

Buffalo Forum



Local Publication of the
U.S. Marxist-Leninist Organization

Workers of all countries, unite!

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the Tests and Refuse Receivership ... II-16**

October 16, 2015

Vol. 19 #10

OCTOBER 21

All Out to Demonstrate at Lafayette

Actions against state takeover of Buffalo schools continue at Lafayette, October 21 at 3:30 and all are urged to join in (see ad p.16).

Lafayette has some of the best teachers in the district along with a diverse and engaged student body. Her students and teachers participate in demonstrations to Albany for full funding for education. They also yearly produce and perform International Night, attended by hundreds. It is a school with many positive qualities, not the least of which are her many immigrant and refugee students (70 percent of the student body). Yet all of this, and a school with a more than 100-year history in the city are threatened by receivership. This is unjust and unfair and a main reason a demonstration to *Refuse Receivership* and demand

Demonstrate at Lafayette • 2

FIGHT FOR AN ANTIWAR GOVERNMENT

Oppose the Crime of Permanent Occupation of Afghanistan

President Obama announced that more than 17,000 U.S. and NATO troops will remain in Afghanistan. That a large number of troops will remain permanently was underscored by Pentagon Defense Secretary Ashton B. Carter who said the next president will need to make decisions

17,000 U.S./NATO TROOPS REMAIN

Obama Refuses to End Criminal Occupation of Afghanistan

President Barack Obama announced that the U.S. will continue its illegal occupation of Afghanistan. He is keeping about 9,800 U.S. troops on the ground, alongside another 8,000 U.S.-backed NATO troops, with additional private

Oppose Occupation of Afghanistan • 5

about the long-term position of U.S. forces in Afghanistan. A senior White House official added, "We always said that we would continue to have a presence there."

The 14-year long war has devastated the people of Afghanistan and their cities

Fight for an Anti-War Government • 3

UNDRONE UPSTATE!

Anti-drone Walk Across New York Coming to Buffalo

New Yorkers demanding an end to drone warfare and targeting drone bases in New York organized an "Undrone Upstate Peace Walk." The marchers will travel 165 miles, from Syracuse to Niagara Falls, talking to people along the way and urging all to stand against drones, weapons of war and assassinations. Organized by the

Stop Killer Drones • 4

Unite the Struggle to Refuse the Tests and Refuse Receivership

The state Common Core testing regime is the basis for labeling students as failures, and schools as failures. It is used to narrow curriculum and force schools to eliminate such vital needs as music and art while devoting more time

to preparing for the tests, which are in math and English. Results from just the state Common Core testing are also being used to assess teachers and whole schools. These same test scores, where the

Unite Struggles • 11

Support Palestine's Right to Be and Reject Collective Punishment

Israel, with U.S. backing, is once again mounting attacks against the Palestinians. Israeli armed forces have killed and wounded dozens of protesters, many of them teenagers. Israel has also attempted to humiliate the Palestinians by restricting

their ability to use the al-Aqsa Mosque. More recently Israel has now declared it will not return the bodies of Palestinians, many of the youth, killed by Israeli soldiers. The justification is that funerals

Palestine's Right to Be • 9

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Public Control of Lafayette and all public schools is taking place.

The Common Core testing regime that put Lafayette in receivership is particularly unfair for her student body, with the majority just learning English. They are forced to take the same test as other students, even though they do not yet know the language. The testing regime is designed to ensure these students fail, despite the fact that they bring many important qualities to their school. These include the contributions of their peoples and cultures, their different way of looking at things, their readiness to learn and take up challenges and more.

The drive of the teachers, students and parents at Lafayette is such that last year they created a redesign plan that was widely supported in the community. They also joined actions at the School Board, along with many others, demanding the equal right to education for all and state approval of their plan. This did not occur. The plan remains valid and called for a variety of important changes, including having the school serve as more of an organizing center.

Now, because of receivership, this plan is not being used. The state Education Commissioner and local receiver are imposing their plan that does not meet the needs of the students. No reason has been given for this rejection, only the undemocratic dictate of the Commissioner imposed.

Further, Lafayette is supposed to be in "phase out," meaning no new students are being admitted. This was also used as the excuse to lay off one third of the teachers and eliminate much needed positions like the English as a Second Language (ESL) coordinator. That is, conditions are being made even more difficult, yet students



are supposed to improve on a test that is unfair to start with.

Further, even though it is "phasing out" in two years, meaning there will be no students left, it was still placed in receivership. Why? What is the aim? And why not use the redesign plan that was locally produced and widely supported? No justification has been given.

The aim of receivership is not to support students

and teachers and raise the quality of education. It is to give the state the opportunity to do as it pleases, which could mean closing the school, or turning it into a charter, or greatly reducing the number of ESL students, scattering them across the district. This is particularly difficult on them and their families, who have come to know and love Lafayette as a place where all are welcome.

It is also very hard on all concerned to impose such a high level of uncertainty. Students are worried about whether there will even be a school for them next year. The same is true for those at Bennett and East. Students, like those on their sports teams, are working to strengthen the teams, knowing there may not even be one in the next two years! This is unfair, undemocratic and completely unnecessary. Yet the Commissioner and local receiver refuse to make clear what is to happen.

We urge all concerned to confront their refusal with a refusal of our own! Refuse receivership, refuse the testing it is based on and demand that Lafayette's redesign plan be implemented! This is what serves the interests of the children, not the doubt and uncertainty, not more testing, not state control.

The rally includes a band, speakers and food truck, so come and stand together to:

Refuse Receivership! Refuse the Tests!

I • FIGHT FOR AN ANTIWAR GOVERNMENT

and lands, while solving no problem. Obama admitted the situation remains insecure and could deteriorate further. The initial invasion October 7, 2001 was aggression and thus illegal and the continued occupation has remained criminal and unjust.

Further evidence of U.S. crimes are plans by the U.S. to increase use of their killer drones by 50 percent in the next four years. Afghanistan is a main base of drone operations for the region. Drones are a main source of terrorism and assassinations and are mass killers of mainly civilians. Even the people the government targets are only suspects, often traveling in cars or eating meals. One of the latest reports indicate that using more than 50 strikes, the U.S. killed 35 so-called terrorists along with more than 210 civilians. Such U.S. ter-

rorism needs to be stopped.

The solution that contributes to peace and security is not permanent occupation, but *All U.S. Troops Home Now!* Removing all U.S. troops from Afghanistan and all foreign countries would do far more to lessen terrorism in the world. To begin with, given the U.S. is currently the #1 perpetrator of terrorism, bringing troops home would greatly lessen U.S. acts of

terrorism. Additionally it would enable the peoples of the various countries to solve their problems on their own, free of U.S. interference and domination. This is their right and upholding it contributes to lessening aggression.

Further bringing *All U.S. Troops Home Now* provides hundreds of billions, even a trillion dollars yearly to put into the U.S. economy and social programs while also contributing to meeting the rights of the people abroad. Both contribute to increased peace and security, abroad and at home, by funding jobs, housing, education, healthcare and targeting hunger and poverty.

To deal with terrorism and insecurity, what is needed is an anti-war government that begins by bringing U.S. troops home. One that stands for eliminating NATO and all use of force to settle conflicts. One that takes responsibility



for U.S. crimes against Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria and all countries it has targeted with aggression, like Pakistan, Palestine, Iran and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Cuba. An anti-war government is also one that cancels the debts of the countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America and pays reparations for slavery. These steps would contribute to peace and security while raising the prestige of the U.S. in the eyes of the world people as a force that contributes to rights, rather than trampling on them.

This election period is a time to make the issue of war and peace central. It is no accident that none of the current candidates are standing against U.S. wars and aggression, that none address the need for an anti-war government. Raising this issue and advancing this fight is one that belongs to all justice-loving people and one that blocks U.S. war plans.

Fight for an Anti-War Government

All U.S. Troops Home Now!



Visit our website: usmlo.org

Drone Warfare, Obama's Weapon of Choice

Jeremy Scahill, *The Intercept*

From his first days as commander in chief, the drone has been President Barack Obama's weapon of choice, used by the military and the CIA to hunt down and kill the people his administration has deemed — through secretive processes, without indictment or trial — worthy of execution. There has been intense focus on the technology of remote killing, but that often serves as a surrogate for what should be a broader examination of the state's power over life and death.

Drones are a tool, not a policy. The policy is assassination. While every president since Gerald Ford has upheld an executive order banning assassinations by U.S. personnel, Congress has avoided legislating the issue or even defining the word "assassination." This has allowed proponents of the drone wars to rebrand assassinations with more palatable characterizations, such as the current term, "targeted killings."

When the Obama administration has discussed drone strikes publicly, it has offered assurances that such operations

are a more precise alternative to boots on the ground and are authorized only when an "imminent" threat is present and there is "near certainty" that the intended target will be eliminated. Those terms, however, appear to have been bluntly redefined to bear almost no resemblance to their commonly understood meanings.

The first drone strike outside of a declared war zone was conducted more than 12 years ago, yet it was not until May 2013 that the White House released a set of standards and procedures for conducting such strikes. Those guidelines offered little specificity, asserting that the U.S. would only conduct a lethal strike outside of an "area of active hostilities" if a target represents a "continuing, imminent threat to U.S. persons," without providing any sense of the internal process used to determine whether a suspect should be killed without being indicted or tried. The implicit message on drone strikes from the Obama administration has been one of *trust, but don't verify*.

The Intercept has obtained a cache of

secret slides that provides a window into the inner workings of the U.S. military's kill/capture operations at a key time in the evolution of the drone wars — between 2011 and 2013. The documents, which also outline the internal views of special operations forces on the shortcomings and flaws of the drone program, were provided by a source within the intelligence community who worked on the types of operations and programs described in the slides. *The Intercept* granted the source's request for anonymity because the materials are classified and because the U.S. government has engaged in aggressive prosecution of whistleblowers. The stories in this series will refer to the source as "the source."

The source said he decided to provide these documents to *The Intercept* because he believes the public has a right to understand the process by which people are placed on kill lists and ultimately assassinated on orders from the highest echelons of the U.S. government. "This

Drone Warfare • 6

I • STOP KILLER DRONES

Upstate Coalition to Ground the Drones and End the Wars, the actions coincide with the 14th anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan. Both bases serve drone operations in Afghanistan and elsewhere. As the organizers state: "Targeted drone assassination is Obama's favored weapon," and the Pentagon now plans to increase its use of drones by 50 percent over the next four years.

The Anti-drone Walk began October 7 at the Hancock base near Syracuse, one of the three largest drone bases in the U.S. In Syracuse they hosted an event titled: "Kabul to Syracuse to Niagara Falls: A Walk to Ground the Drones and End the Wars." The marchers have visited numerous cities and towns along the way to inform people about the crimes of drone warfare and urge the elimination of military drones. As they march to Niagara, their stops have included Camillus, Savannah, Lyons, and Palmyra. Churches and community members have

welcomed them.

From October 13 on, their journey will take them through Nazareth, St. Joseph's, Brockport, Albion, Medina and Lockport. There have been outreach programs at colleges and community centers along the way, including in Rochester and Brockport. As organizers put it, they are working to inform people about "the mindless murder and relentless terror perpetrated by the criminal use of killer drones...Outdoor markets, wedding parties, and village meetings have all been subjected to drone attacks." Events included one at Nazareth College, "Drones, Black Lives Matter, the European Refugee Crisis: What do They Have in Common?" and at Niagara County Community College.

On October 20 marchers will rally at the Niagara Falls Base. All are welcome to participate in a dinner and more activities that evening. Medea Benjamin of Code Pink, which has organized against drones on

a national scale, will be guest speaker.

Oct 20, 3:30pm

Undrone Upstate Rally, Niagara Falls Air Base, Main Gate, Lockport Rd., Niagara Falls. Music; speakers including Medea Benjamin, CodePink; street theater; signs are welcome. Dinner at Kim's International Cafe (\$5 stir-fry).

Oct 20, 7-9pm

Medea Benjamin, speaking against military drones, Hallwalls, 341 Delaware Ave

Oct 21, 8:30-11am

Skype Conversation with Afghan Peace Volunteers, Global Days of Listening Network of Religious Communities, 1272 Delaware Ave., Buffalo.

For more information on how to participate in these events, to join

and/or support the walkers, contact two Buffalonians, Russell Brown @ hobadoxa@me.com, 716-570-5200; or Victoria Ross @ victoryross9@gmail.com, or 716-931-3520.

I • OPPOSE OCCUPATION OF AFGHANISTAN

military contractors also in place. For the people of Afghanistan, the 14-year long U.S. aggression has inflicted hundreds of thousands of deaths, many more injuries and massive destruction of civilian infrastructure. It has directly worsened conditions for the people and region, while solving no problem.

While saying, “I do not support the idea of endless war,” Obama’s actions show he does support permanent occupation. This was re-iterated by a senior White House official who said, “We always said that we would continue to have a presence there.”

In addition, the Pentagon has used more than \$65 billion in public funds for this death and destruction. Maintaining the illegal occupation will mean more unjust deaths, like those at the hospital in Kunduz the U.S. bombed. It is expected to cost at least another \$15 billion yearly.

President Obama also made clear that keeping troops in place serves his drone warfare in the entire region. He said the United States will maintain a significant “counterterrorism” capability of drones and Special Operations forces. The U.S. military will retain facilities in Kabul and also have forces at Bagram Air Base and bases outside Kandahar and Jalalabad, the largest cities in Afghanistan’s southern and eastern regions.

These Afghan bases are considered crucial for U.S. drone terrorism operations, by both the military and CIA. They facilitate drone warfare against other countries, like Pakistan, and drone spying on China and others. As Obama put it, “These bases will give us the presence and the reach our forces require to achieve their mission.” This is a mission not of peace or opposing terrorism but of attempting to secure U.S. global empire through force.

Obama justified the continued crime of occupation saying, “The bottom line is, in key areas of the country the security situation is still very fragile, and in some places there’s risk of deterioration.” This is clear admission that the U.S. has not brought security to the people of the country. Rather, as Obama says, 14-years of war

has brought more deterioration.

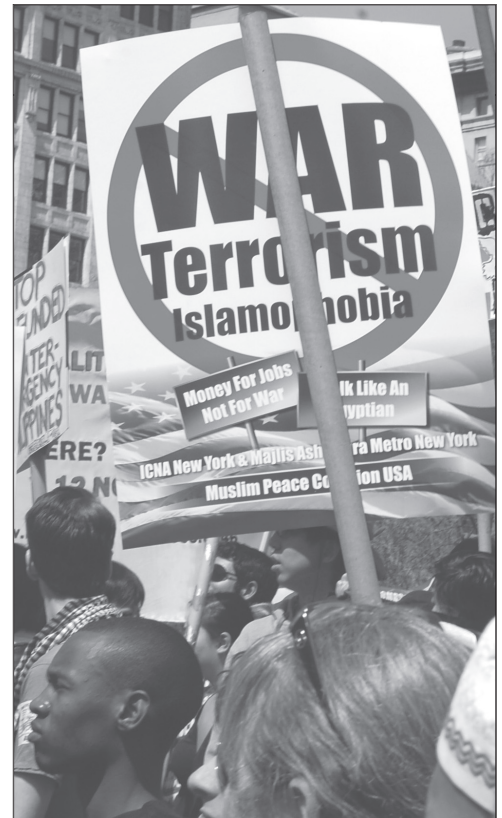
According to reports, al-Qaeda — initially funded and organized by the U.S. to oppose Russia — has now gained new ground in Afghanistan. David Sedney, a former Pentagon official who is a senior associate at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said in general that the 2015 “fighting season” was “the most massive, fiercest” yet. Last week, U.S. forces began a major operation against al-Qaeda in Kandahar, launching 63 airstrikes.

It is precisely these types of airstrikes that have been responsible for destruction of hospitals and thousands of civilian deaths. The attack on the Doctor’s Without Borders hospital in Kunduz is the latest of many similar attacks on civilian infrastructure, a war crime. Reports indicate, for example that over a period with 56 airstrikes, 35 people branded as “suspects” were killed while 219 more civilians were also killed. All of these killings are based on U.S. “intelligence,” which has repeatedly shown itself to be false and often fabricated.

Obama also said, “The only real way to achieve the full drawdown of U.S. and foreign troops from Afghanistan is through a lasting political settlement with the Afghan government.” In this manner he is further indicating that as long as there is resistance to the U.S. installed Afghan government, there will be U.S./NATO troops in Afghanistan.

He leaves out the reality faced by U.S. troops in Vietnam and Afghanistan, which is that occupation, which is illegal and unjust, will be resisted by the peoples and it is they who emerge victorious in the end. The number of troops and weaponry is not decisive, the just cause of the people is.

As an Afghanistan veteran against the war brought out, “I was deployed in President Obama’s surge in 2010 and 2011 and now four years later I’m hearing the same story from the Administration: More American troops are going to solve these issues in Afghanistan. Every time that has failed to improve conditions and now here



we are 14 years later in the longest war in American history. In light of recent events it’s clear that our continued occupation is only making conditions in Afghanistan worse.”

It is also the case that in addition to the vast amount of public funds used for unjust purposes, there are also serious consequences for the soldiers returning home. A study from 2012, for example, showed that more U.S. Army personnel lost their lives to suicide than in combat in Afghanistan. Eleven percent of returning soldiers suffer from PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder). About 24.6 percent have been admitted to hospitals for traumatic brain injury. About 30 percent of soldiers develop mental health issues within three to four months of being home, often stemming from horror about the crimes they committed. All these trends continue and have generally worsened.

While Obama considers continued occupation necessary, peoples here and abroad are instead putting forward the just solution necessary: *All U.S. Troops Home Now!*

HOSPITAL BOMBING IN AFGHANISTAN

U.S. Must Consent to Independent Investigation Led by the International Humanitarian Fact-Finding Commission

Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)

From 2:08 a.m. until 3:15 a.m. on Saturday, October 3, the Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) trauma hospital in Kunduz, Afghanistan, was hit by a series of aerial bombing raids at approximately 15-minute intervals. The main hospital building, which housed the intensive care unit, emergency rooms, and physiotherapy ward, was hit with precision, repeatedly, during each aerial raid, while surrounding buildings were left mostly untouched.

Said Dr. Joanne Liu, MSF International President, October 7, “We received President Obama’s apology today for the attack against our trauma hospital in Afghanistan. However, we reiterate our demand that the U.S. government consent to an independent investigation led by the International Humanitarian Fact-Finding Commission to establish what happened in Kunduz, how it happened, and why it happened.”

We demand an independent investigation by the International Humanitarian

Fact-Finding Commission (IHFFC.org) to establish the facts of this event. The IHFFC is not a UN body; it was created in 1991 by Additional Protocol 1, article 90 of the Geneva Conventions that govern the rules of war. The IHFFC is set up for precisely this purpose: to independently investigate violations of humanitarian law, such as attacks on hospitals, which are protected in conflict zones.

The total number of people killed in
Hospital Bombing in Afghanistan • 8

4 • DRONE WARFARE

outrageous explosion of watchlisting — of monitoring people and racking and stacking them on lists, assigning them numbers, assigning them ‘baseball cards,’ assigning them death sentences without notice, on a worldwide battlefield — it was, from the very first instance, wrong,” the source said. [...]

The CIA and the U.S. military’s Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) operate parallel drone-based assassination programs, and the secret documents should be viewed in the context of an intense internal turf war over which entity should have supremacy in those operations. Two sets of slides focus on the military’s high-value targeting campaign in Somalia and Yemen as it existed between 2011 and 2013, specifically the operations of a secretive unit, Task Force 48-4.

Additional documents on high-value kill/capture operations in Afghanistan buttress previous accounts of how the Obama administration masks the true number of civilians killed in drone strikes by categorizing unidentified people killed in a strike as enemies, even if they were not the intended targets. The slides also paint a picture of a campaign in Afghanistan aimed not only at eliminating al Qaeda and Taliban operatives, but also at taking out members of other local armed groups.

One top-secret document shows how the terror “watchlist” appears in the terminals of personnel conducting drone operations, linking unique codes associated with cellphone SIM cards and handsets to specific individuals in order to geolocate them. [...]

Slides pertaining to Yemen and Somalia, which are part of a 2013 study conducted by a Pentagon entity, the Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Task Force, (ISR), [were also included.] The ISR study lamented the limitations of the drone program, arguing for more advanced drones and other surveillance aircraft and the expanded use of naval vessels to extend the reach of surveillance operations necessary for targeted strikes. It also contemplated the establishment of new “politically challenging” airfields and recommended capturing and interrogating more suspected terrorists rather than killing them in drone strikes.

The ISR Task Force at the time was under the control of Michael Vickers, the undersecretary of defense for intelligence. Vickers, a fierce proponent of drone strikes and a legendary paramilitary figure, had long pushed for a significant increase in the military’s use of special operations forces. The ISR Task Force is viewed by key lawmakers as an advocate for more surveillance platforms like drones.

The ISR study also reveals new details about the case of a British citizen, Bilal el-Berjawi, who was stripped of his citizenship before being killed in a U.S. drone strike in 2012. British and American intelligence had Berjawi under surveillance for several years as he traveled back and forth between Britain and East Africa, yet did not capture him. Instead, the U.S. hunted him down and killed him in Somalia.

Taken together, the secret documents lead to the conclusion that Washington’s 14-year high-value targeting campaign suffers from an over-reliance on signals intelligence [and] an apparently incalculable civilian toll. [...]

These secret slides help provide historical context to Washington’s ongoing wars, and are especially relevant today as the U.S. military intensifies its drone strikes and covert actions against ISIS in Syria and Iraq. Those campaigns, like the ones detailed in these documents, are unconventional wars that employ special operations forces at the tip of the spear.

The “find, fix, finish” doctrine that has fueled America’s post-9/11 borderless war is being refined and institutionalized. Whether through the use of drones, night raids, or new platforms yet to be unleashed, these documents lay bare the normalization of assassination as a central component of U.S. policy.

Celebrating People's History: Iraq Veterans Against the War - Ten Years of Fighting for Peace and Justice

Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW)

"Celebrate People's History: Iraq Veterans Against the War - Ten Years of Fighting for Justice and Peace" is a portfolio poster project honoring IVAW's ten year history of speaking against the wars and taking action to bring home the impact of these wars.

The portfolio features contributions from IVAW members, Justseeds Artists' Cooperative members, and allied veterans, artists and writers. It highlights key ideas, moments, projects, tactics and individu-

als from IVAW history in order to uplift IVAW's ongoing struggle, inspire others to take action, and preserve a snapshot of movement history.

IVAW was founded in July 2004 to give voice to the large number of active duty service members and veterans who were against the war, but were under various pressures to remain silent. Over the past ten years, IVAW members have spoken out and taken action to end the wars they served in

and to transform the society that fostered those wars.

The poster series is a project of Booklyn Artists Alliance, Civilian-Soldier Alliance, Justseeds Artist Cooperative, Iraq Veterans Against the War, and Repetitive Press.

The poster project has traveled to various cities as part of continuing to build the anti-war movement and is available to those interested in hosting an event. Contact support@ivaw.org.



I • PALESTINE'S RIGHT TO BE

are used as a means to protest. Further, whole areas of East Jerusalem, where Palestinians live, are being closed off with barricades and checkpoints. Such collective punishment is a crime and designed to humiliate and silence resistance. But it too is not succeeding.

The Palestinians continue to resist under the difficult conditions of occupation. They continue to demand their rights, the right of refugees to return to their homes and land; the right to self-determination; the right to resist occupation.

As is common in these situations, where Israel claims it is defending itself against terrorists — in this case mainly stone throwing youth against tanks and soldiers — New York Governor Cuomo expresses his support for the Zionists. He does not speak of the collective punishment and occupation of Palestine and the thousands of deaths of civilians by Israeli troops. Instead, he claimed it was the Palestinians that had unleashed a “spree of terror.” He added, “I have



said many times before that friends stand together in times of crisis, and this remains true today. As we continue to pray for peace, my thoughts and prayers are with the people of Israel, especially those most affected during this troubling time.” Not a word for the pregnant Palestinian woman and her child killed by Israeli bombing of her home; or of the many youth killed, or of the protesters and journalists attacked with live fire.

Many youth in the U.S., especially African Americans, readily understand the difficulties the Palestinian youth contend with, facing an armed and violent

and backing of Israel. Without this, Israel would not be able to continue the occupation and impunity to collectively punish and terrorize the Palestinians. These are U.S./Israeli crimes and both governments must be held accountable.

We firmly defend the right of the youth, here and abroad, to resist and we join in defending their rights. Palestine has the right to be and her whole proud history makes clear she will not be eliminated, she will be free!

*End Collective Punishment of
Palestinians!*

occupation force. They know what it means to contend with a militarized police force and the terrorism they impose. They know the impunity of these forces, and the targeting of protesters as the ones who are violent. Use of force, police occupations, and collective punishment are justly opposed here and in Palestine.

Buffalo Forum salutes the resistance in Palestine and condemns continued U.S. arming

6 • HOSPITAL BOMBING IN AFGHANISTAN

the attack is 22, including 12 MSF staff members and 10 patients. Thirty-seven people were injured, including 19 members of the MSF team.

From September 28, when major fighting broke out in Kunduz city, until the time of the attack, MSF teams in Kunduz had treated 394 wounded people in the hospital. When the aerial attack occurred, there were 105 patients in the hospital and more than 80 MSF international and Afghan staff present. Our staff reported no armed com-

batants or fighting in the compound prior to the airstrike. MSF's facility in Kunduz was a fully functioning hospital that was full of patients and MSF staff.

The attacks took place despite the fact that MSF had provided the GPS coordinates of the trauma hospital to Coalition and Afghan military and civilian officials as recently as Tuesday, 29 September. The attack continued for more than 30 minutes after we first informed U.S. and Afghan military officials in Kabul and Washington

that it was a hospital being hit.

MSF's hospital was the only facility of its kind in northeastern Afghanistan, providing free high level life- and limb-saving trauma care. In 2014, more than 22,000 patients received care at the hospital and more than 5900 surgeries were performed. The MSF hospital in Kunduz has been partially destroyed and is no longer operational. This leaves thousands of people without access to emergency medical care when they need it most.

MEDICS REPORT 50 INJURED

Palestinians in Gaza Protest, Face Israeli Attacks

Ma'an News, October 13, 2015

Dozens of Palestinian youths took part in a demonstration in Beit Hanoun in northern Gaza to rally against ongoing Israeli violations in occupied East Jerusalem and the West Bank.

Witnesses said that Israeli forces opened fire at the demonstration from military towers, injuring five, including one critically. Another demonstrator was also reportedly detained. At least 42 Palestinians were injured by tear gas and rubber coated bullets, including journalists covering the protests.

In central Gaza, eight Palestinians were injured by live fire, rubber-coated bullets, and tear gas during a demonstration east of the al-Bureij refugee camp.

Later in the day, hundreds of Palestinians attempted to breach the "security fence" and Israeli forces fired gun shots in the air.

On October 11, a pregnant woman and

her two-year-old daughter were killed when an Israeli air strike caused their home to collapse in southern Gaza City. Nine Palestinians have been shot dead during demonstrations in Gaza since October 9, including two Palestinian boys, aged 13 and 15, who were shot dead during a rally in Khan Younis.

West Bank Protests

Israeli forces shot and injured at least 53 Palestinians, including a *Ma'an* cameraman, during clashes at Huwwara checkpoint in the northern occupied West Bank October 11, medics said. Witnesses told *Ma'an* that Israeli forces trapped Palestinian protesters and fired directly into the crowd, while other soldiers fired from a nearby watchtower.

Abd al-Halim Jaafra, the ambulance and

emergency director at the Palestinian Red Crescent said three of the injured were in critical condition while others that were shot had been taken to Rafidia Hospital in Nablus for treatment. Most were in moderate condition, he said. An Israeli army spokesperson confirmed that Israeli forces fired 0.22 caliber live rounds as well as rubber-coated steel bullets at the protesters.

Last week, Israeli forces shot and injured a reporter from the Lebanon-based Al-Mayadeen TV channel while she was reporting from the al-Issawiya village of occupied East Jerusalem.

Clashes have injured over 1,300 Palestinians since the beginning of the month, with 152 shot with live and rubber-coated steel bullets on October 11 alone, according to the Palestinian Authority Ministry of Health and the Palestinian Red Crescent.

Throwing Stones is Part of Palestine's Struggle

Jesse Rubin, October 5, 2015

The routine brutality of Israeli troops was captured in a recent video from the occupied West Bank village of Nabi Saleh. It showed 12-year-old Muhammad Tamimi being violently arrested.

The widely shared images illustrate the stark imbalance between Israel and the Palestinians. Here was a heavily armed soldier abusing a frightened and unarmed child. Predictably, Israel and its supporters have tried to blame Muhammad's family and neighbors. Miri Regev, Israel's openly racist culture minister, has even argued that the women who came to the boy's aid should have been shot.

Muhammad's father Bassem is currently on a speaking tour in the U.S., where he has been vilified by some media outlets because he plays a prominent role in Nabi Saleh's regular protests against the Israeli occupation. Several publications suggest that the rock throwing which has been known to occur during political demonstrations in Nabi Saleh provokes a violent response from Israel.

Such claims echo the rhetoric of Israeli government. Prime Minister Benjamin

Netanyahu, who has declared a "war" against young Palestinians who throw stones. During the last few weeks, the Israeli government has approved tougher penalties for stone throwers. It has also broadened rules allowing soldiers to fire at protesters. Until now, soldiers were, supposedly, permitted to open fire only if they were in danger. With the new changes, they can shoot at protesters if anyone in the vicinity is considered a risk.

In an interview with The Electronic Intifada, Bassem Tamimi pointed out that throwing stones is a tactic that has long been used by Palestinians living under Israeli occupation. Many Palestinians view throwing stones at the Israeli military as a form of unarmed resistance. "Yes, we use stones to protect our land and our kids," he said. "It is part of our way of struggle."

Contrary to the impression conveyed by pro-Israel publications, it is not the youth of Nabi Saleh who provoke violence. Rather, the main source of violence is the Israeli occupation. On the day of his son's arrest in September, Israeli troops fired "rubber bullets, tear gas everywhere," said Bassem.

Those weapons have caused death and injuries to many Palestinians. [...]

Grassroots organizing should be the focus of the Palestinian struggle, rather than talks with Israel, Tamimi argued. The "peace process" in which the political elite has been engaged since the 1990s has not benefited ordinary Palestinians.

In the few decades since the Oslo accords, Israel has stepped up its colonization of the West Bank, subjected Gaza to a siege and periodic bombing, and exacerbated its discrimination against Palestinian citizens of Israel. Although President Barack Obama has increased U.S. military aid to Israel, Tamimi feels that the American public is becoming more sympathetic towards the Palestinians' plight. Palestine is one of the key focuses of activism on US campuses, for example.

"America is the guard of Israel," he said, "And Israel is a guard of American interests in the region. But we can and must distinguish between the state and the population if we are to win this struggle."

Of Course, it is an Intifada: This is What You Must Know

Ramzy Baroud, October 11, 2015

When my book 'Searching Jenin' was published soon after the Israeli massacre in the Jenin refugee camp in 2002, I was quizzed repeatedly by the media and many readers for conferring the word 'massacre' on what Israel has depicted as a legitimate battle against camp-based 'terrorists.'

The interrogative questions were aimed at relocating the narrative from a discussion regarding possible war crimes into a technical dispute over the application of language. For them, the evidence of Israel's violations of human rights mattered little.

This kind of reductionism has often served as the prelude to any discussion concerning the so-called Arab-Israeli conflict: events are depicted and defined using polarizing terminology that pay little heed to facts and contexts, and focus primarily on perceptions and interpretations.

Hence, it should also matter little to those same individuals whether or not Palestinian youth such as Isra' Abed, 28, shot repeatedly on October 9 in Affula - and Fadi Samir, 19, killed by Israeli police a few days earlier, were, in fact, knife-wielding Palestinians who were in a state of self-defense and shot by the police. Even when video evidence emerges countering the official Israeli narrative and revealing, as in most other cases, that the murdered youth posed no threat, the official Israeli narrative will always be accepted as facts, by some. Isra', Fadi, and all the rest are 'terrorists' who endangered the safety of Israeli citizens and, alas, had to be eliminated as a result.

The same logic has been used throughout the last century, when the current so-called Israeli Defense Forces were still operating as armed militias and organized gangs in Palestine, before it was ethnically cleansed to become Israel. Since then, this logic has applied in every possible context in which Israel has found itself, allegedly: compelled to use force against Palestinian and Arab 'terrorists', potential 'terrorists' along with their 'terror infrastructure.'

It is not at all about the type of weapons that Palestinians use, if any at all. Israeli violence largely pertains to Israel's own perception of its self-tailored reality: that of

Israel being a beleaguered country, whose very existence is under constant threat by Palestinians, whether they are resisting by use of arms, or children playing at the beach in Gaza. There has never been a deviation from the norm in the historiography of the official Israeli discourse which explains, justifies or celebrates the death of tens of thousands of Palestinians throughout the years: the Israelis are never at fault, and no context for Palestinian 'violence' is ever required.

Much of our current discussion regarding the protests in Jerusalem, the West Bank, and as of late at the Gaza border is centered on Israeli priorities, not Palestinian rights, which is clearly prejudiced. Once more, Israel is speaking of 'unrest' and 'attacks' originating from the 'territories,' as if the priority is guaranteeing the safety of the armed occupiers - soldiers and extremist settlers, alike.

Rationally, it follows that the opposite state of 'unrest', that of 'quiet' and 'lull,' are when millions of Palestinians agree to being subdued, humiliated, occupied, besieged and habitually killed or, in some cases, lynched by Israeli mobs or burned alive, while embracing their miserable fate and carrying on with life as usual.

The return to 'normalcy' is thus achieved; obviously, at the high price of blood and violence, which Israel has a monopoly on, while its actions are rarely questioned, Palestinians can then assume the role of the perpetual victim, and their Israeli masters can continue manning military checkpoints, robbing land and building yet more illegal settlements in violation of international law.

The question, now, ought not to be basic queries about whether some of the murdered Palestinians wielded knives or not, or truly posed a threat to the safety of the soldiers and armed settlers. Rather, it should be centered principally on the very violent act of military occupation and illegal settlements in Palestinian land in the first place.

From this perspective then, wielding a knife is, in fact, an act of self-defense; arguing about the disproportionate, or otherwise,

Israeli response to the Palestinian 'violence' is, altogether moot.

Cornering oneself with technical definitions is dehumanizing to the collective Palestinian experience.

"How many Palestinians would have to be killed to make a case for using the term 'massacre'?" was my answer to those who questioned my use of the term. Similarly, how many would have to be killed, how many protests would have to be mobilized and for how long before the current 'unrest', 'upheaval' or 'clashes' between Palestinian protesters and the Israeli army become an 'Intifada'?

And why should it even be called a 'Third Intifada'?

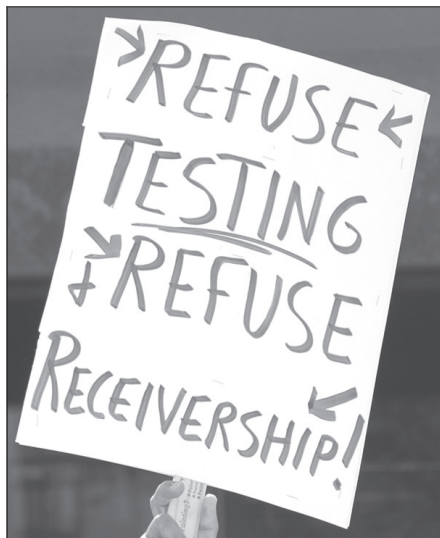
Mazin Qumsiyeh describes what is happening in Palestine as the '14th Intifada'. He should know best, for he authored the outstanding book, *Popular Resistance in Palestine: A History of Hope and Empowerment*. However, I would go even further and suggest that there have been many more intifadas, if one is to use definitions that are relevant to the popular discourse of the Palestinians themselves. Intifadas - shaking off - become such when Palestinian communities mobilize across Palestine, unifying beyond factional and political agendas and carry out a sustained campaign of protests, civil disobedience and other forms of grassroots resistance.

They do so when they have reached a breaking point, the process of which is not declared through press releases or televised conferences, but is unspoken, yet everlasting.

Some, although well intentioned, argue that Palestinians are not yet ready for a third intifada, as if Palestinian uprisings are a calculated process, carried out after much deliberation and strategic haggling. Nothing can be further from the truth.

An example is the 1936 Intifada against British and Zionist colonialism in Palestine. It was initially organized by Palestinian Arab parties, which were mostly sanctioned by the British Mandate government itself. But when the fellahin, the poor and largely

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bar for passing is constantly changed, are also being used to justify state takeover of public schools.

It is known that such tests cannot assess the *quality* of students, or teachers or education, yet that is how they are being used. Indeed, the regime is designed to ensure the best qualities of students, teachers and schools are given no place. Any assessment, based on an overall picture of students and teachers, individually and collectively, is purposely blocked, replaced instead with invalid test scores. A thinking person cannot help but consider such a set up irrational. If the aim is to improve the quality of education, than quality is what has to be examined. A quantitative measure from one math and English test cannot possibly provide the content needed. Which is also why they cannot point to the solutions needed.

The testing and now state takeover using receivership, does not have the aim of improving the quality of education. Both are a means of control and humiliation, so as to further wreck our public schools, including closing and privatizing them. They serve control of our public schools and control of our teachers and students by private interests, using the threat of firing and collective humiliation of students.

We are to believe that two appointed individuals, the state Education Commissioner and local receiver, using the tests, will solve the serious problems our schools face. And we are to believe this even though there are no examples, no evidence, no facts

to show state takeover solves problems and improves quality.

It is not only irrational to exclude those most knowledgeable and professional — parents, teachers and staff — from finding solutions, it is undemocratic. Yet that is what is occurring. For example, the receivership schools were not permitted to design plans their schools needed, but instead had to submit to demands of the Commissioner. These demands included not permitting the schools to call for smaller classes, something that does contribute to improving quality. The local redesign plans for schools like Bennett and Lafayette, widely supported are also not to be used, with no explanation, no effort to show how the state plan is better. It is simply imposed. An undemocratic process cannot provide democratic content.

Blocking people from conscious participation in decision making on matters like education is also a way to block thinking. Participating in deciding, including working out what is needed to raise the quality of education, requires thinking. It requires discussion, debate and thoughtful judgment by those directly involved in the work. The testing regime and state takeover both have as part of their aim to block such thinking and encourage instead the training of non-thinking drones — teachers that follow orders and engage in activities they know to be harmful and students who accept collective humiliation, punishment and training to become drones themselves.

The stand to refuse the tests is one that stands directly against these state efforts and instead calls on all to fight to decide, decide not to take the test, decide not to submit. More than 220,000 students last year refused to take the Common Core tests, with many parents denouncing them as a form of child abuse, harmful to teaching and learning, and doing nothing to improve the quality of education.

Refusing receivership is also a way of rejecting the role of non-thinking drones. It says we will give up our right to decide about the education of our children, we will not submit to the uncertainty and fear being imposed, we will not accept elimination of a system

of public education. We will fight for modernizing public education so that it is fit for modern life. And we will do so by demanding public control of public schools. The public — parents, teachers, staff and students — must decide, so as to develop thinking human beings. Education to change the world is our watchword.

Now is the time to step up and unite organizing efforts to refuse the tests and refuse receivership, as they go hand-in-hand in the attack on democracy. Buffalo especially needs to increase test refusal. This requires efforts to inform and activate more parents and students, school by school. It requires joint work by those in the city and suburbs so as to utilize the experience of those where test refusal is already at a high level. And it requires increasing the role of students, in refusing the tests and receivership. Uniting and building these efforts is the means to defend the equal right to education. It is a means to develop collective work and learn together, which contributes to the development of thinking human beings and a society fit for them. Let all concerned join in! Contact Buffalo Forum or write the refuse receivership organizing committee at BuffaloWeDecide@gmail.com.



BUFFALO JOINS EVENTS IN WEST SENECA AND NIAGARA FALLS

City and Suburbs Unite Against Testing and Receivership

Students, parents, staff, teachers and administrators stood together against Common Core testing and state takeover of Buffalo public schools at two recent events where Long Island retired principal Carol Burris spoke (see p. 13). Organizers of the event emphasized the need for building resistance to the Common Core testing, which is harmful to children and teachers alike. It narrows curriculum and unfairly labels children as failures. As one organizer put it, the state tests are being used as a weapon against students, teachers, schools and districts. This weapon must be removed and all can join in eliminating it by refusing the tests.

Organizers of the event, Western New Yorkers for Public Education, spoke to the many actions they have taken to build the movement against Common Core testing. This included organizing at schools to inform parents about their right to refuse the tests. Letters for refusing were provided along with reasons why the testing is harmful. These include that the focus on testing and test preparation limits time for important subjects like art, music, sports, social studies and science; that

the tests and “standards” have not been tested or shown to improve the quality of education; the test scoring and rankings are based on junk science and are wrongly used against students and teachers while not providing useful information for learning and teaching.

Organizers also spoke of the demonstration organized against then NYS Education Commissioner John King, who held an invitation-only meeting in Buffalo where the public was not allowed to speak. Protesters brought out that Common Core was harming children and education and called for *Public Control of Public Schools*. It was created and imposed on an undemocratic basis, something that has been extended now with state takeover of public schools.

Other actions opposed the sit-and-stare policy of many schools, requiring students who refused the tests to sit in the classroom and stare. Children were not allowed to read, or rest, or go to another room, but forced to sit-and-stare. This policy was a reflection of the harmful and undemocratic character of the Common Core testing regime.

They also brought out that young children, third and fourth graders, were being forced to sit and take an exam longer than the New York State bar exam. Those who are English Language Learners and with special needs are all forced to take the same test as students without these difficulties, only they have to sit for twice as long!

The culture of the business model of education, which the testing serves, was also opposed. It is a culture that treats children like products, to be sorted and ranked. Schools are to become more efficient in producing the products and teachers better product managers. The focus on testing and use of the tests as a weapon eliminate all that is best in education. Testing cannot assess such valuable *qualities* as collaboration and collective work, thinking, creativity, engagement, teaching others, debating and reasoned argument, performing and writing musicals, artistic efforts, and so forth.

Students and teachers are human beings and education needs to meet their needs as human beings, which the business model

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uneducated peasants, began sensing that their leadership was being co-opted – as is the case today – they operated outside the confines of politics, launching and sustaining a rebellion that lasted for three years.

The fellahin then, as has always been the case, carried the brunt of the British and Zionist violence, as they fell in droves. Those unlucky enough to be caught, were tortured and executed: Farhan al-Sadi, Izz al-Din al-Qassam, Mohammed Jamjoom, Fuad Hijazi are among the many leaders of that generation.

These scenarios have been in constant replay since, and with each intifada, the price paid in blood seems to be constantly increasing. Yet more intifadas are inevitable, whether they last a week, three or seven years, since the collective injustices experienced by Palestinians remain the common denominator among the successive genera-

tions of fellahin and their descendants of refugees.

What is happening today is an Intifada, but it is unnecessary to assign a number to it, since popular mobilization does not always follow a neat rationale required by some of us. Most of those leading the current Intifada were either children, or not even born when the Intifada al-Aqsa started in 2000; they were certainly not living when the Stone Intifada exploded in 1987. In fact, many might be oblivious of the details of the original Intifada of 1936.

This generation grew up oppressed, confined and subjugated, at complete odds with the misleading ‘peace process’ lexicon that has prolonged a strange paradox between fantasy and reality. They are protesting because they experience daily humiliation and have to endure the unrelenting violence of occupation.

Moreover, they feel a total sense of betrayal by their leadership, which is corrupt and co-opted. So they rebel, and attempt to mobilize and sustain their rebellion for as long as they can, because they have no horizon of hope outside their own action.

Let us not get bogged down by details, self-imposed definitions and numbers. This is a Palestinian Intifada, even if it ends today. What truly matters is how we respond to the pleas of this oppressed generation; will we continue to assign greater importance to the safety of the armed occupier than to the rights of a burdened and oppressed nation?

(Ramzy Baroud is an internationally syndicated columnist, author and the founder of PalestineChronicle.com. His latest book is My Father Was a Freedom Fighter: Gaza's Untold Story.)

LONG ISLAND PRINCIPAL VISITS BUFFALO AREA

Carol Burris Speaks Out Against State Testing and Receivership

Carol Burris, a retired Long Island principal and education activist recently visited the Buffalo area to speak out against Common Core state testing. Burris, a former teacher, has considerable experience with the state testing and teacher assessment regimes. She is well respected in the field, having won awards as Educator of the Year in 2010 and New York State Principal of the Year in 2013. She is currently an Executive Director of the Network for Public Education.

Said Burris, "Testing is the rock on which the policies that are destroying our local public schools are built." Her presentations at West Seneca and Niagara Falls High Schools addressed this, while emphasizing that parents, students and teachers have a role to play in stopping the testing and fighting for public education.

She asked participants if they thought they had the right and duty to guide the education of their children — YES! was the response. Did they think teachers should decide how best to assess the growth and needs of their students — YES! She spoke to the social responsibility of all to reject government efforts to punish students and teachers and close or privatize public schools. She voiced her opposition to the state takeover of 25 Buffalo schools, using receivership.

Burris brought out that Common Core testing is being used to paint the schools as failing so that people lose faith in the system of public education. The aim is to impose a business model, that eliminates all-round curriculum, with music, art, social studies, sports — and children that are creative and



thoughtful. She brought out how irrational the state demands are, asking who in their right mind would consider closing schools as the way to improve them?

She spoke to the fact that state takeovers have been tried — and failed — in other places, including Philadelphia and Memphis. She opposed Cuomo's "sham" task force for Common Core, saying it will not address the serious problems, including its harm to students and education. The many examples given show, as people in Buffalo are also experiencing, that the quality of education is not being raised, but lowered.

She also spoke to her own experience, as a principal about the need for increased funding to meet the needs of all the students. She said it is irrational to provide *less* funding to students in *greater* need, such as those in Buffalo, where poverty is high and there are many immigrants and refugees. She said other countries spend *more* on students with greater needs while the U.S. does the opposite. Many more guidance counselors, teacher and attendance aides, fully staffed libraries, attendance and other specialists, are needed, yet schools with the greatest

need have fewer.

She concluded saying we do not have the money of those, like Bill Gates, that are pushing Common Core testing — but we have the voice and numbers and ability to organize and win in the court of public opinion. She urged all to join in refusing the tests, saying there were about 220,000 students statewide last year who refused and this year there will be many more. This is a battle that unites parents and teachers statewide and one that needs everyone. Do one thing each day she said, tell a friend to refuse the tests, talk to a teacher, a co-worker, write a letter to the editor, join actions, propose actions. Everyone can contribute and needs to do so.

As the hosts of the event, Western New Yorkers for Public Education put it, we need to remove the weapon of state testing from our schools to improve the quality of education. We need to fight for our children — their well-being is the main reason to opt out of testing.

All concerned can get more information at: www.wnyforpubliced.com and www.networkforpubliceducation.org.

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cannot do. The changes being demanded, using the weapon of testing to achieve them, are a corporate model that is against the public and against a system of public education.

Organizers also stood against state takeover of 25 Buffalo schools, using receivership. Receivership is based on

test scores, so refusing the tests is an important way to block state takeover. As an expression of the united efforts, the Buffalo contingent was joined by those from the suburbs with a banner stating *WNYers Against Receivership*.

Both meetings ended with a call to all present to take 10 refuse testing letters and

speak with fellow parents, teachers and co-workers about the need to refuse the tests. All were encouraged to recognize that to improve the quality of all the schools for all the children, the movement to refuse the tests must continue to grow and strengthen its united efforts — and everyone has a role to play!

STANDING UP FOR STUDENTS AND QUALITY EDUCATION

Buffalo Teachers Federation Passes Resolution Against Receivership

On September 24, the Buffalo Teachers Federation (BTF) Delegate Assembly overwhelmingly passed the resolution below opposing state takeover of 25 Buffalo public schools. The resolution calls on the BTF to “vigorously oppose receivership” and encourage locals statewide to do the same. Already, the Port Jefferson local has done so. It also calls on the union to educate and activate members so they can contend with receivership and the various attacks it involves, such as potential firing without cause of all teachers at a given school and separate agreements that isolate teachers and staff in the given school from the collective strength of the union.

* * *

Buffalo Teachers Federation Resolution in Opposition to Receivership

WHEREAS: New York law establishes Receivership for schools that have been or will be categorized as persistently failing and struggling and that these schools are identified as the schools in the lowest 5% state-wide on NY/Common Core assessments will mean there will always be failing schools and schools in Receivership, and;

WHEREAS: Receivership uses developmentally inappropriate and unreliable Common Core aligned test and punish and evaluation regimes to categorize failing schools, and;

WHEREAS: the BTF has taken a strong position against the Common Core Standards, and encourages parents and members to refuse the Common Core Tests used to place schools in Receivership, and;

WHEREAS: 144 public schools serving mostly low income students from Buffalo to Albany, Utica to New York City, Yonkers to Rochester have fallen into Receivership, and;

WHEREAS: Receivership law states that the Receiver “may abolish the positions of all teachers and pedagogical support staff, administrators and pupil personnel service providers” of any or all Receivership schools and can do so without cause, and require them to reapply if they choose, and;



WHEREAS: Receivership requires a “Staffing Committee” to determine whether senior former staff members at Receivership schools are qualified to return to the school and those who are not rehired at their school are denied “bumping / seniority rights” and must be placed on a preferred eligibility list regardless of their teaching experience, and;

WHEREAS: Receivership further undermines collective bargaining by granting a Receiver broad power over budget, curriculum and programs, discipline, testing, class size, teaching conditions, length of the school day and year for each individual Receivership school, and;

WHEREAS: Receivership erodes local control of schools by allowing a superintendent or independent receiver to supersede decisions and policies established by an elected Board of Education, and;

WHEREAS: The BTF has previously stated both its opposition to Receivership and its support of local control of Buffalo Schools, and;

WHEREAS: Receivership denies due process and other forms of fair employment practices for educators and administrators by allowing the law and commissioner’s regulations to set up a timeframe and process for different agreements with each Receivership school that ensures these “agreements” give expression to the will of the commissioner without ever having

to prove how imposed agreements will improve the quality of education, and;

WHEREAS: Receivership law requires “failing/struggling” schools to improve in two years but provides ZERO/NO additional resources or funding to those schools, and;

WHEREAS: Receivership does not address the great inequality in funding our urban schools as the Tax Cap and GEA have helped to de-fund Buffalo Schools by more than \$100,000,000 since 2010 but rather Receivership doubles down on those districts by defunding them year after year, labeling them failures and giving them one or two years to “improve” without additional resources in most cases.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED IN UNITY: That the BTF vigorously oppose Receivership and encourage our regional and statewide NYSUT affiliates to pass similar resolutions demonstrating solidarity against New York Receivership law, and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the BTF exhaust all legal means to change and to challenge in court any attacks on due process, collective bargaining and other fair labor practices that are a consequence of Receivership, and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the BTF develop a plan/outline to advise members on how they should respond to the demands of Receivership and that the BTF plan meetings to educate and activate BTF members about said plan – especially those in Receivership schools who develop a SIP plan, sit on a Staffing Committee, or are assigned to CET, SBMT and or any other member interested in the impacts of Receivership, and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the BTF submit a Resolution in Opposition to Receivership at the April 2016 NYSUT RA in Rochester NY, and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that a copy of this resolution be sent to BTF Members and all WNY local NYSUT Presidents and the entire Western New York delegation in the State Legislature.



RALLY at LAFAYETTE

Refuse Receivership

Accept Local Redesign Plans

Wednesday, October 21 @ 3:30

LAFAYETTE HIGH SCHOOL

Lafayette, Bennett and East all have locally produced redesign plans that are supported by their students, teachers, staff, parents and community. Yet these plans are not being used. Instead, because of state takeover, plans by the state are being imposed. These state plans that do not allow smaller classes, do not allow more translators and leave all in uncertainty. Because even if schools do improve, the state can still keep control, using receivership. The state can, in the next two years, still close these schools or give them to private interests — to those who will not serve all children.

We say NO! Refuse state takeover and accept the plans NOW. Fully fund all public schools. Remove all schools from the receivership list and let

parents, teachers, staff and students govern and decide.

We also urge all to Refuse the Tests, which are unfair and rigged against the students, especially those who are learning English. By refusing the tests, we are saying we parents, students, staff and teachers know what is best and must decide. We are saying we want music, art, physical education, social studies, librarians, guidance counselors, not Common Core tests. By refusing state takeover we are demanding democracy and local plans that help our students, rather than harming them. **Now is the time to take Lafayette and all Buffalo schools off the receivership list and fight for our right to decide.**



**Public
Control
of Public
Schools!**

