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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.

2021 WWFOR Fall Retreat Saturday, November 13th. (on ZOOM)

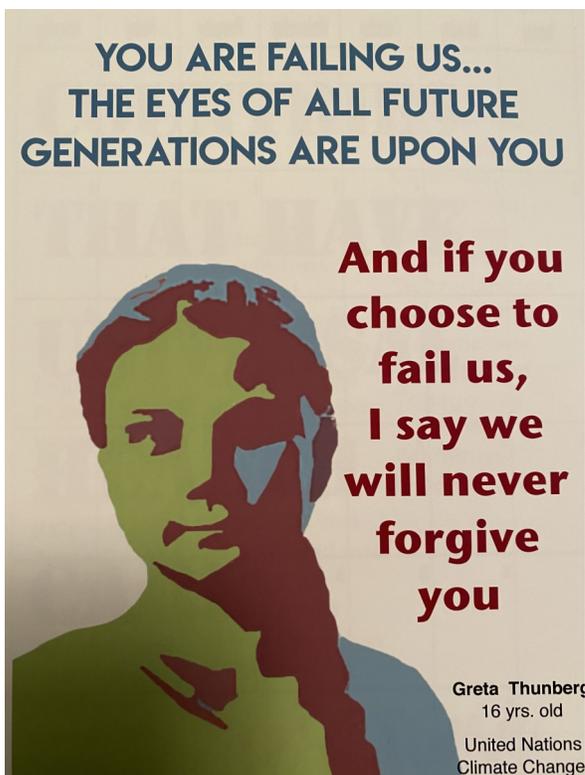
Bridging Our Differences. Civility First....So We Can Work Together

Civility First is a group of citizens on Whidbey Island who represent a wide range of political views. They came together in 2016 to repudiate the divisive language and hate speech permeating our society.

(see civilityfirst.org)

At this retreat we will participate in the Civility First workshop "Bridging Our Differences", then consider how we can use this approach with communicating about social justice issues we work on.

Check the WWFOR website: www.wwfor.org, in October for the Zoom link, more details and registration.



Thanks to Norma Fried



Greta and Jamie Margolin, a Mike Yarrow Peace Fellow, tell Congress in 2019 to listen to the scientists and do something ! The first part of a three-part IPCC report released in August 2021 said the earth is warmer than it has been in 125,00 years.

CONTENTS OF THIS ISSUE

Fall Retreat p.1 Climate Crisis p.1

Mike Yarrow Peace Fellowship Online p.2

Braver Angels workshop July 17, 2021 p.3

Ranked-Choice Voting p. 4 - 6

How to Make War Obsolete p. 6 - 7

Larry visits Afghanistan in 2011 p.8

Hemp, one way out of climate crisis p.8

Western Washington FOR Youth Program:
Gathers Strength Online

by Bruce Pruitt-Hamm, reprinted from Fellowship,
(the national FOR magazine, summer 2021)

The **Mike Yarrow Peace Fellowship (MYPF)** is a unique long-term training program in nonviolent organizing for youth ages 14 to 23. Young people accepted to the program get trained, get paid, and get ongoing support to work on a social change project of their choice for a one-year term. In 2021, a record 22 youth were accepted into this program, with a 40-hour Core Training conducted by video conference over ten sessions from mid-July to mid-August.

Founded by the Western Washington Fellowship of Reconciliation (WWFOR) in the year 2000 as the Peace Activist Training (PAT) Program, the venture was originally conceived as a small one-month summer training with a set stipend of \$500. The number of youths participating grew from two (in 2000) to 14 (in 2014), totaling over a hundred in the 14-year history of the program up to that point.

The program was renamed and redesigned in 2015 to honor Mike Yarrow, the WWFOR staffer who originated it.

Mike died of cancer in 2014. Mike's death coincided with the loss of WWFOR's staff person of 10 years, Ellen Finkelstein; in the late summer of 2014, this double blow threatened the continued viability of the program. A handful of WWFOR activists gathered on the evening of October 7, 2014, at the home of Mike's widow, Ruth Yarrow, to consider the fate of the PAT youth training program. Could we continue? If so, who and how?

It was the parents of youth who had been transformed by the PAT program who persisted. They were willing to provide volunteer leadership but couldn't run a month-long summer training program while working full time. The youth themselves provided the innovation to resolve the dilemma. A 2005 PAT alum, 24-year-old Kaeley Pruitt-Hamm, re-conceived the program as a year-long fellowship. She envisioned a one-week, intensive training, followed by ongoing support for the youth to work on a social change project of their own choosing while receiving a financial stipend. Continuing the PAT program as it had been seemed impossible. This idea was feasible. In fact, in hindsight, it was genius.

The Mike Yarrow Peace Fellowship has faced nearly annual challenges to its continued viability... and we have overcome. In 2017 we lost our historical funding sources of 15 years altogether. We responded by cutting the stipend from \$1000 to \$60 and opening participation to youth outside of Washington State. We were rewarded with a record 15 participants, including Jamie Margolin, a 15-year-old whose project of organizing a Youth Climate March on Washington was the inspiration for Greta Thunberg to begin her "Fridays for the Future" climate strikes. Greta and Jamie testified to Congress together, and Greta was later named Person of the Year by *Time* magazine. Greta wrote the forward for Jamie's book, quoted at the end of this article in the box.

Of course, our plans for the 2020 MYPF program were suddenly uprooted by the Covid-19 pandemic. We rose to the challenge of transforming the 40 to 50 hours of training we had planned into a series of online video workshops. From July 18 to August 18, 2020 we held ten of them. Our Core Training comprised three parts: NV Leadership Development, Kingian Nonviolence, and Strategic Planning and Campaigns. We were delighted with the record number of applications and welcomed 22 young organizers into the program, more than had ever been accepted before. Their projects now cover a wide range of issues like racial justice, climate changes, nuclear weapons abolition, food justice, a documentary on Palestinian rights, and fighting discrimination against those suffering mental illnesses.

The primary goal of the MYPF program is to inspire youth to identify as nonviolent activists, empowered enough to act bravely while thoughtful enough to act strategically. We have been remarkably successful. For more information, please visit the WWFOR website (wwfor.org) or YouTube channel.

"...our elders have lots of wisdom and experience to share with us, and to make changes to the world, our movements must be intergenerational. ... But young people? We are yet to be broken and burned out. We are still closer than adults to that part of ourselves that is full of questions, challenges, and a refusal to accept the state of the world around us. We have fresh energy, insight, and a unique power to create change in our world. " Greta Thunberg

Jamie Margolin, Youth to Power, p. xiv. Hachette Books. Kindle Edition (2020)

The Braver Angels Workshop: July 17, 2021

by David Lambert

It was just a few minutes into the recent WWFOR sponsored Braver Angels workshop held virtually this past July, that I realized I had not been chosen as a participant in work/sharing groups. Instead, observing this workshop proved to be an enlightening and rewarding experience for me. I had earlier this year participated in another three-hour Braver Angels workshop with the identical title: Depolarizing Within. This previous experience with the workshop content assisted me in my observer role; a role I perceive the Braver Angels staff wanted me to be in.

Following my short welcome, Dee Edelman, the principal Braver Angel Moderator, mentioned that this workshop was geared to help members and supporters of WWFOR and other like-minded individuals to communicate openly and honestly, even critically, and if needed, to share respectively among ourselves, about people of quite different political perspectives, without labeling and demeaning them. It was additionally aimed to search within ourselves and find parts of ourselves we might not want to look at and acknowledge, including our own biases. While these goals were challenging and meant to help us “stretch” mentally, emotionally, and socially, and involved some risk on participants' part, the Braver Angels staff, in my view, was highly affirming, supporting, encouraging, and validating toward all participants throughout the workshop.

Some of the many strategies or tools to help us deal with our own “inner polarizer” included:

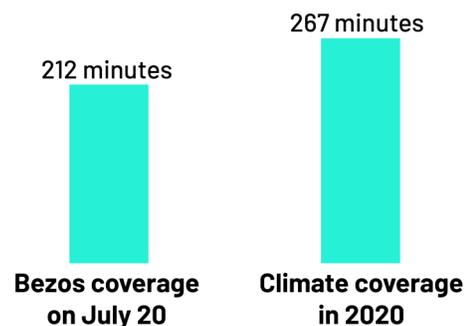
- 1 “Keep my heart open.”
- 2 “We are affected by the culture we grow up in.”
- 3 We can reframe the other person’s thoughts/ feelings: Example: “Now I have more information about them I didn’t know about and can keep that in mind.”
- 4 Learn about the other person’s values. The focus on values is important.
- 5 The “other side” is more varied than a stereotype would suggest.
- 6 The “other side” is more complicated.
- 7 The “other side” has different life experiences than I have.
- 8 Focus on developing a relationship with the person.
- 9 Read about leaders of the “other side” and what they have to say. If you are liberal or progressive, read what conservative leaders have to say, and vice versa.
- 10 Research the history of the other side.
- 11 Distinguish between Positions and People; Policies and Values; Inconsistency and Hypocrisy.

- 12 Avoid pejorative labels, avoid criticizing others’ motives instead of their ideas.
- 13 Criticize your own side also.
- 14 Note the positive in the others’ comments and ideas.
- 15 If you consider yourself progressive, get in touch with your conservative side, and vice versa.
- 16 The LAPP formula for listening and effectively communicating: L-Listen; A-Acknowledge; P-Pivot-ask the person if they are open to hearing your perspective; P-Perspective-share your perspective if they are open to listening.

Following the workshop, the Braver Angels staff debriefed and shared openly in a positive light, their appreciation for the questions and comments made by workshop participants. Again, I was able to experience their inclusiveness and respect for each other and the workshop participants. I came away from this experience grateful to all participants, the Braver Angels Staff, and our workshop planning group for what felt like a highly positive and important learning experience.



Broadcast TV morning shows spent nearly as much time on Jeff Bezos’ space launch in one day than on the climate crisis in 2020



Minutes of coverage on ABC's Good Morning America, CBS This Morning, and NBC's Today (including live launch coverage by these networks during the 9 a.m. hour) from July 20 of Bezos launch coverage versus one year of climate coverage.

Ranked-Choice Voting Won in New York and is on its Way in Washington

Stoney Bird Stoney Bird is a former corporate lawyer who has been working for the adoption of ranked-choice voting since the sessions of the Whatcom Charter Review Commission in 2015.

And not just ranked-choice voting (RCV). The voters won, too.

New York City just conducted the biggest ranked-choice voting election ever in the U.S. The bumble of the test ballots grabbed headlines – but that had nothing to do with RCV. That was just human error (darned humans!) from the election officials – and it was promptly corrected. As far as RCV goes, the election was a huge success.

We know this thanks to polling of the voters both before and after the election. The question before the election was whether voters would be more likely to vote because of RCV. The answer the voters gave: yes! at a ratio of nearly four to one. And indeed, the turnout for this primary election was the most it has been in the city since 1989. With RCV, voters rightly feel that the election results will more closely reflect their views.

After the election, pollsters asked what the voters thought of the experience. Their answers: it's simple to use (95%) and we want to keep it (77%).

The election results were a success, too, at least if you think that election results should reflect the spectrum of perspectives among the voters. Because of RCV, the New York City Council will be the most diverse it has ever been. The Council's perspectives will be weighted the way the people's are.

Why Only in Primaries?

Alert readers will have noticed that the election in New York City was “only” a primary. In fact, last November when New York City voters decided to adopt RCV they explicitly decided that it would not be used in New York's general (November) elections. The reason is that New York law allows fusion voting in the general elections. Fusion voting means that a given candidate can be endorsed by – and run on the ticket of – more than one party. It's a feature of their elections that New Yorkers are strongly attached to. The result is that a given candidate could appear on the ballot more than once – which would add an extra obstacle to adopting ranked-choice voting.

Another aspect is that in New York City whoever wins the Democratic primary will almost certainly win the general election in November. Practically speaking, the primary is the whole game.

Doesn't New York have Runoffs for Their Primaries Anyway?

Yes, it does. The difference is that with a conventional runoff, the voters would have had to come back to the polls a second time, which could be eight weeks later. Historically, the turnout in New York's runoff elections has been 60% less, so only a minority of voters are deciding the result. By using RCV and avoiding a separate runoff election, the city has also saved at least \$10 million in election administration costs.

A Growing Movement

The New York election means almost 40 U.S. cities will hold RCV elections this year, including Salt Lake City, Utah (for the first time this year), and Minneapolis, Minnesota, which has been using RCV for several years. The state of Alaska will hold its first RCV elections in November; their law, adopted by the voters in 2020, covers state and federal offices, including President of the United States. Maine has been holding RCV elections for several years. The voters of Austin, Texas, the country's 11th largest city, have passed RCV and are waiting for the Texas legislature to permit Texas cities to use it.

What's Happening in Washington

Two big “almosts” occurred in Washington this year. The Local Options Bill came nearer to passing the state legislature than ever before, and this summer the King County Council was on the verge of putting it on the ballot for King County voters in November. Both these measures will be returned to next year.

Washington's Local Options Bill (HB 1156) would allow local jurisdictions to adopt ranked-choice voting if they wanted to. It got through two committees with bipartisan support, and it almost reached a vote in the House when time ran out.

Local jurisdictions are presently prohibited from using RCV because of Washington's requirement to hold a top two primary. There is an exception for charter counties that hold non-partisan elections. That's why King County could think of adopting RCV even without passage of the Local Options Bill. Only two other counties would qualify under the exception, and they are San Juan County and Whatcom County. As we write, the San Juan County Charter Review Commission is considering an amendment to the county charter that would call for RCV.

In Whatcom County there are practical barriers, both relating to the difficulty of amending the Whatcom County charter. For the County Council to propose an amendment relating to how the County Council is elected they must do so unanimously. And for the

people to petition for the matter to be put on the ballot, they have to gather 20,000 signatures or more. So, in Whatcom County we'll have to wait for the Local Options Bill to pass.

In the King County Council, the issue only came up a few weeks before the deadline for action. Although there were enthusiastic supporters on the Council (especially Councilmembers Girmay Zahilay and Jeanne Kohl-Welles), others were not as familiar with the idea and were uncertain about whether the voters would support it. When it became clear that the measure could not pass unless it provided for no implementation deadline, Councilmember Zahilay withdrew it. He has promised to revisit the issue next year.

Why We Need RCV

One great benefit of RCV is that you can vote for the candidate that you really like without fear that it is going to throw the election to someone you can't stand. In other words, you don't have to worry about vote-splitting. In addition, candidates realize that they need the second choice on ballots that give their first choice to one of the candidate's opponents. As a result, they generally don't engage in as much negative campaigning. They stick to the issues. There is neither the cost nor the unrepresentative result of a primary which typically has a much lower turnout.

So far we've been talking about the simplest form of ranked-choice voting, sometimes called single-winner ranked-choice voting or instant runoff voting. As the name suggests, it produces a single winner and is best adapted to elections to offices where there is a single holder: Governor, Mayor, County Auditor, and the like. For many, the real gold in RCV is when it is adopted in proportional form. This is the form best adapted to elections of a body like a legislature or a city council or county council. The key points about proportional RCV are that each district has several representatives, ideally five or more, and that the results are proportional, just as the name suggests. If a particular perspective gets 30% of the vote, they get (roughly) 30% of the representation – not zero the way they do now. And if a perspective gets 51% of the vote, they get 51% of the representation – not 100% the way they do with the winner-take-all elections that we currently have.

No More Gerrymandering

Why is proportionality so important? One reason is that the legislative bodies that we elect would more closely reflect the views of the electorate. Even better,

having multimember districts makes gerrymandering effectively impossible. Gerrymandering, as you may know, is the art of drawing voting districts to get the election results that you want. It's a way for politicians to choose their voters instead of the voters choosing their representatives. The League of Women Voters estimates that 90% of the seats in Congress are in effect reserved for one party or the other through the practice of gerrymandering. The infuriating thing is that with winner-take-all elections you have inherent gerrymandering even if the line-drawing is not done with partisan intent. Drawing the lines in any way at all encloses a certain composition of voters, largely predetermining the results of the elections for years to come. We can't get rid of that clog on democracy unless we get rid of winner-take-all elections and adopt proportional ranked-choice voting.

What You Can Do

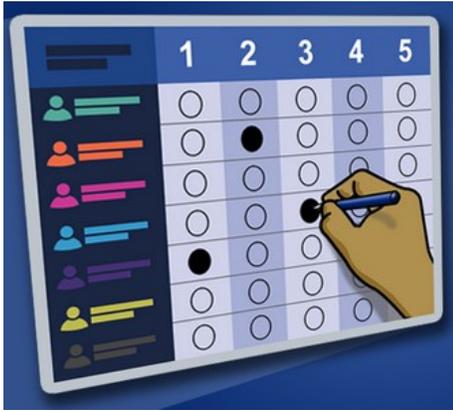
In short, ranked-choice voting would make our democracy more representative, make politicians more accountable, end the vote-splitting problem, end gerrymandering, reduce election costs and make campaigns less negative. If that sounds good to you, here are a few things you can do:

- 1) Go to the FairVote Washington website (www.fairvotewa.org) and
 - 2) Sign up as a supporter and donate
 - 3) Offer to volunteer
 - 4) Go to the legislature's website (leg.wa.gov), click on "Bill Information", search for "1156", and click on "support". You can also write a comment in favor of the bill.
 - 5) Write to legislators in support of HB 1156
- *****



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

A Primer on RCV



- 1) On the ballot, voters rank as many candidates as they like.
- 2) All first-choice votes are counted. If a candidate receives more than 50% of first-choice votes, that candidate wins.
- 3) If no candidate earns more than 50% of first-choice votes, then counting will continue in rounds.
- 4) At the end of each round, the last-place candidate is eliminated and voters who chose that candidate now have their vote counted for their next choice.
- 5) Your vote is counted for your second choice only if your first choice is eliminated. If both your first and second choices are eliminated, your vote is counted for your third choice, and so on.
- 6) This process continues until there are two candidates left. Between these two, the candidate with the most votes wins.

Since the end of the Cold War, **civil defense has fallen into disuse within the United States.** Gradually, the focus on nuclear war shifted to an "all-hazards" approach of Comprehensive Emergency . Whatever that means?



How To Make War Obsolete

By John M Repp, Pacific Call editor

We should have abolished war after World War II. That war was so lethal and so destructive, even before the dropping of the atomic bombs, that had people understood that there is a real alternative to deadly violent conflict, humanity might have taken another path. Instead, we took the path of nuclear deterrence which is a desperate and bankrupt policy that endangers our very existence.

Why have we not abolished war? Gene Sharp (now deceased) of the Albert Einstein Institute says it is because people see **a need to defend** themselves from foreign occupations, coup d'états and/or dictatorial regimes, and we do not know there is another way. The mythology of conventional history as told by the dominators rules our minds. Sharp spent his whole life trying to educate and convince people that there is a more effective way to solve inevitable political conflicts. There is a practical nonviolent substitute for war and violent revolution.

Civilian-based defense is the idea that a carefully prepared program where an educated and trained citizenry could defend a country using tactics like mass demonstrations, strikes of all kinds and economic shutdowns by for example mass stay-at-home campaigns. These tactics combined with a well thought out strategy involving the government and the whole society would prevent an invader from achieving its war aims like seizing land, taking gold, spreading an empire, or extending a religion, all traditional goals of invading armies. To envision civilian-based defense in action, do not imagine a powerful anti-war movement like the movement against the American war in Vietnam. Instead, imagine all government officials of the invaded country, all the judges, all the teachers, all the clergy, all the executives of national companies, all the union leaders, all the media, radio and TV, **plus all the people**, working together nonviolently to prevent the invaders from achieving their goals.

Real life examples of civilian-based defense come from the 1968 Czech resistance to the Soviet invasion. The Czechs used work slowdowns, a refusal to obey Russian officers, and a refusal to recognize the legitimacy of the new regime. Clandestine radio broadcasts denounced the invasion as illegal. The Czechs succeeded in keeping the Russians at bay for eight months. The first 500,000 soldiers of the combined communist east-bloc force had to go

Continued from page 6

home after the early months and were replaced by a completely new army. Sharp's point is that this Czech nonviolent resistance was **spontaneous** and had **no advance preparation**. By way of contrast, with education, advanced training, and participation by the whole society and all its institutions, civilian-based defense would have been 10 times more powerful and effective than the Czech example.

Then in the 1980's, the Polish working class organized the 10 million strong Solidarity, a large trade union with an advanced political consciousness and nationalist objectives. In a few years, the Poles did more to disintegrate the Communist system without firing a shot, more than what the Pentagon had done for decades despite its spending of billions of dollars. Sharp says CBD, or civilian-based defense, fully implemented, would cost us but one percent of the cost of our current military budget!

Sharp was particularly concerned with the dangerous situation in Europe and Japan after World War II, during the Cold War between the Soviet Union and the United States. He thought civilian-based defense should be used by the countries in Western Europe and Japan. He envisioned a period of transition called "transarmament" when CBD would be developed in those U.S. occupied countries at the same time as the American military forces would be gradually pulled out. This approach could have cut our military budget in half. Sharp understood that CBD would be harder to implement in a country as geographically large as the United States, especially since we are separated by the oceans from the eastern hemisphere.

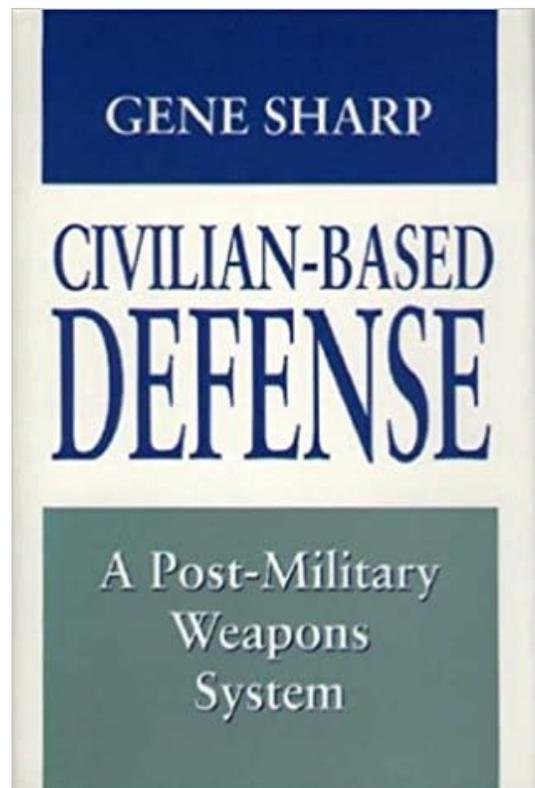
If we and our government were more honest, we would agree that the justification for the buildup of nuclear weapons and the massive military spending was not just for defense. Our government has used our armed forces for more than just defending the homeland. The US has used its military force to project power all over the world so our corporations could own and exploit the natural resources of other peoples and keep in power "friendly" governments that acceded to the property demands of the corporate elites. We should also acknowledge here that this power projection has helped to keep the material goods consumption level of Americans higher than would have been the case otherwise. Also, the corporations that manufacture the military hardware want to keep the status quo we call the military-industrial complex, because of the massive and guaranteed profits in that sector. Finally, to implement a policy of civilian-based defense, would require much more actual democracy than our cur-

rent oligarchs will permit.

Since the end of World War II our Federal Government has grown much larger with every war it has waged. Governments get big and more centralized when they fight wars. Real conservatives need to understand this and too many do not. It is not the benefits that the people receive from the government, like unemployment insurance, Medicare and Social Security that makes our federal budget so large. It is the military spending and the failed, never-ending wars.

If somehow, the human race and our governments can make the changes that Gene Sharp outlines, it would be "an evolutionary change of the same magnitudes as the invention of spears some 500,000 years ago." We will have made war obsolete, before war makes us extinct. All other approaches to world peace, such as the United Nations, nuclear deterrence, multi-lateral disarmament conferences, and hopes that "human nature" will change have not worked. Civilian-based defense will take some time, but if we understand it well, we have a way to make war obsolete.

Gene Sharp said that his idea of civilian-based defense is sometimes misunderstood by peace activists because we are so used to bottom up nonviolent direct action, while civilian-based defense is top-down. It is a way to defend a country without using military power and should be the responsibility of all who live in that society, including the leaders on top.



Originally published November 8, 2011

by Larry Kershner

This is the last entry from the journal of a trip to Afghanistan in 2011.

I now realize how little I have known and still know about Afghanistan and the people who live here. Afghanistan appears to me to be teetering on the brink of collapse despite “the light at the end of the tunnel” talk by the militarist machine. Three and a half billion people on the globe live on less than \$2.50 a day - most of the people of Afghanistan among them. Many people here express the desire that the apparent stability maintained by the military presence continue out of a fear of a return of and the memory of the viciousness of the Taliban.

However, it is impossible for America to “save” Afghanistan. The current face of the American Dream, corporate capitalism, is based on an amoral domination of both people and the physical world and thus is totally antithetical to justice in any form. Any hope of a humane future for Afghanistan will require a radical shift in thinking that must arise from the people of Afghanistan. The Prophet Mohammed has said, “For a man to truly live, he must love for his brother what he loves for himself.” The Afghan Youth Peace Volunteers are practicing this type of radical living each day. These young people, through some spectacular wisdom which has arisen out of the tragedy around them, ask “Why not love?” They are not Pollyannas since they see every day the real misery of their situation. They have recently seen a murderous warlord placed, in an absurd form of realpolitik, at the head of the highest peace council in Afghanistan only to be assassinated but ‘credit’ for this kill is denied by the “Taliban” and other groups. A female orator at Rabani’s funeral declared that the perpetrators would be found and “we will tear them apart with our teeth.”

We have been told that Afghans are Machiavellian and we have been told that Afghans do not trust one another. These young people know the difficulties they face but with their clear thinking can see that there is no other alternative except love and truth.

Afghanistan is torn by internal forces of racism between tribal groups, the power hunger of the warlords, the corruption of the government, homelessness for many, “night raids” of killing supposedly to protect them, unsanitary water supplies, an education system that is barely literate, a lack of trustworthy political leadership, a broken infrastructure, the brakes on any social change from the conservative religious leaders, insurgents and criminal gangs, and the trappings of an

incipient police state. The external forces of the corporate desire to ravage the natural resources of Afghanistan, the militarist knowledge that Afghanistan provides a central position from which to attempt control of the rest of central Asia, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund and other minions of the disaster capitalists, the ideas and excesses of western civilization (sic?), the tremors of the beginning of the end of the American Empire, and the current face of “the white man’s burden” to show the brown people how to be just like us are putting an incalculable strain on the Afghan society. Despite the aberration of the past half century, the history of many hundreds of years shows that the people of Afghanistan are resilient. If they can gain the time to shake off the militarism and paternalism of the West and remember their own strengths and begin healing, maybe they can follow the lead of the brave members of the Afghan Youth Peace Volunteers. This may be their only hope.

All of the daily journal entries are just my observations and impressions. I am not a sociologist, historian, or any other form of academic. After a little less than a month here I cannot claim to begin to understand all that I have seen and heard. I will be the first to admit that all of my opinions and observations may have nothing to do with reality but I do not think so. Nothing that I have said is to be taken as a position by any of the several organizations that I am connected with. These are my thoughts alone. Peace.

HI, MY NAME IS HEMP
IN 3-4 MONTHS I CAN GROW TO PRODUCE
OVER 50,000 COMMERCIAL PRODUCTS
INCLUDING ANYTHING WOOD, PAPER,
COTTON OR PLASTIC CAN BE USED FOR.
I'M ALSO AN EDIBLE PROTEIN INCLUDING
ALL ESSENTIAL AMINO ACIDS, AS WELL
AS OMEGA'S 3, 6 & 9 ESSENTIAL FATTY
ACIDS. BEST OF ALL, I AM RENEWABLE
AND DON'T NEED TO BE GENETICALLY
MODIFIED BECAUSE I'M NATURALLY
PEST RESISTANT.



 THE SACRED PLANT

