beginning of the pandemic, after April 7, the White House took active steps to help the spread of the virus, thinking we were moving toward "herd immunity". They did not worry about all the deaths and disability this policy caused. The plan to send face masks to all Americans was dropped. The CDC (Center for Disease Control and Prevention) was sidelined, and the states were put in charge of efforts to control the spread of Covid-19, despite the fact their borders (as part of the United States) remained open. The White House even went so far as to deny the sending of PPE (personal protective equipment) from Federal stocks to some states with Democratic governors. The resulting political polarization of basic public health measures made the pandemic far worse here than it should have been.

With this pandemic, the USA may lose much of its "soft power" in the world. One hundred and fifty-six years after slavery was abolished, racism's deleterious effect on the politics of our nation continues. This case - the lack of a good universal healthcare and a working national public health system - shows that **racism hurts us all**, not just the groups discriminated against.

**REP. RO KHANNA** ([On DemocracyNow, 2021/4/29](#))

"...the Democratic leadership, the Democratic Party, has accepted the bold progressive vision in terms of ideas. But now there has to be an equally important second step, complementary step, and that is, there has to be **bold institutional reform**. Reform about ideas and a bold vision is necessary, but insufficient if it doesn't come with institutional reform. And **a filibuster**, ending that is one key component, as is **voting rights**, as is **campaign finance reform**, as is **ending gerrymandering**. Unless we have institutional reform, you're going to continue to see a frustration with politics, where policies at 70, 80% approval (by the people), which even the president is supporting, the majority leader is supporting, the speaker of the House is supporting, and yet are not getting enacted."

## What If a Tsunami Hits the Hood Canal Submarine Base?

by Mary Hanson

An article by [Josh Farley in the 4-27-21 Kitsap Sun](#) makes the case for closing the Bangor Trident Base as soon as possible.

In 2012 and following years, Ground Zero and Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility (led by Glen Milner of Ground Zero) filed a lawsuit to attempt to stop the Navy from building a second explosives handling wharf at Naval Base Kitsap Bangor. There were many reasons why this wharf increased the risk of a "dirty bomb" accident, mainly because the second wharf was to be built too close to the first one, and an accident at one would cause an accident at the other.

My concern, then as now, was that the chance of a Fukushima-level earthquake off-shore, the 9.0 "Big One", is high, like 10% a year over the next 50 years. The science behind this estimate is from the United States Geological Survey, not me. Any reputable seismologist can affirm that this level of risk exists. The resultant tsunami would be extraordinarily destructive.

Because the base is on Hood Canal, Farley points out its vulnerability to a tsunami. The submarine base was conceived, built, and completed **long before** the science regarding the likelihood of the 9.0 was understood. I testified to this at a public hearing, so the Navy is fully aware of it.

Some of my conclusions were logical -- connecting the dots -- not totally empirical. Farley's article contains all the facts anyone would need to make the case that there should be no nuclear submarines, missiles or warheads stored, handled, moved in and out of, or deployed from Bangor.

The implications of this are huge. It is in no way an argument in favor of Ground Based Strategic Defense (GBSD) -- those nuclear weapons are sitting duck targets. **It is an argument for moving fast toward nuclear disarmament.** Any submarine base in any country in the seismically active Pacific Rim could be equally at risk, and those risks would be even more likely to be covered up by even less democratic regimes than ours.



## Prohibiting First Use of Nuclear Weapons:

A letter to the Editor of the Seattle Times, written by Louise Lansberry, sent the week after April 22, 2021:

Dear Editor,

Last week, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee voted 21-1 (There are 12 Democrats and 10 Republicans on the committee) in support of the Strategic Competition Act of 2021. It appears that the desire to support a very hostile position toward China is a bi-partisan affair. All the old issues are repeated: human rights abuses, absence of democratic institutions, unfair trade practices, stealing of intellectual property are among the complaints. As if the United States has an unblemished record on any of these matters.

The danger, as Henry Kissinger pointed out at a recent conference, is the doomsday potential of the weapons the US and China possess. Is this the place and time where the use of nuclear weapons could end all conflicts....as well as all life on the planet?

Can we truly believe that such a mind set by a bi-partisan group of senators is going to allow for better relations with China? How will our two senators, Murray, and Cantwell, vote when this bill is sent to the whole Senate for a vote?

Louise attended a Massachusetts Peace Action conference on Prohibiting First Use of Nuclear weapons. She said it was nearly five hours long, but particularly good. She said there are several people working on nuclear issues that are very impressive: Ira Helfand from I-CAN, Tom Collina from Ploughshares, and of course Daniel Ellsberg. Below is a link to a video of The War Game. **A warning: It is very disturbing to watch.**

[The War Game, by Peter Watkins was made for the BBC in 1965, but not broadcast at the time. It is a docudrama based upon a supposed nuclear attack on the south east of England.](#)

[Here you can find the video of our discussion, a talk by Dr. Ira Helfand, and the Q&A session with a showing of The War Game.](#)

[Click here to send a message to President Biden, his administration, and your members of Congress. It calls upon them to put in place a policy of No First Use of nuclear weapons as an important step to prevent nuclear war.](#)