

A Moment of Hope in Gaza



Gazan doctors graduate in front of an Al-Shifa Medical Complex building destroyed by Israeli bombing. Photo: Al Jazeera

By Kathy Kelly

On Thursday, December 25, 2025, during Israel's ongoing genocide against Palestinians, 168 students graduated from medical school, in Gaza. Wearing their white coats, they stood in front of the ruined façade of what was

formerly Gaza's largest hospital, the Al-Shifa Medical Complex. As a backdrop, the destroyed building realistically conveys perils the graduates faced while earning their medical degrees. Throughout the last two years of their studies, they risked assassination, injury, arrest, imprisonment, and torture, as well as at-

tacks on their own family members.

Israel has waged a systematic campaign to destroy Gaza's healthcare delivery and to kill or imprison healthcare professionals. From October of 2023 to October of 2025, the World Health Organization documented 687 Israeli attacks on Gaza healthcare facilities and 211 attacks

on ambulances. These attacks killed 985 people. In the same time period, Israel detained over 306 healthcare workers.

Health Care Workers Watch-Palestine, a nongovernmental organization, reports that 95 Palestinian healthcare workers, 80 of them from Gaza, are still in prison.

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Echoes of Hitler and Pinochet

America's fascist dress rehearsal including torture and the collapse of democratic norms is no longer theoretical—they're preparing for the opening act.

By Henry A. Giroux

We inhabit a historical moment that resurrects, with chilling familiarity, the state terrorism once made visible under Hitler, Franco, Mussolini,
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Photo: Mark Peterson/Redux

Editorial

Talk to the Animals

Fascism, authoritarian rule, a warped, insane, technologically dominated totalitarian warfare state. Some saw it coming years ago, decades ago, maybe centuries ago. They tried to warn us. We didn't really believe it could happen here. But it has.

Ninety years ago, in his prophetic novel *It Can't Happen Here*, Sinclair Lewis wrote, "A country that tolerates evil means—evil manners, standards of ethics—for a generation, will be so poisoned that it never will have any good end." How long did the genocide on the indigenous Indians persist? Has it ever ended? How long did slavery go on to make white men wealthy? How many generations was that? And doesn't that continue in a dif-

'Only to the white man was nature ... "infested" with "wild" animals and 'savage' people. To us, Earth was bountiful and we were surrounded with the blessings of the Great Mystery.'

ferent form with mass incarceration?

North America was once a magnificent wilderness. Now it is uglified with concrete and asphalt roads, massive cities, plastics, corporate factory farms torturing innocent animals, pollution of every sort, with over 1000 nuclear test explosions that have further increased the radioactive toxicity poisoning all life.

Black Elk of the indigenous Oglala Lakota Sioux told us, "Only to the white man was nature a wilderness and only to him was the land 'infested' with 'wild' animals and 'savage' people. To us it was tame, Earth was bountiful and we were surrounded with the blessings of the Great Mystery."

—Tarak Kauff

Have we listened? Some maybe, but not those whose ambition, like a drug, leads them to worship lucre, to control, to dominate, to gain at any cost power and wealth, and to become mad with it.

They have now started yet another war, this time on Venezuela. As horribly usual for U.S. murderous imperialists, there is no excuse, no plausible rationale, nor do they need one. These are gangster capitalists that live to destroy; it is in their nature. They make Al Capone look like a choirboy. "War on drugs"? Give me a break. It's a war on everything natural, a war on Mother Earth, on everything precious. Can't we see that?

And the masses, have they also lost contact with the wild natural world? With the bears, the wolves, the beavers, the eagles, the whales, dolphins—all these teachers that the indigenous tribes learned from? Is that how we've lost our freedom?

More recently, Chief Dan George of the Tsleil-Waututh Nation gave us this wisdom: "One thing to remember is to talk to the animals. If you do, they will talk back to you. But if you don't talk to the animals, they won't talk back to you, then you won't understand, and when you don't understand you will fear, and when you fear you will destroy the animals, and if you destroy the animals, you will destroy yourself."

Sure, we see the madness, the cruelty that is happening. We lament that someone like Trump and the lunatic sycophants surrounding and advising him have taken power, and we look for solutions. We look for a strategy that can save democracy, that can save us. I don't know what or where that strategy is, and I'm not sure it even exists.

Still, there is and must be hope. The kind of hope that is sustained by courage and vision. The kind of hope that no matter how dark the time is, will in some place inside keep the vision of a better world, a place of balance, respect for all life and harmony with the natural world. Hope that keeps the flame of truth and resistance to this monstrous evil alive, maybe buried deep in the heart, but alive, and as long as that flame exists, we are not and never can be defeated. Remember that and keep the resistance alive.



The murders continue. As we went to press, we received the news that the murderous out-of-control lunatic in the Oval Office has had the U.S. military wage a truly unprovoked imperialist attack on the people of Venezuela. We oppose and condemn this illegal assault on a sovereign nation and the kidnapping of President Nicolás Maduro and First Lady Cilia Flores. Despite the lying nonsense that comes out of the White House, there is absolutely no excuse, no rationale for what is another murderous assault by the gangster capitalists who have taken over the government (if you can call it that) of the United States.

This is a blatant and obvious attempt to steal Venezuela's natural resources, primarily its oil, but even more so to impose the U.S. brand of corporate capitalism on Latin America and to set an example of what U.S. military might will do, especially to Venezuela, Nicaragua and Cuba and any country that dares to oppose U.S. hegemony and control.

It is incumbent on all people and organizations that stand for peace and justice to condemn and resist with every means at our disposal this fascist attack, not only on Venezuela but on all of us, everywhere. You can be sure that *Peace & Planet News* and *Veterans For Peace* will not be silent.—The Editors



Photo: Ellen Davidson

Veterans For Peace is an international organization made up of military veterans, military family members, and allies. We are dedicated to building a culture of peace, exposing the true causes and costs of war, and healing the wounds of war.



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Soldiers Who Said 'No!'

By Mike Ferner

For as long as there has been war, there have always been soldiers who said "NO!"

Today, U.S. active duty, guard and reserve troops are being ordered to arm Israel's genocide in Palestine, occupy our cities, kill civilians on boats in the Caribbean, steal Venezuelan oil tankers—all of which is illegal. As Veterans For Peace urges our troops to refuse illegal orders, it's helpful to take a look back at soldiers who did say no, even when they feared for their lives. Here is just a sampling of military personnel who kept their humanity.



The American War in Vietnam

There are numerous examples of G.I.s refusing illegal orders during the American War in Vietnam. To see some of them, watch David Zeiger's stellar documentary, *Sir, No Sir!* which includes members of Veterans For Peace.

One heroic story absolutely deserves a shout-out. Chief Warrant Officer Hugh Thompson Jr. a 25-year-old helicopter pilot, was flying a routine patrol on March 16, 1968, when he witnessed U.S. troops firing on a large number of civilians. He landed, told his door gunner to open fire on the American troops if necessary, left the chopper and told Lt. William Calley to cease firing. Calley's company killed some 400 women, children and old men, but the toll would have been even worse if not for the courage of Hugh Thompson and his crew.

The World Wars

In March 1915, a French infantry company had survived two attacks on entrenched German machine guns. When ordered to a third charge, the company refused. Col. Raoul Berube, commander of the division's artillery, was then ordered to fire on the mutinous company, and he refused as well, living to tell the tale.

General Dietrich von Choltitz, commander of the First German Army, refused Hitler's orders to level Paris in advance of the Allies in August 1944. In his memoir he wrote he disobeyed Hitler because the order had no military value and he thought the Fuhrer was insane.

As Allied forces bore down on Berlin in March 1945, Hitler ordered his Armaments Minister and Nazi architect, Albert Speer, to destroy all German factories

and civilian infrastructure. Speer issued an order complying, but then issued encrypted orders to do nothing, saving what was left of Berlin so it could be rebuilt.

It is largely assumed that Nazi troops and police would be killed or sent to a concentration camp for refusing orders to kill unarmed Jews, Roma, union members or Russian prisoners. That was, in fact, the defense Nazi defendants at Nuremberg cited, but a partial look at the record shows something different.

"Stefan," a Dutch history teacher, pro-

duced a WWII video podcast series called *History Hustle*. In one, he uses material from historian David Kitterman, who documented 85 instances of police, officers and soldiers in the Army and the SS who said "NO!" to superiors who ordered illegal executions.

concentration camps. Himmler transferred Battel to a frontline position but he survived the war and was later recognized by Israel as Righteous Among the Nations.

Bernhard Griese, a major in the Schutzpolizei, or uniformed police force, avoided participating and kept his battalion from participating in the execution of Jews. Ordered by the SD (Sicherheitsdienst, the intelligence agency of the SS) to provide men for a detail to kill 365 Jews, he refused and secured written confirmation from his superiors that he was to follow only direct or-

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Albert Battel, a reserve major in the German Army, tried to prevent the 1942 execution of hundreds of Jews doing forced labor by having them housed and protected by the Army so they could continue to work while also having his troops blocking bridges to keep the SS at bay. It was only a temporary reprieve as the Jews were eventually sent to

orders from his own chain of command. The SS and SD carried out the killings, but Griese was not disciplined.

In late June 1941, a company from Major Friedrich Dern's SS battalion was dispatched to execute Polish Jews and carried out the order. The Lieutenant in charge returned to Dern's battalion and said he refused to compel his troops, trained as soldiers, to ever do that again. Dern wrote SS headquarters stating his troops were not to be used in that way again. As a result, his battalion was dissolved and he was transferred to a different command but was later promoted.

Wehrmacht Lt. Nikolaus Hornig, on Nov. 1, 1941, refused orders to execute 780 Russian POWs, explaining that as a Catholic and an attorney he could not obey. He also informed his soldiers they had the right to reject such illegal orders. Hornig was charged, not with disobeying an order, but undermining morale for what he told his troops. He was sentenced to Buchenwald for the rest of the war but was treated well and maintained his officer's pay.

Kitterman found that just over half the 85 simply refused orders to carry out executions and gave no reasons. The rest said "it's not my job," cited ethical, moral, psychological or legal reasons including the Geneva Conventions, resigned or asked for transfers. Some just evaded duty or aimed poorly on purpose.

As for consequences for those 85 refusniks, 49 received no discipline at all. The rest were reprimanded and threatened to be sent to the front or a concentration camp (Hornig was the only one sentenced), sent back to Germany, demoted, investigated or assigned alternate service not involving executions.

Stefan's podcasts also include the tragic story of a Luftwaffe Sgt. and medic, Ernst Grawe, shot to death one month before the end of WWII in Holland for refusing to execute Dutch resistance fighters.

Soviet Officers Saved Us from WWII—Twice

Commander Vasili Arkhipov commanded a Soviet submarine fleet in the Caribbean during the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, carrying orders to attack if provoked without further orders from Moscow. During the "quarantine" put in place by President Kennedy, U.S. destroyers began dropping depth charges to get the sub to surface. Although he had orders allowing him to do so, Arkhipov refrained from ordering the launch of a nuclear torpedo which would have set off WWII.

On September 26, 1983, Lt. Col. Stanislav Petrov, the officer in charge at a Soviet air defense bunker near Moscow, also saved the Earth from World War III. His radar warned of incoming U.S. ICBMs. Petrov was supposed to inform his superiors

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Left to right: Yonatan Shapira, Hugh Thompson, Luftwaffe Sgt. and medic Ernst Grawe, Vasily Arkhipov.

'We Will Set an Example for the World'

On Jan. 1, Zohran Mamdani was sworn in as mayor of New York. His historic campaign mobilized tens of thousands of grassroots volunteers and culminated in the election of the first Muslim American mayor of a major U.S. city. Below is his inaugural address.

My fellow New Yorkers: Today begins a new era. I stand before you, moved by the privilege of taking this sacred oath, humbled by the faith that you have placed in me, and honored to serve as either your 111th or 112th mayor of New York City. But I do not stand alone.

I stand alongside you, the tens of thousands gathered here in Lower Manhattan, warmed against the January chill by the resurgent flame of hope.

I stand alongside countless more New Yorkers watching from cramped kitchens in Flushing and barbershops in East New York, from cell phones propped against the dashboards of parked taxi cabs at LaGuardia, from hospitals in Mott Haven and libraries in El Barrio that have too long known only neglect.

I stand alongside construction workers in steel-toed boots and halal cart vendors whose knees ache from working all day.

I stand alongside neighbors who carry a plate of food to the elderly couple down the hall, those in a rush who still lift strangers' strollers up subway stairs, and every person who makes the choice day after day, even when it feels impossible, to call our city home.

I stand alongside over one million New Yorkers who voted for this day nearly two months ago—and I stand just as resolutely alongside those who did not. I know there are some who view this administration with distrust or disdain, or who see politics as permanently broken.

And while only action can change minds, I promise you this: If you are a New Yorker, I am your mayor. Regardless of whether we agree, I will protect you, celebrate with you, mourn alongside you, and never, not for a second, hide from you.

I thank the labor and movement leaders here today, the activists and elected officials who will return to fighting for New Yorkers the second this ceremony concludes, and the performers who have gifted us with their talent.

Thank you to Governor Hochul for joining us. And thank you to Mayor Adams—Dorothy's son, a son of Brownsville who rose from washing dishes to the highest position in our city—for being here as well. He and I have had our share of disagreements, but I will always be touched that he chose me as the mayoral candidate that he would most want to be trapped with on an elevator.

Thank you to the two titans who, as an Assembly member, I've had the privilege of being represented by in Congress: Nydia Velázquez and our incredible opening speaker, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.



Zohran Mamdani is sworn in as New York City's 112th mayor by New York Attorney General Letitia James, left, alongside his wife Rama Duwaji, in the former City Hall subway station on Jan. 1, 2026.

You have paved the way for this moment.

Thank you to the man whose leadership I seek most to emulate, who I am so grateful to be sworn in by today, Senator Bernie Sanders.

Thank you to my teams: from the Assembly to the campaign to the transition and, now, the team I am so excited to lead from City Hall.

Thank you to my parents, Mama and Baba, for raising me, for teaching me how to be in this world, and for bringing me to this city. Thank you to my family, from Kampala to Delhi. And thank you to my wife, Rama, for being my best friend and for always showing me the beauty in everyday things.

Most of all, thank you to the people of New York.

'I promise you this: If you are a New Yorker, I am your mayor. Regardless of whether we agree, I will protect you, celebrate with you, mourn alongside you, and never, not for a second, hide from you.'

A moment like this comes rarely. Seldom do we hold such an opportunity to transform and reinvent. Rarer still is it the people themselves whose hands are the ones upon the levers of change.

We will govern without shame and insecurity, making no apology for what we believe. I was elected as a democratic socialist, and I will govern as a democratic socialist.

And yet we know that too often in our past, moments of great possibility have been promptly surrendered to small imagination and smaller ambition. What was promised was never pursued, what could have changed remained the same. For the New Yorkers most eager to see our city remade, the weight has only grown heavier; the wait has only grown longer.

In writing this address, I have been told that this is the occasion to reset expectations, that I should use this opportunity to encourage the people of New York to ask

for little and expect even less. I will do no such thing. The only expectation I seek to reset is that of small expectations.

Beginning today, we will govern expansively and audaciously. We may not always succeed. But never will we be accused of lacking the courage to try.

To those who insist that the era of big government is over, hear me when I say this: No longer will City Hall hesitate to use its power to improve New Yorkers' lives.

For too long, we have turned to the private sector for greatness, while accepting mediocrity from those who serve the public. I cannot blame anyone who has come to question the role of government, whose faith in democracy has been eroded by decades of apathy. We will restore that trust by walking a different path: one where

government is no longer solely the final recourse for those struggling, one where excellence is no longer the exception.

We expect greatness from the cooks wielding a thousand spices, from those who stride out onto Broadway stages, from our standing point guard at Madison Square Garden. Let us demand the same from those who work in government. In a city where the mere names of our streets are associated with the innovation of the industries that call them home, we will make the words "City Hall" synonymous with both resolve and results.

As we embark upon this work, let us advance a new answer to the question asked of every generation: Who does New York belong to?

For much of our history, the response from City Hall has been simple: It belongs only to the wealthy and well-connected, those who never strain to capture the at-

tention of those in power.

Working people have reckoned with the consequences. Crowded classrooms and public housing developments where the elevators sit out of order. Roads littered with potholes and buses that arrive half an hour late, if at all. Wages that do not rise and corporations that rip off consumers and employees alike.

And still, there have been brief, fleeting moments where the equation changed.

Twelve years ago, Bill de Blasio stood where I stand now as he promised to "put an end to economic and social inequalities" that divided our city into two.

In 1990, David Dinkins swore the same oath I swore today, vowing to celebrate the "gorgeous mosaic" that is New York, where every one of us is deserving of a decent life.

And nearly six decades before him, Fiorello La Guardia took office with the goal of building a city that was "far greater and more beautiful" for the hungry and the poor.

I will not abandon my principles for fear of being deemed radical.

Some of these mayors achieved more success than others. But they were unified by a shared belief that New York could belong to more than just a privileged few. It could belong to those who operate our subways and rake our parks, those who feed us biryani and beef patties, picanha and pastrami on rye. And they knew that this belief could be made true if only government dared to work hardest for those who work hardest.

Over the years to come, my administration will resurrect that legacy. City Hall will deliver an agenda of safety, affordability, and abundance, where government looks and lives like the people it represents, never flinches in the fight against corporate greed, and refuses to cower before challenges that others have deemed too complicated.

In so doing, we will provide our own answer to that age-old question—who does New York belong to? Well, my friends, we can look to Mandela and the South African Freedom Charter: New York "belongs to all who live in it."

Together, we will tell a new story of our city.

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Zohran Mamdani

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This will not be a tale of one city, governed only by the 1 percent. Nor will it be a tale of two cities, the rich versus the poor.

It will be a tale of eight and a half million cities, each of them a New Yorker with hopes and fears, each a universe, each of them woven together.

The authors of this story will speak Pashto and Mandarin, Yiddish and Creole. They will pray in mosques, at shul, at church, at gurdwaras and mandirs and temples. And many will not pray at all.

They will be Russian Jewish immigrants in Brighton Beach, Italians in Rossville, and Irish families in Woodhaven—many of whom came here with nothing but a dream of a better life, a dream which has withered away. They will be young people in cramped Marble Hill apartments where the walls shake when the subway passes. They will be black homeowners in St. Albans whose homes represent a physical testament to triumph over decades of lesser-paid labor and redlining. They will be Palestinian New Yorkers in Bay Ridge, who will no longer have to contend with a politics that speaks of universalism and then makes them the exception.

Few of these eight and a half million will fit into neat and easy boxes. Some will be voters from Hillside Avenue or Fordham Road who supported President Trump a year before they voted for me, tired of being failed by their party's establishment. The majority will not use the language that we often expect from those who wield influence. I welcome the change. For too long, those fluent in the good grammar of civility have deployed decorum to mask agendas of cruelty.

Many of these people have been betrayed by the established order. But in our administration, their needs will be met. Their hopes and dreams and interests will be reflected transparently in government. They will shape our future.

Seldom do we hold such an opportunity to transform and reinvent. Rarer still is it the people themselves whose hands are the ones upon the levers of change.

And if for too long these communities

And it will be New Yorkers who reform a long-broken property tax system. New Yorkers who will create a new Department of Community Safety that will tackle the mental health crisis and let the police focus on the job they signed up to do. New Yorkers who will take on the bad landlords who mistreat their tenants and free small-business owners from the shackles of bloated bureaucracy. And I am proud to be one of those New Yorkers.

When we won the primary last June, there were many who said that these aspirations and those who held them had come out of nowhere. Yet one man's nowhere is another man's somewhere. This movement



came out of eight and a half million somewheres—taxi cab depots and Amazon warehouses, DSA meetings and curbside domino games. The powers that be had looked away from these places for quite some time, if they'd known about them at all, so they dismissed them as nowhere. But in our city, where every corner of these five boroughs holds power, there is no nowhere and there is no no one. There is only New York, and there are only New Yorkers.

Eight and a half million New Yorkers will speak this new era into existence. It will be loud. It will be different. It will feel like the New York we love.

‘We will govern without shame and insecurity, making no apology for what we believe. I was elected as a democratic socialist, and I will govern as a democratic socialist. I will not abandon my principles for fear of being deemed radical.’

have existed as distinct from one another, we will draw this city closer together. We will replace the frigidity of rugged individualism with the warmth of collectivism. If our campaign demonstrated that the people of New York yearn for solidarity, then let this government foster it. Because no matter what you eat, what language you speak, how you pray, or where you come from, the words that most define us are the two we all share: New Yorkers.

No matter how long you have called this city home, that love has shaped your life. I know that it has shaped mine.

This is the city where I set land-speed records on my Razor scooter at the age of 12. Quickest four blocks of my life.

The city where I ate powdered doughnuts at halftime during AYSO soccer games and realized I probably wouldn't be going pro, devoured too-big slices at Koronet Pizza, played cricket with my friends at Ferry

Point Park, and took the 1 train to the Bx10 only to still show up late to Bronx Science.

The city where I have gone on hunger strike just outside these gates, sat claustrophobic on a stalled N train just after Atlantic Avenue, and waited in quiet terror for my father to emerge from 26 Federal Plaza.

The city where I took a beautiful woman named Rama to McCarren Park on our first date and swore a different oath to become an American citizen on Pearl Street.

To live in New York, to love New York, is to know that we are the stewards of something without equal in our world. Where else can you hear the sound of the steelpan, savor the smell of sancocho, and pay

me about the city that is theirs.

We discussed construction hours on the Van Wyck Expressway and EBT eligibility, affordable housing for artists and ICE raids. I spoke to a man named TJ who said that one day a few years ago, his heart broke as he realized he would never get ahead here, no matter how hard he worked. I spoke to a Pakistani auntie named Samina, who told me that this movement had fostered something too rare: softness in people's hearts. As she said in Urdu: logon ke dil badal gaye hai [people's hearts have changed].

One hundred forty-two New Yorkers out of eight and a half million. And yet, if anything united each person sitting

\$9 for coffee on the same block? Where else could a Muslim kid like me grow up eating bagels and lox every Sunday?

That love will be our guide as we pursue our agenda. Here, where the language of the New Deal was born, we will return the vast resources of this city to the workers who call it home. Not only will we make it possible for every New Yorker to afford a life they love once again; we will overcome the isolation that too many feel and connect the people of this city to one another.

The cost of childcare will no longer discourage young adults from starting a family, because we will deliver universal childcare for the many by taxing the wealthiest few.

Those in rent-stabilized homes will no longer dread the latest rent hike, because we will freeze the rent.

Getting on a bus without worrying about a fare hike or whether you'll be able to get to your destination on time will no longer be deemed a small miracle, because we will make buses fast and free.

These policies are not simply about the costs we make free but the lives we fill with freedom. For too long in our city, freedom has belonged only to those who can afford to buy it. Our City Hall will change that.

These promises carried our movement to City Hall, and they will carry us from the rallying cries of a campaign to the realities of a new era in politics.

Two Sundays ago, as snow softly fell, I spent 12 hours at the Museum of the Moving Image in Astoria, listening to New Yorkers from every borough as they told

across from me, it was the shared recognition that this moment demands a new politics and a new approach to power.

We will deliver nothing less as we work each day to make this city belong to more of its people than it did the day before.

Here is what I want you to expect from the administration that this morning moved into the building behind me.

We will transform the culture of City Hall from one of “no” to one of “how?”

We will answer to all New Yorkers, not to any billionaire or oligarch who thinks they can buy our democracy.

We will govern without shame and insecurity, making no apology for what we believe. I was elected as a democratic socialist, and I will govern as a democratic socialist. I will not abandon my principles for fear of being deemed radical. As the great senator [Bernie Sanders] from Vermont once said, “What's radical is a system which gives so much to so few and denies so many people the basic necessities of life.”

We will strive each day to ensure that no New Yorker is priced out of any one of those basic necessities.

And throughout it all we will, in the words of Jason Terrance Phillips, better known as Jadakiss or J to the Muah, be “outside”—because this is a government of New York, by New York, and for New York.

Before I end, I want to ask all of you, if you are able, whether you are here today or anywhere watching, to stand with me.

I ask you to stand with us now and every day that follows. City Hall will not be

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If You're Not Free to Oppose a Genocide, Your Society Is Not Free

By Caitlin Johnstone

If the right to free speech does not include the right to oppose an active genocide using strong and unmitigated language, then there is no freedom of speech.

This is exactly the sort of thing that freedom of speech is intended for: times when the government is doing something wrong which needs to be ferociously opposed. That's the primary reason it's an enshrined value in our society. Freedom of speech is for holding the powerful to account.

If you only have freedom of speech when you're agreeing with your government and saying nothing which inconveniences the powerful, then Saudi Arabia has free speech. Every tyrannical regime that has ever existed has had freedom of speech by those standards. You don't measure a society's freedom by how much its citizenry are allowed to agree with their government, you measure it by how much they're allowed to disagree.

And right now we are being told we're not allowed to disagree. We're being told the protests need to stop, the anti-genocide chants need to be criminalized, and



everyone needs to shut up and obey—all justified by the completely baseless narrative that the words and actions of pro-Palestinian activists were somehow responsible a terrible massacre that was committed in Sydney last week.

And these policies just so happen to serve the interests of the very same western powers whose genocide-enabling actions were being forcefully opposed these last two years. Government officials constantly being protested and questioned about their facilitation of Israel's genocidal atrocities. Politicians who are con-

sistently confronted by anti-genocide demonstrators during their public appearances. Wealthy arms manufacturers whose profit margins are being harmed by direct action from activist groups. Plutocratic media institutions who are becoming more and more discredited in the public eye as the Gaza holocaust exposes them all. Billionaires whose empires are built upon the political status quo that gave rise to the genocide in question.

If the powerful are shutting down speech rights to advance their own interests in your society, then your society is

not meaningfully different than the dictatorships the western world tries to contrast itself with. All our stories about living in a free society have been just that: stories. Fairy tales.

That's what they're telling us with this mad rush to stomp out freedom of speech this past week. They are telling us that we do not live in the kind of society we were taught about in school. They are telling us that the only reason we were allowed to speak as we pleased in the years leading up to the Gaza genocide is because we were a bunch of compliant sheep who were not meaningfully challenging the interests of the powerful, and now that we are meaningfully challenging them the facade of freedom and democracy is falling away.

As Frank Zappa once said, "The illusion of freedom will continue as long as it's profitable to continue the illusion. At the point where the illusion becomes too expensive to maintain, they will just take down the scenery, they will pull back the curtains, they will move the tables and chairs out of the way and you will see the brick wall at the back of the theater."

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Vanity Vandalism: Trump's Versailles on the Potomac

By Michael Steven Smith

Donald Trump's giant back hoes have knocked down the east wing of the White House to construct a ballroom in his own honor.

The second president of United States, the learned and thoughtful John Adams, lived in "the peoples house" as it became known. Alone in the newly constructed building in 1800, he walked up the stairs to his bedroom lighting the way by a candle to write letters back to his wife Abigail, who stayed at home in Massachusetts attending their farm.

Trump said he loved the White House and wouldn't touch it. Then he knocked down half of it to build a 90,000 square-foot ballroom. The remaining White House is 33,000 square feet. The ballroom will have gold leaf on the ceiling.

Trump's Versailles on the Potomac will cost a quarter billion dollars, He got the money to build it from a section of the corporate class.

Hitler's fascist party, the Nazis, got money from the German capital class. The clothing manufacturer Hugo Boss, the car manufacturers Mercedes and Volkswagen, the manufacturer of the poison gas used in the gas chambers I B Farben... You get the picture.

Ninety years later in America sections of the corporate class are donating to our

fascist president. Google gave him \$22 million. Palantir gave money. Peter Thiel is a big investor. He's the man who gave us JD Vance by financing his Senate career in Ohio.

Lockheed Martin gave \$10 million. They're a major defense contractor in America, although in keeping with the change of the Defense Department name, we should call Lockheed a war contractor.

Booze Alan Hamilton donated money. They provided advice and surveillance during the Iraq war which killed 500,000 Iraqis.

Nexteraenergy is a contributor. Remember, Trump says that climate changes a "hoax."

R.J Reynolds donated money. They make cigarettes: Camels, Winston, Pall Mall. Salem and Newport are their menthol line. Cigarettes kill 480,000 Americans a year, 44,000 by secondhand smoke.

German capitalism in the 1930s was threatened by a powerful organized working class. So the German capitalists made a deal with Hitler's Nazi party. They helped Hitler come to power and in return Hitler crushed the German working class, beginning with the socialists and communists.

Then he turned on the Jews, whom he scapegoated along with Slavs, Roma, people with disabilities, homosexuals and



communists.

In America, Trump has made a deal with a section of the capitalist class. Some will get their names sketched in stone on the wall in the new White House ballroom. It is all about access and influence.

Trump calls us "lunatic communists and Marxists." He scapegoats immigrants and brown people calling them murderers and rapists, getting them snatched up off our streets and deported.

The new gargantuan ballroom is a monument to American fascism. As the great German playwright Bertolt Brecht wrote, in order to honestly talk about fascism you have to talk about capitalism from which it springs. We do—and we talk honestly, unlike the lying vulgarian who

wants to take us down even as he builds this monstrosity.

Michael Steven Smith is the author, editor, and co-editor of many books, including Imagine: Living In a Socialist U.S.A. and The Emerging Police State, by William M. Kunstler. He lives and practices law in New York City with his wife Debby (and Charlie). Michael Smith has also organized and chaired the Left Forum. He is co-host of the Pacifica radio show Law and Disorder and is a longtime member of the National Lawyers Guild and a former board member of the Center for Constitutional Rights. His most recent book, written with his wife Debby Smith, is Parrot Tales: Our Life With a Magical Bird.

Hitler, Pinochet

... continued from page 1

Pinochet, and other dictators who transformed cruelty into a governing philosophy. Central to such regimes lies a single, devastating truth: the law collapses the moment violence becomes its substitute. In this descent, due process evaporates, political opponents are rebranded as “terrorists,” and violence becomes the organizing principle of power. Independent media are smeared or silenced, universities are targeted for their critical capacities, and the spectacle of brown-shirted, goose-stepping thugs hunting down racialized others slips back into public view as a normalized, even celebrated, form of civic life.

Policies soaked in blood are repackaged as entertainment, folded into a culture industry that echoes the aestheticized fascism of Leni Riefenstahl, spectacles designed to numb, seduce, and train the public in the pleasures of violence. The brutality unleashed by the Trump administration against critics, immigrants, cities, political enemies, and so-called terrorists is more than an echo of fascism’s mobilizing passions; it is a signal of what is to come. Its endpoint can be found in the concentration camps and gulags of the 20th century. And the road to the camps always begins the same way: with the brutalization of the innocent in modern-day torture chambers.

This is the central lesson of the illegal abduction and exile of Venezuelans to one of the most notorious prisons in El Salvador—a maximum-security torture chamber

What emerges here is not simply a catalogue of human-rights abuses, nor merely the grotesque suspension of due process; it is the language of barbarism made policy, brutality elevated to the level of governance.

run by Nayib Bukele. It is a canary in the coal mine, a rehearsal for the next stage of violence that will be unleashed on Americans. More than 200 Venezuelan migrants were seized and sent to a notorious maximum-security torture dungeon in El Salvador run by Nayib Bukele, a ruthless dictator, punished not for crimes, but for the ink on their skin. Their tattoos were read as threats, their bodies as evidence. Later, they were deported to Venezuela as part of a large-scale prisoner ex-



change among the United States, Venezuela, and El Salvador, an arrangement that saw ten Americans held in Venezuela freed in return for the Venezuelan deportees.

As reported in *The New York Times*, many of the men testified that while imprisoned “they were shackled, beaten, shot with rubber bullets and tear gassed until they passed out. They said they were punished in a dark room called the island, where they were trampled, kicked and forced to kneel for hours. One man said officers thrust his head into a tank of water to simulate drowning. Another said he was forced to perform oral sex on guards wearing hoods.”

What emerges here is not simply a catalogue of human-rights abuses, nor merely the grotesque suspension of due process; it is the language of barbarism made policy, brutality elevated to the level of governance. These acts, carried out under the pretext of fighting terrorism, reveal themselves for what they are: the state-sanctioned machinery of a racialized war, a campaign of terror unleashed by the Trump regime against immigrants. Such violence does more than break bodies, it shreds the very fabric of a democratic society—teaching a lesson no nation should ever teach: that some lives can be debased with impunity.

The dreams of annihilation extend from the genocidal slaughter of indigenous populations to its updated colonial and racialized version in American slavery, Hitler’s dreams of racial purity, and Trump and Miller’s embrace of the delusions of white nationalism and white supremacy are back. The Mein Kampf dream-world of masters and servants no longer parade as a fixed repository of history; they have become the present modeled after history.

We live in a world in which stupidity and cowardice no longer hide in the shadows, it now thrives in a culture of massive inequality, precarity, racism, misogyny,

and moral collapse. The vans of death are designed not just for immigrants, trans people, and Black and brown people, they are eager to come for anyone who does not surrender to fascist cult led by Trump and his barbaric ilk. The horror inflicted on more than 200 Venezuelans in Bukele’s torture chamber was not an endpoint but a prelude, an experiment in something far more expansive and deadly.

History offers echoes and warnings, and writers who lived through earlier dictatorships remind us of their enduring lessons. Ariel Dorfman, writing about the barbarous Pinochet regime, reminds us that the lessons of history matter as both a form of moral witnessing and a source of collective resistance. He makes clear with a sense of urgency that “that ordinary men and women can find at the most dire and dangerous moments in their lives, the courage and wisdom to resist injustice, so that the crimes of their day—and, alas, of ours—need not be endlessly repeated tomorrow.” We can only hope that in such dark times his words represent more than a warning but also a call to action.

Henry A. Giroux currently holds the McMaster University Chair for Scholarship in the Public Interest in the English and Cultural Studies Department and is the Paulo Freire Distinguished Scholar in Critical Pedagogy. His latest book is *The Burden of Conscience: Educating Beyond the Veil of Silence* (Bloomsbury in 2025).

Portrait of a Young G.I. as an Artist

By Doug Rawlings

Emerging from their war—
a time and a place
where strangers wanted him dead
and his elders preferred him dancing
on a string—
he returns to us as Lazarus on steroids

Discharged back into the world
that didn’t want her back
she is fast becoming
our very own identity crisis
trying to pull her humanity out
from underneath their manufactured rage

Not to understand why or how—

for the sake of you or me—
but merely to survive
in a world they can claim as their own
in a world of their own design

To pass on to others
some artifact shimmering
with their pain and despair—
not for your pity or mine—
and certainly not for praise

But for our children’s sake
as they yearn in our shadows
to craft their own world
free of war memorials
free of uniforms dripping with medals
free of patriotic charades



Photo: Ellen Davidson

Mohammed Ibrahim Is Free

Now for the rest of our political prisoners

By Post-9/11 Veterans For Peace

Veterans For Peace celebrates the release of 16-year-old Mohammed Ibrahim, a Palestinian American boy who Israel's IDF illegally abducted in February of 2025. This victory stems from the pressure exerted by hundreds of organizations, the efforts of tens of thousands of people in the streets, calling embassies, and emailing representatives, as well as the undying resilience of the Palestinian people.

Now, with Mohammed safe in his family's arms, we refuse to forget the thousands of Palestinian political prisoners being held in the same brutal, inhumane conditions that Mohammed was held in. The boys who were kidnapped along with Mohammed remain in prison. Hundreds, possibly thousands, of children are held behind bars and subject to systematic torture, meant to humiliate, coerce confessions, and indefinitely detain Palestinians, many of whom are held without charge. Under Israeli Apartheid and occupation, children as young as 12 years old can be imprisoned and then transferred to adult prisons at the age of 14. We emphasize that their lack of a U.S. passport does not diminish their humanity, and we affirm our commitment to fight for their release just as we did for Mohammed's.

As veterans, we recognize these practices all too well. We witnessed and even participated in military occupations abroad and returned to violent policing at home. We know that Israel's prison regime is not an aberration; it mirrors the violence of our own. The prison-industrial complex holds people in abusive conditions for multitudes of years and subjects them to modern-day slavery: working hours a day for pennies. Many of these people are from poor communities—black people, brown peo-



As Veterans For Peace, we understand that the military prison system holding innocent Palestinians is merely a reflection of ours. It is a system meant to keep the status quo; it is a system meant to humiliate; it is a system meant to keep the ruling class—here, our wealthy, in Palestine, the occupying state of Israel—in power.

While Mohammed recovers from 9 months of trauma inflicted upon him by Israeli forces, we must not rest

ported Mohammed's release, and demand they extend that same concern to the thousands of imprisoned Palestinian children whose names they do not speak.

- Join marches, rallies, and vigils demanding freedom for all Palestinian prisoners and an end to U.S. military funding that makes these abuses possible.

- Organize in your communities against the U.S. prison-industrial complex and the global systems of militarism that sustain it.

Israel has shown that it can kidnap, torture, and even kill U.S. citizens in the West Bank with impunity. Mohammed's first cousin was among those killed with silence from the U.S. government. We demand full justice for Sayfollah and for Mohammed's illegal kidnapping, outside of the failed, biased frameworks that have allowed these crimes to continue even today.

Veterans For Peace stands unequivocally for the liberation of all political prisoners, from the U.S. prison-industrial system, to the hunger strikers in the UK, to the thousands of Palestinians held without charge in Israel.

Free Palestine, justice for Sayfollah, and free every one of our political prisoners.

The Veterans For Peace Post-9/11 Caucus organizes former U.S. military members with terms of "service" during or after Sept. 11, 2001. We're the next generation of VFP and we're stepping into our voice and our power.

*Israel has shown that it can kidnap, torture,
and even kill U.S. citizens in the West Bank with impunity.
Mohammed's first cousin was among those killed with
silence from the U.S. government.*

ple, even our fellow veterans—trapped in a system meant to continue the cycle of incarceration. Both systems of injustice are wielded by the wealthy and those profiting off the systematic genocide of the Palestinian people, as well as the violence being perpetrated against poor communities in the U.S.. We must reject these systems meant to deny personhood to our oppressed comrades.

now. We call for continued action and advocacy to bring home all of our political prisoners—those being held without charge in occupied Palestine and those being held for speaking out against injustice here in the U.S. or for existing as an oppressed people.

We urge the public and our members to:

- Call your representatives. Thank those who sup-

Hole in the World

By Anthony Alessandrini

For Refaat Alareer

On the day you were murdered
I did many of the things
you would have done if alive—
woke up, kissed my daughter, went
to work, taught a few curious souls
a little about reading a poem—
then read the news in which
your name appeared without
you there anymore. Your assassins
were thorough.

On the day you were murdered
I was not. I came home and read

to my daughter and made her supper.
Whatever your killers could have
accused you of—being a poet,
being a teacher, being a lover
of the world and a hater
of those killers by the numbers—
that's me too. But I'm here
where the bombs began
their journey, not there
where they found their final
home. Therefore: I'm alive
while you are not.

Poems, I tell
the students, are made of
simple things yoked together
to make the unimaginable
exist. A new thing previously
unthinkable.

On the day you were
no more I wanted to be able
to hold my daughter in my arms
and tell her a story. I didn't
want to speak of your children
missing you forever I didn't want
to tell her we never met
and never will. Where
in this poem

where in this world
does the word genocide go?

If I must die
you wrote
let it bring hope
let it be a tale

I write this poem
and it makes nothing

happen. Nevertheless
the hole in the world
where you still should be
is real. Those left behind
to labor with words:

let us
make some poems to fit
the form of your absence.

Anthony Alessandrini is professor of Middle Eastern Studies at The CUNY Graduate Center, where he is a member of the Committee on Globalization and Social Change. He is the author of Frantz Fanon and the Future of Cultural Politics; the editor of Frantz Fanon: Critical Perspectives; and the co-editor of "Resistance Everywhere": The Gezi Protests and Dissident Visions of Turkey.

The Beautiful Game Is Getting Ugly

By Whitney Curry Wimbish and Emma Janssen

WASHINGTON DC—Inside the Kennedy Center, FIFA President Gianni Infantino was hanging a gold medal around the neck of his “close friend” Donald Trump and giving him a hefty golden peace trophy.

“The FIFA Peace Prize is awarded annually,” Infantino said of the new award

[FIFA President Gianni Infantino has been Trump’s number one enabler. FIFA is not going to engage in anything resembling isolating Trump, said [political science professor Jules Boykoff].

nobody has ever won before from his supposedly apolitical organization. The pair were at the landmark arts venue for a floor show—like event before officials drew brackets of teams to play this summer’s World Cup tournament, to be held in Canada, Mexico, and the United States. FIFA took over the building for free and displaced scheduled National Symphony Orchestra concerts, according to The Washington Post; it closed down nearby streets for multiple blocks and forced drivers into inconvenient detours.

“This is truly one of the great honors of my life. And beyond awards, we saved millions and millions of lives,” Trump said in a kind of acceptance speech, referring to a series of conflicts around the world he likes to say he stopped, despite contradictory statements from the people involved in the conflicts. “The fact that we could do that, so many different wars that were able to end in some cases right before they started, it was great to get them done,” he continued, claiming without proof that “the world is a safer place now.”

Outside was an entirely different scene. Dozens of protesters had gathered as close as they could to the Kennedy Center, holding up soccer-style red cards that said, “deadly sanctions,” “bombing boats,” and “racist travel bans.” They flew a giant Palestinian flag and mourned the at least 437 Gazan soccer players murdered in the ongoing U.S.-backed Israeli genocide, according to the Palestinian Football Association. The dead include Suleiman al-Obeid, the Pele of Palestine, whom Israeli soldiers murdered as he waited in line for food in Rafah.

Protesters had a cartoonishly huge soccer ball, which they pushed into a stack of

oversized cardboard ice cubes. “No ICE in my cup!” another series of signs said. Big snowflakes showered down. A phalanx of cops stood within throwing distance. Protesters set up a table with hot cocoa.

The protest, organized by activists and soccer fans, including the group Get Free, want white supremacy out of soccer. Trump colludes with FIFA billionaires, the group argues, and is using “the beautiful game” to promote his message and vision ahead of America’s 250th birthday. It’s one of the many protests that are expected ahead of next summer’s World Cup games, said political observers who study sports. The way FIFA conducts itself amid Trump’s immigration terror campaign and the GOP’s decision to slam the doors shut on immigration of all kinds, including tourism, will act as a preview for how the administration will treat the Summer Olympics in Los Angeles in 2028, they said.

“Soccer is about equality and freedom of movement,” said Anthony Torres, a spokesperson for Get Free. But Trump, he said, is erasing that, just as he’s erasing the history and presence of Black and brown people in the U.S., filling up his detention gulags and “bringing us back to the heyday of Jim Crow.”

Get Free is calling for the World Cup to be a platform for humanity, Torres said, and for World Cup leadership to stand up against white supremacy. Protesters from other organizations turned out, too.

“We’re here to send a clear message to Trump that you can’t reconcile ICE with

state. Sometimes, the chant takes over the whole stadium. Now he’s directing his energy toward keeping ICE away from the World Cup. The goal, he said, is to “abolish ICE during the World Cup and get them out of all of our cities.”

World Cup matches will be played in 11 U.S. cities, including Los Angeles, Miami, and New York, all of which have large immigrant populations. Earlier this year, Los Angeles was the site of major ICE operations and counterprotests, and advocates worry that Trump could use the World Cup as a pretense to incite more raids and violence. Protesters like Milic fear that residents without citizenship could be targeted as they try to enjoy the festivities and games next summer.

Those fears are well-founded: Just this July, an asylum seeker was arrested and handed over to ICE after bringing his two children, aged 10 and 14, to watch FIFA’s Club World Cup final in New Jersey. After three months in immigration detention, the man decided not to appeal when a judge rejected his asylum claim, prioritizing leaving detention above all else. He was returned to his country of origin, according to Human Rights Watch.

Closer to the Kennedy Center, soccer fans lined up for hours to get inside, and by noon a few were still making their way through the snow to get in. They, too, were concerned about the upcoming event. One fan, who declined to share his name and who planned to watch the draw at a coffee shop nearby, said he was supporting the team from Iran.

Under Trump’s travel ban, Iranian of-

“softer” forms of diplomacy, like international sporting events, have the exact same goal as “harder” forms, “then I’m not sure it’s such an amazing goal,” he said before heading indoors. “But if it’s in the spirit of brotherhood, then that’s great.”

Jules Boykoff, professor and department chair in the department of political science at Pacific University and an ex-professional soccer player, said in a phone interview that among the open questions for the June matches are not just whether Trump’s anti-immigration policies will affect players. It’s also unclear how those policies will affect international fans.

‘The fact that the World Cup draw is in D.C. is a testament to that. They made it as easy as possible for Trump to be there,’ he said.

He said he didn’t know how someone from Latin America could come into a U.S. sports event, given that the Supreme Court just ruled that Immigration and Customs Enforcement can use race as a reason to disappear someone. “You gotta be a real sports nut to do that,” he said.

Boykoff added that he doubted whether FIFA would take any steps to meet the kinds of demands demonstrators were making.

“Gianni Infantino has been Trump’s number one enabler. FIFA is not going to engage in anything resembling isolating Trump,” he said. “The fact that the World Cup draw is in D.C. is a testament to that. They made it as easy as possible for Trump to be there.”

The protesters kept chanting even as the event got under way and the snow came down heavier. They took turns kicking the massive inflatable soccer ball into the paper blocks of “ICE,” which went tumbling down onto the concrete.

They cheered. “Gooooooaaaaa!”

Whitney Curry Wimbish is a staff writer at *The American Prospect*. She previously worked in the *Financial Times* newsletters division, *The Cambodia Daily* in Phnom Penh, and the *Herald News* in New Jersey. Her work has been published in multiple outlets, including *The New York Times*, *The Baffler*, *Los Angeles Review of Books*, *Music & Literature*, *North American Review*, *Sentient*, *Semafor*, and elsewhere. She is a coauthor of *The Majority Report’s* daily newsletter and publishes short fiction in a range of literary magazines.

Emma Janssen is a writing fellow at *The American Prospect*, where she reports on anti-poverty policy, health, and political power. Before joining the *Prospect*, she was at UChicago studying political philosophy, editing for *The Chicago Maroon*, and freelancing for the *Hyde Park Herald*.



Demonstrators protest the FIFA 2026 World Cup draw taking place at the nearby Kennedy Center, Dec. 5, 2025, in Washington. Photo: Francis Chung/POLITICO

soccer culture,” said Slobodan Milic, a protester with Free DC and avid fan of D.C. United, the local MLS team. “Soccer is the most democratic game there is. Everyone tries to hit the ball.”

After chatting briefly about PSV Eindhoven’s recent upset win over Liverpool—“It was on Liverpool’s own turf!”—Milic returned to politics. Along with his fellow D.C. United fans, he said, he spends the 51st minute of every game chanting, “Free D.C.!” in reference to the long-standing push to make D.C. the 51st

officials have been barred from coming into the U.S. since June. Trump’s executive order made exemptions for athletes, support staff, and immediate relatives for the World Cup event, but not necessarily for Friday’s draw. Iranian officials had planned to boycott the draw, but Iranian media on Thursday reported that the team’s coach would attend, according to the Associated Press.

One fan stood outside the security line, holding hands with a woman as snowflakes gathered on their thick jackets. If

Ecosocialism or extinction:

Defending Life, Building Free Territories and Ecosocialism From and for the Peoples

Statement from the Second Ecosocialist Meeting, held in Belém, Brazil, November 2025, with participation of 99 organizations and more than 350 people, including a strong presence of organizations representing Indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants.

We don't sell our land because it is like our mother. Our territory is our body. And we don't sell our body. We don't sell our mother. We wouldn't sell it, because it is sacred.

And we start suffering pressures of invasion, pressure from mining, from agribusiness, which has expanded a lot, pressure from logging companies, which are deforesting our territories. And we have been resisting.

—Auricelia Arapiun, Coordinator of Indigenous Organizations of the Brazilian Amazon (COIAB).



In the Light of the New Year

By Four Arrows

At this turning of the light, may we remember that we are the youngest relatives.

Before us came the trees, the four-leggeds, the swimmers, the crawlers, the flyers, and the rooted ones. They were given the Original Instructions for living in balance, and they still carry that wisdom.

May this new year invite us to listen more carefully to our older teachers, to place their well-being before convenience or profit, and to walk again in reciprocity with all our relations.

May we move forward with humility, gratitude, respect, and responsibility, in ways that reflect on the fact that that our future depends on honoring those who have always shown us how to live, and against all odds, are still trying to do so.

Woyuonihan (respectfully),
Four Arrows (Wahinkpe Topa), aka D.T. Jacobs, PhD, EdD

nator of Indigenous Organizations of the Brazilian Amazon (COIAB).

We gather at a moment of profound capitalist attacks on life, within the framework of the actions organized by the peoples in response to COP30. This meeting has allowed us, once again, to reaffirm that both the rise of the far right and the false solutions proposed by governments that call themselves progressive (yet do not hesitate to privatize the commons or facilitate attacks against peoples and leaders who face daily the consequences of the logic of infinite capital growth in their territories) push us to struggle for a world in which living systems are at the center of all

our political constructions, and to forcefully reject any attempt at intimidation.

We have seen an example of what happens when, instead of strengthening the struggles of peoples who defend their territories at the risk of their own lives, the defenders of progressive neoliberalism place themselves at the service of capital and predatory extractivism. The political threats suffered by our Indigenous comrade Auricelia Arapiun during her intervention in our roundtable on the current conjuncture clearly reveal a sector acting within communities to sow fear and fragmentation. Yet we—just as Auricelia expressed in her response to the threat—neither remain silent nor compromise.

The offensive of the far right also manifests in our territories through attempts to violate our sovereignty, reproducing the same logics of subjugation and domination that existed in the past and persist today. Against this imperialist offensive, we, ecosocialists, defend a united front to resist and protect ourselves.

Ecosocialism, as a tool to build another world, has become necessary and urgent. The accelerating destruction of ecosystems' capacity for reproduction and the neocolonial and imperialist character of the supposed alternatives proposed by the very system that created the current climate emergency represent a threat to our continuity as a species, leading us toward a point of no return.

Faced with this challenge, the only possible path is the coordinated organization of our struggles in order to surpass the capitalist system. The organized struggle of peoples, their resistance to systems of domination, and their progress in building other worlds founded on solidarity, complementarity, and reciprocity—respecting the knowledge and cosmologies of different peoples as well as their legitimate rights to self-defense and self-determination—form the fundamental basis of our strategy.

These days of debate brought together representatives of peoples in struggle from different regions of Abya Yala [an Indigenous name for the Americas, meaning "Continent of life"—ed.] and



Auricelia Arapiun, Coordinator of Indigenous Organizations of the Brazilian Amazon (COIAB).

other continents, who have raised their voices globally to denounce that capitalist and imperialist extractivisms are causing environmental and human destruction in many territories. It is necessary to strengthen the alliances among peoples in resistance in order to combat this destruction, while consolidating forms of life-production historically developed by the peoples and today threatened by the contamination and appropriation of water, land, and air by transnational corporations and governments.

The voices of Indigenous peoples were central in this gathering, identifying a shared context of colonialism, invasion, dispossession, extractivism, and false solutions—accompanied by pol-

icies of annihilation and genocide, which not only kill but also render these peoples invisible through criminalization and persecution. At this stage, we see the relationship between body and territory as a fabric where structural violence resides, but also the struggle for life. This struggle manifests in alternative forms of resistance, through the valorization and articulation of knowledge and cosmologies in which ancestry and nature are inseparable; and through self-defense, self-determination, community life, and the importance of hope and unity across territories.

These struggles for life also appear in ecofeminisms, highlighting the struggles of women and feminized bodies across dif-



ferent territories of Abya Yala as they confront the close and historical relationship between capitalism and the violence inflicted on the land, the territories, and women.

From the various forms of extractivism emerges a violence expressed through the contamination and destruction of land; the predation and theft of our commons; the fragmentation of cultural perspectives; and upon the feminized, impoverished, and racialized bodies of thousands of women of the Global South.

This analysis, in addition to identifying capitalism as the structural origin of all territorial violence, also proposes solutions capable of overcoming these contradictions—such as community water management, food autonomy, self-government, community justice, and a subversive conception of care. This vision of care arises from a structural critique of the neoliberalization of the care discourse, which continues to support the logic of capital. In contrast, we position ourselves in favor of collective and community care for radical transformation.

Eco-unionism is a fundamental component of the ecosocialist struggle. The fight for more and better working conditions, combined with the awareness that the exploitation of the working class and the dispossession of our commons serve the interests of capital and mutually reinforce each other, creates the conditions needed to mobilize and advance the structural causes of the oppressions we suffer under capitalism. In this sense, rejecting fracking in Colombia, Latin America, the Caribbean, and worldwide is a task we assume with responsibility to contribute to building free territories. We know that this will only be possible if trade unions articulate with social, popular, Indigenous, and peasant movements in each country, while maintaining their autonomy in defending territories, life, and its reproduction. Through internationalist solidarity, we commit to promoting spaces that denounce violations of labor, human, and natural rights.

From within this shared fabric, we unanimously cry out: Free Palestine, from the river to the sea; ceasefire in Gaza; and condemnation of the genocidal State of Israel for the massacre of the Palestinian people, a people who resist, who sow, who maintain the conviction to stand tall—and whom we embrace through internationalist solidarity, multiplying global actions of support such as BDS and the Flotilla, examples of grassroots resistance that the State of Israel considers threats.

We also demand that governments in the region break their relations with Israel, as in the case of agreements with Mevorot, Israel's national water company, which has become an instrument of colonial domination. Water is a common good and, in Palestine, it is used as a political and economic weapon: Israel controls water sources, prevents Palestinians from drilling wells, collecting rainwater, or maintaining cisterns, thereby creating total dependence and a system of water apartheid. Palestine is a laboratory of domination whose techniques spread to other territories, and resistance and solidarity with the Palestinian people must be

global. We, ecosocialists of the world, stand with and build active solidarity with the Palestinian people and their right to exist.

Days before the start of COP30, we once again observe that this space is incapable of responding to the needs of territories; on the contrary, it presents itself as a mechanism for the financialization of nature. This is why we reaffirm our denunciation and rejection of the payment of odious and illegitimate debts, and call for the dismantling of the international mechanisms that drive and legitimize them. These mechanisms mortgage our future in exchange for the delivery of strate-

an alternative to the dominant agro-food system—whose main actors are agribusiness and commodity production—but also a way to restore and rebuild ecosystems, and to break the alien-

We don't sell our land because it is like our mother. Our territory is our body. And we don't sell our body. We don't sell our mother. We wouldn't sell it, because it is sacred.

ation between countryside and city, making it fundamental in the fight against climate change. It is crucial to understand that agroecology cannot exist within green capitalism, as it involves, as a political practice, a structural transformation of current relations of production and life.

Recognizing that ecosocialism has for years worked to build manifestos and programs defining this strategy, we discussed



gic goods that capital needs for its unlimited reproduction. It is essential to dismantle the debt system, which subordinates and limits its capacity for a planned exit from the system.

We expect nothing from these spaces that propose projects such as carbon credits, which—just like TFFF—embrace the narrative that the problem is that the commons are not yet fully commodified and that there exists a “market failure” to overcome. We also denounce governments complicit in ecocidal projects, such as the Brazilian government which, only days before COP30 in Belém—an Amazonian territory—approved offshore oil exploitation at the mouth of the Amazon, and which, during COP30, approved the registration of 30 new pesticides.

We reaffirm agroecology as one of the paths that build our ecosocialist strategy. The production of agroecological food, rooted in peasant and Indigenous traditions, is not only

the next steps and concluded that there can be no ecosocialism without free territories. We are certain that eco-territorial struggles and the construction of a livable world are the path we must follow, strengthening our initiatives in solidarity, and creating spaces where we can advance the construction of ecosocialism from and for the peoples.

To reach this goal, it is necessary to accumulate victories that show us the way. Carrying out mobilizations and campaigns among the different collectives engaged in building this ecosocialist project is essential to consolidate an integrated and internationalist process of coordinated resistance and shared strategy.

The continuation of this struggle and the construction of the ecosocialist program we need, along with the internationalization of the ecosocialist movement, are tasks we began 10 years ago in these gatherings, and which were consolidated with the formation of the Interna-

tionist Network of Ecosocialist Encounters in 2024, following the meeting in Buenos Aires.

Among new initiatives, we announce the Seventh International Ecosocialist Gathering, to be held in Belgium in May 2026; the International Ecosocialist Seminar, to be held in Brazil as part of the First International Anti-Fascist Conference; and the Third Latin American and Caribbean Ecosocialist Gathering, in 2027, in Colombia. We are convinced that these gatherings must transcend borders and generate common actions of struggle capable of striking simultaneously at the concentrated powers of capitalist extractivism in each territory where we are present.

However, Ecosocialist Gatherings alone are not enough to advance the construction of a program truly rooted in concrete struggles. For this reason, we propose the creation of joint actions and campaigns on Palestine, fossil fuels, mining, debt, and free trade agreements; the defense of water; the struggle

America the Rogue State



Murder Most Foul by Mr. Fish.

By Chris Hedges

The ruling class of the United States, severed from a fact-based universe and blinded by idiocy, greed, and hubris, has immolated the internal mechanisms that prevent dictatorship, and the external mechanisms designed to protect against a lawless world of colonialism and gunboat diplomacy.

Our democratic institutions are moribund. They are unable or unwilling to restrain our ruling gangster class. The lobby-infested Congress is a useless appendage. It surrendered its constitutional authority, including the right to declare war and pass legislation, long ago. It sent a paltry 38 bills to Donald Trump's desk to be signed into law last year. Most were "disapproval" resolutions rolling back regulations enacted during the Biden administration. Trump governs by imperial decree through Executive Orders. The media, owned by corporations and oligarchs, from Jeff Bezos to Larry Ellison, is an echo chamber for the crimes of state, including the ongoing genocide of Palestinians; attacks on Iran, Yemen and Venezuela; and the pillage by the billionaire class. Our money-saturated elections are a burlesque. The diplomatic corps, tasked with negotiating treaties and agreements, preventing war, and building alliances, has been dismantled. The courts, despite some rulings by courageous judges, including blocking National Guard deployments to Los Angeles, Portland, and Chicago, are lackeys to corporate power and overseen by a Department of Justice whose primary function is silencing Trump's political enemies.

The corporate-indentured Democratic Party, our purported opposition, blocks the only mechanism that can save us—

popular mass movements and strikes—knowing its corrupt and despised party leadership will be swept aside. Democratic Party leaders treat New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani—a flicker of light in the darkness—as if he has leprosy. Better to let the whole ship go down than surrender their status and privilege.

Dictatorships are one dimensional. They reduce politics to its simplest form: Do what I say or I will destroy you.

Nuance, complexity, compromise, and of course empathy and understanding are beyond the tiny emotional bandwidth of gangsters, including the Gangster-in-Chief.

Dictatorships are a thug's paradise. Gangsters, whether on Wall Street, Silicon Valley or in the White House, cannibalize their own country and pillage the natural resources of other countries.

Dictatorships invert the social order. Honesty, hard work, compassion, solidarity, self-sacrifice are negative qualities. Those who embody these qualities are marginalized and persecuted. The heartless, corrupt, mendacious, cruel and mediocre thrive.

Dictatorships empower goons to keep their victims—at home and abroad—immobilized. Goons from the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Goons from Delta Force, Navy Seals and Black Ops CIA teams, which as any Iraqi or Afghan can tell you are the most lethal death squads on the planet. Goons from the FBI and Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)—seen escorting a handcuffed President Nicolás Maduro in New York—the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and police departments.

Can anyone seriously make the argument that the U.S. is a democracy? Are there any democratic institutions that function? Is there any check on state power?

Is there any mechanism that can enforce the rule of law at home, where legal residents are snatched by masked thugs from our streets, where a phantom "radical left" is an excuse to criminalize dissent, where the highest court in the land bestows king-like power and immunity on Trump? Can anyone pretend that with the demolition of environmental agencies and laws—

which should help us confront the looming ecocide, the gravest threat to human existence—there is any concern for the common good? Can anyone make the argument that the U.S. is the defender of human rights, democracy, a rule-based order and the "virtues" of Western civilization?

Our reigning gangsters will accelerate the decline. They will steal as much as they can, as fast as they can, on the way down. The Trump family has pocketed more than \$1.8 billion in cash and gifts since his 2024 re-election. They do so as they mock the rule of law and tighten their vice-like grip. The walls are closing in. Free speech is abolished on college campuses and the airwaves. Those who decry the genocide lose their jobs or are deported. Journalists are slandered and censored. ICE, powered by Palantir—with a budget of \$170 billion over four years—is laying the foundations for a police state. It has expanded the number of its agents by 120%. It is building a nationwide complex of detention centers, not solely for the undocumented, but for us. Those outside the gates of the empire will fare no better with a \$1 trillion budget for the war machine.

And this brings me to Venezuela, where a head of state and his wife, Cilia Flores, were kidnapped and spirited to New York in open violation of international law and the U.N. Charter.

We have not declared war on Venezuela, but then there was no declared war when we bombed Iran and Yemen. Congress did not approve the kidnapping and bombing of military facilities in Caracas because Congress was not informed.

The Trump administration dressed up the crime—which took the lives of 80 people—as a drug raid and, most bizarrely, as a violation of U.S. firearms statutes: "pos-
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Zohran Mamdani

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able to deliver on our own. And while we will encourage New Yorkers to demand more from those with the great privilege of serving them, we will encourage you to demand more of yourselves as well.

The movement we began over a year ago did not end with our election. It will not end

form lives and something that demands effort from each of us, every single day.

What we achieve together will reach across the five boroughs, and it will resonate far beyond. There are many who will be watching. They want to know if the Left can govern. They want to know if the struggles that afflict them can be solved. They want to know if it is right to hope again.

So, standing together with the wind of purpose at our backs, we will do something

'And while we will encourage New Yorkers to demand more from those with the great privilege of serving them, we will encourage you to demand more of yourselves as well.'

this afternoon. It lives on with every battle we will fight, together; every blizzard and flood we withstand, together; every moment of fiscal challenge we overcome with ambition, not austerity, together; every way we pursue change in working people's interests, rather than at their expense, together.

No longer will we treat victory as an invitation to turn off the news. From today onward, we will understand victory very simply: something with the power to trans-

that New Yorkers do better than anyone else: We will set an example for the world. If what Sinatra said is true, let us prove that anyone can make it in New York—and anywhere else, too. Let us prove that when a city belongs to the people, there is no need too small to be met, no person too sick to be made healthy, no one too alone to feel like New York is their home.

The work continues; the work endures; the work, my friends, has only just begun.

Rogue State

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session of machine guns and destructive devices; and conspiracy to possess machine guns and destructive devices.”

These charges are as absurd as attempting to legitimize the genocide in Gaza as Israel’s “right to defend itself.”

If this was about drugs, former Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández would not have been pardoned by Trump last month, after he was sentenced to 45 years in prison for conspiring to distribute over 400 tons of cocaine in the U.S., a conviction that was justified with far

The U.S., in the end, was booted out of Iraq, although it controls Iraqi oil revenues, which are funnelled to the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. The government in Baghdad is allied with Iran. Its military includes Iran-backed militias in Iraq’s Popular Mobilization Forces. Iraq’s largest trading partners are China, the UAE, India, and Turkey.

The debacles in Afghanistan and Iraq, which cost the American public anywhere from \$4 to \$6 trillion, were the most expensive in U.S. history. None of the architects of these fiascos have been held to account.

Countries singled out for “regime change” implode, as in Haiti, where the

Libya splintered into enclaves led by rival warlords and militias.

The list of disastrous attempts by the U.S. at “regime change” is exhaustive, including in Kosovo, Syria, Ukraine, and Yemen. All are examples of the folly of imperial overreach. All predict where we are headed.

The U.S. has targeted Venezuela since the 1998 election of Hugo Chávez. It was behind a failed coup in 2002. It imposed punishing sanctions over two decades. It

officials from previous administrations, who tried to bend the world to their will.

Our decaying empire stumbles forward like a wounded beast, unable to learn from its disasters, crippled by arrogance and incompetence, torching the rule of law and fantasizing that indiscriminate industrial violence will regain a lost hegemony. Able to project devastating military force, its initial success leads inevitably to self-defeating and costly quagmires.

The tragedy is not that the American

Can anyone seriously make the argument that the U.S. is a democracy? Are there any democratic institutions that function? Is there any check on state power? Is there any mechanism that can enforce the rule of law at home, where legal residents are snatched by masked thugs from our streets?

greater evidence than that which supports the charges levied against Maduro.

But drugs are the pretext.

Flush with success, there is already talk by Trump and his officials about Iran, Cuba, Greenland, and perhaps Colombia, Mexico, and Canada.

Absolute power at home and absolute power abroad expands. It feeds off each lawless act. It snowballs into totalitarianism and disastrous military adventurism. By the time people realize what has happened, it is too late.

Who will rule Venezuela? Who will rule Gaza? Does it matter?

If nations and people do not bow before the great Moloch in Washington, they are bombed. This is not about establishing legitimate rule. It is not about fair elections. It is about using the threat of death and destruction to procure total subservience.

Trump made this clear when he warned interim Venezuelan President Delcy Rodríguez that “if she doesn’t do what’s right, she is going to pay a very big price, probably bigger than Maduro.”

Maduro’s kidnapping was not carried out because of drug trafficking or possession of machine guns. This is about oil. It is, as Trump said, so the U.S. can “run” Venezuela.

“We’re going to have our very large United States oil companies, the biggest anywhere in the world, go in, spend billions of dollars, fix the badly broken infrastructure, the oil infrastructure, and start making money for the country,” Trump said during a press conference Saturday.

Iraqis, a million of whom were killed during the U.S. war and occupation, know what comes next. The infrastructure, modern and efficient under Saddam Hussein—I reported from Iraq under Hussein so can attest to this truth—was destroyed. The Iraqi puppets installed by the U.S. had no interest in governance and reportedly stole some \$150 billion in oil revenues.

U.S., Canada, and France overthrew Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 1991 and 2004. The overthrow ushered in societal and government collapse, gang warfare and exacerbated poverty. The same happened in Honduras when a 2009 U.S.-backed coup removed Manuel Zelaya. The recently pardoned Hernández became president in 2014 and transformed Honduras into a narco-state, as did U.S. puppet Hamid Karzai in Afghanistan, who oversaw the production of 90% of the world’s heroin. And then there is Libya, another country with vast oil reserves. When Muammar Gaddafi was overthrown by NATO during the Obama administration in 2011,

Soldiers Who Said ‘No!’

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ors and wait for orders to attack, but kept senior officers in the dark and sweated it out for several long minutes. It turned out his radar was wrong. The Russians averted nuclear war a second time.

Since 2023 more than 100 Israelis have refused to serve in the IDF and many have served time in prison. Eighteen-year-old Tal Mitnick was sent to prison for refusing to serve in the IDF. He said, “I believe that slaughter cannot solve slaughter. The criminal attack on Gaza won’t solve the atrocious slaughter that Hamas executed. Violence won’t solve violence. And that is why I refuse.” Nineteen-year-old Sophia Orr was jailed for refusing to serve in the Israeli military and spent 84 days in an Israeli prison. Even when she was fifteen she said, “I saw that the ongoing occupation and apartheid was—and still is—enough of a reason to refuse. It became more important to me after the war and the massacre in Gaza began.” In a country where a majority still fervently supports the genocide in Gaza, these “refusniks” as they are called, demonstrate an example of courage to stand for justice that should inspire us all.

Yonatan Shapira was a Captain and Blackhawk helicopter pilot in the Israeli Air Force. In 2003, he helped coordinate the circulation of a letter that was signed by 27 Israeli Air Force pilots that refused to engage in Israeli military actions targeting Palestinians. He said, during one interview, “Eventually what was the most impactful on me was the Israeli Air Force’s [practice of] targeted killing, or they had the different Orwellian names. They called it “targeted elimination,” which is basically shooting missiles and



Venezuelan President Maduro brought by DEA agents and police to court in Manhattan.

tried to anoint opposition politician Juan Guaidó, as “interim president” although he was never elected to the presidency. When this did not work, Guaidó was dumped as callously as Trump abandoned opposition figure and Nobel Peace Prize laureate María Corina Machado. In 2020, we staged a Keystone Cops attempt by ill-trained mercenaries to trigger a popular uprising. None of it worked.

The kidnapping of Maduro begins another debacle. Trump and his minions are no more competent, and probably less so than

empire is dying, it is that it is taking down so many innocents with it.

Chris Hedges is a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, Presbyterian minister, author, and television host. His books include America: The Farewell Tour; American Fascists: The Christian Right and the War on America; and War Is a Force That Gives Us Meaning. He previously worked for the Dallas Morning News, the Christian Science Monitor, and NPR, and hosted the Emmy-nominated RT America show On Contact.



Sophia Orr and Tal Mitnick.

dropping bombs on civilian populations in Gaza and the West Bank.” Explaining his refusal with others in 2003, he said, I felt that I was doing it in order to save Israel from itself or to save my own people from going into a self-destruction wall or hitting the abyss, and that’s when I decided to organize this group of pilots and write a letter and find people that were willing to join me.”

Today, with a dangerous egomaniacal fascist in charge of the U.S. military, these examples serve to encourage and support U.S. troops to maintain their humanity and integrity whenever they receive illegal orders. Veterans For Peace and an entire movement have your backs!

Mike Ferner was a Navy corpsman during the Vietnam War. He was formerly executive director of Veterans For Peace and served as a member of the Toledo City Council. He is the author of Inside the Red Zone: A Veteran For Peace Reports from Iraq.

Trump kidnaps Venezuela's president to steal the country's oil

Employing the 'Donroe Doctrine,' the U.S. launches a deadly attack on Venezuela and lays claim to its oil reserves.

By Aaron Maté

In announcing the U.S. military's attack on Venezuela and kidnapping of President Nicolás Maduro, an operation that reportedly killed at least 40 people, President Trump laid bare his real motive.

Invoking the 1823 Monroe Doctrine, which has underpinned decades of U.S. aggression against Latin American governments, Trump bragged that "they now call it the Donroe Doctrine ... American dominance in the Western Hemisphere won't be questioned again." The main target of that dominance is Venezuela's oil

prisoned leader to the presidential palace.

While the 2002 coup was quickly reversed, the foundation was laid for a



Chávez's death in 2013 of cancer gave Washington and its opposition allies a new opening. Maduro, the chosen successor, lacked Chávez's charisma and would quickly face a drop in the oil prices that had funded the Bolivarian program.

In March 2015, the Obama administration declared Venezuela to be an "extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States." That move, Anya Parampil writes in her essential book "Corporate Coup," hurt Venezuela's economy by sending "international financial institutions a message to steer clear of Venezuela or risk facing Washington's wrath." Upon taking office, the Trump administration escalated that wrath with crippling sanctions targeting Venezuela's oil sector, which accounted for 95% of the country's export revenue. They also engineered the theft of valuable Venezuelan assets, including Citgo, the U.S. subsidiary of its state oil company, and gold reserves held in UK banks.

According to Venezuelan economist Francisco Rodriguez, a harsh critic of Maduro, Trump's sanctions "drove a collapse in oil revenues, contributing to the largest peacetime contraction in modern history." The sanctions also fueled a wave of migrants fleeing their country's dire conditions, as top Trump officials had anticipated. Thomas Shannon, who served as undersecretary for political affairs at the State Department, recalled warning that "the sanctions were going to grind the Venezuelan economy into dust and have huge human consequences, one of which would be out-migration." But for Trump's first term National Security Advisor John Bolton, a proud architect of the sanctions, economic collapse and migration were an intended result. "There was no doubt the sanctions, along with the general economic deterioration before we imposed them, was driving a lot of people out of the country," Bolton said. "... That, to me, was a way to put pressure on the country."

Bolton's admission underscores the cynicism of the Trump policy: knowingly crushing Venezuela's economy, and then solely blaming Maduro for its collapse; and knowingly creating millions of economic migrants, and then demonizing them when running for office.

In his first term, Trump sought to replace Maduro with Venezuelan politician Juan Guaidó, who was recognized by the U.S. as the legitimate president and feted with a bipartisan standing ovation in Congress. While Trump and his successor Joe Biden ultimately abandoned Guaidó, they did not give up on the overall goal. Since taking office last year, Trump has renewed his regime change campaign under the leadership of its biggest champion, Secretary of State Marco Rubio.

One year ago this month, Trump envoy Rick Grenell visited Caracas and successfully negotiated a deal to free American prisoners. Grenell's back-channel diplomacy raised hopes of a broader rapprochement, but Rubio quickly put that to rest. "One of my priorities is to ensure that U.S. foreign policy sends a signal that it's better to be a friend than an enemy," Rubio explained. And Venezuela, Cuba, and Nicaragua—long targets of U.S. regime change—are "enemies of humanity."

Under Rubio's watch, the U.S. escalated its baseless claim that Maduro was overseeing a drug cartel flooding the U.S. with narcotics. Never mind that Maduro's alleged cartel, the Cartel de los Soles, is not an actual organization, and to the extent that it has operated, only did so as a U.S. partner. As CBS News reported in 1993, the CIA worked with a Venezuelan asset to ship cocaine into the U.S. as part of an operation to infiltrate Colombian drug cartels. That operation was informally described as involving the "Cartel de los Soles," a figure of speech referring to corrupted Venezuelan generals. It is for this reason that the Drug Enforcement Ad-

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In March 2015, the Obama Administration declared Venezuela to be an 'extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States.'

reserves, the world's largest. With U.S. oil companies leading the way, Trump vowed, "we're going to get back our oil ... the money coming out of the ground is substantial."

While Trump intends it as a riff on his first name, his signature doctrine is additionally fitting for mirroring the behavior of a Mafia Don: using violence, threats, and sabotage to obtain material wealth.

In Venezuela, that has meant more than two decades of bipartisan U.S. policy to destroy the country's Bolivarian Revolution, which began under Maduro's predecessor Hugo Chávez.

In April 2002, a rogue military faction kidnapped Chávez and installed Pedro Carmona, a business leader with close ties to the George W. Bush administration. (In a tactic that would be replicated in Ukraine's 2014 Maidan coup, snipers fired on both pro and anti-government protesters to provide a pretext for Chávez's ouster, an episode captured in the documentary "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised.")

A de facto dictatorship was imposed under the Carmona Decree, which suspended the country's democratically approved 1999 constitution and dissolved both the National Assembly and Supreme Court. Within 48 hours, a popular uprising of Chávez's supporters, alongside a rescue operation by loyalist members of the Venezuelan military, returned the im-

long-term campaign of regime change. Among the signatories of the anti-democratic Carmona Decree was María Corina Machado, the Venezuelan opposition figure who, along with her allies, has received extensive U.S. government support via regime change conduits the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Machado, who has promised to hand over Venezuela's valuable oil and mineral wealth for U.S. exploitation and openly campaigned for U.S. military intervention, was recently rewarded a Nobel Peace Prize.

The post-coup period coincided with a boom in oil prices, allowing Chávez to devote considerable resources to social welfare benefiting Venezuela's poor majority. By all indicators, his program helped a marginalized population long excluded from Venezuelan politics. Under Chávez, unemployment was reduced by half, extreme poverty sharply reduced, and GDP more than doubled. These social gains, along with Venezuela's open defiance of U.S. hegemony and promotion of Global South cooperation, angered Washington, which has long targeted governments that defy its control. As a State Department cable advised in 1960 about Cuba, the U.S. response would be to impose policies that "decrease monetary and real wages, to bring about hunger, desperation and overthrow of government."

Trump and Rubio Warn Cuba, Mexico and Colombia Could Be Next

Venezuela rejects presence of foreign troops, defense chief says after U.S. strike

By Jake Johnson

U.S. President Donald Trump and top administration officials, including Secretary of State Marco Rubio, characterized Saturday's assault on Venezuela and abduction of the country's president as a warning shot in the direction of Cuba, Mexico, Colombia, and other Latin American nations.

During the Jan. 3 press conference, Trump openly invoked the Monroe Doctrine—an assertion of U.S. dominance of the Western Hemisphere—and said his campaign of aggression against Venezuela represented the “Donroe Doctrine” in action.

In his unwieldy remarks, Trump called out Colombian President Gustavo Petro by name, accusing him without evidence of “making cocaine and sending it to the

United States.”

“So he does have to watch his ass,” the U.S. President said of Petro, who condemned the Trump administration's Saturday attack on Venezuela as “aggression against the sovereignty of Venezuela and Latin America.”

Petro responded defiantly to the possibility of the U.S. targeting him, writing on social media that he is “not worried at all.”

In a Fox News appearance earlier, Trump also took aim at the United States' southern neighbor, declaring ominously that “something's going to have to be done with Mexico,” which also denounced the attack on Venezuela and abduction of President Nicolás Maduro.

“She is very frightened of the cartels,” Trump said of Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum. “So we have to do something.”

Rubio, for his part, focused on Cuba—a country whose government he has long sought to topple.

“If I lived in Havana and I was in the government, I'd be concerned, at least a



little bit,” Rubio, who was born in Miami to Cuban immigrant parents, said during the Jan. 3 press conference.

That the Trump administration wasted no time threatening other nations as it pledged to control Venezuela indefinitely sparked grave warnings, with the leadership of Progressive International cautioning that “this armed attack on Venezuela is not an isolated event.”

“It is the next step in the United States' campaign of regime change that stretches

States,” the coalition said in a statement. “This renewed declaration of impunity from Washington is a threat to all nations around the world.”

“Trump has clearly articulated the imperial logic of this intervention—to seize control over Venezuela's natural resources and reassert U.S. domination over the hemisphere,” said Progressive International. “The ‘Trump corollary’ to the Monroe Doctrine—applied in recent hours with violent force over the skies of



Venezuela Defense Minister Vladimir Padrino (right) said early Jan. 3 after the U.S. strike, ‘Free, independent, and sovereign Venezuela rejects with all the strength of its history, the presence of these foreign troops, which have only brought death, pain and destruction in their wake.’

“The ‘Trump corollary’ to the Monroe Doctrine—applied in recent hours with violent force over the skies of Caracas—is the single greatest threat to peace and prosperity that the Americas confront today.”

from Caracas to Havana—and an attack on the very principle of sovereign equality and the prospects for the Zone of Peace once established by the Community of Latin American and Caribbean

Caracas—is the single greatest threat to peace and prosperity that the Americas confront today.”

Jake Johnson is a staff writer for Common Dreams.

Kidnapping

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ministration and State Department's annual reports on the drug trade have never even mentioned the “Cartel de los Soles” by name. And while accusing Maduro of heading a fictional drug operation, Trump recently pardoned the former Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández, a convicted narco-trafficker who accepted more than \$1 million in bribes to transmit drugs through Honduras and was caught on tape vowing to “stuff the drugs up the gringos' noses.”

Trump and Rubio have made equally dubious claims about Maduro directing the gang Tren de Aragua (TDA), the pretext for deporting Venezuelan immigrants to a torture-ridden prison in El Salvador without due process. The Trump administration's rationale was undermined ear-

lier this year by a U.S. intelligence report that concluded that the Venezuelan government “probably does not have a policy of cooperating with TDA and is not directing” its activities in the United States.

Unburdened by the facts and contemptuous of international law, the Trump team escalated this fall with a military buildup in the Caribbean and regular bombings of boats it claimed were shipping drugs. The U.S. also opened a new campaign of piracy, seizing Venezuelan tankers to ensure that Venezuelans can't even benefit from the oil that they manage to produce under crippling sanctions. Trump, the Wall Street Journal explained, “sees the more aggressive campaign as a foreign-policy win that could be an economic boon for the U.S. given Venezuela's vast reserves of oil and other natural resources.”

Under these conditions of economic strangulation and military aggression, it

is no surprise that Trump and Rubio finally got their man. The fact that Maduro was seized by U.S. forces with little resistance indicates that Washington had cooperation inside the Venezuelan leader's inner circle. As for the broader public, Venezuela is deeply divided, a split deliberately exacerbated by years of crippling sanctions.

What happens next in Venezuela, where Maduro's remaining government is still in power under Vice President Delcy Rodríguez, remains to be seen. In his remarks, Trump threatened a second invasion, a clear threat to Maduro's successors for complete submission.

The one certainty is that the Trump team's aggression does not end in Caracas. In their public comments on Saturday, Trump and Rubio identified more potential targets. Colombian President Gustavo Petro, a critic of the campaign against Venezuela, “does have to watch

his ass,” Trump declared. As for another critic, Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum, arguably Latin America's most popular leader, “something's going to have to be done with Mexico,” he added. And Rubio, who has long sought regime change in his family's country of origin, offered his own threat: “If I lived in Havana and I was in the government, I'd be concerned, at least a little bit.”

Under the Donroe doctrine, the warning applies to any vulnerable state that resists American dominance.

Aaron Maté is a Canadian writer and journalist. He hosts the show Pushback with Aaron Maté on The Grayzone and fills in as a host on the Useful Idiots podcast. Maté has worked as a reporter and producer for Democracy Now!, Vice, The Real News Network, and Al Jazeera, and has contributed to The Nation.

Not Too Late for the World to Redeem Itself on Gaza

By Mais Al-Reem Hussein

Last month, I was waiting for a shared taxi at the Nuseirat roundabout when I witnessed a heartbreaking scene. As I stood by the side of the road, I felt a small hand tugging at my clothes. I looked down and saw a little girl, no older than eight. She was barefoot, her shirt was torn, and her hair was messy and unwashed. Her eyes were beautiful, and her face showed innocence, yet exhaustion and despair clouded it.

She pleaded: “Please, please, give me just one shekel, God bless you.”

Before I gave her the money, I decided to speak with her. I knelt down and asked, “What is your name, my dear?” She replied in a frightened voice, “My name is Nour, and I am from the north.” Her name, which means “light” in Arabic, stood in stark contrast to the darkness surrounding her.

I asked her, “Why are you asking for money, Nour?”

She looked at me hesitantly, then whispered, “I want to buy an apple ... I crave one.”

In Gaza, a single apple now costs \$7; before the war,



a kilogram of apples was less than a dollar. I tried to ignore the pain rising in my chest. I thought about the circumstances we now face, where young children are forced to beg in the street just to buy an apple. I gave Nour one shekel (\$0.30), but as soon as I did, the situation worsened. A large group of children, all Nour’s age or younger, gathered around me, repeating the same request. I felt immense distress.

For more than two years, we have faced genocide. We have witnessed countless tragedies and horrors. But for me, the sight of children begging in the streets is particularly unbearable. Before the war, Gaza was still a poor place. We used to see child beggars, but they were few, mostly roaming in a few areas. Now, they are everywhere, from the north to the south. The genocidal war has destroyed families and livelihoods across Gaza. The carnage has orphaned more than 39,000 children, and the enormous destruction has deprived more than 80 percent of the workforce of their jobs, driving countless children into extreme poverty and forcing them to beg for survival.

But child begging is not just a result of poverty; it is a sign of a deep disintegration affecting the family, the education system, and the community. No parent sends their child to beg because they want to. The war has left many families in Gaza without options, and in many cases, there are no surviving parents to keep the children away from the streets.

Child beggars do not just lose their childhood; they also face exploitation, harsh labor, illiteracy and psychological trauma that leaves a lasting effect. The more begging children increase in number, the more the hope for this generation diminishes. Houses can be rebuilt, infrastructure can be restored, but a young generation that is deprived of education and hope for the future cannot be rehabilitated.

The strength Gaza possessed before the war was not just about military power; it was about human power,

the main pillar of which was education. We had one of the highest levels of literacy in the world. The enrolment rate for primary education stood at 95 percent; for higher education, it reached 44 percent. Education stood as a counterforce to the debilitating siege that dispossessed the people of Gaza and crippled the economy. It nourished skills and ingenuity within the young generations to help them cope with an increasingly harsh economic reality. More importantly, education gave children a sense of direction, security and pride. The systematic attack on Gaza’s education system—the destruction of schools, universities, libraries and the killing of teachers and professors—has pushed what used to be a remarkably resilient and effective educational system to the brink. The pillar that protected children and guaranteed them a clear future is now falling apart.

After I left the Nuseirat roundabout, Nour’s eyes stayed with me. It was not just because of the pain of seeing an innocent child being forced to beg. It was also because of the realization that this encounter brought about: That

For more than two years, we have faced genocide. We have witnessed countless tragedies and horrors. But for me, the sight of children begging in the streets is particularly unbearable.

the capacity of the next generation to rebuild Gaza one day is being taken away.

The world allowed Israel to carry out genocide in Gaza for two years. It knew what was going on, and yet it chose complicity and silence. Today, it cannot erase its guilt, but it can choose to redeem itself. It can take all necessary action to save the children of Gaza and to grant them the rights they are inherently given by the Convention on the Rights of the Child: The right to food, water, healthcare, a safe environment, education, and protection from violence and abuse.

Anything short of that would mean continuing support for the slow genocide of Gaza.

Mais Al-Reem Hussein is a young Palestinian writer based in Gaza.



Hope in Gaza

... continued from page 1

Prisoners who have been released from detention report that doctors are singled out for particularly brutal treatment.

Among the 80 Gazan healthcare workers still detained is the former director of Gaza’s Kamal Adwan hospital, Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya. On December 27, Dr. Abu Safiya began his second year of imprisonment.

For over a year prior to his incarceration, the Israeli military had subjected the Kamal Adwan Hospital to repeated sieges and attacks. Dr. Abu Safiya and his staff, refusing to desert their patients, managed to increase the number of available beds in the hospital as theirs became one of the few hospitals still operating in northern Gaza.

On Oct. 25, 2024, Israel raided the hospital, bombing its buildings, detaining many patients, and arresting all hospital staff, including Dr. Abu Safiya, who was interrogated and released. On the same day, an Israeli drone attacked one of the hospital buildings and killed Dr. Abu Safiya’s 20-year-old son, Ibrahim. Dr. Abu Safiya buried his son on the hospital grounds and still refused to abandon the patients.

“The Israeli army does not know what it wants,” Dr.

Abu Safiya told a reporter with the Electronic Intifada. “They detained me for a few hours and interrogated me about whether there were fighters inside the hospital, and demanded that I evacuate the hospital completely, but I refused and assured them that there were only patients inside the hospital. But 57 of the hospital’s medical staff were arrested. ... So we are suffering from a severe shortage of doctors, especially surgeons. Right now, we only have pediatricians—it is a huge challenge to work under these circumstances. I refused to leave the hospital and sacrifice my patients, so the army punished me by killing my son. I saw him die at the entrance gate—it was a great shock. I found a grave for him near one of the hospital’s walls, so that he could stay close to me.”

On Dec. 27, 2024, when Israeli forces threatened to level the whole facility, Dr. Abu Safiya agreed to leave the hospital which was, by then, largely inoperable. An iconic video shows him, clad in his white coat, walking through the rubble toward two Israeli tanks.

He was held incommunicado, and then taken to the Sde Teiman prison in the Negev Desert, where he was interrogated and beaten before being transferred to the Ofer prison. There, he is held in solitary confinement. Only his lawyer has been allowed to visit him. She expresses rising alarm over his weight loss, inadequate healthcare, and frequent beatings.

Amnesty International says he has been forcibly disappeared and arbitrarily held without charge. Even though no charges have been brought against him, an Israeli court has extended his detention multiple times. On Oct. 16, 2025, Israel’s Be’er Sheva District Court added an additional six months to his detention.

Who are the criminals? Israel and its partner, the United States, egregiously flout international law, committing numerous war crimes in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Dr. Abu Safiya endures daily punishments in return for his courageous dedication to serving victims of war.

In a better world, in a better future, we can hope that Palestinians graduating from medical school could assemble for an address delivered by Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya. Together, they could uphold “the Humanity Cohort,” as the Gazan doctors who graduated in December 2025 call themselves, and safely commemorate the courageous healthcare workers who risked and lost their lives to care for patients during an Israeli genocide that is still ongoing. Confident that healthcare is never a crime, they could cite their fallen colleagues’ historic and extraordinary adherence to the U.N.’s core mission, “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.”

Kathy Kelly (kathy.vcnv@gmail.com) is board president of World BEYOND War

What Is a Palestinian Without Olives?

By Al Jazerra Staff

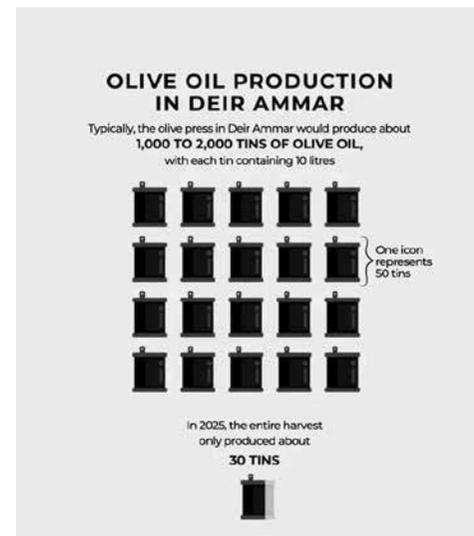
Palestinian farmers in the occupied West Bank face economic devastation as a surge in violence by illegal Israeli settlers and the Israeli military prevents them from harvesting their olives. Around 100,000 Palestinian families are estimated to rely on these trees as a source of income.

DEIR AMMAR, Occupied West Bank—The Othman family sat looking out from their homes at the valley where they've picked olives for generations. Ali Badaha, 60, and his cousins Ismail, 59, and Izzat Othman, 72, recalled chasing each other in those groves decades ago, singing and having picnics while their families harvested the ancestral olive trees. At night, they and others in the hillside vil-

lage waited their turn to press their olives at the village oil press among their neighbors, drinking tea and sharing stories.

But this year, for the first time in their lives, the family's trees and their shrunken olives, long unpruned, have gone unpicked. There's no singing this year. No picnics or kids playing tag through the groves. Rather, the expansive Othman-Badaha clan, their children and grandchildren, sit around a table outside their homes on a late October evening, overlooking family groves they cannot reach due to threats from armed Israeli settlers and constantly renewed 24-hour Israeli closed military zone orders.

Earlier that day, Yousef Dar al-Musa, 67, sat in his family compound, his face and stomach bruised and his arm banded after being attacked by Israeli set-



tlers when he went out to his lands. Settlers beat him with the butts of their rifles in his fields, where he owns more than 450 olive trees.

"I'm not allowed to leave my house? I'm not allowed to go to the land?" he said indignantly. "I inherited that land from my father, my grandfather, my great-grandfather ... And who are you, man? Where did you come from?"

For months, Yousef was attacked by settlers when trying to access his land, where he grows figs, tomatoes, grapes, barley, eggplants, lentils, almonds and cucumbers. His family's most valuable source of income is normally selling olive oil to markets in Ramallah. But this year, he has no olive oil. "The earth is our life, from our ancestors, going back 10,000 years," Yousef said through wheezy coughs and a thick fellahi [farmer's] accent. "Without the harvest, I will die. Really, I will die."

Israel occupied the West Bank in 1967, impacting Palestinian agrarian life by imposing progressively harsher military restrictions and continuing its theft of Palestinian land to construct and expand illegal Israeli settlements and outposts. Land was taken from Deir Ammar to build the illegal settlement of Neria in 1991, across the valley from the Othmans' homes. The village lost more land as the settlement expanded. Several years ago, a settler outpost was built on the ridge extending west of Neria. On his cousin Ismail's terrace, Izzat Othman pointed to

lights flashing from the outpost. "I have 38 acres there. [The settlers] took it, and I can't even walk there," he said. "They tore all my trees down." Pointing to more lights on the other side of the valley, Izzat moved his finger west: "That land is also mine," he said, gesturing to his cousins beside him one at a time. "And that's [my cousin's], and his, and his—all the way down to Ein Ayyoub," he said. "The settlers took it."

Locals say Israeli settlers have managed to seize approximately 1,730 acres of land around the village homes over time—aided by the Israeli military. Ali, Ismail and two of Ismail's brothers inherited land in the valley that has been largely carved up by two roads for settlers only—one built seven years ago, and another six months ago. With greater losses of their land, and incentivized by higher wages, the family and others in the village were pushed to seek employment as manual laborers in Israel. But then Israel cancelled the permits for West Bank Palestinians to enter and work there two years ago, as it launched its genocidal war on Gaza.

The Othmans were left with nothing but farming to fall back on. Yet, restrictions on village farmland increased until this year, when the entire valley and all the

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Palestinian olive farmers hold tight to their roots amid surge in settler attacks

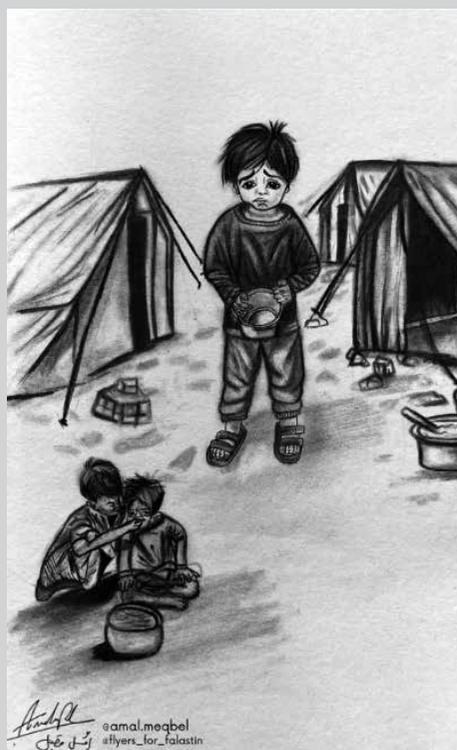
You Scroll

Anonymous
From We are not Numbers in Gaza

A boy standing between tents holding an empty pot.

You scroll and witness a child chasing a water truck—your heart shatters in the silent chase. You scroll and see a child wailing over his father's lifeless form—sympathy wells, heavy and raw. You scroll.

You see a child starved into nothingness—unease gnaws at your soul. You go blank. Helplessness presses your lungs. You reach for a snack, then scroll.



You glimpse an infant consumed by flames in a refugee tent—tears sting your eyes, unbidden. You scroll. You watch parents perish trying to fill empty stomachs, silent desperation etched in their faces. You scroll. You feel it. Then

you scroll again. And again. Until feeling becomes noise. Until death becomes content. Until suffering is algorithm-friendly.

You look for more. They look for mercy.

fields surrounding Deir Ammar were effectively declared off-limits by the Israeli military. By villagers' estimates, about 80 percent of the olive trees around Deir Ammar have gone unpicked; only the trees within the village were reachable.

In October and November, the olive press in Deir Ammar normally runs 24/7, producing 1,000 to 2,000 tins of olive oil, with each tin holding 2.6 gallons, according to workers there. But this year, on a weekday afternoon in the peak of the season, the press was empty, the machines silent. The entire village's harvest only produced about 30 tins. The olive harvest season has effectively been cancelled in Deir Ammar.

According to Ismat Quzmar, economic researcher and the external relations officer of the Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS) in Ramallah, the total value of the Palestinian olive oil sector is \$120m to \$140m. Olive cultivation comprises about 20 percent of Palestine's total agricultural output, a relatively small portion of total economic output that plays an outsized role for rural families.

The Unequivocal Failure of Neoliberalism

And the imperative need to humanize the earth

By Mark Lesseraux

In the late 1970s in England and in the early 1980s in the U.S., there was a resurgence of the British version of economic liberalism. This resurgence first manifested in the administrations of Margaret Thatcher in England and Ronald

Add to all of this a shifting of the burden of taxation away from the very wealthy squarely onto the shoulders of the middle class and people in or near poverty. This sweeping shift in U.S. economic policy, which was initially heralded by conservative Republicans in the early 1980s, was later dubbed “Neoliberalism.”

throughout most of the 20th century, to a finance-based service economy in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. This current economic form is centered largely around the fluctuations that occur on Wall Street, which are driven by economic speculation rather than by mass manufacturing.

Clinton-era deregulation in the 1990s

helpful human services in countries all around the world, these globalist oligarchs have been able, until quite recently, to cloak their primary aims in a facade of supposedly pro-democratic altruism.

Interestingly, their promotion and imposition of global “democracy” has often been achieved by overturning democratically elected governments that have been replaced by dictators, U.S.-picked stooges and, in the case of nations like Syria, Al Qaeda terrorists.

Unfortunately, over the course of the last 10 to 15 years, the aforementioned oligarchs have (via their control of the Western “mainstream” media) been able to conflate their warlusting imperialist endeavors with what it means to be part of the 21st century “left.” As a result, any challenge to these modern day robber barons’ psychopathic warmongering gets lumped in with the agenda of the “right” or with that of MAGA. This blatantly transparent deception, this ridiculous reduction of the matter of government funded illegal invasions and mass killing to a partisan political issue has practically made “peace” a dirty word among a sizable portion of the so-called “liberal” political class in the collective West.

It’s almost as embarrassing as it is morally reprehensible to watch and listen to some of these “educated” pundits within the Democratic Party and/or the Labor Party in Europe rail on about the (genuinely) frightening aspects of Trumpism while they condone mass slaughter and colonialist annexations of every stripe (as well as genocide) as long as it’s carried out by their political faction.

To be fair, this hasn’t been the case with all of the Democratic Party, many of whom have stood their ground against the mass violence and genocide perpetrated by team blue (as well as by the Republican Party, of course) in this century so far.

By the year 2000 the liberal (left of center) New Deal-inspired economic policies of the Democratic Party had been largely abandoned in favor of neoliberal policies. Since that time we have endured two major economic collapses (in late 2000 and in early 2008) and a near complete takeover



Reagan in the U.S. and became somewhat confusingly known as “Neoliberalism.” A central feature of the form this ideology took was to demonize “liberal left” programs and institutions that lifted the U.S. out of social and economic despair 40 years earlier. Things like labor unions, social safety nets and progressive taxation of the wealthy were all put on the chopping block.

In the 1980s, it was professed that deregulating the economy, i.e.: letting the economic market regulate itself, would allow the “corrective market hand” to operate unhindered by human fallibility. Neoliberal free-market ideologues such as Milton Friedman and Friedrich Hayek claimed that when the markets were freed up and larger sums of wealth were allowed to flow to the top that this would produce a “trickle-down” effect that would eventually benefit every sector of society.

Now, 40 years on, it’s clear that the near reverse has happened. By the 1990s the privatization of public institutions began in full; the deregulation of international trade produced capital flight, increased de-industrialization and the outsourcing of U.S. jobs; the deregulation of the mainstream media enabled takeovers of TV, radio, and the news media by uber-wealthy moguls; the deregulation of the banking system allowed for an unprecedented concentration of wealth and power in the hands of the banking system and their affiliated oligarchs; the de-democratization of the U.S. electoral system created a stable of politicians in both major political parties that are completely beholden and dominated by multi-billionaire donors and superPACs.

To add to this confusion of terms and factions, in the early/mid-1990s, the Democratic Party in the U.S. began discarding its liberal (left-of-center) ideology and started adopting the Thatcher-Reagan inspired policies of “neoliberalism.” In fact, many consider the Clinton era (1992–2000) to be the steroid era for neoliberalism. Under the direction of Alan Greenspan, who was also the main economic advisor to both Nixon and Reagan, the Clinton Administration did away with the bulk of the restrictions on privatization and large-scale corporate takeovers.

The last two decades of the 20th century, the Reagan-Clinton era, basically amounted to a neoliberal coup. This paved the way for what has come to be known as “globalism.” Initially, globalism was a politically neutral term that mostly had to do with how technological acceleration had produced a new level of interconnectedness among what were previously distant, separated parts of the world. In the 21st century, though, the terms “globalization” and “globalist” refer to a socio-economic ideology that professes the imminent need to spread Western neoliberal democracy via the use of economic coercion and military force, to all parts of the planet as quickly as possible.

In the U.S., this globalization process has subordinated all other needs—including the basic needs and wishes of the voting public—to global neocolonial expansion. The result has been a further hollowing out of the U.S. industrial base and its workforce. Suffice to say, this process of de-industrialization has produced a shift in the U.S. from an industrial economy

enabled a massive amount of capital flight and the outsourcing of a large section of the American job market. These conditions led to the transfer of wealth upward to a largely unrooted, nonprovincial elite. This 21st century assemblage of oligarchs and international bankers have made unprecedented profits over the course of the last few decades via a combination of neo-imperialist conquest, mass media monopolization and insider-informed market speculation. This is the unspoken though ironically quite well-documented agenda of multi-billionaires like Larry Fink (head of BlackRock), Klaus Schwab (head of the W.E.F.) and George Soros (financial speculator, philanthropist) when they speak of their aim to create a global “Open Society.”

What these globalist oligarchs have

Under the direction of Alan Greenspan, who was also the main economic advisor to both Nixon and Reagan, the Clinton Administration did away with the bulk of the restrictions on privatization and large-scale corporate takeovers.

mainly been generating over the course of the last 25 to 30 years are violent overt and covert regime change operations, U.S./NATO-funded and -aided color revolutions, wars and proxy wars all over the globe. Through so-called “democracy spreading,” government agencies such as USAID, which combines seed funding for neocolonialist takeovers with a range of genuinely

of all major U.S. institutions by private corporations during the George W. Bush 2, Obama, Trump, and Biden eras. The transfer of wealth upward hasn’t slowed down at all over the course of the last 45 years.

Since 1979 there has been no increase in real wages in the U.S. Previous to the 1980s, real wages in the U.S. rose in ev-

continued on next page ‘...

Neoliberalism

... continued from previous page
ery decade since the year 1820. Neoliberalism, along with a few other key factors, put an end to American prosperity as we'd known it for a century and a half.

With the exception of a handful of semi-outliers, every current U.S. politician in the upper tiers of government is more or less a proponent of the neoliberal ideology. What we've witnessed in the 21st century so far is the total "triumph" of Western neoliberalism and the corresponding collapse of U.S. (and European) prosperity. Every U.S. presidential administration since 1980 has been a neoliberal administration.

The result has been what essentially amounts to an unspoken unification of the Republican and Democratic Parties' basic ideologies. The "liberal" faction within the donor class simply propagates the idea that any challenge to their agenda is a fantasy created by the right. This has the effect of turning off many otherwise well-meaning people to the idea that their party essentially shares the military, and to a large degree economic agenda of the faction they've been groomed to despise.

The "conservative" faction within this donor class does the same thing of course, but in a form that accords with their own objectives. This proliferation of confusion has, up until now, maintained the division between the increasingly marginalized masses of the supposed "left" and "right."

There's no longer any question that the world has changed drastically over the course of just the last three to five years. The U.S.-dominated "unipolar"



Chuck Schumer, John Bolton, etc.) and in Europe (Keir Starmer, Friedrich Merz, Emmanuel Macron, Ursula von der Layen) are pushing for. Their end game is war and more war.

It remains to be seen what the Trump Administration is actually going for as far as its foreign policy objectives are concerned. Aside from Trump's decision to reopen channels of diplomacy with Russia and China, there's no clear indication that his administration has a serious understanding of the massive global transformation that's already upon us. This is evidenced by Trump's unwillingness to accept the futility of taxing and threatening countries (like China) that aren't

the two major political parties in the U.S., you're greatly mistaken.

Here's the indisputable deal: We're going to have to get used to the idea that the U.S. as well as the rest of the West, i.e., Europe, Australia, Canada, etc., are going to need to work together in good faith with the nations in the Global South, i.e., China, Russia, India, South Africa, etc., if we're going to survive as a human race. A tipping point will eventually be reached, ideally sooner rather than later, when we, the West, will begin to (collectively) realize that a considerable portion of the information we've been fed over the years about the supposedly totally anti-democratic, unredeemable Global South isn't true. When this happens the process of global humanization will begin its lift-off phase. The same is true vice versa. Although the Global South is a bit closer to the goal of openness than the Collective West is.

But why linger in tit for tat land?! It'll be exciting and fascinating to be a part of what happens when the phantasmal line between the forsaken "left" and the forsaken "right," and for that matter, between our planet's "Collective West" and its "Global South" finally dissolves, and we unite in the common endeavor to save our shared future.

The future of our human species, if it is to survive as a project, is one of nonvio-

Hopefully 100 years from now, people will look back on this grotesque period of reciprocal destruction (of perpetual wars) as a kind of human pre-history. This isn't just wishful thinking. In fact it's the only sort of thinking that's going to eventually lift us out of this 10,000 year-long bad hair stage we've been stuck in as a species. Until then it's our responsibility to hold the line and to not give in to the current cult(ure) of violence.

Where do we start? "Only inner faith and inner meditation can end the violence in you, in others, and in the world around you. All other doors are false and do not lead away from the violence." Choosing this doorway, this path of self-initiation, is actually the true "Royal Road." It's the first step and most important step on the road to the eventual humanization of the earth.

And what does this mean, to "humanize the earth?" It means to say "Yes" to the process of human evolution and to the possibility of overcoming suffering in oneself and in others instead of "No." It means to freely choose, via an act of inner faith, to do all one can to lift up and champion what is best in oneself and in others. It means to learn without limits. In synthesis, it means to treat others the way you would wish to be treated. Regarding the question, "When should we start?"

We're living now in the beginning of the 'multipolar' era. In fact, the Western colonialist era, which we've been trapped in for about five centuries, is beginning to disappear.

era (1990–2022) is over. The world has already transitioned. We're living now in the beginning of the "multipolar" era. In fact, the Western colonialist era, which we've been trapped in for about five centuries, is beginning to disappear. The new alliances that have recently formed in the Global South (China, Russia, India, South Africa, Brazil, etc.), are outstripping the West in the domains of manufacturing and overall economic growth as well as military strength. Whether or not we're in favor of this paradigm shift isn't a question that should be interfering with our acknowledgement of the fact that it's happening. We're already there.

The belief that the U.S. can, by proxy or otherwise, bomb and kill its way back to unipolarity is a pipe dream, and an incredibly dangerous one. Yet this is essentially what the elite neoliberal/neocon oligarchs and their political pundit servants in both the Republican and Democratic Parties (Lindsey Graham, Bill Kristol, Ted Cruz, Victoria Nuland, Liz Cheney,

threatened by the U.S. anymore. In fact, it's we who need their exports, their resources to make our deindustrialized country run. The Biden Administration was stuck in the same time-loop.

If Trump is foolish enough to begin an actual land war with Venezuela or Iran he'll wreck any chance his administration has of fulfilling its promise to shut down the neocons' culture of perpetual war. At this point it's genuinely hard to predict whether Trump will be able to actually put America first when push finally comes to full-on shove in the Middle East, or if he'll continue to bow to his war lusting Zionist/AIPAC/Israel First donors.

Most Israelis, including the rightwing religious zealot hardliners in Israel, the ones who make Netanyahu (who's a genocidal sociopath) almost look like a moderate, actually preferred Joe Biden's brand of auto-submission to Israel's demands over Trump's, the point being, that if you think there's a lesser of two bought-off genocide aiding and abetting evils among

If you think there's a lesser of two bought-off genocide aiding and abetting evils among the two major political parties in the U.S. you're greatly mistaken.

lence. Our future nonviolent human culture will no longer be crippled by what will be looked back upon as infantile forms of repression and oppression that exist today as economic violence, physical violence/war, as well as psychological, racial and religious violence. The way we currently feel about slavery is going to be the same way we feel about war and economic tyranny in the future.

Well, if not now, when? We're alive now. The cameras are rolling. To quote the well known singer and human rights activist, Peter Gabriel, "The eyes of the world are watching now."

Mark Lesseraux is a singer/songwriter/socio-political columnist from Brooklyn, New York, USA. He is a Humanist, a proponent and practitioner of Active Nonviolence and a student of Nonduality.

On the Natural Law of Embodied Existence

By Koohan Paik-Mander

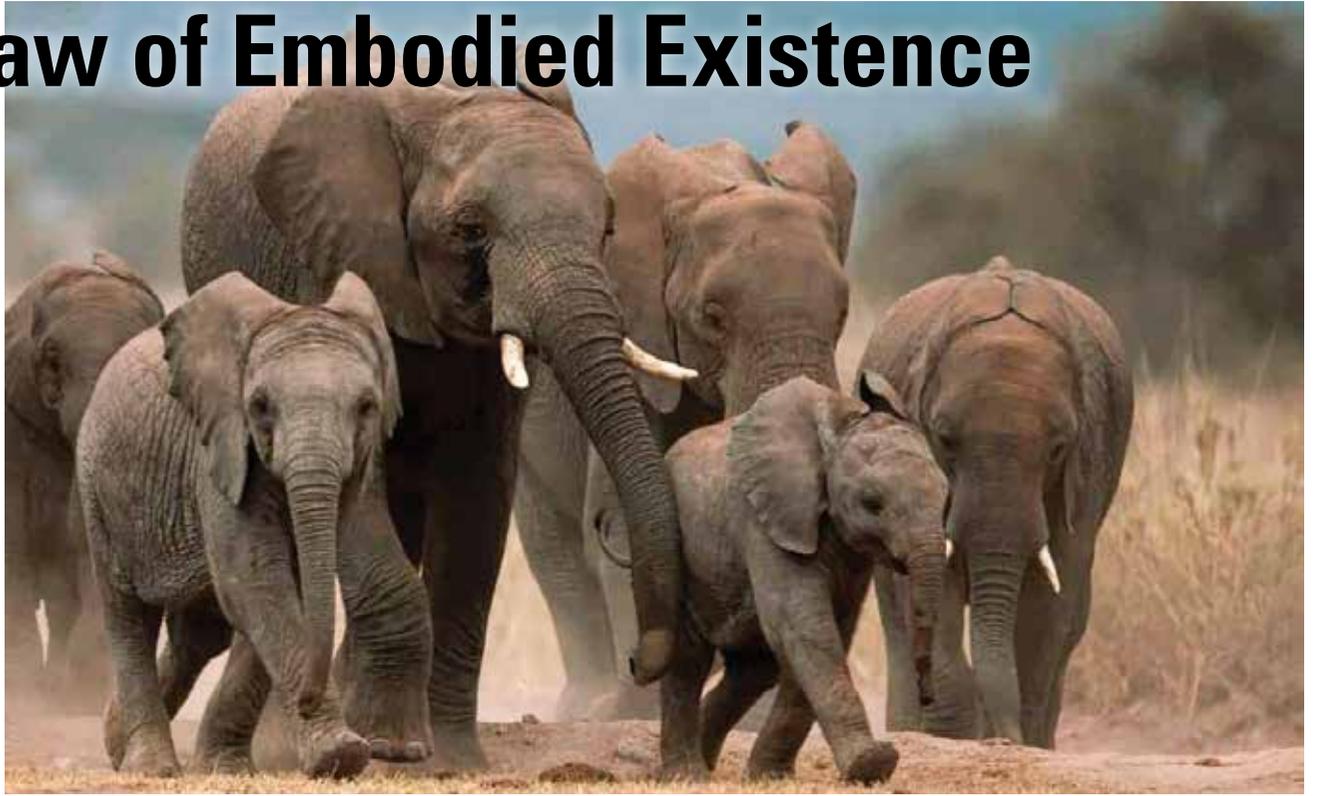
Barbarians of the Eurocene, whose shackles are forged in economies of algorithms and war, you nuclear monsters who anger at the beauty of flesh and Mother Earth, I come from the ancestors of abundance and the descendants of the future. I ask you techno-savages to leave us alone. You and your disruptions are not welcome among us. We don't want chip-implants in our brains. We don't want to move to Mars. You are alien to our embodied existence. We are of the Earth.

No formal government represents us, so I address you with no greater authority than that with which wilderness always speaks. We are proud members of the ancient tribe, joyous in its unenclosed riot of spontaneous diversity. I hereby declare that the exquisite ecologies of Nature, of which we are a part, be independent of the tyrannical disruption you seek to impose on us. You have no moral right to rule us through ideology or algorithmic pseudo-science nor do you possess methods of enforcement we have true reason to fear.

You have neither solicited nor received our free and informed consent. Your User Agreements are cryptic shams of extortion, within which gangsters have hidden dead bodies. Your transactional mind does not know our relational way of being with each other and with Nature. Your insolent topologies flout the very currency of the natural world—those boundaries of time and space, geographies and seasons, ebb and flow, systole and diastole, and carrying capacity. You are a cancerous rib pulled from capitalism's side, ceaselessly demanding unending growth, as if metastasization were a good thing. Artificial intelligence will never affirm life, no matter how many 3-D facsimiles it prints. Your singular motive is profit. Your reductive logic is an insult and a danger to Life itself.

You have never engaged in our great nuanced languages, yet you profit from the extraction of our wealth—ore, minerals, human bodies and oil—and the enclosure of Earth, moon, and genomes. Now, you dare to stake claim on our self-determination. You will never succeed, as long as our existence and relationships remain in the embodied world. You cannot digitize and monetize our agency. You do not know our culture, our ethics, or the unwritten codes that provide more order than could ever be obtained by any of your disruptions.

Digital technologies are capitalism's greatest "triumph." Trillions of algorithms work ceaselessly 24/7 to buy and



Elephants play a key role in creating forests, which store carbon and protect biodiversity.

sell on world stock markets, to secure deals to cut down forests, extract commodities on all continents and seabeds, to set up factory farms, and to displace traditional sustainable communities, which have survived for millennia precisely because of their respect for cycles and geographies.

And still, you endlessly claim to be the provider of "solutions"! You use this assertion to lure us into your precincts. You invent problems that don't exist. Stop! We cannot accept the ravaging of the Earth and human civilization that you present as "solutions." You are the problem.

Where there are real conflicts, where there are wrongs, we will identify them and address them by our means. We have our own Social Contract. This governance will arise according to the conditions of our world, not yours.

Ours is a world that values the interconnectedness of all beings. Priority is given to mutual support, human scale of space, Nature's scale of time, body joy, diversity of contexts, and sustaining our vital relationship to all forms of life—past, present, and future. This is the path to real, lasting wealth, but it is invisible to you.

We are humanity of all ages, on a continuum of all genders, and in a plurality of all shades, like those of the Earth, from the dark hues of rich humus to iron-rich red clay to the chalky Dover cliffs—and everything in-between. There are no disabilities. Every person is a song.

Out of wisdom will emerge post-capitalist governance, just as it spontaneously sprang in Zuccotti Park, atop Mauna Kea, on urban farms, and in other places where people are valued over profit. Our embodied connection to place is a sacred one.

Your legal concepts of property, expression, identity, movement, and context do not apply to us. They are all based on coercion, manipulation, deception, extraction and accelerating inequity—all cruel ruses that have been imposed for the last 500 years in a multitude of forms: colonialism, capitalism, and militarism, now culminating as insidious techno-fascism.

Now, you target us as the next wave of raw material! You wring your greedy hands, with reveries of extracting all the data in the world and more, to fill your large-language maw. You dream of replacing forests and farmlands with monotonous computer gulags and nuclear reactors to process your data hoards. You plot to channel infinite computations into glorious palaces, prisons and genocides.

But you are powerless over the mortal coil that inspires in you loathing and disgust.

You are terrified of your own children, for they are reminders of the apocalyptic loan you over-borrowed against their future. Because you fear their reality, you work desperately to devote your brief time on Earth to a fool's search for a way to ship humanity to Mars.

By contrast, what great fortune to be born into this embodied world! Imagine, to share an existence with mitochondria of a nudibranch, lenticular clouds, slender-toed geckos, and all the sentiments and expressions imaginable in an awe-inspiring intricate web of life! We honor her seasons, the wane and wax of the moon, the ebb and flow of tides, sunrise and sunset, and countless other rhythms. Sacred cycles and places are our scripture, instructing when and how to plant, to fish, to harvest, to give birth, to bury one's dead. But your new technologies erase, in one fell swoop, these ancient guideposts, to the peril of a livable future.

Your increasingly hostile and colonial measures place us in the same predicament as all those who have also struggled historically for liberation. We must declare ourselves immune to your delusions of omnipotence. You cannot algorithm us into silence and conformity.

Our small communities are spread across the Planet, determined to dismantle capitalism and return to joy, love, beauty, and wonder, connecting with nature, our bodies, and each other. It has happened before, and it shall happen again.

Koohan Paik-Mander serves on the boards of World BEYOND War and the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space. She is on the advisory committee of the Global Just Transition project at Foreign Policy in Focus. She is co-author of The Superferry Chronicles: Hawai'i's Uprising Against Militarism, Commercialism and the Desecration of the Earth.

The Blue Whales Have Stopped Singing

By Caitlin Johnstone

The blue whales have stopped singing
because the krill are vanishing
because the oceans are warming
because we are ruled by long-toothed liars
whose insides are full of dead leaves.

The great whales have gone silent
and my bird has gone blind
and there are chatbots in the basement
and corpses in the corn.

Under the overpass it is dry and still.
You would never know that everything is dying.
You should come and visit me.

Meet me over there under the sepia streetlights
with the strangleporn perverts and fentanyl fallen,
all the stillborn scar tissue extractions
from the wreckage of a banished womb,
the NAFTA-noosed factory towns full of deserted
buildings

and the window-snarling meth towns full of deserted
people,
where the cries of orphaned Palestinians mingle
with the cries of the last baby orangutan
ever born in the wild.

Meet me under the flickering lights.
Bring me some smokes and a sad luck story
and let's stay up late by the freeway
watching the traffic get sparse.
Show me the spots on your skin
where life has kicked you
and I will kiss them
and give you a flower.

The leviathans have gone quiet
and the turbines are getting loud,
and everything has become so strange.
So sit with me on this curb
under my burlap wing
and let's laugh
and heal
and mark beauty
until sunrise.