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“You can’t run a fully-fledged democracy and a colonial war; one aspires to decency, the other is a form of fascism.”

-John Pilger



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We Are Spartacus

John Pilger

Spartacus was a 1960 Hollywood film based on a book written secretly by the blacklisted novelist Howard Fast, and adapted by the screenplay writer Dalton Trumbo, one of the 'Hollywood 10' who were banned for their 'un-American' politics. It is a parable of resistance and heroism that speaks unreservedly to our own times.

Both writers were Communists and victims of Senator Joseph McCarthy's House Un-American Activities Committee, which, during the Cold War, destroyed the careers and often the lives of those principled and courageous enough to stand up to a homegrown fascism in America.

'This is a sharp time, now, a precise time ...' wrote Arthur Miller in *The Crucible*, 'We live no longer in the dusky afternoon when evil mixed itself with good and befuddled the world.'

There is one 'precise' provocateur now; it is clear to see for those who want to see it and foretell its actions. It is a gang of states led by the United States whose stated objective is 'full spectrum dominance'. Russia is still the hated one, Red China the feared one.

From Washington and London, the virulence has no limit. Israel, the colonial anachronism and unleashed attack dog, is armed to the teeth and granted historical impunity so that 'we' the West ensure the blood and tears never dry in Palestine.

British MPs who dare call for a ceasefire in Gaza are banished, the iron door of two-party politics closed to them by a Labour leader who would withhold water and food from the children.

In McCarthy's time, there were bolt holes of truth. Mavericks welcomed then are heretics now; an underground of journalism exists (such

as this site) in a landscape of mendacious conformity. Dissenting journalists have been defenestrated from the "mainstream" (as the great editor David Bowman wrote); the media's task is to invert the truth and support the illusions of democracy, including a "free press."

Social Democracy has shrunk to the width of a cigarette paper that separates the principal policies of major parties. Their one subscription is to a capitalist cult, neoliberalism, and an imposed poverty described by a U.N. special rapporteur as "the immiseration of a significant part of the British population."

War today is an unmoving shadow; "forever" imperial wars are designated normal. Iraq, the model, is destroyed at a cost of a million lives and three million dispossessed. The destroyer, Blair, is personally enriched and fawned over at his party's conference as an electoral winner.

Blair and his moral counter, Julian Assange, live 14 miles apart, one in a Regency mansion, the other in a cell awaiting extradition to hell.

According to a Brown University study, since 9/11, almost six million men, women and children have been killed by America and its acolytes in the "Global War on Terror." A monument is to be built in Washington in "celebration" of this mass murder; its committee is chaired by the former president, George W. Bush, Blair's mentor. Afghanistan, where it started, was finally laid to waste when President Biden stole its national bank reserves.

There have been many Afghanists. The forensic William Blum devoted himself to making sense of a state terrorism that seldom spoke its name and so requires repetition: In my lifetime,



Julian Assange inside London's harsh high-security Belmarsh Prison.
(Taken covertly by an unknown fellow prisoner)

the United States has overthrown or attempted to overthrow more than 50 governments, most democracies. It has interfered in democratic elections in 30 countries. It has dropped bombs on the people of 30 countries, most of them poor and defenceless. It has fought to suppress liberation movements in 20 countries. It has attempted to murder countless leaders.

Perhaps I hear some of you saying: that is enough. As the Final Solution of Gaza is broadcast live to millions, the small faces of its victims etched in bombed rubble, framed between TV commercials for cars and pizza, yes, that is surely enough. How profane is that word “enough”?

Afghanistan was where the West sent young men weighed down with the ritual of “warriors” to kill people and enjoy it. We know some of them enjoyed it from the evidence of Australian SAS sociopaths, including a photograph of them drinking from an Afghan man’s prosthetic.

Not one sociopath has been charged for this and crimes such as kicking a man over a cliff, gun-

ning down children point-blank, slitting throats: none of it “in battle.” David McBride, a former Australian military lawyer who served twice in Afghanistan, was a ‘true believer’ in the system as moral and honourable. He also has an abiding belief in truth, and loyalty. He can define them as few can. This coming week he is in court in Canberra as an alleged criminal.

“An Australian whistleblower,” reports Kieran Pender, a senior lawyer at the Australian Human Rights Law Centre, “[will face] trial for blowing the whistle on horrendous wrongdoing. It is profoundly unjust that the first person on trial for war crimes in Afghanistan is the whistle blower and not an alleged war criminal.”

McBride can receive a sentence of up to 100 years for revealing the cover-up of the great crime of Afghanistan. He tried to exercise his legal right as a whistleblower under the Public Interest Disclosure Act, which the current attorney general, Mark Dreyfus, says “delivers on our promise to strengthen protections for public sector whistleblowers.”

Yet it is Dreyfus, a Labor minister, who signed off on the McBride trial following a punitive wait of four years and eight months since his arrest at Sydney airport: a wait that shredded his health and family.

Those who know David and know of the hideous injustice done to him fill his street in Bondi near the beach in Sydney to wave their encouragement to this good and decent man. To them, and me, he is a hero.

McBride was affronted by what he found in the files he was ordered to inspect. Here was evidence of crimes and their cover-up. He passed hundreds of secret documents to the the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and The Sydney Morning Herald. Police raided the ABC's offices in Sydney while reporters and producers watched, shocked, as their computers were confiscated by the Federal Police.

Attorney-General Dreyfus, self-declared liberal reformer and friend of whistleblowers, has the singular power to stop the McBride trial. A Freedom of Information search of his actions in this direction reveals little, at most, an indifference.

You can't run a fully-fledged democracy and a colonial war; one aspires to decency, the other is a form of fascism, regardless of its pretensions. Mark the killing fields of Gaza, bombed to dust by apartheid Israel. It is no coincidence that in rich, yet impoverished Britain an "inquiry" is currently being held into the gunning down by British SAS soldiers of 80 Afghans, all civilians, including a couple in bed.

The grotesque injustice meted out to David McBride is minted from the injustice consuming his compatriot, Julian Assange. Both are friends of mine. Whenever I see them, I am optimistic. 'You cheer me,' I tell Julian as he raises a defiant fist at the end of our visiting period. 'You make me feel proud,' I tell David at our favourite coffee shop in Sydney.



David McBride (Sydney Criminal Lawyers)

Their bravery has allowed many of us, who might despair, to understand the real meaning of a resistance we all share if we want to prevent the conquest of us, our conscience, our self respect, if we prefer freedom and decency to compliance and collusion. In this, we are all Spartacus.

Spartacus was the rebellious leader of Rome's slaves in 71-73 B.C. There is a thrilling moment in the Kirk Douglas movie Spartacus when the Romans call on Spartacus's men to identify their leader and so be pardoned. Instead hundreds of his comrades stand and raise their fists in solidarity and shout, 'I am Spartacus!' The rebellion is under way.

Julian and David are Spartacus. The Palestinians are Spartacus. People who fill the streets with flags and principle and solidarity are Spartacus. We are all Spartacus if we want to be.

Calling for a ‘Pause’ in Israel’s Assault on Gaza Isn’t Enough

Kathy Kelly

Operation Cast Lead, an Israeli aerial assault and massacre of Gazans begun on December 27, 2008, lasted for 22 days. The Israeli military deployed its navy, air force and army against the people living in Gaza, using U.S.-supplied weapons and killing 1,383 Palestinians, of whom 333 were children.

I remember a doctor at the Al Shifa hospital, after a ceasefire was declared, shaking with anger and remorse as he told me that for 22 days the world watched while the incalculable affliction of Gaza went on and on. Most of his patients, he said, were women, children, grandparents.

Carrying our press passes from Counterpunch, I and Audrey Stewart, a human rights worker, walked into Gaza at the Rafah border crossing, which at the time was the only Gazan border crossing not controlled by Israel. We were sandwiched between correspondents working for the New York Times and the LA Times. A human rights activist in Cairo had arranged for Audrey and me to stay with a family in Rafah, the residential area the crossing opened into. Overnight, bombs could explode like clockwork, once every eleven minutes, from 11 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. and then again from 3:00 a.m. – 6:00 a.m. Yusuf, a bright child and the family’s oldest, explained to Audrey and me the difference between explosions caused when an Apache Helicopter fired a Hellfire missile and the sounds of 500 lb. bombs dropped by F-16 fighter jets. Yusuf at the time was seven years old.

When the ceasefire was declared, Yusuf’s mother sank into a chair and murmured, “Can you imagine? This is the first time I breathe in all these 22 days, – I was so frightened for my children.”

Yusuf lost no time in going out to organize neighborhood children who were soon dragging a large tarp through alleys and along roadways, seeking twigs and branches they could bring to their families for fuel.

Meanwhile, Mohammad, his younger brother, playfully imitated an airplane flying in circles, after which he would dive into his father’s lap as, seated in a circle, we all shared breakfast.

Four years later, following another Israeli aerial attack against Gaza, I had a chance to again visit the family in Rafah. The children were proud of how their father organized relief work to help children traumatized by the bombings and siege. Gaza’s access to food, fuel, basic medicines, even clean water for washing or drinking, would continue to constrict under Israeli pressure over those years in which Yusuf and Mohammad would, eventually, become husbands and fathers themselves, still assisting the family efforts to share resources and care for increasingly desperate neighbors.

This month, Mohammad is dead. On October 12, while he was sleeping, his building was attacked by an Israeli warplane so that it collapsed, crushing him to death. I don’t know if his own children were with him, but countless others took hours or days to die in the rubble, as the region starved for fuel with which a rescue effort might have been undertaken. An estimated 10,000 people have been killed. 4,104 Gazan children, utterly innocent, have suffered tortuous deaths in just the recent month of atrocity.

Calling for a “pause” in the bombing rather than a full ceasefire is hideously cruel and unmistak-



ably futile. Allow some relief to go in, a few of the maimed and wounded to go out, and then resume the bombing and the starvation blockade? President Joe Biden must call for a ceasefire, writes Professor Emeritus Mel Gurtov, “in order to save lives, including those of the hostages and Gaza’s population.” Who will benefit if the slaughter, instead, continues? Certainly, the weapon manufacturers’ profits will soar, assured of a sustained intensification of violence across the region and perhaps across the world.

On November 12, launching at 8pm Central time, the Merchants of Death War Crimes Tribunal, which multiple activists have spent the last year preparing, will officially convene. It will aim to hold four major military contractors – Boeing, Lockheed Martin, RTX (Raytheon) and General Atomics – accountable for any war crimes and crimes against humanity they may be found to have committed.

I hold myself accountable for not having done more to stop the ongoing, and now horrifically intensified, carnage enacting monumental collective punishment on innocent Palestinians, including the children who make up half of Gaza’s population.

Recently, former U.S. President Barack Obama admitted that “nobody’s hands are clean ... all of us are complicit to some degree.” We all, and not just the leaders we’ve failed to restrain, have unforgivable blood on our hands, but I’m mindful of young Afghans who repeatedly told us, over the past decade, that “blood doesn’t wash away blood.”

We’ve no excuse, none whatsoever, for not raising our voices resoundingly, thunderously, clamoring for a Ceasefire, Now.

There Will Be Repercussions: The West is Collectively Responsible for Israel's Genocide in Gaza

Ramzy Baroud

On October 20, Secretary-General of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres, stood on the Egyptian side of the Rafah crossing, between Egypt and besieged Gaza.

Guterres was not the only international figure to travel to the Gaza border, hoping to mobilize the international community in the face of an ongoing genocide, in an already impoverished and besieged Strip.

“Behind these walls, we have two million people that is suffering (sic) enormously,” Guterres said.

These efforts, however, paid little dividends.

The spokesperson for the Ministry of Health in Gaza, Ashraf al-Qudra, said in a statement on October 24, that the flow of humanitarian aid into Gaza is “too slow (for it to) change the reality” on the ground.

This means that the seemingly endless UN Security Council debates, General Assembly resolutions and calls for action did little to alter the tragic situation in Gaza in any meaningful way.

This begs the question, what is the use of the elaborate international political, humanitarian and legal systems, if they are unable to stop, or even slow down a genocide that is being aired live on TV screens all across the world?

In previous genocides, whether those accompanying the Great Wars or that of Rwanda in 1994, various justifications were offered to explain the lack of immediate actions. In some cases, no Ge-

neva Conventions existed and, as in Rwanda, many pleaded ignorance.

But, in Gaza, no excuse is acceptable. Every international news company has correspondents or some presence in the Strip. Hundreds of journalists, reporters, bloggers, photographers and cameramen are documenting and counting every event, every massacre and every bomb dropped on civilian homes. It is important here to note that scores of journalists have already been killed in Israeli attacks.

Scientific approximations are telling us, for example, that nearly 25,000 tons of explosives have been dropped on Gaza by Israel in the first 27 days of war. It is equivalent to two atomic bombs, like those dropped by the US on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.

When US President Joe Biden callously tried to question the numbers of the Palestinian dead, the Gaza medical staff, who are forced to perform life-saving surgeries on the dirty grounds of hospitals, took the time to prove him wrong. On October 26, they produced a list containing the names of 6,747 Palestinian casualties who were killed in the first 19 days of war.

Thousands have been killed and wounded since then, yet Washington and its Western allies insist that “Israel has the right to defend itself” even if this comes at the expense of a whole nation.

The Israelis are not masking their language in any way. The New York Times reported on October 30 that “in private conversations with American coun-

terparts, Israeli officials referred to how the United States and other allied powers resorted to devastating bombings in Germany and Japan during World War II ... to try to defeat those countries.” A few days later, Israeli Minister Amichai ... has openly declared that nuking Gaza is an option in his country’s genocidal war on the Palestinian people.

On the day the NYT report appeared, Karim Khan, the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), arrived at the Egyptian side of the Rafah border.

He still used the same guarded language, as if not to offend the sensibilities of Israel and its Western allies. “Crimes allegedly committed in both places have to be looked into,” he said, referring to both Israel and Gaza.

One could excuse Khan by arguing that legal jargon must be restrained until a thorough investigation is conducted. But thorough investigations are rarely conducted when it comes to Israeli crimes in Gaza or anywhere else in Palestine.

When an investigation is carried out, international judges frequently find themselves accused by the US and Israel of bias or worse, anti-Semitism. In the case of the investigation spearheaded by a respected South African judge, Richard Goldstone in 2009, the man was forced to retract part of his report.

Khan knows this too well because he is currently sitting on a large and growing file of Israeli war crimes in Palestine, insisting on delaying the procedure under various excuses. Obviously, the US does not favorably view ICC judges who advance war crime cases against Israel. The anti-ICC sanctions imposed by the Trump Administration in 2020 are an example.

Many officials in Western institutions are becoming aware of this hypocrisy. On October 28, Craig Mokhiber resigned from his position as the Director of the New York office of the UN’s High Commissioner for Human Rights in protest of the UN’s

failure to stop “a genocide unfolding before our eyes in Gaza.”

On October 20, around 850 members of the EU staff signed a letter to EU Commission President, Ursula von der Leyen, criticizing her “unconditional support” for Israel.

The letter was polite and diplomatic, considering the horrendous moral failure of Von der Leyen, especially when her gung-ho approach to the Russian war in Ukraine is compared to her blind support of Israeli crimes in Gaza. “Only if we acknowledge Israel’s pain, and its right to defend itself, will we have the credibility to say that Israel should react ... in line with international humanitarian law,” she said.

The International Olympic Committee, which insists on separating between politics and sports, has no problem meddling in politics when the enemy is a Palestinian.

The IOC issued a statement on November 1, warning any participant in the Paris Olympics, scheduled for 2024, from engaging in any “discriminatory behavior” against Israeli athletes, because “athletes cannot be held responsible for the actions of their governments”.

The word ‘hypocrisy’ here does not even begin to describe what is taking place, and the repercussions of this moral failure will be felt around the world for years to come. Never again should the West be allowed to play the role of the mediator, the impartial politician, the judge or even the self-serving humanitarian.

This is not a difficult conclusion to reach. Gaza has been turned into a Hiroshima as a result of Western bombs and the blank political check handed to Israel by Western governments and leaders from the onset of the war, in fact, 75 years prior.

Nothing will ever alter this fact, and no ‘strongly worded’ future statements will ever help the West redeem its collective moral failure.

Europe Agonizes In Gaza

Boaventura de Sousa Santos

Europe is a small corner of a vast continent called Eurasia stretching from Cape Roca to Cape Dezhnev – a vast continent with a very rich history. In that small corner, what we call the Iberian Peninsula is even smaller. For millennia, this was a minor space to which no possible conqueror gave much importance. It was the end of the Ptolemaic world – a dead end. The Romans used this corner of the world to weaken the Carthaginians and draw them away from the Italian peninsula. Many centuries later, when the Visigoths held sway here, it was the Muslims from North Africa who came to culturally enrich this marginal region of Europe. Without the multicultural richness of Al-Andalus, Western culture as we know it would not exist.

From the 15th century onwards, Europe began to lose the priority given to its centuries-old ties with Eurasia and to invade other regions of the world, separated by oceans, and expand in new directions, by sea, to the West and South, and to the far East. The story of the winners of this history is a huge trophy cabinet. The story of the losers took a long time to become known, and even today it is only partially known. Europe's "way of living together" with these new worlds has almost always been characterized by appropriation, pillage, and violence, always in the name of noble ideologies (Christianity, civilization, progress, development, human rights, democracy). Without being unimportant, such ideologies never had the strength to counteract the essence of coexistence, which required permanent war.

Less well known is the fact that this "way of living together" was followed for both external and internal use. That's why the longest period of peace that Europe has ever enjoyed lasted just over a hundred years (1815-1914), and even then there was the Franco-Prussian War in between. The second period, which began in 1945, doesn't seem to be able to last that long. The reason lies in the original sin of Euro-

pean civilization considering itself superior without a global consensus on the criterion of superiority or on who had the legitimacy to define and impose it. For this reason, since the 15th century, Europe has only been able to define itself through reciprocal exclusions. Russia has sometimes been Europe, sometimes the other side of Europe. And Russia has either seen Europe as its home or as the home of the enemy. The same happened with the Balkans. Eastern Europe was barbarism for Hitler (the Poles had no Kultur) and Southern Europe was the backyard of Northern Europe, half-African by blood and lifestyle. Ireland, on the other hand, was a colony of England and was subjected to famines as severe as those Stalin imposed on Ukraine. During the Cold War, the problem of Russia was solved, not by dividing Russia, but by dividing Europe into two blocs.

Once the Cold War was over, Europe's real historic defeat began. Once again, Europe was unable to unite except against Russia. This time, it wasn't on its own initiative (which was actually going in the opposite direction, Willy Brandt's Ostpolitik), but on the initiative of the USA, which was ready to collect on the European debt it had incurred from the Second World War. The failure to put an end to NATO (and, on the contrary, expanding it after the end of the Warsaw Pact) was the instrument used to separate Europe from Russia. The end of historical colonialism had made it more difficult to gain cheap and unconditional access to the natural resources that Europe had always lacked. For twenty years, starting with Vladimir Putin's accession to power in 2009, this difficulty was solved by Russia, which supplied Europe with 35% of its natural gas at prices that favored the international competitiveness of European (mainly German) companies. This solution came to an end with the explosion of the gas pipelines on September 26, 2022. If the US didn't cause the explosion (many claim it did), it was at least the one who benefited most from it, making Europe much more



dependent on the US, and in such a way as to make the European economy less competitive.

The continuation of the war in Ukraine, i.e. Europe's inability to build a just peace against US geostrategic interests, has been the most visible manifestation of Europe's historic decline. It certainly won't be the last. Colonialism is a ghost that will haunt Europe for a long time to come. Its most recent outcropping is the criminal final solution imposed by Israel on the martyred people of Palestine. Zionism became a convenience of the British Empire to prevent the emergence of a strong Arab state in the Middle East and expanded thanks to European anti-Semitism, a long and cruel history that goes from the 16th century Inquisition to Nazism, via the 1881 pogroms in Russia and the Dreyfus Affair in France (1894). Just remember that one of the founding books of Zionism was published in 1896 (*The Jewish State* by Theodor Herzl). Today, the Zionism installed in the Israeli government is a toxic mixture of two of the worst legacies of European civilization: colonialism and fascism. Israel is a colonialist state divided by an abyssal line: democracy for the Jews, fascism for the Palestinians, whether or not they are citizens of Israel. Politically, Israel continues to serve the interests of Western imperialism in the Middle East, this

time not the British Empire, but the US Empire. On an ethical-ideological level, Israel is Europe seen in the cruel mirror of the worst of its history, a history that stubbornly refuses to remember the accounts it doesn't want to settle with the world. Watching the images from Gaza on TV and social media, the world that has been colonized by Europe has the feeling of *déjà vu*. It remembers the following facts: the human life of the colonizers is worth immeasurably more than that of the colonized; the colonized, when they resist with some effectiveness, are terrorists, and for terrorists the solution is always conceived as final – extermination; while the colonizer acts on principle, the colonized act with barbarity, so the contradiction between the colonizer's principles and the colonizer's barbarity are never the subject of discussion; there is no point in investigating individual responsibilities because guilt and punishment are collective, since the colonized are not punished for what they do but for what they are (inferior, disposable); when they are not terrorists, the colonized are obstacles to development, and so the ground may have to be cleared for the alternative to the (Chinese) silk route to reach the port of Haifa safely; there is no point in asking other colonizing countries for help as long as they benefit from the dirty work done by others.

The Killing Train Unveils Itself and Fascism

Michael Albert

Often what is vile hides itself. Denies itself. Alibis itself. Rationalizes itself. It even fades from awareness due to its being so ubiquitous that we become like fish who take for granted the ever-present sea. But sometimes what is vile blares forth. Look at me, it bellows. Here I am! Yea me! Celebrate me!

Decades back, I wrote an emotive piece to express horror at the oft-denied, oft-hidden, oft-unad-dressed, oft-taken-for-granted ubiquitous sea of violence that engulfs us. I still feel a need to emote that. Don't you? But now another feeling gnaws at me. It's a kind of extension of the first, I suppose. So here is a big section of the decades-old piece about the sea of violence that was titled "The Killing Train." After that, some words about an extension to today.

Suppose a hypothetical god got tired of what we humans do to one another and decided that from January 1, 1991 onward all corpses unnaturally created anywhere in the 'free world' would cease to decompose. Anyone dying for want of food or medicine, anyone hung or garroted to death, poisoned to death, shot or beaten to death, raped or bombed to death, anyone dying unjustly and inhumanely would, as a corpse, persist without decomposing. And the permanent corpse would then automatically enter a glass-walled cattle car attached to an ethereal train traveling monotonously across the U.S., state by state, never stopping. One by one the corpses would be loaded onto the cattle cars and after every thousand corpses piled in, higgeldy piggeldy, a new car would hitch up and begin filling too. Mile after mile the killing train would roll along, each corpse viewed through its transparent walls, let's say 200 new corpses a minute, one new car every five minutes, day and night, without pause.

By the end of 1991, on its first birthday, the killing train would measure over 2,000 miles long. Traveling at 20 miles an hour it would take about five days to pass any intersection. By the year 2000, assuming no dramatic change in institutions and behavior in the interim, the transparent train or corpses would stretch from coast to coast about seven times. It would take about six weeks from the time its engine passed the Statue of Liberty to when its caboose would go by, its hypothetical god still wondering when pitiful, aspiring humanity would get the message.

Think how a young child sometimes points to a picture in a book or magazine and asks for an explanation, 'Tell me about a tree? A car? A boat? A train? A big train? The killing train?' Go ahead, answer that.

If the ecologists are right that this planet is a single super-organism, they are wrong that pollution, toxic waste, and other human-created garbage is the most deadly virus attacking it. Maybe soon, but for now, the killing train is still worse.

Think about the pain that radiates from the Vietnam War monument with its 50,000 names in Washington, D.C. Imagine the lost opportunity and lost love and the network of negative influences that radiate from the unnecessary deaths enumerated on that monument. Now think about the killing train stretching from coast to coast and back and forth and back and forth and back and forth. Consider its impact, not only on those on board, but on every person that any of those corpses ever loved or would have loved, fed or would have fed, taught or would have taught.

Who rides the killing train? Citizens of the Third World, selling their organs for food, selling their babies to save their families, suffering disappearances



and starvation. Dodging bombs. They lived in Brazil, the Philippines, El Salvador, and New York. They are headed for the killing train. Every day. Millions. Is this exaggerated? When 10 million children die yearly for lack of basic medical aid that the U.S. could provide at almost no cost in countries whose economies Exxon and the Bank of America have looted, what can you call it other than mass murder? Bloated diseased bodies are victims of murder just as surely as bullet-riddled bodies tossed into rivers by death squads. To deny medicine is no less criminal than to supply torture racks, steal resources, or carpet bomb.

Evolution has given humans the capacity to perceive, think, feel, imagine. At a time of war—as now [when I wrote the killing train] in the Gulf—if we get aroused to action we begin to see the whole train as it persists day in and day out. When this happens, what do we do about it. Become depressed? Cynical? Anguished? Cry? Daydream of Armageddon? Daydream of retribution? Daydream of justice? Hand out a leaflet?

Once we begin to see it, how do we face the killing train? Part of me says these crimes are so grotesque, so inhumane, that the perpetrators deserve to die. A

little tiny killing train for the killers and no more big killing train for everyone else. An eye for a million eyes. What other step makes more sense?

But that's not the way the world works. People give the orders, wield the axes, withhold the food, and pay the pitiful salaries, but institutions create the pressures that mold these people. When an institutional cancer consumes the human patient, what kind of surgeon can cut it all away? Is the weight of repression so intense it can never be lifted?

At first, becoming attuned to our country's responsibility for the corpses the hypothetical god stacked behind transparent cattle-car walls makes handing out leaflets, or arguing for peace with a co-worker, or urging a relative to think twice about cursing victims, or paying taxes, or going to a demonstration, or sitting in, or even doing civil disobedience seem insignificant. But the fact is, these are the acts that the hypothetical god, tired of our behavior, would be calling for if she were to actually parade the 'free world's' corpses down our main streets in a humongous killing train. These are the acts that can accumulate into a firestorm of informed protest that raises the cost of profiteering and domination so high that the institutions breeding such behavior start to buckle.

'You lose, you lose, you lose, and then you win.' Every loss is part of the process that leads to transforming institutions so that there can be no people as vile as Hussein or Bush. No more 'Good Germans' or 'Good Americans,' cremated Jews or decapitated peasants.

I think the killing train excerpt included above continues to apply. When I earlier wrote at the outset of this essay that I now feel need for an extension perhaps you thought I meant I need to note all the additional transparent cars recent years murders would add, or maybe I instead wanted to now describe the hypothetical god's killing train as so long it would now stretch around the whole planet over and over, not just the U.S. But I actually meant there has been what seems like a change I want to note. The violence has stopped trying to hide. Still ubiquitous, now the violence often trumpets itself. It blares forth, look at me, celebrate me, even as you suffer my impact.

Global warming is in our face. Oil, oil, oil, hooray. Violence struts forth and says no more food and off with your electricity too. Run, run, but, ha ha, you have nowhere to run. And let's bomb to dust your hospitals. Let's shut off your water. We know how to deal with civilians. Use ours. Kill yours. And the U.S., the mightiest of the mighty, the biggest bully of all says, great balls of fire you are indeed wonderful. Here's more guns to shoot. Here's more bombs to explode. By all means, starve them too. And if anyone interferes, here is our fleet, here are our planes, here are the really big guns. We got your back. We push you forward. And of course the arms merchants weep with joy. For we are masters of war. Worship us.

So no, my new added need was not to add more about the vile circumstances themselves. The killing train addressed that, albeit now the insane depravity of capitalist ecological violations threaten to simplify the hypothetical god's effort to create a graphic advisory for caring beings to view because capitalist violation now threatens to make the whole planet a killing train for such a god to show some aliens....

And my need for an extension was not about how to react either. The need for and efficacy of activist resistance addressed back then still applies now.

No, the new feeling that pushed my fingers to type this brief extension is about how we understand ourselves so as to productively talk with one another. It seems like evidence and logic are not enough. Indeed, they seem not only insufficient, but at times barely relevant. For this extension, I can't quote myself from a few decades back but I can quote a really great novelist, Kurt Vonnegut, from still more decades back, who then wrote about a still earlier time when people even more widely embodied incredibly contradictory sentiments in each human vessel. His subjects were then much like, I fear, many people are today. Like we who bemoan civilian relatives or just distant look alikes who have been struck down to become corpses behind transparent walls in a metasizing killing train but who simultaneously cheer on shoveling countless more corpses into that same train as if that would make things better. Like we who suffer high waters rising and dangerous tem-

peratures climbing but simultaneously ridicule green anger and activism. Like we who support strikers but bemoan welfare and immigrants. And yes, I know that not everyone harbors good submerged beneath bad or bad beneath good. Still, to me Kurt Vonnegut's words, quoted here from his book *Mother Night*, are worth some space. He wrote:

"I have never seen a more sublime demonstration of the totalitarian mind, a mind which might be likened unto a system of gears whose teeth have been filed off at random. Such a snaggle-toothed thought machine, driven by a standard or even by a substandard libido, whirls with the jerky, noisy, gaudy pointlessness of a cuckoo clock in Hell."

...

"The dismaying thing about the totalitarian mind is that any given gear, though mutilated, will have at its circumference unbroken sequences of teeth which are immaculately maintained, that are exquisitely machined."

"Hence the cuckoo clock in Hell. Keeping perfect time for eight minutes and twenty-three seconds, jumping ahead fourteen minutes, keeping perfect time for six seconds, jumping ahead two seconds, keeping perfect time for two hours and one second, then jumping ahead a year."

"The missing teeth of course, are simple, obvious truths, truths available and comprehensible even to ten-year olds, in most cases."

"The willful filing off of gear teeth, the willful doing without obvious certain pieces of information is how (fascism) happens. That is the closest I can come to examining the legions, the nations of lunatics I have seen in my time."

With gear mutilation accelerating on every side of us, and please note, inside us too, I wonder how we can productively address willfully missing truths both in others and in ourselves as well. That is a question that needs serious attention.

Jewish Anti-Zionism

Peter Bohmer

I want to share how my background causes me to support the Palestinian struggle against the Israeli occupation of all of Palestine including Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Since 1967, I have actively opposed the U.S. military aid and ideological support for Israel, and in solidarity with Palestine.

I mourn the deaths of 9500 people murdered in southern Israel and Gaza over the last three weeks (as of October 29th) over 1400 in Israel, mainly Israeli civilians by Hamas and over 8000 Palestinians in Gaza and growing numbers in the West Bank by the Israeli military, the IDF. Let us take a moment to reflect on this death of human life and the injuries of many more.

My parents and grandparents were Jewish from Central Europe, my parents grew up in Vienna, Austria. The German military and Nazis were welcomed by much of the Austrian population when they invaded in spring 1938. Germany immediately annexed Austria. My dad was 22 when he was incarcerated in Vienna by the Austrian Nazis and frequently beaten. According to Nazi records, he was imprisoned for being “political” and Jewish. He was released after four months. My parents escaped a few days later to France.

They wanted to leave Europe because they expected an imminent Nazi invasion of France. They were denied visas to Australia and Canada because of these countries’ antisemitic immigration policies. After a few rejections, my parents were admitted to the U.S. in June 1939. My grandfather and at least four other relatives were gassed to death in concentration camps.

Antisemitism, as anti-Jewishness, has been prevalent all over Europe and to a lesser but real extent in the U.S. It continues today although less systemic. Many Jewish people as a response have seen their liberation and fair treatment as integrally connected with the

liberation of all people, e.g., Karl Marx, Rosa Luxemburg, the many socialist Jews, in the civil rights and anti-apartheid movement and in the Palestine Solidarity movement.

Because of this history of oppression, I grew up believing Jewish people would not oppress others. I was naïve. A majority of Jewish people in Israel and around the world support a Jewish dominated state. A Jewish state where Palestinians are systematically displaced from their land and are treated less than equal within the Israeli state formed in 1948; and less than human on the land Israel seized in 1967: the West Bank Gaza, and East Jerusalem. When you take someone’s land or enslave them, as what also happened in the U.S., there is a strong tendency for the dominant group to justify it.

On Facebook recently and for years, I have been accused by individuals of being antisemitic. An earlier version of this talk given on October 17th in Olympia, Washington was censored and removed by Facebook administrators for being inappropriate. I am anti-Zionist which is fundamentally different from being anti-Jewish. The Netanyahu led Israeli government, many leaders of the Republican and Democratic Party and some Jewish groups in the U.S. try to undermine criticisms of Israel and support for Palestinian self-determination and justice by calling criticism of Israel, antisemitic.

Some criticisms of Israel are motivated by hatred of Jews, e.g., white supremacist groups in the US, and we should never ally with them in opposing the Israeli occupation.

Zionism means a Jewish State where the laws, educational system and major institutions favor Jewish people, and that Palestinians are second class citizens or non-citizens.

Zionism also means the right of return for anyone around the world who is Jewish while hundreds of thousands of Palestinians and their millions of descendants who were expelled from Israel's 1948 created borders are not allowed to return. Most of the population of Gaza are Palestinians forced out of Israel in 1948 and their children and grandchildren. A Jewish dominated State where Palestinians have lived for millennia is Jewish supremacy.

Moreover, the Israel government has supported many anti-Jewish and antisemitic governments such as Hungarian leader, Viktor Orban in Hungary, and provided arms and military training to the military dictatorships in Guatemala and Argentina in the 1970's and 1980's. Israel was furthering US foreign policy in these actions, one important reason why the U.S. has been such a supporter of Israel. While opposing antisemitism, don't allow Zionists to define you as antisemitic. My perspective is similar to Jewish Voice for Peace (jewishvoiceforpeace.org). They have been organizing a series of powerful demonstrations and sit-ins in, mainly in D.C., demanding an immediate cease-fire and against U.S. support for the Israeli war.

It is not an exaggeration to call the Israeli occupation, apartheid; and Gaza an open-air prison that has become a concentration camp. Violence and displacement by Israeli settlers and the IDF of Palestinians have also increased in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, as has the blockade of Gaza. Groups such as Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, the U.N. Secretary General, and an Israeli human rights group, B'Tselem use these terms although we seldom find them in the mainstream media or by U.S. politicians.

This does not justify the killing of Israeli civilians in southern Israel but let us understand its causes did not begin with what happened on Saturday, October 7th but with British colonialism and the 1948 Nakba (forced removal of Palestinians). Israeli's revenge, mass murder, starvation and collective punishment of Palestinians including the 16 year blockade of Gaza is a war crime that is wrong and will not bring security to Jews.

All Israeli governments, Labor, Likud, Netanyahu, and the recent mass Israeli social movement that has opposed the Netanyahu government's increasing authoritarianism towards the Jewish population, are rejectionist. This means they do not accept Palestinians as equals, neither in the past nor present.

Whether it's one state or a real independent two state solution, it must center economic and political justice and equality for all, especially but not limited to Palestinians. This includes the right of Palestinians to return to inside the 1948 borders that Israel imposed.

Since 1967, the U.S. has unconditionally supported the illegal, immoral occupation of the West Bank, the annexation of East Jerusalem, and made more than a dozen vetoes in the UN security council of resolutions critical of Israel. The U.S. just vetoed a UN resolution calling for a cease fire and negotiations. The U.S. provides \$3.8 billion dollars of military aid annually and has committed to continue this through 2029. Biden just proposed an additional \$14 billion of military aid to Israel, and it is sure to be passed by Congress.

Rather than supporting a cease fire, negotiations and opposing the massive Israeli bombing and invasion of Gaza, the Biden administration is sending Israel additional weapons and military advisers. The U.S. has sent since October 7th, two aircraft carriers and 2000 marines to the Middle East in support of Israel, and has given Israel carte blanche to invade Gaza and commit the murders of tens of thousands and further ethnic cleansing.

The more we actively support the end of the Israeli occupation and U.S. support for Israel, the more we have the right to criticize the Hamas killings and taking of more than 200 hostages. I differ from the few groups and individuals who justify the October 7th murder of Israeli civilians by the Hamas led attack. They claim because the Palestinian struggle is anti-colonial and for self-determination all actions are justified. The killing of Israeli civilians, especially those and their descendants who fled the Nazi control of Europe is wrong. Many of them were not granted permission to immigrate to Great Britain, the U.S., Canada, Australia and other countries because of antisemitism and had



no place else to go but Palestine. This does not justify the forced displacement of Palestinians but makes their situation somewhat different from other settler colonialists.

I am also critical of those who ignore or even worse, support the mass killing by Israel in Gaza, directly by bombing and the ongoing military invasion. But also, indirectly by blocking most food, water, electricity, fuel and medical supplies from getting in. To defend Israel's increasingly genocidal policies by calling it self-defense is horrendous.

Israel claims a Zionist State is the only security for Jews around the world. Long run security cannot be based on the oppression and domination of another people. People will rise up. Israel is developing formal relations with and recognition by some of the conservative Arab states in the Abraham Accords. That will not further security in the long run, as the population in Egypt, Morocco, the UAE, etc. strongly support the Palestinian struggle.

The Hamas attack of October 7th shows the limits of this immoral strategy of Israel. Even if Israel destroys Hamas, oppression breeds resistance and Israel will eventually be defeated. Moreover, this security state strategy moves Israelis further to the right.

For moral and political reasons, the security of Jewish people and Palestinian people requires the end of the Israeli occupation, the end of U.S. support for Israel, and justice for all Palestinians.

The goal of a Palestinian socialist organization, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, DFLP, is, "a people's democratic Palestine, where Arabs and Jews live without discrimination, a state without classes and national oppression, which allows Jews and Arabs to develop their national culture together".

Let us do what we can in the streets, in letters and by lobbying politicians to oppose U.S. military aid to Israel including the massive, proposed increases and for ending U.S. support for Israeli aggression. Expose and challenge US corporations like Boeing and Raytheon that have sent billions of dollars of weapons to Israel, paid for by our taxes. Support the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) Movement against Israel.

Educate yourselves, friends, and family about the colonization of Palestine. It is a horrible situation for Palestinians, especially in Gaza and it is our responsibility to do what we can to change U.S. policy so that it is more in line with popular sentiment all over the world including declining U.S. support for the Israeli occupation. A minimal demand is for an immediate cease fire and an end to the Israeli siege of Gaza.

I often hear that Palestine-Israel is too complicated to take a position on, or there is no solution because Israelis and Palestinians are equally victims. An insightful response in a talk at Evergreen by Khader Hamide, a leading Palestinian activist who the U.S. unsuccessfully tried to deport for 20 years: "Palestinians are losing their land, and their lives and Israelis are losing their humanity."

A common slogan among Jewish people and Israeli leaders is "Never Again", which they usually restrict to Jewish people. The holocaust against Jewish people is horrendous but so is the holocaust against African people, Native and indigenous people, and others. Let us mean by "Never Again" for All People. That is both the moral and strategic position.

Americans Are Bankrolling Israel's Unfolding Genocide in Gaza

Sonali Kolhatkar

Americans are funding a genocide and no one asked our permission.

We are being dragged, unwillingly, into a war that is decimating a people. We are being forced to become involuntary accomplices to mass slaughter.

Palestinians, on the basis of their legal right against being wiped out, have filed a major lawsuit against President Joe Biden's administration for funding Israel's ongoing pogrom in Gaza, one that has killed more than 11,000 people, including 4,700 children. Represented by the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR), the plaintiffs include Palestinians who have collectively lost at least 116 family members to U.S.-funded Israeli military attacks.

The U.S. has sent Israel a total of about \$317 billion in inflation-adjusted tax-payer money, which amounts to more than \$4 billion annually. Almost all that funding has gone toward the Israeli military. Israel is the largest recipient of American foreign aid, receiving more money than what we give to far larger, far poorer nations, ones that have a far greater post-colonial claim to Western aid.

Now, the U.S. Congress and the Biden administration want to give even more of our tax dollars to Israel, specifically to continue bankrolling the unfolding genocide. They are quibbling over the political strings attached to the aid but are united in their desire to send the supplemental funds.

But, according to CCR, "The United States has a duty under Article 1 of the Genocide Convention to prevent and punish acts of genocide, an obligation the U.S. Congress made law in 1988." It's not just the number of dead Palestinians that ought to result in a withholding of U.S. aid but the fact that Israe-

li officials have been overt about their genocidal aspirations.

The lawsuit offers evidence of how various Israeli politicians have referred to Palestinians with dehumanizing language such as Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, who promised that the "human animals" in Gaza would suffer the consequences of his order for "a complete siege on the Gaza Strip," resulting in "no electricity, no food, no fuel."

Days into Israel's bombing campaign, United Nations Special Rapporteur Francesca Albanese warned on October 14, 2023, of a grave danger of ethnic cleansing of Palestinians, saying, "The international community has the responsibility to prevent and protect populations from atrocity crimes." Referring to the first great displacement that Palestinians suffered, Albanese added, "There is a grave danger that what we are witnessing may be a repeat of the 1948 Nakba, and the 1967 Naksa, yet on a larger scale."

At the time Albanese made the warning, Israel had killed 1,900 Palestinians.

A month later, on November 13, Israel's Agriculture Minister Avi Dichter described his nation's bombing campaign with a concise phrase, worthy of an operational name for planned genocide: "Gaza Nakba 2023. That's how it'll end."

By then the official death toll of Palestinians was more than 11,000. United Nations experts warned that "the Palestinian people are at grave risk of genocide," and, added, "Israel's allies also bear responsibility and must act now to prevent its disastrous course of action."



Gaza is being reduced to rubble.

One journalist named Chris McGreal, wrote in *The Guardian*, “I covered the Rwandan genocide as a reporter. The language spilling out of Israel after the butchery of the Hamas attacks is eerily familiar.” McGreal also correctly called out U.S. elected officials such as Senator Lindsey Graham for picking up the pitchfork and joining the violent mob. “We are in a religious war here. I’m with Israel. Do whatever the hell you have to do to defend yourself. Level the place,” said Graham.

It’s a simple calculus: Israeli officials promise to wipe out people who they view as less than human, with the full blessing and financial might of the U.S. The predictable outcome is a fulfillment of their promises, one that is happening in real-time. Not only are politicians responsible for Palestinian genocide, but so too is the media for uncritically reporting on the explicit goals and desires of genocidal maniacs.

Why shouldn’t we believe leaders when they tell us exactly who they are and what they intend to do? History is replete with naïve denials of stated intentions to violate human decency even as crimes unfold in plain sight. Recall that when Donald Trump told the nation in 2015 that he would launch a white supremacist presidential bid. Media outlets refused to call him a racist until several years later after the damage was done and he was in the White House. Hate crimes surged against Black people, Latinos, Muslims, and Jews. It wasn’t until the summer of 2019 that media outlets finally decided it was okay to label him a racist—that too after much hand-wringing. About a year and a half later, Trump mobilized an attack on the U.S. Capitol in January 2021 in what legal experts describe as an “insurrection” by a majority white mob. Trump told us who he was. Mainstream media outlets refused to believe him until it was too late.

We’re seeing a familiar hand-wringing today. Take the *New York Times*’s insistence on using euphemisms like “extremist,” “incendiary,” and “inflammatory” to avoid describing Israeli officials’ language and the Israeli military’s actions as genocidal.

This type of discussion dilutes an understanding of Israel’s stated goal by attempting to grapple with

the technical definition of genocide. For example, Omer Bartov, a professor of Holocaust and genocide studies at Brown University wrote in a November 10 *New York Times* op-ed that, “I believe that there is no proof that genocide is currently taking place in Gaza.” Still, Bartov admits that his “greatest concern watching the Israel-Gaza war unfold is that there is genocidal intent, which can easily tip into genocidal action.” (Notice how he doesn’t say “Israel has genocidal intent”—a common use of the passive voice to dilute blame.)

Countering this concern in comments to Vox, Raz Segal, an associate professor of Holocaust and genocide studies at Stockton University asked, “How many Palestinians need to die for these statements [by Israeli officials] to be recognized as what they are?”

It is the job of journalists to warn against abuse, exploitation, and corruption, and to shine a light on power so that an informed citizenry can decide on the course of its government. Many journalists are indeed speaking out against sidestepping the responsibility to report on genocide. More than a thousand have signed on to a letter saying they “hold Western newsrooms accountable for dehumanizing rhetoric that has served to justify ethnic cleansing of Palestinians.”

That ethnic cleansing is in full force. CCR’s lawsuit is seeking an injunction to immediately block U.S. tax dollars from supporting Israel’s war in a concrete effort to block the genocide, or at least wash the stain of Palestinian blood off American hands. Meanwhile, public support for U.S. aid to Israel has dropped, with more Americans now opposed to the military assistance than supporting it according to a Reuters-Ipsos poll. Nearly 70 percent support a ceasefire. International leaders, government offices, and media institutions, often ignore or deny genocides as they are unfolding, express regret after it’s too late, and then make promises of “Never again.” When warning signs of the next genocide arise, the cycle repeats. It’s up to us to stop it and we have that chance right now.

Solidarity? Make Sure Your Tax-Money is Not Invested in War Crimes!

Majed Abusalama interviewed by Kristina Božič

A prominent writer and political activist Majed Abusalama is a co-founder of numerous organizations, one of them being Palestine speaks in Germany. Born in Gaza, he is now based between Berlin and Tampere, where he is finishing his PhD about the generation of the Israeli blockade of Gaza.

You were born in Jabaliya refugee camp. Is what you see now in Gaza still the place you have known?

Yes, I was raised in Gaza, I went to the UN schools, I lived through the first and the second Intifada. I have seen the development and changes throughout this time. Refugees had at first minimal infrastructure. With time, cities grew larger and more populated. Now Gaza is one of the most densely populated areas in the world and with little and limited space people build upwards. Urban development has been restarted after every Israeli aggression.

In 2008 and 2009 Israeli bombardments caused a massacre and destroyed a lot. But people started again, they rebuilt, attempted certain developments to resolve problems caused by the Israeli settler-colonial regime and the military blockade. The 2012 bombardments brought destruction. Then again in 2014 ... And in 2020 ... With every hint of development, a huge infrastructure collapse and erasure of new and urban memories followed.

This is part of Israeli structural violence. They do not disrupt only our bodies by killing and wounding us they also erase and wound our memories.

The images we have of our urban surroundings, of the streets, squares, iconic buildings – they destroy them.

What we see now is the most extreme. Every time is worse, bombardments and the destruction increase. Through the years the severity, pain and intensity have grown. It is a tactic to engineer and manage the people: they bomb more brutally and then they offer a few extra privileges. After each destruction the Israeli construction industry gets better business opportunities. Materials coming to Gaza are mostly from Israel colonial power. This is another ugly side of settler colonialism: they besiege us, bomb us and then they sell us material to build so they can later bomb again. They control the military checkpoints and the fences that surround Gaza and they decide what can come in.

The urban infrastructure and images of Gaza have thus been repeatedly erased through generations. The generation of the Palestinians of the blockade, who are the focus of my research, have been disrupted the most. They have seen the most destruction, bombings and continuous erasures of their homes, towns. They have lost many people, family members, friends ... They have had to reproduce them and be in a way reborn multiple times.

But the present destruction is unprecedented?

Yes. It is an extreme peak of excessive violence and what legal experts warn amounts to genocide. The bombardments ... especially the carpet bombings mean that there are repeated strikes on a building. This creates an-earthquake-like feeling that shakes bodies and makes hearts skip beats. People are losing family members, neighbours ... The number of killed civilians is horrific. Whole families



have been wiped out. I have friends who are the sole survivors – orphans. All their family members have been killed. My cousin's wife and three children were killed. He is left alone. Thirteen years of his life and of building a home have been wiped out by an Israeli bombing.

This makes us draw comparisons with the price our grandparents paid during the Nakba. Gaza will never again be Gaza from before these bombardments, but the looming danger is even greater.

Many Palestinians warn that children connect Israel and Israelis only with bombings, tanks and destruction, the only experience they have with them. The effects of the brutalities reach across generations?

Yes. And this violence can also radicalize. I think this is actually the goal of the present fascist Israeli regime: to grow and embolden hate so that no one ever speaks about one, democratic state solution. It is part of the infrastructure of the occupation – the psychological war. They can legitimate the Jewish-only state if they can convincingly claim that it is not only that Palestinians are not Jewish but that Palestinians can not possibly overcome

what Israeli forces had done and are doing to them – after such atrocities it is impossible to live amicably together.

This is Israeli long-term strategy of segregation – using the internalized injustices as a reason for continuous and growing segregation, for more Palestinian bantustans and Jewish superior control over the land. It is what the Zionist project has been about all along.

In response to the present Israeli bombardments of Gaza you have written A letter to Europe from a Palestinian. We witness dehumanization of Palestinians in many Western media, in politics – and we allow it. How does this effect us and will effect our societies?

What is happening is a huge disruption to our societies. The effects are felt and will come on many levels – economic, social, political and communal. Gaza will never be the same. And we as humans will not be the same – I think we are in an increasingly worsening state. The traumas never end. And Israel embeds more and more traumas and extreme experiences, using them as control mechanisms for human management. We have generations of Palestinians who have never

had an experience with an Israeli civilian, only with the militarized responses, with snipers shooting peaceful protesters or farmers, with the siege that has made worse the dehumanization that has lasted decades. This aligns them with the rightwing groups in Europe and around the world that spread anti-Muslim propaganda. In their eyes no Muslim movement is a liberation movement, all are terrorists and none can be a partner in democracy.

We are experiencing a dangerous time. People in Palestine, in Gaza are at extreme risk. Reason is at risk. After experiencing or witnessing what we witness daily happening to our families in Gaza – we are changed, damaged.

Our, Palestinian lives are about sustaining hope, which is our moral duty, about sustaining survival and resistance. The situation is extreme but in many ways we have never lived “normal” lives. It is not normal to have to daily respond to and resist Israeli settler-colonial tactics to control and manage people. Yet we try to lead and continue with our “normal” lives. We want to remain human.

However, in the West, now more than ever we are not seen as equals. This time we can read this very clearly although we have known it for 75 years. But sometimes, in the most violent times you see the most humane and heroic faces of people. Like the ones who saved Holocaust survivors or who hid the Jews when Nazis came searching. There are people who put themselves at risk for humanity, who try to stop atrocities. They are the real humans, not those who are silent and neutral. Today the world is at a huge test. While Palestinians are being dehumanized, delegitimized we see how Gazans share the little water, bread, and rice they have so they can survive together. These are the most human actions – to care for and to share with others.

In your present and past activism, you cooperate with Israeli anti-apartheid activists. How difficult and important is this to counter the logic of segregation you have mentioned before that Israel is trying to instill?

It is important to understand that anti-colonial and anti-Zionist Israelis are very few, maybe a couple of thousands. They have very little power in a society that is mostly rightwing. Even liberal Zionists who support a two-state solution are not inclined to Palestinians living with them in a democratic, anti-colonial and anti-facist state.

With anti-Zionist and anti-colonial groups, like Jewish voice for peace, we share this vision and that is why it is important for us to work together. Also, here in Germany. We cooperate because we see the importance of our continuous communication and to prepare the ground for a one state reality, for being neighbours together ...

For me the only important reality now is the struggle to dismantle the settler-colonial regime and enable the refugees to enact their right of return – to their homes they had to leave, to the villages their grandparents were forced from during Nakba. The future must be of equality, where no one is superior to the other. I have been trying to contribute to this in the last twenty years. Every time the suppression of settler colonial regime grows also our demands grow. And our moral responsibility grows, which is not exclusive to Palestine but inclusive of all people between the river and the sea. I believe that human liberation is connected to Palestinian liberation but also to the liberation of the Jewish settlers who have been used by the fascist, settler-colonial regime to occupy the land.

In the USA we see growing anti-Zionist, Jewish resistance to the Israeli settler-colonial project. Representing the majority of the Jewish youth they support the Palestinian struggle. We work together, we fight together for equality and for the rights of everybody. We re-see the reality of apartheid and settler-colonial regime. The fascist, right-wing settler-colonial regime can no longer hide its criminality. Anyone can learn and read what Israel is doing. And the continuous crimes against humanity that are committed to sustain the settler-colonial regime and Jewish supremacy put Jewish people around the globe at risk.



Yes, we need to keep open doors and we have to ensure there is a decolonised space for all oppressed and colonized people. They need to be given more space. It is crucial that Palestinian voices and narrative are heard and present. If we talk of liberation, then the most important voices must be of the oppressed and the colonized.

The reality of the occupied Palestine is also that the oppression sometimes comes from the Palestinian political forces, which Israel has coerced into the colonial system of repression. You mentioned the importance of being ready for a one, democratic state reality. How can Palestinian people and society be best supported in this?

Palestinians in Palestine are being put in bantustans. We are dealing with Foucault's analyses how to manage people through capitalism. People are managed through deprivation. It is politics of death. Of course, there are always ways of reconciliation. And the oppressed are the ones who wish to live in peace the most. We know what it means – because we know what war, loss and dispossession mean. The intergenerational trauma gives us this huge longing for liberation, justice and equality.

But the West cannot ensure these. We need the whole world to stand up and say no to Israel. We need a stop to financing Israel, to arms trade with Israel. Israel's status needs to reach the status of apartheid South Africa. This is the aim of the BDS campaign – to boycott, disinvest and sanction. These are the tools people have and this is the only way forward. A fascist right-wing regime will not change by itself. We need the revolution by the people. And I think we have solutions. No oppressed and colonized people have stayed oppressed and colonized forever. Liberation has a price and I only hope we will not have to pay much higher price than we have already paid.

South-African apartheid was resisted also by workers who joined the boycotts globally. You have called for this in the case of Palestine and Israel. There are unions in Europe who have supported the Palestinian unions' call for solidarity, we see solidarity with Palestine among football fans, calls by academics to stop research and academic co-operations. Can this be enough?

A Norwegian example is a good one. Their biggest trade union with over a million members has voted for solidarity with Palestine, to ensure Israel's accountability, and for the illegal settlements' products to be banned. Also Belgian trade unions and the fire-fighters in Barcelona have expressed important support. Labour movements speak the same language and workers understand. Palestine is a class struggle, where the elite class is trying to protect its own economic interests. Around the world on the streets in solidarity with Palestine we see the workers, migrants ... not the elites. Palestine joins many struggles: anti-imperial, anti-capitalist, anti-colonial, anti-class ... it also reminds trade unions of their moral identity of internationalism and solidarity. On the streets we understand this.

I have great hope in people, also that they will find a way to ensure the space for the Palestinian narrative to be heard and explain others why this is our common struggle. Western states, all Eu-

European governments are complicit in war crimes against Palestinians. They trade in arms with Israel and import settlement products. Taxes of Europeans and of workers contribute to Israeli actions against Palestinians. I think labour unions and people are protesting this more and more. And this is a very simple form of solidarity: make sure your tax money is not invested in war crimes.

Do you think legal venues are worth pursuing – the International Criminal Court prosecution and the use of universal jurisdiction ...?

I think all venues are worth taking. Everybody can do something, also at their workplace. If a worker knows his or her company works with Israel, he or she should protest. This happened with workers at booking.com and Airbnb when accommodations were offered in illegal Israeli settlements. This is immoral and illegal. Workers held their employers to account, reached out to the BDS movement ... some have deleted these offers, written appeals, some have quit their jobs. Capitalist structure is strong, but it reiterates that Palestine is also an anti-capitalist struggle. We see today that corporations are not held to account and we, people have been commodified to serve capitalist interests, which harm people in Palestine, Africa, global South; using people's resources to gain more wealth. This is a clear global circle of structural violence that must be stopped. Western imperialism must be dismantled at all levels, today. Now.

Your grandparents were among the victims of Nakba. They were forced from villages Bayt Jirje and Isdud, today's Israeli city of Ashdod. How can we ensure the right of return for all Palestinian refugees without adding to the fear Israeli government spreads against Palestinians? What would return, restitution, reparations and justice mean?

There are Palestinian architects and an important Palestinian researcher Salman Abu Sitta, who have worked on this question – is the return possible and how. There are many villages still

there and there is enough space for everybody in the land. Return is viable. And settlers know they came from abroad and live on the land that is not theirs, contributing to ethnic cleansing. Reparations should be paid and Israel is a rich enough country and has received a lot of aid – only the military aid from the USA amounts to billions every year and this ongoing genocide on Gaza has cost already over 200 billion dollars, with more aid-money coming to Israel. There are legal and conflict transformation experts who can find a way and set up a system how this can be done.

What Israel is trying to do is construct fear among settlers that they are going to be the next refugees. This brings back fears that go back to Europe, to the Holocaust and the ethnic cleansing of Jews from there, how the Zionist have been using this and to the Christian ongoing anti-Semitism against Jews to have them in Palestine. Before the colonization of Palestine Jews lived in all Arab lands. And we understand that a new wrong cannot be justified with the experience of a past wrong. We can achieve justice: everybody who has done wrong should apologize and the international community should facilitate the process with the aim that no one gets hurt. Everybody has to contribute to justice and equality and to collective liberation of everybody in the land. This is what the Palestinians have actually been calling for. We are trying to tell the Israelis, the Jews, the international community that we are ready for a solution that will not make more people refugees. We know the price of being a refugee, of having lost people and home, of resisting a settler-colonial regime and we do not want more harm.

Palestine has always been a diverse community – Jews, Christians, Muslims, Baha'i, Druze, Sufis ... – everybody lived in Palestine together. There were no ethnic problems nor antisemitism, which have always been a European problem. Everybody was just Palestinian. That was historic Palestine. We could have a common land again. And we have enough smart people who can shape a fair and just resolution for everybody. This is the dream.

DC's Got a Gas Problem, and They're Not the Only Ones

Alexandria Shaner

"Climate activists are sometimes depicted as dangerous radicals. But the truly dangerous radicals are the countries that are increasing the production of fossil fuels. Investing in new fossil fuels is moral and economic madness."

– Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General of the UN

From Oct. 24-26, a coalition of ecoactivist groups, including Extinction Rebellion Northeast, Extinction Rebellion DC, or XRDC, Scientist Rebellion, and Climate Defiance, engaged in three days of nonviolent actions against the gas industry in Washington, D.C. They disrupted the industry's biggest annual event in North America, temporarily shut down construction on a major pipeline project, and built bridges of inter-movement solidarity by joining in protests for a ceasefire in Gaza.

The week of action began by disrupting the North American Gas Forum to demand an end to the gas industry's lies that are accelerating climate chaos and endangering billions of lives around the globe.

The day's events began with a banner drop at Rock Creek Parkway that read, "Don't be gaslit. Natural gas = Fossil fuel = Extinction. Unite. Rebel. Survive." Dozens of activists then led a joyful march to the Park Hyatt hotel where the conference took place and held a rally outside. Activists inside, complete with saxophone music, chanting and a banner reading "Business as usual is climate disaster," disrupted the fireside chat session for Assistant Secretary for Energy Resources in the U.S. Department of State, Geoffrey Pyatt. Security forced the activists out of the hotel, where the chanting and rally continued.

Later on, participants crowded Pyatt's car, temporarily blocking him from leaving, and chanting,

"end fossil fuels." The action concluded with a die-in outside the hotel entrance.

Ali Hadjarian, PhD, a spokesperson for Scientist Rebellion, highlights the truth that the gas industry continues to intentionally obscure: "Given the consensus of scientists and agencies around the world that fossil fuel use must end now, it's absurd that the industry is gathering at conferences like this one to figure out how they can keep profiting off of the destruction of people and the planet. The science is clear: methane is damaging our health and accelerating our descent into climate chaos. Even the industry's so-called 'solutions' like renewable natural gas and gas certifications are just more hoaxes to delay climate action. Methane's time is up. The gas industry must accept this rather than invest in lies and stranded assets."

Jay Waxse, a professional engineer, published scientist, and spokesperson for Climate Defiance pointed out the political element that enables the gas industry's deception and violence: "The methane gas industry is poisoning our communities, and our government and economic system not only fail to hold the gas industry accountable but continue to incentivize it as the world burns. Politicians like Geoffrey Pyatt cozy up to the industry to make a buck while the rest of us suffer the consequences. Stop buying the gas industry's lies and start treating gas like the dirty fossil fuel it is. Respect us or expect us."

The gas industry has invested in a decades-long advertising push to make their product appear safe and appealing despite knowing the serious health consequences of their product for over a century. Utilizing tactics from the tobacco industry's playbook, they avoid regulations at the expense of the health and safety of both people and planet.



In order to meet climate commitments, the government must stop approving climate bombs like the Mountain Valley Pipeline and gas export facilities on the Gulf coast (which if approved, would be equivalent to operating 143 coal plants for 45 years) and instead, redirect that investment into clean energy and climate resiliency. Methane gas is not part of a livable future, no matter how much the gas industry attempts to say otherwise.

Even though the week of actions had been planned for months in advance, on the second day of the program the organizers and participants shifted strategy in response to the ongoing genocide in Gaza. In an act of solidarity, instead of performing their own action on Oct. 25, the climate coalition accepted an invitation to join one of If Not Now's protests focused on demanding that Congress call for an immediate ceasefire. If Not Now is a movement of American Jews organizing their community to end U.S. support for Israel's apartheid system and demand equality, justice and a thriving future for all Palestinians and Israelis.

As it turns out, Gaza is yet another hot spot, not only for racist exclusion and appropriation of land, but also of gas. On Oct. 30, Israel awarded 12 licenses to six companies to explore natural gas offshore of the Mediterranean coast. A U.N. report is questioning Israel's right to these resources, since some are sourced from within the Occupied Territory of Palestine and much of the rest are outside national borders in the deep sea. If these deals continue as planned, they represent a carbon bomb that will earn profits for neoliberal states and fossil fuel corporations, all while further dispossessing the Palestinian people and robbing humanity of a livable planet.

"XRDC's Stop Project Pipes action may have been locally focused, but the gas and oil industry plagues the whole world," explained Rachel, an organizer for XRDC, pointing out that the U.N. was talking about the unrealized potential of Palestinian oil and gas reserves in 2019. "This all just emphasizes the fact that capitalism has to go if we want a livable future. If our governments are prioritizing oil licenses and war for profit over the wellbeing of any person or people, then it is far past time for a change."

Connecting global climate concerns to Gaza, the situation is even more immediately dangerous because the Israeli state and capitalist elite want the resources of Palestinian land, but not Palestinian labor, an aspect that differentiates the apartheid regime in Israel from the apartheid regime of South Africa. As William I. Robinson pointed out in 2014, "This is a situation in which the dominant system needs the resources of the subordinate group but not their labor — that is, not their bodies, their physical existence. This is the racist structure most likely to lead to genocide. It was the experience of Native Americans in North America."

Robinson's analysis has proven prescient and chilling. These new exploration contracts are at best like throwing gas on the flames. If understood for their worst potential implications, new gas contracts are not just fueling the flames, but partially responsible for starting the fire. Gas is being unearthed as a significant but downplayed factor that cuts through



Activists stopped work on Washington Gas' Project Pipes by locking themselves together over the construction site. They were eventually removed by police and arrested. Over 50 protesters joined in the action chanting, playing music, waving banners, and supporting their locked down friends. | Photo by Miles Amore

ideology and rhetoric — a powerful economic interest that has come to exercise decisive influence over Israeli state policy and international involvement.

On the third day, they concluded with a big finish by shutting down a construction site for Project Pipes, Washington Gas's \$4.5 billion fossil fuel pipeline project that will lock D.C. into decades more dangerous methane pollution, making it impossible to meet the district's climate goals — all while forcing ratepayers to foot the bill. This is the first time that a gas pipeline construction shutdown has happened in D.C.

Activists walked onto the construction site, laid down and locked themselves to each other with lock boxes — stopping work on a project that will pollute the air in D.C. and contaminate communities for generations to come. For attempting to stop this harm, five activists were arrested.

Meanwhile, more participants stood by chanting and held Halloween-inspired banners reading "DC Council: Don't ghost your climate promises" and "Washington Gas: Zombie industry." In total, about 50 activists participated in the protest.

The methane that Washington Gas pumps into residents' homes pollutes the air with a cocktail of toxins that severely damages health, leading to premature death, respiratory illness and cancers such as leukemia. Outside, methane leaks contribute to the formation of smog, which is also a cause of premature death. Methane leaks put residents in direct danger of fire and explosions — a very real risk in D.C. where over 70 percent of leaks are at hazardous levels and could explode at any moment.

Project Pipes started almost a decade ago, yet Washington Gas has failed to significantly reduce the number of gas leaks in their pipes nor the greenhouse gas emissions associated with them. Despite Washington Gas's clear ineptitude and the extensive risks posed to the community, the D.C. Council has failed to step in and protect constituents from this deadly project.

"Washington Gas will tell you that we are endangering people's lives by delaying their project. But this corporation is motivated by profit, not the well-being of people," said Claire, a spokesperson for XRDC, highlighting where the real danger is coming from: "Washington Gas is the one pumping explosive gas into our communities, polluting our homes and endangering our lives. As long as Washington Gas forces methane through the city, residents will be in danger, especially low-income communities and communities of color. The D.C. Council must take a stand to secure a safe, livable future for all. It's time we end methane and electrify D.C."

Several organizations have been working to stop the project for years, yet the D.C. Council and the D.C. Public Service Commission have failed to listen to the science. On the cusp of phase three, the final part of Project Pipes' timeline, now is the time for the D.C. Council to step in and direct the commission to stop Project Pipes before more money goes down the drain.

Faced with the consistent and absolute failures of D.C. politicians to act, constituents are beginning to ask: what other choice is now available to us, but to shut down the fossil fuel infrastructure ourselves?

Anatomy of a Climate Coalition Campaign: Disrupting Gas from DC to Gaza

Jay Waxse and XR Rebels interviewed by Alexandria Shaner

This interview is a behind the scenes follow up to DC's Got a Gas Problem, and They're Not the Only Ones.

From Oct. 24-26, a coalition of ecoactivist groups, including Extinction Rebellion Northeast, Extinction Rebellion DC (XRDC), Scientist Rebellion, and Climate Defiance, engaged in three days of nonviolent actions against the gas industry in Washington, D.C. They disrupted the industry's biggest annual event in North America, temporarily shut down construction on a major pipeline project, and built bridges of inter-movement solidarity by joining in protests for a ceasefire in Gaza.

To share an inside view of how this campaign was developed, where it's at, where it might be going, and how it relates to broader climate issues and intersectional movement solidarity, Alexandria Shaner interviews Jay (he/they), an organizer from Climate Defiance, and Claire (she/her) and Rachel (they/them), two organizers from XRDC.

These 3 days of actions were the culmination of a lot of groundwork. Could you give some background and context for how each action, at the National Gas Forum and at the Project Pipes construction site, was developed?

Rachel on the Gas Forum: Before XRDC had gotten involved in planning this action, a coalition of rebels [rebels is the term for XR activists] from various Extinction Rebellion chapters in Northeastern America had started formulating ideas on how to disrupt the forum, raise money, and get people involved. When they initially contacted XRDC to help with the logistics, we all knew this was way too good of an opportunity to pass up, and of course we wanted to help our comrades call out the gas industry!

I started joining their meetings twice a week and doing some research on what the forum was about. It wasn't too long before we realized the forum was largely about how to greenwash "natural gas" and convince the public that we need gas for a transition to renewable energy. In other words, "how to gaslight the public to make a buck and destroy the planet at the same time". We thought this tied in really well with Extinction Rebellion's foundational demand, "Tell the Truth!"; so we leaned in and decided to call the action "Stop the Gaslighting" – because, let's be real, gaslighting is exactly what they are doing when they tell us that lighting gas is in our best interest.

We really wanted to disrupt the forum from the inside. We tried to register an activist for the event, but unfortunately the North American Gas Forum had a really elitist vetting process and this activist wasn't able to get in. It makes sense that they would only want the most committed and well-known gas-goblins to participate in an event that talks about manipulating the public. Why would they open the doors to the public when they don't actually care about the public's well being?

Jay on the Gas Forum: When the Climate Defiance team heard about the beautiful resistance that Extinction Rebellion groups were putting together at the North American Gas Forum, we jumped at the opportunity to contribute some good trouble inside the event. We weren't surprised to see US public officials rubbing elbows with the methane gas industry. It's pretty standard these days. Which is all the more reason to bring youth-led, multi-generational climate leaders to resist such a corrupt and destructive forum.

Rachel on Project Pipes: I joined XRDC about a year ago, and by that point in time, XRDC had been working on a campaign to call out the City Council for neglecting their supposed “commitment” to move towards sustainable energy. In this effort, an emphasis has been placed on Washington Gas’ Project Pipes, which aims to replace all of DC’s gas infrastructure – not just the old and leaky gas pipes, but ALL of them. Despite a decade of work, there has actually been an INCREASE in gas leaks since the beginning of this project.

The motivation on Washington Gas’ part is to delay any efforts to move towards a future where their product (gas) is obsolete and to make as much money off of the ratepayers as they can – but, of course, they won’t tell you that. The initial estimated cost to the ratepayers was \$4.5 BILLION, and the project is already over budget.

By the time I had joined, there was already a vision of a construction site shut down, but we wanted to exhaust other options first. We emailed City Councilmembers to put an end to Project Pipes, we protested in less disruptive ways, we invited Washington Gas to debates, chess games, and even jousting. We even locked ourselves on to the doors of the Wilson Building to remind Councilmembers that the people are paying attention. Unfortunately, we haven’t gotten any indication that the DC Council will put a stop to Project Pipes, so we had to take matters into our own hands.

Claire on Project Pipes: XRDC’s End Methane, Electrify DC campaign launched back in April 2022 with a huge banner drop from the front of the DC Council building, but it was born earlier, about two years ago, over a series of strategic planning sessions. Among other influences, we took notes from groups that had shifted from broad climate demands to organizing campaigns around much narrower demands, such as Insulate Britain.

The idea was that focusing on a specific, winnable demand, and demonstrating that NVDA [nonviolent direct action] allowed that win to happen,

would make a strong case for the power of NVDA and build huge momentum to move toward larger wins. We wanted to try that idea out here in DC and adapt it to our context. We weighed many different ideas for what our narrower demand could be – at one point we had possibilities on a whiteboard, each with tally marks indicating how we had scored them against a long list of factors.

We considered things like, is this demand actually winnable? Is it easily understood, and would it be able to win popular support among DC residents? Does it center climate justice? Can it have impacts beyond DC? And more. We got input both from within our XRDC chapter and from outside experts. And in the end, we decided to demand that the DC Council take action to stop Washington Gas’s Project Pipes.

Project Pipes began about a decade ago and is slated to continue into the 2040s – compare that to DC’s commitment to become climate neutral by 2045. The project has to be approved in phases, and the third phase is up for approval very soon, making it especially critical to escalate the pressure now and hold our leaders accountable. Even as our recent action took place at a Project Pipes construction site, where we stopped an entire day of construction, our message to DC leaders was clear: DC Council, don’t ghost your climate promises!

This campaign brought together a coalition of ecoactivist groups and included both local and regional participants – who was represented at each action?

Rachel on the Gas Forum: XRUS, XRPhilly, XR-Capitol Region, XRDC, XR Boston, Scientist Rebellion, Climate Defiance, Third Act, Beyond Extreme Energy, CCAN – and many more...

Rachel on Project Pipes: While this action was organized by XRDC, there were individuals from many groups such as CCAN, XRPhilly, XRDC, Scientist Rebellion, and Climate Defiance.

Any behind the scenes organizing highlights or strategies that you'd like to delve into?

Claire on Project Pipes: A lot goes into planning an action like this, and there are multiple points where folks come together to prepare and build community.

XRDC held an NVDA training a few weeks prior to the action – it was open to anyone, not just those who would be participating in our action. Prior to the action, a core group of us also had a more intimate training and build session where we constructed the lock boxes used during the action, with guidance and help from a talented and generous ally who came in from about an hour outside DC. This was an amazing capacity-building opportunity, and also an important part of getting ready (and excited) for the action.

We also had an art build where we painted the beautiful, Halloween-themed banners as well as smaller cardboard signs.

Having the Gas Forum action earlier in the week also helped to build community for the intense Project Pipes action. It especially helped out-of-town folks get to DC and get connected. We were so appreciative of all the folks who traveled to DC for the Gas Forum action, and then stuck around for Project Pipes, and even took on key roles in the action.

XRDC had been doing a lot of outreach to trusted groups and individuals to invite folks to participate, but the weekend before the action, our outreach also took another form: canvassing the neighborhood surrounding our action site. Around eight of us spent an afternoon knocking on doors, having conversations with neighbors about what Project Pipes is and why they should oppose it, and distributing flyers (which included an invitation to our post-action happy hour).

Day-of, while it may have looked like things wrapped up when we loaded up the banners, megaphones, and signs into the car and left the action site, that was just the transition to the next phase.

A number of us shared a meal, and our jail support team kicked into high gear to support our reds [“red” roles signify a high probability of arrest, five “reds” were arrested at this action]. This continued into the next day, when we were there in the courtroom and outside the courthouse to welcome our reds as they were arraigned and released.

That evening, we held a “DC Methane-Free” happy hour at a local pizza place where XRDC folks, other climate orgs, and community members gathered to get to know one another and share information about our work, including XRDC’s gas campaign. The happy hour had a great turnout and was an exciting way to continue the momentum from the previous day’s action.

The following week, we all gathered virtually to debrief from the action, with each person sharing their “roses” (things that went well), “thorns” (things that didn’t go so well), and “buds” (ideas for the future).

Jay on the Gas Forum: We knew our targets inside the forum were going to be defensive and insecure to our presence. They were ready to attempt to block our ability to disrupt their anti-science toxic business meetings that serve to advance climate chaos and perpetuate environmental injustice. So, we brought a saxophone. Our comrade wailed out some jazz blasts to accompany our love and rage that we delivered up and down the lobby, stairs, and elevator of the Park Hyatt, where the gas forum was held.

Rachel: Claire’s and Jay’s descriptions are pretty comprehensive. A few of the organizing highlights I’d point out from the Gas Forum action were: scouting, NVDA training, making sure people coming from out of town had a place to stay, and doing the art build.

For Project Pipes: scouting, NVDA training, making sure we weren’t disrupting lead water pipe replacement, talking with a lawyer about how to minimize charges, changing plans daily based on how the construction locations changed leading up to the action, art builds, and wheat pasting and flyering around the neighborhood.

Discuss participants joining in the Palestinian solidarity and Gaza ceasefire actions, in addition to the fossil fuel resistance actions. What are your thoughts on building power blocs of solidarity between movements and highlighting systemic connections between the fossil fuel industry, arms industry, and capitalism?

Rachel on the Gas Forum: Initially, we wanted our actions to take place over the course of the three-day forum and not just on Tuesday, but since Monday was just registration day at the forum, we decided not to tip our hand too soon. Tuesday was our big day of action, and while we initially wanted to disrupt again on Wednesday, we were invited to an action organized by If Not Now which focussed on telling congress “Ceasefire Now”! We discussed our options and we all felt that our efforts would be best spent at If Not Now’s action.

Unfortunately, a lot of the out-of-town rebels who participated in the Gas Forum action had to go home before the “Ceasefire Now” action. But I follow some of them on social media and see that they are going to marches and actions in their local cities. A lot of people from different affinity groups who were at the Gas Forum action are now risking arrest in actions to support Palestinians. At least one of these people was at the Grand Central Station shut down, another person was demanding a ceasefire in Bernie Sanders’ office and got arrested, and one was a medic at If Not Now’s action. It really is an honor to know these people, and the love and fire in their hearts inspires me every day.

Rachel on Project Pipes: XRDC’s Stop Project Pipes action may have been locally focussed, but the plague of the gas and oil industry plagues the whole world. Shortly after our action, I saw a statement that talked about Gaza’s “natural gas” reserves and immediately realized that may be a motivating factor in this whole thing. I did a little research and saw the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development was talking about “the unrealized potential of Palestinian oil and gas reserves” in 2019 as if oil and gas are the only reasons to value that land. I also found that Israel has been using gas and oil licenses

to bribe different companies (and likely international governmental bodies as well).

This all just emphasizes the fact that capitalism has to go if we want a livable future. If our governments are prioritizing oil licenses and war for profit over the wellbeing of ANY person or people, then it is FAR past time for a change.

One beautiful thing about the rebels I have met through climate activism is that they will fight for justice no matter what it looks like. Despite our regular XR rules of keeping messages climate related, we have been openly discussing ways we can help the people of Gaza. We have been sharing actions, expressing our grief, sharing our hopes, and using our platforms to speak up. We had a brief discussion about endorsing the November 4th National March for Palestine, and there was no opposition. There is so much worth fighting for, and we will give it our all.

Claire on Project Pipes: Although we each have finite time and energy, it absolutely makes sense that people are joining actions across these and other areas, from climate and fossil fuels, to Gaza solidarity, to reproductive rights, and more. We’re here out of love and rage, and we see that racist, capitalist, and colonialist systems are at the core of so much injustice and oppression around the world.

The more we shake up the status quo, and the more we demonstrate that anyone can fight for a better world, the more we acknowledge how interconnected all of these issues are, the closer we get to tipping points where the people’s voices can’t be ignored.

Where is the campaign going from here? What are your thoughts on climate justice and broad movement strategy in DC, the US, and possibly wider?

Rachel on the Gas Forum: While XRNE does not currently have our next action planned, we are already discussing the formation of an official Northeast chapter. This would encourage climate coalitions in Northeastern America to continue supporting each other in major power centers. Whether



we decide to target politicians in DC or capitalists in New York, expanding our network of support could provide countless opportunities. Perhaps this will allow further coalitions to form. I would LOVE to see an XR Midwest or XR Southeast coalition! And you already know we will be at the next North American Gas Forum – that is, if we haven’t already shut them down by then.

Rachel on Project Pipes: Since this was the first time a gas pipeline construction shutdown has happened in DC, we are really hoping it will inspire others around the country and maybe even around the world to take similar action. Even if there is not enough momentum in someone’s city to do their own local action, perhaps they will be motivated to go to the Mountain Valley Pipeline and aid in shutting down that construction in whatever way they can.

We also want to emphasize that you do not have to get arrested to be an essential part of the movement. You could spread the word on social media, you could message your representatives, you can create art, you can donate – whatever your strengths and passions are, they can be used to further this movement.

This fight isn’t going anywhere. Earth defenders will exist as long as humans are around.

Claire on Project Pipes: As we already mentioned, the third phase of Project Pipes is up for approval very soon. We are definitely feeling the need to keep up the pressure and build on the momentum from this action. Awareness of this issue in DC is rising, and we feel it’s a critical moment. That said, we are also reflecting on where we are at in the campaign, how it’s gone so far, and what makes sense strategically as far as next steps. So, stay tuned!

As far as broader movement strategy, I wish I had the answers but honestly, I don’t. I still have so much to learn about activism and organizing. Like so many others doing this work, this isn’t what I was trained for or thought I would do when I grew up – it’s something I’ve realized is entirely necessary, and I am learning as I go.

I very much believe that NVDA is the key to achieving transformational change, but most broadly, my feeling on climate justice strategy is “yes.” If someone is able to sit outside a government building every day in protest – yes. If a group is able to continuously disrupt pipeline construction – yes. If a coalition is able to organize a massive march and

rally – yes. We need more of it, in whatever way it is able to happen. And the more we can learn from and support one another, the stronger we will be.

Jay: The climate wing of the movement for human rights must connect these global scale issues to frontline communities to achieve real justice. We need a livable planet, and unless it's one that is accessible to the poor, it's neither radical or revolutionary. Mass nonviolent direct action can help us get there and help us continue to build pressure on public officials that should be doing more. Winning environmental justice fights, advancing mutual aid, and building capacity for a general strike will also be transformative in the global fight ahead!

Let's end on a more personal note – how did you come to this movement? Share a little about your path to becoming an organizer. What are the hard parts and the benefits of doing this work?

Claire: It has been on a long journey to get to this point. Growing up and into early adulthood, I loved nature and considered myself an environmentalist. I was active on various environmental causes, and I knew climate change was real and bad, but didn't understand that it was truly catastrophic.

NVDA was nowhere within the realm of what I could conceive that I might do in my life. I heard about XR in the break room at work, from a coworker who was telling a story of being locked onto a boat during a protest. I was awestruck by the fact that real people do those things and that I was talking to one of them.

Not long after, I went to an in-person XRDC talk, and I was sold. It was the first time I'd heard the truth told like that. Not half-truths, not hedging or sterile abstractions, not cushioned in "it's okay, we're fine, we can make it better, no worries." It was the first time someone told me that it's a crisis, that it's scary, that things are going to get really, really bad – and that NVDA is one of the best tools we have to do anything about it.

I wish I could say that everything about the crisis and about what I needed to do was totally clear to me in that moment. It wasn't, and I'm still learning. But that talk changed my life.

Over the past few years, I've gotten more and more involved with XRDC, from planning actions and discussing strategy to doing community outreach and wheatpasting. I've reduced the hours I work at my day job so that I can spend more time on climate activism, which is now one of the most important things in my life – maybe the most important.

I'm here because if I want to make a difference for other people (and other creatures) in this world, if I want my life to have meaning beyond myself, I don't know of a better way to do that. If you're wondering if you should get more involved and dedicate more of yourself to this work, the answer is yes. It always has been for me, even if I didn't accept that truth right away.

Jay: I always knew I wanted to help make change. For eight years, I focused on advancing renewable energy by working in solar engineering and solar scientific research. This is important, but I began to see that without a root cause analysis of where our society and economy stands, expanding renewable energy is only part of the solution. We must approach progress in a lens that deprograms our extractive and exploitative ways.

When Bernie's campaign was gaining momentum, I began my organizing career to fight for a political revolution. From that point on, I knew organizing was my calling. For four years, I have fought for an empowered democracy for the people, economic rights, compassionate public policy, and against expansion of industry that is killing our people and planet.

Even in these intense struggles, the main thing that sustains me is movement work that is centered on love. A love that especially includes people getting together to express righteous anger and outrage about what harmful action governments are doing with our money, and in our name!