

Women Against Military Madness

Newsletter

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Korea: Women Walk for Peace Across the De-Militarized Zone (DMZ)

by Christine Ahn

One year ago, I wrote to the renowned American feminist author Gloria Steinem asking if she would consider walking with other women across the De-Militarized Zone (DMZ) between North and South Korea to help bring peace to Korea. She promptly replied, "Yes. My high school classmates went to war there."

On May 24, 2015, 30 international women peace-

makers from around the world will walk with Korean women, North and South, to call for an end to the Korean War and for a new beginning for a reunified Korea. Along with Gloria Steinem, our delegation includes Nobel peace laureates Mairead Maguire from Ireland and Leymah Gbowee from Liberia, Patricia Guerrero from Colombia, former U.S. Army Colonel Ann Wright, Code Pink co-founder

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Christine Ahn and her daughter, Jeju, at the children's center in Pyongyang.

WAMM Newsletter

The statements and opinions reflected in this newsletter are the views of the author and not necessarily official positions of WAMM. We encourage a diversity of opinion to represent the range of perspectives that coexist under the banner of WAMM's mission statement.

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Women Against Military Madness is a nonviolent, feminist organization that works in solidarity with others to create a system of social equality, self-determination and justice through education, action and the empowerment of women. WAMM's purpose is to dismantle systems of militarism, economic exploitation and global oppression.


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PM **The New Jim Crow** *Mass Incarceration in the Age of Color Blindness*

reviewed by Polly Mann

(New Press, 2010 by Michelle Alexander)

Part Two of Polly Mann's Three-Part Reflection and Summary (Part One appeared in the Women Against Military Madness Newsletter, Fall 11, 2014)

In the 1920s, when I was a child in Hot Springs, Arkansas, there were certain unspoken and unwritten racial rules. A white person called any black person by his/her first name and any black person addressed the white person as Mr., Mrs., or Miss. All people of color entered the homes of white people by the back door. Schools were segregated and one had only to view the exterior of schoolhouses to recognize the inferiority of the black school system. Today all this has changed. I think racism still exists, but it is more covert. Guests at the leading hotel are from all ethnic groups, and on the surface racism is dead. But underneath, whether in Minnesota or Arkansas, racism still lurks. Its ugliest manifestation is the massive, and most often unjust, incarceration of young black men for drug convictions. This is the theme of Michelle Alexander's barn-burner of a book, *The New Jim Crow*, replete with statistics to bear out her thesis.

Her book describes how virtually all constitutionally protected civil liberties have been undermined by the drug war. Mandatory drug testing has been approved along with random searches and sweeps of public schools and students; search warrants have been issued based on anonymous tips, and helicopter surveillance has been authorized without an arrest warrant. State and local law enforcement agencies have been granted the right to keep for their own use cash and assets seized in drug raids. The Anti-Abuse Act of 1986 provided mandatory minimum sentences for the distribution of cocaine, including far more serious punishment for the distribution of crack, associated with blacks, than powder cocaine, which was preferred by whites.

The U.S. Supreme Court struck down the basic requirement that motorists stopped by police have to give their consent to a search, thus negating the Fourth Amendment to the Constitution. The Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) trains police to conduct unreasonable and discriminatory stops and seizures throughout the United States. The “drug-courier profiles” utilized by the DEA and other law enforcement agencies for drug sweeps on highways, airports, and train stations are notoriously unreliable.

Thousands of people are swept into the criminal justice system every year pursuant to the drug war without much regard for their guilt or innocence. Police are allowed by the courts to conduct “fishing expeditions” for drugs based on nothing more than a hunch. Once in the system, people are often denied attorneys or meaningful representation and pressured into plea bargains by threats of unbelievably harsh sentences—higher than those many countries impose on convicted murderers. Legal representation provided criminal defendants is often illusory. Approximately 80 percent of criminal defendants are indigent and unable to hire a lawyer, and the nation's public defender system is woefully inadequate, with attorneys unable to handle their enormous caseloads.

This is the way the roundup works in virtually every major city in the country. The *San Jose Mercury News* reviewed 700,000 criminal cases and found that “at virtually every stage of pre-trial negotiation, whites are more successful than nonwhites.” The State of Georgia's “two strikes and you're out” legislation imposes life imprisonment for a second drug offense. As a result 98.4 percent of those serving life sentences were black.

But when a defendant pleads guilty to a minor drug offense, he probably will not be told that that “guilty” plea will most likely prevent him from receiving any kind of government benefits. The sentencing might be probation, community service, and court costs. Also unmentioned might be his lifetime denial of health and welfare benefits, food stamps, public housing, and federal educational assistance. His driver's license may be suspended and he may no longer qualify for state employment and professional licenses. He will not be permitted to enlist in the military, possess a firearm, or obtain a federal security license.

There have been changes in our laws, but not as a result of increases in crime. Instead they have created dramatic increases in the mandatory length of prison sentences that have resulted in the growth of our prison system.

Polly Mann is a co-founder of Women Against Military Madness and a regular contributor and columnist for the WAMM newsletter.

Good News: Victories, Pushbacks, Daring Deeds, and Other Signs of Hope

Uruguay Welcomes Guantánamo Prisoners

Six prisoners in Guantanamo who had never been charged and had been cleared for release as long ago as 2009 were accepted humanely by the country of Uruguay. *The Guardian* reported that when they arrived the former prisoners received hugs from Uruguayan officials, friendly waves, and thumbs up from patients at the hospital that was their first stop for health care, and that their American lawyers were cheered on the streets of Montevideo.

Recognition of Palestine

On January 13, international-law researcher Roslyn Fuller writing for “Op-Edge” on *RT*, wrote about UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon’s acceptance of “the Palestinian Authority’s ratification of over a dozen major international treaties and conventions, including all of the cornerstones of modern international law, such as the Geneva Conventions, the Convention against Torture, and the Vienna Conventions on Diplomatic Relations and on the Law of Treaties,” stating that “it is a highly significant move that would seem to be the final act in a sweeping reform to Palestine’s status under international law . . . By becoming a party to these treaties, Palestine acquires rights and duties that it did not previously possess, fundamentally shifting the balance of power, not just between itself and Israel, but between itself and the rest of the world.” See Roslyn Fuller’s analysis at: “Palestine ICC membership—end of limbo status?” *Op-Edge, RT*, January 13, 2015

No Business as Usual: Black Lives Matter

Standing in unity with Ferguson, Missouri, in their call to action against non-indictments of police killings of young black males, a multiracial coalition led by young black organizers extended 30 blocks through Manhattan on December 13, calling for “deep changes that will allow us and our communities to live free from fear and suffering at the hands of the police.” Solidarity marches took place all over of the world. Marchers claimed roadways in U.S. cities. In Minneapolis, Minnesota, thousands marched down Highway 35 and in Oakland, California, protesters shut down a police headquarters for hours. In another action defenders of black lives rallied en masse at the Mall of America in the Minneapolis suburb of Bloomington.

It’s a Generous Life

“The radical lifestyle of those who live in intentional communities, make very little money, consume as little as possible, pool their resources, and protest environmental disaster is based on living for the long-term. Some of these people live in the Phillips Neighborhood [of Minneapolis] . . . The Catholic Worker House, known as Rye House, puts on free, delicious community dinners every week; provides homework help for kids who live around them; grows organic vegetables and raises chickens (so as not to perpetuate our disastrous industrial food system); holds roundtable discussions; offers resources for homeless people; and practices activism on issues important to them.”—Report from *Southside Pride*, southsidepride.com

Actual Peace Builder, Human Rights Activists Awarded

Two grassroots peace-builders and human rights activists: Ibrahim Ag Idbaltanat from Mali and Francisco Javier Estevez Valencia from Chile were named winners of the 2014 UNESCO-Madanjeet Singh Prize for the Promotion of Tolerance and Non-Violence. More info: *Rise Up Times*, riseuptimes.org, a blog that includes good news.

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Photo: Sage Passi

The Martin Luther King Day march in St. Paul on January 19, 2015.



Wall art by Domke, Germany

WORD UP!

Dr. King's legacy has been clouded by efforts to soften, sanitize, and commercialize it. From here on, MLK weekend will be known as a time of national resistance to injustice.

—*Black Lives Matter*
Minneapolis

• **Good News,**
• *continued from page 3*

• **France Held Accountable for Moral Damage**

• Causing near-apoplectic fits in the equal-justice-is-not-for-all crowd, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) made the bold judgment that certain Somali pirates were entitled to the right to appear posthaste before a judge after capture. The pirates would still be tried and convicted, and the case will not address the general root causes that created Somali piracy in the first place such as destruction of Somalia's economy and the inability to fish for livelihoods and food while oil tankers command the country's coastline. However, at least a nation was (this time anyway) held accountable, in some way, for withholding legal rights of others when it roams far from its own borders. The French government was ordered to pay damages in a modest range of five figures for "moral damage," as well as legal costs, to the pirates for holding them in custody for an additional 48 hours, according to *France 24*.

• **Finally U.S. (Sort of) Recognizes Cuba**

• Though it took the Pope and Canada to seal the deal and it was accompanied by a jab from Secretary of State John Kerry—especially hard to swallow these days—about another country needing to improve its human rights and democracy, the U.S. opened diplomatic relations with Cuba. For its part, our island neighbor released U.S. spy guy, Alan Gross, it had held for five years, and three of the Cuban Five held for 16 years in U.S. prisons were released (two of the five had been released in 2012).



Photo: Sage Passi

An estimated 2,000 or more people participated in the Black Lives Matter march, St. Paul, Minnesota, on Martin Luther King Day 2015.

Revictimized Palestinian-American Rasmia Odeh Released (for Now)

After being kept for five weeks in a Port Huron, Michigan, jail, 67-year old Rasmia Odeh, assistant director of the Arab American Action Network who works with the Arab Women's Committee in Chicago, was released on bond to come home to Chicago pending sentencing (corrected date) which will take place **March 12, 2015**. More info, and be sure to check date at: uspcn.org and stopfbi.net

DOJ Drops Threats Against Journalist (No, I Won't Back Down) James Risen

The U.S. Department of Justice dropped its threat to imprison journalist James Risen unless he revealed his source in reporting the story of Operation Merlin, the CIA's plan to entrap Iran by providing the nation with flawed nuclear weapon blueprints. (However, it must be mentioned in this context that whistleblower Jeffrey Sterling, a former CIA officer, is now in federal court on trial for giving classified information to Risen about the Iraq déjà vu-type CIA operation that provided Iran with flawed nuclear weapon blueprints.) See antiwar.com for results and RootsAction.org for public follow-up actions.

ACLU Files Suit on Behalf of Asylum-seeking Mothers, Children

On December 16, 2014, the American Civil Liberties Union filed a nationwide class-action lawsuit challenging the Obama administration's policy of locking up asylum-seeking mothers and children to intimidate others from coming to the United States.

The case was brought on behalf of mothers and children who have fled extreme violence, death threats, rape, and persecution in Central America and have come to the United States for safety. Each has been found by an immigration officer or judge to have a "credible fear" of persecution, meaning there is a "significant possibility" they will be granted asylum.

Anti Gun, Pro-Woman New Surgeon General

Dr. Vivek Murthy was confirmed as surgeon general at the end of last year. A physician at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, he has a history of advocating for healthcare and women's health, and was opposed by the gun lobby. He was born in India, has lived in the U.S. since a very young child, and is the first surgeon general of Indian descent.

Korea,

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Medea Benjamin, and so many more courageous women peacemakers. We will listen to Korean women about how war and militarism impacts their families, lives, and dreams and hold international peace symposiums in Pyongyang and Seoul where we can share our experiences and ideas of mobilizing women to bring an end to the danger of violent conflict. Our hope, as a symbolic act of peace, is to cross the 2-mile-wide DMZ that separates millions of Korean families and bring an end to the state of war in Korea.

The year 2015 marks the 70th anniversary of Korea's division into two separate states by Cold War powers, which precipitated the 1950-53 Korean War. More bombs were dropped by the U.S. on Korea in these three years than on all of Asia and the Pacific islands during World War II; the deployment of an atomic bomb was even threatened. One year into the Korean War, U.S. Major General Emmett O'Donnell Jr. testified before the Senate, "I would say that the entire, almost the entire Korean Peninsula is just a terrible mess. Everything is destroyed. There is nothing standing worthy of the name . . . There [are] no more targets in Korea."

After nearly 4 million people, mostly Korean civilians, were killed, fighting was halted when North Korea, China, and the United States representing the United Nations Command signed a cease-fire agreement. All three powers promised to sign a peace treaty within three months, as well as withdraw all foreign troops and introduce no new weapons. While China removed its troops from North Korea within the first few years, Washington still has 28,500 U.S. troops on approximately 100 bases and installations across South Korea. Over 60 years later, the signatories to the armistice have yet to deliver on the promise to sign a peace treaty.

Many ask: If there has been no peace treaty over the span of an entire lifetime, why is it so urgent to sign one now? Here's why: In 2013, after North Korea tested its third nuclear weapon, Washington deployed nuclear bombers across Korean skies. The United States was "within an inch of war" with North Korea, according to former U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta. To help defuse tensions on the Korean Peninsula, Pyongyang announced in early January that it would forego testing nuclear weapons if Washington agreed to halt joint military exercises with Seoul. Most Americans don't realize that the U.S. and South Korea regularly conduct war games simulating the invasion and overthrow of North Korea. Imagine if Russia regularly

staged military exercises with Mexico in the Gulf of Mexico simulating an invasion of the White House. Americans would not accept it, and North Koreans shouldn't have to either. There is wide consensus that replacing the armistice with a peace treaty would go a long way to de-escalate tensions that have long plagued Korea and the region.

In a 2011 paper, the U.S. Army War College warns that the only way to avert a catastrophic confrontation is to "reach agreement on ending the armistice from the Korean War" and "giv[e] a formal security guarantee to North Korea tied to nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction." Across party lines, U.S. ambassadors to Korea since the 1980s have argued for engagement and a formalized peace process. James Laney, U.S. ambassador to South Korea under Bill Clinton, reflected, "[I]n order to remove all unnecessary obstacles to progress, [we need] a peace treaty to replace the truce that has been in place since 1953. One of the things that have bedeviled all talks until now is the unresolved status of the Korean War. . . . Absent such a peace treaty, every dispute presents afresh the question of the other side's legitimacy."

Not only must we formally resolve the Korean situation to prevent war from breaking out, but millions of Korean families remain divided by the DMZ. Every year, thousands of Korean elders die waiting on a government list to see their children or siblings living on the other side of the DMZ. In her Dresden speech last spring, South Korean President Park Geun-hye said, "It has been 70 long years. Last year alone, some 3,800 people who have yearned a lifetime just to be able to hold their sons' and daughters' hands—just to know whether they're alive—passed away with their

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WORD UP!

A Military-Industrial-Movie Complex

As hacked emails from the head of Sony Entertainment, Michael Lynton, disclose, Sony's tête-à-tête with the Obama administration over *The Interview* must be dated back to the production stage . . . Indeed, in addition to State Department officials, Bruce Bennett, a North Korea watcher and regime-change advocate at the Rand Corporation, the U.S. military-funded think tank, and a consultant to the government on North Korea, also served as a consultant with Sony on this film. His primary, albeit hardly novel, thesis on North Korea is that the assassination of the North Korean leader is the surest way of guaranteeing regime collapse in North Korea. In a June 25, 2014 email to Sony Entertainment CEO, Lynton, who also sits on the Rand Board of Trustees—an indication of Sony's cozy relationship with the military industrial complex—Bennett implied that a North Korean regime-change cultural narrative, by dint of its politicized reception within the Korean peninsula, might oil the machinery of actual regime collapse.

—Christine Hong, "Stranger than Fiction: The Interview and U.S. Regime-Change Policy Toward North Korea," *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, Vol. 12, Issue 52, No. 4, japanfocus.org, December 29, 2014

At the Pyongyang Children's Center.

WORD UP!

Show Me the Hack Attack

A new wave of documents from Edward Snowden's cache of National Security Agency data published by Der Spiegel demonstrates how the agency has used its network exploitation capabilities both to defend military networks from attack and to co-opt other organizations' hacks for intelligence collection and other purposes. In one case, the NSA secretly tapped into South Korean network espionage on North Korean networks to gather intelligence.

—“NSA secretly hijacked existing malware to spy on N. Korea, others,” *Ars Technica*, arstechnica.com/information-technology, January 18, 2015

RESOURCE:

The Korean War: A History

by Bruce Cumings (Modern Library Chronicles 2011)
Roots, repercussions of the forgotten war that helped form and continues to form the relationship of the U.S. to the world.

● **Korea,**
● *continued from page 5*

● unfulfilled dreams.”

● Another cost of the unended war on human
● lives is most visible in North Korea where
● crippling embargoes against the government
● make it difficult for ordinary people to
● access the basics needed for survival. While
● most Americans make a mockery of the
● North Korean leader and deride the regime
● for starving the people, what most don't
● understand is how the sanctions policy of
● their very own U.S. government—intended
● to deprive the Kim regime—has served as a
● chokehold on the North Korean economy
● and ordinary people. The ability of the people
● to access the basics—from food to seeds to
● medicine to technology—is greatly strained
● by U.S.-led international sanctions against
● the DPRK. On his last trip to North Korea,
● former U.S. President Jimmy Carter said,
● “In almost any case when there are sanctions
● against an entire people, the people suffer the
● most and the leaders suffer least.” In the case
● of North Korea, Carter said, “the last 50 years
● of deprivation of the North Korean people of
● adequate access to trade and commerce have
● been very damaging to their economy.”

● *At the children's center in Pyongyang.*



The unresolved Korean conflict gives governments in the region justification to further militarize and prepare for war, using funds that could be used instead for schools, hospitals and the welfare of the people and the environment. Pyongyang even acknowledged last year how the unended war has forced it “to divert large human and material resources to bolstering up the armed forces though they should have been directed to the economic development and improvement of people's living standards.” North Korea plays a perfect villain for the Obama administration to justify its pivot to Asia, which will shift 60 percent of the U.S. Navy and Air Force to the Asia Pacific by 2020. At a March 25 Senate Defense Committee hearing on the 2015 budget, the commander of the U.S. Forces in Korea (USFK), General Curtis Scaparrotti, argued that while the 28,500 U.S. troops based in South Korea were “fully resourced,” he was concerned about the readiness of “follow-on” forces needed if fighting erupted, suggesting the need for more resources to Korea. In fact, half of the world's top 10 military spenders are regional powers—the United States, China, Russia, Japan, and South Korea—amounting to \$1 trillion in “defense.” The U.S. takes the cake with \$640 billion.

These are the reasons why women are walking for peace in Korea, to help reunite families, improve human rights in North Korea, and end the state of war for 70 million Koreans living on the peninsula.

The North Korean government has approved this peace walk, as has the UN Command, pending confirmation from South Korea, which we are still awaiting. Given that President Park is the first female president and that she has already granted two other delegations permission to cross the DMZ—New Zealanders on motorbikes and Korean-Russians retracing their migration—we believe we have a good chance of being granted authority in the name of peace.

We have decided, however, that in case we are denied by President Park, we would still do the peace walk and just go back from Pyongyang through China and fly to Seoul. Our peace walk has already generated so much enthusiasm and enlivened hope to so many Koreans everywhere that we must go forward and continue to bring light and hope to Korea.

As Gloria Steinem put it, “If this division can be healed even briefly by women, it will be inspiring in the way that women brought peace out of war in Ireland or Liberia.” Our women's

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Scotland: Plane Spotting

More repercussions in other parts of the world with revelations about U.S. torture policies: Brazil released its National Truth Commission Report on December 10, 2014, in which it implicated torture training programs in previous decades of Brazilian military at the School of Americas in Ft. Benning, Georgia. Then, on December 11, 2014, Andrew Lermouth of the Scottish newspaper *The National* reported investigations to begin on collusion during the Bush years:

Scotland's most senior law officer, Lord Advocate Frank Mulholland, has ordered police to investigate whether the shocking U.S. Senate report on the CIA's programme of kidnapping and torture could lead to criminal charges in Scotland . . . It has long been alleged that the UK Government allowed US planes carrying these suspected terrorists to land in Scottish airports to refuel or stop overnight before continuing on to sites where the men would be



tortured . . . Police Scotland [sic] started an investigation into the possibility that CIA's euphemistically titled 'Extraordinary Rendition' programme stopped in Scotland's airports last year, when a report by academics at the University of Kent and Kingston found that Aberdeen, Wick and Ayr airports could have been used by flights transporting detainees.

Korea,

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peace walk across the DMZ can play a very important role in de-escalating tensions and renewing the Korean people's belief that peace and the peaceful reunification of Korea are indeed possible, and within their lifetimes.

We are calling for women to organize solidarity vigils with us on May 24, 2015, International Disarmament Day, the day we plan to cross the DMZ. We also need financial support

to make this peace walk possible, and that includes small and large donations. Please help us amplify women's voices calling for peace and the reunification of Korea by making a donation now to Women De-Militarize the Zone, which is sponsoring this peace walk. www.womencrossdmz.org.

Christine Ahn is the founder and int'l coordinator of Women DeMilitarize the Zone and co-founder of the Korea Policy Institute and National Campaign to End the Korean War. She's testified at the United Nations, U.S. Congress, and ROK National Humans Rights Commission and has led several peace and humanitarian aid delegations to North and South Korea. She is a columnist at Foreign Policy in Focus and has been widely published, including in The New York Times, International Herald Tribune, CNN, The Nation, and San Francisco Chronicle.

Seeking WAMM Board Members

WAMM is seeking members to join the Board of Directors for a two-year term starting March 7, 2015, through the Annual Meeting, 2017. The Board meets the third Tuesday evening of each month and is responsible for the well-being of WAMM. Board members also serve on standing committees to guide the direction of the organization. We laugh and eat together, too! If you are a playful woman who is serious about peacemaking, contact the WAMM office (612.827.5364) to express your interest and/or to learn more.

WORD UP!

Show Me the Proof

First of all, Sony and the FBI have announced that they've found no evidence so far to tie North Korea to the attack. New reports, however, indicate that intelligence officials who are not permitted to speak on the record have concluded that the North Koreans are behind the hack. But they have provided no evidence to support this and without knowing even what agency the officials belong to, it's difficult to know what to make of the claim. And we should point out that intelligence agencies and government officials have jumped to hasty conclusions or misled the public in the past because it was politically expedient.

— Kim Zetter, "The Evidence That North Korea Hacked Sony Is Flimsy," *Wired Magazine*, December 18, 2014, about the hacking of Sony Pictures Entertainment in retaliation for producing the film, *The Interview*, which portrayed the assassination of North Korean Premier Kim Jung-Un



Not merely the stuff of Hollywood fantasies, North Korea, inflated as an existential menace, has been indispensable, for example, to "the deployment of ballistic missile defenses closer to North Korea," not to mention sales of surveillance drone technology to regional allies . . .

—Christine Hong, "Stranger than Fiction: The Interview and U.S. Regime-Change Policy Toward North Korea," *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, Vol. 12, Issue 52, No. 4, japanfocus.org, December 29, 2014



RESOURCE

Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch

Seeks to ensure that in this era of globalization, all Americans can enjoy economic security, a clean environment, safe food, medicines and products, access to quality affordable services such as health care and the exercise of democratic decision-making in matters that affect them and their communities. www.citizen.org

WORD UP!

The Ideology of Globalization

The ideology of the multinational is globalization. There is one core reason for this: Globalisation is a process by which the state is weakened. Weakened, that is, at any attempt to control the economic destiny of its people via regulation at the borders or through internal political processes. A multinational has a single basic need which is access: to the economy, wealth, resources and labour of any country.

—“*Feudalism, capitalism and corporatism: How the corporation is changing the world;*” Jeffrey Harrod, philosophersforchange.org

Can Free Trade Agreements Be Stopped in Their Fast Tracks?

by Carol Masters

Under our Constitution, Congress writes and sets trade policy. Corporate lobbies, however, want the administration to assume such trade authority for the Transpacific Partnership (TPP) trade talks through a mechanism called “Fast Track.”

Fast Track is a procedure, rarely used, that allows executive branch negotiators to skirt Congress and the public, rewriting trade policies that affect our daily lives—from the stability of our jobs to the safety of our food. Congress couldn’t revise the agreements and could only vote “yes” or “no” to the United States joining the TPP.

Past deals such as NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) and CAFTA (Central American Trade Agreement) have empowered corporations to attack domestic health and environmental policies, enabled Big Pharma to raise medicine prices, and equipped banks with a tool to roll back financial regulation.¹

What happened after NAFTA was enacted in 1994: NAFTA contained 900 pages of rules for which each nation was required to subjugate its domestic laws to the international trade agreements—even if voters and our representatives had previously rejected those policies. Many of NAFTA’s boosters in Congress never read the entire agreement. There were limits on the inspection of food sold in grocery stores; new patent rules that raised medicine prices; constraints on local governments’ ability to zone against toxic industries; new rights and privileges that promoted relocation abroad of factories and jobs. Data after 20 years show the damage NAFTA has created for millions of people in the U.S., Mexico, and Canada.

CAFTA was an expansion of NAFTA to Central American nations (Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and the Dominican Republic). It passed through Congress by one vote in the middle of the night on July 27, 2005. Its effects have displaced family farmers in trade partner countries, eviscerated labor and environmental standards, and privatized and deregulated key public services.

CAFTA was promoted as generating prosperity in Central America, along with a decline in violence and immigration to the U.S. The opposite has happened. Central America is facing unprecedented levels of gang and drug-related violence, and immigration from Central America to the United States has surged.

CAFTA and the Forced Migration Crisis: In September of last year Ben Beachy, Research Director, Public Citizen’s Global Trade Watch spoke at a Congressional hearing. Although he stopped short of saying that CAFTA was solely responsible for the surge of Central American children trying to cross the border into the U.S., the horrific violence in Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala has been fed by economic instability in those countries.²

According to Beachy, “1.1 million small-scale farmers and 1.4 million other Mexicans dependent on agriculture lost their livelihoods” when an influx of cheap U.S. corn into Mexico caused the price paid to farmers to fall by 66 percent, forcing many to abandon farming. “Under CAFTA, family farmers in Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala have been similarly inundated with subsidized agricultural imports.” Further, these economies became dependent on short-lived apparel assembly jobs – many of which have vanished, and hundreds of thousands of jobs were displaced as “China joined the WTO and Chinese sweatshop exports gained global market share.”

The Newest Trade Agreements: TTP and TTIP Described as “NAFTA on Steroids,” the Transpacific Partnership (TTP) similarly gives foreign corporations privileges that override domestic laws on environmental health and citizens’ rights. Corporations would be able to claim that those domestic laws hamper “free trade” and sue member countries on those grounds.

Although this trade deal would have huge effects on the economy, environment, and food sovereignty of the countries involved, TPP negotiations are being held in secret between unelected government officials and representatives from more than 600 of the world’s most powerful corporations.³ At present, the TPP talks include 12 Pacific Rim countries: Canada, the United States, Mexico, Peru, Chile, New Zealand, Australia, Singapore, Malaysia, Brunei, Vietnam and, most recently, Japan.

The AFL-CIO, among other labor and justice organizations, does not support the TPP in its current form because of implications for labor and human rights. The potential effects for ordinary people include:

- undermining access to medicines by extending monopoly protections for Big Pharma
- empowering corporations to sue governments for environmental and health measures they do not like

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Trade Agreements,

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- restricting Internet innovation and increasing the surveillance of online interactions
- undermining Indigenous rights and human rights
- creating a race to the bottom on working conditions, environmental standards and public regulations
- prioritizing large-scale corporate agriculture (GMOs, antibiotics) over sustainable local farming.⁴

It is being called the ultimate corporate takeover of public policy that would impact safe food, sustainable jobs, clean water and air, education, even democracy. The majority of Americans believe that offshoring jobs and NAFTA-style free trade deals have hurt the U.S. economy. Over the last year, U.S. public opinion has intensified from broad to overwhelming opposition to NAFTA-style trade deals.

During 2014, Fast Track still faced widespread opposition in Congress and among the U.S. public. This past September, nearly 600 organizations sent a letter⁵ opposing Fast Track to Senate Finance Committee Chair Ron Wyden. A poll earlier in the year found that 62 percent of U.S. voters oppose Fast Tracking the TPP.

According to Moveon.org, the White House and many corporate “trade advisers” are turning up the heat on Congress. However, Minnesota Representative Keith Ellison has called TPP “the largest corporate power grab you’ve never heard of.” Massachusetts’s Elizabeth Warren explained, “In other words, if people knew what was going on, they would stop it. This argument is exactly backwards. If transparency would lead to widespread public opposition to a trade agreement, then that trade agreement should not be the policy of the United States.” But trade officials have kept a tight lid on the negotiations and have only recently allowed members of Congress to view and not copy the text, which remains “classified.”

Nevertheless the deal’s completion is not guaranteed. In 2015, Republicans in the new Congress who might have been expected to give the president trade-negotiating authority are still sour about his executive action deferring deportation of undocumented immigrants and many conservatives are in no mood to give Mr. Obama anything. Democrats may be even less amenable to Fast Track for the TPP. Representative Sander M. Levin of Michigan, the ranking Democrat on the Ways and Means Committee, which has jurisdiction on trade,

has said he is “not about to allow Mr. Obama to negotiate the partnership on his own, then present it to Congress for an up-or-down vote with no opportunity to change it. You’re asking members to give away their leverage on a historic trade agreement when there are major issues outstanding,” Mr. Levin said, suggesting that a vote on trade promotion authority before the presentation of a completed TPP, “would be a donnybrook.”⁶

You can still make your voice heard by writing to your member of Congress⁷ to urge them to voice their opposition to Fast Tracking the TPP.

And that’s not all.

Another important trade deal of public interest—of which the public may not be aware—is **the bilateral Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP)**, a series of trade negotiations carried out mostly in secret between the EU and U.S. “TTIP is about reducing the regulatory barriers to trade for big business, things like food safety law, environmental legislation, banking regulations and the sovereign powers of individual nations.”⁸ Sound familiar?

For most countries in the European Union, standards on food safety and the environment are much more strict than in the U.S. For example, the EU allows virtually no genetically modified foods, and the U.S. has more lax restrictions on the use of pesticides. Ninety percent of U.S. beef has growth hormones, which are restricted in Europe due to links to cancer. The U.S. beef industry has tried repeatedly to have these restrictions lifted through the World Trade Organization and will likely use TTIP to do so again.

John Hilary, Executive Director of international campaign group War on Want, identifies the three pillars of TTIP (and perhaps other recent “trade” deals) as Deregulation (labor standards, food safety standards, environmental rules), Privatization, and new Powers for investors. One of TTIP’s central goals is the introduction of Investor-State Dispute Settlements (ISDS), which allow companies to sue governments if those governments’ policies cause a loss of profits. The proposal is, Hilary says, “an assault on European and U.S. societies by transnational corporations,”⁹ in effect the transfer of power from society to capital.

Carol Masters is a long-time WAMM member and Twin Cities writer whose works include The Peace Terrorist, short stories, and You Can’t Do That, a biography of Marv Davidov.

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RESOURCES

- **No GMO Wherever You Go**
- Sustainable Pulse has started a project to gather together ‘GMO Free’ groups from around the World with the aim of creating a co-ordinated global campaign under the umbrella of the Global GMO Free Coalition (GGFC).
- Following the best practises of the Global Anti-Nuclear Movement, the Deep Sea Conservation Coalition and the Elders, the GGFC will provide much needed global coordination to counteract the misguided arguments of the biotech industry regarding GE Crops and their associated pesticides.
- gmofreeglobal.org and sustainablepulse.com

WAMM THANKS

- **Audrey Kvist for donating to the newsletter in honor of Polly Mann and Mary Beaudoin**
- **Bob Jones in memory of Elizabeth Fry and Jeannette Rankin**

WAMM Calendar

Please note that WAMM's provision of information on other group's events is not meant to convey or endorse any action contrary to public policy that would be inconsistent with exempt purposes under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3) i.e., charitable purposes.

Ongoing WAMM Vigils for Peace

Vigil to End War

Every Wednesday. Time from now till spring: 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. Lake Street/Marshall Avenue Bridge, signs available at St. Paul side. Also brief circle up for announcements after the vigil on St. Paul side. FFI: Call WAMM at 612-827-5364.

Vigil to End the Occupation of Palestine

4:30 to 5:30 p.m. every Friday, corner of Summit Avenue and Snelling Avenue, St. Paul. FFI: Call WAMM 612-827-5364.

Peace Vigil Every Tuesday, 5:00 to 6:00 p.m. on the Eastside of the Franklin Avenue Bridge, Minneapolis. Sponsored by: Prospect Hill Neighbors for Peace. FFI: 612-379-7398

Grandmothers for Peace Vigils 50th Street and Halifax (1 block w. of France) 4:45 p.m. to 5:45 p.m. FFI: Marian Wright, 612-927-7607

For information on additional peace vigils in Minnesota and Wisconsin, call the WAMM office at 612-827-5364.

Ongoing WAMM Committee Meetings

Board Meeting Third Tuesday of each month, 6:00 p.m. at WAMM, 4200 Cedar Avenue South, Minneapolis. FFI: Call WAMM, 612-827-5364.

The WAMM Book Club

10:00 to 11:30 a.m. Afro Deli, 1939 South 5th Street, Minneapolis. Third Saturday of the month. FFI: Call 612-827-5364.

End War Committee Acting Against War and the Threats of War. First Monday of each month, 5:30 p.m. at WAMM, 4200 Cedar Avenue South, Minneapolis. FFI: Call Marie 612-827-5364

Ground All Drones Committee First Thursdays of every month, 4:30 to 6:00 p.m., 4200 Cedar Avenue South, Minneapolis. FFI: 612-827-5364

Middle East Committee Second Monday of each month, 10:00 a.m. at WAMM, 4200 Cedar Avenue South, Suite 3, Minneapolis. FFI: Call WAMM 612-827-5364

St. Joan of Arc/WAMM Peacemakers Fourth Tuesday of each month, 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. at St. Joan of Arc Church, Parish Center, 4537 Third Avenue South, Minneapolis. FFI: Barbara, 612-722-4444

Tackling Torture at the Top (T3) Second Wednesday of each month, 10:00 a.m. at 4200 Cedar Avenue South, Minneapolis.

Ongoing Events

Committee to Stop FBI Repression Stand with the people subpoenaed in a witch hunt, defend civil liberties. Learn what you can do. All who stand up and act for justice and solidarity are welcome. FFI: See stopfbi.net and mnStopFBI.wordpress.com, or call (612) 379-3585.

People of Faith Peacemakers Breakfast Second and fourth Wednesdays, 8:00 to 9:30 a.m. at African Development Center, Riverside and 20th Avenues South. A resource and support group for those concerned about peace with justice from a faith perspective. FFI: www.justviewpoint.org or call 763-784-5177

Grandmothers for Peace First Wednesday 12:45 p.m. at Edina Public Library, 5280 Grandview Square, Edina. Programs around justice issues that help us to understand our role in changing unjust systems. FFI: 952-929-1566

Pax Salons Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. 943 West Seventh Street (St. Paul Gallery), St. Paul. Please come. Topics vary. Call for details. Small donations accepted. FFI: 227-3228

Second Monday Night at the Movies March 9, 7:00 p.m. 4200 Cedar Ave. South, Minneapolis. New feature every time. Popcorn popped on site. Discussion follows. Free and open to the public. Sponsored by WAMM Monday Night Movie Committee.

Third Thursday Global Issues Forum 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. FFI: globalsolutionsmn.org

Middle East Peace Now Usually second or third Saturday. Refreshments 9:30 a.m., Program 10:00 a.m. Location may vary. FFI: mepn.org

Dignity, Not Detention Vigil Every first Sunday, 2:30 to 3:00 p.m. at 425 Grove Street (Ramsey County Law Enforcement Center). Vigil for civil immigrant detainees in jail. Sponsored by: Interfaith Coalition for Immigration, Advocates for Human Rights. FFI: Email interfaithonimmigration@gmail.com

Special Events

Rock for Rasmea, Rally Against the Injustice System, for All Political Prisoners. February 21, 6:30 p.m. to 12:00 midnight, Intermedia Arts, 2822 Lyndale Avenue South, Minneapolis. For Palestinian-American community leader Rasmea Odeh's case, broader FBI repression, squashing movements for justice and liberation, esp. targeting indigenous people, people of color. Short films curated by MIZNA, spoken word poetry curated by local artist Sarah Thamer, sets by local Twin Cities musicians, live auction of local and Palestinian art. Fund-raiser for her legal appeals process. Intermedia Arts' VERVE Grants for Spoken Word poets and 2012 grant winner Misty Rowan. Organized by the Anti-War Committee. FFI: antiwarcommittee.org

MN State Board of Investment. Wednesday, March 4, 10 a.m. MN State Capitol: On July 1, Israel Bonds purchased by the state, using millions of Minnesota's public retirement dollars, will mature. FFI: mnbreakthebonds.org

International Women's Day 2015 Friday, March 6 to Sunday, March 8, KFAI celebrates IWD with 24 hours of programming.

WAMM Annual Meeting Saturday, March 7, 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., Spirit of St. Stephen's, 2201 First Avenue South, Minneapolis. See back page for more info.

A Call for Immigration Reform. Tuesday, February 17, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. Coeur de Catherine Ballroom, St. Catherine University, 2004 Randolph Avenue, St. Paul. Featured speakers: Simone Campbell, SSS (nuns on the bus) Executive Director of a National Catholic Social Justice Lobby; Dr. Bruce Corrie, PhD, Assoc. V.P. for University Relations and International Programs Concordia University. Free and open to the public. Sponsored by: Justice Commission of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet and Consociates. FFI: Contact Ginger K. Hedstrom, Justice Coordinator, (651) 690-7054 or ghedstrom@csjstpaul.org

Rally to Stop U.S. Wars and Drones Saturday, March 21 at 1:00 p.m., Lake St. and Hiawatha Ave., Minneapolis. Sponsored by MN Peace Action Coalition. FFI: 612-275-2720 or 612-827-5364

SAVE THE DATE:

A National Antiwar & Social Justice Conference: Stop the Wars at Home & Abroad! Friday, May 8 to Sunday, May 10 Empire Meadows (Clarion) Hotel in Secaucus, New Jersey (30 minutes from New York City). Register for hotel room at conference reduced rate: call 201-348-6900 and say it is for the UNAC Antiwar Coalition conference. Sponsored by: United National Antiwar Coalition (UNAC) Conference info online or UNACpeace@gmail.com, or call 518-227-6947

Additional events listed at WomenAgainstMilitaryMadness.org or call the WAMM office: 612-827-5364.

For Minnesota Alliance of Peacemaker events, see: mapm.org

No one has to go it alone in the pursuit of peace! Join, renew, or give the gift of a WAMM membership to someone you know.

WAMM Membership

- \$15-39 Low Income/Student membership
 \$40-59 Annual membership
 \$60-199 Household membership
 \$200-349 Sustainer (amount above membership)
 \$350+ Major Donor (amount above membership)
 This is a new membership. This is a membership renewal This is a gift membership
 Check enclosed. Please charge my credit card \$ _____

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Contributions are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.
 Make checks payable to WAMM, 4200 Cedar Avenue South, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55407

Pledge for Peace

- (WAMM will send a coupon book)
 \$ _____ Monthly
 \$ _____ Quarterly
 I want to volunteer for WAMM

- **WAMM Committees**
- **Issues Committees:**
- Book Club
- End War Committee: Acting Against War and the Threats of War
- Middle East
- Monday Movie Committee
- St. Joan of Arc/WAMM Peacemakers
- Ground All Drones Committee
- Tackling Torture at the Top
- **Administrative and Other Committees:**
- Coordinating
- Finance
- Fundraising
- New Member
- Newsletter
- Personnel
- Program/New Issues
- Silent Auction
- **WAMM Board**
- Meredith Aby
- Marie Braun, Treasurer
- Diane Haugesag
- Sally Kundert, Co-chair
- Vanessa Lawrow
- Polly Mann
- Sarah Martin
- JoAnn Maus
- Brigid McDonald
- BethAnne Nelson
- Coleen Rowley
- Margaret Sarfehjooy
- Lucia Wilkes Smith, Secretary
- Sharon Rice Vaughan, Co-Chair
- Carol Walker

Trade Agreements,
continued from page 9

Endnotes

- 1 Global Trade Watch, <http://www.citizen.org/Page.aspx?pid=1328>
- 2 <http://citizen.typepad.com/eyesontrade/2014/09/cafta-and-the-forced-migration-crisis.html>
- 3 Kristen Beifus, <http://www.yesmagazine.org/issues/love-and-the-apocalypse/why-the-transpacific-partnership-is-a-really-really-big-deal> Kristen Beifus Kristen is Executive Director of the Washington Fair Trade Coalition, which is dedicated to creating an equitable global trading system.
- 4 Cross-Border Network Against the Transpacific Partnership, <http://tppxborder.org/>
- 5 <http://www.citizen.org/documents/letter-wyden-fast-track-september-2014.pdf>
- 6 <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/31>
- 7 http://action.citizen.org/p/dia/action3/common/public/?action_KEY=12635
- 8 <http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/comment/what-is-ttip-and-six-reasons-why-the-answer-should-scare-you-9779688.html>
- 9 <http://www.waronwant.org/news/latest-news/18256-ttip-the-fight-is-on-for-2015>

Tackling Torture at the Top (T-3) Video Contest

WAMM's Tackling Torture at the Top (T3) Committee announces our **2nd Annual Video Contest** on the subject of torture and torture accountability.

Prizes

- \$500 Jury Prizes in Serious and Satirical Categories
- \$300 Audience Favorite Prizes in the same two categories

Two prizes in each Serious and Satirical Categories Jury and Audience Favorites.

Deadline for entries: **March 1, 2015.**

FFI and details: tacklingtorturevideocontest.webs.com

Tackling Torture at the Top, through this contest, hopes to produce entertaining and informative videos that contradict the harmful and inhumane view that torture is acceptable and necessary educate the public, raise questions about the direction of our foreign policy and our use of the military, and by so doing, give the public the awareness and courage to rein in our country's out of control security apparatus.



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Saturday, March 7, 2015. 10:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.
Spirit of St. Stephen's
2201 First Avenue South, Minneapolis
Near bus lines #11, #2, #17, #18. Parking in lots or on First Ave or Stevens Ave

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