

225 N 70th 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.*

WRITING

LETTERS

TO THE EDITORS OF MAINSTREAM PRESS IS A GOOD THING.

9/11: Lessons Learned?

Dear Editor of The Seattle Times: (Sept. 10, 2021)

The 20th anniversary of 9/11...what have we learned? The debate on how we just ended having our boots on the ground in Afghanistan will continue, but what about a debate on why we stayed for 20 years? Numerous stories have surfaced about how the military brass has known this was an “unwinnable conflict” just as Vietnam was, and at what price for the U.S. and allies as well as the people of Afghanistan (and Iraq.)

Clearly, we can’t undo the many disastrous decisions along the way, but will we continue to follow this so-called war on terrorism with similar approaches?

The 2001 and 2002 Authorizations for Military Force (AUMF) have allowed four administrations (Bush, Obama, Trump and Biden) to be directors of where we use military force while this role for declaring war was and is designated to Congress in the Constitution. Yet Congress has abrogated its role. If each member of Congress had to study and debate when and where the U.S. pursued military action, perhaps we might avoid such tragedies. Can we at least get our Washington delegation to speak out their on views regarding this issue as efforts to repeal these AUMF’s are considered?

Louise Lansberry, Seattle

Waive patents, share know-how.

Dear Editor of The Seattle Times: (Sept. 26, 2021)

In Gary Locke’s Op-Ed: “Weakening IP protections won’t help developing countries fight COVID-19” [Sept. 8, Opinion] he opines that “no expert seriously thinks suspending IP (intellectual property) protections will boost vaccine supply.” Seriously? Public health experts around the world, including in the U.S. have made it clear that until more countries are able to produce and deliver the coronavirus vaccine, we will never get rid of this pandemic. It is critical that low-income countries increase their vaccination coverage rates from the current pitiful levels of roughly 1% of the adult population. Low vaccine coverage is exacerbating the spread of new variants, first detected overseas, that spread domestically and then abroad.

Temporary patent waivers, combined with a sharing of technical know-how and assistance with logistical support such as special freezers and other equipment, would allow many national systems to produce vaccines for their own countries or regions. We can’t just depend on a handful of corporations to vaccinate the world. The work of Americans is not to do it for them, but to allow local production to proceed.

Locke is either seriously misinformed or simply, true to form, deeply invested in maintaining trade protections for the big pharmaceuticals – to the detriment of the health of all of us.

Mary Anne Mercer, Seattle

Mary Anne Mercer, Ph.D is the Senior Lecturer Emerita in the Department of Global Health and Health Services at the University of Washington.

CONTENTS OF THIS ISSUE below

- Letters to the Editors on AUMFs & Patent Waivers for Covid-19 Vaccines p.1**
- Modern Monetary Theory p. 2-3**
- The Difficult Problem of Climate Change p. 4**
- Downward Slide of U.S. Middle Class p. 5-6**
- WA Poor People’s Campaign p.7-8**
- WWFOR Fall Assembly online p.8**



These headphones, found in 2018, were used to listen to underground radio during the Nazi occupation of Norway. Staying informed was a step to liberation.

\$ The Truth about Money Can Allow Us to Spend More Federal Dollars to Help People Post-Pandemic - Without More Taxes.

by Vandana Whitney

In 1971, President Nixon took the U.S. off the gold standard. Fifty years later, the members of Congress seem convinced we're still on the gold standard and they are not alone in that mistaken belief. While going off the gold standard made radical changes to our monetary system, the national conversation about how money works barely changed at all.

Under the gold standard, the federal government was very restricted as to how much currency it could issue because dollars had to be backed up by a certain amount of gold. If the public or other trading countries started demanding gold for the dollars they held, then the gold reserves would drop, and the government could issue even less currency to spend into the economy. There was a finite number of dollars that could be issued and be in circulation at any given time depending on gold reserves.

Since going off the gold standard in 1971, we have what is called a non-convertible fiat monetary system, meaning you can't trade U.S. dollars (USD) into the government for anything other than new dollars. Eliminating the need for the government to defend its gold reserves also means that there is no financial constraint on how much money the government can issue. Congress remains steadfastly, if somewhat erratically, unaware of the change.

The Constitution gives Congress the power to authorize spending, so Congress determines how much money is created and issued in a fiscal year; that is the power of the public purse. But as we have all witnessed once again this year, while Congress has no trouble whatsoever in authorizing and creating the money for the bloated military budget, the members insist that there is only a finite number of dollars available for domestic spending. The public is frustrated with Congress and suspects that something is terribly amiss with this budgeting process, but like Congress, the public has been educated to believe that we're still on the gold standard.

Economists in the field of Modern Monetary Theory, or MMT, are working diligently to educate both Congress and the public to an entirely different understanding of our money system. Over twenty

years ago, this group of economists began an analysis of the Federal Reserve's accounting system, and the Federal Reserve's interaction with the Treasury. Their research contradicts the standard narrative about our money.

Professor Stephanie Kelton became the public face of the MMT economists because she is exceptionally good at explaining complex economic issues to people who have no background in economics. Kelton's book, *The Deficit Myth*, was published in 2020 and immediately became a *New York Times* best seller. Kelton also knows how to talk to members of Congress. She served as chief economist on the U.S. Senate Budget Committee for the Democratic staff in 2015 and as a senior economic adviser to Bernie Sanders in 2016.

The first myth, or mistaken belief, that Kelton addresses in her book is that the federal government should budget like a household. It is irrefutably true that the federal government is the monopoly issuer of our currency, the USD. The government is the currency issuer while everyone else is a currency user. That is a very important distinction that is obviously true but is hardly acknowledged. State and local governments have to tax or borrow before they can spend. Households and businesses must earn or find the money before they can spend. The federal government does not have to find the money before it spends because it creates our money. The government must spend dollars into the economy before the rest of us can get dollars, so it plays by an entirely different set of rules than businesses or households.

When Congress authorizes new spending, the Federal Reserve, acting as the Treasury Department's bank, creates new digital dollars on its computers. Digital dollars are known as bank reserves, and since we live in a digital age, most of our money is just numbers on a spreadsheet that exist on computer hard drives in electronic bank accounts.

The hardest myth to overcome is the mistaken belief that taxpayers fund the government. The taxpayer money mantra came about in the 1980's during Ronald Reagan's administration in this country and Margaret Thatcher's administration in the U.K. It was deceptive by design and because it was repeated so effectively, we now have most people believing that the public funds the federal government. That was never true; it is exactly the reverse.

(continued next page)

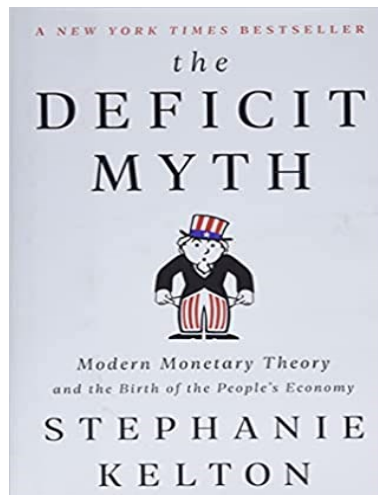
(continued from page 2)

As a point of logic, a government that issues its own currency must spend before it taxes, or else there would be no currency to collect. In accounting terms, when the government spends, it's crediting or adding to bank accounts. When we pay taxes, the government is debiting or subtracting from bank accounts. At the federal level, our tax dollars are just deleted; they don't fund anything.

Even though the federal government is self-financing, taxes are essential to the monetary system. If the government continued spending dollars into existence but never drained any dollars back out, it would have a definite inflationary effect. So taxing dollars out of the economy removes those dollars from circulation and helps to control inflation. This is an important point because MMT economists maintain that while the government is not financially constrained, there is a real restraint to spending: available human resources, natural resources, and inflation. Additional reasons for federal taxation are 1) that it creates a demand for dollars as the government will not accept any other form of payment, 2) it can be used to alter the distribution of income, and 3) it can modify spending behavior through tax incentives.

Another glaring misunderstanding of our money system is the idea that we have a national debt that must be paid back. The annual deficit is just government spending in a fiscal year minus taxes taken back out of circulation (we normally spend more than we tax) and by law the federal government must issue Treasury securities (bonds) to equal the difference. We are told that the government is "borrowing" money when it issues bonds which is very misleading terminology. The government has no need to borrow in a currency that it alone issues.

Our so-called national debt is nothing more than Treasury bond money held in what are called securities accounts at the Federal Reserve. They are functionally identical to savings accounts at commercial banks. At maturity, the bond money is moved out of savings into Federal Reserve accounts (checking accounts) with added earned-interest dollars. Those Treasury bond dollars are never used or needed as a source of government revenue, and the earned-interest dollars are not a problem as the U.S. can always create the dollars in its own currency to cover all debts or obligations. The U.S. has no debts in a foreign currency.



Under our current system, if the federal government doesn't run deficits, then the public doesn't have Treasury bonds. Treasury bonds are only issued in response to deficits. So, while members of Congress unite in their fear and loathing of a federal deficit, everyone loves Treasury bonds. If you're an investor, U. S. bonds are safe, they're liquid, they're free of default risk. Bonds help you diversify your portfolio, and they pay interest. It's a false narrative dilemma that is completely illogical but persists because of our collective ignorance about our fiat monetary system. Stephanie Kelton is working to change that.

Based on her own interactions with lawmakers in Congress, Kelton estimates that roughly one-third of Congress is now MMT conversant. By that she means that they could articulate—in very general terms—that the federal government is the issuer of the currency, that its budget is not constrained like that of a household or

private business, and that inflation, not solvency, is a real constraint on spending. Right now, all new bills in Congress must pass a review by the Congressional Budget Office to check for whether the bill will increase the deficit. (Non-spending bills obviously don't need a CBO review.) MMT economists say this is totally wrong thinking and that we have government agencies that could instead calculate the inflationary pressures associated with any new bill. Government agencies do have tools to help control inflation.

If the public clearly understood how our money system functions, members of Congress would, in fact, be put in a far more uncomfortable position. Such knowledge would not help the corporate interests that push to privatize all public services. As we know, corporate PAC money funds a high percentage of congressional campaigns. It is much easier to declare that the government can't afford to fund public services than to hold more relevant debates as to whether such spending would be inflationary.

Rep. John Yarmuth, current House Budget Committee Chair, is one of the few members of Congress who publicly uses MMT talking points. Yarmuth said recently in an interview that MMT's influence in Congress is greater than its visibility. "There aren't many people who are willing to be out front about it because it doesn't resonate with what the average person thinks," he said. Educating the average person is key to changing a political system that is clearly not working for the American public.

The Difficult Problem of Climate Change

by John M Repp

Many people think the problem of climate change will simply require that we change how we get energy; that there is a technological solution. I thought that until recently. We just need to switch from fossil fuels to renewables. Build hundreds of wind farms and put solar panels on roofs everywhere. Electrify our cars, trucks, and trains. Start by withdrawing the subsidies from fossil fuels embedded in the tax system. All it will take is the political will.

We were shocked last summer when a “heat dome” parked itself over the Pacific Northwest. There were temperatures of 121 degrees Fahrenheit recorded in British Columbia. Too much of the fruit crop in Eastern Washington and British Columbia was destroyed. Fires raged for months in Northern California, eventually threatening the world’s oldest trees. In October, there was a deluge in Italy where 29 inches of rain fell in 12 hours. More and more Americans now understand that climate change is affecting their communities.

We know now that the United States government, while studying and writing good scientific reports about the reality of climate change, has been **focused** quietly on increasing the domestic production of oil. They want to make our country self-sufficient in energy. It is almost as if the energy crises of the 1970’s just happened. James Gustave Speth has made the legal briefs written for Our Children’s Trust into a book: [They Knew: The US Governments Fifty-Year Role in Causing the Climate Crisis](#) (2021). [Our Children’s Trust](#) is an organization attempting to use the courts to force the government to mitigate climate change to protect the future of our children. 350 parts per million of carbon dioxide would stabilize the climate; today we are at 412 and rising. Even if we did everything that scientists say we must do, there is a long-time lag. It is going to get much worse soon. [The Guardian of Oct 15, 2021](#), in advance of the COP26 conference in Glasgow, has put online a spectacular report. They write: “Decades of time has been squandered – US president Lyndon Johnson was warned of the climate crisis by scientists when Joe Biden was still in college and yet industry denial and government inertia means the world is set for a 2.7C increase in temperature this century, even if all emissions reduction pledges are met. Every decision – every oil drilling lease, every acre of the Amazon rainforest torched for livestock pasture, every new gas-guzzling SUV that rolls onto the road – will decide how far we tumble down the hill. In Glasgow, governments will be challenged to show

they will fight every fraction of temperature rise, or else, in the words of Greta Thunberg, this pivotal gathering is at risk of being dismissed as “blah, blah, blah. **UPDATE:** “Blah, blah, blah” it was.

Global population has grown eight times the size of what it was at the beginning of the fossil-fuel powered industrial age 200 years ago. Our problem is not so much climate change. It is ecological **overshoot**. Overshoot is what happens when human demand exceeds what the planet can regenerate naturally. Framing the problem as overshoot, rather than just a problem of how we get our energy, changes the task we face. [To achieve sustainability: Graham Turner](#), a senior scientist from Australia has written: “You’d have to halve the birth rate, you’d have to have net zero immigration, you’d have to go totally renewable energy and double efficiencies in every sector of the economy, and the really key thing is you’d have to reduce the working week over time so that it would become half of what it is..” People wouldn’t have the same level of income as now and household consumption would be reduced by half. It would mean people living a 1950s or 1960s-style lifestyle, with one car and TV per household.

This is not a politically popular message. Adding the reality of economic justice, through a wealth tax, progressive income taxes, tight regulation of the banks and financial markets, and corporate reform that makes corporations into cooperatives, can make a necessary change in the standard of living much more acceptable. That is the main idea behind “just transition”. Creating stronger communities can compensate for fewer consumer goods.

When climate change starts effecting the food supply, the issue will become front and center. If we don’t deal with climate change soon, billions of poor people will start dying from climate change induced famines. We have passed that point in some areas of the world, hence the migration crises here and in Europe.

A scientific [paper](#) entitled “Through the Eye of a Needle: An Eco-Heterodox Perspective on the Renewable Energy Transition” concludes: “To achieve sustainability and salvage civilization, society must embark on a planned, cooperative descent from an extreme state of overshoot in just a decade or two.” A big question is whether China and the United States will be able to cooperate to do this despite the increasing tension of the two great powers.

We have left the generations following us with a massive challenge. How do we lessen the human impact on the natural world? How do we make our main task the regeneration of the natural world, rather than the growth of the human economy?

The Rise and Subsequent Downward Slide of the Middle Class in the United States Since 1938

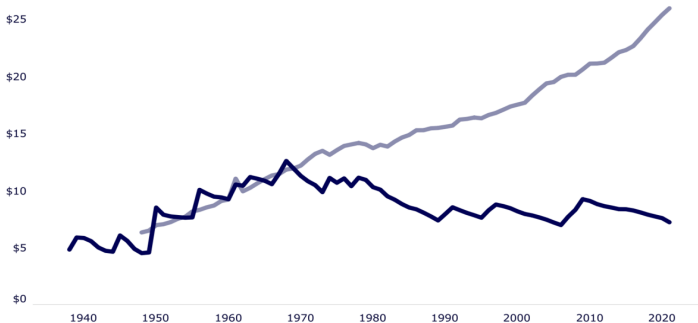
by John M Repp

An economic historian looking at the USA over the past 70 years would be alarmed, assuming they wanted the American people to be healthy and happy. The two charts below tell much of the story.

In the first chart, the minimum wage kept pace with the rise in productivity from 1938 to 1968 as the left-hand half of the chart shows. That was the period when the great American middle-class came on the stage of history. After 1968 the productivity curve climbed ever higher but the minimum wage and the general wage level stagnated. This means there was a great increase in wealth creation, but the wage earners, which was most of the American population, were not receiving their fair share of that wealth. The workers were not getting raises commensurate with the wealth they were

Trends in the Minimum Wage

Minimum Wage, in 2020 dollars and if it had kept pace with productivity, 1938-2021



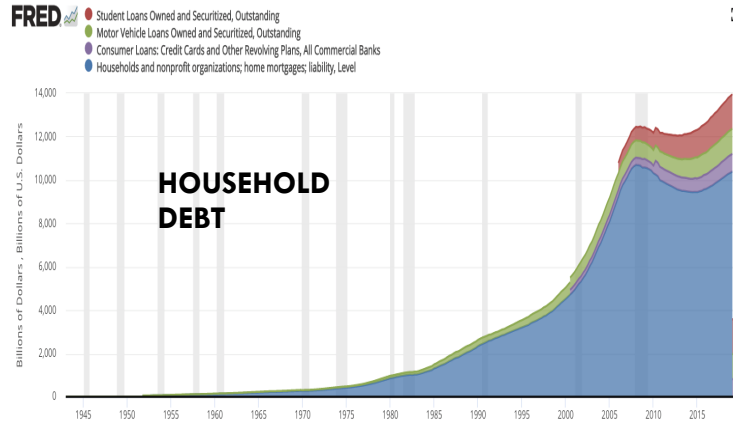
■ Real minimum wage in 2020 dollars
■ Minimum wage if kept pace with productivity

<https://cepr.net>
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics and author's calculations



creating.

As the next chart shows, after 1968, many households became heavily indebted, with student loans, car loans, consumer loans and home mortgages. Households tried to maintain their standard of living despite the leveling off of wages. Often, more than one person in each household had to go out of the house and work for wages. Even that was not enough, so, typically, the household borrowed money and went into debt.



As family income stagnated and debt levels increased, many people experienced a great deal of stress. People know when they are slipping behind. Scholars have shown that when the wealth gap in a society increases, the health and well being of the society deteriorates. There is less trust between people. There is more mental illness and drug abuse. There is more obesity, more crime, more violence and more teen pregnancy. This is what that economic historian of the last 70 years of American life sees.

What is to be done?

A few years ago people started to demand \$15 dollars an hour minimum wage. However, as Dean Baker writes, 26 dollars an hour should be the actual minimum wage if the wage level had kept pace with the increase in productivity, as the first chart shows. Baker writes that if the minimum wage level were somehow magically raised to 26 dollars an hour, over the next 5 years, there would be some serious economic problems. Injecting so much new money into the economy through the wage system would cause large-scale unemployment and inflation. Why? Because in the last fifty years there have been **major changes** to: 1) rules of corporate governance effectively **allowing the executives to set their own salaries**, 2) **near monopolistic** patent and copyright laws that cause prices of drugs and software to be more expensive than they would be, and 3) the development of a “industry” made of hedge funds and huge banks that **siphon off massive amounts of money** to traders who contribute no real wealth to the economy. These facts about our economy are not understood by most people.

Continued from page 5

In other words, **we must restructure the economy as we raise the wages** of the lowest paid and give raises to the rest of the workers to improve the standard of living for all. The progressive’s plan is definitely needed, but **a permanent fix** would involve **changing corporate governance law, patent and copywrite law and regulating hedge funds and the big banks**. If these reforms are being talked about on corporate media, I am not hearing them. I only hear about them from a progressive economist like Baker.

Baker has written a book entitled Rigged (2016) which explains in detail how the structural changes in our economy over the last 50 years make it necessary to reform that structure before we can inject enough new money into the economy to lessen the massive inequality in our system. The new money can be injected, either through massive government spending (currently being proposed) or through raising the wages of millions of Americans (a preferable way that is not being considered except by what remains of the labor union movement)

Such a change would not just improve the lives of millions but would make our political system much more functional. Commenting on the lack of unity in the Democratic Party and the opposition to our democracy by the Trump Republicans, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez said “ the problem in American democracy today is that the people have lost faith in us, in government, that we actually will fight for working people.” Considering the lost ground of the millions of wage earners over the past 50 years, we can understand why so many people have lost faith in government.

Yet, it will be through government action that we can rectify the wrongs enumerated above. We may not like what the government is doing, but we need a government to do what we want. We cannot individually change policy.

If history is any guide, to get the action we need, a powerful progressive political movement must push the government while direct action must force American industry to deal with the economic inequality as well as climate change. After FDR was pushed by the voters and started the New Deal legislation, it was the sit-down strikes of 1936-1937 in the most powerful sector of the economy at that time, the automotive sector, that forced the largest corporation of the time (General Motors) to bargain with the unions. These events inaugurated a 30+ year period when with the unions

bargaining, the wage levels kept pace with productivity increase (the left-hand part of the first graph). We need something as powerful as the sit-down strikes to achieve policies that deal with inequality and climate change.

UPDATE 2021

In the wake of the late 2021 surge in the Covid pandemic in the United States, there is a phenomenon happening that is being called “the Great Resignation”. Workers are leaving the workforce or switching jobs by the millions, especially the essential workers. A recent survey by Microsoft indicates about 40% of workers are considering quitting or changing jobs. This spring, in April alone, according to the U.S. Department of Labor, four million people quit their jobs. The same thing happened in September. For many, they said, it was the way their employer treated them during the pandemic that prompted their action. Many may be leaving work because of fear of getting Covid-19 in not safe workplaces. Jack Rasmus calls “the Great Resignation” the general strike of 2021.

There is at the same time actual strikes by some of the few unionized workers in the private sector. The rate of unionization among private sector workers in just 6 percent. John Deere workers and Kellogg workers are on strike in late October, and John Deere settled in November, with good raises. IATSE (International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees), the union of Hollywood, Broadway, and television workers, almost struck but managed to get a new contract.

The public has come around to supporting unions again. I quote here Jim Hightower in The Hightower Lowdown, (volume 23, number 8, September 2021, the paper copy):

“Just 10 years ago, Gallup polls found that not even half of Americans approved of labor unions, but a steady rise in favorability has pushed that number to **two-thirds**. (That’s fast approaching the **72% level** Gallop registered in 1936 at the start of our modern organized labor movement.) **Even 45% of today’s Republicans approve of unions, 15 points higher than a decade ago.**”

There continues to be real legal barriers to organizing unions set up by the Supreme Court that did not exist 40 years ago when unions were much stronger. But maybe a corner is being turned, at least in worker’s consciousness, if not in worker organization.



WA Poor People's Campaign

Everybody's got the right to live!

Forward Together! Not One Step Back!

by Dorothy Van Soest and Romy Garcia, Members of the Washington Poor People's Campaign Coordinating Committee

Our goal is to create a Beloved Community and this will require a qualitative change in our soul as well as a quantitative change in our lives.
—Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

At the November program meeting of the Seattle Fellowship of Reconciliation Chapter, we began our presentation about the Washington Poor People's Campaign with the vision of a *beloved community*, the concept first coined by philosopher and theologian, FOR founder Josiah Royce, and then popularized by Dr. King, himself a member of FOR. Dr. King's *beloved community* philosophy centered on the belief that "racism, bigotry and prejudices will one day be replaced 'by an all-inclusive spirit of sisterhood and brotherhood' and that 'poverty, hunger and homelessness will not be tolerated because international standards of human decency will not allow it.'"

Actualizing the beloved community constitutes the ongoing work for people of faith and conscience who value the dignity of each person and the sacredness of Mother Earth and illustrates how the Fellowship of Reconciliation's vision of a world of justice, peace, freedom and environmental regeneration and adaptation is perfectly aligned with the Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival.

The Poor People's Campaign: Past and Present

In 1968, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and many others called for a "revolution of values" in America. They sought to build a broad, fusion movement that could unite poor and impacted communities across the country. Their name was a direct cry from the underside of history: The Poor People's Campaign.

In 2018, the Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival picked up this unfinished work. From Alaska to Arkansas, the Bronx to the border, people are coming together to confront the interlocking evils of systemic racism, systemic poverty, ecological devastation, militarism and the war economy, and the distorted moral narrative of religious nationalism.

At this critical juncture, the Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival is needed to shift the moral narrative, impact policies and elections at every level of government, and build lasting power for poor and impacted people. It is a moral fusion movement that unites people all over the country to address the five interlocking injustices that have led to over 140 million people being poor or low wage. It is a fusion cross-class movement led by poor people of all backgrounds and their allies who come from every region and state of the country. While grassroots from the states up, it includes over a hundred national sponsors, 15 national faith endorsements, and thousands of allies.

Creating a Third Reconstruction

The Poor People's Campaign is building towards a Third Reconstruction that draws on the transformational history of the First Reconstruction following the Civil War and the Second Reconstruction of the civil rights struggles of the 20th century. The Third Reconstruction is a revival of our constitutional commitment to establish justice, provide for the general welfare, end decades of austerity, and recognize that policies that center the 140 million poor and low-income people in the country are also good economic policies that can heal and transform the nation.

In May of this year, the Poor People's Campaign joined Representatives Pramila Jayapal and Barbara Lee when they announced a congressional resolution titled, *Third Reconstruction: Fully Addressing Poverty and Low Wages from the Bottom Up*. In June, the Washington Poor People's Campaign joined more than 50 simultaneous actions across the country to deliver the resolution to and demand that our members of the US House of Representatives embrace it.

Continued on page 8

Continued from page 7

The Mass Poor Peoples & Low Wage Workers Assembly and Moral March on Washington, June 18th 2022

Between now and June 18, 2022, the Washington Poor People’s Campaign along with forty-six other state campaigns will focus on organizing toward a generationally transformative event, a moral fusion moment of gatherings locally and a mass gathering in Washington DC. It is one part of the broader movement to realize a Third Reconstruction that is building across the country.

It is not just a one-day event. It is a *declaration* that there are more than 140 million poor and low-income people and we must do more to make them hear us and meet the needs of the people—a *declaration* that this is not a political game, that people are dying, that more than 50% of our children are poor or low wealth—a *declaration* that we are here, that we will never again be divided, and that we will be heard— a *declaration* that we are doing M.O.R.E.—Mobilizing, Organizing, Registering, and Educating—of poor and low wealth who are eligible to vote to vote in 2022—a *declaration* that we understand, in the words of Frederick Douglass during the years leading up to the First Reconstruction, that “power concedes nothing without a demand.”

An Invitation to Become a Mobilizing Partner

As part of a moral fusion movement that is uniting people all over the country to address the five interlocking injustices, the Washington Poor People’s Campaign is building people power here by inviting groups, organizations, and faith communities to become mobilizing partners. Local and regional chapters of organizations that are already endorsing/mobilizing partners on the national level, such as the National Fellowship of Reconciliation, are invited to affirm their alignment by signing on as a mobilizing partner of the Washington state PPC as well. For more information, go to www.washingtonppc.org. To sign on, write to washington@poorpeoplescampaign.org and let us know your chapter is in alignment with the PPC fundamental principles and that you want to be a mobilizing partner, along with contact information for a person with whom we can communicate.

To sign up for regular communications, register at: www.poorpeoplescampaign.org

WWFOR Fall Retreat: Nov. 13, 2021

By David Lambert

The theme for this Retreat was Bridging Our Differences: Civility First...So We Can Work Together. Civility First is the name of a Whidbey Island organization that began around 2016. Tom Ewell, of Whidbey Island Chapter of WWFOR, has been involved in its inception. This group has a strong purpose of active listening and helping people do our best to understand what others are saying without necessarily agreeing with them, and additionally doing our best to learn from and share with them, to bridge differences.

The morning started with an inspiring welcome from Bruce Pruitt-Hamm, Chair of WWFOR, followed by sharing about Civility First history and activities by Cathy Whitmire, CF’s Founder and Director. The morning workshop was an excellent presentation by Kate Bracy and Sandi Peterson of Civility First in which all participants engaged in followed by small group sharing of what they thought and felt about the presentation.

At noon, Kwabi Amoah-Forson enthusiastically discussed his recent Manifest Humanity [Peace Bus](#) journey. Following Kwabi’s presentation, [Doug Mackey](#) shared about [experiences in Afghanistan and the dire situation the people of that country experience, ongoing.](#)

The afternoon workshops focused on Houselessness, Critical Race Theory, and a Q & A Civility First workshop. Formal and informal feedback from the participants has shown most had a positive learning and sharing experience.

This Retreat was planned by mostly members of Olympia FOR chapter of WWFOR with thorough and competent coordination from Jean Gant. And: a shout out to Tom Hathorn for his steady and conscientious tech work.

For further information: Explore the Civility First website at: <https://www.civillityfirst.org>. While on this website, you may wish to sign the Civility First Pledge. Individuals or Groups may sign.



