

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.

## **To Protect Our Planet, and Ourselves, We Need to Ban the Nuclear Bomb**

by *Beth Brunton* | First published in *Real Change* August 2nd, 2017, reprinted by permission of author

Are you doing your best to protect our people, planet and just prosperity?

Yes, thank you. You reduce or recycle, you bike or bus, you vote for the greenest candidates and policies to prevent climate change and other disasters.

What else could you do? You could add to your to-do list: ban nuclear bombs to keep our people and planet safe from mass destruction. Nuclear weapons are a greater threat than ever, but you can join the new nuclear abolition movement growing here and all over the world.

How can one bomb destroy a city? On Aug. 6 and 9, 1945, the United States detonated the first nuclear bombs on the people living in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan.

The bombs instantly killed at least 100,000 people and destroyed thousands of homes, schools, buildings and nature. Another 100,000 died later from burns and radiation.

Fortunately after this devastation, an international community of scientists, religious, elected leaders and millions of people of conscience united to demand action and declare, "Never again." In 1970, the Non-Proliferation Treaty committed nuclear-armed states to pursue disarmament. Then, in 1996, the International Court of Justice opined that the threat or use of nuclear weapons violates international law.

Finally, this spring, nations met to negotiate a ban on nuclear weapons, giving them the same illegal status as other weapons of mass destruction such as chemical and biological weapons. On July 7, a treaty was signed by 122 nations. This is a historic victory for disarmament and a crucial step in creating a world without nuclear weapons.

Unfortunately, the U.S. and other nuclear-armed nations did not sign. In fact, Trump is igniting a new nuclear arms race. He has repeatedly asked why the U.S. can't just use nuclear weapons. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson has declared that all options, including a pre-emptive military strike, are on the table with North Korea. Even before the

recent election, U.S. military-industrial profiteers launched a plan to spend \$400 billion on nuclear weapons over the next 10 years. According to Physicians for Social Responsibility, Washington residents paid \$1.4 billion in 2016 in federal taxes — \$196.06 per person.

Why should Washingtonians care? Because the largest concentration of deployed nuclear weapons in the U.S. is just 20 miles west of Seattle at the Bangor submarine base. If one or more of those nuclear bombs were detonated, by accident or hack, can you imagine what would happen to every living thing here? These bombs are up to 30 times more deadly than the ones that destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Why do I care? In 1969, I had the opportunity to spend my junior year of high school as a Rotary exchange student in Hiroshima, Japan. I spent that year seeing the survivors' scars, hearing their stories and listening to their pleas to share this message to prevent another Hiroshima. This taught me the inevitable tragic suffering of war, and that the better option is to invest our time, skills and resources to protect life.

So what can we do now? Right here in our state, people are joining together to speak out to prevent nuclear annihilation. A new statewide coalition to stop the new nuclear arms race brings nearly 30 faith, labor, environmental, peace and health groups together to influence our elected representatives. In the wake of this historic treaty banning nuclear weapons, you can call your members of Congress to support the treaty. To learn more, including information about events and action options, visit Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility.

Would any sane, caring person ever choose mutually assured destruction? Never again. Let's join with our neighbors and the international community to ban the bomb now.

A longtime law, economics and history teacher, **Beth Brunton** contributes to creating a more just, peaceful world by strengthening nonviolent power through community connections.

**BAN THE BOMB**

**What the UN is Doing Now to Ban Nuclear Weapons and How You Can Help**

by Lilly Adams

In March, 132 states took a pivotal step forward by participating in historic negotiations to ban nuclear weapons. The US was not one of these countries. Negotiations will form, “a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination.” (United Nations. *Conference to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons, Leading Towards their Total Elimination*. Online at <https://www.un.org/disarmament/ptnw/>)The US boycott of these negotiations is an embarrassing and irresponsible decision, but will not hinder the momentum of this global movement.

Negotiations were set in motion after a UN General Assembly decision in late 2016.

This is the culmination of 72 years of work in the UN and the international community, since atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. Previous international actions have moved us in the right direction: the Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1970 committed nuclear armed states to pursue disarmament, and the 1996 International Court of Justice advisory opinion found that the threat or use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to international law. Now, the ban will provide another, definitive legal tool to aid in the path towards a world without nuclear weapons.

Nuclear weapons states currently cling to misguided Cold War-era perceptions of the utility of nuclear weapons. Global disarmament efforts have stalled, and there are still roughly 14,900 nuclear warheads in the hands of nine states, with 6,800 in the US alone. Meanwhile, the rest of the world is asserting that such indiscriminate and devastating weapons are intolerable on the world stage. The treaty will place nuclear weapons under the same legal status as other weapons of mass destruction: biological weapons, chemical weapons, cluster munitions, and anti-personnel landmines. In doing so, it will strengthen global norms against these weapons.

The treaty was finished on July 7, 2017 and signing will begin on Sept 20, 2017. When 50 nations sign, nuclear weapons will be illegal.

Along with the US, none of the nuclear-armed nations are participating in the conference. As the US was the first country to develop a nuclear weapon, and the only country to have used them in war, it should recognize the moral imperative to eliminate them and lead the charge.

I encourage readers to join me in calling on our Senators Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell to express their support of the ban negotiations, and push for US participation in the resulting treaty.

If you do write, here are some suggestions to make your letter more effective by making it personal:

Why do YOU care about these negotiations, or having a ban on nuclear weapons? Put this front and center.

Make it local – we live under the threat of the Trident submarines at Bangor Naval base, we see the legacy of Hanford in the tri-cities, we lived with missiles at the Fairchild base. What do you connect most with?

Share our work locally – how are you involved in nuclear weapons activism? Talk about the coalition, (The Washington State Physicians for Social Responsibility Coalition <https://www.wpsr.org/our-work-in-washington/> Seattle FOR is a member) and the work we’re doing!

Take the sample above as a suggestion. Please edit, put things in your own words, move things around. You can use pieces of the sample, but we can’t all submit the same article.

*Lilly Adams coordinates WPSR’s nuclear arms abolition campaign, working to build a state-wide coalition, engage with elected officials, and promote education and awareness of this issue. She graduated from UC Berkeley with a degree in Society and Environment and is passionate about promoting environmental and social justice through community organizing. Lilly has worked as a community organizer with groups including CALPIRG, Food & Water Watch, Students Against Fracking, and Corporate Accountability*



Logo of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons see <http://www.icanw.org/>

**Letter to the Editor of the Lewis County Chronicle on the So-called Justice System**

by Larry Kershner, reprinted by permission of the author

There have been recent calls to impeach President Trump for obstruction of justice. However, the whole American political and so-called justice system is itself an obstruction of justice. I recently had the pleasure of being a defendant in the federal court system. The current criminal legal system is designed not to produce what is right or just or fair. The current system criminalizes political dissent. Dissent which opposes and tries to change the dominant social order or policies of the government should be protected by the First Amendment of the Constitution.

The US criminal legal system is political, the clear intention of which is to control certain communities in order to benefit those with power. A 1999 survey by the American Bar Association found that 47% of the American public believes the legal system to be unfair, especially to minority communities.

Thirty years ago, there were 500,000 people behind bars in America. Today, there are 2.2 million. The United States with 5 percent of the world's population, has 25 percent of the world's prisoners and 50% of the world's lawyers. The US has the second highest per-capita incarceration rate in the world. According to the US Bureau of Justice Statistics, Black and Hispanic prisoners make up 59% of the US incarcerated population. The recent trial of the police officer who killed Philando Castile is a perfect example of the justice a person of color can expect in this country.

Anyone who has been involved with the legal system knows that the impartial color-blind delivery of justice by the courts is a myth. The function of the court system is to maintain State control and the power structure of the dominant elite. Judges and juries are not meant to provide justice but to provide social stability. In a broad sense many, if not most, criminal charges in a society that is capitalist, racist, hetero-patriarchal, transphobic and classist are essentially political.

In our case, the government and the court refused us any opportunity to explain the reasons for our action at the Bangor Nuclear Submarine Base. The government filed and the court accepted a motion *in limine* which prevented us from expressing the moral, ethical and legal reasons that convinced us that our action was not only legal but necessary. Since we were gagged by the court and the government despite the free speech that all Americans are entitled to, we could not receive a fair and just trial.

Court rules are so hidden and convoluted that a Gnostic priest called a lawyer is required to understand what is happening. In a jury trial the prosecutors get to

speak last. Many if not most trial judges are ex-prosecutors. The supposed last arbiter of justice, the Supreme Court, only takes about 70 cases a year out of thousands and is generally unconcerned about equity and justice, looking mainly at procedural issues.

As Benjamin Franklin said "Justice will not be served until those who are unaffected are as outraged as those who are".

*Larry Kershner lives in Centralia. He is a retired Family Nurse Practitioner and an active member of the Fellowship of Reconciliation and Veterans for Peace. He recently did civil disobedience at the Bangor Nuclear Submarine Base to protest the illegality of nuclear weapons.*

**The Art of Unarmed Uprising: to Change the Conversation**  
a review of Mark Engler and Paul Engler. [This Is An Uprising: How Nonviolent Revolt Is Shaping the Twenty-first Century.](#)

(New York: Nation Books. 2016)

by John M Repp

The Engler brothers start their story with an account of the campaign of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) to end segregation in Birmingham, Alabama in the spring of 1963. The campaign was very carefully planned. The strategy was to create a public crisis and a media event using a combination of several nonviolent tactics like lunch-counter sit-ins, boycotts of merchants who displayed "whites only" signs, marches and the intention to fill the jails. Martin Luther King, Jr., the leader of SCLC, expected someone would be killed from police repression. No one was. When their campaign succeeded, the activity of the civil rights movement exploded through the South. In 1964, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act which banned discrimination in public accommodations and hiring. The Engler's call this the "legislative endgame". It was the civil rights movement that changed the direction of our nation's politics, and as we say now, "changed the conversation".

The corporate mass media always portray popular uprisings as "spontaneous" and "leaderless" but the Engler brothers write that the organizing of mass uprisings is an art. Mass uprisings can be "engineered". To be honest, the dynamics of a mass uprising are subtle and complex and require sacrifice and escalation. Organizers of mass nonviolent uprisings seek conflict. They do not avoid conflict. Above all, a mass nonviolent uprising can be an effective alternative to armed struggle. The Engler brother's narrative of Birmingham is one of many historical examples of mass momentum-driven uprisings, an approach to social change that is the main focus of their book.

A real value of this book is the distinction the Engler brothers draw between different movement approaches to social change. They assert that each approach is needed. Each

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is appropriate at different times and places and that confusion, or worse, competition between the different approaches is a cause of movement weakness. When one approach is seen as the best or the only effective approach and the others are put down, social movements can fracture.

Here are the three approaches. 1) There is the **mass momentum-driven nonviolent uprising** like the mass movement that erupted after the success in Birmingham, the spreading of sit-down strikes all over the U.S. after the Flint sit-down strike of late 1936 and early 1937 and the recent Occupy Wall Street movement. 2) There is **structure-based organizing** like Alinsky-style community organizing or the union movement that was able to consolidate collective bargaining in the wake of the sit-down strikes. The unions, their bargaining and their political efforts were able to compress the wage-gap in the U.S. for 50 years, creating the “middle class”. Structure-based organizing is often hesitant to organize mass uprisings because the organization has bank accounts, employees, and carefully guarded relationships with key political players that they want to keep and not jeopardize. The Englers call SCLC a “hybrid organization” since it used both type 1 and 2 approaches. Finally, there is the third approach, 3) the **alternative communities** like the Quaker community or the counter-culture of the 1960’s. They attempt “to be the change they want to see” in society. **Successful social change requires all three approaches**, called “the ecology of change” by the brothers’ Engler.

Gandhi used all three over the course of his life. The Salt March was a momentum-driven uprising. The Congress Party was structure-based organizing. The ashram where he lived was an alternative, or pre-figurative community. (p.277)

There are limits to mass mobilizations as shown by the case of the Arab Spring and Occupy Wall Street. Just a mass nonviolent uprising is not enough. A strong organization is needed to consolidate or institutionalize the demands and make the reforms. Movements have stages. “Mass mobilizations alter the terms of political debate and create new possibilities for progress; structure-based organizing helps take advantage of this potential and protects against efforts to roll back advances; and countercultural communities preserve progressive values, nurturing dissidents who go on to initiate the next waves of revolt.” (pp. 253-254)

There is a wonderful quote from MLK, Jr. about Gandhi that I wish the right-wing fundamentalist Christians could hear and understand: “Gandhi was probably the first person in history to lift the love ethic of Jesus above mere interaction between individuals to a powerful and effective

social force on a large scale.” (p.13, quoted from King’s *Stride Toward Freedom: the Montgomery Story*, 1958)

Similar to the confusion between the different approaches to social change is the confusion around the concept of “nonviolence”. It is usually considered to be a philosophy or a way of life, called “principled nonviolence”. That is the Fellowship of Reconciliation stance. But nonviolence is also a strategy for social change, often referred to as “strategic nonviolence”. When another of the key figures in the book, Gene Sharp, was reading about Gandhi’s movement of resistance to the British in 1930’s India, he learned that most of the participants did not “embrace nonviolence out of a sense of moral commitment. Instead, they chose to employ nonviolent struggle because they believed it worked.” (p.40) This finding was very troubling to Sharp at first, until he realized it was a great opportunity because it meant large numbers of people could be mobilized for a nonviolent campaign. If only people who believed in “principled nonviolence” participated, the direct actions would be small. This is the experience of many of FOR-led direct actions. But the Engler brothers and Gene Sharp are looking instead to mass momentum-based uprisings for their great power. FOR often organizes new groups like SNOW (Sound Nonviolent Opponents of War) that WWFOR started in Seattle in 2002 when the invasion of Iraq approached and there was a need for large movements.

This year the Mike Yarrow Peace Fellows were assigned the Engler’s book. On the back cover, Michelle Alexander wrote “we have more power than we realize.” And Bill McKibben added that this book describes “a powerful method for making real change fast. And real change fast is in fact what our world requires.”

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*John M Repp became politically conscious during the American war in Vietnam. He worked with SNOW (Sound Nonviolent Opponents of War) starting before the invasion of Iraq and joined WWFOR then. He is the editor of The Pacific Call.*

### Wall Street Is Strip-mining America

a review of Les Leopold’s *Runaway Inequality: An Activist’s Guide to Economic Justice* (New York: Labor Institute Press, 2015)

by John M Repp

On the back cover of the *Runaway Inequality*, from a shop steward:

“Look, I’m not a reader. In fact, I hate to read. But I love reading this book. It’s written for people like me. I can’t

put it down.”

Runaway Inequality tells us that economic inequality is much, much worse than we think it is. The wage-gap ratio is the ratio between the income of the 200 highest paid CEOs of large American corporations and the income of the average non-supervisory worker at those companies. Leopold cites an opinion survey that asked average Americans what they thought the wage-gap is and what they thought the wage-gap *should* be. In 2013, the answers were respectively 36 to 1 and 7 to 1. The actual wage-gap in 2013 was 829 to 1!.. In 1970, it was 45 to 1. Despite political affiliation or educational level, most Americans wildly underestimate the size of income inequality. Leopold writes “if the typical American knew the real numbers, they would be outraged”. (p.12)

Leopold’s book is full of over 100 easy-to-read charts and clear analysis. He is giving us many of the facts we need to start constructing a platform that can unite the different movements. Such a platform needs to be more a vision than just a list of demands, but an understanding of the facts and solid analysis is necessary for the vision to emerge.

Something happened around 1980 that set runaway inequality into motion. At the time the media named the problem “stagflation.” The U.S. experienced both rising prices and rising unemployment at the same time, something many economists thought was impossible. Conservative economists argued that freer markets would solve the problem. Their policy ideas were adopted. The new economic philosophy was called “neo-liberalism” and it is still the reigning philosophy of both political parties. The prescription of this model has three parts: cut taxes on large corporations and the wealthy, cut government regulations and cut government spending on social programs. We now have almost 40 years of evidence that these policies triggered runaway inequality and ripped the social fabric of our country.

Leopold cites a study that suggests that of the many causes of runaway inequality, **the financial sector also known as “Wall Street” is the main driver.** For example, after deregulation, corporate raiders, now called private equity and hedge fund managers, would buy a company with borrowed money, reward themselves with huge fees for the raid, get the management to do the investors bidding by making most of their pay in stock options, and use company revenues to buy back the stock to raise the stock price. In 1982, William Simon, who was Treasury Secretary under Nixon, Ford and Carter, put up \$333,000 and with two other partners, borrowed \$79 million to buy Gibson Greetings, a greeting card company. Sixteen months later, the three partners sold the company for \$290 million, making an 870% profit. The deal left the company with a massive debt. The revenue that in the past would have gone to grow the firm

and pay decent wages was instead siphoned off into the financial sector. By 2002, the financial sector was gobbling up 42.5 percent of all corporate profits. Leopold calls this the financial strip-mining of America. And corporate raiding was but one way the financial engineers used to indebt corporations, individuals and governments to take wealth out of productive sectors of the economy. Others include the real estate bubble that popped in 2007-8 and the high fees cities and states pay to Wall Street when they borrow money.

We hear often that American corporations must move jobs to lower wage countries to stay competitive. But the more Wall Street loads up our corporations with debt, the less competitive they become. Germany, with almost \$10 an hour higher wages in manufacturing than the U.S., remains competitive with China i.e. their trade balance with China is even, while ours is a huge deficit. Germany keeps its financial sector in check, in part by supporting public banking.

So how have these Wall Street policies affected the standing of our country relative to other developed countries? We have the highest CEO/average worker income gap of all the developed countries.(p.64) In median wealth, we ranked 27<sup>th</sup> in 2012.(p.65) We are number 20 in the ranking of average life span, almost 5 years behind the leader, Japan.(p.72) The odds of a person rising above the station of their parents i.e. upward mobility, is about 50/50 in the U.S., while in Denmark, the chances are 7 to 1. (p.75) We have a higher child poverty rate than 34 other countries. (p.86) We were the first country to put freedom of the press into a Bill of Rights. However, today we are ranked 42nd in press freedom. (p. 87) After reading all these statistics and those cited here are but a few, we can no longer say we are the “greatest country in the world”. In 2010, 80% of the American people still believed that idea. In 2014, fewer believed, especially among the young.

As the wealthy and the big corporations pay less tax, government at all levels must borrow more. The wealthy would rather loan money to our cities, states and Federal governments than pay taxes. We are told we do not have the money to address climate change while high finance is extracting more and more from our personal, corporate and government budgets through debt. Wages have stagnated since 1973 even though worker productivity has been rising. As manufacturing jobs have disappeared from the cities, (Detroit is a good example) racial discrimination has left some neighborhoods of our cities devastated. They now resemble militarized occupation zones. The wealth gap between whites and Black and Hispanic Americans is huge: whites having about 10 times as much net worth as Blacks and Hispanics. Black neighborhoods were red lined until 1968, so Blacks could not get FHA loans to buy homes. Wall

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Street targeted Black and Hispanic buyers for high interest rate sub-prime mortgages that lead to foreclosures and the crash of 2007/8. Blacks and Hispanics fell even further behind.

Finally, we get to a discussion of some solutions. Leopold mentions restoring Glass-Steagall, which would prevent federally insured banks from speculating. Breaking up the big banks is also mentioned. But a whole chapter is devoted to public banking with the little-known Bank of North Dakota (BND) as the model. BND did not need bailout money during the 2008 crash and unemployment did not skyrocket in North Dakota after the crash. This was before the fossil fuel boom in that state. Most large city and state governments deposit their taxes and fees in the too-big-to-fail Wall Street banks. With public banking, that money would be deposited in those jurisdictions own banks, which would be required to invest in real wealth producing capital projects or businesses in their locale. With 50 public state banks like BND, Leopold writes “we could create up to 10 million new jobs”. (p.264)

Leopold discusses a maximum wage policy. Swiss activists got on the ballot a measure to limit the wage-gap to 12 to 1. It did not pass, but efforts continue. A maximum wage for high earners was the effect of the 91% marginal income tax rate for people earning more than \$200,000 – or \$2 million in today’s dollars – in the U.S. from 1946 to 1951.

Leopold writes that a financial transaction tax (Tobin tax) will put the brakes on the rapid buying and selling of stocks, bonds, options and derivatives. After all, we the 99% pay a tax when we buy something. Wall Street does not. Other developed nations provide free higher education for their citizens. This policy would produce more knowledgeable and productive citizens. Single-payer health care – Medicare for All – would be less costly and would cover everyone. Funding education and health-care is a real investment, not a cost, and is not carbon-producing.

“To tame runaway inequality, we need full employment.” (p 280) The private sector cannot produce enough jobs even with the huge government stimulus like military spending. Leopold writes that real unemployment is at least 11.3 million in February 2015. 20 million people want full time work and cannot find it 7 years after the financial crash. Finally, we must support coal, oil, and gas industry workers who must sacrifice as we move away from fossil fuel; otherwise they can be recruited by the fossil fuel companies to push back on the needed move away from fossil fuels.

Trump and the Republican right-wing want to blame our countries’ social and economic problems on minorities, immigrants and other countries. Stagnant wages are blamed on

immigrants. The loss of manufacturing jobs is blamed on China. Deflecting anger away from Wall Street is a classic divide-and-rule strategy by the 1%.

Leopold finishes his book with “An Open Letter to New Movement Organizers” (p. 299)

He says people are waiting for something defiant. He discusses the limits of “silo” or one issue organizing. He analyses the strengths – the idealism – and the failure of Occupy Wall Street. The leaders seemed to believe only a “spontaneous” uprising was necessary to make social change and a sustainable organizational structure was not needed. They also did not provide a way for people to participate who did not want to sleep in the occupied public spaces.

Leopold recommends we study and learn from the original populist movement of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the last time an American movement tried “to take control of the money supply away from private bankers while at the same time building new cooperatives”. (p. 303) Sometime soon he hopes that a national movement and organization (or coalition of organizations) will be organized “to forge a new agenda that takes on runaway inequality and climate change”. (p.308)



“ ...they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. “

**ISAIAH 2:4**

**After Mitchell and Jessen: Why the Truth of U.S. Torture Still Matters**

by Rob Crawford, first published in The Seattle Times, page A9, Sept 5, 2017 as “Put an end to the crime of torture”

The fight over civil war monuments reveals a crucial fact about our political culture: how we remember history matters. Unjust institutions and the ideologies that support them benefit from a distorted, forgotten or unknown history. White supremacy is Exhibit A. On the other side, every movement attempting to right past wrongs must engage in a struggle over how the past is represented.

The anti-torture movement, working to ensure that the torture regime put in place during the Bush-Cheney administration never happens again, faces similar challenges of memory and forgetting. In order to achieve our goal, we must tear down the edifices of denial, omission, and outright lies that have been constructed in defense of U.S. torture. Unless Americans know what actually happened and the consequences that followed, torture is almost guaranteed a rerun. Donald Trump’s threats to bring back torture should be warning enough that we have not put torture behind us.

The last significant breakthrough in getting to the truth was the Senate Torture Report, released in 2014. The full report, however, remains classified and powerful forces want all copies destroyed.

This September, in Spokane, a civil suit brought by the ACLU against two CIA contractors on behalf of torture victims promised to provide the public with three weeks of public testimony at an open trial. The trial would have been an opportunity to hear how torture destroys lives and has killed many of its victims. The defendants, James Mitchell and Bruce Jessen, were the chief architects of the CIA’s torture program; and then they put their model of “learned helplessness” into practice in CIA prisons.

The settlement announced last week was an impressive achievement. Three victims of CIA torture-- Suleiman Salim and Mohamed Ahmed Ben Soud (both were later released when found to be blameless) and Gul Rahman who died chained to the ceiling, naked, in a Bagram Cold Cell--won legal recognition that they were tortured and suffered harm. The plaintiffs won undisclosed monetary damages. The ACLU’s lead attorney, Dror Ladin, said the settlement was “a clear warning for anyone who thinks they can torture with impunity.” The case set a new precedent in the ongoing struggle for accountability.

Yet, the opportunity of a public trial involving CIA torture, a first, has now been foreclosed. I fear that the forces of denial and forgetting will take advantage of this development. As far as I can tell, no public official,

including Washington State Senators and Representatives, has chosen to comment on the settlement or the need for justice to be served in the interest of achieving a torture-free country. Media coverage was extensive but fleeting.

The fact remains that no criminal charges have been brought against the key perpetrators of U.S. torture. Impunity remains a political reality, thereby creating the expectation that U.S. leaders, CIA officials, and military brass can and will get away with committing the crime of torture in the future.

Importantly, most people remain uninformed about what really happened when Dick Cheney announced he was taking the War on Terror to “the dark side.” They don’t know or, worse, don’t want to know, the horrific consequences of torture on its victims, knowledge about which leaves one with the anguished question, how could this have happened? Unless we muster the courage to ask critical questions about our country’s national security policies, we will have no idea of the harm inflicted on the nation by torture and others acts of unjustified violence. We will not be able to recognize how torture has made us less safe and less free.

The fight for truth will continue. Only when Americans call upon their conscience, look with eyes wide open at the dangers we face from those who claim to be our defenders, and act to demand a more just and peaceful government will there be an end to torture and unlawful state violence of all kinds. If torture is not wrong, nothing is wrong.

**Rob Crawford** is a Professor Emeritus of the School of interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences University of Washington, Tacoma. Rob has been active in the Washington state Religious Campaign Against Torture <http://www.wsrcat.org/> and is a member of the Fellowship of Reconciliation.



**Minimum Wage Brings Justice**

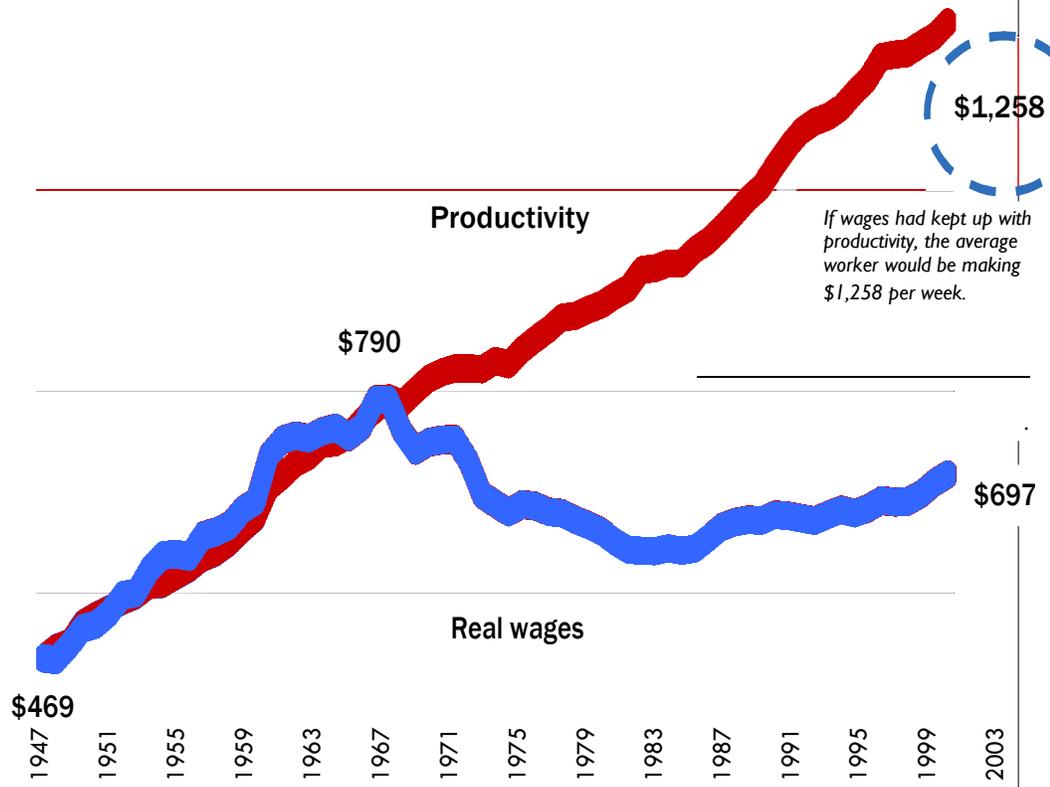
by Mary Margaret Pruitt

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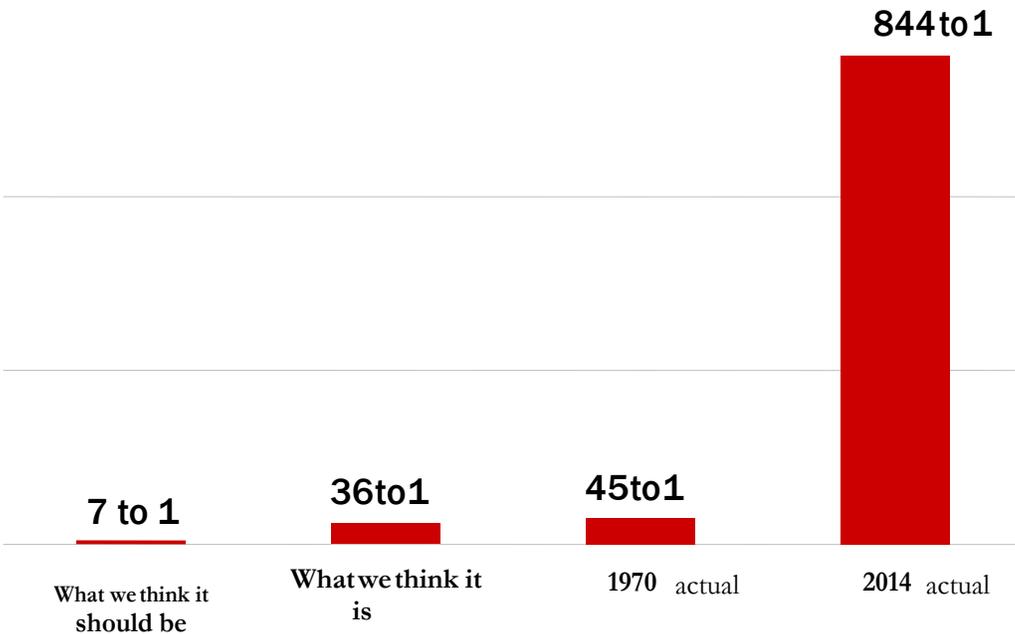
<http://www.seattletimes.com/opinion/letters-to-the-editor/minimum-wage-brings-justice/>

Thank you for your thought-provoking coverage about the \$15 minimum-wage issue “Minimum wage research offers valuable insight” [Editorials, June 26] and “Mackey’s \$1 a year CEO salary most likely will be history now” [Business, June 26]. People who work conscientiously at a full-time job should be paid a livable wage, which \$15 is not. CEO salaries that are 300 times that of their average workers should be adjusted so that jobs are not lost and worker hours are not reduced when low-income worker wages are raised to \$15/hour. We pledge allegiance for “liberty and justice for all.” We need to live it.

**The Gap Between Productivity and Wages**



**The Wage Gap Is Much Bigger Than We Think—or Want**



These charts are from Les Leopold’s Runaway Inequality: An Activist’s Guide to Economic Justice (New York: Labor Institute Press, 2015)

The wage gap chart compares the income of the 200 highest paid CEOs of U.S. corporations with the income of the average non-supervisory employees in those companies.