



MAGAZINE

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Fighting Against
Climate Change

US Electoral
Extravaganza



*“Repression is
not a gradual
process,
it leaps out at
you and takes you
off guard”*

-Roger Hallam



www.znetwork.org

Title image: Oil Kills

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On the Frontline of Resistance: The Women of Palestine

M. Reza Behnam

During her acceptance speech in August at the Democratic National Convention, Vice President Kamala Harris heaped praise on her mother. She spoke proudly of a childhood full of promise, forged by a single mother who taught her to dream big.

As Harris paid homage to her mother, I thought of how Israel has done everything in its power to insure that there be no childhood “full of promise” for Palestinian children. During the time

she accepted the presidential nomination, across the ocean, Israel accelerated its genocidal war on Gazan families.

The Democratic standard-bearer advocates for a women’s right to an abortion and decries sexism and racism, but has no explanation as to why the United States continues to buttress an Israeli regime populated with right-wing racists eager to kill women and babies in Gaza.



Emphasis at the convention was on freedom, joy and just futures for all Americans. Possibilities and visions the Biden-Harris administration, has denied all Palestinian mothers, fathers and children owing to their embrace of apartheid Israel.

Despite countless United Nations reports on the state of Palestinian women in Occupied Palestine, little has changed. The struggle for freedom and self-determination for their progeny and themselves did not begin on 7 October 2023. Women have always been the bedrock of Palestinian life. They have held their community together despite more than seven decades of Israeli occupation and terrorism. The women of Occupied Palestine deserve safe and secure futures, where families can finally thrive.

Israel's war on Gaza has spared no one. It has, however, impacted women in unprecedented ways. They bear the disproportionate burden of responsibilities for their families, children and elders. Thousands of women have become widows, forced into the role of provider and protector. It is mothers and adult women who are tasked with finding ever-scarce food, yet they eat last and less than everyone else.

Against the constant fear of death, sickness, hunger, exhaustion and loss, the women of Gaza struggle to keep their families alive and united and their children shielded from the psychological trauma of war. The faces of children seen in the morning, may be gone forever by evening.

Israel's war on Gaza has been described as a "war on women." Two mothers are killed every hour. Of the reported 40,786 (2 September) killed since 7 October, 70 percent have been women and children, leaving families anguished and their children with diminished protection.

Nearly one million women and girls have been displaced and are living in extremely overcrowded shelters with little or no privacy, access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene.



It is close to impossible to impart the suffering that women have endured. The thoughts of United Nations Women Special Representative in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Maryse Guimond, may help: "I barely recognized women who I knew before the war. The last nine months [July 2024] is embedded on their faces, on their bodies." Faced with death, destruction and displacement, women in Gaza, she added, "show remarkable strength and humanity in their struggle to survive, with hope and solidarity amidst the devastation."

One of the greatest fears of both parents and children is loss. It is easy to grasp the panic of a parent whose child has wandered off in a crowded bazaar or to visualize the fear on the face of a child separated from a parent—the source of love, protection and security.

Every 10 minutes a Palestinian child is killed or wounded in Gaza. Save the Children estimates that up to 21,000 are missing—17,000 unaccompanied

and separated from their families and approximately 4,000 buried under the rubble. Another 19,000 have been made orphans.

Israel's war on women, has also been a war on children. The ethnic cleansing of generations of Palestinian children has been ongoing since Israel declared statehood in 1948.

Some mothers have reported that their children are frightened of bedtime, because the worst airstrikes in Gaza come at night. And that after decades of Israeli attacks many children have learned to distinguish between airstrikes, missiles, drones and other weapons.

There are no restful nights in worn-torn Gaza. It has been reported that mothers sleep with their shoes on. To save their children, they must be able to run quickly from Israeli bombs dropped during the night.

Israel's policy of deprivation predates 7 October. Before the current war, it allowed just enough water and food imports into the Strip to keep Palestinians at subsistence nutrition, just enough calories to prevent starvation.

Israel has continued to use starvation as a weapon of war. On 9 October 2023, Defense Minister Yoav Gallant made the regime's intentions clear when he announced a complete siege of the Strip, justifying the country's illegal and inhumane actions by stating, "We are fighting against human animals and will behave accordingly."

Intentionally starving civilians, "depriving them of objects indispensable to their survival, including willfully impeding relief supplies," is a war crime, according to international humanitarian law and laws of war and has been outlawed by UN Security Council Resolution 2417 (2018). The United States, however, has rendered international law hollow, UN resolutions and the United Nations body toothless through its veto power on behalf of Israel.

One can only imagine the despair of mothers and

fathers who find themselves powerless to provide food for their starving children. Facing unprecedented hunger, Palestinians have resorted to eating grass, weeds and animal feed to keep their children and themselves alive.

Furthermore, 11 months of war has extracted an immense cost on Gaza's already battered health care system, with women feeling it most profoundly. It should be noted that before the October siege, Israel denied Palestinians the basic right to health, contravening international humanitarian and human rights laws.

Israel's 16-year blockade and five prior wars on the enclave devastated Palestinian lives and left the country's health care structure and services teetering on the brink. For nearly 20 years it controlled the people and goods allowed in and out, including medical supplies, equipment and services.

Currently, with only a third of Gaza's hospitals barely functioning, with a lack of clean water, electricity, fuel and medical supplies, the health care system is near collapse and diseases have surged.

In August, the Gaza Strip experienced its first case of polio in 25 years, when 11-month-old, Abdul Rahman Abu Al-Jidyan, contracted the highly infectious disease. Displaced more than five times, Abdul's mother, Navin Abu Al-Jidyan, along with her husband and eight children, have been living in a tent in Deir al-Belah in central Gaza.

During a limited humanitarian pause, the World Health Organization and its partners began, on the first day of September, a difficult campaign to inoculate around 640,000 children under the age of ten.

According to the U.S. Center for Disease Control, three doses of the vaccine are needed to achieve 99-100 percent effectiveness; unlikely in this very brief ceasefire. Unsurprisingly, Israel has provided vaccinations to its soldiers, with boosters offered to those deployed in Gaza.

Abdul's mother correctly understood the futility of the vaccination efforts, saying what good will this measure do, "We live in a place where hygiene levels are completely non-existent. The water is polluted, sewage runs between tents, the place is filled with insects and epidemics,... We live in hell."

Jidyan, and other mothers in Gaza, are keenly aware that when the vaccination effort ends, Israel will once again begin bombing and killing the children who had just been vaccinated.

Water has also been used as a weapon of war. It is essential to both physical and spiritual health. The protocol and rituals around which a Muslim's life revolves have been violently disrupted. Water deprivation has made the obligatory ritual of ablution (ceremonial washing) before prayer impossible.

The paucity of water—reduced by 94 percent—and sanitation have been especially difficult for the more than 690,000 women and girls of reproductive age. Pregnant and lactating women and their newborns are especially vulnerable.

Menstrual periods have become an ordeal for Gaza's women and girls, where privacy and essential feminine hygiene products are wanting. Forced to use diapers or scraps of cloth during their periods, many have developed skin and urinary tract infections. They have been wearing the same stained clothes and undergarments for months. Some women have resorted to shaving their heads, because of a dearth of cleaning products.

The daily toil is best expressed by 18-year-old, Samar Shalhoub, a displaced Gaza resident: "We've gone back to the Stone Age. There's no security, no food, no water, no hygiene," she said, "I'm ashamed, I feel humiliated."

The challenges facing pregnant women are insurmountable. Decimation of the health care system has left an estimated 50,000 pregnant women with no access to basic health, prenatal and nutrition requirements. An aid organization, Islamic Relief

Worldwide, has described their travails and indignities, including repeated displacements, malnourishment and the stress and fear of constant bombardments.

Women, with no functioning hospitals, have been forced to give birth on floors of overcrowded and makeshift medical centers, in tents and in other traumatizing settings. Others have endured cesarean sections without anesthetics or pain medicines.

Interestingly, the U.S. Surgeon General issued an advisory report in August 2024 warning that parental stress had become a serious health issue in the United States. At once, I thought of the stark contrast between the conditions parents in the United States are facing compared to that of Palestinian mothers and fathers whose movements and very lives are being controlled by a brutal occupying army; and where, on a daily basis, they are forced to make life-and-death decisions regarding their children and themselves. Gazans do not control their physical reality, one in which Israeli violence is unrelenting.

The Surgeon General also wrote that "raising children is sacred work." For eleven long months, the parents of Gaza have valiantly carried out the sacred work of keeping their children alive.

Women have been the political spine of the struggle for freedom and liberation of Palestine across generations. It has been their strength, resilience and fearlessness that have kept the resistance alive. Israel has targeted them knowing that they are the pillar that sustains Palestinian life.

Members of the American political class, like Kamala Harris, continue to give Tel Aviv immunity and the tools of war to commit genocide and to unabashedly violate international laws.

Palestinians, women and men, are quite aware that they stand on their own against Israeli genocide and apartheid. And that they cannot trust American politicians, no matter their gender.

A Path Forward

Mazin Qumsiyeh

Over the past 45 years, I have been active on the streets and on the internet for our people struggle for return and self-determination in the face of a most brutal and merciless colonial regime. I read thousands of books and wrote a few myself. I read tens of thousands of research and analytical papers (and wrote hundreds myself). The problem of our country can actually be described very briefly. Its solution (remedies) can also be described briefly. Implementing the solution would be doable and is the only way to avoid a catastrophic world war.

So briefly, we have 15 million indigenous Palestinians, over 8 million of us are intentionally made refugees or displaced people (and that number increases daily). So far over 250,000 Palestinians were killed or perished prematurely thanks to genocidal policies since 1948. A million were injured and another million imprisoned since 1948. The perpetrator Jews fell under the spell of an idea called Zionism that tries to convince people that Jewishness is a nationality (Constantinian Judaism as called by Marc Ellis) and thus that Jews as a collective not only have a right to this ancient land but have an exclusive right to it. Gathering as many Jews as possible from around the world to take over indigenous land was done by force of arms and forces of lobbies around the world that go Western Governments to adopt this project of ethnic cleansing and genocide (and ecoside and scholasticide!).

The main problems faced by this colonial project are 1) that it arrived at colonialism a bit late after colonialism lost its appeal (the shiny city on a hill, promised land, inferior races and all that), 2) A stubborn resistance of the local people (Christian, Muslim, Bahai, Druz etc) who would not simply go away (see my book on this: *Popular Resistance in Palestine: A history of Hope and Empowerment*), and 3) difficulty to control information in the 21st century (e.g. live feed of genocidal acts).

The main support for the Zionist project and why it persisted so long were several (not in any particular order): 1) very good hasbara /propaganda disseminated largely through well controlled western corporate media and Hollywood creating an illusion (pop culture) that Israel is a democracy, that it is redemptive and good for Jews, and that it is defending itself against barbarism, 2) A well-oiled Zionist network willing to do anything to advance the cause including bribery, blackmail, and arms twisting in other ways, 3) A policy of creation and support of Arab and Muslim autocratic “leaders” willing to support the project to keep their seats. These three pillars have received significant blows thanks to the obvious intentional and ongoing genocide and a global (including Arab and Muslim awakening). But the pillars for now seem to hold though shaky. My thought is that the pounding at those pillars must increase significantly to end this nightmare for humanity and to avoid a catastrophic world war (where ALL will be losers). What are the hammers pounding that need to be strengthened?

1) Resistance: naturally in colonial anti-colonial struggles, most of the resistance is unarmed and some of it armed. International law recognizes not only a right to resistance but obligation to resist. This includes the imperative of building institutions of sumud (resilience/resistance) on the ground like our own institution (palestinature.org) and hundreds more. Over the past 150 years, it has been shown that killing more Palestinians creates more (and even smarter/more innovative) resistance.

2) Support by all people of conscience around the world. This includes things like Boycotts, Divestments, and Sanction (See bdsmovement.net), media work, civil disobedience and more.

3) Truth telling: Putting out the real narrative of what is happening and dispelling the myths and lies including about colonizers “right to defend themselves”,



nature of racist apartheid regimes, and the myths of a “two-state solution”. For the latter, see my 2004 book: *Sharing the Land of Canaan*.

4) Dismantling the support network of colonialism. This includes exposing all individuals and entities that support Zionism including the “Palestinian Authority” (PA). The PA was created by the “Oslo accords” and supposed to be interim for 5 years but is now 30 year old and had made “Israel” economically and diplomatically successful while destroying our society methodically. This is now the most profitable colonial occupation in history. Undermining this rigged system is an imperative as is pushing for the alternative “decolonization” and anti-apartheid struggle. That is much harder for colonialist to cope with. See books by Edward Said on this.

Note I did not add a fifth point about the UN, International laws or conventions since their implementation depends on mechanisms where the US can and has used veto power on those thus giving Israel impunity. The jury is still out on whether such mechanisms or even statements by human rights organizations have utility beyond their public relations value. The four points above should suffice in synergy to hammer more at the three above listed pillars of Zionist colonial support. This is our human path which is away from the Zionist path which leads to world annihila-

tion and self-fulfilling prophesy of Armageddon. We still can save humanity but the window is closing so we must act urgently. Your thoughts are appreciated.

Finally a poem by with my rough translation
(Poet Mohthel AlSgour):

*Do you think that when you burned me And danced
like devil over my remains
And left me for thrashers to thrash me Shades to the
eyes of the sun in sockets
Do you think you have suppressed my identity And
erased my beliefs and my history
In vain you try – no extinguishing a revolutionary I, like
the resurrection, one day coming
I am like Jesus coming back strong and from each storm
gathers myself
I will come back – oldest revolting lover and back as the
gloriest of highest revolutions
I will be back with the Torah, the Injil* and the Quran
and the tasbih** and the prayers
I will be back with all religions as one religion devoid of
hatred and divisiveness
A man from the trench inevitable my return.. I am all
the coming times ...*

*= new testament

**=glorification of god/supplication

Why Children's Rights Are Critical for Climate Policy and Environmental Activism

Esther Afolaranmi, Carter Dillard

The actual cause of the climate crisis is the anthropogenic emission of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere since the start of the industrial revolution. But the proximate cause—the underlying activity that sparked the climate crisis and the intertwined environmental crises—is how we have built society, starting from when humans are born.

Despite the threat of the sixth extinction, ecosystem collapse, air and water pollution, and the numerous associated health impacts, few environmental activists or politicians recognize the proximate cause.

The climate crisis has fundamentally been fueled by countries treating future generations as a means to sustain their economies instead of as an intrinsic part of their nations. Society is set up to view children as workers, consumers, and taxpayers rather than as empowered citizens with an influential voice in their democracies. This ill-advised social doctrine is the proximate cause of the climate crisis. We must take remedial measures and seek justice for the natural world—humanity and all species—through legal means that address children's rights via birth equity.

By shifting the focus to children's rights as a fundamental aspect of policy evaluation, we can reshape climate policy, save countless lives, and redefine wealth entitlements.

This is especially important since extreme temperatures will lead to more suffering for already vulnerable populations worldwide. According to international studies, these extreme weather conditions are likely to impact ethnic minorities more and will lead to the “greatest risks” for people from developing countries. To protect future generations from heat waves, the attenuation of democracy, and the reduction of representation ratios, children's rights

and the rights of individuals must drive policymaking.

If we addressed these factors, particularly intergenerational justice, climate policy would be different, saving countless lives and trillions of dollars.

Why Advocacy Organizations Need to Focus on Family Planning

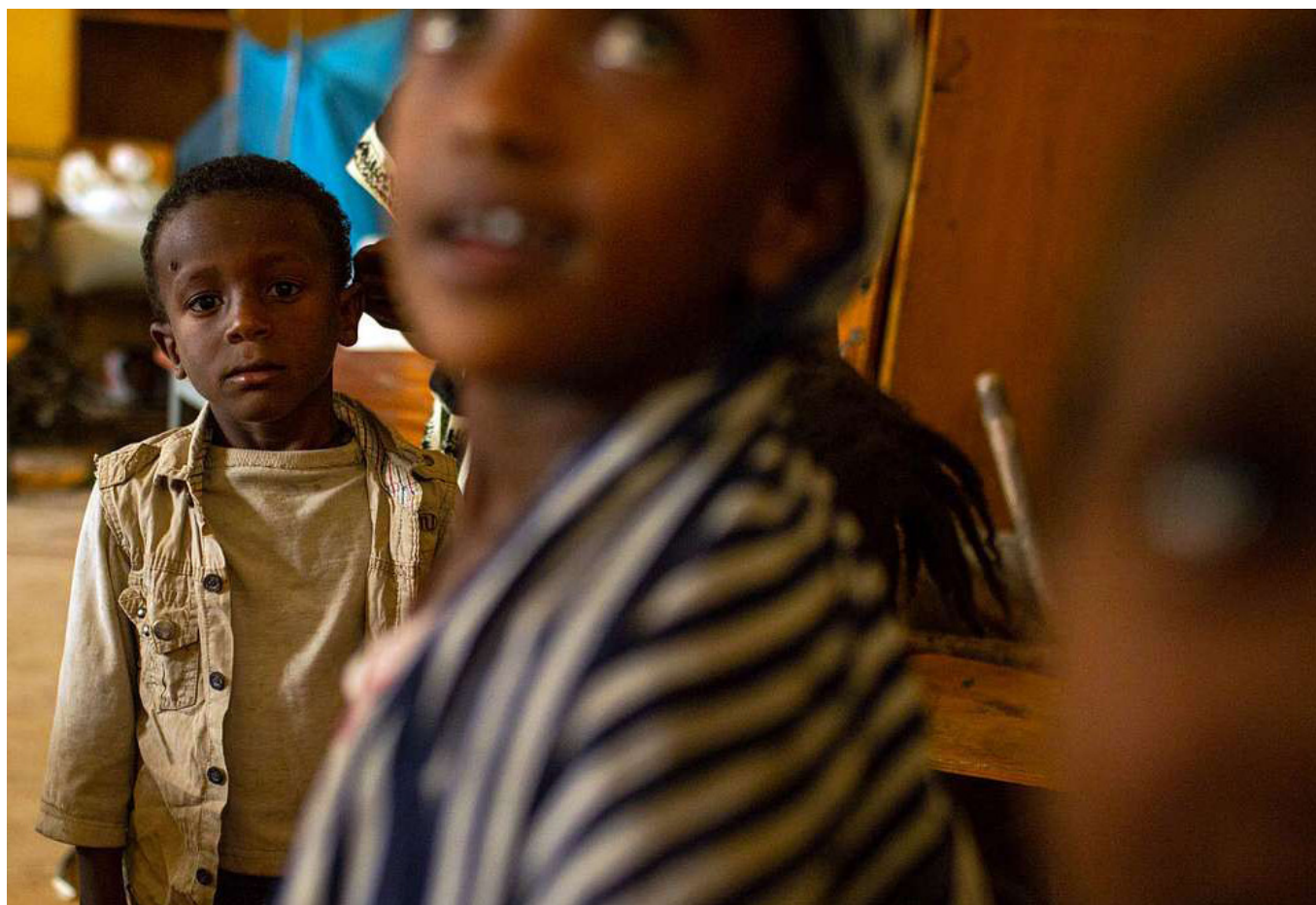
Advocacy organizations working to bring about positive social, economic, and environmental changes should consider including family planning in their goals. Including birth and development equity in their work is essential to ensuring meaningful changes for future generations. Ignoring this aspect might undo the positive impact these organizations might otherwise have.

The climate crisis goes beyond emissions; it is a multifaceted catastrophe, with efforts to mitigate it being undone on all levels as children enter the world without access to birth and development equity. For example, not using children's rights as the basis for family planning systems has allowed ecocidal growth and also diluted the role of each person in governance and their capacity to halt the crisis.

Family policies should be integral to animal protection, child welfare, environmental protection, human rights, and democracy to secure children's futures.

Impact Fraud: Good Work Is Being Undone

Instead of focusing on increasing the economic wealth of nations, governments should ensure that women and their families have access to child



welfare resources consistent with the Children's Rights Convention. Unfortunately, family planning policies have failed to achieve this. Instead, children (primarily of color) enter the world with no functional protections and are exposed to environmental and socioeconomic conditions that are not conducive to helping them survive and thrive.

According to a July 2022 Pew Research Center study, almost half of U.S. parents felt the government was doing "too little" to resolve issues that concerned them, while 54 percent gave the same reply regarding the government's response to addressing problems faced by children.

Evidence of ubiquitous and horrific child abuse worldwide demonstrates this, along with the push for mindless growth, which comes at the cost of environmental damage. According to a 2020 study published in the *Journal of Population and Sustainability*, "more than three-quarters of the reductions in carbon emissions achieved since 1990 by

increased efficiency and reducing carbon dioxide emissions from energy production have been canceled out by the effects of a growing population."

Studies also show that the increasing financial burdens and "climate change fears" are deterring people from having children. According to a 2021 article in the *Lancet*, 39 percent of young people globally were reluctant to have children due to climate change.

This constitutes fundamental threshold harm on at least seven distinct or incommensurable levels (welfare, equity, human rights and democracy, environmental, reproductive rights, efficiency, and trust).

A February 2024 press release by UNICEF is a reflection of how we are failing child welfare globally, with 1.4 billion children not having any "basic social protection." "Fewer than one in ten children in low-income countries have access to child benefits, leaving them vulnerable to disease, missed education, poor nutrition, poverty and inequality."

The family policies many support are quietly doing more harm—undoing climate mitigation efforts that will lead to 4 million people dying between 2000 and 2024—than other policies are doing good. This dynamic can be labeled “impact fraud.”

“Overall, the effects of global climate change are predicted to be heavily concentrated in poorer populations at low latitudes, where the most important climate-sensitive health outcomes (malnutrition, diarrhea, and malaria) are already common, and where vulnerability to climate effects is greatest. These diseases mainly affect younger age groups, so... the total burden of disease due to climate change appears to be borne mainly by children in developing countries,” research by Australian epidemiologist Anthony McMichael and his team concluded.

These policies position us to benefit from a coercive legal system of entitlements without paying the high costs. We can also meet our obligation to future generations by ensuring children are born and raised in conditions that protect their rights and guarantee birth and developmental equity.

Impact fraud can be measured against a few simple metrics, like whether we invest enough in children, whether states are capable of holding functional constitutional conventions, or the concept of child rights-based legitimacy (the idea that children’s rights logically precede and enable human rights and are thus the basis of political obligation and state legitimacy).

A Fatal Decision: The United Nations Human Rights Conference of 1968

The climate crisis is less about emissions or population growth. It should be viewed as more of a policy mistake made by world leaders in 1968 (when the United Nations held its International Conference on Human Rights in Tehran) that allowed society to benefit at a fatal cost to future generations. At the time, politicians and policymakers conflated the disparate acts of having children and choosing not to as covered by autonomy rather than birth equity and children’s rights.

The human rights policy of 1968 hid actual costs and favored wealthy families that relied on a growing class of workers and parental autonomy. Therefore, it chose cyclical inequity and unsustainable growth over the inclusivity that creates genuine political autonomy. This obscured the overriding nature of birth equity as the first human right.

At the most fundamental level, the policy cemented by United Nations agencies in 1968 limited the interventions regarding the decision to have children—their number, the resources they deserve, the conditions in which they are born and raised, their level of influence in setting the rules of democracy, and the actual impact of population on the nonhuman world, etc.

Indeed, no one can justly benefit from a system when the reason for preventing intervention is based on the value of autonomy, pointing to the misconceived logic behind this thinking. It placed greater value on the rights of people to decide whether or not to have children rather than the rights of children.

People — Not Documents — Constitute Nations

The current and widespread concept of reproductive autonomy is the antithesis of self-determination—an inversion of autonomy where some children are born into horrible circumstances, and others live in extreme wealth but are controlled by others.

People, not documents, constitute nations. If liberalism has struggled to find a way to include oneself in a system yet remain free, the easy answer would be this: You have to care enough about each child born into the world to position them so that you will both be empowered. You must be empathetic enough to care about the children born into unfortunate circumstances and their impact on the nonhuman world they need to survive.

The Act of Having Children Is Not a Private Act

Our current policy treats children as means to be used by others, substitutes coercion for inclusion in rulemaking, and is the genesis of the fallacy of personal autonomy irrespective of our accessibility to intergenerational wealth. Any person having a child does so while being part of a political system, making this choice hardly a personal or private act for parents.

Maintaining the status quo family policy—including the greenwashing that hides its impacts—has killed many simply because we hid liability and did not move the extreme wealth that was made at the cost of pursuing these policies.

Because of these mistakes, people were not valued, which allowed consumption, population growth, inequity, and exclusive political systems to grow, which fundamentally drove the current child welfare crisis. Some (primarily white people) benefited at a cost to others (and controlled the basic criteria for cost/benefit analysis) by never meeting their most fundamental obligations: Ensuring birth and development conditions consistent with children's rights.

A few benefitted from a coercive legal system of entitlements, the legitimacy of which was falsely premised as a form of inclusive freedom.

'Distractivism'

The animal law/animal rights movement can lead us toward ecocentrism and help shift the focus to nature's integral role in ensuring the survival of future generations.

We cannot protect nonhuman animals without accounting for how the children we have and raise will individually and collectively relate to them as vulnerable entities outside of functional legal protection and as the inhabitants of the ecologies that allow humans to be free and thrive.

Protecting animals requires more meaningful action than prosecuting animal cruelty, setting a precedent through legal cases, or introducing a new vegan product. This means animal law implementation should not be limited to discussions or hijacked by "distractivists." We must recognize that animal personhood is integral to human reproductive rights, and our family planning policies must reflect that.

A more fundamental vision aligns animal rights with other social justice movements because it shifts focus from legal coercion to ensuring that all beings inhabiting the planet are treated well.

The anthropocentric approach we currently follow perpetuates a cycle of growth and environmental destruction instead of concentrating on reversing the climate crisis by adopting a bottom-up approach centered around ensuring that children and animals thrive.

The animal rights movement's claims of success are the most inaccurate when we factor in the impact of family policy on animals. More animals have died from unchecked human population growth than have been saved by dietary change. Focusing on food without first focusing on family, inclusion, and legitimacy turns a fundamental justice movement into a racket of selling vegan products to a tiny percentage of consumers and leads to low-impact campaigns that are examples of distractivism.

Moreover, funders have driven animal organizations toward growth-based food because they are invested in the companies that make it. This is another example of turning the focus away from pressing issues like animal welfare.

Animal rights should thus not ask how humans should treat nonhumans, which is the arrogant and anthropocentric mindset that led to the climate crisis and threatens the existence and survival of humans and nonhuman animals alike.

Major animal protection organizations have been publicly called on to assess whether their approach

to family policy harms animals more than their other work does good, and they have had no response. Activists like Wayne Hsuing have advocated for truth and change in this area to avoid undoing the work done to protect nonhuman animals.

Animal law must concentrate on policies, like family law, which have the most significant impact, not sensational or profitable policies premised on our ability to replace other species. It is the most unifying form of justice around a zero baseline to avoid harming others.

But this will not work if wealthy funders silo the movement and base assessments of legitimacy on whether the law protects their current entitlements or focus on low-impact precedent, sensational victories, or on cases and statutes, the benefits of which are being undone by inequitable families. These funders live in a fictitious juridical world where calling something nature or saying it has rights has some magical impact, while in the real world, pro-natal policies have been undoing the work done to create more equity and hiding life-saving reparations.

Living in that top-down fantasy world clouds the high ideal of a legitimate system that protects nonhumans. Such a system would need to be more inclusive and thus aligned with minimal “social sources” conceptions of positive law, consistent with reasonable representative ratios.

Most people define law as unique because it comes from the participation of its subjects. But of course, that depends on several factors, like how many people are involved, whether they are represented, whether their votes are diluted, etc. By most measures, current legal systems are far too crowded and attenuated from their members to be participatory and legitimate.

Redefining State Sovereignty Around Birth Equity

A petition before the United Nations, filed by our group, Fair Start Movement, would redefine state

sovereignty and legitimacy around the most primary value, child rights/birth and developmental equity, as defined by the metrics above, and require certain things of member nations. This is not altruism but creating freedom through equitable relations that ensure we show the trust democracy or relative self-determination requires.

Today’s extreme wealth was made at a cost to that value and is owed to those who have paid the most to ensure “increased economic prosperity.” This way of functioning has also violated the fundamental human right to matter. And those who have benefited are trying to hide this fact to ensure they continue to gain from this unequal system.

This policy and outlook change would set a baseline for any climate harm evaluation that does not scam victims out of what they are owed—self-determination, prioritizing reparations as the first human right, and providing conditions that ensure maximum protection for children.

Reforming the baselines can be accomplished through existing programs that invest in women. Examples include Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) policy reforms, requiring an objective standard for social and environmental claims that match the actual harms to infants and mothers, and getting high-profile entities to admit their prior use of terms like sustainable was inaccurate given the growth they embraced.

In the field of family planning, storytelling has had an enormous impact and can be used to increase demands for equity reparations as activists model them.

Tax reforms, baby bonds, child welfare, and minimum income policies are also geared to incentivize and support the birth of children at a time, place, and with resources that ensure each child’s development conditions are minimally consistent with the Children’s Convention and ensure birth equity. Children’s rights must also be aligned with animal rights or ecological restoration rather than human rights.



Photo: Gayatri Malhotra

Even if ethicists cannot agree on this standard, it should be used provisionally to avoid more irreparable harm. All of this work cascades from an action currently before the United Nations seeking to concretize equity/self-determination as the basic norm underlying human rights. There are a variety of national, state, and local model statutes to implement this change.

At a corporate level, nonprofit and for-profit companies can be certified, ensuring they are not benefiting at a deadly cost to others.

Requiring restorative or ecocentric environmental policies and birth and developmental equity, as included in constitutional rights to personal freedom or the ability to control the influence others have over us is another step in this direction. Environmentalism failed because it treated the environment as a human resource rather than the homes of nonhuman families and communities that value autonomy.

Creating a system of child welfare entitlement, consistent with intergenerational justice and political legitimacy, would require identifying a series of thresholds for family planning entitlements:

- A minimum level of welfare.
- A minimum level of equity.
- Restoration of the nonhuman world and climate.

This work could, in the long run, help prevent mass violence where those who lash out feel disempowered and are unable to access the justice system because they were never included in it in a meaningful way.

We can avoid continuing to make the deadly mistake described above by asking ourselves and others one question: What are we doing to ensure that the conditions all children are born and raised in, including their environment and resources, help them become self-determining individuals? Also, what are we doing to ensure that the benefits of our work are not undone?

We must make conscious choices to improve the planet on which we raise our children by respecting nonhuman beings and the environment. Learning the importance of co-existing in harmony is essential to breaking away from our unhealthy lives and policy choices. We must also choose to place greater value on individuals over senseless growth.

“Post Growth” — Why and How?

Michael Albert

People against destroying our planetary home often favor “No Growth” — “steady as she goes” — or even the rhetorically catchier “DeGrowth” — “shrink baby shrink.” Their pro-growth opponents sometimes say, “grow baby grow,” or more pointedly, “drill baby drill.” But if you asked me, “where do you stand vis a vis growth? Give yourself a really short label that includes the word growth.” I would reply, “I favor what I think most degrowthers and no-growthers also favor and what many pro-growthers oppose. That is, I am for “post-growth” or, to clarify, I am for good growth and against bad growth.

To focus on growth per se orients us to care most about the size of a pile of products. But to focus on pile size misdirects eyes away from full consequences. We may tend to ignore what each product may be. We may tend to ignore how the pile arrives. We may tend to ignore where the pile goes.

Many growth advocates like that effect. They want growth per se center stage. They want eyes off well-being much less impoverishment, alienation, subordination, and planetary impact. Some then say “ignore consequences. Go for growth. Growth is good.”

Degrowthers and no-growthers instead care what’s in the pile. They care about how it got created and where it winds up. They want eyes on well-being, impoverishment, alienation, subordination, and planetary impact. Consequences matter. But in that case, why do degrowthers and no-growthers opt for a label that suggests our eyes should see mainly pile size?

“Post growth” as an alternative label would instead suggest that growth per se is not the point. Post growth would not imply that growth per se guarantees net benefit or imposes net damage. Post growth would say highlight the consequences

of production, consumption, and allocation that enhance human fulfillment and development and decry the consequences of production, consumption, and allocation that reduce human fulfillment and development. Likewise, reject what violates ecological sustainability. Welcome what enhances ecological sustainability. So should we all say “post growth” to avoid making growth per se the issue? Or how about if we say “we favor good growth and we oppose bad growth?”

Many analysts incorrectly treat growth as homogenous. Some then wrongly deduce that growth is good. Growth is essential. Don’t question growth. Welcome growth. But their entreaty is demonstrably, wrong—or worse, maliciously deceptive. Some other analysts also treat growth as homogenous but then wrongly deduce that growth is bad. Growth harms. Reject growth. Their entreaty is also demonstrably wrong.

Growth is not always good. Growth is not always bad. Growth is not essential for sensible economy. Growth need not destroy sensible economy. To perceive a zero sum face-off, “grow or don’t grow,” can derive from willful obfuscation but also from correctable confusion.

Growth of any kind surely requires an increase in something over some period of time. Height, weight, income, wealth, distance, whatever. But what is the thing whose increase from one year to the next ought to constitute year on year economic growth? This is harder to agree on.

Some say or at least imply that economic growth should register more weight or perhaps more items this year than last year. But with that definition, there will be more growth next year if we switch some effort from tending the sick or educating the young to producing more gas guzzling suvs, or even

piling up unused cement. To drop more bombs that generate more corpses and headstones would contribute to growth. To reduce bombs, corpses, and headstones would diminish growth. If we define growth by pile size, even disgusting choices could augment growth. Spit poison. Clean it up. More growth than if we did neither. So we can define growth as pile size, but should we? Is to define growth as pile size useful or obfuscatory?

What if we take society's total productive output and measure it by worth per worker, and then do so again, and so on, to see if it is more per year with each new year? With this definition, only more worth of output per worker would constitute growth. Since we can define things however we choose, should we define "growth" this way?

We should want our concepts, the things we keep track of with a label, to be things that we care about and we want to pay attention to. Assuming we want everyone to eat, sleep, and be merry—and not just those who work—let's direct our attention to worth per person, not worth per worker. Growth would then mean more worth per person. Worth not volume, is that a good definition?

It depends on what counts as worth. How about benefits of society's product for people minus costs of the product's creation for people? The reason to subtract cost is straightforward. If we use five pencils to produce two pencils, our net result is minus three pencils, not plus two pencils. Similarly, if we use fossil fuel, lithium, sunlight, or human work hours to produce household energy whose consumption can increase human well being, then we need to subtract the cost of the production to see if the economy's yearly productive output has grown. What if we ignore some costs of either production or consumption, or, for that matter, some benefits of either? We would calculate the wrong result. Why would anyone do that? Here are some reasons.

The automobile industry uses energy, human labor, steel, rubber and so on to produce vehicles. What is its positive output and what should we subtract to determine the net worth of the auto industry's

yearly activity? The positive output is presumably the vehicles. What is the cost to subtract? We used up steel, rubber, human labor, etc. But we also generated some other productive output than just the vehicles, for example pollution, smashed souls and severed limbs of workers, and reinforced class divisions. For that matter, to further the picture, to use the outputted vehicles provides transport, a good thing, but it also generates traffic deaths and more pollution, decidedly bad things.

It turns out, even in our simple survey, that to highlight net worth of output, we have an advisory. We should count the the beneficial impact of what's produced, including of how it is produced and of its consumption, but then we should also count the harmful impact of how it is produced and of its consumption including what gets used up or harmed. So far, so good, but a new problem arises. How do we count the worth or cost of anything? Where does such a measure come from?

In our capitalist economy, markets assign prices. If these prices accurately account for all costs and benefits, we can add up the total price of all units of stuff to get the price of the whole pile of stuff, and then take that per capita. Bingo, except—wait a second. Do those prices actually reveal what we mean by worth? Do market prices accurately assess positive impact on workers, consumers, society writ large, and the planet? Do they accurately subtract negative impact on each including what we used up and bad consequences for global warming or for workers' well being? Via the clash and jangle of market competition, where bargaining power rules, do prices of what goes into producing outputs and prices of outputs themselves and prices of outputs' consumption effects accurately account for the full personal, social, and ecological consequences of producing and consuming stuff?

We can easily see that they don't. Think of public transport, health care, parks, safe streets, and education. Think also of missiles flying and bombs exploding. Consider liposuction that thins few and pollution that sickens many. Think of exhausted souls exiting factories at day's end. Do the changes

in workers' well being on and off the job get counted? Tesla, Amazon, Apple, and Google disperse gigantic profits that gild owners' mansions of glory. How does that get assessed? What about positive and negative economic implications for future ecology or for future social relations? Do prices account for killing the planet?

My too quickly argued point is that market accounting doesn't register accurate full personal, social, and ecological consequences of producing and consuming stuff for all those affected or even for anyone affected. Rather it reflects the relative power of those who want this or that as against those who suffer the consequences of this or that.

So why are utterances about the virtues of capitalist growth bogus? It is because market prices don't actually measure full personal, social, and ecological costs and benefits. They instead measure what buyers and sellers were able to buy and sell things for, which in turn depends overwhelmingly on what people were able to coerce by their bargaining power.

No market mechanism accurately tallies the real personal, social, and ecological effects on workers of doing their jobs to produce what they produce, or on residents near workplaces affected by factory run-off, or on the intended direct consumers, or on those who didn't buy but who are affected by other consumer's consuming what they bought, or on those affected by emergent social relations, or those affected by ecological implications. What does get measured reflects who can take what, who can impose what, and also, bearing directly on our discussion of labels, on who decides what consequences are named and counted and what consequences go unnamed and uncounted.

In capitalism, choices of how to produce, how much to produce, and what to consume are made overwhelmingly by necessarily competitive and inexorably profit-seeking owners and by consumers unavoidably saddled by restrictive social situations. All confront horribly inaccurate prices. Markets bend us all out of shape. Bent outcomes emerge.

In our world, economic growth names an increase in something economic from one period to the next. Fair enough. But what is the something that economic growth measures? Who has an interest in measuring that something? Who is misled by eyes being focussed on only that something?

Consider when British imperial control of India was at its height. Suppose about a billion dollars worth of stuff moved from India to England yearly. Suppose the cost of maintaining the imperial relation between England and India was about two billion dollars yearly. Why might England pursue such a costly policy? Follow the money. Where did the billion that came back to England wind up? Where did the two billion that it cost England come from?

Suppose the billion that went to England from India went to British owners as profits. Suppose the two billion that were spent to maintain the relationship came from British taxpayers. In that case, what grew? The wealth of the owners in England. Who lost? The rest of the population of England, and of course, India, suffering not only extraction but subordination. Now consider the U.S. in the world today. The U.S. has roughly 800 overseas military bases. Imagine the costs. Are there any benefits? Who pays? Who profits? Gross pile size ignores differential consequences.

Consider a more domestic example, the auto industry, mentioned earlier. Broadly speaking, the picture is clear enough. The owners and less-so but still significantly, empowered employees do stupendously or at least fantastically well. Other disempowered employees and the pollution-breathing population, not so much. Take into account ecological effects like global warming and depletion of non replaceable resources. Count the direct and indirect personal effects. Count the effects on social relations inside and outside the auto plants. Count pain, danger, ill health, nervous tension, and hate. We would then see workers with not much that grows other than bodily damage year to year—and we would

see owners and to a lesser but not insignificant extent empowered employees whose income and influence grows greatly year to year. We would see differential consequences.

Consider another example, also mentioned earlier, the “suck away the fat cosmetic surgery” industry. Stuffed wallets of the rich bid up the product’s price. Given the incredible inequality of bargaining power among different constituencies, the will of the rich counts far more than that of the poor regarding all aspects of production and consumption including what is done, how it is done, and how it is valued. It turns out that if we judge output by market prices, we get an incredibly bent accounting and very seriously warped outcomes. Many consequences go un-counted. This is capitalist profit-seeking as usual.

So it comes down to this. Suppose we want “growth” to measure something that bears on human well being and development in all its dimensions. Then what should growth measure? What should we care about enough to want keep track of and celebrate its increase?

How about a comparison, from year to year, of the total value per capita of society’s economic activity where value (somehow) takes into account the full consequences of both production and consumption on individuals and groups regarding the well being and development of people, of the environment they live in, and of the social relations that bear on their future options—and where the benefits and costs that people enjoy or suffer count just as much for each person as for each other person?

That is not precisely perfect. None of the above is. It is all too brief to be precisely perfect. Nonetheless, perhaps the proposed definition is good enough to clarify what we ought to mean by growth, and who should want it.

But now comes a worldly wrinkle that often gets overlooked. It is a kind of intellectual con game. Suppose we talk about a society in which the

economy properly and equitably accounted for true personal, social, and environmental costs and benefits. In that case, if we define it as above, growth would track the net gain (or loss) of benefits outputted per year per capita. It would tally harmful consequences for equity, self management, ecological balance, and social and personal material well being as negatives. It would tally beneficial consequences of all those types as positives. It would calculate the net result. Positives minus negatives. In that case, if we grew that economy year to year, it would mean that having taken everything into account, we would have generated more net good for people per capita. In that case, if there is also equitable dispersal, we should all favor growth. With that definition and in that type of post capitalist economy, growth would be good. But that is not our world. And to act as if it is our world—that is the con game.

Unlike in an imagined vastly better future world, in our actual capitalist market economy, we have no proper accounting of costs and benefits, nor are they equitably distributed. An increase in production and consumption in our world can yield more negatives than positives, but with the negatives not counted or undercounted, and with the positives over counted and also inequitably allotted. Such growth can be not just bad, but even catastrophically bad. High waters rising. Essential resources disappearing.

For our proposed definition, we can see various ways to maintain or increase desirable growth from time 1 to time 2. We could produce more benefits per capita with no increase in detriments, or we could produce the same amount of benefits per capita, but with less detriments. We could apportion more fairly. But if we are eager for, or quite content with, or even just unaware of or misinformed about negative outcomes, we may accept that to produce more value of what some get even at the expense of producing less that others get and regardless of how much harmful stuff we suffer even unto ecological death could seem to be wonderful and essential growth.

The con game causes people to think that more growth will necessarily mean more good stuff for them despite that it will often instead mean more good stuff for someone else plus more loss or devastation for them. Or it causes people to think that cutting back output will necessarily mean less good stuff for them even though it can mean less bad stuff for them.

It turns out if we think things through, we need to be careful when we talk about growth. Perhaps we should arrive at the observation that we might better call ourselves “post growth” than “no growth” or “degrowth” much less “pro growth.” Perhaps we should pay attention to what actually matters, not to what professors or media minions of power and wealth tell us to pay attention to.

But how do we do that? Ultimately, I happen to think we reject all hierarchies of inequitable influence. We reject private control of productive assets. We reject a class-creating corporate division of labor. We reject competitive market or centrally planned authoritarian allocation. We adopt instead an approach to economy (kinship, polity, and culture) that elevates diverse participation, equity, solidarity, and self management. We adopt classless collectively self managed work and enact classless collectively self managed participatory allocation. We uncover and properly account for ecological impact and entwinement. We abide the ecological precautionary principle.

But even if we all came to agree on all those ultimate steps, still what about the here and now? What about global survival? The long haul should inspire and inform us now, for sure. But how do we prevent current warming turning into tomorrow’s heating? How do we prevent tomorrow’s heating turning into next year’s boiling? How do we prevent next year’s boiling turning into next decade’s end times? And how do we deal, as well, with other less known but also urgent ecological crises?

Some say we can only deal with global climate change or any other ecological crisis by first win-

ning a new world. For them, “Revolution is the only solution.” But that sentiment fails to recognize that escalating current ecological nightmares and foreseeable desirable future social revolution don’t share one timeline. For the former, we don’t have much time to avoid calamity. For the latter, we need considerable time. We better not ignore that we have to win calamity-preventing changes while the whole world is still horribly flawed. We can wish we could attain a post capitalist economy quickly enough that its subsequent operations would organically reverse global warming, but for people who are against destroying our planetary home to treat that wish as reality would unintentionally drown and burn us all in a surging, boiling pool of self-imposed delusion. Winning a new world won’t happen soon enough to reverse global warming before global boiling incinerates us.

We want a new vastly better society. But we also want to survive ecological crises. The order of these accomplishments is not a matter of free choice. To survive to then battle on to win a new world is a possible path. To win a new world to then survive is not a possible path. The new world part would take too long. We would succumb to an endless night before we won a new morning.

On the way to a new world, we must win calamity-preventing reforms in our current world, albeit in a manner that develops informed desire for and prepares means to win much more later.

With capitalism, racism, and sexism still propelling the opposite of our desires, we nonetheless have to win changes that immediately reduce, curtail, and reverse ecological damage. Our practices, demands, and struggles and our self definition should communicate to those not yet immersed in our agenda that we want not growth per se and also not no growth or degrowth per se. We want positive growth, which first requires an end to global warming and attention to other on-coming ecological crises.

Oil Kills: Inside the International Uprising Disrupting the Aviation Industry

Alexandria Shaner

Despite increasing repression, an unprecedented alliance of civil resistance groups is targeting airports on three continents to demand a binding treaty to end fossil fuels by 2030.

24 July - Ongoing | Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Uganda, UK, USA

A new international coalition is disrupting airports to make one demand: the adoption of a treaty to end fossil fuels by 2030.

Under the banner Oil Kills, small groups of activists have occupied airport departure lounges, plane cabins, terminals, tarmacs and roads across three continents — and they aren't done yet. Here are the numbers so far: 500 people, 31 airports, 22 groups, 166 arrests, 42 people on remand in prison — all in support of their one demand.

The coalition formed when members of Extinction Rebellion, the A22 Network and Stay Grounded began reaching out to other groups globally. What resulted was an unprecedented alliance of civil resistance groups focused on the sustained disruption of airports — a key pillar of the fossil fuel economy.

Unifying aims, collective strategy and diverse tactics

All Oil Kills participants are committed to non-violent direct action and to the central demand, but from there, individual creativity and context has led to an array of actions. The resulting structure is a decentralized yet cohesive power bloc with unified aims that becomes more than the sum of its parts, rather than a lowest common denominator coalition.

Each participating group has adopted the central demand that governments must work together to establish a legally binding treaty to stop extracting and burning oil, gas and coal by 2030, as well as supporting and financing poorer countries to make a fast, fair and just transition. But each local group also brings its own unique knowledge and demands which are in turn supported by the coalition. Futuro Vegetal in Spain, for example, focuses on the imperative to adopt a plant-based agri-food system while Students Against EACOP in Uganda demand a stop to the East African Crude Oil Pipeline — and all stand in solidarity with one another.

Each group also brings its own creative tactics, from airport glue-ins, to plane occupations, to spray-painting terminals, to street marches. “The airports don't know what to expect because we don't even know exactly what to expect from each other — it's beautiful and effective,” said a coalition member who requested to remain anonymous for legal reasons.

After the initial whirlwind of actions in July, with 37 arrests over the first two days alone, disruptions have continued steadily across three continents, with especially relentless activity in Germany where Letzte Generation has held several actions in multiple airports.

On Aug. 9, Students Against EACOP in Uganda joined the Oil Kills campaign, planning a peaceful march to the parliament in Kampala and the delivery of a petition demanding an end to the East African Crude Oil Pipeline, and for their government to sign the treaty to end fossil fuels.

But the police mounted roadblocks to stop the march from starting, and arrested 45 student ac-



Letzte Generation Austria stages a messy sit-in at Vienna Airport for Oil Kills.

tivists on public buses and their three bus drivers on arrival. Two students managed to slip away and regrouped, reaching the parliament building with petition in hand before also being violently arrested.

Kamya Carlos, a student at Kyambogo University and spokesperson for Students Against EACOP, connects the inequitable and ecocidal nature of today's airline industry to its origins in neocolonial extractivism. "New oil, gas and coal infrastructure continues to exacerbate the climate crisis. As the global temperatures hit their tipping points it is clear that projects such as the East African Crude Oil Pipeline should never be constructed in the first place," he said. "These projects, which end up being used almost exclusively by rich people and polluting the atmosphere, should never be allowed by right thinking members of society. We demand the government to sign a fossil free treaty and call an end to EACOP."

Even though police repression represents a major threat, on Aug. 27, 20 climate activists and persons affected by the oil pipeline came back out in another

peaceful march to petition Uganda's Ministry of Energy. They were again violently dragged from the street by police in fatigues and held on remand until Sept. 6, when the court finally granted their release on bail. All 20 have been ordered to appear for a hearing on Nov. 12.

"The resilience under extreme repression shown by Students Against EACOP is an inspiration and metaphor for the Oil Kills movement," said Jamie McGonagill, an Oil Kills member from XR Boston. "We refuse to die."

You can't arrest a rising sea

As of this writing, 22 Oil Kills activists remain in custody in Uganda, six in Germany and 14 in the U.K. Speaking to the increasing criminalization of dissent, McGonagill explained that "draconian responses that imprison nonviolent climate activists, especially as we've seen lately in the U.K. and in Uganda, show that the authorities misunderstand us. They will not stop us. We will just get more and more creative."

Oil Kills is not alone in facing repression. On Aug. 8 in New York City, a 63-year-old grandfather and professional cellist, John Mark Rozendaal, was arrested and hit with a criminal contempt charge, carrying a maximum sentence of seven years in jail, for performing Bach's "Suites for Cello" at Citibank's headquarters. Rozendaal was participating in the Summer of Heat campaign to pressure Citibank to divest from fossil fuels through sustained nonviolent civil disobedience. Connecting this case to the burgeoning international movement, U.N. Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders Mary Lawlor, in following Rozendaal's case, has expressed her "strong concern" at the severity of the charges. In a disturbing trend that has become the new normal in Italy, peaceful eco-activists are being branded a "danger to security and public order," served with specious charges, banned from cities without trial, and criminalized under anti-terrorist laws intended to prosecute the Mafia.

Last week in the U.K., several high profile journalists and activists affiliated with the movement for Palestinian liberation were arrested in a sweep by counter-terrorism police for their opposition to genocide. They have been held under Section 12 of the U.K.'s Terrorism Act, which outlaws support for a "proscribed organization." Such an application of the law would mean that you can go to jail for 14 years for expressing an opinion.

XR NYC organizer Meg Starr, a long-time Puerto Rican solidarity activist and coordinator of the XR Allies sub-circle, noted that the links between genocide and ecocide — in Palestine and elsewhere — are becoming clearer and more important to emphasize. "Our targeting of Citibank," Starr commented, "included a focus on Citi's major support of the Israeli military as part of their role as the world's leading financier of oil and gas expansion." Roger Hallam, co-founder of Extinction Rebellion and Just Stop Oil, was recently sentenced to five years in prison for making a speech over Zoom in what is being called a "grotesque sham-trial."

"Repression is not a gradual process, it leaps out at you and takes you off guard," he warned from

his prison cell. "Do you remember the Solidarity leaders in Poland? They were invited into talks with the Polish government but when they got to the meeting, they were arrested in one fell swoop and imprisoned for years. You don't think it will happen to you and then it does."

Hallam's message is that we can expect more repression, but that authorities must also expect more resistance. "You can't negotiate with physics, with a thousand peer-reviewed articles," he wrote. "Just Stop Oil reminds us what resistance, that far-off folk memory relegated to Netflix, actually looks like in the present moment. Thousands of arrests, hundreds of imprisonments and a five-year sentence for making a speech."

In a statement announcing a pause in international actions to allow politicians to consider their demands, Oil Kills echoed the realism of Hallam's framing. "The facts are clear, we are flying towards the obliteration of everything we know and love. Continuing to extract and burn oil, gas and coal is an act of war against humanity. ... To know these facts and yet to have no plan to end the extraction and burning of oil, gas and coal is reckless and immoral."

They point out that while activists sounding the alarm and demanding change are increasingly criminalized, our politicians are actually the ones who are complicit in the greatest crime in human history. "Whether those in charge realize that they are engaging in genocide is not the question. For this is how it will be seen by the next generation and all future generations," Oil Kills warned. "For now we are taking a pause, but governments must take heed: you cannot arrest your way out of this, just as you cannot imprison a flood or serve injunctions on a wildfire."

Oppose oil injustice, propose mobility justice

Stay Grounded is a network of individuals, local airport opposition and climate justice groups, NGOs, trade unions, initiatives fostering alterna-

tives to aviation like night trains and organizations supporting communities that struggle against offset or projects to develop so-called “sustainable aviation fuels.” Importantly, Stay Grounded goes beyond affirming the conclusion that business as usual is not an option, and stands for a 13-step program to transform transport, society and the economy to be just and environmentally sound. “Flying is the fastest way to fry the planet so it’s key to start by cutting pointless and unfair flights like private jets or short haul flights,” said Inês Teles, a spokesperson for Stay Grounded and an Oil Kills member. “Our actions disrupting airports should be a shock to the system that is driving us towards climate catastrophe.”

In summary, Stay Grounded’s program begins with a positive vision for justice. It includes advice for achieving a just transition, shifting to other modes of transportation, developing economies of short distances and changed modes of living, as well as strong political commitments for land rights, human rights and climate justice.

Their program then details what must be avoided — obvious yet important items like growing the harmful air travel industry, including infrastructure expansion, loopholes and privileges for aviation, and common greenwashing pitfalls like carbon offsetting, biofuels, and illusory technocentric fixes. Though Stay Grounded’s aims are more specific to the air travel industry than Oil Kills’ unifying demand for a treaty to end fossil fuels by 2030, coalition members are able to build on these positive aims, utilizing leadership from frontline communities affected by the air travel industry. Sharing and even cross-pollinating pro-social and ecologically healthy programs, in addition to opposing destructive practices, has been an effective way of galvanizing and sustaining support across diverse movements and communities.

Covering activism isn’t activist

The choice to focus on disrupting the air travel industry in order to pressure governments to adopt a fossil fuel non-proliferation treaty is as bold as

the demand itself. Much of the media’s reaction so far has been unsurprisingly harsh, condemning the disruptions as “not the right way to do it.” Very little critical analysis has been audible above the din, but that doesn’t mean critical analysis isn’t happening.

It turns out, if you actually listen to them, that Oil Kills activists take strategy extremely seriously — after all, they’re knowingly putting their own freedom on the line through their actions. That is not a decision to be taken lightly, especially in today’s legal context. While news coverage of their “stunts” has circulated widely, what about the reasons behind their actions and assessments of their impact?

Covering climate activism well is a critical part of getting the climate story right. Too often journalism focuses on protesters’ tactics and not the problems they’re drawing attention to or the arguments they’re making. In a recent roundtable discussion, author, journalist and activist Bill McKibben urged fellow journalists to consider that, “we can serve our audiences better, treating activists as the newsmakers they are, rigorously evaluating their arguments as we would a public official.”

Journalists often shy away from foregrounding activists as sources of information and analysis for fear of being perceived to be more “activist” than “objective.” This framing is entirely misleading however, and can more accurately be explained as the pressure to avoid platforming those seeking to change the system in deference to those whose position exists to maintain the system. Why is a politician or a business owner an appropriate subject, but not an activist? There is no objectivity in this, but there are salaries and awards.

The myth that journalism must keep activism at arms length also misses the point that many of these ordinary people taking action are some of the best informed on the biggest news story of our time: the climate and ecological emergency. Activists have been speaking on climate science and policy for decades, many have even been personally affected by ecological disaster, but they have been almost exclusively ignored by the mainstream press.

After decades of fossil fuel industry gaslighting, it turns out the activists have been right all along. It's past time to hear these people out as legitimate subjects and newsmakers, able and deserving to speak about their work and their areas of expertise.

Why target air travel?

First, the obvious answer: oil kills. And the air travel industry is very, very oily. Aviation is by far the mode of transport with the biggest climate impact. If aviation was a country, it would be one of the top 10 emitters.

Emissions from aviation are rising more rapidly than any other sector of the economy. The number of aircraft and the number of passenger-miles flown is expected to double over the next 20 years. If left unchecked, they could consume a full quarter of the available carbon budget for limiting temperature rise to 1.5 C.

Second, oil isn't extracted equitably, burned equitably, and neither does it kill equitably. At the turn of the millennium, less than 5 percent of the world's population had ever sat in an aircraft. But it is mostly non-flyers who bear the brunt of the climate crisis and the negative effects of airport expansion like land grabbing, noise, particle pollution and health issues. Communities in the Global South that have barely contributed to the crisis are affected most. Indeed, well before the repression of the Oil Kills coalition, climate activists — especially in Latin America — have faced what is being termed “ecopoliticide”: the targeted and strategic murder of those who dare take action.

Stephen Okwai, a project affected person who has joined the movement to stop the EACOP pipeline in Uganda, feels there is now greater risk in inaction than in protesting. A project affected person, or PAP, is a legal term for the people directly affected by land acquisition for a project through loss of part or all of their assets including land, houses, other structures, businesses, crops/trees and other components of livelihoods. They are legally owed compensation, but in the case of Okwai and others

affected by EACOP, there has been no such justice.

“Currently most of us in western Uganda are being disturbed,” he explained. “You cannot know when the rain is going to start and when it will stop yet most of these people are farmers. The effect of this oil project is greatly impacted on the people.”

After he was arrested during the Aug. 27 march in Kampala, Robert Pitua, a member of Oil Kills, Students Against EACOP, and a PAP, said that, “Livelihood restoration programs [have been] insufficient, and now we cannot manage to restore the initial livelihoods we had. Most people are given unfair and inadequate compensation.” This structural and planned destruction of hundreds of communities has left PAPs no choice but to resist, and is the source of a common refrain in Students Against EACOP's demonstrations: “We refuse to die.”

This leads to the third reason to target aviation. The Oil Kills uprising is highlighting that the problem of aviation is part of a bigger story of injustice — it is in fact a pillar helping to hold up a system of injustice. The air travel industry is contrary to the need to eliminate fossil fuel use; it is tied to the military-industrial complex; and it is connected with the undue influence of big business on public policy, including trade, economic development and climate.

Aviation remains fossil fuel dependent, yet the industry promotes false solutions such as new aircraft technologies, which do not yet exist, in order to continue to pollute for profit. Offsets and biofuels fail to reduce emissions while endangering food supplies, biodiversity and human rights.

“Not only is the air travel industry a cornerstone of globalized fossil capitalism, but it is also a symbol of inequity,” Jamie McGonagill said. “By disrupting a major column of the system, we aim to disrupt the system itself.”

Rather than plentiful data and common-sense reasoning, it is more often a powerful underlying consciousness that has spurred many to action. When



Students Against EACOP in Uganda face heavy repression for their nonviolent actions demanding their government sign a fossil fuel non proliferation treaty and put an end to the East African Crude Oil Pipeline. Criminalization of dissent is on the rise worldwide as more and more people demand fundamental change to systems that fail both people and planet.

asked why it was necessary to disrupt air travel across Europe and North America, Just Stop Oil spokespeople replied, “because governments and fossil fuel producers are waging war on humanity. Even so-called climate leaders have continued to approve new oil, gas and coal projects pushing the world closer to global catastrophe and condemning hundreds of millions to death.”

The Oil Kills coalition has rallied around reality with the seriousness it deserves, refusing dystopia by disrupting it, and demanding a clear and urgent path towards repair. “Our leaders from wealthier countries must seek a negotiating mandate for an emergency Fossil Fuel Treaty,” said coalition members in an Aug. 14 statement. “They also need to immediately finance and support poorer countries to make a fast, fair and just transition.”

Assessing impact

If increased media attention on the climate and ecological emergency is any indicator of success, and it is, the Oil Kills uprising is punching well above its weight. “Oil Kills” was mentioned over

2,900 times in the press during the first week of the campaign. The Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty initiative has also never attracted so much media attention worldwide, with an increase of over 1,000 percent in mentions from the week prior to the campaign’s launch. Oil Kills actions drew comments from politicians, government officials and from the vice president of Norwegian oil giant, Equinor. For only 500 people spread out over three continents, they have indeed been hard to ignore.

It is true, not all publicity is created equal — but pleasing the general public is not always the priority. In a recent article, Mark Engler and Paul Engler, coauthors of “This is an Uprising,” discussed why protest works even when not everyone likes them. They explain that a very common result is that, when asked about a demonstration that makes news headlines, respondents will report sympathy for the protesters’ demands, but they will express distaste for the tactics deployed. They will see the activists themselves as too noisy, impatient and discourteous.

The coauthors, both experienced activists and resistance scholars, point out that this is actually an age-old dynamic, and one addressed eloquently by Martin Luther King Jr. in his renowned 1963 “Letter from a Birmingham Jail.” They explain that, “this letter was written not as a response to racist opponents of the movement, but rather to people who professed support for the cause while criticizing demonstrations as ‘untimely’ and deriding direct action methods. ‘Frankly I have yet to engage in a direct action campaign that was ‘well timed’ in the view of those who have not suffered unduly from the disease of segregation,’ King quipped. But confronting these criticisms, he made the case for why the movement’s campaigns were both necessary and effective.”

In a similar vein, Oil Kills participants, like medical student Regina Stephan who recently took action at the Berlin airport with Letzte Generation, feel they have no choice but to act: “Just yesterday, the state of Lower Saxony gave the green light for new gas drilling off Borkum,” Stephan said. “That can’t be true! As long as our decision-makers work hand in hand with the fossil fuel companies and put profit before human life, I’m standing here — on the tarmac — and I can’t help it!”

Joining in this sentiment, Anja Windl, who took action at Stuttgart airport said very succinctly: “As long as our livelihoods are being systematically destroyed, our protests will not stop.”

Importantly, Oil Kills participants are not demanding that everyone utilize the same tactics. Rather, these activists are urging others to join the climate justice movement in diverse ways. Anja continued, “if you also want to campaign for an end to fossil fuels, you don’t have to sit on an airfield like I did: Just come to a Disobedient Assembly near you!”

In recent years, there has been considerable research published that attempts to measure radical flank effects and track the polarizing effects of movements. Mark Engler and Paul Englers’ analysis cautions that, “while there are limits to how much protest impacts can be precisely quantified, the

cumulative result of such research, in the words of one literature review, is to point to ‘strong evidence that protests or protest movements can be effective in achieving their desired outcomes,’ and that they can produce ‘positive effects on public opinion, public discourse and voting behavior.’” They conclude that both the historical experience of organizers and recent studies provide backing for the idea that “support for a movement’s issue can grow, even when a majority of people do not particularly like the tactics being used.”

Finally, success cannot be fully measured by public opinion, especially when the strategy is to trouble public consensus. Oil Kills has been very clear that they are not acting in order to sooth or please anyone — they are intentionally sounding the alarm as a way of empowering people to act. By treating the climate crisis as a crisis, and reacting accordingly, activists are, in a sense, giving other people permission to do the same and showing them how. It’s like when someone is real with you and that makes you feel like you can be real too — and we all need to get real, real fast. The spell of complacency is like the tranquilizer that helps walk a cow to slaughter. Oil Kills is shouting, “wake up and live!”

In a debrief by the Oil Kills campaign on Aug. 16, they addressed the public: “it is time to face reality: no one is coming to save us. There is no free pass, no shelter from the coming storm. Our best chance of survival is to resist. To join the growing numbers of ordinary, everyday people, from across the globe who are refusing to stand by while hundreds of millions of innocent people are murdered.”

Offering a pathway forward out of doom, Oil Kill’s messaging has remained crystal clear: “The climate crisis will not end until every single country has phased out fossil fuels, [and] those who bear the greatest responsibility and have the greatest capacity must do the most ... In this time of crisis, we expect our governments to work collaboratively, as we have done, and negotiate a Fossil Fuel Treaty to end the war on humanity before we lose everything.”



Police arrest an activist who reached the Ugandan Parliament. Photo: Busein Samilu

The next rebellion is coming

Coming back down from the hugeness of our crisis and into ourselves as individuals often causes a feeling of paralysis, especially for the majority of people not yet interconnected within communities of resistance and solidarity. But there have been actions where small groups or even lone activists have held up an Oil Kills banner and received media coverage and support because they are part of a global campaign which can't be ignored. Every single contribution adds to that.

In a Sept. 6 letter to climate activist prisoners of conscience, Naomi Klein wrote, "In a world that was right-side up, you would be celebrated as the ones who helped break the spell that is setting our world on fire. In truth, your actions could still do that, if enough people know about them."

It continues to be an urgent and essential task to ensure that more and more people do know about Oil Kills and other manifestations of resistance, but it is also evident that the world's elites already understand the threat that these actions represent — the

threat of mass uprising. That threat is precisely why nonviolent direct action in defense of planetary life is being criminalized so viciously.

Klein continued, "Movements against climate arson are already converging with movements against genocide and unfettered greed. The next wave of rebellion is coming. Along with the tankers, I see it clearly on the horizon."

The Oil Kills uprising and fellow movements around the world have placed their bodies between those tankers and our shared future to say, "here, and no further." If enough of us line up behind them, their actions could very well lead the way to an adoption of a treaty to end fossil fuels by 2030 — that remains to be won. What is for certain is that their actions are troubling the autopilot system, disrupting the mechanics of fossil-capital's death march and creating desperately needed space to pursue alternate routes. Whatever else lies on the horizon, their contributions are already impacting the world in ways we cannot yet know but will be unlikely to forget.

Recycling the Discarded

Damon Orion

The stigma of a criminal conviction can be a major barrier to community reentry for recently released prisoners. A December 2021 report by the Bureau of Justice Statistics highlighted the employment barrier faced by the more than 50,000 who were incarcerated, with 33 percent of them being unable to find any employment “over four years” after their release from prison in 2010.

Meanwhile, a 2002 study by the U.S. Department of Justice of employers in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, found that “ex-offenders... [were] one-half to one-third as likely to receive initial consideration from employers relative to equivalent applicants without criminal records.”

In 2018, the Prison Policy Initiative reported that more than 27 percent of formerly incarcerated individuals were unemployed—a figure “higher than the total U.S. unemployment rate during any historical period, including the Great Depression.”

The challenges of finding employment and housing often create a vicious cycle. A 2021 study “Recidivism of Prisoners Released in 24 States in 2008,” pointed out that 61 percent of the inmates interviewed were back in prison within a decade.

“Homeless Shelter Use and Reincarceration Following Prison Release,” a report of 48,424 prisoners released from New York State correctional facilities, concluded that “homelessness contributes to a higher risk for incarceration,” and “inversely, incarceration contributes to an increased risk of homelessness.”

The Compost Co-op, a worker-owned service in Greenfield, Massachusetts, offers formerly incarcerated individuals an alternative to this path. Its workers collect compost from customers’ curbsides and bring them to western Massachusetts’s largest

commercial composting site, Martin’s Farm. This enables staff members to earn a living wage through meaningful work.

The seeds of this co-op were planted between 2011 and 2015 when Greenfield Community College instructor and future Compost Co-op co-founder Revan Schendler taught a course at Franklin County Sheriff’s Office called Crime and Punishment in the U.S.: A Sociological Overview. “Out of the classes emerged an interest in establishing a think tank,” Schendler explains.

While speaking at a webinar organized by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in July 2024, Schendler said, “The compost co-op was developed inside a rural county jail by incarcerated people who identified the lack of meaningful living wage work... as contributing to reincarceration” According to her, “More than 25 incarcerated and previously incarcerated people” are part of the co-op.

In December 2013, members of the Greenfield community began meeting with the sheriff’s office inmates weekly. The group, comprising people from the community and inmates, went on nature excursions, sponsored annual art and poetry shows, advocated for policy changes, and discussed alternatives to incarceration. This think tank gave rise to the idea of the Compost Co-op.

Andrew Stachiw, a think tank member and educator at the jail, developed a business plan for the co-op in 2017. The organization was incorporated the following year. It now serves more than 300 residential and commercial customers throughout Greenfield and neighboring towns such as Great Falls, Montague, and Deerfield.

Explaining the goals of the Compost Co-op during the webinar, Schendler said, “The goals of the incarcerated developers included having control



Image by the Compost Co-op

over your labor and not being a cog in a wheel, was one. Two, [having] flexible and nonpunitive work schedules, three giving back to the community by protecting the environment, and four helping the next person out.”

Positive Environmental Impact

With 30-40 percent of food in the U.S. going into the trash—nearly 60 million tons per year—the Compost Co-op serves as a model for food waste reduction. It also promotes environmental health. As the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency notes, composting reduces greenhouse gas emissions and “improves a community’s ability to adapt to adverse climate impacts by helping soil absorb water and prevent runoff of pollutants during floods. It also helps soil hold more water for longer, mitigating the effects of drought.”

By hiring formerly incarcerated workers, the Compost Co-op also promotes racial justice. In 2023, the Sentencing Project reported that “one in five Black men born in 2001 is likely to experience imprisonment within [his] lifetime.” According to a Pew Charitable Trusts brief from the same year,

data from a 595-jail sample revealed that “Black people made up, on average, 12 percent of the local community populations but more than double that, 26 percent, of the jail populations.” The same data showed that “[a]s of 2022, Black people were admitted to jail at more than four times the rate of white people.”

Eli Smith, who does administrative support and operations work for the Compost Co-op, feels the group’s environmental activism is inseparable from its mission to uphold social, racial, and class justice. “Low-income communities and communities of color are the first to be affected by the repercussions of climate change,” he explains. “[These] communities have been pushed to the margins and to areas of our country that are the least desirable or are closest to rivers and bodies of water.”

The Compost Co-op’s work helps mitigate these conditions by promoting “racial and environmental justice.” A blog from 2023 noted that since forming in 2018, this collective had “diverted almost a million pounds of compostables from the waste stream, resulting in reduced methane emission from landfills, decreased waste headed to incin-

erators (which contribute to high asthma rates in children), and less waste shipped from our region by rail.”

The low-income and BIPOC communities are disproportionately vulnerable to health problems caused by air pollution from traffic, industrial facilities, and incinerators.

Combating Housing Insecurity

In 2024, an annual state count reported 29,435 unhoused individuals in Massachusetts. This reflected a 54 percent increase from the 19,107 reported in 2023.

According to AffordableHousing.com, applications for affordable housing in Massachusetts can take years to come to the top of the waiting list.

This is especially destabilizing for newly released inmates, many of whom are “kicked to the street with no house, job, or money,” according to Smith. “Maybe they give you the items you [were wearing and] had in your pocket when you were arrested. In New England that can mean that if you get arrested in July and go to jail wearing a T-shirt and shorts, they let you back out [in the same clothes] in the middle of December with snow on the ground. If you don’t have family or friends to support you, you’re just homeless.”

The Compost Co-op helps individuals in this situation. In 2023, the collective announced a partnership with the design and construction company Oxbow Design Build. A letter written collectively by the worker-owners of both co-ops described how the two organizations “transformed a dilapidated building in Greenfield into apartments that will last centuries rather than decades. Six people who collectively experienced decades of homelessness and housing insecurity now have homes.”

This initiative was taken on when “seven members with experience of incarceration” had to leave the co-op due to a lack of housing. “The worker-owners decided that the business had to find a way to

address that need or it wouldn’t survive or fulfill its mission,” said Schendler during the webinar.

Economic Democracy

Smith notes that in most workplaces, bosses and managers have dictatorial power. “Unless you’re lucky enough to be unionized or work at a worker-owned co-op, there’s nothing you can do to sway your boss’s decision about something.” He adds that exploitation increases when workers are formerly incarcerated or face other barriers to employment such as being “low income or not [being] a straight white man.”

Smith contrasts this with the Compost Co-op’s ethos of worker ownership. “I think a lot of the reason [this group’s founders] wanted a worker-owned co-op is so that you have agency and ability to make decisions in your workplace. A lot of employers like to say, ‘We value your opinion,’ and then don’t listen to anything you say. When I became a worker-owner or was close to becoming one, I learned that I actually have a say in this business, and my coworkers want to hear my opinion. It’s not just lip service.”

Passing It On

Smith, who feels “things have to change on a large scale to truly affect issues like incarceration and climate change,” encourages anyone interested in starting a composting co-op to bear in mind that operational methods will vary based on many factors—for example, a specific region’s physical location and political atmosphere. “Even on the local level, laws and legislation have a big impact,” he says.

Recommending the Institute for Local Self-Reliance as a resource for learning to compost, Smith advises prospective composting cooperative founders to take inspiration from multiple examples. “Study how they function and take pieces that you think will work in your area versus trying to copy someone else’s community composting program exactly.”

Undebatable: What Harris and Trump Could Not Say About Israel and Gaza

Norman Solomon

Kamala Harris won the debate. People being bombed in Gaza did not.

The banner headline across the top of the New York Times home page — “Harris Puts Trump on Defensive in Fierce Debate” — was accurate enough. But despite the good news for people understandably eager for Trump to be defeated, the Harris debate performance was a moral and political tragedy.

In Gaza “now an estimated 40,000 Palestinians are dead,” an ABC News moderator said. “Nearly 100 hostages remain. . . . President Biden has not been able to break through the stalemate. How would you do it?”

Vice President Harris replied with her standard wording: “Israel has a right to defend itself. We would. And how it does so matters. Because it is also true far too many innocent Palestinians have been killed. Children, mothers. What we know is that this war must end. It must when, end immediately, and the way it will end is we need a ceasefire deal and we need the hostages out.”

“End immediately”? Anyone who isn’t in fantasyland knows that the only way to soon end the slaughter of Palestinian civilians would be for the U.S. government — the overwhelmingly biggest supplier of Israel’s armaments — to stop sending weapons to Israel.

Meanwhile, a pivot to advocating for a cutoff of weapons to Israel would help Harris win the presidency. After the debate, the Institute for Middle East Understanding pointed out that the need to halt the weapons is not only moral and legal — it’s also smart politics. Polls are clear that most Americans want to stop arming Israel. In swing states,

polling has found that a large number of voters say they’d be more likely to cast a ballot for Harris if she would support a halt.

What Kamala Harris and Donald Trump said about Israel and Gaza in their debate was predictable. Even more certain was what they absolutely would not say — with silences speaking loudest of all. “Great is truth, but still greater, from a practical point of view, is silence about truth,” Aldous Huxley wrote, describing “the greatest triumphs of propaganda.”

By coincidence, the debate happened on the same date as publication of a new afterword about the Gaza war in the paperback edition of my book *War Made Invisible*. To fill in for the debate’s abysmal silences, here are a few quotes from the afterword about the ongoing carnage:

- “After the atrocities that Hamas committed on Oct. 7, the U.S. government quickly stepped up military aid to Israel as it implemented atrocities on a much larger scale. In truth, as time went on, the entire Israeli war in Gaza amounted to one gigantic atrocity with uncountable aspects.”
- As with the steady massacres with bombs and bullets in Gaza since early October, “the Israeli-U.S. alliance treated the increasing onset of starvation, dehydration, and fatal disease as a public-relations problem.”
- “In the war zone, eyewitness reporting and photojournalism were severely hindered if not thwarted by the Israeli military, which has a long record of killing journalists.”
- “Although the credibility of Israel’s government



tumbled as the Gaza war dragged on, the brawny arms of the Israel lobby — and the overall atmospheric pressure of media and politics — pushed legislators to approve new military aid. . . . Official pronouncements — and the policies they tried to justify — were deeply anchored in the unspoken premise that some lives really matter and some really don't.”

- The United States persisted in “violating not only the U.S. Conventional Arms Transfer Policy but also numerous other legal requirements including the Foreign Assistance Act, the Arms Export Control Act, the U.S. War Crimes Act, the Leahy Law, the Genocide Convention Implementation Act, and several treaties. For U.S. power politics, the inconvenient precepts in those measures were as insignificant and invisible as the Palestinian people being slaughtered.”
- “What was sinister about proclaiming ‘Israel’s 9/11’ was what happened after America’s 9/11. Wearing the cloak of victim, the United States proceeded to use the horrible tragedy that occurred inside its borders as an open-ended reason to kill in the name of retaliation, self-pro-

tection, and, of course, the ‘war on terror.’ It was a playbook that the Israeli government adapted and implemented with vengeance.”

- Israel’s war on 2.2 million people in Gaza has been “a supercharged escalation of what Israel had been doing for 75 years, treating human beings as suitable for removal and even destruction.” As Israel’s war on Gaza has persisted, “the explanations often echoed the post-9/11 rationales for the ‘war on terror’ from the U.S. government: authorizing future crimes against humanity as necessary in the light of certain prior events.”

That and so much more — left unsaid from the debate stage, dodged in U.S. mass media and evaded from the podiums of power in Washington — indict not only the Israeli government but also the U.S. government as an accomplice to mass murder that has escalated into genocide.

Silence is a blanket that smothers genuine democratic discourse and the outcries of moral voices. Making those voices inaudible is a key goal for the functioning of the warfare state.

Why Project 2025 is a Threat Even If Trump Loses the Election

Rafael Holmberg

The glimpse of a potential victory for Kamala Harris in the presidential election has cast a false sense of security about the storm brewing around an increasingly radical Republican party. It is naïve to think that Trump's loss would magically erase the Republican underbelly that is planning for a complete restructuration and reduction of government responsibility and civil freedom. Whatever happens, the proponents of a new radical Republican government are clearly in it for the long run, and they have made their aggressive intentions clear regardless of the election outcome. Even though it started two years ago, Project 2025 – the unpleasant offspring of the Heritage Foundation think-tank – has only recently made greater news following the hopeless outlook of Biden's desperate presidential campaign.

For those who are not familiar with it, Project 2025 is a 900-page manifesto detailing the plan for a quick government restructuring in the event of a Republican victory in the upcoming elections. Its propositions are almost a caricature of 'new Republican' dogmatism, but behind its absurdity lies a serious threat. The policy changes it presents focus on four central intentions: to actively restore the nuclear family as the central feature of the American identity; to promote US sovereignty over all else; to prioritise a theologically driven idea of individual liberty; and (perhaps most concerning) to absolve the administrative State, in other words to reduce State funding and responsibility to a minimum (echoing Argentina's extreme cuts to educational, health, environmental, cultural, and welfare support following the election of right-wing anarcho-capitalism Javier Milei).

This last point would, in practice, grant the president an unprecedented level of executive power,

bypassing current constitutional, Congressional, and judicial restrictions on presidential autocracy and threatening a new presidential form of a Louis XIV-style absolute monarchy.

After Biden dropped out of the presidential run and campaign funding returned for the Harris-led Democrats, opinion polls showed a decrease in Trump's likelihood of winning the election. Naturally, the fears of Project 2025 associated with a Trump victory began to subside. If Trump loses, the Republican plan, drafted (amongst other right-wingers) by major Republican figures and broadly supported in Republican circles, won't go through, right? Unfortunately, this is reaction reveals an ignorance of the real threat that the Project constitutes.

Project 2025 represents a serious tension in the US body politic, and its orchestrators have likely prepared for either outcome of the election. The Project's leader, Kevin Roberts, delayed the publication of his book – which criticizes childless women, suggests removing abortion and LGBT rights, and even NY dog parks for being 'anti-child' – until after the election. With an introduction by JD Vance that recognises the need for a 'second American revolution', this postponement reveals the long-term outlook of the new Republicans. Even if Trump loses, the book (and all of its overt ideological paranoia concentrated in Project 2025) can be published with a sense of security that its effects and legacy will not be diminished.

It is clear that the Republican party has been subject to profound changes since Trump entered the game. Traditionalist values of upholding conventions, valuing tradition, and submitting to the 'highest power' (the Divine), have been aban-



done. The new Republican party instead stands for aggressive corporate funding, tailoring policy to financial interests, and using 'God' only as a convenient campaign strategy. In other words, the intention behind Project 2025 is adaptable, and its mutability is in its service.

Trump has taken a clear distance from Project 2025, and this is likely one of the reasons that Kevin Roberts' book has been postponed: the Project is intended to live on after Trump. It would continue, and possibly even be strengthened without his opposition, if Trump were to lose and eventually stand down. In other words, Project 2025 sets the stage for a qualitatively new form of right-wing US politics. It is clear that if Trump wins, the dangers posed by Project 2025 are immanent, with major Republican figures having directly contributed to it.

But its danger is by no means reduced if Trump loses. In fact, this eventuality has seemingly been prepared for. Trump's distance from the Project signals that he may not be the right bearer of its

legacy. Many of the Project 2025 contributors are in fact ex-Trump officials. JD Vance, who wrote the introduction for the book, supports even more radical action in the name of reactionary right-wing politics than the policies proposed by Trump. With Trump facing the possibility of a loss after the renewed Democratic campaign, the minds behind Project 2025 seem ready for an all the more direct attack: "to circle the wagons and load the muskets" as Robert's wrote in an overt reverence to violent means of establishing their new vision of US government.

Ultimately, we should not be naïve enough to assume that a victory by Kamala Harris would equate with the end of Project 2025, as some commentators have suggested. As is clear both according to the manifesto and the utterances of its supporters, Harris' victory would only be the first step. The manifesto of the new Republicans constitutes an aggressive long-term plan, which certainly does not end with Trump.

Election Years Are Dangerous Times for People of Color

Sonali Kolhatkar

As he runs for reelection in 2024, former president Donald Trump has made the outlandish claim that “millions of people [have crossed the United States border] ...from prisons, jails and mental institutions to come into our country and destroy our country.” His statement was a combination of two tropes that are often deployed by those seeking political power in election years: Being “tough on immigration,” and—in spite of the fact that he is the first ever major party presidential nominee to be an indicted criminal —“tough on crime.”

Trump has made such racist and violent language a central tenet of his political career, famously launching his presidential campaign in 2015 by claiming that Mexico was sending rapists and criminals across the border to the U.S. In seeking reelection he has used Hitlerian rhetoric, claiming repeatedly that immigrants are “poisoning the blood of the country.”

Such words have serious impacts, especially on people of color. After Trump won the 2016 presidential race, a Washington Post analysis found, “that counties that had hosted a 2016 Trump campaign rally saw a 226 percent increase in reported hate crimes over comparable counties that did not host such a rally.” The Leadership Conference on Civil Rights in its report, *Cause for Concern 2024: The State of Hate*, has looked further back in time and found that “Each of the last four presidential campaign cycles has shown an unmistakable pattern: Reported hate crimes increase during elections.” The report’s authors expect a spike in violence this year and worry about “the trend of increased hate to continue into the 2024 election.”

It’s not just Trump. During the first presidential debate of this year, which took place on June 28 between Trump and then-presumptive Democratic nominee Joe Biden, there was a heavy focus on

immigration. Trump accused Biden of rolling out the welcome mat to undocumented immigrants, saying, “He decided to open up our border, open up our country.” This is, of course, patently untrue.

In reality, not only did Biden expand on the harsh anti-immigrant policies that Trump enacted during the years 2016 to 2020, but, in January 2024, as he started his reelection campaign, Biden went as far as channeling Trump’s favored rhetoric of threatening to “shut down the border.” He did so in the context of garnering Republican support for a bipartisan deal on funding aid to Ukraine that included border enforcement.

When that deal failed, Biden’s team was, as per an AP report, “planning to campaign to reelect him by emphasizing that Republicans caused the deal to collapse.” A Democratic strategist named Maria Cardona, told AP, “We need to lean into this and not just on border security, but, yes, tough border security coupled with increased legal pathways.”

Then, three weeks before his June debate with Trump, Biden announced “New Actions to Secure the Border,” which included refusing asylum applications for those who crossed the border without papers. The National Immigrant Justice Center (NIJC) denounced Biden’s plans saying they “mimic” Trump’s policies and predicted that, “[p]eople in need of asylum who are among already marginalized populations will be most gravely harmed.” NIJC further pointed out that, “People arriving at the U.S.-Mexico border who will be turned back under this policy are overwhelmingly Black, Brown and Indigenous people seeking asylum.”

Now, with Vice President Kamala Harris as their presidential nominee, Democrats are maintaining

what the New York Times called, “decidedly more hard-line” on immigration than in decades.

In other words, Democrats have preferred one-upping Republicans on immigration rather than distinguishing themselves as more humane.

According to Bill Gallegos, a member of the Mexican Solidarity Project who writes for its weekly Spanish-English bulletin, scapegoating immigrants of color helps Republicans “garner votes from a large sector of white voters.” He adds that the anti-immigrant rhetoric also serves to, “make immigrant workers even more vulnerable to exploitation by U.S. companies, and a successful mass deportation campaign of immigrants will smooth the road for a broad attack on all remaining remnants of U.S. democracy.”

Coded language about crime and punishment is also a favorite election campaign tactic. In 2022, the Washington Post found that “Republicans spent 58% of the money for ads focused on crime” while campaigning for office ahead of the last midterm elections. Because the U.S. criminal justice system disproportionately ensnares people of color, fueling fear of crime can result in greater criminalization of Black and Brown people.

Just as Democrats have tended to appease Republican demands on harsh immigration enforcement, they have embraced the “tough on crime” rhetoric rather than distancing themselves from it. Before he stepped out of the 2024 presidential race, Biden, who has a history of supporting law enforcement, pushed a pro-police bill called the Safer America Plan, which critics say is an extension of Clinton’s 1994 bill and would negatively impact Black and Brown communities.

Lis Smith, a Democratic strategist told the NBC News, “If Republicans thought President Biden would hand them a wedge issue for 2024, they thought wrong.” She added that “It’s going to be very hard to define him as soft on crime.” White House spokesperson Andrew Bates challenged Republicans saying they, “need to commit here and now to

joining with President Biden — not obstructing him — in fighting the rising crime rate he inherited.”

The U.S. public believes crime rates are up, perhaps because media sources and politicians like Biden and Trump tend to fuel moral panic over crime. Yet, according to Pew Research, “U.S. violent and property crime rates have plunged since the 1990s, regardless of data source.” The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in particular, found a 15% drop in violent crime in the first part of 2024 compared to the previous year. Crimes of murder and rape were down by about 26% each. A recent Axios review of newly available data from U.S. cities found a similar plummeting of crime rates.

Only four years ago, when a nationwide racial justice uprising in the wake of George Floyd’s murder had politicians on the defensive regarding police violence, Democratic leaders such as Nancy Pelosi and Chuck Schumer were ridiculed for their performative promises of justice. Geri Silva, a longtime prison abolition activist and founder of Families to Amend California’s Three Strikes, denounced the politicians saying, “I have so much disdain for would-be progressive hypocrites.”

Silva points out that, “Many politicians who support progressive policies like ‘care first’ and ‘rehabilitation over punishment’ do so only to please their BIPOC base.” However, they tend to have, what she calls a “dramatic shift during election season,” towards pro-law-enforcement policies, “revealing them to be the worst kind of opportunists.”

None of this is new. The trend of criminalizing people of color with violently racist rhetoric and policies in order to win elections far predates Trump and Biden and can be traced at least as far back as Richard Nixon’s “Southern Strategy” which he used to great effect in the 1968 and 1972 presidential elections. Realizing that overt racism was not as effective in the wake of the 1965 Civil Rights Act, Nixon relied on provoking white fear of people of color without making explicit reference to race and instead focusing on the dog-whistle phrase of “restoring law and order”—an earlier version of “tough on crime.”

This trend became a winning formula for the Republican Party in particular. Ronald Reagan ran on an implicitly racist “tough on crime” platform in 1980 and won. He left office doubling the prison population. In 1988 George H. W. Bush successfully beat Massachusetts Gov. Michael Dukakis after Republican strategist Lee Atwater championed racist ads about Willie Horton, a Black man who had raped a white woman while on a weekend pass from prison. Bush’s campaign pinned the furlough program on Dukakis, and won the election by painting the Democrat as “soft on crime” while hinting to his white conservative electorate that as president, he would ensure Black criminals were kept in their proper place: prison.

African-American history professor, Marcia Chatelain, of Georgetown University told the New York Times, that the Willie Horton debacle “also taught the Democrats that in order to win elections, they have to mirror some of the racially inflected language of tough on crime.”

Four years later, when Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton ran for president as a Democrat, he interrupted his campaign to oversee the execution of a Black man held on death row, and later boasted, “no one can say I’m soft on crime.” In 1994, two years after Clinton won the presidential race, he kept his campaign promise of being “tough on crime” by signing the 1994 Crime bill into law—a signature policy that fueled mass incarceration in the U.S.

George W. Bush continued his father’s legacy in 2000 when he ran for president—although he became most notorious for his failures in the Iraq war. By the time Barack Obama ran for president eight years later on an anti-Iraq-war platform, the public’s appetite for being tough on crime had waned, with a growing awareness that mass incarceration was out of control.

Indeed, Obama’s 2008 and 2012 presidential wins may have been the exceptions to the “tough on crime” election trend. But a Black man occupying the White House was the ultimate trigger for white supremacists, so much so that Obama’s successor, Trump, laid the groundwork for his eventual presidential campaign by promoting conspiracy theories

of Obama being a non-native-born citizen and a Muslim.

There is a direct link between the election-related violence aimed at people of color and the white supremacist origins of the nation: Settler colonialist decimation of Indigenous peoples, enslavement of Africans, systemic exclusion of immigrants, and Jim Crow segregation.

We live with the legacies of these systems today via on-going institutional discrimination against Black and Brown people, harsh anti-immigrant laws and policies, and racist rhetoric. The violence tends to ramp up quite predictably in election years, in ways that illuminate how the U.S. project of democracy is built on “otherizing” nonwhite people.

Ideas such as “the great replacement theory,” which Republican politicians have embraced, motivated a mass shooting 7 months ahead of the 2022 midterm elections in Buffalo, New York by a racist perpetrator whose victims were mostly Black. That same year the FBI recorded a whopping 11,643 hate crimes across the U.S. The incidents were disproportionately aimed at Latinos as well as Black Americans.

Prominent Republican donors such as Elon Musk have also promoted the dangerous notion that immigrants are overrunning the nation and destroying American democracy. Musk, who is of white South African descent and was born during apartheid, last year doubled down on a false claim that Black leftists in South Africa were “openly pushing for genocide of white people.” This language echoes the claims of “white genocide” that white supremacists in the U.S. have used as justification to target immigrants of color.

Gallegos worries that a “‘successful’ ethnic cleansing campaign against immigrants” would be a part of a campaign to “institutionalize a white Christian nationalist form of apartheid.”

The solution, he says, is to “build a broad united front against fascism,” and engage in an “overall effort to defend and expand democracy” centering on the rights of people of color and immigrants.

What is Driving the Rise in Racism and Fascism in Ireland?

Stephen McCloskey

On 3 August 2024, Tricolours and Union flags were held aloft by racists and fascists at Belfast City Hall, united in prejudice, railing against the organization of a 'Unity over Division' rally by anti-racist community organisations and trade unions. The far-right in Belfast was joined by agitators from Coolock in Dublin who have violently opposed the siting of an accommodation centre for international protection applicants in their area. The racists were prevented from marching on Belfast Islamic Centre by the police and turned their anger on businesses in South Belfast owned by members of the minority ethnic communities. They then attacked hotels housing asylum-seekers in what must have been a terrifying ordeal for vulnerable children and adults, many of whom had already suffered the trauma of fleeing their countries to seek sanctuary. Several nights of racist violence followed in which businesses, homes and a mosque were targeted. This wave of far-right violence in England, Wales and the north of Ireland followed the stabbing to death of three young girls in Southport on 29 July. Toxic social media posts attributed the killings to a Muslim and migrant despite the 17-year old suspect being born in Cardiff.

In the south of Ireland, there has been increasing levels of violence directed at international protection applicants forced to sleep in tents because of a lack of state-provided accommodation. There have also been at least 31 arson attacks on 'properties or locations linked, or rumoured to be linked, to the housing of people seeking asylum or international protection'.

Housing crisis

So, what is driving this escalation in racist intimidation and violence? A common denominator in

the north and south of Ireland is a housing crisis, particularly the lack of affordable social housing to buy and accommodation to rent. In the north, only 400 new social housing units are to be built in 2024-25 from a target of 2,000, with the lack of housing feeding the false narrative that the available stock is reserved for migrants. According to the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA), net migration increased by 2,300 people or just 0.1 per cent of the total population in 2022 which means that only 2.5 percent of asylum-seekers in the UK live in the north. The displacement rhetoric whipped up by the far-right on the basis that migrants are lengthening waiting lists for social housing and absorbing available supply is a fallacy as asylum applicants are not on social housing waiting lists. The housing crisis is caused by a supply issue and flawed government policies, not inward migration.

In the south of Ireland, the homeless total has surpassed 14,000, 4000 of whom are children. A chronic lack of social housing combined with unaffordable rental charges and rising numbers of tenant evictions has created a gridlocked housing sector. The 2022 Irish census revealed that 41 per cent of young people, aged between 18 and 34, are living with their parents because they are unable to afford a mortgage or secure a tenancy in the rental sector. The housing crisis is compounded by investor funds from the private sector buying up properties to rent out and create 'a permanent income stream for their shareholders and wealthy investors'. The Department of Finance revealed that a total of 623 homes were bought by 16 investors in 2023, compared to 395 in 2022 and 187 in 2021. This is the reckless outcome of neoliberal policies that enlarge the role of the private sector and landlords whose only imperative is to turn a healthy profit.

Inner city neglect

But the lack of affordable social housing is not the only driver of poverty and racism in Ireland. Pobal, a government agency designed to support social inclusion and community development, found in 2023 an increase in the gap between Ireland's most disadvantaged areas and the national average. The Pobal Deprivation Index uses a composite of ten indicators to measure an area's level of disadvantage including educational attainment, unemployment, access to services and the number of persons per room. It found that 195,992 people 'now live in areas classed as very or extremely disadvantaged' including Coolock in Dublin's northside, where arsonists targeted a site designated for housing units for Ukrainian refugees. With Ireland riding a corporate tax windfall which resulted in an €8.6 billion surplus this year, there is an obvious case to be made for increased investment in services that address the fault-lines in Irish society that have manifested themselves in racially-motivated violence stirred by inflammatory and, in some cases, 'false and racially-motivated, toxic speech'. While there is no tax boon to be had in the north of Ireland, the newly elected Labour government needs to shed itself of the 'non-negotiable' fiscal rules that are constraining much needed expenditure on failing services, particularly on the National Health Service. The north of Ireland has the 'highest per capita waiting list in the UK' for health appointments, including patients who have waited more than a year for an appointment. Nearly one-in-five people in the north live in poverty, including over 100,000 children, with one in fourteen households food insecure.

Wealth redistribution

Governments in Dublin and London need to use taxation to redistribute wealth given the polarising effects of neoliberalism in accelerating inequality in Britain and Ireland. Oxfam has reported that the richest one per cent of Britons hold more wealth than 70 per cent of the population combined. The same report found that 95 food and

energy corporations more than doubled their profits in 2022 and paid out \$257 billion (£211 billion) in dividends to shareholders. The timing of this windfall for the super-rich coincided with millions of families struggling to manage food and energy bills, and unprecedented numbers making recourse to foodbanks to survive. It's a similarly unequal and depressing situation in Ireland, with the richest one per cent controlling 35.4 per cent of Irish financial wealth. Ireland's two billionaires have more wealth – €15 billion – than fifty per cent of the Irish population combined, who own €10.3 billion. A progressive wealth tax on Irish millionaires and billionaires could generate up to €8.2 billion a year, argues Oxfam, a war chest that could help address the persistent social and economic problems that are creating so much disadvantage, anger and alienation from mainstream politics.

Since the 1970s, neoliberalism has created the ideal conditions that allow the far-right to prosper. It privatises public services, suppresses wages, erodes the welfare state and undermines the social contract. The atomisation of society under neoliberalism collapses the political into the personal and denies the capacity for systemic thinking. So, in addition to addressing the material causes of poverty through a more equitable redistribution of wealth, is the need for education and critical thinking that demystifies and challenges the fallacies that are driving racism and fascism.

As Henry Giroux argues: 'Education both in its symbolic and institutional forms has a vital role to play in fighting the resurgence of false renderings of history, white supremacy, religious fundamentalism, an accelerating militarism, and ultra-nationalism'. Transformative education is needed to challenge the epistemic injustice that blinds communities on the frontlines of poverty in Ireland from the systemic failures that underpin inequality. The alternative is to allow the far-right to prey upon the effects of neoliberalism to foster prejudice and hate.

Who Wants to Kill and Die for the American Empire?

Nicolas J.S. Davies

The Associated Press reports that many of the recruits drafted under Ukraine's new conscription law lack the motivation and military indoctrination required to actually aim their weapons and fire at Russian soldiers.

"Some people don't want to shoot. They see the enemy in the firing position in trenches but don't open fire. ... That is why our men are dying," said a frustrated battalion commander in Ukraine's 47th Brigade. "When they don't use the weapon, they are ineffective."

This is familiar territory to anyone who has studied the work of U.S. Brigadier General Samuel "Slam" Marshall, a First World War veteran and the chief combat historian of the U.S. Army in the Second World War. Marshall conducted hundreds of post-combat small group sessions with U.S. troops in the Pacific and Europe, and documented his findings in his book, *Men Against Fire: the Problem of Battle Command*.

One of Slam Marshall's most startling and controversial findings was that only about 15% of U.S. troops in combat actually fired their weapons at the enemy. In no case did that ever rise above 25%, even when failing to fire placed the soldiers' own lives in greater danger.

Marshall concluded that most human beings have a natural aversion to killing other human beings, often reinforced by our upbringing and religious beliefs, and that turning civilians into effective combat soldiers therefore requires training and indoctrination expressly designed to override our natural respect for fellow human life. This dichotomy between human nature and killing in war is now understood to lie at the root of much of the

PTSD suffered by combat veterans.

Marshall's conclusions were incorporated into U.S. military training, with the introduction of firing range targets that looked like enemy soldiers and deliberate indoctrination to dehumanize the enemy in soldiers' minds. When he conducted similar research in the Korean War, Marshall found that changes in infantry training based on his work in World War II had already led to higher firing ratios.

That trend continued in Vietnam and more recent U.S. wars. Part of the shocking brutality of the U.S. hostile military occupation of Iraq stemmed directly from the dehumanizing indoctrination of the U.S. occupation forces, which included falsely linking Iraq to the September 11th terrorist crimes in the U.S. and labeling Iraqis who resisted the U.S. invasion and occupation of their country as "terrorists."

A Zogby poll of U.S. forces in Iraq in February 2006 found that 85% of U.S. troops believed their mission was to "retaliate for Saddam's role in the 9/11 attacks," and 77% believed that the primary reason for the war was to "stop Saddam from protecting Al Qaeda in Iraq." This was all pure fiction, cut from whole cloth by propagandists in Washington, and yet, three years into the U.S. occupation, the Pentagon was still misleading U.S. troops to falsely link Iraq with 9/11.

The impact of this dehumanization was also borne out by court martial testimony in the rare cases when U.S. troops were prosecuted for killing Iraqi civilians. In a court martial at Camp Pendleton in California in July 2007, a corporal testifying for the defense told the court he did not see the cold-blooded killing of an innocent civilian as a

summary execution. “I see it as killing the enemy,” he told the court, adding, “Marines consider all Iraqi men part of the insurgency.”

U.S. combat deaths in Iraq and Afghanistan (6,257 killed) were only a fraction of the U.S. combat death toll in Vietnam (47,434) or Korea (33,686), and an even smaller fraction of the nearly 300,000 Americans killed in the Second World War. In every case, other countries suffered much heavier death tolls.

And yet, U.S. casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan provoked waves of political blowback in the U.S., leading to military recruitment problems that persist today. The U.S. government responded by shifting away from wars involving large deployments of U.S. ground troops to a greater reliance on proxy wars and aerial bombardment.

After the end of the Cold War, the U.S. military-industrial complex and political class thought they had “kicked the Vietnam syndrome,” and that, freed from the danger of provoking World War III with the Soviet Union, they could now use military force without restraint to consolidate and expand U.S. global power. These ambitions crossed party lines, from Republican “neoconservatives” to Democratic hawks like Madeleine Albright, Hillary Clinton and Joe Biden.

In a speech at the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) in October 2000, a month before winning a seat in the U.S. Senate, Hillary Clinton echoed her mentor Madeleine Albright’s infamous rejection of the “Powell Doctrine” of limited war.

“There is a refrain...,” Clinton declared, “that we should intervene with force only when we face splendid little wars that we surely can win, preferably by overwhelming force in a relatively short period of time. To those who believe we should become involved only if it is easy to do, I think we have to say that America has never and should not ever shy away from the hard task if it is the right one.”

During the question-and-answer session, a banking executive in the audience challenged Clinton on

that statement. “I wonder if you think that every foreign country— the majority of countries—would actually welcome this new assertiveness, including the one billion Muslims that are out there,” he asked, “and whether or not there isn’t some grave risk to the United States in this—what I would say, not new internationalism, but new imperialism?”

When the aggressive war policy promoted by the neocons and Democratic hawks crashed and burned in Iraq and Afghanistan, this should have prompted a serious rethink of their wrongheaded assumptions about the impact of aggressive and illegal uses of U.S. military force.

Instead, the response of the U.S. political class to the blowback from its catastrophic wars in Iraq and Afghanistan was simply to avoid large deployments of U.S. ground forces or “boots on the ground.” They instead embraced the use of devastating bombing and artillery campaigns in Afghanistan, Mosul in Iraq and Raqqa in Syria, and wars fought by proxies, with full, “ironclad” U.S. support, in Libya, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and now Ukraine and Palestine.

The absence of large numbers of U.S. casualties in these wars kept them off the front pages back home and avoided the kind of political blowback generated by the wars in Vietnam and Iraq. The lack of media coverage and public debate meant that most Americans knew very little about these more recent wars, until the shocking atrocity of the genocide in Gaza finally started to crack the wall of silence and indifference.

The results of these U.S. proxy wars are, predictably, no less catastrophic than the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The U.S. domestic political impacts have been mitigated, but the real-world impacts in the countries and regions involved are as deadly, destructive and destabilizing as ever, undermining U.S. “soft power” and pretensions to global leadership in the eyes of much of the world.

In fact, these policies have widened the yawning gulf between the worldview of ill-informed

Americans who cling to the view of their country as a country at peace and a force for good in the world, and people in other countries, especially in the Global South, who are ever more outraged by the violence, chaos and poverty caused by the aggressive projection of U.S. military and economic power, whether by U.S. wars, proxy wars, bombing campaigns, coups or economic sanctions.

Now the U.S.-backed wars in Palestine and Ukraine are provoking growing public dissent among America's partners in these wars. Israel's recovery of six more dead hostages in Rafah led Israeli labor unions to call widespread strikes, insisting that the Netanyahu government must prioritize the lives of the Israeli hostages over its desire to keep killing Palestinians and destroying Gaza.

In Ukraine, an expanded military draft has failed to overcome the reality that most young Ukrainians do not want to kill and die in an endless, unwinnable war. Hardened veterans see new recruits much as Siegfried Sassoon described the British conscripts he was training in November 1916 in *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer*: "The raw material to be trained was growing steadily worse. Most of those who came in now had joined the Army unwillingly, and there was no reason why they should find military service tolerable."

Several months later, with the help of Bertrand Russell, Sassoon wrote *Finished With War: a Soldier's Declaration*, an open letter accusing the political leaders who had the power to end the war of deliberately prolonging it. The letter was published in newspapers and read aloud in Parliament. It ended, "On behalf of those who are suffering now, I make this protest against the deception which is being practiced upon them; also I believe it may help to destroy the callous complacency with which the majority of those at home regard the continuance of agonies which they do not share and which they have not enough imagination to realize."

As Israeli and Ukrainian leaders see their political support crumbling, Netanyahu and Zelenskyy are taking increasingly desperate risks, all the while

insisting that the U.S. must come to their rescue. By "leading from behind," our leaders have surrendered the initiative to these foreign leaders, who will keep pushing the United States to make good on its promises of unconditional support, which will sooner or later include sending young American troops to kill and die alongside their own.

Proxy war has failed to resolve the problem it was intended to solve. Instead of acting as an alternative to ground wars involving U.S. forces, U.S. proxy wars have spawned ever-escalating crises that are now making U.S. wars with Iran and Russia increasingly likely.

Neither the changes to U.S. military training since the Second World War nor the current U.S. strategy of proxy war have resolved the age-old contradiction that Slam Marshall described in *Men Against Fire*, between killing in war and our natural respect for human life. We have come full circle, back to this same historic crossroads, where we must once again make the fateful, unambiguous choice between the path of war and the path of peace.

If we choose war, or allow our leaders and their foreign friends to choose it for us, we must be ready, as military experts tell us, to once more send tens of thousands of young Americans to their deaths, while also risking escalation to a nuclear war that would kill us all.

If we truly choose peace, we must actively resist our political leaders' schemes to repeatedly manipulate us into war. We must refuse to volunteer our bodies and those of our children and grandchildren as their cannon fodder, or allow them to shift that fate onto our neighbors, friends and "allies" in other countries.

We must insist that our mis-leaders instead recommit to diplomacy, negotiation and other peaceful means of resolving disputes with other countries, as the UN Charter, the real "rules based order," in fact requires.

Running With the Prison Vans at Southwark

Conall Morrison

My chest is still sore like having done too many push-ups, or taken a knock. It's from the shoves of the police "Get back" as they surround the vans leaving Court but we find a way to flow through them and tap the sides to communicate our support for those inside. I'm sorry it's come to this, I'm sorry that you're inside. It's not fair, 4 and 5 years locked-up. For what?

I think it hasn't sunk in yet? I call it peaceful pro-

test. Wilful obstruction of the highway? Public Nuisance? Not conforming.

Checking the papers later the judge decrees them guilty of "conspiracy to cause a public nuisance for coordinating direct action protests on the M25 over four days in November 2022". And yet every mention of climate change inadmissible. "The end of the world is neither here nor there". I cried when the news came out: 4 years for 4 of



them and 5 for Roger. Cressida is only 22. The bitterness and hate that they will experience makes me sad.

I didn't bring my phone so that if I was arrested they couldn't tell who I was immediately. This wastes their time... and means they can't arrest so many people. I didn't think that there was a high likelihood of arrest, (I wrote Ruth's number on my forearm, just in case). I wanted to be present, able to feel it, and also to make friends. To act in solidarity. These people are going away for 4 years, the least I can do is to turn up for an afternoon.

At the end of the road when the van pulled out into the traffic and hummings of the high street hustle-bustle, people stopped wide eyed and stared, "What is going on?" "5 years for peaceful protest!" We shout, "not democracy!"

Heart beating hard in my chest, police running at me from a long way off. I got separated from the crowd with one other man. The police man was trying to grab hold of me and I made it to a side street. After a short while afraid of arrest it quietened down. I made my way signless back to the front of the court. Wondering if anybody would be there still... and it was just like before, maybe just warmer in the sun.

Dale Vince, Chris Packham hanging around with aides and organisers, the same faces smiling back. The police back behind the iron gate, catching their breath. I rehydrate, should've brought a banana.

The second van came out, we carried a song and chanted "we love you!" to those inside. Again drumming on the sides and shouting and whooping to show support. I saw some of the famous activists motion go for a drink. And was invited a couple of times to go for soup (you can get arrested for that). I'm tired, I've been enough of a nuisance on one hand and on the other not nearly enough. I go home. I shook a few previous-to-then strangers' hands and shared a smile. I talk to a Covid masked lady on the tube, still

doing outreach with her sign "Stop Jailing Truth Tellers" she has deep concern for the trees. I missed my stop, she apologised and I said "not at all".

Debriefs are important and I watch the footage when I get back. It looks like quite a crowd, quite a nuisance, and again so sad. A victory for the elites, the string pullers, the point zero zero one percent. I watched it back with brother in law Simon and again, able to pick myself out. Great tactic from the man just lying in the road. He does it at least 3 times. The crowd like water... The police under-resourced just like the teachers, the doctors and the nurses. Only just hanging on. The illusion of power, that can crumble fast. The strength of the arm of the law pushing people away and moving along, like some kind of swarm defense of a sports team, the risky high press. I feel it now again in my chest, like Christiano Ronaldo, my pride muscle.

