



MAGAZINE
DECEMBER 2024



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expulsion.”*

-Kathy Kelly



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Antisemitism versus Anti-Zionism

Stephen Shalom

We are living in the midst of one of the great humanitarian tragedies of our lifetimes. Tens of thousands of innocent men, women, and children — especially women and children — are being slaughtered in Gaza. Thousands more are being killed in Lebanon. They are dying from bombs, provided to the Israeli military by the United States government. They are dying from the intentional cutting off of food aid and medical supplies. They are dying buried under tons of rubble. They are dying from the systematic destruction of their health care system.

What can be done about this?

Israel could agree to a ceasefire.

The United States could cut off the massive flow of weaponry.

Washington could stop giving Israel diplomatic cover at the United Nations for its crimes.

But, no, Israel and its supporters in the United States have a better strategy. They just accuse anyone who criticizes Israel of being an antisemite, of hating Jews.

Antisemitism

Back in 2023, the UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, condemned the Hamas killing of civilians on Oct. 7, but he also said that one needed to understand the more than five decades of Israeli occupation and he condemned Israel's collective punishment of the people of Gaza. The Israeli ambassador immediately declared that Guterres was engaging in an antisemitic blood libel against the Jewish people.



Photo by: Dylan Shaw

When the International Court of Justice found that Israel was plausibly committing genocide in Gaza, Israeli officials charged that the court was antisemitic, and the ranking Republican on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee declared that the court had a predilection for antisemitism.

When the International Criminal Court considered bringing war crimes indictments against Hamas AND against Israeli leaders, the Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu denounced the chief prosecutor of the Court as one of the “great antisemites in modern times.” But it wasn’t just Netanyahu. The World Jewish Congress – an organization that supports Israel down the line – condemned the prosecutor’s call for an indictment as “antisemitic.”

Now let me be clear. Antisemitism – hatred of and bias against Jews – is a real problem, in the world and in the United States. It is ugly and it must be opposed. Consider some examples. In 2015, Pastor John Hagee, the head of Christians United for Israel, declared that the Holocaust was caused not by Hitler but by “half-breed Jews.” In 2017, neo-Nazis marched in Charlottesville, VA, chanting “Jews will not replace us” – leading Donald Trump to declare that the marchers included some “very fine people.” In 2018, a rightwing, anti-immigrant, antisemitic fanatic murdered 11 people in a Pittsburgh synagogue. In 2022, Trump had dinner at Mar-a-Lago with two individuals, one of whom denied the Holocaust ever happened and the other who declared “death con 3 on Jews” and said “there’s a lot of things that I love about Hitler.” In 2023, the Texas Republican party rejected a resolution banning the party from associating with known Nazi sympathizers and Holocaust deniers. In 2024, Trump endorsed for governor of North Carolina a person who called himself a “Black Nazi.” And during the recent election campaign, Trump declared that Jews would bear a lot of the blame if he lost the election. So antisemitism really exists and it is vile.

Is there any antisemitism in the pro-Palestinian movement? Of course. It would be shocking if

when a country calling itself “the Jewish state” and claiming to be acting in the name of the Jewish people carries out horrendous war crimes there weren’t some people coming away with bigoted views about Jews as a whole. This is wrong and it must be condemned. Israel’s crimes are not the responsibility of all Jews. We need to unequivocally reject Jew hatred from whatever source it comes.

But it is important to make sure that when we call out antisemitism, we are actually addressing antisemitism and not criticisms of the Israeli state and its policies.

Unfortunately, legislators – across the country and right here in New Jersey – have been working to confuse the distinction between criticisms of Israel and antisemitism. They have been trying to pass laws that establish an official definition of antisemitism – the so-called International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition (IHRA) – that declares by legal fiat that if you call Israel a racist state then you are antisemitic.

But why is it antisemitic to point out the deeply racist nature of Israel’s Nation State Law, which declares that “the exercise of the right to national self-determination” in Israel “is unique to the Jewish People”?

Why is it antisemitic to identify the racism in Israeli prime minister Netanyahu’s assertion that “Israel is not a state of all its citizens ... Israel is the nation-state of the Jewish people and them alone”?

Why is it antisemitic to claim that it is racism to have on the books, as Israel does, more than 70 laws that discriminate against Palestinians?

Why is it antisemitic to report the findings of the respected international organizations Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, as well as the Israeli human rights organization B’Tselem, that concluded that Israel is guilty of the crime of apartheid?

Zionism and Anti-Zionism

Last year, the House of Representatives passed a resolution declaring that “anti-Zionism is antisemitism.” Now what is Zionism? It is an ideology that says there should be a specifically Jewish state, an ethnonationalist state, in a territory where the majority of the population was Palestinian. True enough, there were some early Zionists who had visions of coexistence between Jews and Palestinians. But in recent years the dominant version of Zionism has meant establishing a Jewish supremacist state. And just as it was not anti-white to oppose the white-supremacist regime in South Africa, so too it is not antisemitic or anti-Jewish to oppose the Jewish supremacist regime in Israel-Palestine.

Now do some people use their anti-Zionism as a cover for their antisemitism? Yes. So, if you walk up to someone wearing a yarmulka, and say “You dirty Zionist” – when in fact you know nothing about the person’s views about Israel or Palestine and the only thing you know about them is that they are wearing a traditional Jewish skullcap – that’s antisemitism. But if someone chants – as many Zionists in Israel do – “death to the Arabs!”; or “May your village burn”; if someone declares, in the words of a Zionist member of the Israeli parliament, that the “Gaza Strip should be flattened,” and all its residents killed – then by all means you ought to be an anti-Zionist and there’s nothing antisemitic about it at all.

Here’s the thing about the IHRA definition of antisemitism: the overwhelming majority of experts on Holocaust Studies, Jewish Studies, and Middle East Studies agree that the IHRA definition unacceptably mixes up criticisms of Israel with antisemitism. And the overwhelming majority of civil liberties organizations warn that the IHRA definition is a violation of free speech, trying to shut down criticism of Israel – organizations like the American Civil Liberties Union, the American Association of University Professors, the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression, and Human Rights Watch.

Now it would be antisemitism if Jews were denied their right to practice their religion. As some of you may know, we recently celebrated the Jewish holiday called Sukkot during which time observant Jews are supposed to construct a temporary shelter, a sukkah. Well, a few weeks ago at Swarthmore College, some Jewish students put up a sukkah — in solidarity with Palestine. The administration demanded that they take it down. The students explained it is sacrilegious to remove a sukkah before the end of the holiday. The administration told them it would “be happy to talk more.” But instead of talking, the College sent a large crew to destroy the sukkah, under cover of darkness, while students were sleeping in it, thus forcibly restricting them from practicing their religion. This is antisemitism, but this wasn’t antisemitism by the pro-Palestinian movement, but by a college administration defending the Israeli state. In fact, across the country, Jewish students at 22 campuses erected Gaza Solidarity sukkahs, and college administrations and agitators destroyed almost half of these sacred dwellings.

Now you may hear the argument that it is somehow antisemitism to want to divest one’s university from Israel’s crimes. But it wasn’t anti-American bigotry to want to break university ties with Dow Chemical, which made napalm, during the horrors of the Vietnam war. It wasn’t anti-Latino bigotry in the 1980s to oppose university complicity with sweatshop labor in Central America. It wasn’t anti-white bigotry to want to divest universities from South African apartheid. It’s not any sort of bigotry to want to divest from fossil fuels that our hurtling our planet toward environmental catastrophe. In the same way, it’s not antisemitism, but the profound belief in humanitarian values that is behind the calls to divest from the Israeli war machine that is causing so much suffering in Gaza today.

So, let us always be alert for antisemitism. Let us condemn antisemitism wherever we see it. But let us not diminish our commitment to justice in Palestine by false charges of antisemitism from those who want to give a blank check to Israel’s crimes.

When Will the General Assembly Suspend Israel?

Kathy Kelly

The Biblical Book of Job chronicles a string of catastrophes relentlessly plaguing the main character, Job, who loses his prosperity, his home, his health, and his children. Eventually, an agonized Job curses his own existence as well as the god that created him. Issues of evil, justice, and divine wisdom are explored, and while the Book of Job surrenders divine wisdom to God, it recognizes that the work to be done here on earth is our own.

Numerous interpretations of the story exist, and more than one version has circulated through the ancient Near East. One version concludes with Job avowing repentance. “I know that my redeemer liveth, and so I repent in dust and in ashes.”

The Latin root for the word ‘repent’ is *pensare* – to think. ‘Repent’ suggests an effort to rethink.

Job’s surprising repentance has been on my mind as calls increase, in 2024, for the United Nations to rethink its relation to Israel as a member state. Increasingly, civil society groups are pressuring Permanent Missions to the UN to eject Israel as a voting member of the General Assembly.

To paraphrase Pankraj Mishra, writing for the New York Review of Books, a stunned world has watched with disbelief as the United States provisions Israel with weapons enabling a mass murder spree across the Middle East.

Palestinians in the West Bank have recently urged all organizations demanding UN compliance with the International Criminal Court ruling of July 2024 to sign a letter available at World BEYOND War which urges Member States of the United Nations General Assembly to fulfill their duties.

Following up on the potential of this letter, a new coalition, “Global Solidarity for Peace in Palestine” has issued a letter to His Excellency Mr. Philemon Yang, the President of the United Nations General Assembly asking him to convene an urgent meeting of the General Assembly to demand an immediate and permanent ceasefire, establish and secure humanitarian aid corridors and ensure the complete withdrawal of Israel from the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

The letter additionally requests:

- The revival of the UN Committee Against Apartheid to address systemic violations of international law and human rights in the OPT.
- Consideration of targeted boycotts, sanctions, and divestments, particularly against illegal operations in the OPT.
- The establishment of an arms embargo on Israel.
- Exploration of suspending Israel from the General Assembly until it complies with international law.
- To further support these efforts, the letter calls for the establishment of an unarmed UN peacekeeping mission in the OPT under Chapter VII of the UN Charter to ensure the safety and dignity of all civilians.

In a way, Israel has already removed itself from norms maintained by the UN Charter as it has consistently flouted UN treaties, Resolutions and Advisory opinions. We must not forget that Israel refuses to acknowledge to the UN its possession of nuclear weapons.

I felt startled, during an initial planning call held with Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza,

when one of them spoke of the evacuation he and his family faced, that very day, and said, “We are facing the final solution. Israel is imposing the final solution on us.” Other participants spoke of having shuddered during bombings, day and night.

Journalist Mehdi Hasan, writes movingly in the Guardian of how absurd it is that the United Nations’ General Assembly agrees to seat Israel as a U.N. member nation.

Israel’s abusive repudiation of the very idea of the United Nations, its escalating and lethal violation of countless international norms, its repeated, deadly attacks on U.N. sanctuaries and peacekeep-

ers justifies its expulsion. Hasan reminds us that Israel’s outgoing Ambassador to the United Nations shredded the UN charter while standing at the General Assembly podium. This is the Charter that declares the UN mission to eradicate the scourge of warfare for future generations.

It is time for the clouds to part above the burning lands of West Asia – for the suffering there to be comforted and their pitiless accusers rebuked by the gathered voice of humanity, by the agent that created Israel and can, when it wishes, “let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.” The work here is ours and so let our United Nations demand, and not beg, humanity from Israel and from its imperial sponsor, the United States.



Palestinians try to extinguish a fire at a building of an UNRWA vocational training centre which displaced people use as a shelter.

A Nation in Denial: Why Israel's Defeat is Imminent

Ramzy Baroud

The paradoxical phrase, 'running away forward' is one of the most apt descriptions that illustrates the state of Israeli affairs now.

It seems that everything that Israel has done in the past year or so is a mere attempt to deny, distract from or escape imminent future scenarios – all of which are bleak.

Indeed, the last year has repeatedly proven that Israel's military supremacy is no longer able to win wars or decide political outcomes.

Moreover, the genocide in Gaza and the rapid theft of Palestinian land in the West Bank have exposed, like never before, the ugly face of Zionist settler-colonialism. Only those who are wholly indoctrinated or are paying no attention still argue that Israel stands for any kind of moral ideals or is a "light unto the nations".

Also, incessant attempts by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to marginalize, if not entirely erase the Palestinian cause have completely failed. The suffering, resistance and pride of the Palestinian people have made their cause a global one, and, this time around, irreversibly so.

Yet, despite all of this, Israeli leaders continue to drag their people into endless quests toward arbitrary destinations, making promises of 'total victory' and the like.

Monitoring statements by Israeli leaders and media conversations in rightwing Israeli press would leave one bewildered.

While over 55,000 Israeli soldiers have tried, but failed, over the course of several weeks to finally

subdue northern Gaza, Israeli settler leaders are busy making plans to auction real estate, envisaging new settlements and beach resorts inside the destroyed Strip.

The Israeli newspaper Haaretz reported on October 21 that Israel wants to build several settlement blocks inside Gaza. But how is Israel to protect these areas over the course of months and years when they could not protect southern Israel itself just one year ago?

In the West Bank, where an armed rebellion has been brewing, but is yet to actualize on a mass scale due to the 'security coordination' between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, Netanyahu's rightwing government is speaking of full annexation.

"The year 2025 will, with God's help, be the year of sovereignty in Judea and Samaria," said Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, referring to the occupied West Bank. Whether Israel turns its de-facto annexation of the West Bank into a de jure annexation or not, it will alter little of the legal status of the West Bank under international law, as an illegally occupied Palestinian territory. The same applies to the Palestinian city of East Jerusalem, which was officially annexed by the Israeli Knesset in 1980, under the so-called 'Jerusalem Law'.

Not many in the international community are willing to accept Israel's scheme in the West Bank, anyway, as they – save Washington – still refuse to recognize Israel's sovereignty over Jerusalem. In fact, the opposite is true, as determined by the International Court of Justice on July 19. The ruling, which was backed by international consensus, resolved that "the State of Israel is under the



Photo by: Dylan Shaw

obligation to bring an end to its unlawful presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory as rapidly as possible". On September 17, the United Nations fully embraced the ICJ's decision.

That aside, by annexing the West Bank, Israel would have fired the mercy shot at the PA, thus turning the entire West Bank into a platform of Palestinian popular resistance. How could Israel withstand that new war front, when it is already struggling, if not outright failing, to secure any victories in Gaza and South Lebanon?

In a recent article, Israeli historian Ilan Pappé wrote about 'Fantasy Israel', a decades-long political construct that believed that the "West supports Israel because it adheres to a Western 'value system' based on democracy and liberalism."

That fictional Israel has been collapsing for years, long before the current war on Gaza – though the genocidal war accelerated that process. The collapse of Fantasy Israel "has exposed cracks in the social cohesion, and in the readiness of many Israelis to devote as much time and energy to military service as they did in the past," Pappé argues.

Israel is now under the control of a different breed of politicians, who are armed with a massive and

growing super-structure of an equally close-minded and extremist intellectual base. This group is struggling with a whole different set of illusions, as they continue to convince themselves that they are winning, when they are not; that they can impose their will on the Palestinians, and the rest of the world, when they cannot; that the continuation of the war would allow them to finish a job that, in their minds, should have been finished a long time ago: the total destruction of the Palestinian people.

Since this crowd is motivated by extremist religious ideologies, they are unable to abide by any form of rational thinking, even that emanating from well-regarded Zionist figures inside Israel itself.

"This war lacks a clear objective, and it's evident that we're unequivocally losing it," Former Mossad deputy chief Ram Ben-Barak said during an interview with the Israeli public radio on May 18.

None of this matters to Netanyahu and his right-wing ministers, of course. They continue to reference and recycle old religious dogmas, while fervently praying for miracles. In doing so, they insist on reconstructing a new 'Fantasy Israel', which, of course, is set to collapse, as fantasies often do.

Mourn and Organize

Peter Bohmer

Trump's victory is a serious loss for most people in the United States and globally. I disagreed before the election and now, that it didn't matter who won the Presidential election. Let us mourn and grieve but not give up. Elections matter and this one certainly does but being political means building and gaining power, being active to further what you believe in, much more than voting or supporting a candidate.

I don't know if any campaign would have caused a Kamala Harris victory. However, her pro-Israel, anti-Palestinian positions, her pro fracking and promoting more oil and gas production by the U.S., and especially her promotion of neoliberal economic policies and not promoting raising the minimum wage, or making unionizing easier or advocating for universal, quality and affordable health care for all was wrong morally and tactically (to win).

Racism, and certainly sexism, were a big factor in Trump's victory, more below. It is hard to measure its influence on the election, but a proportion of the U.S. population is not willing to vote for a Black and Indian woman with immigrant parents for President. The Republicans also stoked and played into transphobia. Support for Trump's toxic masculinity contributed to his growing support from 2016 to 2024 among young men; this was most pronounced among the non-college educated.

Perhaps most significant is the defection of working class and non-college educated households and individuals to Trump and the Republicans, first primarily among whites and increasingly among Latin@, Asian American and African-Americans. Among African Americans, the decline was primarily among men. Some of this was manifested in non-voting. Nonvoting increased significantly from the 2020 Presidential election. Nonvoting should not be exaggerated but my guess is that three million less will have voted in 2024 than in 2020

in spite of a voting age population that grew by four million. Much of the decline in voting was in areas that have been the most strongly Democratic, e.g. Chicago, New York, Detroit, Philadelphia, Los Angeles.

The recent election was not a landslide for Trump and the Republicans. They will continue their small majority in the United States House of Representatives and flip the Senate from 51 who vote Democratic to 49 Republicans to, 47 Democrats to 53 Republicans. Trump gained about three percentage points in the Presidential race, compared to 2020, from 47 to slightly below 50% of the vote, and Harris lost about three percentage points compared to Biden in 2020, from 51 to 48 per cent of those who voted. Including votes for third party presidential candidates, almost three million, Trump will have received slightly less than ½ of the votes of those who voted.

Even if Harris had won by a small margin much of the following is still relevant. In this period, where the threat of fascism must be taken seriously and combatted, the concept of non-reformist reforms or reform and revolution is still applicable. The idea is to organize, develop campaigns to have victories that at least partially meet people's felt needs, that can't be fully met in a capitalist society, leading to further demands, that build political consciousness and power from below. An example would be winning a campaign for free public transportation with worker and community control of the transit company. A challenge and priority today is the need to prevent further declines in all forms of justice and programs, e.g., Medicaid, and stop attacks on the most vulnerable while organizing to go beyond the status quo.

Key is building and furthering social movements, organizations, developing ongoing campaigns with a focus on the following struggles. Victories, even



Photo by: Wilson Hughes

partial victories and substantial reforms will be more difficult with the Republicans rather than the Democrats controlling the Presidency, U.S. Senate, the House of Representatives and the Supreme Court but still possible. Hopefully this control will be temporary but let us not put most of our energy and limited resources towards getting Democrats elected in 2026 and 2028.

Key Issues!

1. Anti-Authoritarianism, anti-Fascism.

By this I mean there is a substantially greater likelihood of a more repressive state with more serious repression and oppression focused on the most vulnerable and those who actively oppose this authoritarian agenda. This danger is real, the most serious in my lifetime. We are not living in a fascist society and should never exaggerate the current reality, but that is the current

project of Trump, Vance, key advisors like Steve Bannon and Stephen Miller and Project 2025, and most of Trump's appointees.

It is imperative that we build a broad coalition with all who support democracy and oppose increased repression even if they don't share our perspectives on some issues. Our challenge is to build a broad front against fascism while simultaneously having some of us put forward a theory and practice that opposes all forms of oppression and advocates for justice and liberation for all. Let us continue to organize to free all political prisoners, present and future.

We should support a diversity of tactics including teach-ins, rallies and large demonstrations, direct action including civil disobedience and disrupting business as usual while being deliberate to not isolate ourselves from the broader population; that

our actions build the movement against repression rather than isolate it. Although there will be opposition by many Democratic Party officials and many courts and judges to growing authoritarianism and that is necessary, let us not rely on them or follow them to stop the current danger.

2. Palestine Solidarity and an Arms Embargo of Israel—One of the most significant social movements in the US (and globally) in the last 13 and a half months has been the Palestine solidarity movement, on and off campus. Netanyahu is celebrating Trump's victory and is expanding the war in Lebanon, the West Bank, and threatening to go to war with Iran. Although difficult to be so, the Trump Administration will probably be even more supportive and complicit in Israeli genocide than the Biden Administration has been. Gaining an arms embargo and the US demanding a permanent ceasefire in Gaza and the end of the Israeli war on the West Bank and Lebanon will be even more difficult than under Biden but not impossible and should continue to be a priority.

We need to deepen and broaden the Palestine and Lebanon solidarity movement. Although popular support for a U.S arms embargo has majority support in the U.S., one of our tasks is to increase knowledge and active opposition to the U.S. and Israeli war in the Middle East. The U.S. support for Israel was not the major issue for most voters in the recent election although it probably caused many eligible voters to not vote for President and in fewer cases to vote third party. I think the mainstream media and Democratic Party leaders underestimate the importance of Palestine, and not only to Muslims and Arabs. Winning a permanent ceasefire in Gaza and the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Gaza and the end of bombing of Gaza and Lebanon is a central issue of our time and Israel could not continue without continued U.S. military support.

We also need to also address the underlying issues by supporting the end of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the end of the blockade and siege of Gaza and the right of return

of Palestinians to within the 1948 Israeli borders, often called, Israel 48. Also we should campaign for a solution that leads to the equality of all people, Palestinian and Jewish, in what is historic Palestine, the end of Jewish domination. Even if Israel stops in the future the bombing of Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, the need for a continuing and strong Palestine solidarity movement continues.

3. Economic Justice, Policy

At the very least it is important to maintain the inadequate social safety net we have: Social Security, the Affordable Care Act (healthcare), Medicaid and Medicare, food stamps, Section 8 housing vouchers, protecting unions, child care subsidies, etc. Although an uphill battle with all three branches of government controlled by Republicans and the neoliberal leadership of the Democratic Party, there is popular support for the following which we should organize for.

- Making it easier to unionize, supporting the PRO Act (Protecting the Right to Organize Act). This act would make it easier to organize, including gig workers who are usually defined unjustly as independent contractors and thus not eligible to form or join unions.
- Raise the national minimum wage to at least \$15 an hour with yearly increases to cover the increase in prices.
- Extend the Affordable Care Act towards universal, quality and free health care for all including undocumented immigrants and inmates financed by taxes on the wealthy.
- Resist all tax cuts for the 1% and organize a campaign for a more progressive tax system, increased taxes on capital gains, corporations and high-income households.
- Forgiveness for student debt
- A non-reformist reform for a Universal Basic Income (UBI) that guarantees every household an income above the poverty line while maintaining or increasing most existing social programs. Complementary or a possible alternative is winning Universal Basic Services (UBS) that would provide free or affordable and quality public services such as healthcare,

childcare, education, transportation, and internet access for all residents.

4. Immigrant Justice

At the very least, maintain DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) and resist and stop by any means necessary the mass deportation of undocumented immigrants. Organize to continue and expand Temporary Protected Status (TPS) that allows people from countries in war, people facing a severe crisis to remain and work in the United States during dangerous conditions in their home countries, e.g. people from Haiti, Venezuela, Ukraine!

We should do active immigrant defense at the community level and organize at the city, State and National level to prevent mass imprisonment and deportation of immigrants and against the use of the courts, private corporations like GEO, local law enforcement and the National Guard and U.S. Military to carry this out. We need to build an underground movement and a mass movement in solidarity with all immigrants.

Anti-immigrant politics and related policies are a key part in the United States, Canada and Europe right-wing social movements and growing political parties for fascism. Challenging all aspects of this right-wing anti-immigrant politics must be a central part of our campaigns. It is a part of the struggle against continuing U.S. racism. Unlike the Harris campaign which didn't challenge the demonization of immigrants, a popular education campaign about the positive aspects of immigration—revitalizing depressed communities, their humanity, providing key labor in many sectors of the economy, e.g. agriculture and housing construction, the tech industry; and furthering diversity, is essential.

The U.S. by its past and present, foreign intervention in other countries, e.g., Central America, and the U.S. being a major cause of climate change, should be explained in accessible terms as a cause of refugees, including climate refugees coming to the United States. We should increase the support

and solidarity with and granting paths to citizenship for these asylum-seeking refugees. Those fleeing poverty are also refugees, economic refugees.

5. Climate Justice

We need to further organize to maintain the reforms although inadequate of the Biden administration, e.g., The Inflation Reduction Act which incentivizes growing usage of wind and solar energy and electric cars, and towards the elimination of coal production; the appointment of some people in the EPA and other agencies who take the climate crisis seriously. It means the United States staying in the inadequate Paris Climate Agreement, which is a forum for advocating for increasing financial aid to the Global South countries so they can develop economically, while decreasing the use of fossil fuels.

Trump's campaign promise of "Burn, Baby Burn, and his appointees should be taken at face value. He plans to withdraw from the inadequate Paris Climate Agreement; it

means increased drilling for oil and natural gas on public lands, it means reducing restrictions or regulations on the production of fossil fuels, and the increased production and export of liquefied natural gas. This extractive policy poses an existential threat to people across the world if Trump and the oil industry get their way.

The majority of people in the US want to reduce the use of fossil fuels and there is a significant climate justice movement on and off campus. Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) of fossil fuel companies and of financial institutions supporting this sector is alive and growing. Our task is to grow popular movements to win the phasing out of fossil fuels by ending all subsidies on oil and gas production, that cuts off financing of this industry, that gets institutions such as cities, churches, pension funds, and universities to divest from corporations complicit with this industry. It will be easier to have victories at the State and local level so demands should be directed there at least as much now as at the Federal level. A growing campaign for a Green

New Deal that combines good jobs at a living wage, racial and economic justice and keeping fossil fuels in the ground has the potential to build a broad coalition. It should include financial support for the Global South. A diversity of tactics including militant action is called for. The broad support for dealing with the climate crisis means that militant actions can have broad support and delegitimize further the petroleum industry.

6. Reproductive Justice and the Right to Abortion

We should continue and expand our organizing to institutionalize the right to abortion at the State and local level, including the public financing of the costs of abortion. This does not mean giving up on struggles for the national right to abortion, but victories are easier at the current time at the State level. Also, abortion clinic defense remains essential!

Like the broad concerns about the climate, most of the population supports the right to abortion, even in States that voted for Trump.

7. Solidarity with LGBT struggles, people.

Anti trans advertising and speech were a major part of the Republican campaign at the national level and at the State level, e.g., in the campaign against the reelection of Senator Sherrod Brown in Ohio. Popular education in support of trans rights is important both in the general population and in all our movements. So is defense, physically, being welcoming in our communities and organizations, and organizing for LGBT rights in our programs and campaigns.

8. Globally, we need an internationalist global solidarity framework and practice which includes but is not limited to Palestine and Lebanon. What follows are a few specifics.

The ultra-nationalism of the Trump administration is a serious threat to the population of the world, especially in the Global South. There is no respect for the sovereignty of other societies or their right to self-determination nor concern for their people. This needs to be challenged at the ideological level

and against the related actions and policies.

The danger of a U.S. initiated war against China is real. In criticizing the exploitation of workers in the Chinese economic system and its domestic repression, let us make sure to demonstrate solidarity with the Chinese people and challenge anti-Chinese racism and demonization. We should oppose the threatened high tariffs against Chinese made goods. They are a regressive tax, meaning a lower proportion of their income will be paid for these increased tariffs by high income people and a higher proportion by the United States working class. Besides hurting Chinese workers, it will raise prices of most goods here. (Let us also stop Trump's threat of raising tariffs against Mexican goods.) In addition, Chinese and U.S. cooperation in dealing with the climate crisis is necessary, e.g., sharing technology.

Other necessary parts of our global solidarity framework and social movements are continued opposition to nuclear weapons and nuclear war.

Peace and peace treaty with Iran! This does not mean supporting Iran's oppressive and repressive regime, internally, but it does mean opposing all US aggression against Iran and opposing in all ways Israeli aggression against Iran including war.

We should oppose and end U.S. sanctions and/or U.S supported regime change against Cuba, Venezuela, Nicaragua and Iran.

We need to reduce the military budget and the number of U.S. military bases abroad.

What Else?

Education, Popular Education and the Media!

We shouldn't ignore or demonize all the 78 million people who voted for Trump on November 5, 2024. He won half of the people who voted. Of those who supported Trump, there was justified anger against the ruling class of this country and against the elitism of the professional-managerial class (PMC) who are increasingly becoming the base of the

Democratic Party. Much of the recent Democratic Party campaign was wrongly aimed at the PMC even though it failed to gain sufficient voters from the PMC to win; its support continued to decline among working class voters, many of whom did not vote.

The power of Fox News and right-wing social media in promoting Trump and the Trump agenda is very central to their success and a lesson for us; the importance of expanding our media and social media presence.

Some of the opposition to Harris and especially the support for Trump and the Republicans is racist and misogynist. The appeal of MAGA, Make America Great Again, is an idealized view of the U.S. past, i.e., the 1950's where white men had more social status than Black people and other people of color and more than white women, and their leadership in all institutions was not challenged and the U.S. was the dominant power globally—economically, politically, militarily and culturally. The growing tendency of substantial numbers of white working-class members to support the Republican Party because of their resistance to racial equality has been apparent in presidential elections since 1968. It has been a conscious strategy of the Republican Party beginning with Nixon's southern strategy in 1968, to gain a base with the white working class, not only in the South, but nationally by appealing to white fears. Trump and the movement he lead have been even more explicit and successful than past Republican campaigns in this racist appeal.

However, to write off half of the U.S. population as deplorable and hopelessly white supremacist and misogynist is wrong and defeatist. Conservative ideology and the right-wing movement have grown in the U.S. and in many other countries, especially in the Global North. Many are decent people who follow fake news. Let us be principled about racial, gender, immigrant and LGBT justice and rights while treating those who voted for Trump, respectfully.

We need to find points of agreement, e.g., their

anti-establishment perspective, justified anger at the inequality of income and wealth in the United States and understand the causes of their support for MAGA. Then let us respectfully develop together a framework built on solidarity and caring for all while targeting those with economic power and global capitalism.

We should make a priority of popular education with those who are not wealthy but who share much of the Trump agenda. Schools are important arenas for popular education but so are neighborhoods, workplaces, churches, and community organizations. An aspect of reaching out means building inclusive communities and activities that overcome the isolation and alienation that is prevalent in the United States and a breeding ground for supporting strong and authoritarian leaders. It means reaching out and going in a respectful and principled way to communities where the majority support Trump.

A New Political Party?

The Democratic Party is a corporate controlled and pro imperialist Political Party. Interrelated is the increased alienation of young people, and the working class from it. Its transformation into being the political party that leads radical social transformation or even substantial positive reform of this country is unlikely to happen, and not worth the effort.

The Green Party received 0.5% of the vote for President in 2024, in spite of the opening they should have had because of the support for Israel, increased oil production and neoliberal economics by both major parties. They are primarily a party that runs weak campaigns for President every four years. The campaign of Green Party Presidential Candidate, Jill Stein, was concentrated in battleground states rather than in safe states which would have made sense, by getting more votes than they got and not helping Trump win. The Green Party claimed there was no difference between the Democrats and Republicans parties. In practice, the Green Party worked, even though ineffectively, to ensure a defeat by Harris. This was wrong although

they did not cause Harris to lose because even if everyone who voted for Jill Stein had voted for Kamala Harris, the result would not have changed in even one State. Trump would still have won all the battleground States, even Michigan. There are many good people in the Green Party and many people who voted for them because they couldn't vote for the Democratic Party because of its total support for Israel. We should reach out to them. The Green party and Jill Stein have repeated the same failed strategy and focus on Presidential campaigns for the last 20 years and not learned from these failures. It is time to put the Green Party to rest.

We need to build a party of a new type, not necessarily in the immediate future as it will require mass movements and major social upheaval. These are necessary preconditions for a significant new political party where millions are willing to go beyond the Democratic Party.

Why and What Kind of Party?

1. To help connect and build unity across the major issues and social movements I have been examining and others social movements.
2. Develop and share historical memory of our past strategies and visions, and our victories and lessons from our gains and defeats, e.g. from Reconstruction.
3. Involvement in campaigns within social movements at a local, State and national level and in solidarity with others at a global level.
4. Developing an anti-capitalist vision(s) of an alternative to capitalism, One developed economic proposal is the participatory socialist vision developed by Michael Albert, Robin Hahnel and others, see www.realutopia.org
5. Not primarily electoral but has an electoral component! Running candidates that are accountable to our program, and involvement in initiatives consistent with our program should be a part of this proposed political party but only a part and not the priority. Probably more initially at the local level! Social movements are the key to challenging corporate and government power, towards reform and revolution,

and this should be the focus of this political party of a new type.

By not being primarily electoral, we avoid the difficulty of getting off the ground in an electoral system structured to marginalize third parties. However, for this party to flourish, it needs to have a significant base to begin with and not be the creation of a few left intellectuals or small groups nor be a self-appointed vanguard party. Discussion should begin but the conditions are not right for its formation now.

In closing, get involved in organizing against authoritarianism and for justice and liberation! Our future and all of humanity and nature depends on it.

1. On campus! Student movements have always played a central role in positive social change. The Palestine solidarity movement and encampments are a current example; the campaign for divestment from fossil fuel corporations is another.
2. In your community, workplace! Building strong social movement unionism is a priority and there is increased support for unions.

Now is not a time for escapism, resignation, cynicism, despair, or nihilism. Those in power, whether Trump or centrist Democrats win if we don't challenge them on all levels.

REFLECT CRITICALLY on mistakes we, the left, have made that have isolated and limited us while not rejecting the left. Learn from our mistakes. Discuss with others what we can do better to be more effective. It is insufficient to blame the Democrats, the mass media, social media and those who supported Trump. Focus on what we can do!

Few people thought in 1855 that slavery would end in 10 years. Although racism has continued this was a partial but important victory.

We can win!

Si Se Puede!

Escaping Trumpism with a People's Agenda

CJ Polychroniou

A clear consensus has emerged that the economy was the key factor behind Trump's stunning victory. However, that may not be a very accurate description about what led a disaffected electorate wanting to see Trump back in the White House as the U.S. economy had been in a rather good shape from the second quarter of 2022 to the third quarter of 2024 and was in fact outperforming all other advanced economies by a wide margin. Indeed, surveys had consistently shown that the majority of voters had negative views on the economy at large, thus revealing a disconnect between economic numbers and public sentiment. Unemployment was the lowest it had been in decades, consumer spending was up, and inflation had cooled off. Yet voters still thought the economy was trash.

The U.S economic system does stink, no matter what the numbers show, and the political system is totally dysfunctional, which explains why so many voters were not fazed by Democrats' core message that Trump posed a threat to democracy. They were probably wondering where democracy was to be found when economic elites run the show. Forty-five years of neoliberal economics have exacerbated capitalism's inherent tendencies toward economic inequality, created a permanent state of economic insecurity, and led to the rise of an oligarchy.

The United States is the most unequal society in the developed world. The rich are growing richer with every passing year while the middle class shrinks, and the poor are left to their own fate for survival. Massive social inequalities and economic disparities destroy trust and confidence in government and leave people thinking that the future is unavoidably grim. This is the primary reason for

the rise of ethno-nationalism and authoritarian populism in the developed world, including of course Trumpism in the United States. It is the disastrous socio-economic and political consequences of neoliberalism that produce feelings of neglect, powerlessness and anger and lead voters in turn to cast their ballots for demagogues like Donald Trump who promise a return to a golden era.

The irony is that while Trump is an authoritarian bully who wishes to use the iron fist of the state to rollback immigration and crush social agendas and even those who oppose him, his economic views are overall staunchly pro-market and outrageously neoliberal. In that regard, there is nothing fascistic about Trump when it comes to the economy. Statism lies at the heart of fascist ideology. The state is the all-powerful entity for fascists. The question of state-controlled planning of the economy is of paramount importance to fascism. For fascists, the state should not control all the means of production, as is the case with traditional socialism, but should dominate them.

Trump's proposals for the economy are seen as a mixed bag. That's because while he has proclaimed himself a champion for deregulation, he is in favor of protectionist trade policies. But Trump's trade policy should not fool people that he is not a neoliberal. With protectionist trade policies, Trump, as with the way he runs his own business, only sees the short-term advantages in economic policy. Moreover, protectionist trade policy does not depart from neoliberalism. As has been acutely pointed out by British political economist Tom Wraight, Trump simply uses "the coercive power of the state to force other nations to conform to market-based economic logic."

Trump has promised an anti-regulation blitz from Day One upon his return to the White House on virtually all aspects of the economy, including environmental and public health regulations. After spending months lying to voters about his knowledge of Project 2025, Trump has picked scores of people who worked on this ultra-reactionary policy manifesto for top posts in his administration. The Heritage Foundation's Project 2025 agenda for the economy, if fully implemented, would create a far more unequal and harsher society as it entails policies that will lead to massive cuts on all social programs, including Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program and food assistance, and calls for massive disinvestment in public services and a host of new tax cuts for wealthy households and corporations.

Project 2025 is the ultra-right wing game plan for the full completion of the neoliberal economic vision and political nightmare that started nearly half a century ago. It will produce far greater social dislocation and greater economic anxiety than any other time since the onset of the neoliberal counterrevolution. Most of those who voted for Trump on the basis of their perceptions about the direction of the economy and their belief that the country is on the wrong track will be deeply disturbed by the new economic and social realities that will emerge in the United States during the second Trump reign and will hopefully rethink their support for Trumpism. The problem is that the Democratic Party is either incapable or unwilling to offer citizens a new vision for the United States, one that will end the rule of oligarchy, restore democracy, and put people and the planet above profit.

Here are some policies that should be included in a socio-economic agenda for the specific needs of the people in the twentieth-first century United States of America:

1. Implementing Universal Health Coverage (UHC). That is, a publicly administered system that guarantees that all people have access to the full range of quality health services when
2. Getting rid of all challenges and obstacles of union organizing, which include making illegal threats to close a plant if workers select a union to represent them and threatening workers with loss of jobs or benefits if they join a union. Current U.S. law makes it difficult for workers to join unions and even excludes certain categories of workers.
3. An industry-level approach to collective bargaining with active participation in social dialogue. An industry-level approach to collective bargaining will secure the best economic compensation possible for workers.
4. Undertaking a large-scale federal program of social housing construction. The United States faces a deep and persistent housing affordability crisis that demands active government intervention. It is beyond naïve belief to think that the market can fix the housing crisis. Repairing the house market with market oriented solutions such as liberalizing zoning rules and other regulations have never worked. They do not lead to a major increase in housing supply or in more affordable housing. A strong housing safety net should also be introduced to address the problem of homelessness and ensure home security for the most vulnerable.
5. Raising the federal minimum wage to \$15 or even \$20 per hour. The current federal minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour has been stagnant since 2009 and maintaining it is a scandal of grand proportions. No decent society, let alone the richest country in the world, should accept having such a thing as the "working poor."
6. Fighting poverty and inequality. Poverty should not be defined one-dimensionally based on income alone. Poverty should be

and where they need them. Financing of UHC could come entirely from broad-based tax revenues. Coverage would be universal and automatic. Covered services would include inpatient, outpatient, dental, mental health, and long-term health, as well as prescription drugs. All three levels of the U.S. government (federal, state, and local) would be involved in the health care system.

seen as access to a variety of resources, such as education, health, energy, jobs, rights and personal security. The task of eliminating poverty should include both short-term (cash hand-outs) and long-term approaches (delivering social services and addressing the structural causes of poverty with initiatives such as the guaranteed-jobs program).

7. Implementing the Green New Deal. Greening the economy is a vital and urgent task to save humanity and the planet from the impacts of global warming but also provides a macro-economic approach to sustainable economic growth. It's a win-win situation and only vested interests (fossil fuel industry, banks, oil-producing nations) and lack of political stand on the way to transitioning to a green economy.
8. Cutting military spending. The United States spent \$820 billion on national defense during the fiscal year 2023. It spends nearly 8.4 times as much on its military as Russia does and more than three times the amount of China. While the U.S. comprises just over 4 percent of the world's population, it accounts for nearly 40 percent of global military spending. Between 2001 and 2022, the U.S. spent \$8 trillion on war. The notion that such enormous defense spending is important for national security questions is utterly absurd. The U.S. homeland has never been invaded and no nation threatens U.S. national security. The obscene amount of money that the U.S. spends on defense, which different methodologies estimated to be above \$1.5 trillion for the fiscal year 2022, is for the building and maintenance of the U.S. empire. The U.S. has over 750 overseas military bases, which only provoke geopolitical tensions and harm the United States, as David Vine demonstrates in his book *Base Nation: How U.S. Military Bases Abroad Harm America and the World*. Money saved from cuts in the defense budget can go towards supporting social programs and/or for reducing the national debt. Arguing for reforms in Social Security and Medicare when the country spends so much money on the military is

morally indefensible and will become politically unacceptable if people realize how wasteful and harmful military spending is.

At the heart of the neoliberal vision is a societal order based on the prioritization of corporate power and free markets and the abandonment of public services. The neoliberal claim is that economies would perform more effectively, producing greater wealth and economic prosperity for all, if markets were allowed to perform their functions without government intervention. This claim is predicated on the idea that free markets are inherently just and can create effective low-cost ways to produce consumer goods and services. It is all rubbish, of course; nothing but an ideological pretext to make the rich richer and the poor poorer. Neoliberalism is indeed not simply an economic doctrine but also a socio-political ideology that places individual self-interest before the common good, displays indifference to social inequalities and economic disparities and subsequently justifies plutocracy.

Trump's approach to government and corporate interests, which he will undertake with an extra heavy authoritarian twist, will magnify all aspects of the neoliberal nightmare that has engulfed the United States under both Republican and Democratic administrations for the past several decades. Unfortunately, a majority of the U.S. electorate refused to see what Trump really stands for and was duped into believing that their great leader is the one to take on the detestable liberal/neoliberal establishment and create in turn a system that works for the average citizens, not just the rich. The next four years promise to be one of severe cruelty for the most vulnerable people in the United States and a nightmare for the environment. We should raise walls of resistance as much as we can. More important, though, we should demand from the democratic forces to adopt a socio-economic agenda that puts people's needs above corporate interests and consigns neoliberal capitalism to the dustbin of history.

Will Trump End or Escalate Biden's Wars?

Medea Benjamin, Nicolas J.S. Davies

When Donald Trump takes office on January 20th, all his campaign promises to end the war in Ukraine in 24 hours and almost as quickly end Israel's war on its neighbors will be put to the test. The choices he has made for his incoming administration so far, from Marco Rubio as Secretary of State to Mike Waltz as National Security Advisor, Pete Hegseth as Secretary of Defense and Elise Stefanik as UN Ambassador make for a rogues gallery of saber-rattlers.

The only conflict where peace negotiations seem to be on the agenda is Ukraine. In April, both Vice President-elect JD Vance and Senator Marco Rubio voted against a \$95 billion military aid bill that included \$61 billion for Ukraine.

Rubio recently appeared on NBC's Today Show saying, "I think the Ukrainians have been incredibly brave and strong when standing up to Russia. But at the end of the day, what we're funding here is a stalemate war, and it needs to be brought to a conclusion... I think there has to be some common sense here."

On the campaign trail, Vance made a controversial suggestion that the best way to end the war was for Ukraine to cede the land Russia has seized, for a demilitarized zone to be established, and for Ukraine to become neutral, i.e. not enter NATO. He was roundly criticized by both Republicans and Democrats who argue that backing Ukraine is vitally important to U.S. security since it weakens Russia, which is closely allied with China.

Any attempt by Trump to stop U.S. military support for Ukraine will undoubtedly face fierce opposition from the pro-war forces in his own party, particularly in Congress, as well as perhaps the entirety of the Democratic party. Two years ago, 30 progressive Democrats in Congress wrote a letter to President

Biden asking him to consider promoting negotiations. The party higher ups were so incensed by their lack of party discipline that they came down on the progressives like a ton of bricks. Within 24 hours, the group had cried uncle and rescinded the letter. They have since all voted for money for Ukraine and have not uttered another word about negotiations.

So a Trump effort to cut funds to Ukraine could run up against a bipartisan congressional effort to keep the war going. And let's not forget the efforts by European countries, and NATO, to keep the U.S. in the fight. Still, Trump could stand up to all these forces and push for a rational policy that would restart the talking and stop the killing.

The Middle East, however, is a more difficult situation. In his first term, Trump showed his pro-Israel cards when he brokered the Abraham accords between several Arab countries and Israel; moved the U.S. embassy to a location in Jerusalem that is partly on occupied land outside Israel's internationally recognized borders; and recognized the occupied Golan Heights in Syria as part of Israel. Such unprecedented signals of unconditional U.S. support for Israel's illegal occupation and settlements helped set the stage for the current crisis.

Trump seems as unlikely as Biden to cut U.S. weapons to Israel, despite public opinion polls favoring such a halt and a recent UN human rights report showing that 70% of the people killed by those U.S. weapons are women and children.

Meanwhile, the wily Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu is already busy getting ready for a second Trump presidency. On the very day of the U.S. election, Netanyahu fired his defense minister, Yoav Gallant, who opposed a lasting Israeli military occupation of Gaza and had at times argued for pri-

oritizing the lives of the Israeli hostages over killing more Palestinians.

Israel Katz, the new defense minister and former foreign minister, is more hawkish than Gallant, and has led a campaign to falsely blame Iran for the smuggling of weapons from Jordan into the West Bank.

Other powerful voices, national security minister Itamar Ben-Gvir and finance minister Bezalel Smotrich, who is also a “minister in the Defense Ministry,” represent extreme Zionist parties that are publicly committed to territorial expansion, annexation and ethnic cleansing. They both live in illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank.

So Netanyahu has deliberately surrounded himself with allies who back his ever-escalating war. They are surely developing a war plan to exploit Trump’s support for Israel, but will first use the unique opportunity of the U.S. transition of power to create facts on the ground that will limit Trump’s options when he takes office.

The Israelis will doubtless redouble their efforts to drive Palestinians out of as much of Gaza as

possible, confronting President Trump with a catastrophic humanitarian crisis in which Gaza’s surviving population is crammed into an impossibly small area, with next to no food, no shelter for many, disease running rampant, and no access to needed medical care for tens of thousands of horribly wounded and dying people.

The Israelis will count on Trump to accept whatever final solution they propose, most likely to drive Palestinians out of Gaza, into the West Bank, Jordan, Egypt and farther afield.

Israel threatened all along to do to Lebanon the same as they have done to Gaza. Israeli forces have met fierce resistance, taken heavy casualties, and have not advanced far into Lebanon. But, as in Gaza, they are using bombing and artillery to destroy villages and towns, kill or drive people north and hope to effectively annex the part of Lebanon south of the Litani river as a so-called “buffer zone.” When Trump takes office, they may ask for greater U.S. involvement to help them “finish the job.”

The big wild card is Iran. Trump’s first term in office was marked by a policy of “maximum pressure” against Tehran. He unilaterally withdrew America

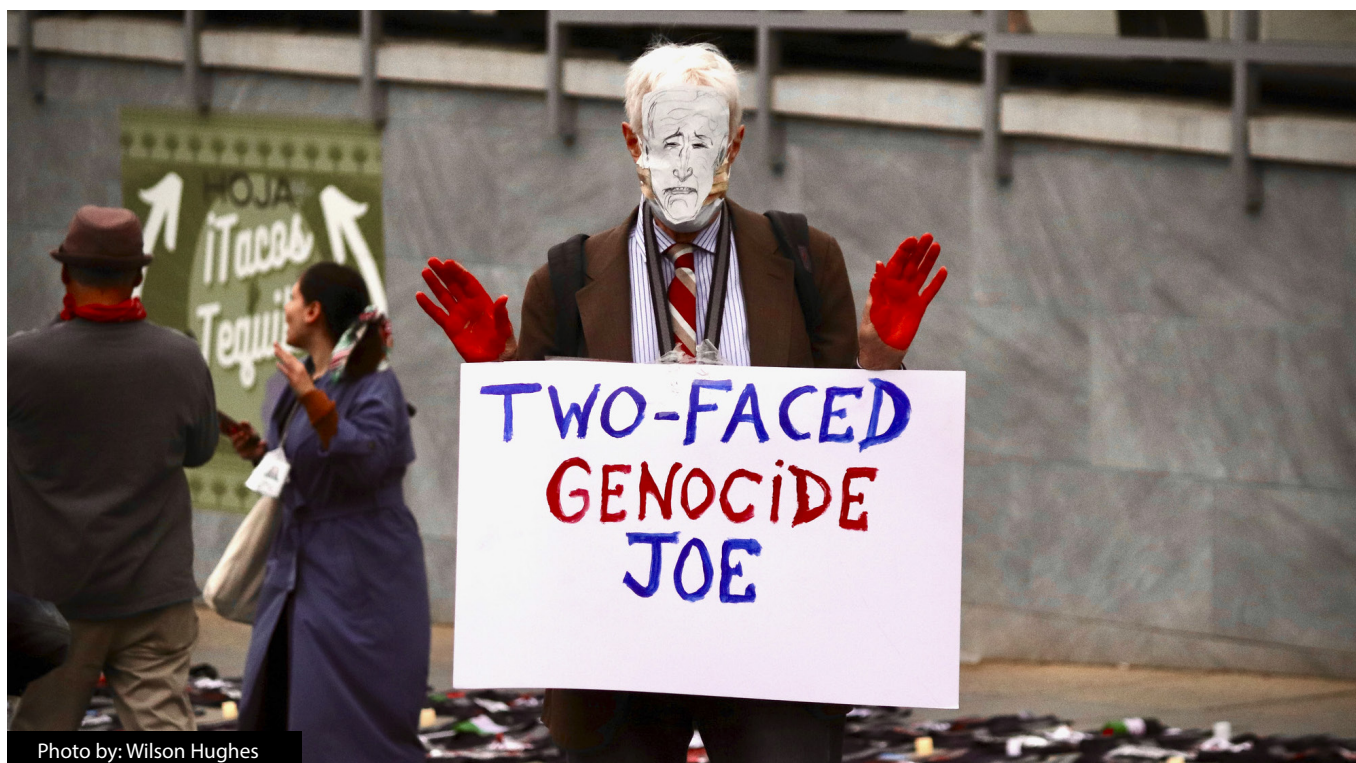


Photo by: Wilson Hughes

from the Iran nuclear deal, imposed severe sanctions that devastated the economy, and ordered the killing of the country's top general. Trump did not support a war on Iran in his first term, but had to be talked out of attacking Iran in his final days in office by General Mark Milley and the Pentagon.

Colin Powell's former chief of staff, retired Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson, recently described to Chris Hedges just how catastrophic a war with Iran would be, based on U.S. military wargames he was involved in.

Wilkerson predicts that a U.S. war on Iran could last for ten years, cost \$10 trillion and still fail to conquer Iran. Airstrikes alone would not destroy all of Iran's civilian nuclear program and ballistic missile stockpiles. So, once unleashed, the war would very likely escalate into a regime change war involving U.S. ground forces, in a country with three or four times the territory and population of Iraq, more mountainous terrain and a thousand mile long coastline bristling with missiles that can sink U.S. warships.

But Netanyahu and his extreme Zionist allies believe that they must sooner or later fight an existential war with Iran if they are to realize their vision of a dominant Greater Israel. And they believe that the destruction they have wreaked on the Palestinians in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon, including the assassination of their senior leaders, has given them a military advantage and a favorable opportunity for a showdown with Iran.

By November 10, Trump and Netanyahu had reportedly spoken on the phone three times since the election, and Netanyahu said that they see "eye to eye on the Iranian threat." Trump has already hired Iran hawk Brian Hook, who helped him sabotage the JCPOA nuclear agreement with Iran in 2018, to coordinate the formation of his foreign policy team.

So far, the team that Trump and Hook have assembled seems to offer hope for peace in Ukraine, but little to none for peace in the Middle East and a rising danger of a U.S.-Israeli war on Iran.

Trump's expected National Security Advisor Mike Waltz is best known as a China hawk. He has voted against military aid to Ukraine in Congress, but he recently tweeted that Israel should bomb Iran's nuclear and oil facilities, the most certain path to a full-scale war.

Trump's new UN ambassador, Elise Stefanik, has led moves in Congress to equate criticism of Israel with anti-semitism, and she led the aggressive questioning of American university presidents at an anti-semitism hearing in Congress, after which the presidents of Harvard and Penn resigned.

So, while Trump will have some advisors who support his desire to end the war in Ukraine, there will be few voices in his inner circle urging caution over Netanyahu's genocidal ambitions in Palestine and his determination to cripple Iran.

If he wanted to, President Biden could use his final two months in office to de-escalate the conflicts in the Middle East. He could impose an embargo on offensive weapons for Israel, push for serious ceasefire negotiations in both Gaza and Lebanon, and work through U.S. partners in the Gulf to de-escalate tensions with Iran.

But Biden is unlikely to do any of that. When his own administration sent a letter to Israel last month, threatening a cut in military aid if Israel did not allow a surge of humanitarian aid into Gaza in the next 30 days, Israel responded by doing just the opposite—actually cutting the number of trucks allowed in. The State Department claimed Israel was taking "steps in the right direction" and Biden refused to take any action.

We will soon see if Trump is able to make progress in moving the Ukraine war towards negotiations, potentially saving the lives of many thousands of Ukrainians and Russians. But between the catastrophe that Trump will inherit and the warhawks he is picking for his cabinet, peace in the Middle East seems more distant than ever.

Omnicide Joe?

Norman Solomon

President Biden has never wavered from approving huge arms shipments to Israel during more than 13 months of mass murder and deliberate starvation of Palestinian civilians in Gaza. Biden's crucial role earned him the name "Genocide Joe."

That nickname might seem shrill, but it's valid. Although Biden will not be brought to justice for serving as a key accomplice to the horrific crimes against humanity that continue in Gaza, the label sticks — and candid historians will condemn him as a direct enabler of genocide.

Biden could also qualify for another nickname, which according to Google was never published before this article: "Omnicide Joe."

In contrast to the Genocide Joe sobriquet, which events have already proven apt, Omnicide Joe is a bit anticipatory. That's inevitable, because if the cascading effects of his foreign policy end up as key factors in nuclear annihilation, historians will not be around to assess his culpability for omnicide — defined as "the destruction of all life or all human life."

That definition scarcely overstates what scientists tell us would result from an exchange of nuclear weapons. Researchers have discovered that "nuclear winter" would quickly set in across the globe, blotting out sunlight and wiping out agriculture, with a human survival rate of perhaps 1 or 2 percent.

With everything — literally everything — at stake, you might think that averting thermonuclear war between the world's two nuclear superpowers, Russia and the United States, would be high on a president's to-do list. But that hardly has been the case with Joe Biden since he first pulled up a chair at the Oval Office desk.

In fact, Biden has done a lot during the first years of this decade to inflame the realistic fears of nucle-

ar war. His immediate predecessor Donald Trump pulled the U.S. out of two vital treaties — Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces and Open Skies — and Biden did nothing to reinstate them. Likewise, Trump killed the Iran nuclear deal negotiated during the Obama administration, and Biden let it stay dead.

Instead of fulfilling his 2020 campaign promise to adopt a U.S. policy of no-first-use of nuclear weapons, two years ago Biden signed off on the Nuclear Posture Review policy document that explicitly declares the opposite. Last year, under the euphemism of "modernization," the U.S. government spent \$51 billion — more than every other nuclear-armed country combined — updating and sustaining its nuclear arsenal, gaining profligate momentum in a process that's set to continue for decades to come.

Before and after Russia's invasion of Ukraine in late February 2022, Biden showed a distinct lack of interest in actual diplomacy to prevent the war or to end it. Three days before the invasion, writing in the *Financial Times*, Jeffrey Sachs pointed out: "Biden has said repeatedly that the U.S. is open to diplomacy with Russia, but on the issue that Moscow has most emphasized — NATO enlargement — there has been no American diplomacy at all. [Russian President Vladimir] Putin has repeatedly demanded that the U.S. forswear NATO's enlargement into Ukraine, while Biden has repeatedly asserted that membership of the alliance is Ukraine's choice."

While Russia's invasion and horrible war in Ukraine should be condemned, Biden has compounded Putin's crimes by giving much higher priority to Washington's cold-war mania than to negotiation for peace — or to mitigation of escalating risks of nuclear war.

From the outset, Biden scarcely acknowledged that the survival of humanity was put at higher risk by the

Ukraine war. In his first State of the Union speech, a week after the invasion, Biden devoted much of his oratory to the Ukraine conflict without saying a word about the heightened danger that it might trigger the use of nuclear weapons.

During the next three months, the White House posted more than 60 presidential statements, documents and communiques about the war in Ukraine. They all shared with his State of the Union address a stunning characteristic — the complete absence of any mention of nuclear weapons or nuclear war dangers — even though many experts gauged those dangers as being the worst they'd been since the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis.

With occasional muted references to not wanting a U.S. military clash with nuclear-armed Russia, during the last 33 months the Biden administration has said it did not want to cross its own red lines — and then has repeatedly proceeded to do so.

A week ago superhawk John Bolton, a former national security advisor to President Trump, summarized the process on CNN while bemoaning that Biden's reckless escalation hasn't been even more reckless: "It's been one long public debate after another, going back to 'Shall we supply ATACMS [ballistic missiles] to the Ukrainians at all?' First it's no, then there's a debate, then there's yes. 'Should we supply the Ukrainians Abrams tanks?' First it's no, then there's a long debate, then it's yes. 'Should we supply the Ukrainians with F-16s?' First it's no, then there's a long debate, and it's yes. Now, 'Can we allow the Ukrainians to use ATACMS inside Russia?' After a long debate, now it's yes."

Whether heralded or reviled, Biden's supposed restraint during the Ukraine war has steadily faded, with more and more dangerous escalation in its place.

Biden's recent green light for Ukraine to launch longer-range missiles into Russia is another jump toward nuclear warfare. As a Quincy Institute analyst wrote, "the stakes, and escalatory risks, have steadily crept up." In an ominous direction, "this needlessly

escalatory step has put Russia and NATO one step closer to a direct confrontation — the window to avert catastrophic miscalculation is now that much narrower."

Like Biden and Secretary of State Antony Blinken as well as the Democratic and Republican phalanx of Ukraine war cheerleaders on Capitol Hill, Bolton doesn't mention that recent polling shows strong support among Ukrainian people for negotiations to put a stop to the war. "An average of 52 percent of Ukrainians would like to see their country negotiate an end to the war as soon as possible," Gallup reported last week, compared to only 38 percent who say "their country should keep fighting until victory."

Biden and other war boosters have continued to scorn, as capitulation and accommodation to aggression, what so much of the Ukrainian population now says it wants — a negotiated settlement. Instead, top administration officials and laptop-warrior pundits in the press corps are eager to tout their own mettle by insisting that Ukrainians and Russians must keep killing and dying.

Elites in Washington continue to posture as courageous defenders of freedom with military escalation in Ukraine, where hundreds of thousands have already died. Meanwhile, dangers of nuclear war increase.

Last week, Putin "lowered the threshold for a nuclear strike in response to a broader range of conventional attacks," Reuters reported, "and Moscow said Ukraine had struck deep inside Russia with U.S.-made ATACMS missiles.... Russia had been warning the West for months that if Washington allowed Ukraine to fire U.S., British and French missiles deep into Russia, Moscow would consider those NATO members to be directly involved in the war in Ukraine."

For President Biden, the verdict of Genocide Joe is already in. But if, despite pleas for sanity, he turns out to fully deserve the name Omnicide Joe, none of us will be around to read about it.

To Die, Survive, Or Thrive

Michael Albert

Are you like me? Has getting out of bed become a serious challenge? Has getting back in bed become a beckoning distraction? Do you intermittently see a mountain on one side and a cliff that plummets to hell on the other side?

To borrow from Dylan, do your eyes “collide with stuffed graveyards?” Are you ill that “Maggie’s Farm,” which itself deserved revolutionary transformation, is now instead morphing into Trump’s concentration camp? With four more years of Trump being Trump, do you fear that everything now worthwhile will die? Is your succinct summary of Trump’s 900-page Project 2025, “kill, destroy, eradicate all that Trump targets?” So, do you, like me, feel that surrender is a luxury we cannot afford? Okay, but what does no surrender mean? What are we to do?

I re-read the above and I think to myself, what are these apocalyptic words that I offer without detailed data? Shouldn’t I talk tariffs, deportations, enfeebled health care, books banned, and education eradicated? Isn’t to react to circumstances without offering details emotional but not informative? Shouldn’t I analyze every last data point?

But then I think, why should I do all that? Facts are now piled high in hundreds of places. Analyses are abundant. Endless lies and their manipulations obscure truth, sure, but many truths and their explanations are nonetheless readily available. Hell, liberals, sometimes even conservatives, are warning of Fascism.

I suppose I could mull over the dynamics of tariffs to come up with some seeming slant or subtlety that someone, somewhere might not have already heard and could not easily find to read with a five minute search. But is to repeat what is already known, even with a tiny twist, a

contribution? Would that help anyone find ways to resist?

Okay, here is an observation that might not be widespread and might help a little. The ignorance of Trump’s voters about what is bearing down on them is sort of like how you or I reflexively dismiss conspiracy theories. Relevant conspiracy information is everywhere. It takes minutes to search it out. We could become aware and even expert in conspiracists’ claims but we find giving time to conspiracies an infuriating, fruitless pursuit. We therefore reflexively reject conspiracist’s claims.

I believe millions of Trump’s voters see our claims about Trump’s policies like we see conspiracy claims. Our information is easy to find and consider. But millions believe that our anti-Trump claims are rantings of crazy, malevolent, duped people who hate whoever disagrees with them, so they reflexively reject our truths. For them, lies dominate. Truth is not even in their basement. And so an anti-vax Cabinet prepares to cleanse hospitals. A racist Cabinet prepares to deport immigrants. A moneybags Cabinet prepares to tariff imports and derivatively the whole economy, even as it transfers funds from poor to rich on every front. A fascist Cabinet prepares to reconfigure the government to Trump’s specifications. Yet half the country believes everything is going to get better. They believe Trump is on their side.

This isn’t even Alice in Wonderland absurdity. Kafka wouldn’t believe it. Give Trump free rein and here comes hell. And not just for America but for the whole world since our biggest export is cultural lies and delusions, distorted hate and greed, and yes, if you don’t welcome all that, extortion and bombs.



Photo by Samantha Sophia

Give it all a name. How about Fascism? Its foundation is profit plus lies, hate, and fear. So, sure, Trump himself might thrive, though even that is dubious. Repression,

denial, denigration, and especially high water and hard rain everywhere, each steadily escalating, will not facilitate thriving for many. So what now? Back to bed? More Netflix? School daze? Or perhaps we must face some easily demonstrable facts.

Fact 1: Whatever else we believe in, desire, and pursue, Trumpist fascistic social and environmental collapse must be stopped. Yes, I know that it is ridiculous that this disgusting degenerate blowhard occupies such a world-spanning position as to absolutely require endless attention, but like it or not that is our situation. To ignore him, with head in the ground denial won't help.

Fact 2: Perhaps it is not an exhaustive list but there are at least three possibilities for how to stop Trump. First, Trump destroys himself and his own agenda, or he at least helps us to do so by his overreach, hubris, insanity, and we can only hope total and complete personal physical and mental dissolution. Second, Trump and his minions lose the Senate and House of Representatives and then the White House in two and four years respectively. And third, Trump is removed from office by corporate monsters in gray flannel suits barely more moral than himself but who for their own selfish reasons dump him—soon.

Those three possibilities are all that my mind conjures because as much as I would give anything to help it happen, in the next four years I don't foresee a well organized fifty or more million strong revolutionary movement taking over government and workplaces to then implement

compelling, workable, shared and participatory plans ironically called Participatory Project 2029.

Fact 3: Regarding the three possible paths away from Trumpism becoming full-on Fascism, I offer three observations together as one third fact. First, there is nothing much that we can do about the devolution possibility. Maybe Trump will be dumber and wilder than would be wise for him to fulfill his agenda—or maybe not. Either way, he must be stopped.

Second, the election possibility will be pursued by many but how does the possibility of election losses for Trump actualize? If we assume contested fair elections which is not a hundred percent certain, either Trump and his Republican agents lose many supporters and attract few replacements or whoever runs against Trumpism attracts many new voters and loses few that offset those gains. But even if this electoral path works, note that while Trump would be gone we would arrive back at the status quo before Trump with the Democratic Party victors celebrating their tremendous accomplishment even though their preferred status quo had earlier helped produce Trumpism, and given sufficient time would likely do so again.

The third “you’re fired” possibility arises from a whole different direction and causal calculus. At some point, and the sooner the better, a few corporate emissaries visit Donald, and inform him that it is time to hand in his papers and retire to one of his waiting mansions. He can blame health or whatever else he might like as his explanation, but he must vacate.

So what can a serious leftist who rejects the whole damn system and who wants fundamentally new political, economic, and social institutions and relations do? Since we have agreed that surrender is not an option, it seems we have to work on option one, two, or three.

How do we decide, and then how do we act on our decision? I don’t see how we leftists can

induce Trump to blow himself up. We could of course work on the electoral option, but not wanting to go right back to the status quo before Trump we would presumably prefer an agenda that makes Trump-removing electoral results more likely, but that also aims to attain better than prior business as usual. For that, perhaps there is a better option than subordinating to Democratic Party plans. And what about getting the slightly less despicable monsters to remove Trump? At this point, to propose a possible decision, I need to move from facts to conjecture, but I think to a rather sensible conjecture.

Hypothesis: If Trump implements step after step of his agenda even just a bit at a time much less in massive doses, and if he claims contrary to evidence that his wins are wonderful for the public and horrible for the public’s enemies, and claims that all the simultaneous pains are products of enemies he hasn’t yet but will deal with, and if media behaves subserviently or even just non dismissively, then Trump’s support will actually grow as he appears validated and unstoppable. Get on the train or get run over by it. And each new Trump-celebrated step will accelerate further larger steps. He will seem to many an omniscient servant of God. To others, a genius.

Yes, I know it is a horrifying hypothesis, but, it is also, I think, a quite reasonable hypothesis. Stopping a repeatedly triumphalist Trump would become steadily more difficult. On the other hand, if Trump-2’s early plans are disrupted and blocked and if media is successfully pressed to report even somewhat accurately and fully, Trump’s support will diminish.

Conclusion: Early effective opposition will impede Trump’s plans, diminish the damage he inflicts, and derivatively diminish his support. In those ways it will make every path to Trump’s elimination more likely. So it turns out that not signing up to electoral campaigns that are two and four years down the road but instead opening fronts of activist resistance to Trump’s early policy efforts at deportations, tariffs, and depart-

mental cuts can not only aid future election prospects but also, looking further down the road, retain independence from the Democratic Party and even develop organizational tools and popular desires to pursue aims beyond prior business as usual.

So I find myself believing a simple argument that leads to a simple proposition. To best stop Trump and thereby best reduce Trumpian damage while we also propel electoral prospects against him but avoid Democratic Party diversions and prepare the way for movements against the next Democratic Congress and administration, leftist resistance should reach out to ever wider constituencies to actively block Trumpian policies with whatever methods immediately work—for example, teach-ins, talks, sanctuaries, encampments, marches, demonstrations, strikes, occupations, and diverse civil disobedience—all directed both at Trump's policies and structural plans and, when need be, at media or other complicit institutions to pressure them as well.

But what about the morally decrepit grey flannel corporate invaders who we hope fire Donald along the way? Why might they do that? When the UAW strikes against auto companies, and actually when any movement seeks any demand, how do they win? It is not rocket science. They do not win by convincing elites that the moral thing to do is to make the changes. That is like trying to convince a tree to fly. Movements win, instead, by creating a social situation that protested elites so fear that they decide to defensively give in to prevent the movements' further growth.

So in the current case, the resistance to Trumpism and fascism wants first to make Trump back off various policies, and then to make corrupt immoral corporate power fire Trump. To do so elites need to see the resistance continually growing, diversifying, and ultimately threatening not just what it nominally focusses on, Trump's policies, but also the elites and their favored institutions more broadly. So if Trump soon tries to

implement deportations, tariffs, and some other initial aims, the resistance focuses on all that to stop Trump from having wins to celebrate, even as we also seek to develop in a way that says we are going to keep growing. Repression and not implementing our demands won't beat us but will instead grow and intensify us. That is how a movement to stop Trumpist policies wins, even as it also prepares to continue beyond Trump.

Who composes this threatening resistance? It will have to welcome and retain not just seasoned activists but also many many Harris and even Trump voters, frightened and angered so much by Trump's actuality, that they want to and become connected to ways to fight back.

So the bottom line is we now face the horror of Israeli and Eastern European warfare, the suicidal pursuit of militarist war production and fossil fuel use, the danger of world wide economic chaos, the harm and mayhem of anti immigrant madness, and the possible complete dissolution of even partially democratic structures and the parallel further centralization and regimentation of mass and even independent media. In short we face knife-edge times. The worst threatens all of us. To vigorously collectively pursue the best that can emerge is our only alternative.

So no surrender. No submission. Business as usual, school as usual, even personal life as usual aren't sensible options. To ignore encroaching fascism for months or a year, will forfeit everything usual, much less better, for many many subsequent years. This would be a world-bendingly poor choice for friends, family, and others. Whatever form of resistance available to you that may suit you, however modest or profound it may be, do it as best you can.

Does this sound over dramatic? Am I urging too much? I think not, but if these words are a little too dramatic, that seems better to me than to foster any doubts about what's now at stake.

Free Palestine. Free ourselves. Free the planet.

A Time of Few Certainties

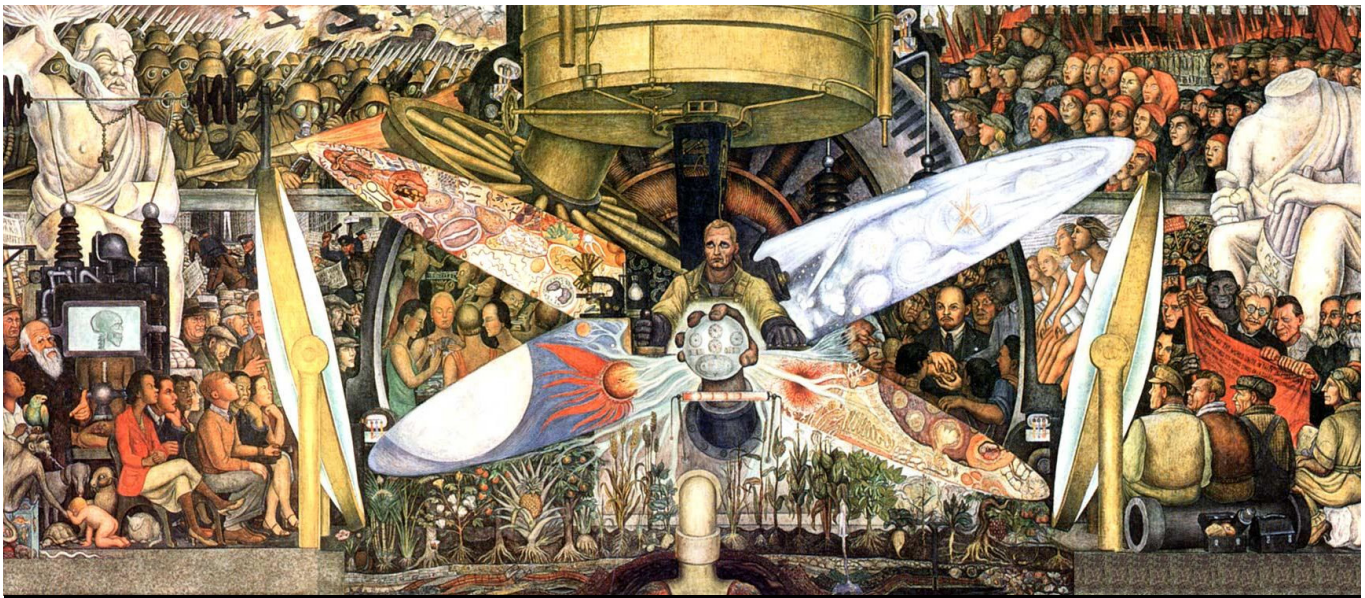
Boaventura de Sousa Santos

Both personally and collectively, the certainties of the present always carry with them the germ of future uncertainties. But there are moments or eras in which certainties are more pronounced and uncertainties more remote, and moments or eras in which the opposite occurs. What kind of certainty/uncertainty dialectic do contemporary societies find themselves in? As always, history helps us to understand, but it doesn't prescribe anything for the simple reason that it never repeats itself. Certainties can be shaken by two types of uncertainty: upward uncertainties and downward uncertainties. The former are the challenges that can be overcome with a little more of the same kind of effort that gave rise to the certainties; the downward uncertainties are those that represent challenges which, from the outset, seem lost. But the most important thing about this classification is knowing which class or social group has certainties and benefits from them, and which class or social group has uncertainties and what kinds of consequences they have.

At the beginning of the last century, the European bourgeoisie, which at the time claimed to be the protagonists of the only civilized world, was full of certainties. Scientific and technological advances were dizzying. On the technological front, the two sides of the North Atlantic (Europe and Europe-out-of-place) were rivaling each other in the speed of inventions in the fields of aviation, motorized travel, radio, and cinema. In 1900, French trains were faster than English or German trains, at 59mph, 56.5mph, 50mph respectively. But the Americans outpaced them all: 67mph. Advances in science were equally exciting, even if many of them translated into new technologies. For example, in 1895, Wilhem Röntgen discovered lightning with an immense penetrating capacity. Since no one knew what they were, Röntgen called them x-rays. This was followed by the discoveries (sometimes rediscoveries) of radioactivity, the

atomic structure of matter, alpha and beta rays, the theory of electrons and the theory of relativity. The absolute space of classical mechanics gave way to the impact of time and speed, the relationship between matter and electric charge, and the relationship between particles and fields. Rutherford described the atom as a miniature solar system and Niels Bohr sought a synthesis between atomic theory and quantum theory, an effort crowned in 1925 by Schrödinger and Heisenberg and by the concept of entropy. For its part, mathematics, through George Cantor and his theory of sets, had entered a field that had previously been the exclusive preserve of theologians: infinity and the various types of infinity. But perhaps the most important certainty of the early 20th century was that biology would transform humanity in unprecedented ways in the centuries to come. Biology brought together physics, chemistry, psychology, sociology and even ethics and religion. The triumph of science extended to medicine and psychiatry. It was a world of certainties. There were uncertainties, but they were upward, in other words, challenges to be conquered only with more effort.

But this is only part of the story. After all, the First World War was looming. Two downward uncertainties (i.e. uncertainties difficult to conceive of as easy challenges to overcome) haunted the European bourgeoisie: the growing power of the working class as a social and political actor and the awakening of Asia, illustrated by the emergence of the power of Japan, "the yellow peril" of the time. The former was for the working class the first rising uncertainty in its history: the challenge that with a little more effort it could defeat the two pillars of bourgeois power: property and privilege. The bourgeoisie's second downward uncertainty would eventually lead indirectly to war: the benign side of science and technology concealed the dark side of power struggles, imperial rivalries, living space, the propaganda of war as an exercise in purifica-



Diego Rivera: Man at the Crossroads (1933)

tion and progress, the desperate search for raw materials, the savage destruction of nature and its faithful guardians. Was war the logical outcome of previous progress? And if so, was the previous progress real or illusory? Were there any alternatives? Why weren't they tried?

The certainties of today

The certainties of today are heirs to those of the last century, except that over time they become more fragile and almost always closer to downward uncertainty. And the protagonists have also changed profoundly. Let's look at the paradigmatic case.

Science and technology. Every society gets the science it deserves. The conflicts and contradictions in society are always reflected in science. At the beginning of the 20th century, largely due to the growing strength of the working class, the fundamental contradiction was between prosperity and productivity: either maximizing full humanity or maximizing wealth. Prosperity pointed to the distribution of benefits across all of humanity (even if humanity was confined to the North Atlantic). The distribution didn't have to be egalitarian, but it had to be significant enough to avoid "the rebellion of the masses". On the contrary, productivity was centered on the accumulation and concentra-

tion of wealth because, given the scarcity of resources, no one could get rich without causing the impoverishment of others.

The idea of prosperity dominated both economic theory and law. Far from having altruistic motives, the idea of prosperity was haunted by the fear of socialism. There was theorizing about "the moral obligation of the economy", the "social function of property", "the new natural law", "the morality of competition". Max Weber anguished over the problem of objectivity in the face of the contradictions he had learned from Marx (without saying so). The boldest ones spoke of solidarity, economic democracy, free association, social protection legislation, integral socialism and imperialism. All this scientific creativity was intended to manage the emerging contradictions, but it had little impact on political decisions, which were increasingly dominated by the idea of progress as productivity and the accumulation of wealth. As always, science and technology followed politics.

The certainties in scientific and technological progress are the same today, but the intellectual and political contradiction between prosperity and productivity has disappeared. To understand this disappearance, we need to answer the question: where are the protagonists of the benefit of cer-

tainties today, and the protagonists of the uncertainties they cause?

One possible answer is that the two contradictory categories of the early 20th century are now rooted deep down in everyone's subjectivity. We are all bourgeois and we are all workers. We have become a bourgeois-worker magma. We are paralyzed without knowing which identity to prefer. We are slaves to the meager benefits that each identity gives us. Our indecision is the other side of the lack of alternatives: are we to kill the bourgeois in us or the worker in us? The identitarianism that is now fashionable has a grain of truth to it. It's a palliative for the disaster of the greater lack: prosperity with full humanity as opposed to productivity as the accumulation of wealth.

As long as the paralysis lasts, it is not possible to distinguish between usefulness, futility and harmfulness, either in scientific or technological progress (if there is any difference between the two). Hence the nature of the uncertainties of today.

The uncertainties of today

The uncertainties of today are downward for the overwhelming majority of the bourgeois-worker magma that the world (and not just the European world) has become. The uncertainties about which the bourgeois-worker magma wonders with as much clairvoyance as impotence are three.

Will war come? The spectre of war looms inexorably. The magma doesn't think. It is rather thought of by the powerful war machine. In the words of the very propagandists of this fatal machine, the Third World War will be much more devastating than the previous ones. Despite the fact that this is well known, there is no world peace movement, and anyone who sets out to organize one will be silenced or neutralized as a terrorist. In the meantime, the magma is preoccupied with more pressing issues (hunger, unemployment, helplessness in misfortune), or is drugged with anxiolytics or antidepressants, or is simply distracted by safaris into its own bestiality with the help of psychoanalysts who need to make a living.

Will democracy survive? The bourgeois-worker magma has forgotten for so long that neoliberal politics was a system of legalized corruption with the aim of transferring wealth from the poorest to the richest that it now appeals to the few politicians it deems honest without knowing that they only exist (when they exist) to legitimize the continuity of global systemic corruption. And it is anxious about the future of democracy, but it votes for the far right that wants to eliminate it.

Is the human species going extinct? This is the most radical downward uncertainty, given the period of ecological collapse we have already entered. And this is where the bourgeois-worker magma most reveals its paralysis. After all, the greatest enemy of this strange reflective species, which I've called the bourgeois-worker magma, is itself when it refuses to reflect.

What is to be done?

Fortunately, this magma-world is not the whole world. Those who have managed or are managing to escape the magma are the protagonists of upward uncertainties. They are the peoples, cultures, classes and groups who have suffered the most from modern capitalist, colonialist and patriarchal domination and who have been able to resist without giving up the knowledge and ways of being and of living together that their ancestors and today's comrades have passed on to them in their struggles and resistance. They learned Eurocentric science and technology, but only took advantage of what suited them and never stopped thinking that science, while a valid knowledge, is not the only valid knowledge. Based on these ecologies of Eurocentric and non-Eurocentric knowledge, they resisted domination, discrimination, oblivion and even extermination. As a whole, they are what I call the epistemic global South. They are the South only because there is a North that aimed to northify them for better to mortify them.

Are they up to such a task? After all, it only took one person and one week to create the universe.

Resisting Empire & Injustice Through Fiction

Alexandria Shaner interviews Tamara Pearson

Empire and injustice are not abstract concepts – they shape our daily lives. Awareness alone won't change that. We can read the news, digest the facts, but change requires more than information. It demands emotional connection, imagination, a vision for something different, and a willingness to dismantle the systems that uphold these injustices. Storytelling is crucial in this process. It allows us to understand and challenge the status quo, to resist, and to create the futures we need.

In this conversation, we explore the radical potential of fiction for resisting empire and injustice with Tamara Pearson, an Australian-Mexican journalist, editor, activist, and author whose work spans investigative journalism and literary fiction. She has long written about the intersections of global inequality, imperialism, migration, and ecological destruction, with a particular focus on the US's unhealthy relationship with Latin America. Her newest novel, *The Eyes of the Earth*, is a heart opening and captivating work of magical realism set in Mexico City, where the story of an elderly refugee – unnoticed, quietly heroic, and determined to find a bed to finally rest in – unfolds amidst a city beset by the forces of empire.

In the novel, Pearson invites us to witness unseen magic and beauty as the protagonist navigates a world built on systemic violence, surprising everyone by turning it upside down. *The Eyes of the Earth* is not just a story of survival; it is a narrative of defiance against the literal and metaphorical monsters of empire – it lays bare the bones of the world, decodes injustice, unravels inequality, rescues dignity, and reveals the essence of humanity; its pains and potential.

Storytelling becomes a vital act of resistance, a way to recognize and reground in shared humanity

across the false divides of power and nation, and a way to dismantle structures that harm to create space for something better.

Your newest novel, *The Eyes of the Earth*, was just launched at a webinar under the theme of 'Resisting Empire & Injustice Through Storytelling & Fiction'. Could you start by explaining what this theme means to you? How does fiction promote critical political literacy?

There are whole narrative systems used in Hollywood, in schools, and in the media, to celebrate and glorify colonisation – the initial invasions (often framed as “discoveries”) and then the systems of domination and control that were implemented. Those power dynamics continue today via imperialism, economic control of the Global South by the Global North, unfair trade agreements, and so on, and language is used to make the conquerors out to be the heroes (the US “brought democracy” when it was bombing Afghanistan and Iraq, and so on). We need to be able to unravel this kind of discourse, show it up for what it is, and then tell our own stories that reveal what has actually happened and is happening. There are various useful mediums for communicating realities, from investigative journalism through to non fiction, art, and music, but fiction is especially important. It is so open and free and full of imagination, that I find that it's often where we can be most honest and real. We can use metaphors, characters, and plot to address the big ideas, the lasting traumas, to ask questions, and to imagine.

Strong stories have a way of being memorable and staying with us because they are able to touch the rawest pain and other intangible things like dreams – that journalism, for example, can't. And we have to be careful not to be too dismissive of things like



"The wonderful benefits of fixing things" is a chapter in *The Eyes of the Earth*, a novel set in Mexico City about an elderly migrant woman who can fix anything | Image by the author, Tamara Pearson

hope, dreams, possibilities, and generational trauma. After all, activism and social change require deep sensibility as well as ongoing political analysis. Political literacy is very much about understanding how global economic and political powers work, and fiction can describe and provoke reflection about these things in very sincere and profound ways.

As an activist, journalist, and novelist, your work involves being both observer and storyteller – practices that are essential for social change but also for healthy societies in general. Could you comment on your experience developing as a listener and a communicator? How can we better notice what often goes unseen and give voice to it in ways that promote the spreading of awareness itself?

I think we have to be humble to listen well, and to deeply appreciate the experiences and wisdom of people we're talking to (listening to) and value the world around us. Those who struggle to listen to others - some men when interacting with women for example - often don't respect those people. But when we really appreciate people or a city or landscape, it is easier to listen and observe well.

We also need to understand what it is that determines who (which social classes) is heard, and who is invisible, and how that happens. Something like 90% of so-called global news in the mainstream media is focused on the Global North; on Europe and the US, Australia, Canada. Racist and classist positions underlie the decision the media makes to cover news in some countries while overlooking others. Likewise, the social media algorithms that put certain wealthy people and actors in the spotlight and that feed people content that objectifies women and so on. Humans write those algorithms, and they also reflect society's dominant values - values that have been fostered by people with power in order to maintain that power. Understanding how we learn helps us to learn better, and understanding how we see, and what goes into what we see, helps us to see with more clarity. My novel uses sight a lot, with one character going largely unseen and another character seems to have veils covering his eyes.

Introduce us to the heroine of your novel, *La Tortuga*. Who is she and what is the world we discover through her?



Alebrijes parade in Mexico City | Image by the author, Tamara Pearson

La Tortuga is the main unseen character. She's from the Global South - from Honduras, and has just fled her country to Mexico. As an old woman refugee, she's very invisible, and she does heroic and magical things that few notice. Not unlike the real world, where the heroes we're given are the James Bonds and Supermen (young, physically strong, Global North and white men) but the real heroes, I think, are the refugees who cross seas on boats or who walk for months through Central America and Mexico. La Tortuga, because of her age and her ability to listen, has managed to accumulate huge amounts of wisdom, and she uses that wisdom to help her survive, and to take on seemingly impossible battles. She's trying to find somewhere to sleep in Mexico City, and so through her we also get to know that city, almost as if it were a character itself.

Throughout *The Eyes of the Earth*, each human is accompanied by their alebrije, diverse and fantastical creatures that seem to be both a soul manifestation and a reflection of life experiences. What is an alebrije and what is their significance in this story?

Alebrijes are a Mexican art form - they are fantastical animals that are usually carved out of wood

or constructed with papier-mache then painted in wonderfully bold colors. Mexico City has an annual alebrije parade, where towns and schools and other groups or collectives contribute a giant alebrije they have made, and often named.

In the novel, I take alebrijes a step further and bring them to life, as visual manifestations of each person's essence. They represent how diverse and interesting people are, but also how that person is evolving, coping, and relating to things. Ultimately, the alebrijes are humanity and I can use them in the story to show what our humanity is up to and what is happening to it.

The character of Harry, a young American-tourist Youtuber, is interesting in that he seems to understand instinctively that he is part of a deeply unjust world and carries a crippling loneliness and guilt. He wants "to learn" and to "do some good in the world". Yet, it seems that the closer Harry gets to confronting the bigger truths about where and how he fits into this unjust world, the more he throws up defensive walls and refuses to truly see justice. Could you talk about this character and what he represents?

Harry is visiting Mexico City and develops a problematic friendship with La Tortuga which is ultimately a portrayal of the US's relationship with Latin America, or the Global North's relationship with the Global South. Harry, like many people who live in the US or Europe, usually has good intentions but he doesn't know how to listen to La Tortuga or how to truly help her. He often ends up making things worse for her.

Both La Tortuga and Harry are new to Mexico, but they come from different countries. This single difference greatly affects the freedom they experience and the way they are treated. They are both travelers, but one is a refugee, and one is a tourist, and I hope this contrast helps us to reflect on how we move about in the world, what we expect when visiting another country for example, and how different kinds of travelers are treated differently.

While much becomes naturally politicized throughout the novel, woven through the story are zoomed out and more overtly political vignettes. One particularly clarifying passage reads:

“People from Andean coffee farms went into the big cities and took photos of the strange ways of being of the locals. They were amused by the colourful costumes, the abject and sad expressions and the skills of road repairers and construction workers. Zimbabweans, Bolivians, Guatemalans, and Haitians went on cruises around the Australian coast and on safaris through the strange landscapes of northern England. Venezuelan, Iranian, and Honduran journalists observed the presidential elections in the US, reported for the global media networks on all the abnormalities and undemocratic elements, and provided the main expert analysis of the situation. A Burkinabé tourist went missing for a day in Toronto and the media was all over it. Senegalese people went to France to teach locals how to repair their roofs and to take photos with the little French children.”

Could you discuss showing the political nature of the world vs explaining it?

It's an interesting question, especially as someone who is both a journalist and fiction writer. I include vignettes to try to draw the links between those two spaces, in a way. Sometimes the vignettes add a worldly context to what a character is experiencing. Or they develop on it in some way. The novel is magical realism - which for me is a very bold genre that ties the magical nature of humanity with the gritty realness of everyday life. But there is even another layer; that what the characters are going through is not something they face alone - there are whole social classes facing something similar. I hoped that the very short vignettes help add insight into the lives of migrants or the forces behind environmental destruction and empire's looting, in a powerful and thought-provoking way.

In the streets of Mexico City, among poverty, refugees, and unhoused people, La Tortuga and her wider community of characters reveal that beauty and hope can be found in what at first seems like a terribly harsh and ugly place. Your characters are sometimes even able to turn power relations, seemingly set in hard concrete and steel, upside down. At the same time, their stories de-sanitize suffering, forcing us to recognize and feel their trampled humanity. Could you talk about hope and beauty among despair, and about the power of resistance and of empathy?

When the movies or the mainstream media do portray or cover the Global South, they typically depict countries like Mexico as dirty and dangerous places or places of poverty and hardships. Like that, they often make it seem like global inequality is something natural or deserved. But in fact, Latin America is abundant in resistance, art, intelligence and research, care, science, community, and its own histories and traditions. By leaving all that out, the entertainment and media industries portray this region as one-dimensional and hopeless - and like that, they encourage apathy.

In fact, I am constantly moved by how my friends and fellow activists and neighbors here manage to be kind and resilient despite all that they or we are going through.

Mexico's long story, going back well before the Spanish invasion, is one of ingenuity, creativity, survival, and long and well-organized resistance. People here are capable and wonderful, and very much able to run their communities and country without the US telling the region what to do (ie Trump recently and Biden and Harris before him trying to dictate Mexico's migration policies, not to mention the very one-sided and destructive NAFTA and USMCA). There is a whole lot of hope in just how capable people really are. Gosh I even find hope in how airports are run; they are extremely complex machines - if people can do that, of course they can run a more just economy. If people can be kind amid years of water scarcity, despite horrifically low wages, despite lacking health care etc etc - of course they have the empathy necessary to resist and to organize.

Throughout the novel, we come to understand that there is a "System of Monsters" which is the main, underlying "anti"-force destroying the potential abundance of wellbeing for both people and planet. The difference between charity and justice is also deeply explored. These are the underlying forces with which La Tortuga is destined to contend, and which are also inescapably entwined into all of our lives, in fact, with all life on Earth. Could you talk about systemic resistance and the pursuit of justice?

As Eduardo Galeano is famous for saying, charity is vertical. The people who "give" often dictate terms for the vulnerable folks on the receiving end. We need to look much more closely at the impact of aid and charity, and I try to touch on that in the novel. As mentioned above, there is often an inference of lacking in ability; that the reason some people don't have a well is because they don't know how to build one. So well-meaning Global North folks will visit some African country and build a well, often without bothering to ask people what they actually need, nor to examine why there are water supply issues in the first place. Had they asked, they might find that all the water is being redirected to European-owned mines, or to car-producing, US-owned factories. Justice involves a lot more understanding

than charity - that's one of the things, but hopefully the novel has been able to elaborate on many of the differences.

To conclude, it is becoming more and more urgent to humanize migrants and to politicize the issue of human migration and upstream systemic conditions. How has your work with migrants, refugees, workers, and activists informed your stories? And how have stories affected your activism?

I've been working with a migrant shelter in Mexico City for the past eight or nine years. Refugees and migrants stay there as they seek asylum or visas in Mexico, or as they work or recover or save up to continue their journey to the US. People who think there is some kind of line or queue to get into the US have no idea just how difficult and complex it is to migrate. Let's be clear, most people migrating through Mexico have little money and are sleeping in the street, sometimes in quite large encampments. The shelters, all volunteer-run and self-funded, aren't enough, and sleeping in the street makes those people even more vulnerable to organized crime, illness - let alone making it hard to go through the bureaucracy of migration. I wish that those who support militarizing and strengthening the borders could meet the characters I have met in the shelters, could hear about what they left behind, why they decided to flee or leave, and what they go through on their journey, including extortion (usually multiple times both by organized crime and migration officers), rape, kidnapping, robbery etc. I tried to capture some of these migrants in the novel - as well as their agency (how they cope, what they think, what they want), and of course the more I learn, the more I am convinced of the futility and harm of borders and the need for us to demand that refugees and migrants be treated with respect and care, rather than criminalized.

The Eyes of the Earth, by Tamara Pearson, Tehom Center Publishing, 2024 is available in ebook and print from local and online booksellers.