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

EVERYBODY'S GOT A RIGHT TO LIVE

by Jean Gant Delastrada, Fall Retreat

Committee Chairperson

The 2023 WWFOR Fall Retreat, the Human Right to a Livable and Just World, addressed the topics of climate disruption and militarism, with a special focus on the work of young peace and justice activists. Young people around the world have been especially concerned about the speed of climate disruption and have questioned what the world of their future years will be like environmentally. Young activists are also increasingly aware of the intersectionality in peace and justice issues. FOR, a non-violent peace movement, is more and more making the connections between war and militarism and the need for a peaceful just and sustainable world. Elsie Sabel and Justin Yang, in a Youth Climate Issues panel moderated by Sarah Pham, started us out by sharing their perspective of high school activists. (see p.2)

We then heard about an exciting new way for young people to work for climate preservation for their future. Melissa Hornbein, a senior attorney from the Western Environmental Law Center, who worked with Our Children's Trust in the lawsuit of Held v. Montana, talked about a group of young people who won a lawsuit against the state of Montana to preserve their right to grow up in a healthy environment. Their win in Montana may not survive the appeal to the state Supreme Court, but some other states and countries in Europe are trying similar legal routes to mandate laws that protect climate.

Fall Retreat participants discussed these presentations in small group breakout rooms and had a choice of workshops on specific programs about climate disruption and ways to work against it. Jim Janko from Veterans for Peace talked about their Climate and Militarism Project, including the very current

examples of the devastation of Gaza by the war with Israel. Aurora Martin described her Seattle-based organization Front and Centered, which brings together in coalition minority-led groups working for sustainability. Tying together the information from these presentations was a call to action from the Washington State Poor People's Campaign, Effects of the War Economy, and Ecological Devastation on the Poor. Romy Garcia and Karen Austin invited us to join in a state-wide demonstration in Olympia on March 2, 2024, to present their demands to the state government.

WWFOR's Mike Yarrow Peace Fellowship Program is our primary way of working towards the future with young people. In the 2023-2024 school year, MYPF has more than 20 young people, ages 14 to 24, participating in the program. The range of topics they are working on this year include Food Justice and Anti-Racism (Vindhya Adamala), Climate Action (Justin Yang), Native American Organizing and Decolonization (Anela Decker) and Artful Activism in the Bengali Community (Anoova Satar). The MYPF students who described their plans for these projects at the Fall Retreat will be invited to return to present their progress at our Spring Assembly. For more details on the Fall Retreat, please see the Fall Retreat 2023 section on the WWFOR website, www.wwfor.org.

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Elsie Sabel,

I'm part of the Thurston Youth Climate Coalition; an organization of high school and college-age climate activists in Thurston County. I started my activist ways in 2019, when I skipped school to attend a global climate strike at the Capitol. After that, I became part of the leadership of my school's climate club in 2020. Being on zoom, we couldn't do much in-person, but we organized letter writing campaigns and attended virtual city council meetings. In 2022, Greta Thunberg called for another global climate strike. I was excited to attend my cities strike, but as the day drew closer, I wasn't hearing anything about it. So, I got together a group of friends and together, we organized it. The day came with over 100 people attending. Not bad for a group of rookies.

After that, we decided to form the Thurston Youth Climate Coalition. We saw our local governments agreeing to enact change, and then dragging their feet, saying they were "working on it". So, we staged die-ins at local city council meetings and met with the environmental coordinators of each city. Since then, my perspective has shifted a bit. I believe that the environmental coordinators are doing the best they can, but they're working with empty pockets. They're only given enough money for small, performative gestures. Living in such a liberal area we have plenty of sympathizers, but if we go up a little more on the government chain, we find people are largely desensitized to our cause. I've heard of the need for national as well as local change. But what happens locally depends on the next rung up. I say, we need the middle guys to help out the little guys. We need more state funding if local climate mitigation and adaptation will ever succeed.

Justin Yang, MYPF Trainee,:

The WWFOR fall retreat was a insightful and supportive meeting of many people working to make the world better in different ways. I found presenting my project, Washington Declaring the Climate Emergency, was at first a daunting task, but a worthwhile one, as the fellow participants were very receptive and innovative in asking questions and offering advice. Learning about the different efforts and organizations that these people have spearheaded outside of my panel was fascinating and allowed me to connect with others who could offer me support or grow my individual project. Finally, I believe that the best way for people to engage with the effort to better the climate is to start doing what climate action you can. Doing nothing and despairing in the scope of the problems our world faces is a pitfall that many of us face, but simply taking another step and communicating with others who also want to help will allow you to both make an impact with your own hands and work towards a larger change.



Mike Yarrow

PEACE
FELLOWSHIP



Seattle's new drug bill will harm people: This new law wastes lots of taxpayer money and only makes the problem bigger.

*by Carl Nakajima, a Real Change vendor.
Reprinted from Real Change, the Seattle homeless paper, Oct 11-17, 2023, page 9*

I am very strongly against the drug enforcement bill that the (Seattle) City Council passed.

People I know have died from overdoses of drugs shortly after being released from jail. This is because the amount of drugs that the body can accept changes while they are incarcerated. Upon release, they took the same amount of drugs as before entered the jail.

Drug use is not a habit that can be easily changed through physical punishment. On the contrary, it is a habit that can be made worse by making someone's life miserable. Being arrested and detained has many negative consequences. It creates barriers to housing and employment. It causes loss of contact with people who are trying to help. It causes people to lose their shelter spots, housing opportunities, tents, cars and belongings. They are taken back to square one. The council (except for Councilmembers Tammy Morales, Teresa Mosqueda, and Kshama Sawant) did the worst thing to the people in the city who need help the most. What they are doing is not a solution but a temporary deception. If you round up homeless people and temporarily put them in jail, sure, the city will look cleaner. It will look like the politicians are doing a great job, making them more likely to get reelected. But the main problem isn't going anywhere, it's going to remain and it's probably going to get worse.

What our elected officials need to do is accept the problem and confront it (like Portugal, etc.)

Addicts should be accepted as addicts. We should give people a place to live or give them a place where they can make their own home. Then we can start helping with their other problems.

Don't spread problems around. Even if our unhoused neighbors have problems, they have the human right to live a normal life, just like addicts who have a home.

Jails are the most expensive shelter in our city besides hospitals (in terms of cost per bed per day, cost of Medicare care, staffing, etc.) More than anything, court costs and other legal fees will stack up that homeless or mentally ill people can't afford. Who do you think will end up paying this expensive bill in the end? Taxpayers!

Worse yet, we won't get our money's worth. Putting more people in jail might make some people quit drugs. But most people will use drugs again, sooner or later after being released. As Mosqueda and Morales said, the bill doesn't contain any new funding for treatment. This law was not written for addicts and does not solve the root of the problem.

Sadly, six council members voted in favor of the new cat and mouse game. Chasing homeless people around without giving them a proper place to live and cleaning up after them is a waste of budget. We've tried it for a long time, and it's been proven to be useless.

Some council members may think we just set out to find a solution. But if you take a step in the wrong direction, there are things you can't fix. This new law wastes a lot of taxpayer money and only makes the problem bigger.

Mayor Harrell said, "The ultimate answer to solve homelessness ...is housing." And he also said, "We cannot and will not sit idly by while people suffer and die from the effects of drugs and substance use disorder." I hope that the Mayor is saying that we should not criminalize drug users. It takes a huge budget to provide housing and treatment for people who are homeless and suffering from substance use disorder. We should be spending our money on real solutions for those people.

People suffering from substance use disorder need help, not punishment.

Ukraine is not a North Atlantic Country and Wants to be an Independent Nation

by John M Repp

The U.S. Veteran's for Peace held a virtual convention on August 25-27, 2023. There is a video recording of the keynote speakers that has been posted on Youtube: <https://youtu.be/1LdERmcB1qk> The speakers were Clare Daly, an Irish member of the European Parliament and Jeffery Sachs, an American economist and advocate for sustainable development. Sachs worked for a time as an advisor to Mikhail Gorbachev in the conversion of the former Soviet state planned economy into a "normal" i.e., capitalist economy. Both keynote speakers addressed the convention on the war in Ukraine.

They both agree: **the war in Ukraine was provoked by the American insistence on expanding NATO to Ukraine.** Both Daly and Sachs were very animated, emotional, and persuasive, and they knew well the history of the area from the collapse of the Soviet Union, through the reunification of Germany, to the attack on Ukraine. Western Washington FOR's Larry Kershner, a Vietnam vet, told me about the convention and sent me the link that I watched.

As an aside, I remember very well standing at vigils with Veterans for Peace in the West Seattle Junction. Some Vietnam vets joined our neighborhood peace group and came to our monthly potlucks. It was Veterans for Peace who had the well-earned respect of the public. Students would listen to them when we went to high schools for counter-recruiting.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the negotiations to unify Germany, when American diplomats **verbally promised Russia that NATO would not move one inch to the east**, fourteen countries in eastern Europe have joined NATO. Protests from Russia have been ignored. Currently, the war in Ukraine has caused a large

buildup of military budgets in Europe. NATO has been strengthened and enlarged after Trump nearly destroyed it.

Daly and Sachs told the convention that they have been and will continue to be called Putin's puppets for speaking out. But they are willing to take that abuse because they know that until we understand the situation and our countries part in it, we will not find a way to peace. Sachs says very clearly that Biden, as vice-president, played a part of the 2014 uprising in Ukraine that ousted a Kremlin friendly oligarch. We do remember that Biden said his goal was to weaken Russia. Never mind, what suffering the people of Ukraine must undergo.

This is the U.S. military-industrial complex at its worst. Our government ships billions of dollars' worth of weapons to Ukraine but does not risk a strong anti-war movement because no American soldiers are taking part in the war. Biden has always felt he had to support the military-industrial complex.

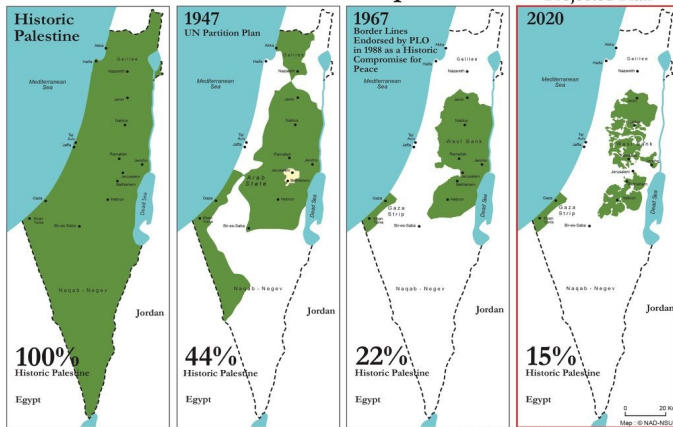
Sachs thinks the U.S. foreign policy establishment should work to achieve an immediate ceasefire and start negotiations. He says, the U.S. must agree to Ukraine's **neutrality** i.e., Ukraine must **not** become a part of NATO, and in exchange, the Russian army would exit Ukraine. Would Putin agree to that? Sachs thinks so.

The White House needs to change its policy from trying to "weaken Russia" by supplying weapons to Ukraine to calling for a cease-fire and armistice like our 2023 Spring Assembly speaker Helena Cobban suggested.



Massacre in Gaza. Written Dec 7, 2023

The Palestinians Historic Compromise



by John M Repp

As the current crisis in Israel-Palestine unfolded, some of the early reports referred to the “laws of war”. One of the most crucial distinctions in the laws of war is that between combatants and non-combatants or civilians. The terrorist attack of Oct 7, 2023, by Hamas on a music concert and some nearby kibbutzim broke the laws of war and started the current crisis. For almost two months after Oct 7, Israel broke those laws of war in its massive response with the bombing of Gaza. The bombardment of Gaza by Israel has killed civilians at an historic pace. They are using two thousand pound bombs, thousands of them. As of Nov 25, 2023 according to The Seattle Times, over 15,000 women and children in Gaza have been killed. One and a half million people have been displaced. A few days ago, there was an exchange of prisoners and a ceasefire, but now the bombing and the Israeli army’s hunt for Hamas leaders continues.

Tragically, the United States is playing the role of arms supplier, diplomatic supporter, and thus is complicit in these international crimes. The United States gives Israel about \$3.8 billion dollars’ worth of military aid to Israel each year. The White House has proposed adding \$14 billion because of the current crisis. If President Biden is playing a role in moderating Israel and working towards negotiations between Palestinians and Israel, he is doing that behind the scenes. Over the weekend, U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin

said it is critical that Israel protect Gaza’s civilians: (from The Hill, 12/7/2023) “If you drive them into the arms of the enemy, you replace a tactical victory with a strategic defeat,” he said. “So, I have repeatedly made clear to Israel’s leaders that protecting civilians in Gaza is both a moral responsibility and a strategic imperative.”

After Oct 7, the statements of Netanyahu and his defense minister show the intent to commit genocide and their actions since confirm the same. Launching a siege against Gaza by cutting off all electricity, fuel, food, and water from a civilian population is an international crime. If we don’t have enforcement, international law will mean nothing.

There is also the dynamic of the hard liners compared to accommodationists, in each group. Hamas, the hard line Palestinian position was at one time supported by Netanyahu who is the leader of the hard line position of the Israelis. Netanyahu was adamantly opposed the two-state solution, and he said supporting Hamas “was our strategy”. He supported Hamas to keep the Palestinian side divided. Sadly, the hard line positions of each group reinforce each other.

We must be clear: the crisis did not begin on Oct 7th. There is the larger historical context. There has been a **fight over land** since the beginning of Israel 75 years ago. Before 1948, the land that became Israel was 93% Palestinian. Israel is a settler colonial state on the European model with Jews, called Zionists, as the dominant group in the government. The residents of Gaza are mostly refugees or the families of refugees whose land was taken during the Nakba (catastrophe) in 1948 during the first Arab Israeli war. Before the Nakba, Palestine was a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society. There have been many wars and uprisings called *intifadas* since 1948.

The actions of Israel since 2007 when all access to Gaza was controlled by Israel made it the “open air” prison. Some non-violent protestors were shot in the legs, or banished from Israel like the current FORUSA chairperson, Ariel Gold. Applicable here is the famous quote by John F. Kennedy: “Those who make nonviolent revolution impossible, make violent revolution probable.”

Cont. from page 5

The FORUSA chairperson has written: “FOR unequivocally condemns actions of violence that avoid the harder battles of justice. The killing and maiming of civilians, whether by Hamas rockets or Israeli airstrikes is unjustifiable, a war crime under international law. Also, unjustifiable are the actions of Israel that led to this current war: decades of military occupation with no end in sight, apartheid policies, recurrent massacres, and a siege so brutal that has turned Gaza into the largest open-air prison on earth.”

There is no military solution to this crisis. There were massive demonstrations all over the world supporting the Palestinians before the first exchange of prisoners and the ceasefire. And many of the younger generation of Americans as well as groups like Jewish Voices for Peace called for a ceasefire and protested Biden’s public stance.

The United States could play a positive role in the region by using the leverage we could have since we supply Israel with so much of its military arsenal. American geopolitical strategists, focused on U.S. control in an area with key shipping routes and plenty of oil, want a militarily strong ally in Israel.

The two-state solution, a sovereign Palestine beside a sovereign Israel has been the dream of many for years. Many say the Israelis have taken so much land that a two-state solution is no longer possible.

We need less backward looking and more forward dreaming. Why can’t we envision a single democratic nation with autonomous states, with civil rights for all people regardless of their tribal origin, religion, or the language they speak? Not very well known is the fact that more than 90% of the land area inside the boundaries of the current state of Israel is land owned by the Israeli government. In the past, Israel would offer that land to Jewish immigrants as their solution to the very real problem of antisemitism. But with an agreement to create a bi-national state, Israel could give land or sell at a nominal cost land to Palestinians. Also, the violent attacks in the West Bank on Palestinians must stop.

The world wants not the replacement of one tribe by another as both the right-wing Zionists and the Hamas fighters imagine, but a state with modern citizenship rights for all.

To step back a minute, at one time, in warfare, there were battlefields, where two armies faced each other for the fight. Civilians would try to steer clear of the battlefield. The battlefield mode was true of the American civil war, and World War I was also mostly a war on battlefields with the two sides dug in, fighting in trenches.

But as soon as armies and air forces started using **airplanes**, and now rockets, to bomb, all distinctions between combatants and civilians broke down. In the Spanish civil war of 1936 to 1939, the Spanish fascists asked for help from the German Nazi government which was anxious to practice bombing from the air. The famous Picasso painting of 1937 was a powerful protest against the new method of warfare. Then, at the closing days of World War II in the Pacific, the United States dropped two atomic bombs on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, killing thousands of women, children, and old men.



An Israeli strike on a **refugee camp** in Gaza on November 2, 2023. No one knows how many more bodies lay under the rubble.

An Op-ed on gun violence, domestic and international

by Marjorie Prince

With the possible exception of those used for hunting game, I suggest that Congress enact legislation **banning the manufacture, sale, and use of all handguns and assault rifles**. I am saddened by the Republican Party's disdain for any meaningful gun regulation. While mass shootings dominate the news, thousands die from suicide by guns and other fateful spur-of-the-moment acts of anger and fear using guns. (47,000

Americans died by gun violence in 2021 counting both suicides and homicides)

Yet how can we curb gun violence here in the U.S. when we pour millions of dollars into fighting wars abroad? As others have noted, in war there are no winners. The American Civil War ended in 1865, but it is clear that many Americans want to continue fighting it to preserve the racist ideology that sees black lives as inferior and therefore subject to unequal treatment in employment, housing, education, health care, in history books, and the terrorism of police killings.

While Russia's invasion of Ukraine is appalling, with no end of fighting in sight, the U.S. steady increase of money and weapons to Ukraine seems only to increase the deaths and maiming of Ukrainian and Russian civilians and soldiers. **Negotiation is the only viable solution.** Ukraine should allow Russia to keep Crimea and therefore be responsible for rebuilding it.

U.S. affection for guns and weapons is global and results in too many lives lost. While we work for strict regulation here at home, we also need to end our participation in killing people in other countries. When negotiations occur and fighting in Ukraine ceases, we still will be required to help rebuild what has been destroyed in Ukraine. Because of budget concerns (raised primarily by Republicans), other needs will be neglected.

When negotiations occur and fighting in Ukraine ceases, we still will be required to help rebuild what has been destroyed in Ukraine. Because of budget concerns (raised primarily by Republicans), other needs will be neglected.

Let us begin to see **parallels** between gun proliferation here at home and our use of weapons of war to settle disputes all over the world. We need to work on both issues.

A letter to *Pacific Call*:

I ask you to not forget the growing security crisis in Haiti. According to the UN, there have been more than 1,230 killings and 701 kidnappings in Haiti from July 1-September 30 of this year alone. More than half of all Haitians face hunger as a result of the high cost of imported food and a decade of drought. Hunger leads to civil unrest, as people become desperate to feed their families.

Kenya is preparing to deploy troops, but this will not address the root of the violence. Here are five, nonviolent steps I urge you to take to address Haiti's security crisis:

1. Help pass the Haiti Criminal Collusion Transparency Act S. 396/H.R. 1684 which requires the State Department to investigate and report on collusion between Haitian elites and violent gangs, and impose sanctions on officials and private individuals supporting the gangs terrorizing Haitians.
2. Pressure the Department of Homeland Security to eliminate illegal gun smuggling from the U.S. to Haiti. Haiti does not produce weapons or ammunition, and most are coming from the United States, usually through another Caribbean country. Homeland Security should step up inspections in Miami.
3. Call on Secretary of State Blinken to end U.S. support for Prime Minister Ariel Henry. Henry was not elected, and has impeded civil society efforts to a democratic transition. There is evidence he was involved in President Moise's assassination. The U.S. should instead insist that Henry relinquish power, and that the Haitian government support Haitian-led efforts for a transitional government and a return to democracy.
4. Help fight rising hunger by leading Congress to use its appropriations, oversight, and legislative authority to change USAID's approach to hunger and agriculture in Haiti to invest in initiatives to mitigate the impact of drought, as well as training and technology for small-scale farmers, so that Haitians can feed themselves.
5. Call on the White House and DHS to halt deportations of Haitians and accelerate work permits to migrants who have received TPS and Humanitarian Parole.

Sincerely, Bruce Radtke



GOOD NEWS for a CHANGE

Workers are Organizing, Striking and Winning Better Contracts

by John M Repp

The United Autoworkers (UAW) strike against General Motors, Ford, and Stellantis (formerly Chrysler), began on September 15, 2023. The UAW had made some changes to its method of electing leadership in the last few years. Instead of union locals electing delegates and then the delegates electing the leadership at a national convention, they instituted a direct election of leaders. They also changed how they approach a new contract. In years past, the UAW would strike just one of the big three automakers. This year they struck a single factory belonging to each of the three. As the strike went longer more factories were added to increase the pressure. If one of the big three started to concede but the other two did not, the next week, the UAW would strike another factory of the non-conceding company. By this method, they played the companies off against one another.

The workers were also kept informed of the day-by-day talks at the bargaining table. Unlike in the past when the workers only learned what was happening as negotiations were concluded. The UAW also got the battery plants of the companies to be union plants.

Since 1979, the UAW has had to give concessions to the auto companies. However, this year, they won big. More money for wages was not the only issue. Companies in the last 40 years introduced two tier-systems, so that new workers would have to work many years, up to eight, to step up to the highest wages levels. The tier-systems were not completely eliminated, but the step up time was made much less for new hires.

The current economic situation has to be considered when looking at the success of the union movement. The economy was strong, and labor was in great demand. Workers had been told during the pandemic that they were **essential**. Many now actually believe that they are essential. Paul Krugman wrote that one-fourth of the wage gap spread that developed since 1979, was recovered with

the new contract. He meant not the wealth gap, but the wage gap, the distance between the highest wages and the lowest wages in a factory or company.

When President Biden visited a picket line of the UAW, it made national news. It was the first time a sitting President had ever visited a picket line. Trump visited a non-union factory in the same week. Another unique feature of the UAW position was their call to other labor unions to have their contracts end on May 1, 2028. The idea was that if a number of unions end their contracts at the same time, they all can put tremendous pressure on the corporate sector to concede some of the great gains they have made over the last 40 years.

UPS Teamster drivers also got a new contract and good raises. Very important for them, they will get worker protection from high heat; their trucks will be airconditioned. SAG-AFTRA, the actors union, and Writers Guild of America both struck, and both got good contracts with some regulations of studios using artificial intelligence for crowd scenes for example. More than 75,000 health-care workers walked off the job at Kaiser-Permanente. As of October 2023, there have been 312 strikes involving 453,000 workers this year compared to 43,700 over the same period two years ago.

Some of the newly formed labor unions are struggling, like the Amazon Labor Union and Starbucks Workers United, because their companies are refusing to come to the negotiating table.

Addendum: On November 29, 2023, General Motors announced a \$10,000,000,000 (ten billion dollar) stock buyback. During the UAW strike they claimed they could not pay workers anymore. Stock buybacks started in the 1980's and have been one of the ways the 1% have gotten so wealthy in the last 40 years. Forbes magazine once said, stock buybacks occur when corporations have money "they don't need".

