

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.*

## Obedience to What?

By Abby Brockway

As a Christian, obedience is a theme that has been in my life and appears as I study scripture. My story of obedience began on a cold January evening when I spoke at a climate rally in Seattle. After the talk, a spiritual leader representing an indigenous group called Idle No More encouraged me to think more about obedience. I did just that.

Last summer, Lummi leader and Master Carver Praying Wolf Jewell James stopped at Saint Marks Cathedral in Seattle on a journey with his totem pole from Montana to Alberta. A letter of apology signed by various church leaders in the Northwest was presented to James Jewell and to the Lummi Nation acknowledging the historical disrespect of Native American spiritual practices and traditions. In the letter, the leaders of our denominations "promised to honor and defend the rights of Native Peoples ..."

Further, the letter said "In this decade a new threat has arisen against Native Peoples, the mining, transport, burning, and disposal of fossil fuels. Proposed coal export terminals would damage native fisheries protected by longstanding treaties and poison our shared air and water. Coal trains servicing these terminals would cut across sacred lands and impact the health of those indigenous communities. In this generation we also acknowledge that the mining and burning of fossil fuels creates terrible threats of climate disruption, ocean acidification, and pollution to harm all, especially the poorest."

"Tribal leaders have asked us to keep our past promises, and to stand with them in defense of their sacred lands and fishing rights. And so we call upon the Northwest Congressional delegation and other elected officials, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Department of the Interior, and all people

of goodwill to uphold the treaty rights of Native communities of the Northwest. We ask that all environmental and cultural harm to Native lands and peoples be considered when making public policy decisions about the mining, transport, and export of coal and other fossil fuels."

"As religious leaders, our greatest commandment is to love our neighbor as ourselves. Putting this ethic into action, we stand in solidarity with our Native neighbors to safeguard the traditional lands, waters, and sacred sites of their peoples from destruction."

James Jewell asked the people to stand with the Lummi Tribe to protect front line areas facing extreme extraction and

exploitation. He explained that the Salish Sea has salmon that have tumors and peeling skin, and starfish suffering from a disease causing their bodies to dissolve. The waters are now so acidic that baby oysters are being raised in Hawaii and transported back to the Sound when they are strong enough to endure the acidic waters.

He asked us to stand up with the Lummi Nation and all Tribes to protect our sacred lands from the destruction of extraction, such as the Lummi burial grounds, which are being threatened by the proposed construction and operation of a coal export terminal. These and other expansion projects for coal and oil also disturb the herring breeding grounds vital to salmon survival and threaten the stability of our Salish Sea.

Not only am I concerned I question the overall stability of our climate. With increased fossil fuel transport, I see fires, floods, drought and destruction happening in record-breaking numbers. Increased atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> thicken the greenhouse blanket allowing more heat to be trapped causing global average temperatures to rise. If we keep at the current rate, the average temperature around the world could increase by about 4 to 12° F by the year 2100. We need to maintain at least 3/4 of all known reserves of fossil fuels in the ground in order to keep the earth's temperature from rising above 2° Celsius.

In September 2012, oil trains began coming through Seattle loaded with dangerous Bakken crude from North Dakota. In 2014, the number of these oil trains passing through Seattle on their way to refineries in Skagit and Whatcom counties grew to



**ABBY ON THE TRIPOD**

Cont. from page 1 around 14 per week. This could double once the Philips 66 refinery in Ferndale completes its oil-by-rail-unloading facility in December 2014, and if the Shell refinery in Anacortes is granted a permit for its own unloading facility.

On September 2nd, I joined Rising Tide Seattle in erecting a steel tripod in the Everett Delta train yard in front of a parked oil train. Four others locked their bodies to the feet of the tripod while I climbed to the top and sat for 8 hours actively petitioning our government. We launched both an online and ground campaign to demand that Governor Inslee enact an immediate moratorium on all fossil fuel trains and deny permits for all coal and oil shipping facilities proposed in Washington. We built positive relationships with the large fleet of police officers, FBI agents and firefighters; sang songs; and explained the urgency and the need to be heard. We spoke to reporters and waved in solidarity to trains passing by and to truckers honking in support. This Act was done with careful consideration, respect and prayer.

I know I must act. We all must act on what we believe. We must protect what we love with our hearts, our mind and our entire being. As a citizen I have participated as fully as possible, attending over 40 hours of hearings; meeting elected officials and speaking about my concern for our region's energy policy; gathering signatures and voting. I do not feel heard and feel unaware of what is happening in our region. I desperately want to make changes for the common good. I risked my safety, my reputation and my comfort to call out for what I believe to be global climate justice. My currency is my passion, love, vulnerability, will and faith.

I am prepared to face the legal consequences and the financial cost of my actions. I choose obedience to the earth and all who dwell on it. Please join me in the fight for the health and the sustainability of our region and the world.



THE BOOK TO READ THIS WINTER

## Breaking Denial, Dreaming in Public, and Answering History's Knock.

By John M Repp

A review of *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs the Climate* 2014 by Naomi Klein

What is wrong with us? Why can't we answer history's hard knock on our front door in the form of super storms, record droughts, floods, wildfires, globetrotting diseases, food shortages and finally threats of tipping points like the melting of the West Antarctic glacier and massive releases of methane from Arctic permafrost. The answer is denial, denial of climate change.

Naomi Klein tells us exactly when and how she broke through her denial of climate change. It came when she heard a young Bolivian woman tell her in late 2009 that climate change was both terrible threat and an opportunity. When she learned to reframe climate change and see both possibilities clearly, the threat and the promise, she began the research for this excellent book.

I have read 4 reviews, three in the corporate press: *LA Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, and the Associated Press, and one in *The Guardian* of UK, and even *The Guardian* review was critical of Klein. So I offer another view.

Climate change will change everything whichever way we choose, continued denial or "a massive mobilization larger than any in history" (p.5) You get a strong sense when reading this book that things are changing very fast. Klein writes that she had to scramble to keep up. Her argumentation is brilliant as is her reporting directly from the scene. She is asking for system change not light bulb change.

Many people say the world cannot cooperate and they point to the 20 year failure of the UN sponsored meetings. She says not true. Parallel to the failures of climate change negotiations have been the success of globalization and free-trade treaties that actually have teeth in them and are not nonbinding like the climate change agreements. These so-called "free trade" treaties have actually increased greenhouse gas emissions as they have encouraged more trade powered by fossil fuels as well as the manufacturing of goods for developed countries in less developed countries that are powering their industries with coal, like a repeat of the Industrial Revolution in the West.

Many people say we won't sacrifice. No, she says. People are already sacrificing under the austerity regimes: cuts in jobs, services, loss of homes, pensions, and savings, delayed retirement and abandoned educational plans. True, people are chaffing at these sacrifices, but that is only because there is no universal sharing of sacrifice like during the WWII rationing. Now, the super wealthy, the Wall Street banks and multinational corporations are thriving like never before.

Many people say the technology and policy proposals are not

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there. Yes they are! writes Klein. Today wind and solar are cheaper than coal for generating electricity. Take away the 1 trillion dollar a year subsidies the fossil fuel industry receives each year on a global basis and stop the “right” to pour carbon emissions cost free into our atmosphere, and the fossil fuel industry would disappear quickly.

In the last chapter, Klein calls for a mass uprising where everyone is an activist. She looks at history to see if what she says we must do is possible. She writes of the abolitionist movement, the women’s movement, and the civil rights movement and wants something like all of them combined, plus the worker’s movement which knows how to win economic changes. The abolition movement did not achieve 40 acres and a mule, nor did the women’s movement achieve parity wages or wages for housework, and the civil rights movement the end of poverty. But Klein thinks it is possible for the highest goals of the liberation movements of the last two centuries to finally be achieved. That is how big of a force climate change will be. She also reminds us that popular uprisings take even the organizers by surprise.

The change we need will go deep into the psyches of modern humans. We will have to change our worldview. We must learn to see ourselves not just as “singular gratification units” but as a mass of contradictory desires who can rebuild and reinvent “the very idea of the collective, the communal, the commons, the civil and the civic after so many decades of attack and neglect” (p. 460) To survive we will need to learn to work together to regenerate more life on the earth, not extract more fossil fuels and metals from the ground and consume evermore stuff.

Again, to get a sense of how fast things are changing, just after I read Klein, I read about Rodale’s proposal to use regenerative organic farming to absorb all the excess green house emissions of the last few decades. (To see this proposal web search: “Rodale Institute Regenerative Organic Agriculture and Climate Change”)

If Rodale’s idea works, we change how we farm and the plants and living soil will absorb more greenhouse gas emissions. We have yet another tool to deal with climate change. But Klein’s thesis remains solid. Our economic policies will have to change. Smaller, local, cooperative ventures must be favored over large multinational corporations. Our new economy will require a redistribution of wealth and power. All the rules of the deregulating, privatizing and social program cutting version of capitalism will have to be broken. She reminds us that free market theory was ignored when the banking system nearly collapsed.

In part, Klein is writing this book for progressives. She wants us to stop our denial of climate change and figure out how all our different issues are related. We all face the same power structure. There will not be a separate movement for each of our good causes. But climate change is “the best argument progressives have had” to realize all our demands. She reports on the world-wide movement of local people blocking the efforts of the fossil fuels companies to develop new unconventional sources like gas and oil fracking, shale oil, deep ocean drilling and all the new infrastructure to transport the dirty fuel all over the world, for example, the pipelines and the shipping docks. She calls this “Blockadia” and sees this vibrant

movement with new coalitions like the “Cowboy and Indian” alliances in the American West as just the beginning.

This book gives me hope. Throughout the book, Klein tells us what policies we need to put in place, how to we need to do it, how much it will cost and where we will get the money, and she gives us a deadline, 2017. We had better get busy.

(To see Naomi Klein at Seattle Town Hall on 9/28/2014 web search: “TalkingStickTV - Naomi Klein - This Changes Everything”)



## The Health Effects of War: Conversations with an Iraqi Doctor about the Epidemic of Birth Defects in Iraq

By Mary Anne Mercer, senior lecturer, University of Washington  
Department of global Health

Obstetrician Dr. Muhsin Al Sabbak of Basrah, Iraq, accompanied by an environmental toxicologist, Dr. Mozghan Savabieasfahani, recently spoke in Seattle on increases in birth defects since the US-sponsored wars in Iraq. The presentations were sponsored by the University of Washington and various community groups. Dr. Al Sabbak is chair of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the Basrah Maternity and Children’s Hospital in southern Iraq and has served on the faculty of the Basrah Medical School for nearly three decades. After the first US-Iraq war in 1991, he began to track birth defects among the infants he delivered. The rates began to rise in the late 1990s, increasing from 1.37 infants with obvious defects for every thousand women he delivered from October 1994 to 1995 up to 23 per thousand in 2003, a **17-fold increase**. Alarmed at the growing numbers, he carefully photographed several thousand newborns with anomalies of many types. His presentation included pictures of a few of the tragic conditions he faces with his patients, some of them with such extreme or unusual deformities that neonatologists

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could not classify them.

There is growing evidence that a major cause of the increases in birth anomalies comes from environmental contamination with heavy metals and other toxins that were generated by US military bases during burning of waste in open air pits, and by heavy bombardment of Iraqi cities. Exposure to fine particulates of heavy metals --that become airborne during and after bombing explosions-- is thought to be a main cause of the rise in newborn anomalies. Pregnant women and their growing fetuses are highly sensitive to exposure to metals which could lead to birth defects and neurodevelopmental disorders that have become common in Iraq after 2003. Metals enter the body mainly by inhalation and their levels build up over time. Heavy metals are known to wreak havoc on the human genome, damaging the DNA of egg and sperm cells. Dr. Savabieasfahani has collected hair, nail and deciduous tooth samples from the parents and the children themselves who were born with birth defects and has found unusually high concentrations of various heavy metals such as titanium, magnesium, lead, and mercury -- all heavily used in the production of US weapons.

Of particular interest is the finding that US soldiers who served in Iraq and had numerous medical problems as a result of their service were also found to have high levels of titanium in body tissues. In addition to the contaminated dust of military bombardment, soldiers were exposed to smoke from massive open-air burn pits that were used to destroy the waste products generated by the occupation. Some of the burn pits were as large as 10 acres, and around the clock burned items that might include batteries, electronics, plastics, asbestos products and the corpses of dead animals and humans. Samples tested from the smoke of one burn pit contained a highly poisonous mixture of dioxins, furans, volatile organic compounds, poly-aromatic hydrocarbons, and other poisonous particulate matter. The US corporations Halliburton and KBR used the pits as an economical method of waste disposal on the bases that they supplied.

How to address environmental devastation of this magnitude is a major challenge, and one that the international public health community has not yet begun to address. Because most of the burn pits are still in place and still contain high levels of toxic chemicals, they continue to expose the Iraqi population to their pollutants. One approach that could be a small step in both acknowledging the devastation that US wars have caused and helping to ameliorate its effects would be requiring that the army or its contractors clean up the burn pits. Much more research is badly needed, however, and funding for that research will likely be available only when we recognize our responsibility for causing the devastation in the first place.

## WWFOR Report for Witness

*By Bruce Pruitt-Hamm*

They say "Necessity is the Mother of Invention." After nearly 40 years of enjoying paid staff, the Western Washington Fellowship of Reconciliation (WWFOR) is transitioning to become all volunteer... and all active!

Following chronic budget concerns, our "board" decided this spring to terminate the position of our WWFOR Organizer of 10 years, Ellen Finkelstein. A "Transition Committee" was commissioned and has been working for months to ensure that the regional organization continues and expands its tradition of networking unpaid activists (aka "volunteers"). WWFOR has, using volunteers, organized (with Oregon FOR) a Northwest-wide annual conference at Seabeck conference grounds on Hood Canal for over 60 years.

The WWFOR is updating that tradition with new technologies for networking and collaboration that are being embraced by the younger generation of activists and by newer tech-driven activist networks like 350.org. We have formed a standing committee on Information Technology that conducted a "needs assessment" and forged ahead to begin revamping our web site, our social media and, most importantly, our communications infrastructure. We will be utilizing various IT tools to allow volunteers to accomplish tasks that were always done "in the office". These include using remote access and "cloud" technologies; and facilitating committees and issue working groups to coordinate, make decisions and accomplish and track tasks by use of an Organizational Website that has sub sites, shared calendars, task lists and document workspace, and online meeting and screen-sharing resources. The WWFOR office and staff always functioned as a clearinghouse and a networking resource, but those functions can now be "flattened" and fulfilled with new collaboration technologies, and the cost savings invested in program.

Of course, the Transition Committee understands technology is useless without people. In April we surveyed our mailing list (using online survey tools unavailable 20 years ago) of 1300 to assess what they were interested in for program and willing to do for handling office and organizational tasks previously handled by paid staff. We figured that if there wasn't enough interest to keep a program or organizational function going, then we should re-examine its continuance. In other words, let the members lead and we would follow... and facilitate. We followed up by phone with the roughly 100 folks surveyed who indicated interest in one or more activities. From this we have initiated list-servs on 3 program topics that had the most interest: nonviolence; economic justice and racial justice. We intend to follow up further to assist and encourage members to initiate and organize programs and projects based upon their interests.

A key program of WWFOR was put "at-risk" by the elimination of staff. Founded by Mike and Ruth Yarrow, former

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WWFOR staff in 2000, the WWFOR has conducted a month long training program for high school youth each July, called the "Peace Activist Trainee" program. For the last 14 years WWFOR staff have provided the backbone of this program, which has trained over 100 youth in nonviolent direct action. In 2014 the WWFOR Organizer served again as the Director. However, 2 Assistant Directors, Kaeley Pruitt-Hamm and Dante Garcia, both former PAT graduates, helped with the planning and training. Kaeley has now been hired by Friends Committee on National Legislation in Washington, DC and Dante is working as staff with 21Progress in Seattle; but both care deeply for the sustainability of the PAT program, in no small part due to their loyalty to, and love for, Mike Yarrow, who died June 2, 2014 from cancer. Kaeley proposed a revamping of the PAT program to accommodate the loss of Ellen Finkelstein as a full time staff. She proposed an ambitious one year fellowship with a summer and recurring monthly training component that we are calling the Yarrow Peace Fellowship. Dante has indicated his interest and willingness to take a leadership role in the development of this program idea and Ellen Finkelstein and Ruth Yarrow have also endorsed it. An all-volunteer committee has formed to begin the hard work of developing and implementing the Yarrow Peace Fellowship, to honor and keep alive the legacy of Mike Yarrow and the Peace Activist Trainee program.

In addition WWFOR has changed the name of its "board" from Area Committee to Regional Council (a regional analog to the National Council); begun to review and update its Guidelines (bylaws); strengthened and populated its committees; obtained the services of IT and web consultants; elected new leadership; and most importantly, shifted its focus toward the grassroots of its chapters and members, a shift necessitated by the loss of staff. A necessity that is proving to be the mother of innovation for the WWFOR!

## North American or Global Empire

*By Larry Kerschner*

The end result of the war between the U.S. Empire and the Spanish Empire in 1898 marked the beginning of the global American Empire. Spain had been losing control of its empire due to internal corruption and external national liberation movements, especially in Puerto Rico, Cuba and the Philippines. On September 23, 1868, at Lares, nearly 1000 Puerto Rican revolutionaries declared the first Republic of Puerto Rico. Many of these rebels were former African slaves who had escaped. The revolt would be known as El Grito de Lares (the Cry of Lares). These revolutionary forces eventually controlled the mountains and much of the rural areas around the towns with Spanish garrisons.

Although unable to push the Spanish from Puerto Rico, the Spanish Empire finally agreed to negotiations which resulted in

many concessions for the people of Puerto Rico.

The Cuban War of Independence (1895–1898) was the last of three liberation wars that Cuban rebels fought against the Spanish occupiers. The final three months of the conflict escalated to become the part of the Spanish-American War. With the abolition of slavery in Cuba in October 1886, former slaves joined the ranks of farmers and urban working class. The number of campesinos and tenant farmers rose considerably. The rise of labor movements began at the same time.

"El Partido Revolucionario Cubano" (The Cuban Revolutionary Party) was officially proclaimed on April 10, 1892, with the purpose of gaining independence for both Cuba and Puerto Rico. By the end of 1894, the basic conditions for launching the revolution were set.

The insurrection began on February 24, 1895, with uprisings all across the island. From the very beginning of the war, one of the most serious problems for the rebels was the acquisition of suitable weapons. This lack of arms led to guerrilla-style fighting, using the environment, the element of surprise, a fast horse, and a machete. Most of their weapons were acquired in raids on the Spaniards. Attempts to bring in weapons from outside were thwarted by the British Navy and the U.S. Coast Guard.

The rebels eventually had fighting forces in all the provinces. Madrid decided to change its policy towards Cuba and drew up a colonial constitution for Cuba and Puerto Rico and installed a new government in Havana. But with half the country out of its control and the other half in arms, it was recognized by the rebels as powerless and this move was rejected by the rebels.

With concessions offered to rebels in Puerto Rico and Cuba, the weakness of the Spanish Empire began to become evident to other Powers.

Starting in the early 1880s, Spain had also suppressed an independence movement in the Philippines which was intensifying so Spain was now fighting two wars, which put a heavy burden on its economy. But it turned down offers in secret negotiations by the United States in 1896, which was closely following the war, to buy Cuba from Spain.

In the Philippines, the liberation struggle had already formed a national government with a large peoples' army which had swept the Spanish Colonial Army and its administration from most of the Philippines.

The U.S. capitalist power structure viewed with alarm the

rise of nationalist forces of independence. They were also concerned that the British or one of the other great powers of the time might step into the power vacuum created by these anti-colonial movements before the U.S. could annex them.

So on April 25, 1898, the U.S. declared war on Spain while at the same time invading Puerto Rico, Cuba and the Philippines. The Treat of Paris, at the end of the Spanish-American War, transferred control of the Philippines, without consulting the people of the Philippines, to the United States.

Under the pretext of aiding the Philippine rebels, the first U.S. troops landed on June 30, 1898. U.S. troops continued to arrive even after the last of the Spanish troops surrendered on December 10, 1898.

On February 4, 1899, the U.S. troops began to wipe out the Philippine forces under an order that allowed no truces or ceasefires. Over half of the total U.S. Army of that time, 1.2 million U.S. troops eventually occupied the Philippines.

The Philippine people were totally unprepared for the genocidal attack of the American military. Unable to cope with the guerrilla tactics used by the Philippine revolutionary forces, the U.S. military began using the same approach they had used against the indigenous peoples of North America, and which they reprised for use more recently against the Vietnamese people in the American War in S.E. Asia.

The general outlines of this tactic called for destroying all organized social and economic life in guerrilla areas. Villages were burned while crops and animals were destroyed, diseases were intentionally spread in biological warfare, and people were either killed or forced to become refugees in their own country. Large areas were declared "free-fire zones" in which any Filipino seen was shot on sight.

Media at the time supported the indiscriminate killing, looting and torture encouraged by the U.S. Military high command. The Boston Herald said: "Our troops in the Philippines....look upon all Filipinos as of one race and condition, and being dark men, they are therefore 'niggers' and entitled to all the contempt and harsh treatment administered by white overlords to the most inferior races".

In Samar Province, U.S. General Jacob Smith ordered his troops to kill every Filipino man, woman and child they could find "over ten". The war and occupation by the U.S. changed the cultural landscape of the islands, as people dealt with an estimated 34,000 to 220,000 Filipino casualties (with more civilians dying from disease and hunger brought about by war), disestablishment of the Roman Catholic Church (as a "state Church" — as previously in Spain), and the introduction of the

English language in the islands as the primary language of government, education, and business.

By 1901, the Filipino, Cuban and Puerto Rican patriots had all been defeated and the question of the U.S. expanding from a North American Empire to a Global Empire was decided.



**Spanish-American War Propaganda**



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