

Buffalo Forum



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

Workers of all countries, unite!

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Government Shutdown and Increasing War Danger Mark Trump One-Year Anniversary

Government shutdown — which Trump said was a present to him — marks the anniversary of his one year in office. When Trump was elected, it was said that since Republicans controlled the House and Senate and presidency, Trump would have no difficulty imposing his dictate. Instead, the year has been marked by the increasing dysfunction of Congress, including the inability to pass major legislation such as that on immigration

Trump Anniversary • 3

Hands Off Korea! No to Naval Blockade and Sanctions

President Trump has continued his provocations and threats to use nuclear weapons against the DPRK. Most recently the U.S. has organized a number of countries to join in imposing a naval blockade, recognized in international law as an act of war. The U.S., using

Japan, Australia and others, is threatening to board ships of other countries trading with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). This is being done in the name of enforcing existing UN sanctions, which themselves

Hands Off Korea • 5

Shutdown Shows Need for New Arrangements

As *Buffalo Forum* goes to press, the Senate failed in efforts to provide funds to keep government operating. The government shutdown begins at 12:01am Saturday, January 20. It immediately impacts federal government workers, such as healthcare

and first responders, who will be forced to work without pay over the weekend. If it persists, hundreds of thousands of federal workers will be laid off or forced to work without pay. Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid will all be impacted

Government Shutdown • 4

New York Action Demands Freedom for Palestinian Ahed Tamimi, Urges Boycott Of HP

Samidoun Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network

Dozens of New Yorkers gathered on Monday, January 15 to demand freedom for Ahed Tamimi and fellow Palestinian child prisoners. The enthusiastic crowd gathered outside the Best Buy electronics store, where they urged shoppers to boycott Hewlett-Packard (HP)

products until the corporation stops profiting from Israeli imprisonment, apartheid and colonialism.

The action was organized by Samidoun Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network. Protesters chanted, carried

Freedom for Ahed Tamimi • 13

Buffalo Joins Demonstrations on Anniversary of Trump Presidency

Buffalo is among hundreds of cities demonstrating on the one-year anniversary of the Trump presidency and the Women's March. The action Sunday, January 21 begins at 2pm with a rally on the steps of City Hall (Niagara Square) with music and a Gnonoyoh, an indigenous giving of thanks. The march will begin at about

2:30 and go past the Holding Center and Buffalo Police Department, as part of work to defend the rights of prisoners and reject the militarization of police and policing. A number of other issues, such as the right to education and defense of women's rights and human rights, will also be addressed.

Buffalo Demonstrates • 2

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I • BUFFALO DEMONSTRATES

The march will conclude at the Federal Building, where the focus will be on opposing U.S. wars and the general militarization of life, in our public schools and communities.

There is also a rally organized on January 20 at Seneca Falls, with buses leaving from Buffalo Saturday morning. An important aspect of the action is the effort to unite the various struggles, with numerous organizations participating and attention given to various fronts of work.

One of the concerns of participants is what is needed for development of common work in the coming year. The anniversary action contributes to bringing people together, but that is only one step. Many more are needed to defend the rights of all. It is also the case that a main direction being put forward for 2018 is to involve people in supporting the existing electoral set-up, whether through voter registration or running candidates, especially women. A problem presenting is that the repeated experience of all is that the existing set-up, by design, excludes the people and their interests and empowers the rich. A main feature of this is the fact that the a set up is one here the people do not decide — do not decide the candidates, do not decide the platforms, do not decide the process, which is generally hated by all for its negative content and billions wasted. This reality cannot be ignored. The aim of those striving to defend rights and win change

that favors the people cannot be to defend this old set-up that produced a Trump presidency, a dysfunctional government and an increased danger of war. This is not our president, not our government, not our democracy.

Buffalo Forum puts forward that common work that further unites the various struggles and advances the interests of the people can be developed by advancing work for an Anti-War Government and Peace Economy. A demand should be made to all candidates, federal, state and local to advance such a platform. The growing danger of broader war and militarization of life is a grave concern of all, yet it is kept out of the discussion when it comes to elections. In fact it imbues all aspects of life, as control and regimentation of our youth and the workforce indicate. Issues of education, women's rights, immigrant rights, cannot be separated from the U.S. drive for war and its destructive path, abroad and at home.

It is also the case that organizing for an Anti-War Government is not mainly a matter of electing people at this time. Rather it is a matter of developing collectives and new institutions that put decision making by the people themselves at the center. The drive of the people for political power so as to solve the problems we face can find expression in such common work for political empowerment.

I • TRUMP ANNIVERSARY

and healthcare. The dysfunction stems in part from the fact that the Democrats and Republicans no longer exist as political parties, addressing political interests. Instead the vying factions among the rulers operate as cartels, contending and colluding to protect private interests. They are using violence against the peoples abroad and at home while also threatening open violence against each other. Alliances shift, with various forces included or excluded in the office of the presidency, which is the main prize as it is where power is concentrated.

What stands out is the public good, public interests are not part of the equation. It is partly for this reason that the various headlines read that the public will not be impacted by the shutdown, even though hundreds of thousands of federal workers will be forced to work, or be laid off — without pay. This includes the various health and safety and first responders working over the weekend. Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security — that is the most vulnerable — will all be impacted. The effort is to dismiss the public interests and focus attention on the cartels.

Great pressure is being exerted to draw people into a false debate as to whether Republicans or Democrats are to blame, followed by calls to elect one or the other in 2018. Everyone is to ignore the reality that the current system of U.S.-style democracy no longer functions. As the past year indicates, with open contention within and between the military, presidency and intelligence agencies, it cannot resolve the conflicts among the rulers, and it cannot provide legitimacy in the eyes of the people. The dysfunctional congress, elimination of political parties and efforts to eliminate politics more generally, the great power concentrated in the presidency with a government of police powers instituted, all indicate that the current set up can solve no problem. It is finished and new institutions must be brought into being.

A democracy that empowers the people to govern and decide, that puts guaranteeing the rights of all at the center is needed. This is where discussion

must go. The upcoming elections are an opportunity not to join in reinforcing the old, dysfunctional system, but instead to raise this necessity for the new and discuss and debate advancing the struggle to bring it about. Independent thinking and independent politics are needed so as not to get stuck in the old, failed system.

Trump campaigned against war, yet the anniversary is marked by the open and repeated threat to use nuclear weapons against Korea, an open-ended military presence in Syria, where the U.S. now has about 2,000 troops, huge increases in the use of Special Forces in Africa and continued war against Iraq, Afghanistan and Yemen. The drone warfare broadly increased by Obama has been further intensified by Trump involving far more bombings in many more countries.

The wars being waged are not for political purposes, but rather for destruction of human productive powers. And because they are wars of destruction, the politics of negotiating peace treaties are absent. For the U.S., whatever cannot be controlled is to be destroyed. Indeed, nuclear weapons are solely for that purpose.

It is said that Trump's threats to use nuclear weapons are different than those of past presidents. In fact this threat and use of nuclear blackmail have been used by U.S. presidents since nuclear weapons were developed. Truman not only used nuclear weapons against Japan and as a means to terrorize the world, he had additional plans for their use. When he was asked at a press conference in November 1950, during the U.S. war against Korea, if nuclear weapons would be used, he said all weapons were on the table. This is the phrase repeated by presidents ever since, including Bush, Obama and now Trump.

The Pentagon has repeatedly developed plans to use nuclear weapons, against Korea, Viet Nam, Cuba, etc. and huge sums are being used to modernize them today. The main difference with Trump is that he is open about these plans. Coupled with the war games against Korea, where it is made public that attacks using nuclear weapons are practiced, means the U.S. can no longer deny these plans.



In the current situation, the U.S. is striving to make Korea the aggressor. While it is the U.S. that has a massive nuclear arsenal, plans to use them and a history of aggression, it is said the DPRK is the problem. The monopoly media consistently leave out their stand and long practice, which is that they do not engage in aggression and will not use nuclear weapons unless attacked. Faced with this, Trump has repeatedly tried to provoke the DPRK into taking action first, so as to justify U.S. aggression. It is a dangerous game of brinkmanship, one widely opposed by Koreans and the peoples of the world.

Stepping up opposition to the growing danger of war is a concern of many. It is the peoples, of the U.S. and the world, that are decisive in blocking war and securing the peace. A recent conference to strengthen united efforts, here and abroad, to close all U.S. foreign bases and bring troops home is indicative of the reality that people of the U.S. stand as one with the peoples of the world against U.S. aggression and wars. The call for a new direction for the country, for an anti-war government and peace economy, is being heard.

I • GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

as will all the various federal agencies, some worse than others.

Government shutdown is a serious concern among the people, but considered a “present,” by President Trump. He, like others, including New York Senator Schumer, a main player in negotiations, see the shutdown as a bargaining chip, a means to secure particular private interests. Schumer claims he is defending the undocumented youth brought here as children. But he is the one who has pushed for immigration legislation that includes biometric ID for *all* workers requiring an FBI and Homeland Security background check. It is a means to further control and regiment the workforce, giving some ID and others not, forcing them potentially into slave labor camps. He is striving to position himself as a champion of immigrants in part so he can further such legislation. Careful attention is needed as these various forces do not favor the people.

As well, while all the contending factions claim to be concerned about the public, the readiness of all to use the shutdown indicates that the public interest and public good are expendable. The federal workers, those reliant on federal services, are expendable as the factions contend for their own private interests, be it funding for border wall construction, or biometric ID’s, or more weaponry and detention centers.

Contention among the various forces is such that Trump has intervened saying



he was both for and against the same proposals. It appears that his main aim was to secure the shutdown, this “present” as he calls it, to further discredit Congress, while positioning himself to have greater leverage. It remains to be seen if that will be the case, as for many across the country, all of government is discredited and dysfunctional — sharply posing the need for new arrangements, a new set up that favors the people.

This concern about dysfunction has been underlined by the fact that there have already been three “stopgap” measures. Congress has been unable to pass a budget, one of its most important responsibilities, for fiscal year 2018, which began in October 2017. The stopgap measures provide funds for a very limited period of time. This current one, which had passed in the House and provided funding for another month, failed in the Senate. The Senate requires 60 votes

to end debate, and these could not be secured.

More time is not the problem. Even if yet another stopgap measure is passed over the weekend, it will not overcome the dysfunction. The dysfunctional government reflects the fact that politics are being eliminated and the two parties of the rich no longer function as political parties but as cartels, like gangsters, contending and colluding. Trump is head of a government of police powers, which acts with impunity against the people and without concern

for legitimacy. It is a government where rule of law has been eliminated and thus bodies that legislate law, like Congress, largely reduced to a consultative body with little power. The budget is one key issue that remains, so having Congress unable to pass a budget further supports the notion that the president alone should rule.

The “blame game” now underway is a means to divert from the reality of a government of police powers, with great power concentrated in the presidency. It is a means to involve those concerned about the rights of the people abroad and at home in the contention among the cartels. Instead, given that existing institutions no longer function, attention must be given to the development of new institutions that do serve the people and guarantee their rights. A new electoral set-up, a new constitution, new forms of governance are the order of the day.

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Koreans to March as One at the Olympics

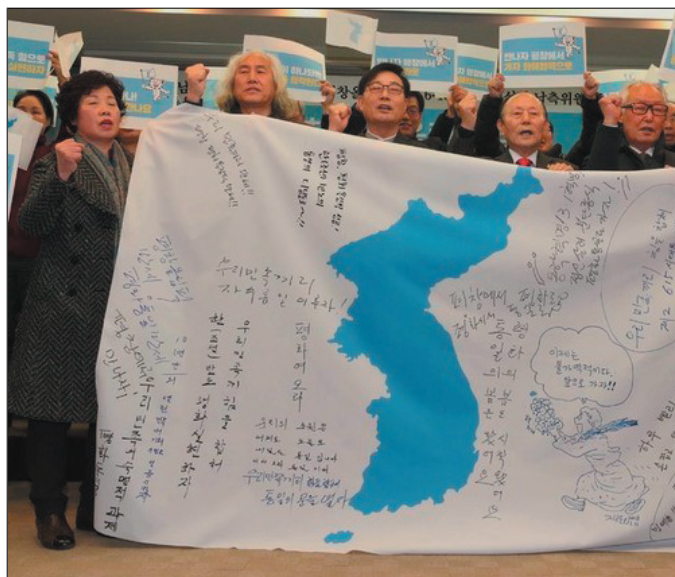
Korean athletes, from the north and south, will march together for the Winter Olympics opening ceremony under the Korean Unification flag, with its blue image of the peninsula on a white background. There will also be a joint Korean women's ice hockey team for the Games in Pyeongchang, south Korea, which take place from February 9-25. The news of a united delegation has brought great joy to Koreans everywhere, as it contributes to efforts to peacefully reunite the country. Athletes from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) will also compete in artistic skating, downhill and long-distance skiing. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) is expected to approve the agreements at a meeting with Koreans from the north and south on January 20.

The agreements for the Olympics are part of efforts, by the Koreans themselves, to peacefully resolve current problems and strengthen their work for reunification. This included ensuring the U.S.-organized and commanded war games were postponed so they would not occur during the Olympics. Not only the Koreans but world public opinion certainly would not accept such a thing. Even so, the U.S. is maintaining a large number of warships in the area.

In addition to athletes, the DPRK's

delegation will include government representatives, a 30-member taekwondo demonstration team, fans and a cheering squad of 230 people. The DPRK will also send a delegation of 150 people, including athletes, to the Paralympic Games taking place from March 9-18. The sides also agreed on holding joint training of skiers at a resort in the DPRK. Performers from north and south will also hold a joint cultural event at Mount Kungang in the north.

The united delegation for the 2018 Olympics is the tenth joint participation in international sporting events. The two countries marched under the unification flag at the 1991 World Table Tennis Championships, and at a number of sporting events since. Eleven years ago teams from north and south Korea also marched under the unification flag, hands



Members of the June 15 Joint Declaration Southern Action Committee at the Seoul Press Center on January 11, 2018, hold up the Korean Unity Flag bearing messages welcoming the DPRK's participation in the PyeongChang Winter Olympics and the Inter-Korean dialogue.

grasped together and held high, at the opening ceremony of the 2006 Winter Olympic Games in Turin, Italy.

Buffalo Forum salutes the joint talks and unified delegation for the Olympics and urges all to join the Koreans in working for peaceful reunification of the country and an end to all U.S. interference.

I • HANDS OFF KOREA

are illegal and unjust. The sanctions being imposed are also unjust and acts of genocide, designed to bring the DPRK to her knees, simply because she is pursuing her own path and rejecting U.S. dictate.

Great hysteria is being generated that it is the Koreans who are the threat, when it is the U.S. that has its troops and warships and bombers in the region. The Koreans have no history of aggression, no troops or warships abroad. They have repeated many times, as they did again recently, that they will act to secure the peace of the region and only use nuclear weapons to defend themselves when attacked. They support having a nuclear-free zone on the peninsula and for the region. It is the U.S. that rejects such a positive step

for peace.

It is the U.S., with its war games, show of force, brinkmanship and constant efforts to goad the Koreans into taking action that are the cause of problems. While the Koreans north and south are currently sitting down and striving to develop conditions to peacefully reunite the country, including a united delegation for the Olympics, the U.S. keeps threatening war. A naval blockade is one more means to try and get the Koreans to act first. The U.S. creates these arbitrary and unjust situations, then uses them to justify its own illegal actions. It is not interested in the peace and security of the peoples, but in its own empire and striving for world domination. Control of Korea is a key part of that, as such control

also serves U.S. efforts to control China and Russia. Trump's constant threats also indicate that whatever the U.S. cannot control, it will destroy and will use nuclear weapons to do so.

This requires the people of the U.S. to step up their anti-war organizing and strengthen their common work with the peoples of Korea. Let no one be fooled by U.S. efforts to paint Korea as the aggressor, just as they did with Iraq and Libya and Syria. It is the U.S. that is the aggressor, the U.S. that is the source for war. Now is the time to join the world's people in demanding that all U.S. foreign bases be closed, all U.S. troops brought home, and all use of force against the peoples ended.

Leader of DPRK Calls for Inter-Korean Talks in New Year's Speech

On January 1, the leader of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) Kim Jong Un delivered a New Year's address in which he clearly expressed the desire of the DPRK to engage in talks with the Republic of Korea (ROK) to resolve the current tensions on the Korean Peninsula on the basis of the principle "By Our Nation Itself." An excerpt from the address is printed below.

The prevailing situation demands now that the north and the south improve relations between themselves and take decisive measures for achieving a breakthrough for independent reunification without being preoccupied by the past. No one can appear honorable before the nation if he or she ignores the urgent demands of the times.

This year is significant both for the north and the south as in the north the people will greet the 70th anniversary of the founding of their Republic as a great, auspicious event and in the south the Winter Olympic Games will take place. In order to not only celebrate these great national events in a splendid manner but also to demonstrate the dignity and spirit of the nation at home and abroad, we should improve the inter-Korean relations and glorify this meaningful year as one noteworthy in the history of the nation.

First of all, we should work together to ease the acute military tension between the north and the south and create a peaceful environment on the Korean Peninsula.

As long as this unstable situation, which is neither war nor peace, persists, the north and the south cannot ensure the success of the scheduled events, nor can they sit face to face to have a sincere discussion over the issue of improving bilateral relations, nor will they advance straight ahead towards the goal of national reunification.

The north and the south should desist from doing anything that might aggravate the situation, and they should make concerted efforts to defuse military tension and create a peaceful environment.

The south Korean authorities should respond positively to our sincere efforts



The Reunification Sisters, a monument in north Korea devoted to Korean reunification.

for a detente, instead of exacerbating the situation by joining the United States in its reckless moves for a north-targeted nuclear war that threatens the destiny of the entire nation as well as peace and stability on this land. They should discontinue all the nuclear war drills they stage with outside forces, as these drills will engulf this land in flames and lead to bloodshed on our sacred territory. They should also refrain from bringing in nuclear armaments and aggressive forces from the United States.

Even though the United States is wielding the nuclear stick and going wild for another war, it will not dare to invade us because we currently have a powerful nuclear deterrent. And when the north and the south are determined, they can surely prevent the outbreak of war and ease tension on the Korean Peninsula.

A climate favorable for national reconciliation and reunification should be established.

The improvement of inter-Korean relations is a pressing matter of concern not only to the authorities but to all other Koreans, and it is a crucial task to be carried out through a concerted effort by the entire nation. The north and the south should promote bilateral contact, travel,

cooperation and exchange on a broad scale to remove mutual misunderstanding and distrust, and fulfill their responsibility and role as the motive force of national reunification.

We will open our doors to anyone from south Korea, including the ruling party and opposition parties, organizations and individual personages of all backgrounds, for dialogue, contact and travel, if they sincerely wish national concord and unity.

A definite end should be put to the acts that might offend the other party and incite discord and hostility between fellow countrymen. The south Korean authorities should not try, as the previous conservative "regime" did, to block contact and travel by people of different social strata and suppress the atmosphere for reunification through alliance with the north, under absurd pretexts and by invoking legal and institutional mechanisms. Instead, they should direct efforts to creating conditions and an environment conducive to national harmony and unity.

To improve inter-Korean relations as soon as possible, the authorities of the north and the south should raise the banner of national independence higher than ever

Inter-Korean Talks • 7

Outcomes of Inter-Korean Talks

High-level inter-Korean talks were held January 9 in Panmunjom at the “House of Peace” where the 1953 Armistice ending the armed conflict of the Korean War was signed. Representing the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) was a delegation led by Ri Son Gwon, chairman of the Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Country, while the delegation from the Republic of Korea (ROK) was led by Minister of Unification Jo Myung Gyun. During the talks, the two delegations discussed contributions to successfully holding the 23rd Winter Olympics in south Korea and improving inter-Korean relations. Since that time additional talks have been held and agreement reached for a unified Korean delegation at the Olympics (see p.5).

Joint Press Release from Inter-Korean Talks

The delegations from the north and south sides issued the following joint press release after the January 9 inter-Korean talks.

At the talks both sides had sincere discussions on the participation of a delegation of the north side in the 23rd Winter Olympics and Paralympics and the improvement of the inter-Korean relations in conformity with the desire and expectations of all Koreans and agreed as follows:

The north and the south agreed to proactively cooperate in ensuring that the



23rd Winter Olympics and Paralympics in the south side area will be successfully held, providing an occasion for enhancing the prestige of the nation.

In this regard the north side agreed to send a delegation of the National Olympic Committee, a sports team, a cheering squad, an art troupe, a Taekwon-do demonstration group and a press corps, along with a high-level delegation to the Olympics, and the south side agreed to provide the accommodations they will need.

Both sides agreed to open working-level talks with regard to the north’s dispatch of an advance party for a field tour beforehand and participation in the Winter Olympics, and agreed to discuss a schedule by way of document exchange.

The north and the south agreed to make

concerted efforts to ease the military tension, create a peaceful environment on the Korean Peninsula and promote national reconciliation and unity.

They shared the viewpoint that the present military tension should be eased and agreed to hold talks between the military authorities to this end.

They agreed to promote national reconciliation and unity by invigorating contacts and travels, and exchange and cooperation in various fields.

The north and the south agreed to respect the north-south declarations [on reunification] and solve all problems arising in inter-Korean relations through dialogue and negotiations on the principle of *By Our Nation Itself*.

To this end, both sides agreed to hold

Outcome of Inter-Korean Talks • 8

6 • INTER-KOREAN TALKS

before, and fulfill their responsibility and the role they have assumed for the times and the nation.

Inter-Korean relations are, for all intents and purposes, an internal matter of our nation, which the north and the south should resolve on their own responsibility. Therefore, they should take a steadfast stand and view that they will resolve all the issues arising in bilateral relations on the principle of *By Our Nation Itself*.

The south Korean authorities need to know that they will gain nothing by touring foreign countries to solicit their

help on the issue of inter-Korean relations, and that such behavior will give outside forces, who pursue dishonest objectives, an excuse for their interference and further complicate matters. Now is not the time for the north and the south to turn their backs on each other and merely express their respective standpoints. It is time that they sit face to face with a view to holding sincere discussions over the issue of improving inter-Korean relations by our nation itself and seek a way out in a bold manner.

As for the Winter Olympic Games to

be held soon in south Korea, it will serve as a good occasion for demonstrating our nation’s prestige and we earnestly wish the Olympic Games success. From this point of view we are willing to dispatch our delegation and adopt other necessary measures; with regard to this matter, the authorities of the north and the south may meet soon. Since we are compatriots of the same blood as south Koreans, it is natural for us to share their pleasure over this auspicious event and help them.

(English translation edited slightly for grammar and clarity)

7 • OUTCOME OF INTER-KOREAN TALKS

talks in every field, along with high-level talks between the north and the south aimed at improving inter-Korean relations.

North Korea said it will attend the Winter Olympics in the South next month, and both sides agreed to resolve problems through dialogue and revive military consultations to avoid accidental conflict.

Military Communications Fully Restored

A south Korean military officer communicates with his counterpart in the DPRK via the inter-Korean military hotline in Panmunjom, that was restored January 3, 2018.

On January 3, the DPRK unilaterally reconnected the military hotline between itself and the ROK at Panmunjom to facilitate the holding of talks between the two governments.

On January 9, the second military hotline located near the West Sea was reactivated as a result of agreements reached at the talks in Panmunjom. This second hotline was previously used in part to confirm the identity and guarantee the safety of Korean from north and south moving across the border at the Kaesong Industrial Complex in south Korea while the DPRK was taking part in projects there.

The two channels for direct dialogue between governments and military authorities of the two Koreas were severed in February 2016.

President of ROK Holds New Year's Press Conference

On January 10, President of the ROK Moon Jae-in held his first press conference of the New Year where he made the following remarks:

The lives of the people need to be stabilized through the settlement of peace on the Korean Peninsula. There should never be another war on the Korean Peninsula. The ultimate goal of our diplomacy and national defense is to prevent a war from recurring on the Peninsula. I do not want the immediate unification of the Korean Peninsula. My goal is to resolve the North



Demonstration in Seoul, south Korea demanding an end to U.S. war threats

Korean nuclear issue and solidify peace while I am in office.

The people who set the country right serve as a stepping stone or a milestone in diplomacy and national security. They are the source of power that will bring peace to the Korean Peninsula. Last year, relying on that power, I was able to consistently proclaim the principles of peace on the Korean Peninsula to the four major powers involved in issues related to the Peninsula and the rest of the international community. As a middle power standing tall in the international community, the Korean government was able to announce the New Northern Policy and the New Southern Policy. I was also able to continue to stress the need for dialogue in inter-Korean relations.

A senior-level dialogue between the two Koreas was held yesterday. An inter-Korean communication that was once severed has been restored. North Korea agreed to participate in the PyeongChang 2018 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. U.S. President Donald Trump said he supported the inter-Korean dialogue and the fostering of a peaceful atmosphere through the PyeongChang Olympics. The postponement of the Korea-U.S. joint military drill was also agreed to.

It is only a beginning. We have to successfully host the PyeongChang Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games.

We need to strive until the end to make it an Olympics of peace. Furthermore, we have to solve the North Korean nuclear issue peacefully. We have to make it a turning point toward an improvement in inter-Korean relations and peace on the Korean Peninsula.

I will do my best to make this year a new start for peace on the Korean Peninsula. In the process, I will more closely cooperate with related countries, including our ally the United States, China and Japan, and the rest of the international community.

If peace begins in PyeongChang, I will turn it into a stable system that takes root. To solve the North Korean nuclear issue and settle peace, I will pursue more dialogue and cooperative projects.

I stress once again; the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula is a process toward peace and a goal at the same time. The denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, which was declared by the two Koreas, is our fundamental position that can never be compromised.

I will light a candle of peace on the Korean Peninsula. I will remove the anxiety and distrust that are deeply embedded in the individual lives of the people. I will take a step forward along with the people in an effort to help create an everyday life that is peaceful and safe, and with no worry over war.

U.S. Initiates All-Out Naval Blockade of DPRK — An Act of War

On January 12, seventeen countries, led by the U.S., signed a statement indicating that they are “postured” to enforce UN Security Council Resolutions 2375 and 2397 against the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK). These enforcement measures include interdicting and inspecting ships suspected to be trading with the DPRK in materials prohibited under UN Security Council sanctions, based on “information that provides reasonable grounds.”[1]

The prohibited materials include oil and textiles, showing that in fact the measures being taken conform to a type of selective naval blockade aimed at strangling the DPRK. The group of 17 “enforcers” — pressured by the U.S., which introduced Resolutions 2375 and 2397 at the UN — claim their inspections will be done with the consent of the state under whose flag the targeted vessels are operating. However, it is known that where the U.S. military is concerned, such demands are more the gangster “offer that cannot be refused.” These efforts by the U.S. to try to bring the DPRK to its knees while also trampling on the sovereignty of countries involved in trading with the DPRK are an act of war that must be opposed as such. It is the U.S. that is now and has long been the aggressor and is now dragging other countries into its war efforts. So far there has not been direct enforcement but if any such action occurs it is important to recognize that it is the U.S. that is the cause and aggressor, not the DPRK.

The countries involved justify their actions based on the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) framework that allegedly “prevents the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction” put forward in September 2003 by then-U.S. President George W. Bush six months after the U.S. invaded and occupied Iraq based on the fraud that it was doing so to stop Iraq’s development and use of weapons of mass destruction. A total of 105 countries signed the initiative in 2003.

The January 12 “joint statement” says, “As member states of the United Nations and as PSI-endorsing states, it is



our responsibility to implement [United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR)] obligations fully.”

The statement cites the following seven measures to be taken:

“Inspect proliferation-related shipments on vessels with the consent of the flag State, on the high seas, if we have information that provides reasonable grounds to believe that the cargo of such vessels contains items prohibited under UNSCRs concerning the DPRK.

“If there are reasonable grounds to believe that the cargo on a vessel flagged by one of our countries is prohibited for export to or from the DPRK under relevant UNSCRs, cooperate with inspections pursuant to the commitment above.

“If we, as flag States, do not consent to inspection on the high seas, we will direct the vessel to proceed to an appropriate and convenient port for required inspection.

“Direct our flagged vessels to a port in coordination with the port State when requested; and deflag any of our flagged vessels designated by the 1718 Committee [UN Sanctions Committee 1718 overseeing the enforcement of Security Council Sanctions regarding the DPRK -- TML Ed Note].

“Prohibit our nationals, persons subject to our jurisdiction, entities incorporated in our territory or subject to our jurisdiction, and vessels flying our flag, from facilitating or engaging in ship-to-ship transfers to or from DPRK-flagged vessels

of any goods or items that are being supplied, sold, or transferred to or from the DPRK.

“Redouble efforts to implement in full the measures in relevant UN Security Council Resolutions with respect to inspecting, detecting, and seizing items the transfer of which is prohibited by those resolutions.

“Seize and dispose of (such as through destruction, rendering inoperable or unusable, storage, or transferring to a State other than the originating or destination States for disposal) items the supply, sale, transfer, or export of which is prohibited by relevant UN Security Council Resolutions and consistent with other international obligations.”

The statement calls on all UN member states to follow the lead of its 17 signatories stating, “We call on all UN Member States to enforce all elements of applicable UN Security Council Resolutions. Given our concerted efforts to build our capacities and resolve to act to interdict WMD and related materials, we stand united in our determination to prevent the DPRK from acquiring nuclear and ballistic missile-related technologies, and from engaging in prohibited activities that generate revenue for its illicit WMD program. As PSI endorsing States we remain strongly committed to WMD counter-proliferation, including supporting and enforcing UNSCRs 2375, 2397, and all other

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DPRK-related UN Security Council Resolutions.”

Japan Already Carrying Out Maritime Surveillance

There have been a number of reports during the week of January 8 that Japan, one of the PSI “Partners” that signed the joint statement, has been deploying its military ships and aircraft in and over waters around the Korean Peninsula, monitoring the movement of ships, taking photographs and collecting other data on the DPRK’s naval trade, which is declared “illicit” as a result of sanctions. This is then sent to the U.S. military showing how the UN Security Council is being sidestepped by the U.S. as it seeks to enforce that body’s sanctions.

Open Discussion of Naval Blockade of DPRK

Reports indicate that the U.S. is preoccupied with completely choking off the DPRK, claiming that “China and Russia” are refusing to cut off shipments of goods as required under the UN sanctions pushed by the U.S.

Sections of the U.S. ruling circles see a naval blockade as an “alternative method” to force the DPRK and its people to submit. Retired U.S. Navy Lieutenant Commander Gregory Neeley states in a December 31 opinion piece in Fox News that “The naval blockade is not a new concept, and historically has enjoyed significant success. From the British Royal Navy blockade of the First French Empire during the Napoleonic war to the 1962 U.S. blockade of Cuba, which effectively ended Soviet attempts to establish missile bases on the Caribbean island, blockades have proven effective. Short of direct military action, a multi-national naval blockade of North Korea is not only palatable; it may be the only alternative.”

In discussing how this would work, Neeley outlines what he says are the options on the U.S. table:

- 1) direct military attack;
- 2) acceptance of DPRK’s right to



nuclear weapons; and

3) the third and best option — a naval blockade. Without a blockade, “where every ship in the vicinity of North Korea is boarded, searched, and if necessary impounded, it will be impossible to entirely close the oil lifeline spigot.”

“Like sanctions,” he writes, “blockades are designed to slowly choke the recalcitrant nation to submission. Unlike sanctions, a blockade provides the capability to monitor, intercept and enforce restrictions on what can go in and out of the target nation while providing a powerful psychological and diplomatic instrument. A naval blockade in the Sea of Japan and the Yellow Sea would prevent North Korea from obtaining essential raw materials and equipment, including refined petroleum and military spare parts. A naval blockade also serves to choke export income, in this case the lucrative coal and iron exports the regime needs to quite literally keep the lights on.

“The United States need not act unilaterally and carry the entire weight of a blockade of North Korea. U.S. allies in the region would support the initiative. Key players in this effort would be Japan

and Australia, with support likely from Singapore, South Korea, India, Taiwan and potentially NATO forces.

“The Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force, boasts the fifth most powerful navy in the world with one of the largest economic exclusion zones to patrol. Their destroyers and frigates are modern and equipped with the Aegis combat system.

“Australia, another island nation in the Pacific, is the only country to have supported the United States in every military conflict since World War One. The [Royal Australian Navy (RAN)] is built for coastal operations, with shallow water diesel-electric submarines, helicopter landing ships, frigates, and the Armidale class patrol boat, one of the most effective littoral combat platforms in the world. I served with the RAN during the early

2000’s blockade of illegal alien vessels. It proved a tremendously effective ‘reverse blockade’ of the Australian coast.”

This makes clear that the blockade is directed against the people of the DPRK, to “turning the lights out,” in the hopes of achieving regime change. It is also a means to bring the military forces of the various countries, like Japan and Australia, under direct U.S. command. Imposing a naval blockade also ups the ante in terms of U.S. efforts to force the DPRK to respond to such efforts to stop and board her ships so as to label her the aggressor. A naval blockade is an act of war by the U.S. to be opposed by all.

Notes

1. These 17 nations which refer to themselves as “Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) Partners in Support of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 2375 and 2397 Enforcement” are Australia, Argentina, Britain, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Japan, south Korea, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Singapore and the United States.

Sanctions Against the DPRK

Margaret Villamizar

The sanctions adopted against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) by the United Nations at the instigation of the United States are more than sanctions.[1] They are the basis for a blockade of the DPRK, which has called them "an act of war." [2]

Economic sanctions are commercial and financial penalties applied by one or more countries against a targeted country, group, or individual. Economic sanctions may include various forms of trade barriers, tariffs, and restrictions on financial transactions. An embargo is similar, but usually implies more severe sanctions.

Economic sanctions are not necessarily imposed because of economic circumstances; they can be imposed for a variety of political, military and social reasons. They can be used for achieving domestic and international purposes.

What typifies a "blockade" is that it pursues the isolation, asphyxiation and immobility of the targeted country, for the perverse purpose of suffocating its people and making it cease to affirm its right to be sovereign and independent. The cardinal elements of the concept of "blockade" are to cut off, close, disconnect from the outside to achieve the surrender of the besieged entity by force or through hunger.

Since the 1909 London Naval Conference, it is an accepted principle in international law that a blockade is an act of war. As such, its use is only permissible between belligerents. There is no rule of international law to justify a so-called peaceful blockade, which refers to a practice of the colonial powers of the 19th century and early 20th century. In 1916 the United States government itself warned France: "The United States does not recognize that right of any foreign power to obstruct the exercise of commercial rights of non-interested countries, resorting to blockade when there is no state of war."

And here we get to the crux of the matter. The belligerent countries which

fought in Korea in the 1950-53 war under the UN flag did so to achieve the surrender of the DPRK. They were forced to sign an armistice agreement instead when they were not able to take over all of Korea. After signing the Armistice Agreement, the U.S. has not respected its terms, including its ultimate aim of concluding a peace treaty with the DPRK.

The U.S. first initiated economic sanctions against the DPRK in 1950 under the *Trading with the Enemy Act*. In a 1997 review of U.S. extra-territorial sanctions in the University of Pennsylvania Journal of Economic Law, Harry L. Clark wrote that "re-export sanctions against North Korea generally mirrored those of Cuba." (Re-export provisions forbid non-U.S. persons from exporting items of U.S. origin or that contain U.S. content from third countries to sanctioned destinations.) At the time, the U.S. had just tightened its blockade of Cuba with new extra-territorial provisions under the 1996 *Helms-Burton Act*.

The Indictment for Offenses Committed by the U.S. Government Against the People of Korea 1945-2001 prepared for the Korea International War Crimes Tribunal held in New York City on June 23, 2001 stated in reference to the period from July 1953 to 2001: "The U.S. government forced the imposition of severe economic sanctions on Korea, enforced by blockade and the coercion of other nations and states that were calculated to and did in fact impoverish and debilitate the people of northern Korea damaging



the people, the economy, depriving them of essential medicines, medical supplies, safe drinking water, food and other necessities, destroying their lives in major part, committing a genocidal crime against humanity.

"The United States government, by imposing sanctions, a blockade, economic coercion on other nations and parties, undermined the health and endurance of the people of northern Korea, used the deprivation of food as a weapon, forcing hunger, malnutrition and starvation that took hundreds of thousands of lives." [3]

The Indictment provided the following details:

".... Economic interference by the U.S. and a devastating blockade were calculated to create conditions to destroy a major part of the northern Korean population, radically reduce available food, medicines, health care and medical capacities causing wide-

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spread malnutrition, weakening of the population, increasing susceptibility to diseases, illnesses and epidemics. Chronic food shortages, hunger and periodic famine contributed to a reduced life expectancy of more than six years in the 1990s. Among children under 5 years of age the death rate increased from 27 per 1,000 live births to 48 per 1,000 or 77 per cent, and among infants from 14 to 22.5 per 1,000 live births or 60 per cent. The percentage of the population with safe drinking water has dropped 30 per cent in recent years. Vaccination coverage for diseases like polio and measles fell 40 per cent between 1990 and 1997. Dysentery, iodine deficiency and vitamin deficiency are among many serious health problems for children. Per capita income in the north dropped from \$991 per year in 1991 to \$457 in 1999. All these figures were reported by AP on May 15, 2001. Over this period of 48 years, unlawful U.S. policies and actions have caused many hundreds of thousands of deaths in Korea. [...]"

In June 2008 the U.S. removed the DPRK from application of the *Trading with the Enemy Act* and from its "state sponsor of terrorism" list. However it left other sanctions in place and continued to add more under the *International Emergency Powers Act* and the *National Emergencies Act* and other legislation. NBC News reported in 2008 that then President George W. Bush said the changes made would have little impact on the DPRK's financial and diplomatic isolation and that "it will remain one of the most heavily sanctioned nations in the world."

UN Security Council Sanctions

United Nations (UN) Security Council sanctions against the DPRK were first adopted in 2006 after that country's first nuclear test. They targeted individuals and entities engaged in activities deemed to be directly or indirectly involved with aspects of its nuclear program, said to be prohibited. These sanctions were stepped up numerous times over the years, with those adopted on December 22, 2017

at the behest of the U.S. and passed unanimously by the Security Council, being the most severe.

They include a 90 per cent reduction in the amount of oil that the DPRK can import as compared to 2016, and impose ruthless restrictions on the export of food and agricultural products, machinery, electrical equipment, earth and stone, including magnesite and magnesia, wood and vessels, besides affecting companies that do business with and in the DPRK, many of them Chinese. Sanctions imposed earlier in 2017 already banned the DPRK from exporting coal, iron and iron ore as well as textiles. According to Reuters, coal and other minerals were the DPRK's biggest export in 2016 and textiles its second biggest, with 80 per cent of textile exports going to China. New regulations introduced targeted sanctions against 15 DPRK officials and call for the repatriation of the DPRK's citizens working in other countries within the next 24 months. This will cut off a vital source of income for many families. The sanctions passed in November 2016 also include restrictions on the export of art from the DPRK, in particular the export of statues, for which the Koreans are world-renowned.

All of this is justified by the anti-communist assertion that the regime in the DPRK uses the income it manages to bring into the country through trade and remittances to proliferate nuclear weapons, not to feed its people.

The UN Commission on Human Rights' Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights at its 52nd session passed Resolution 1997/35 on August 28, 1997, entitled *Adverse Consequences of Economic Sanctions on the Enjoyment of Human Rights*. The Sub-Commission expressed its concerns about economic sanctions by framing them in the light of the need to respect the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenants on Human Rights and the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the two Additional Protocols thereto. The Sub-Commission

stressed four particular points concerning such measures:

(i) They should always be limited in time, (fourth preambular paragraph);

(ii) They most seriously affect the innocent population, especially the most vulnerable (fifth preambular paragraph);

(iii) They aggravate imbalances in income distribution (sixth preambular paragraph); and

(iv) They generate illegal and unethical business practices (seventh preambular paragraph).

An impartial reading of the Six-Prong Test to evaluate sanctions contained in The Bossuyt Report produced by the UN Economic and Social Council in response to the Sub-Commission's resolution titled: *The Adverse Consequences of Economic Sanctions* (see item below), would lead to the conclusion that the sanctions against the DPRK are not only illegal, but indeed an act of war. They are not imposed for legitimate reasons since the danger to world peace is not posed by the DPRK's nuclear tests, which are self-defense measures, but by the U.S. striving to dominate the Korean Peninsula and U.S. threats of war and refusal to permit the DPRK to develop its own way of life in peace. In other words, they are motivated by a self-serving political agenda and this is a violation of international law. They also violate humanitarian law. Depriving the DPRK of 90 per cent of its oil necessarily affects every aspect of life, of food production, industrialization and the health and safety of the population.

Notes

1. To see the content of the existing UN Security Council sanctions targeting the DPRK which were first established in 2006 and expanded since, [click here](#).

2. Statement of DPRK Foreign Ministry Spokesman, Korean Central News Agency, December 24, 2017.

3. "Report and Final Judgment on U.S. Crimes in Korea 1945-2001," Korea International War Crimes Tribunal, June 23, 2001. (*TML Weekly*, [cpcml.ca](#))

TAMIMI FAMILY REMAINS DEFIANT

Israeli Court Indefinitely Extends Detention of Ahed Tamimi and Her Mother

Ma'an, January 18, 2018

An Israeli military court on Wednesday ordered 16-year-old Palestinian activist Ahed al-Tamimi to remain in custody indefinitely, until she faces trial for a number of charges relating to a video of her, standing in her front yard, slapping and kicking an Israeli soldier.

The teenager was arrested on December 19, days after the video of her confrontation with the soldiers went viral on social media. The armed soldiers were raiding her hometown of Nabi Saleh in the central occupied West Bank, and had shot her 14-year-old cousin in the face moments before the video was filmed.

Now, nearly a month later, al-Tamimi has had her detention extended several times until on January 17, Israel's Ofer military court refused her lawyers' request for bail. During the hearing, the judge reportedly said that they could not grant the teenager bail because she was "too dangerous."

The court also ruled to indefinitely extend the detention of Ahed's mother, Nariman, who was detained a day after her daughter. Nariman is being charged with "incitement" for livestreaming the video.

Ahed is being charged on 12 counts, including assaulting an Israeli soldier, interfering with a soldier's duties, and two past instances of stone throwing — which can carry up to 10 years in Israeli prison.

Earlier this month, Ahed's distant cousin Musaab al-Tamimi, from Nabi Saleh's sister village of Deir Nitham, was shot and killed by Israeli forces. Since Ahed and Nariman's arrest, Ahed's cousin Nour was arrested — she was recently released — her aunt was detained, and recently one of her cousins was detained in an overnight raid.

The Tamimi family of Nabi Saleh is well known internationally for their

activism against the Israeli occupation, which maintains a heavy, near-constant presence in their village. Ahed Tamimi is famous across Palestine and the Arab world for videos of her, since her childhood, defiantly resisting Israeli soldiers who clash with Palestinians in her village nearly every week.

Two years ago, her family made headlines when an Israeli soldier violently attempted to arrest her younger brother, who had one arm in a cast at the time. Ahed and her mother managed to pull the soldier off her brother and free him.

Since her arrest, Ahed has become the subject of dozens of solidarity campaigns across the world demanding her release from Israeli prison, and an end to Israeli detention of Palestinian children.

According to Palestinian prisoners rights group Addameer, 6,171 Palestinians were being held in Israeli prison as of December, 350 are children.

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signs and distributed leaflets about the case of Ahed, the 16-year-old Palestinian teen and youth activist from Nabi Saleh who has been imprisoned by the Israeli occupation since December, and the other 6,200 Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails. They also distributed information about the global campaign to boycott HP and demand the corporation end its complicity with Israeli colonialism and occupation, including its contracts with the Israel Prison Service.

The protest came the same day as Ahed's hearing in military court and followed several large actions in New York City in support of Ahed, her jailed mother Nariman, and their fellow Palestinian prisoners. Ahed's next hearing will take place on January 31, also her 17th birthday, and there is a global call to action for protests. A New York action by many groups is planned for January 30.

Samidoun organizers and other NYC

activists are participating in a number of actions in the coming days. On January 18, they joined the #DaysofRage protest against U.S. war and imperialism organized by the International League of People's Struggle.

On January 20, they will join in two actions, including a contingent at the Women's March for Ahed Tamimi and fellow Palestinian women prisoners.



Israeli Forces Detain 8 Palestinian Minors, Including 11-Year-Old

Israeli forces detained 21 Palestinians during pre dawn raids on January 16 across occupied East Jerusalem and the West Bank, according to Palestinian and Israeli sources. The Palestinian Prisoner's Society (PPS) said in a statement that 17 Palestinians were detained from the West Bank and East Jerusalem, while an Israeli army spokesperson said that 11 Palestinians were detained in the West Bank alone.

PPS reported that Israeli police detained

10 Palestinians after raiding and ransacking their homes in East Jerusalem. Among the detainees were eight minors, including an 11-year-old, three 14-year-olds, a 15-year-old, a 16-year-old and a 17-year-old.

Meanwhile, PPS said Israeli forces conducted raids across the central West Bank Ramallah district, detaining four Palestinians.

In the northern West Bank, Israeli forces detained two Palestinians, including a

former prisoner, during raids in the Nablus district, while one Palestinian was detained from the Jenin district.

Israeli raids into Palestinian towns and villages are near daily occurrence in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

According to UN documentation, between December 19th and January 1st, Israeli forces carried out 170 search and arrest operations in the West Bank.

(Ma'an News)

Bring the Palestinian Resistance to Speak to Your Group

International Solidarity Movement

In 2002, the International Solidarity Movement (ISM) grabbed world attention by bringing volunteers from around the world to defend Palestine through nonviolent resistance. They stayed with resistance fighters in the Nativity Church in Bethlehem. They brought medical supplies to the besieged Palestinians in the ancient Nablus Casbah. They documented and filmed the destruction and mass killing of Palestinians in the Jenin refugee camp. In 2002 and 2003, thousands participated at their own expense.

One was Rachel Corrie, who was killed trying to prevent demolition of a home in Gaza. Another was Tom Hurdall, killed by a shot to the head. ISM has operated continuously since that time, serving at the request of the Palestinian community through participation in Palestinian non-violent resistance. In 2009, 2012 and 2014, ISM volunteers were with the Palestinian people in Gaza, reporting the Israeli invasion and helping in the hospitals, clinics and schools that were attacked even as they served the refugees.

But ISM is today unable to fill the demand from the Palestinian popular movement. We need more volunteers, so we decided to bring the ISM to North America to talk to interested groups. In late February, one of our Palestinian coordinators and an experienced international volunteer will team up to speak on the west coast. In March, they will tour the east coast, then the rest of the U.S. and Canada, ending in late April.

The presentation will include a screen-

ing of an abridged version of *Radiance of Resistance*, a film produced by three ISM volunteers in Nabi Salih and featuring A'had Tamimi and her cousin, Janna Ayyad.

The ISM volunteer for the west coast portion of the tour will be Katie Miranda, who served as an ISM activist, coordinator and trainer in the West Bank. Katie Miranda is a jewelry and apparel designer, calligrapher, and contributing cartoonist to the Middle East Eye. She is the founder of Palbox, a quarterly subscription box featuring products from Palestine and Arabic calligraphy.

On the east coast, Joe Catron will serve on the tour. As an ISM volunteer, Joe reported from Gaza during several major Israeli attacks, especially from al-Shifa Hospital, as the Israelis threatened to bombard it. He is now an independent reporter on Palestine and the Middle East, and an organizer of many public actions in New York, as well as a widely followed commentator on social media. We will announce the Palestinian participant/s after they successfully get their US and Canadian visas.

In order to make the speaking tour affordable to student groups, we are asking only for \$250 per event plus local meals, lodging and transportation. Homestays with local families in the community are an inexpensive and welcome way to meet the lodging and meal requirements. The actual



cost to ISM is around \$1000 per event, including international and domestic airfares as well as speaker compensation for otherwise lost income. A small group of donors has already pledge to match your donations in order to raise the estimated \$25,000 to cover the rest of the costs. Please be as generous as you can.

To reserve a date for your event: Call 510-236-4250. Send your donation by check or on line to the Northern California chapter of ISM by following the instructions here: <http://www.ism-norcal.org/donate>.

U.S. Attorney Drops Charges Against 129 Trump Inauguration Protesters, 59 Still Face Decades In Prison

Popular Resistance

A legal filing submitted today January 19 by the U.S. Attorney's Office (USAO) indicates that the federal government has drastically reduced the scope of the prosecution of people mass arrested during Donald Trump's presidential inauguration on January 20, 2017 (J20). The government will no longer bring charges against 129 of the 200 people previously indicted based on their presence at a march that was violently herded into a police trap. Fifty-nine people still have trial dates scattered throughout this year and face charges carrying up to 60 years in prison. [The first trial saw acquittals, as jurors did not accept the government's claim that simply being present was a crime and said the government admission that they would present no evidence that any of those charged had committed any acts of violence or destruction showed protesters were not guilty. — BF Ed. Note]

The motion filed by Assistant US Attorney Jennifer Kerkhoff claims that the smaller remaining group of defendants still face charges due to their alleged involvement in "identifiable acts of destruction, violence, or other assaultive conduct."

The superseding indictment behind the case contains little to no particularized evidence against named defendants, and instead asserts collective guilt based on black clothing, anti-capitalist chants, and the fact that the protest march was "moving as a group."

This claim of collective guilt was contested by defendant Elizabeth Lagesse, who said she was "a little bit confused that I'm still on the list. I don't fit any of the criteria that they listed and I have absolutely no idea what their justification is."

Last month, defense counsel submitted a motion alleging that a police detective (Detective Gregory Pembererton) lied to a grand jury in order to secure an indictment against everyone mass arrested at the anti-Trump protest. Detective Gregory Pembererton has a history of making social media posts attacking protesters

and the media. Before the 2016 election, he told a right-wing media outlet he hoped Donald Trump would "put a stop to" protesters who criticize police.

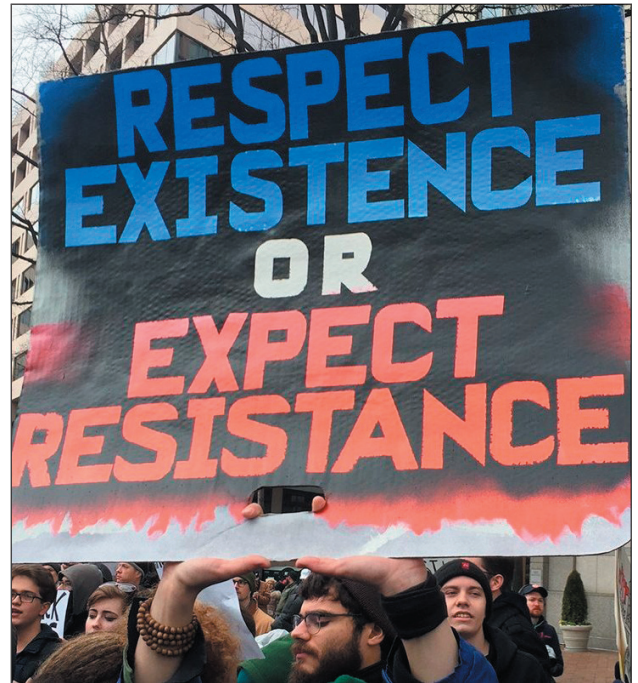
"Those 129 cases should have been dismissed a year ago, but we are very excited that the Government recognized that it was logically impossible for 217 defendants to have done the exact same conduct," defense attorney Mark Goldstone said.

The first J20 trial saw prosecutors introduce video from the alt-right fake news outlet Project Veritas, who has a proven track record of falsifying evidence, in an attempt to portray an organizing meeting for anti-Trump protests as a criminal conspiracy.

Local DC organizer Dylan Petrophilos, who was not physically present during the protest events mentioned in the indictment, is among those still facing felony charges. Based on court proceedings thus far, the U.S. Attorney's decision to target Petrophilos seems to be based on a Project Veritas video and his appearance on a podcast to promote inauguration protests.

The DC Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) is facing a recently expanded ACLU lawsuit filed on behalf of several people physically and sexually abused by police on inauguration day. MPD Commander Keith Deville, who ordered the mass arrest, admitted under oath last month that he believed "convictions in the case would limit our civil liability in the matter."

Betty Rothstein of Defend J20 Resistance, a group organizing support for the defendants, said that supporters will



continue to closely monitor the case:

"The fight isn't over for the remaining 59 defendants, so now more than ever it's important to support them, as the government will be going even harder after this smaller group. But the fact that 129 defendants had their cases dropped also goes to show just how these charges are a politically motivated scare tactic. We're committed to fighting each and every last charge until every single defendant is free."

On Friday, January 19, a status hearing will be held to determine the trial date for the second group of defendants. The third and fourth trials are scheduled for March 5 and March 29. The remaining cases will be held in the courtroom of District of Columbia Superior Court Chief Judge Robert Morin, who had jurisdiction over previous legal battles in which the Trump's Department of Justice fought to gain access to Facebook and Dreamhost data containing personal information of protesters, journalists, and others arrested at inauguration protests. *(Reprinted from Unicornriot.ninja)*

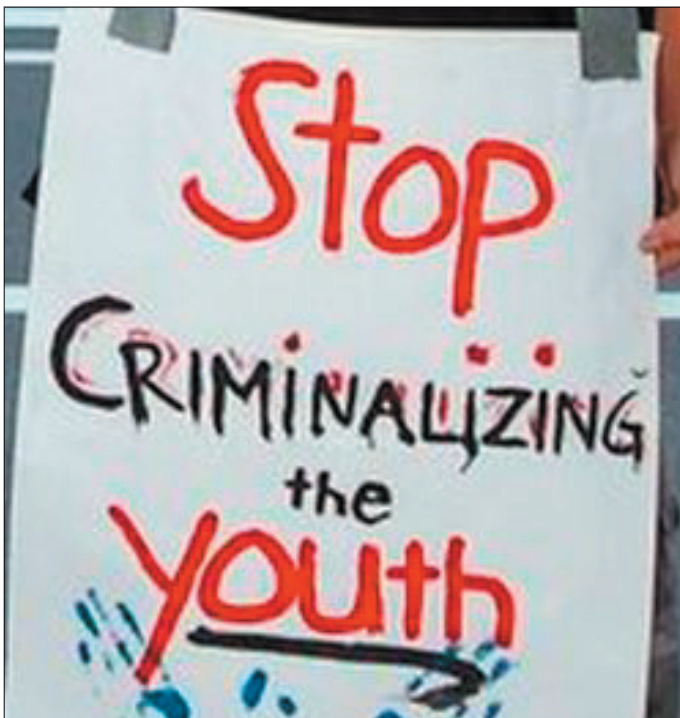
STUDENT AND PARENT DEMAND TO NFTA

Stop Criminalizing Our Students! One Pass, Full Service

Parents, students and community organizers came together recently to demand that the NFTA eliminate its complicated bus pass system for students and provide a single pass with full service. Organized by the Buffalo Parent Teacher Organization, a sizeable crowd participated in a meeting at the Merriweather library. Speaker after speaker gave examples of the problems with the current complicated system of numerous passes, all with limitations. The common demand of all was for one pass with full service. The Buffalo Public Schools pay full fare for the passes, \$75 per student, more than \$8 million, so full service should be provided.

Students brought up numerous problems. They spoke to the fact that they can be on time at the bus stop, but because the bus is late, their pass becomes invalid. They also addressed the irrational nature of the routes chosen, where they are forced to wait for a bus that runs less frequently, rather than take the one that is more frequent, because that is what the pass dictates. They spoke to being forced to walk home at night in areas they are unfamiliar with because their pass was not valid either at that time or location. Parents emphasized safety issues as well and the lack of sufficient service, especially on the east side.

All made clear that students are capable of getting back and forth to school and choosing the times and routes they need, but the NFTA will not permit it. Students and parents alike repeatedly asked why there needs to be so many different passes for students when what is needed is one single pass with full service. The NFTA and BPS representative gave no answer. The contract for the NFTA service is currently being negotiated so now is the time to make these changes. But there was no



indication, despite the clear and coherent demands, that this will occur.

Currently the Buffalo Public Schools pay full fare, \$75, per student. But the passes are only good at certain times on specific routes. A whole variety of passes are needed for different circumstances, such as after school activities, sports, evenings, etc. It is a complicated system that requires the student to know and ask in advance for the pass required. It was also brought out that in the past there was a full service pass that enabled students to fully participate in school activities as well as go to museums, the library, attend trainings, etc. One reason it does not exist now is consistent with the general regimentation of students. Schools are more like prisons and students are to be controlled and limited.

During the meeting the NFTA representatives tried to make the students and parents the problem. It was a lack of communication they said, not the lack of a single full service pass. They said problems needed to be reported to them when they occurred, again putting the burden on students as if the NFTA did not know the many problems identified.

Or they blamed the drivers, who are forced to implement NFTA policy regarding the passes, which includes not allowing students to board.

Parents, students and drivers are not the problem — the NFTA and its policies are. The refusal to provide one pass with full service is yet one more means for the NFTA to control students and keep them from pursuing their interests, including socializing with friends and participating in organizing efforts of various kinds.

This was further brought out in comments about the criminalization of students using the bus and train. The station at Utica and Main was given as an example, where it is common for 4-5 police cars to be present when school lets out in

the afternoon, before any incident of any kind has occurred. There are also rules saying students cannot gather in groups of more than three, cannot wait at the station for friends, etc. The show of force and arbitrary enforcement of the rules creates a situation where students are treated like criminals simply for using the bus. This was denounced to broad applause.

Students should not be criminalized simply for riding the bus. NFTA claimed they do not think students are criminals, but gave no response in terms of changing the actions which show they are criminalizing the students and using the issue of passes and station rules as a means of control. This includes use of collective punishment, as expressed in the various rules and NFTA actions in the name of "stopping fights."

Students are to do as they are told and accept whatever limitations and punishments that are imposed. Those participating in the meeting rejected this and joined in demanding the NFTA take responsibility for its unjust actions against students. *One pass, full service now! No to criminalization of our youth!*