



MAGAZINE

FEBRUARY 2025

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Resistance To Tyranny

Bucking The Global
Order

Palestine Is Still The Issue



*"It matters little how
we define victory and
defeat for a nation
still suffering the
consequences of a war
of annihilation."*

-Ramzy Baroud



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The Limits of Tyrants

Ted Glick

“Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will. Find out just what any people will quietly submit to and you have found out the exact measure of injustice and wrong which will be imposed upon them, and these will continue till they are resisted with either words or blows, or with both. The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppress.”

-Frederick Douglass,
August 3, 1857, in Canandaigua, NY

65 years ago today, on February 1, 1960, the first student sit-in at lunch counters throughout the segregated South began in downtown Greensboro at a Woolworth's store. Young people literally put their bodies on the line, and were beaten and jailed for doing so, to demand an end to racist laws and daily practices prohibiting Black people from using public and private facilities solely because of the color of their skin.

This action sparked similar actions throughout the South, the formation of the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the emergence of a national mass movement against segregation and racism. Four years later, in 1964, the Civil Rights Act was passed in Congress, followed the next year by the Voting Rights Act.

I'm pretty certain that there were very few people before that sit-in who thought that within five years the South's racist, essentially fascist, way of life going back almost a century could be successfully overcome, legally, although, of course, it took many years and constant struggle for those laws to finally bring about a civil rights revolution. Despite some weakening of those laws over the last decade or so, they are still, legally and culturally, largely in effect.

After two weeks of the Trump Presidency it is clear that he and the MAGA movement have every intention of using their power to roll back not just decades of the gains of the civil rights movement but of all movements defending and advancing human rights, labor rights, women's rights, democracy and social, economic and environmental justice. This is a tyrannical regime.

Resistance to it there already has been, beginning with the hundreds of thousands of people who demonstrated in over 300 localities on January 18th. It has continued through the work in communities all over the country helping immigrants at risk of deportation learning their rights and getting organized to defend them. It happened this week when 23 states challenged Trump's effort to prevent the disbursement of literally trillions of dollars allocated by Congress and signed into law by Biden. The American Federation of Government Employees has called for a massive demonstration in DC on February 11th against the Trumpists' efforts to get rid of professional civil service workers. And there are many other ways that, on issue after issue, our US resistance movement has refused to bend to the would-be dictator.

What about demonstrations and nonviolent direct action? There have been some voices raised to the effect that, under a Trumpist regime, these are not as important, or are risky, compared to under a Democratic regime.

There's some validity to the critique. Successful organizing involves much more than demonstrative, visible action: one-on-one conversations with community members or co-workers; calls, emails, texts or meetings with those with some power to correct wrongs or advance positive change; legal action; meetings to come to agreement internally within a group or with



coalition partners about strategy and tactics; writing and videoing and taking pictures and circulating them as widely as possible; testifying before government bodies to oppose or support a particular policy or decisions; and more.

But absent visible and public actions, as large and/or as creatively risk-taking as possible, victories will be harder to come by. Here's how I wrote about this in my 21st Century Revolution book:

“No revolution of any kind has happened without the manifestation of people's anger at oppression or abuse via public marches, demonstrations, strikes (including hunger strikes) and civil disobedience to express their strong feelings and to spread the word to others about their resistance. Oppressed people need to see that there are others who feel the same way

and are willing to take action to change things. Elected officials, even those who are supportive, need to appreciate the strength of people's feelings via seeing it in action. And clearly, the target(s) of the public demonstrations need to see both sizeable numbers of people involved and the urgency and intensity of their feelings.”

In Frederick Douglass' Canandaigua speech in 1857 he also said something that is not as widely quoted as the “limits of tyrants” quote at the beginning of this article but is just as important:

“People may not get all they pay for in this world, but they must certainly pay for all they get. If we ever get free from the oppression and wrongs heaped upon us, we must pay for their removal. We must do this by labor, by suffering, by sacrifice, and, if needs be, by our lives and the lives of others.”

Garbage Rises Until We Dump It

Michael Albert

Trump, Musk, Vance, Kennedy and the rest of our new government's murderous members now oversee political life in the USA. Things were already horrific and have been for ages. But now the worst garbage has fully risen. Humanity has seen this before and the view isn't pretty. So where is the dump site? Where is the dump truck to remove all of this insidious and barely organic waste matter from public impact?

I know logic and pundits say we should not be diverted from addressing actual policy plans by jumping on our current rulers' verbal excesses. We should not be diverted from their truly treasonous actions by the volume of their intensely hyperbolic rhetoric. We should not let the scale of their perverse agenda shock and awe us into submission. But while standing strong, we should also restrain our passions. We should be balanced, measured, and mature—you know, like the New York Times. We should not be overly passionate. To raise our voices too loud would look like a mindless rant. It would make us sound like them. We are told, don't do that. But is this advice helpful? Yes, it has a certain wisdom. Nonetheless, I think it also has a degree of misfit.

I sit at my computer and survey YouTube videos, videocasts, and podcasts, late night TV talk shows and even The New York Times as they all now address current events. What I find isn't remotely Chomskyian in scope or depth. Nonetheless, despite all the lying, all the obscurantism, all the eyes in your pocket self-inflicted blindness, at this point I wonder how people can not know what's unfolding and more or less how bad it is. We can see the facts everywhere. Greed and cowardice assemble in high places. We can't miss it. Oligarchs uber alles. Some mistakenly relish it. Some don't want to know it is happening. Some are so isolated no information penetrates. Can activism still reverse those causes for passivity. I think so. At the top, however, Trump and his murderous appointees are beyond redemption.

So I find myself concluding that a whole lot of people below the top know, or sort of know, or actively suppress from their daily awareness that our situation is profoundly dangerous. In that respect fascism's surge is not unlike global warming, profit driven AI, and nuclear gluttony. Murderous elites nurture and feast on each. They eat justice. They slip-slide us to hell. But where it all finally ends up is going to depend on us, not them, because they are not going to let up on their own. To plead with them for mercy, to seek from them compassion, is like to ask a tree to fly. Only to force them to meet our demands will work. Only to raise social costs they can't bear so they must relent to avoid more losses will work.

So my first problem with talking or writing in detail but without providing appropriate passion about MAGA policies is that to do that is already happening. Detailed accounts of today's facts are everywhere. Yes, such accounts are necessary. Sometimes they are even especially brilliant. But such accounts have already reached 1,000, 10,000, even 50,000 times as many people as you or I could hope to directly reach. And even if we could duplicate that scope much less if we only add infinitesimal redundancy, I doubt it would change anything because the facts are already widely evident. The circumstances are already widely known. Even what to do to resist is getting some serious and brilliant attention, though not yet quite enough.

People already have sufficient inescapable evidence of the unfolding horrifying situation. What people lack is sufficient inescapable evidence of effective, unwavering resistance. But without effective unwavering resistance, fascism will triumph. The good news is resistance has already begun and proposals for what more to do have emerged from many directions and many constituencies.

So what can a tiny-audience writer do, whether me or you or any other? What can a lone conversant per-

son do, whether me or you or any other? What can even a publisher do? What words or acts might help unleash passionate activism appropriate to the facts of our situation?

I wish I knew for certain but I don't. Not yet. So we keep trying to do whatever we can that is within our means. But what things? Caring about one's own and oneself is valid and worthy. Local security, preparedness, and mutual aid is good. Self defense has an admirable place in these times, including mutual aid with one's family, friends, and neighbors. But if we too narrowly focus on reducing our own risk and defending our own turf, murderous administration will surge like a wall of lava flowing from a gigantic persistent volcano, or like a tsunami that has a non-stop source. We have seen this before. It swept Germany, Europe, and the world. So we have to operate collectively, and sooner rather than later. Doing what?

Lots of separate defenses are not nothing, but lots of separate defenses will be less than enough to stop Trump. In fact, in the worst case, an overly defensive mindset could lead to our doing Trump's work for him. It could cause us to cleanse our agendas, rewrite our mission statements, and even rid our communications of sentiments that Trump and Co. dislike. It could cause us to do what Trump and Co. intend us to do, even without their having to attack us. I get that things are scary. I get that we have an inclination to protect. But I also think that in too big doses that inclination can produce preventive submission that ironically enacts what it nominally seeks to prevent.

Even further, while lots of separate movements on the offense will be better than only defense, that too won't be enough. Atomism has to become collectivism. Silos need to merge. We need to attain a movement of movements each component of which literally advocates for the rest, aids the rest, and shares the campaigns of the rest. Let the murderous administrators Texas death-fight each other. Meanwhile, all the while, we must unify.

To succeed we have to get ourselves together across issues and tactics and not just for us, but for all but a small sector of the whole population. Trump,

Musk, Vance, Kennedy, other billionaires, and a good many politicians and rich owners throughout the land seem to have devolved too far toward greed, hypocrisy, and hate to even perceive much less embrace justice. But outside them, to achieve anti-fascist unity will be hard but not impossible.

We should favor restoration, not demolition. Construction, not destruction. Solidarity, not vengeance. But at the same time, we shouldn't wishfully deny the obvious. At the head of today's hate parade the orange commander in chief serves only himself. We should want movements to salvage wandering souls, often including our own, but not his. We should want movements to unify, in time even with our current opponents, but not him. The garbage that has risen way past reason that now scowls at us and at the world with hooded, sick eyes, wants only to claim all power for itself. Their dump site has to be where we designate it to be. Their dump truck has to be us.

I am sorry if the above is too aggressive to be seemly. I am also sorry if it isn't sufficiently footnoted. I am sorry if it even sounds borderline hysterical, like a rant. I can't help that possible impression and also express the anger I feel. Anger isn't a posture I propose we should cultivate for a future better world. But anger may sadly be a mindset that we temporarily need if we are to attain a future better world.

All this is just to say that I am not ranting without prior consideration. And lots of prior sober, careful entreaty. I can't help it. Sufficient passion seems to me to be precisely what's now too often missing. We have ample smiling and even laughing with friends to help us through the dark, and we have plenty of overly abundant, tirelessly accurate, academically footnoted analysis as well. We now need to designate a dumpsite for the risen garbage. We need to become a gigantic collective dump truck to take out the trash. The new Administration will not go away on its own. Those following it will not escape fealty without encountering a very different tune. Is that even possible?

Suppose everyone who at least likes and agrees with Sanders were to unify not only in words but in deeds. Suppose we were to attain considerable unity of agenda. Suppose we each abet all. Suppose we all abet each. We do this as individuals and our organizations collectively do it as well. What would that look like? What would that do to MAGA's unity? What costs could that generate for Trump and Co? Or even suppose just a tenth of that whole constituency of Sanders-likers started to work together to protect and advance all. Wouldn't that energy say to the other nine tenths and to countless more beyond who currently feel there is no useful path forward and who therefore refrain from resistance—"Wait, fascism is not inevitable. Unified collective action can stop, reverse, and replace it. Come on."

Elon Musk gives the Nazi salute with Nazified macho gusto and then does it again. Then he tells Holocaust jokes and celebrates and financially supports the growing neoNazi party in Germany. Is that a policy directive? No, but is it therefore irrelevant? I don't think so. Some say it is a tic. Seriously, a tic? Some say he is just offering his audience, "here is my heart for you." Really, he wants to give his heart to humanity? Some explain that it was just the Mussolini version of what Hitler later borrowed. But isn't that at most a distinction without a difference?

The Proud Boys know what Musk's move was. Every last neo-Nazi celebrant in the U.S. knows what it was. And so does the growing German fascist front that is enjoying Musk's material aid in Germany. Should we nonetheless ignore his salute as mere expression, while we pile our attention on more specific policy actions like border closing, anti-trans directives, birth citizenship mayhem, ubiquitous deportations, demolishing DEI, imperial adventurism, tantrum-tariffs, pro fossil ecocide, and fascistically rebuilding the government itself? Yes, we should certainly pile on all that with our own collective actions, of course. We should produce teach ins, talks, marches, rallies, blockades, sanctuaries, occupations, encampments, and more to build our size and commitment so we are ever more able to impose steadily growing social costs

on Trump and Co. But shouldn't we also note some of what these murderous administrators say? Isn't the huge irony of Trumpian insanity that along with countless lies aimed only at confusion—such as "they are eating our cats and dogs"—they also openly speak words that reveal their true intents. Next up, don't be surprised to hear a new slogan, "hail victory," which is english for "Seig Heil," adopted to aggressively accompany Musk's energetic hand from the heart to the sun Nazi salute. Forget about Gangnam style. These guys are into Hitler style. How does one calmly reply to a Nazi salute? What does calmness in that case communicate?

Decades back, I remember furiously screaming at my school's administrators about Vietnam and their research policies like stabilizing helicopters to better shoot anything that moved on the ground. My substance was thoughtful but my tone was passion plus. They ignored the substance. They ordered me to drop the passion, calm down and grow up. You are out of control, you need therapy, they said. And I would think, no you and your calm demeanor are what is out of control. You are the ones detouring away from human sensibility. I am appropriately angry.

Many years after that but still decades ago, when I was at South End Press, we published a book titled *Friendly Fascism*. The author, Bertram Gross, made a case that a stylistically friendly version of fascism was coming our way. It would be fascism with a smile, fascism that urges us to have a nice day. It would be the real fascism, but in a deflecting disguise. Stealth fascism. Fascism with a human face. Who would have guessed that the word "friendly" was the mistaken part of the author's warning?

Trump is a twisted thug with Oval Office authority. Trump has an array of cowardly satraps around the country ready to do his bidding. Malevolent moneybags now tout his virtues and genuflect their servile allegiance. Garbage has risen in a social setting that has long rewarded greed, hate, violence, and disdain. Time to get together. Time to turn the tide. Time to take out the worst garbage. Time to transform the social setting.

Democracy Is Happening in Serbia

Davor Džalto

Serbia is boiling with anti-government protests. The protests were initiated by Serbian university students, who are organized in an anarcho-syndicalist manner, where decisions are made at student plenums, without a central decision-making body, fixed representatives, or leaders.

What immediately triggered the protests was the collapse of the roof at Novi Sad train station, which resulted in the death of 15 people. The initial demands of the students were for an efficient, fully transparent investigation that would lead to prosecuting those responsible, regardless of their position in the political hierarchy. This was an important demand, since the chief political figure in Serbia, President Aleksandar Vučić has an arbitrary and semi-authoritarian style of rule, where many if not most positions in various political and even professional bodies are filled based on personal and party alliances and corruption. Incompetence, repression and arrogant behavior of those in power, protected by Vučić as long as they stay obedient to him, have dominated Serbia for many years.

The protests initiated by university students have been joined by many citizens throughout the country. Universities and schools are on strike, many other workers support them, and thousands of citizens are on the streets of Serbian cities, supporting student demands.

The protests in Belgrade are the largest. In December 2024, around 100,000 people gathered at Slavia, one of the central squares in Belgrade. This has seriously shaken Aleksandar Vučić. Initially, he and his machinery of repression tried both to intimidate students and to bribe them (offering cheap student loans for instance).

Neither the regime's thugs, nor the pretense of meeting student demands, nor the promises of fa-

vorable housing loans, nor attempts to infiltrate the protest organization, have yielded results. On the contrary, these methods have given the protests additional credibility and strength. Most students are serious, well-organized, dignified, and justice-oriented individuals.

The citizens of Serbia have reason to be proud of the students. They have demonstrated political awareness and a willingness to engage for the common good, successfully organizing protests that are either completely impossible or very difficult to imagine in most countries, including those in the Western ones (even though they are badly needed in virtually every Western country).

Following a broader tendency, the regimes in Serbia have turned politics into the worst possible thing. Instead of caring for the common good, politics has become a means for enriching the political elite and their affiliated business circles, corrupting society, colonizing the country, and humiliating most of its citizens. To be fair, the majority of citizens have legitimized this, and no one can escape their share of responsibility.

What began as student protests calling for an impartial investigation and the persecution of those responsible for the Novi Sad tragedy has turned into a huge popular movement—an expression of deeper dissatisfaction, not just with the government's failures in this specific case, but with the entire system that has been established.

Most students participating in the organization of the protests seem aware that to maintain their credibility, these protests must remain independent of political parties. The threat to society and democracy in Serbia (as in many other countries, such as the U.S., for example) comes not only from the current regime but also from much of the opposition.



Many in the opposition have, over the years and decades, demonstrated exemplary incompetence and corruption, showing interest only in personal and party gains. There is also the issue of the dominant ideological orientations shaping strategic policies. Many in the opposition appear sincere in their desire to establish a system where power is not concentrated in the hands of one person or a single oligarchic structure. That is fine if the goal is merely the replacement of the current regime. But the dominant ideas guiding most opposition parties do not go beyond the framework of a liberal-capitalist conception of society. In practice, they advocate (often unknowingly) for the decisive influence of big capital on public policies, for maintaining Serbia's (neo)colonial status, and for reducing its citizens to cheap labor, effectively turning workers into modern-day slaves. While Vučić attempts to transform Belgrade into a cheaper version of Dubai and the rest of Serbia into a desert (without oil, but with lithium ore), the plans of the liberal opposition

are limited to turning Serbia into a Balkan version of America—which is equally bad news (for anyone who knows something about American society beyond cheap propaganda).

This is why the protests initiated by university students in Serbia, joined by many freedom-oriented citizens, are so important. They represent a democratic, self-managing, anarcho-syndicalist movement, against both authoritarianism and (neo) colonialism.

This type of organizing largely prevents infiltration by both regime and opposition activists who would like to take over the protests and channel them according to their own interests. The mode of organization of these protests is unique in that it displeases, at the same time, both those on the conservative/right end of the political spectrum and mainstream liberals. Both Western government (and corporations) and the Russian are unhappy

about the protests; they understand that very well that real, self-managing democracy is a threat to both of them.

Here lies the answer to why the mainstream media in the West have mostly been silent about these protests. Western powers, just like any imperial power, prefer to have local autocrats, as long as these are obedient to their imperial masters. In return, they are given a free hand to exercise their autocracy and even authoritarianism within the country. Authentic democracy is the last thing they want to see in reality.

While Western powers, through their presence in the region and in the media, are trying to infiltrate the protests and change the course of events—keeping the focus on Vučić's regime while moving them away from the anarcho-syndicalist organization into a more representative one (which would allow them to manipulate the leaders using all conventional and unconventional means)—some Western leaders are calling for peace and the resolution of the conflict in an institutional manner. The phrase “in a democracy, power is lost and gained through elections” is often repeated these months, both by the autocratic Vučić regime. But what happens when the system is so corrupt that institutions cease to fulfill their intended functions? What happens when democratic ideas, values, institutions, and procedures are reduced to an empty shell, serving as a fig leaf to conceal autocratic or corporatist-fascist interests? Across Serbia—and the “Western world”—we witness increased media manipulation, broken systems of election and electoral engineering, lobbying, bribery, intimidation, and blackmail, all aimed at pushing authentic democracy out of state institutions.

The protests have already demonstrated that Vučić's regime lacks legitimacy. The larger and more persistent they become, the more the regime's credibility will erode, both domestically and internationally, until various power centers realize that it has become highly unhygienic to continue supporting this corrupt regime.

However, what are the alternatives? The students have rightly detected that they do not want to simply hand over their credibility, energy, and successes to any opposition option. If the protests grow larger and more widespread, the anarcho-syndicalist mode of organization could be implemented in other institutions, apart from the University. That, together with bigger protests, could completely paralyze the existing institutions.

One way forward could be for Serbian citizens to decide to apply the principles of self-management on a broader scale. While the same system of direct democracy cannot govern a state due to the complexity and efficiency required, a form of direct elections for a transitional, non-partisan government could be implemented. This transitional government, chosen in streets and public squares, could have clear responsibilities and a fixed mandate, with the primary task of ensuring fair elections under rules that prevent the continuation of a corrupt, undemocratic system.

Such an undertaking would not be possible without broad societal consensus, and even then, such an experiment would be painful and fraught with great risks. Let us not forget that the problem of Serbian citizens is not just the current regime and the (state, media, business, criminal) power structures within the country; it also lies outside Serbia—in international (imperial) political and corporate structures. Turning a blind eye to this would be both foolish and dishonorable.

The only thing Western liberal elites fear more than autocracy is—democracy. With autocrats, big capital can still make deals; in functional democracies, it has no chance. That is why such an experiment would face pressures greater than those encountered by Greece's Syriza. Challenges still lie ahead, and the greatest will come after the collapse of the existing regime. Therefore, it is necessary to mobilize the best Serbia has to offer and connect with progressive structures worldwide. Important battles are won only with a great deal of dedication, perseverance, energy, learning, and time.

Control, And Worse: Trump is Criminalizing All of Latin America

Tamara Pearson

From preparing to send migrants to Guantanamo Bay, to labeling cartels “terrorist organizations,” Trump has been using both language and policies to frame Latin American countries and Latinx migrants in the US, as criminal. Painting the entire region as a source of danger, as the enemy, rather than as a partner, paves the way for coercion, subjugation, and the normalization of human rights violations. It is a path for the US to advance its business interests and nationalism through control rather than the usual pretense of diplomacy and dialogue.

Terrorists and tariffs

In just two weeks, Trump has put Cuba back on the terrorist list, signed an executive order deeming cartels terrorist organizations, with specific reference to those in Mexico that are apparently “flooding” the US with drugs and violence, as well as a couple of others in Venezuela and Central America, and instructed the departments of Defense and Homeland Security to prepare the US naval base on Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, to hold migrants.

He said there were 30,000 beds there to “detain the worst criminal illegal aliens threatening the American people,” adding that some migrants are “so bad we don’t even trust the countries to hold them because we don’t want them coming back. So we’re going to send them out to Guantanamo.” The US has previously used the base to hold untried, so-called suspects of terrorism. The Pentagon said it would send “the worst of the worst” — whatever that means, when referring to people who are in life-threatening danger or so exploited or impoverished they had to flee their

homeland — to Guantanamo this weekend, but at the time of writing, that didn’t appear to have happened yet.

At the same time, countries that don’t do what Trump wants, including impossible and inhumane requests like stopping all migrants, get threatened with tariffs. When Colombia refused to accept military planes deporting migrants precisely because it criminalizes them, Trump wrote, “We will not allow the Colombian government to violate its legal obligations with regard to the acceptance and return of the criminals they forced into the US,” then threatened 25% tariffs and a travel ban on Colombian government officials. He also threatened BRICS countries with tariffs if they replace the US dollar as reserve currency, and signed an order Saturday imposing 25% tariffs on Mexico for allegedly not doing enough to stop migrants and drugs from reaching the US (at the time of writing, those tariffs were then paused for a month after Mexico agreed to send 10,000 more troops to its northern border).

Reinforcing this control over Latin America, he ordered the Gulf of Mexico be renamed the Gulf of America, and vowed to “take back” the Panama Canal.

Violating refugee and migrants’ rights, in a show of racism

And while coercing Latin America, Trump has also made a big show of deporting Latinxs and denying Latin American migrants entry at the Mexico-US border. In violation of both US and international laws and basic human rights, Trump has suspended the United States Refugee



Photo: Tamara Pearson

Admissions Program (USRAP), and now people can't request asylum and be interviewed to determine credible fear. However, Trump used an executive order to pass this, even though it requires congressional approval. He also wants to revive Remain in Mexico, though Mexican president Sheinbaum has refused.

He has told quite the story of carrying out "the largest deportation in American history," but the

reality is that deportations are very expensive, and migrants still have to be able to argue their case before a judge first. There is an enormous backlog of cases (3.5 million still open) so Trump's grand standing — while having real and horrific concrete consequences for many — isn't so feasible in practice. In the first few days of his term, his administration deported 600 or so people per day, then reached a thousand. In 2024, Biden deported 270,000 people, an average of 739 per day.

But, these deportations are being talked up by the media and raids are being televised live, in order to put on a show that popularizes the criminalizing of migrants, and demarcates Latinxs and Latin Americans (“illegals” and “criminals”) as the scary enemy. The cameras were ready to photograph people arriving in the Brazilian city of Manaus handcuffed, while agents in New York have been told to be camera-ready for ICE raids there, and Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi Noem live-tweeted a raid.

She also recently announced that the government revoked a decision to protect some 600,000 Venezuelans from deportation. Trump has been using a very old law, designed for world-war-type scenarios — the 1798 Alien Enemies Act — to detain and deport non-citizens without the typical minimum evidence requirements, due process, or right to appeal. That makes these deportations about identity, race, and nationality, rather than about any kind of law breaking. On top of this, we know he rescinded federal guidance that ICE raids shouldn’t take place in sensitive spaces like schools and hospitals, and he expanded express or expedited deportations beyond the border areas and beyond those who had only arrived less than two weeks ago.

Criminalisation in order to subjugate

All this amounts to a systematic dehumanization of the region, in order to lay the ground for increased control and attacks of it, possibly even intervention. It is both a continuation of, and entrenching of the abhorrent treatment by the US towards Latin America, and towards the Global South more broadly— a justification of subjugation.

It is also, of course, a deliberate offensive against those governments that dare, to different extents, be somewhat disobedient of the US and its unreasonable, unfair trade deals, policies, and its transnationals’ extensive exploita-

tion, contamination, and resource robbery. This is not new, with the White House using crippling and cruel sanctions to try to break uncooperative countries like Venezuela, Cuba, and Nicaragua. But sometimes that toxicity is cleverly disguised in either fake diplomacy, or excuses about the nature of the governments of those countries (while the US then materially supports genocide). Criminalizing Latin America is a material and ideological strategy for disempowering it, while asserting the US’s so-called superiority, to then use that for later power plays (economic, or with troops) and furthering injustice.

The mainstream media is right by his side, repeating Trump’s use of terms like “illegal migration” without questioning them, and without using terms that are actually technically correct. They are actively contributing to the normalization of racism towards people that are forced to migrate and denied safe routes to do so.

The real criminals (the proponents of racism and sexism, the active destroyers of the planet, the builders and users of bombs, the manufacturers of inequality and poverty) making the oppressed out to be criminals, is a narrative and program that has been employed ad nauseam. The perpetrators of violence put that characteristic onto their victims. The colonized somehow become the invaders. Rather than US imperialism culturally, economically, and politically dominating Latin America — including its backing of recent right-wing coups, it is Latin American migrants who are depicted as “invading” the US.

The story is upside-down and must be countered. Offensives like this can also often lead to increased organizing and activism. It is possible that attacks all over the place could bring the recipients of such attacks (from Latinxs and Palestinians through to women and trans and non-binary people, workers, and environmental activists) closer together, with a common basis for more united struggles and deeper solidarity.

Moving from a Doomsday Clock to a Peace Clock

Medea Benjamin, Nicolas J. S. Davies

This year's Doomsday Clock Statement landed like a damp squib in a Trump-swamped corporate news cycle on January 28th. The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists only moved the hands of the Clock forward by one second, from 90 seconds up to 89 seconds to midnight, which must have come as a relief to the few members of the public who heard about it.

But this minimal advance in the hands of the Clock was a strange and misleading top-line for the Bulletin's actual Doomsday Clock Statement, which was brimming with extremely dire warnings that deserve far greater official and public attention.

This disconnect between the movements of the hands of the Doomsday Clock and Bulletin's underlying threat assessments is deeply troubling. If the positioning of the hands of the Clock does not accurately reflect the seriousness of the dangers it represents, then the powerful symbolism of the Doomsday Clock is lost, undermining the very purpose for which Albert Einstein, J. Robert Oppenheimer and their colleagues invented it.

The new Clock Statement began, "In 2024, humanity edged ever closer to catastrophe. Trends that have deeply concerned (us) continued, and despite unmistakable signs of danger, national leaders and their societies have failed to do what is needed to change course."

The original atomic scientists created the Doomsday Clock to symbolize humanity's suicidal march toward annihilation by nuclear war, and that is still the greatest danger that midnight on the Clock represents, even as it now incorporates the added dangers of climate change, biological threats and disruptive technologies.

The threat assessments in the 2025 Clock statement

begin with the warning that the war in Ukraine "still looms over the world," and that it "could become nuclear at any moment because of a rash decision or through accident or miscalculation."

It was this danger of escalation to nuclear war over Ukraine that led the Bulletin to move the hands of the Clock forward by 10 seconds in January 2023, from 100 to 90 seconds to midnight.

Since then, despite President Biden's warning in 2022 that war between Russia and the United States would be the suicidal Third World War that we must avoid at all costs, the U.S. and NATO have blasted through every self-imposed "red line" designed to prevent that, providing Ukraine with tanks, F-16 warplanes, long-range missiles, and approval to use them inside Russia as well as in Ukraine.

The roles of U.S. and NATO personnel in targeting, planning, surveillance, intelligence and secret "special operations" involving Western weapons have escalated into the very war between the United States and Russia that Biden promised to avoid.

So we cannot understand the Bulletin's decision to move the hands of the Doomsday Clock only one second closer to the global mass suicide it symbolizes, as if these developments in the war between NATO and Russia have not brought us significantly closer to self-destruction than we were two years ago.

The Clock Statement then addresses the crisis in the Middle East. In January 2023, when the Bulletin last moved the hands of the clock forward, the U.S. and Israel were enjoying a false sense of security and normalcy in that region, believing that they had suppressed and tamed armed resistance to Israel's illegal occupation of Palestine.

Now, since the Palestinian breakout in October 2023 and Israel's genocide in Gaza, the new Doomsday Clock statement warns that, "Conflict in the Middle East threatens to spiral out of control into a wider war without warning."

With nuclear-armed Israel threatening to launch a major war on Iran and ready to use its nuclear weapons before it would accept an existential defeat in such a war, and with no real limits to U.S. support for Israeli war-making and genocide, the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists is right to warn that this could spiral out of control at any moment. Yet it seems to have ignored this danger too in its one-second tick forward of the Doomsday Clock.

While these raging conflicts involving nuclear weapons states may be the most dangerous current flash-points for a nuclear war, nothing reflects the relentless nature of our accelerating march toward Armageddon more clearly than the determination with which the nuclear weapons powers, led by the United States, are expanding and "modernizing" their nuclear arsenals, even as they complete the dismantling of all Cold War-era arms control treaties and nuclear safeguards.

The 2025 Doomsday Clock Statement makes it clear that the Bulletin's analysts understand this only too well:

"The countries that possess nuclear weapons are increasing the size and role of their arsenals, investing hundreds of billions of dollars in weapons that can destroy civilization. The nuclear arms control process is collapsing, and high-level contacts among nuclear powers are totally inadequate given the danger at hand."

And yet they insist that the inexorable advance of these Doomsday plans over the past two years has only brought us one second closer to Doomsday. How can that be?

The next and final sentence in the paragraph on nuclear weapons addresses the dangers of nuclear proliferation, which is the widely predicted result of the failure of the nuclear powers to pursue genuine nuclear disarmament:

"Alarming, it is no longer unusual for countries without nuclear weapons to consider developing arsenals of their own—actions that would undermine long-standing nonproliferation efforts and increase the ways in which nuclear war could start."

The next paragraph in the Doomsday Clock Statement addresses the dangers of the Climate Crisis. It explains that global greenhouse gas emissions are still increasing and global temperatures are still rising, causing extreme weather, floods, tropical cyclones, heat waves, droughts and wildfires on every continent.

"The long-term prognosis for the world's attempts to deal with climate change remains poor," it reads, "as most governments fail to enact the financing and policy initiatives necessary to halt global warming."

But this is just one more dire warning that is not reflected in the hands of the Doomsday Clock.

On biological threats, the Clock statement warns, "Supposedly high-containment biological laboratories continue to be built throughout the world, but oversight regimes for them are not keeping pace, increasing the possibility that pathogens with pandemic potential may escape. Rapid advances in artificial intelligence have increased the risk that terrorists or countries may attain the capability of designing biological weapons for which countermeasures do not exist."

On disruptive technologies, it warns that, "Systems that incorporate artificial intelligence in military targeting have been used in Ukraine and the Middle East, and several countries are moving to integrate artificial intelligence into their militaries. Such efforts raise questions about the extent to which machines will be allowed to make military decisions—even decisions that could kill on a vast scale, including those related to the use of nuclear weapons."

The strange decision to only advance the Doomsday Clock by one second appears to be a hedge against the possibility that all these current trends will continue, but that, by some miracle, none of them will actually succeed in destroying us all in the next few decades.

This could leave BAS in the embarrassing position of a Chicken Little predicting a calamity that has not come to pass, even as the hands of the Doomsday Clock appropriately advance to within a few seconds of midnight.

But this way of thinking defeats the very purpose of the Doomsday Clock, which is to raise the alarm with policy-makers and the public about the dangerous course we are on. The existential dangers we face are only too real, and the failure of our public and private institutions to address and resolve them is the most egregious and potentially suicidal failure in the history of our species.

In abdicating its responsibility to warn us of the gravity of these dangers, the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists risks turning Einstein and Oppenheimer's call for sanity into yet another mechanism to normalize the suicidal insanity of our 21st century rulers.

The Bulletin appears to have joined all the other mainstream institutions of American society – the White House, Congress, the military-industrial complex, the Republican and Democratic Parties, the corporate media, Wall Street, academia – in normalizing the collective denial by which our corrupt ruling class lulls the public into sleepwalking toward mass extinction.

Remarkably, while the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists seems to have abandoned its founders' commitment to the urgency of nuclear disarmament, President Trump apparently recognizes that ending the nuclear arms race would be the crowning diplomatic achievement of his, or any, U.S. presidency.

In off-the-cuff remarks in a video call to the World Economic Forum in Davos on January 23rd, Trump suddenly raised the tantalizing prospect of nuclear disarmament negotiations with Russia and China. Talking about a phone call with President Xi of China, Trump elaborated,

"We'd [Trump and Xi?] like to see denuclearization. In fact, with President Putin, prior to an election result, which was, frankly, ridiculous, we were talking about denuclearization of our two countries, and China would have come along. China has a much smaller,

right now, nuclear armament than us or field than us, but they're going to be catching up at some point over the next four or five years."

"And I will tell you that President Putin really liked the idea of cutting way back on nuclear. And I think the rest of the world, we would have gotten them to follow. And China would have come along too. China also liked it. Tremendous amounts of money are being spent on nuclear, and the destructive capability is something that we don't even want to talk about today, because you don't want to hear it. It's too depressing."

"So, we want to see if we can denuclearize, and I think that's very possible. And I can tell you that President Putin wanted to do it. He and I wanted to do it. We had a good conversation with China. They would have been involved, and that would have been an unbelievable thing for the planet. And I hope it can be started up again."

What Trump says in these unscripted, off-the-cuff remarks is encouraging. It seems that President Xi reminded Trump of their discussions during his first term, and, at least for a moment, turned his attention to the ultimate "elephant in the room" hanging over all our heads.

As the fate of the world teeters in the hands of an unpredictable U.S. president and the enfeebled Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists muffles the powerful symbolism of its Doomsday Clock, CODEPINK has created an alternative for the precarious times we live in: the Peace Clock. Instead of counting down the minutes and seconds to our extinction, the Peace Clock calls on the U.S. government to take a series of specific, concrete steps toward nuclear disarmament.

That starts with agreeing to Russian and Chinese proposals for a ban on weapons in space and reinstating the 1972 ABM Treaty with Russia, including the removal of formerly prohibited U.S. anti-ballistic-missile installations in Poland and Romania. By such concrete, practical steps, the Peace Clock would, step by step, make the world safer and safer, leading sooner rather than later to its sixth and final step: the complete nuclear disarmament of all the nuclear weapons powers.

U.S. Rulers Versus South African Rulers – Versus Both Their Peoples And Ecologies

Patrick Bond

Surviving the Washington vs Pretoria diplomatic storm – which is increasingly beyond the protagonists on each side to manage given the lack of cool heads in U.S. President Donald Trump’s maniacal regime – will entail one of three routes forward:

- First, surrender immediately, and do what the bullies demand.
- Second, act as individualized states and societies, taking umbrage at brash yankee ignorance, misinformation and open racism – but in essence, come to the gunfight with just a water pistol, by acting alone.
- Third, organize other states and societies to encourage a full-fledged backlash against Trump and his main corporate supporters in Big Tech, banking and fossil capital, and in the process provide bottom-up solidarity to social forces in the U.S. and everywhere that are truly dedicated to equality and sustainability.

The South African government is at a fork, not sure whether to choose the second or third route, but with powerful local and international elements promoting the first.

Why are Trump-Musk-Rubio so insanely aggressive?

On February 6 at 2am, Trump’s foreign minister Marco Rubio announced a boycott of a February 20-21 event: “I will NOT attend the G20 Summit in Johannesburg. South Africa is doing very bad things. Expropriating private property. Using G20 to promote ‘solidarity, equality, & sustainability. In other words: DEI [diversity, equity and inclusion] and climate change.”

The DEI that Trump’s chief budget-cutter Elon

Musk hates most is legislation aimed at apartheid-rectifying affirmative action for South African corporations, which are the world’s most unethical according to PwC. What is termed ‘Black Economic Empowerment’ (BEE) aimed to create a black bourgeoisie, e.g. BEE’s two main beneficiaries, President Cyril Ramaphosa and his brother-in-law, fellow coal mining tycoon Patrice Motsepe. If Musk introduces Starlink satellite internet connections to South Africa, as Ramaphosa had requested last September during a New York meeting, BEE requires that Musk find a 30% co-ownership partner.

Musk calls these ‘openly racist ownership laws,’ apparently anathema to a white lad raised by an emotionally-abusive father, and trained in apartheid-era South Africa. As Musk told CBS reporter Lesley Stahl in 2018 of his youth, “It was very violent. It was not a happy childhood.” Stahl: “I do know that you were bullied at school.” Musk: “I was almost beaten to death, if you would call that bullied” – i.e., training elite white kids received at Bryanston (Johannesburg) and Pretoria Boys high schools, in order to run the apartheid system and corporate South Africa.

On February 7, Trump responded to Ramaphosa’s vague “we will not be bullied” State of the Nation Address remark the night before, with another blast: “South Africa has taken aggressive positions towards the United States and its allies, including accusing Israel, not Hamas, of genocide in the International Court of Justice.” Trump ruled that Washington “shall not provide aid or assistance to South Africa; and shall promote the resettlement of Afrikaner refugees escaping government-sponsored race-based discrimination, including racially discriminatory property confiscation.” (The latter charge is a canard as very little land reform has occurred.)



Moreover on February 10, Trump imposed 25% tariffs on all imports of aluminum and steel, including South African products. It is a fair bet that the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) trade deal will soon be cancelled, or at minimum, that South Africa will be expelled.

How to reply, effectively?

Across the world, while many national leaders (e.g. from Denmark and Greenland, Panama, Mexico, Colombia and Canada) take the second route of individualistic back-lash, there are those Trump intimidates – e.g., King Abdullah of Jordan – who make unnecessary concessions.

In the latter category, it was highly symbolical that Ramaphosa's presidential spokesperson Vincent Magwenya spoke just hours after Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu announced their desire for U.S. 'long-term ownership' of Gaza and the strip's

conversion into a real estate development that Trump termed the 'Riviera of the Middle East'. The world was disgusted, including even Washington's Axis-of-Genocide allies in London, Berlin, Brussels and Paris.

But in a February 6 press conference, just after Rubio's insults, Magwenya repeated an invitation first made on December 2 (the day after Trump threatened 100% tariffs on South African and BRICS exports): Ramaphosa expects Trump for a state visit before the G20 leaders' summit in November. As Magwenya explained, "We are hoping that there will be time even for a round of golf. We have been trying to urge the president to steal a bit more time to get his swing back in order and back in the groove so that when he takes President Trump out for a round of golf, he's able to put up a decent game."

How can one have a decent game with the 'Com-

mander in Cheat' who was nicknamed 'Pele' by cad-dies for his ability to kick the ball from the rough to the fairway, if the Presidency lacks the courage to utter even a word about Gaza's fate, Israel's repeated violations of the ceasefire, or even more murderous military attacks on Palestinians in the occupied West Bank.

Another losing game is betting on intra-corporate trade, especially when Trump slaps illegal, willy-nilly tariffs on imports, almost whimsically. Yet on February 15, Bloomberg reported that Pretoria's neoliberal Trade Minister, Parks Tau, is offering concessions to Washington in search of a bilateral free trade deal. The effect will be to assure profits for some of the world's most destructive corporations' South African branch plants and their major U.S. exports: BHP Billiton, ArcelorMittal, New York-listed (former South African oil parastatal) Sasol, the main German and Japanese automakers, and a handful of agri-corporates.

Trump has three realistic choices for trade with South Africa: 1) the status quo; 2) kick SA out of AGOA; and 3) kill AGOA completely. The latter seems most likely, given his hatred of Africa. The most unlikely would be a fourth option: a US-SA bilateral free trade deal, one favored by Tau, who is so pro-corporate he opposes ending South African coal sales to Israel because he celebrates WTO 'non-discrimination' (against genocidaires). This option would also mean Tau splitting South Africa out of Africa from the standpoint of U.S. trade.

The AGOA status quo overwhelmingly (95%+) provides tariff benefits to multinational corporates or to white plantation owners in automobile, steel, aluminum, petrochemical and vineyards. Most of these firms abuse SA's scarce electricity and water supplies, and they also engage in non-renewable resource depletion ('unequal ecological exchange'), export profits via illicit financial flows and emit vast greenhouse gases, thus impoverishing SA even further.

AGOA beneficiaries are also extremely capital-intensive, carbon-intensive industries: the 27 leading

electricity guzzlers in the 'Energy Intensive Users Group' consume 42% of the country's coal-fired power, but hire just 4% of South Africa's workers. Serving their interests, notes Bloomberg, Tau "considers such an accord better than preferential treatment because it would be a negotiated deal... a bilateral agreement would give South Africa a chance to negotiate tariffs with the U.S."

Pretoria still fuels Israel

The world needs Pretoria to drop vanities like Ramaphosa's time-out for golf practice or Tau's mythical free trade deal, and instead provide strong moral leadership. The world needs the South African Ambassador to Washington, Ebrahim Rasool, to reverse the ridiculous white-flag statement he made late last year: "We need to put away the [Palestine-solidarity] megaphone now. And [Ramaphosa's] words were, it is now sub judice...I understand the need to completely recalibrate...that's the art of the deal. It is about framing the messages in particular ways that make South Africa an ally [of Trump]."

Just as urgently, Ramaphosa should halt mining companies' support for Israel's 17.5% coal-fired power grid. On February 11, a massive bulk-cargo boat – the 'Cape Friendship' – arrived at Israel's Hadera Port directly from Richards Bay, South Africa, carrying 170,000 tons of coal. Asked by local Palestine activists to cut access to state-owned rail and port facilities for such shipments, Transport Minister Barbara Creecy simply ignored the correspondence.

While profits are drawn from such shipments (about \$8 million each), South Africa's Foreign Minister Ronald Lamola, meanwhile, authorized his Director General Zane Dangor to help organize the Hague Group: nine countries defending the leading international courts from Trump's lawlessness and sanctions. On January 31, their opening statement committed that South Africa, Colombia and other signatories would "prevent the docking of vessels at any port... in all cases where there is a clear risk of the vessel being used to carry military

fuel and weaponry to Israel, which might be used to commit or facilitate violations of humanitarian law, of international human rights law, and of the prohibition on genocide in Palestine”.

But politicians from both Pretoria and Bogota look foolish with pronouncements like these, when violated so rapidly: in the former by Cape Friendship, and in the latter because Glencore and Drummond Coal also still ship fuel to the Israeli military from Colombia (recently on the Algoma Value, Despina V and Navios Felix bulk carriers, which also service Richards Bay), long after President Gustavo Petro's June 2024 announcement that such coal sales would end.

Working with Glencore (a firm listed on both the Johannesburg and London stock markets), Ramaphosa's brother-in-law Patrice Motsepe has since 2006 made the most profits of any single South African from such shipments. Ramaphosa himself, as leader of Shanduka Coal, had until 2014 been Glencore's leading local partner.

(Also reflecting these loyalties, Motsepe also welcomed a pro-Israel statement by South Africa's chief rabbi at his 100,000-strong national Day of Prayer last December 10, and he is a FIFA soccer federation director representing Africa, joining that body's refusal to urgently end Israeli participation – although after Moscow's illegal 2022 invasion of Ukraine, FIFA rapidly tossed out the Russians. In 2020, Motsepe had regaled Trump with flattery at the Davos World Economic Forum, “Africa loves you,” a sleazy sentiment he had to retract after a continent-wide uproar.)

For the sake of profit, local coal exporters like Motsepe are undermining Ramaphosa's G20 solidarity-equality-sustainability hosting claims and making a mockery of Pretoria's support for Palestine. Two other Johannesburg-born directors on the Glencore board – CEO Gary Nagle and former Pretoria central banker Gill Marcus – went quiet at the company's 2024 annual meeting when challenged by a shareholder about the firm's 1.5 million tons of coal just sold to Israel.

From futile appeasement to anti-Trump activism

In contrast, there are other constituencies demanding that Pretoria shift decisively to the third route. In late January, the SA Federation of Trade Unions called for Boycott-Divestment-Sanctions against both the U.S. in general and Musk in particular (Tesla vehicles, X.com social media and Starlink subscriptions). At minimum, the Nairobi-based Pan African Climate Justice Alliance suggested, the world should impose urgent climate-catalysed sanctions on Trump for exiting the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change the day he took office.

If Trump-Musk-Rubio don't immediately retract their attacks on South Africa, perhaps Ramaphosa could explore backlash potentials among the G19 foreign ministers on February 20, and threaten that the U.S. be expelled from the G20, given Rubio's clear sabotage-oriented tweet. That penalty was first proposed by G7 leaders for Moscow in 2014 after Russia invaded Ukraine's Crimea, although the G20 did not implement it because of BRICS opposition.

Since Trump has also ended U.S. membership in the World Health Organization (with adverse implications for pandemic prevention), cancelled climate research and emissions-cuts commitments, and terminated USAID's support for humanitarian assistance, reproductive health programming and much more, it would make sense to have the G20 and all other multilateral institutions push back by threatening to kick the U.S. entirely out of the United Nations, especially its neo-colonial Security Council. Indeed, it would be reasonable to consider relocating all the reasonable UN officials who will barely survive the four years ahead if based at its Manhattan complex to, say, Nairobi, which enjoys the same UN host-city status as Geneva.

On February 2, Trump had uttered, “Terrible things are happening in South Africa. The uh leadership is uh doing some terrible things.” It is time for Ramaphosa to show what truly ‘terrible’ things – i.e., strategies to achieve geopolitical, economic and environmental justice – might mean for the lawless Trump regime.

Ramaphosa's latest massacre

Instead, the past few months witnessed Ramaphosa's attacks on his own former constituency, when during the 1980s he presided over the National Union of Mineworkers. These included state-imposed starvation of hundreds of informal-sector artisanal 'zama zamas' (colloquially in isiZulu, those who 'take a chance') in abandoned South Africa mines, shocking the country and the world. In mid-January, 87 bodies were discovered within Stilfontein gold mine's accessible tunnels in relatively close proximity to rescue gear, but countless more remain out of reach.

These corpses mark a low point in an explicit class war disguised by rampaging xenophobia that will please Donald Trump. The prospect of Trump visiting Johannesburg in November, when Ramaphosa hosts the G20 leaders' summit, is ironic. In a November 2024 speech made at the Rio de Janeiro G20, Ramaphosa railed against "the use of hunger as a weapon of war, as we are now seeing in some parts of the world, including in Gaza and Sudan."

But just days before, the Minister in the Presidency whom Ramaphosa often calls upon to explain state policy, Khumbudzo Ntshavheni, had rationalized many weeks of police oppression of Stilfontein mine-workers by calling them 'criminals.' She proclaiming that the police should "smoke them out!" through denial of food, water, and vital medicines – e.g., immune-strengthening antiretrovirals for workers living with HIV. By then the starvation strategy had been underway for three months. (Ntshavheni is subsequently being investigated by police for corruption in her prior municipal management job, in an act a judge ruled "boggles the mind.")

When more than 1800 Stilfontein mine workers surfaced, they were arrested. The vast majority were immigrants from neighboring states toiling in hellish conditions. Surviving workers had finally resorted to cannibalizing flesh from their dead comrades, as well as eating insects. The mutual-aid philosophy of Ubuntu – "I am because we are" – which Ramaphosa often invokes (e.g. at Davos last month), was, like solidarity with Palestine, reduced to empty rhetoric.

Multiple forms of extractive exploitation

About two hours' drive southwest of Johannesburg, old gold mines established in the 1940s-60s stretch across the landscape. Their depth of 2.8 kilometers – and 4 kilometres at Carletonville mine (halfway from Stilfontein to Johannesburg) – pockmarks the world's most prolific seam. The Reef's gold, discovered in the mid-1880s, once contained half the world's historic reserves.

But alongside exhausted gold, diamond, coal, platinum, manganese, iron ore, chrome and other mineral lodes for which South Africa is infamous, are the detritus of capitalist degradation: more than 6,000 mines were never shut properly. Once they are considered sufficiently depleted by formal mining companies, many are picked clean by desperate artisanal zama zama mineworkers. Residues still exist — e.g., in the columns that hold up roofs that are over a century old, or in scrapings along the tunnel walls — but are exceptionally hazardous to mine.

Writing on conditions at Stilfontein, Sunday Times reporter Isaac Mahlangu described "an underground hierarchy in which those who did the digging and mining at the lowest levels were mainly foreigners, the majority from Mozambique. Very few South Africans did this work. Those at higher levels were rope-pullers or were involved in processing the gold. Others were tasked with distributing food... Gold dust was the main currency for buying goods from the shop deep underground on level 10." One worker told him, "The gold that fills a Colgate [toothpaste] cap is worth \$162 underground, although the shop does not give change." A 5-kilogram bag of maize (corn) meal costs \$270, which is 25 times its cost above ground.

Accounts are still emerging of the way police and the hard-to-track corporate directors responsible at Stilfontein Gold Mining (who had long ago abandoned the site) contributed to the mass murder. Although mining capitalists are responsible for extreme environmental, social, and economic irresponsibility across the Reef, many working-class South Africans were provoked into making heartless, xenophobic remarks, egged on by high-profile right-wing populists catching the energy of the Trump Effect.

As pressure rose to save the mineworkers' lives, Deputy Police Minister Shela Polly Boshielo announced, "We are setting a wrong precedent, to say 'people can get under the ground, do illegal mining, get all the money and everything, and then we will then come and rescue them as government'... So we are not even dealing with South Africans, who really, you can say, they're trying to make a living. They [immigrant mineworkers] are not. They are illegal."

Even more vitriolic remarks were made by Patriotic Alliance Deputy President Kenny Kunene (a Johannesburg municipal leader in partnership with Ramaphosa's ruling African National Congress): "I have no sympathy for those who have died stealing the wealth of our country... I have absolutely no sympathy. They must die like rats underground there, all of them. They must burn in hell." A common theme is that the artisanal mineworkers steal from society, as implied by another politician, Action SA President Herman Mashaba: "I personally have got no sympathy whatsoever for criminality."

Also in mid-January, Minerals and Petroleum Resources Minister Gwede Mantashe announced his opposition to local community activists who suggested regularization of artisanal mining, i.e., that his ministry "give licences to steal gold to Mozambicans, Zimbabweans and Lesotho nationals. It's a criminal activity. It's an attack on our economy by foreign nationals in the main." Mantashe attempted to put a number to the theft: "Illegal mining is a war on the economy... it is criminals attacking the economy. Precious metals illicit trade is estimated in 2024 to about \$3.2 billion, a leakage on the value of the economy of the country."

Against sub-imperialism

There are three possible replies to xenophobes. The first appeals to basic, genuine Ubuntu humanistic values. The most active trade union supporter is General Industries Workers Union of South Africa president Mametlwe Sebei, who is also a human rights lawyer. When two government ministers (Mantashe and the police minister) visited Stilfontein in mid-January, Sebei told a community meeting not far from the mine

shafts: "These ministers are here at the scene of the crime. Hundreds of miners have died underground in what can only be a bloody culmination of their treacherous policies of the police operation, planned and executed with the approval at the highest echelons of the state, including the Cabinet." The community responded by refusing to hear the ministers, forcing them to retreat in shame.

A second rebuttal is to point out that compared to the artisanal mineworkers' low-tech extraction systems, there is a vast outflow of mineral wealth carried out by multinational mining corporations, nowhere near compensated for by reinvestment in the economy, society, and infrastructure.

A third is that surplus value feeding South African mining capitalism has been drawn from immigrant workers dating back at least 150 years, and those countries are today themselves resource-cursed by Johannesburg firms. As explained by Solomon Mondlane of Mozambique's opposition Democratic Alliance Coalition, "50% of our gas in Mozambique goes to South Africa. 80% of our electricity in Mozambique goes to South Africa. And they buy it on a less amount, while here in Mozambique, we pay double the amount for what is produced in our country. And they will tell us we are busy flocking into their countries, when in actual fact our country is being looted by South Africa."

The best-known local labor leader, Zwelinzima Vavi of the SA Federation of Trade Unions, agreed: "South Africa is often being accused of being a sub-imperialist and playing that role to its neighbors and to the rest of the African continent. Our daughters and sons [serving in the SA military] have been sent to the northern parts of Mozambique to fight a war on behalf of multinational companies [Total, ExxonMobil, ENI, BP, etc.] that are lining up to exploit the massive gas fields around Cabo Delgado. And they have been there, of course, with a clear instruction from France. The French President, if you remember, came unscheduled to Union Buildings [in May 2021], clearly to lobby South Africa to ensure that it has soldiers to put guards on the vast gas fields in the northern parts of Mozambique."

Vavi continued, “This is what makes me sick — when people say, ‘They are stealing our mines, they are stealing our gold.’ Hold on, what are you talking about? Whose gold? How have you benefited, as a black South African, from this gold that you want to protect? And to celebrate the death of people ‘who are stealing our gold and who are illegal foreign nationals’? Mozambicans do not come to South Africa by choice. They do not cross the Kruger National Park such that they discover only a wallet [after immigrants are eaten by lions, leopards and hyenas], when a whole body cannot be traced... If you were to spend four or five days in a week with your children crying to you, sitting helplessly, not knowing what to do? People are driven by desperation. The fact that most of the people who are being rescued in these mines — zama zamas — are from Mozambique is not a coincidence. It’s because the revolution there failed, just like the revolution here in South Africa is failing.”

Ramaphosa’s own failings are indisputable; once the inspiring leader of the National Union of Mineworkers during apartheid, his major investment in Lonmin in 2012 led him to treat a wildcat strike as ‘dastardly criminal’ in emails he wrote 24 hours before the police massacred 34 platinum rock-drill operators who were demanding a \$1000/month wage. Ramaphosa was a board member of Lonmin and advised the company to continue offshore illicit financial flows.

Going forward, South African solidarity with those struggling in Mozambique must be reignited, for the latter’s revolution against Portuguese colonialism had helped motivate an upsurge of confidence and the Soweto student protests in 1976. Mutual aid with the Mozambican citizenry is needed today, especially in forging stronger community-worker ties, as new rebels have risen up against the now-corrupted nationalists. That’s the anti-xenophobia agenda being forged by the artisanal miners themselves, backed by GIWU-SA, SAFTU, Mining Affected Communities United in Action, and progressive lawyers.

As they take forward demands for a Commission of Enquiry into the hundreds of deaths, part of the work is a psychological reversal of the hatred found in state and society. This is necessary so that the ‘stealing’ of

sovereign mineral wealth is better understood — as a core process of multinational corporate extractivism — and so that internationalism replaces xenophobia.

Can the 2025 G20 reignite internationalism? Or will it, as in Rio, coopt social militancy?

Ramaphosa’s use of the G20 chairing platform will include an attempt to relegitimize, to erase memories of Stilfontein. On February 20 he will welcome to Johannesburg the likes of Britain’s David Lammy, Germany’s soon-to-be-dethroned Annalena Baerbock, Kaja Kallis from the EU and several other ethically-challenged pro-Zionist Western foreign ministers; and from the original BRICS, Brazil’s Mauro Vieira, Russia’s Sergey Lavrov, India’s Subrahmanyam Jaishankar and China’s Wang Yi (who are often also tasked with defending their elites’ prolific commercial and military ties to Israel), plus reactionaries from Argentina, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye — but not forgetting just one progressive, Juan Ramón de la Fuente from Mexico.

Because the G20 also entails a variety of business, civil society and academic side show events, the group’s host also possesses divide-and-conquer capacities, as were evident in Rio de Janeiro last November. In a planning meeting for the 2025 G20, Johannesburg-based ‘Fight Inequality Alliance’ leader Jenny Ricks pointed out how, “President Lula requested that movements and unions join the G20 ‘Social20’ — not the Peoples’ Summit — in the context of far-right fascism in Brazil. He wanted a more united thrust. A number of social and labor movements moved out of the People’s Summit into the S20, and that caused enormous tension.”

Just after the Rio G20, Laura Corcuera from the Spanish e-zine El Salto offered a long article with an optimistic title: “Brazilian social movements open a new cycle of struggle against global financial capitalism.” But she pointed out how Lula’s G20-Social cooptation of the Central Única dos Trabalhadores trade union and the Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (Landless Peoples Movement) “generated harsh criticism among Brazilian and Latin American grassroots social movements for having demobilized protests against the G20.” According to Sandra Quintela

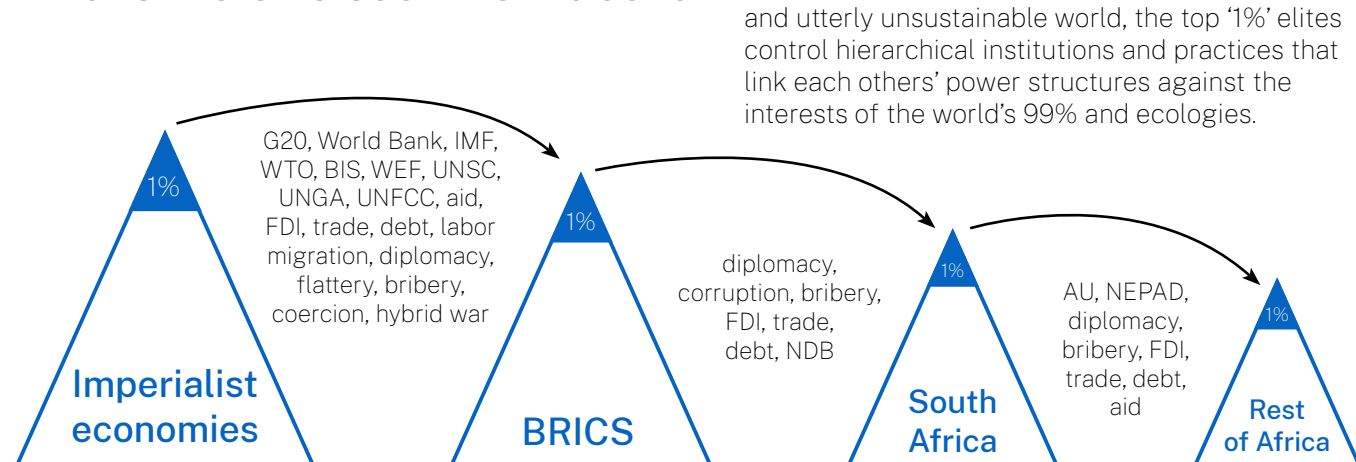
of the Jubileu Sul (anti-austerity and debt) network, “We do not want to legitimize that place as a space for dialogue. That is why we held this People’s Summit, an autonomous, sovereign and self-financed space.”

South Africans know well the fragmentation of politics due to ideological divergences, and 2024 was a test of whether the centre could hold within the country’s centre-right elites. It has held so far, within a Government of National Unity as prone to splintering as the 1994-1996 model just after apartheid. But at the global scale, given that G20 leaders’ own political delegitimization continues in many member

countries, you would be very brave indeed to predict that a bloc of the most powerful, venal rulers can today even properly debate – much less deliver – Solidarity, Equality and Sustainability.

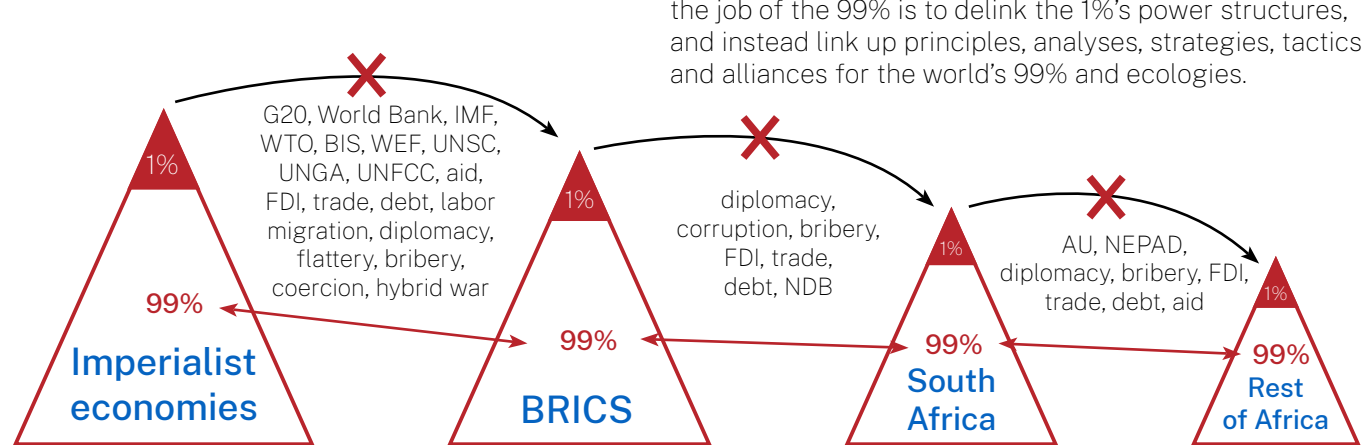
Where does that leave progressives who do not want to be bamboozled by Ramaphosa and his talented bureaucrats’ progressive phraseology? One graphic representation of a transnational capitalist class and its state supporters versus the 99% was made in a couple of (North and South) pyramids by Kevin Danagher, co-founder of San Francisco-based Global Exchange, to reflect differences between elite and grassroots globalizations. Here’s a tweak, from above:

What’s the G20 seen from above?



The opposite effort – breaking the chains binding the top 1%, so as to make new ones linking the 99% – is now needed more than ever.

What’s the G20 from below?



Gaza's Unbreakable Resistance: A Historical Perspective on the War and Its Aftermath

Ramzy Baroud

The problem with political analysis is that it often lacks historical perspective and is mostly limited to recent events.

The current analysis of the Israeli war on Gaza falls victim to this narrow thinking. The ceasefire agreement, signed between Palestinian groups and Israel under Egyptian, Qatari, and US mediation in Doha on January 15, is one example.

Some analysts, including many from the region, insist on framing the outcome of the war as a direct result of Israel's political dynamics. They argue that Israel's political crisis is the main reason the country failed to achieve its declared and undeclared war objectives—namely, gaining total “security control” over Gaza and ethnically cleansing its population.

However, this analysis assumes that the decision to go to war or not is entirely in Israel's hands. It continues to elevate Israel's role as the only entity capable of shaping political outcomes in the region, even when those outcomes do not favor Israel.

Another group of analysts focuses entirely on the American factor, claiming that the decision to end the war ultimately rested with the White House. Shortly after the ceasefire was officially declared in Gaza, a pan-Arab TV channel asked a group of experts whether it was the Biden or Trump administration that deserved credit for supposedly “pressuring Israel” to agree to a ceasefire.

Some argue that it was Trump's envoy to Israel, Steve Witkoff, who denied Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu any room to maneuver, thus forcing him, albeit reluctantly, to accept the ceasefire terms.

Others counter by saying that the agreement was initially presented by the Biden administration. They argue that Biden's supposedly active diplomacy ultimately led to the ceasefire.

The latter group fails to acknowledge that it was Biden's unconditional support for Israel that sustained the war. His UN envoy's constant rejection of ceasefire calls at the Security Council made international efforts to stop the war irrelevant.

The former group, however, ignores the fact that Israeli society was already at a breaking point. The war on Gaza had proven unwinnable. This means that, whether Trump pressured Netanyahu or not, the outcome of the war was already sealed. Continuing the war would have meant the implosion of Israeli society.

On the Palestinian side, some analyses—affiliated with one faction or another—exploit the war's outcome for political gain. This type of thinking is extremely insensitive and must be wholly rejected.

There are also those hoping to play a role in Gaza's reconstruction to gain political and financial leverage and increase their influence. This is a shameful stance, given the total destruction of Gaza and the urgent need to recover the thousands of bodies trapped under rubble, as well as to heal the wounded and the population as a whole.

One thing all these analyses overlook is that Israel failed in Gaza because the population of Gaza proved unbreakable. Such notions are often neglected in mainstream political discussions, which tend to commit to an elitist line. This line is entirely removed from the daily struggles and collective choices of ordinary people, even when they achieve extraordinary feats.



Image by Jesus Barraza, Palestine Poster Project Archives

Gaza's history is one of both pain and pride. It stretches back to ancient civilizations and includes great resistance against invasion, such as the three-month siege by Alexander the Great and his Macedonian army in 332 BCE.

Back then, Gazans resisted and endured for months before their leader, Batis, was captured, tortured to death, and the city was sacked.

This legendary resilience and *sumoud* (steadfastness) proved crucial in numerous other fights against foreign invaders, including resistance to Napoleon Bonaparte's army in 1799.

Even if some of Gaza's current population is unaware of that history, they are a direct product of it. From this perspective, neither Israeli political dynamics, the change of the US administration, nor any other factor is relevant.

This is known as "long history" or *longue durée*. Far from being merely an academic concept, the

long legacy of resistance against injustice has shaped the collective mindset of the Palestinian population in Gaza over the years. How else can we explain how a small, isolated, and impoverished population, living in such a tiny piece of land, managed to withstand firepower equivalent to many nuclear bombs?

The war ended because Gaza withstood it—not because of the kindness of an American president. It is crucial that we emphasize this point repeatedly, rather than seeking inconclusive and irrational answers.

It matters little how we define victory and defeat for a nation still suffering the consequences of a war of annihilation. However, it is important to recognize that Palestinians in Gaza stood their ground, despite immense losses, and prevailed. This can only be credited to them—a nation that has historically proven unbreakable. This truth, rooted in "long history," remains valid today.

A Coalition of Slovenian NGOs File Indictment Against Israeli Politicians and Army Commanders

Urška Breznik

On Friday, November 22nd 2024, a coalition of eight Slovenian non-profit NGOs and the Slovenian movement for the rights of Palestinians filed an indictment against eight Israeli politicians and army commanders with the Slovenian Public Prosecutor's Office. The indictment is the direct result of Slovenian civil society's disappointment with the Slovenian government's inaction in the face of the ongoing genocide and displacement of Palestinian people.

The coalition is comprised of NGO's that regularly collaborate when there are pressing issues in Slovenian society that need to be addressed, for example the defense of the right to clean water in the Slovenian constitution when it is being threatened by corporate interests, the defense of abortion rights when right wing parties want to remove it from the Slovenian constitution, and so on. Some of the organizations have, in the previous years, also collaborated on actions and events in solidarity with Palestine, such as organising lectures, book presentations, exhibitions, and demonstrations.

In November 2024, after 13 months of the genocide that Israel is committing against Palestinians, some of the organisations have decided that it is time to take legal action against Israeli politicians and army leaders. Since the only thing that the Slovenian government has done in support of Palestine is to recognize it as a state in June 2024, the coalition feels that by filing an indictment, it can put pressure on the government to exercise more pressure against Israel.

With the help of a pro bono lawyer, they prepared an indictment in which they call for the prosecu-



Rally supporting the liberation of Palestine in Maribor, Slovenia

tion for the criminal offences in connection with the reasonable suspicion of having committed crimes against humanity under Chapter 14 of the Criminal of the Code of the Republic of Slovenia (KZ-1/ CC-1):

- Article 100: Genocide
- Article 101: Crimes against humanity
- Article 102: War Crimes

The indictment was filed against (the functions named are those that the persons were holding by the time the indictment was filed): Benjamin Netanjahu, Prime Minister of the State of Israel, Yoav Gallant, Israeli Minister of Defence, Benjamin "Benny" Gantz, Minister in the Israeli Government



A Coalition of Slovenian NGOs File Indictment Against Israeli Politicians and Army Commanders

without Portfolio, Ron Dermer, Minister of Strategic Affairs in the Government of Israel, Gadi Eisenkot, Minister without Portfolio in the Israeli Government, Aryeh Makhoul Deri, Minister without Portfolio in the Israeli Government, Herzl “Herzi” Halevi, Chief of the General Staff of the Israeli Armed Forces and Aluf Tamir Yadai, Commander of the Ground Forces of the Israeli Armed Forces.

The indictment states that the suspects committed these crimes from 7 October 2023 on, as senior officials of the State of Israel under whose command the armed forces have conducted military operations under the single name of Operation Steel Sword against the Palestinian civilian population in the Gaza Strip, whereby by November 2024:

1. More than 43,000 Palestinians were killed, out of more than two million living in the Gaza Strip before the start of military operations. This represents more than 2% of the population. Of this number, according to the latest United Nations reports, 70 percent are children and women. More than 100,000 people have been injured in the military attacks and it is estimated that more than 10,000 are missing under the rubble. By indiscriminately bombing a densely populated area (so-called “carpet bombing”), the Israeli army has indiscriminately killed or seriously injured part of the Palestinian people, which, according to international standards and Article 100 of the Criminal Code-1, meets the legal qualification of the crime of genocide;
2. The deliberate creation of such living conditions for the Palestinian people, inter alia, by preventing access to food and medicine and by deliberately destroying the water supply infrastructure and the health care system, which further contributed to the partial destruction of the population of the Gaza Strip. This constitutes a crime against humanity under international law and Article 101 of the Criminal Code;
3. The following war crimes have been continuously committed:
 - deliberate attacks against civilians not directly participating in hostilities, including deliberate attacks against children;

- deliberate attacks against civilian objects, i.e. objects which are not military targets;
- attacks and bombing of undefended towns, villages, dwellings or buildings which are not military objectives; and
- attacks against United Nations and other humanitarian personnel,

whereby the suspects knew, or by virtue of their position should have known, that these offences were being committed, and even in some cases openly encouraged them to do so.

Article 13 (paragraph 3) of the Criminal Code (CC-1) allows the Republic of Slovenia to prosecute anyone who commits an offence abroad which, under an international treaty or under general principles of law recognised by the international community, is prosecutable in all countries, regardless of where it is committed. The Commentary to the CC-1 clearly confirms the view that there is a consensus in the international community that these are the crimes of which the applicants allege that the suspects are guilty – genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

In the Republic of Slovenia, the principle of the universal applicability of the Criminal Code (in the substantive sense) and universal jurisdiction (in the procedural sense) applies. As a result, anyone can be investigated and prosecuted in the Republic of Slovenia, including nationals of a foreign state, who has committed any of the following crimes against a national of a foreign state abroad – genocide (Art. 100), war crimes (Art. 101), and crimes against humanity (Art. 102).

However, pursuant to Article 14 (paragraph 7) of the Criminal Code, perpetrators who have committed the above-mentioned criminal offences against citizens of a foreign country abroad may be prosecuted in the Republic of Slovenia only with the permission of the Minister of Justice. The applicants are aware that the Prosecutor's Office must request the Minister of Justice to grant permission for prosecution. However, in the view of the applicants, a direct request to the Minister of

Justice will lead to transparency in the Minister's decision-making. The Republic of Slovenia and its officials are obliged under Slovenian law and international law to ensure the prosecution and punishment of the most serious international crimes. The Prosecutor's Office is obliged to prosecute those responsible for genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity, in accordance with Slovenian criminal law and the Republic of Slovenia's international legal obligations. Slovenia is one of the countries with universal jurisdiction that can try those accused of these crimes even in absentia. It should also be pointed out that the Republic of Slovenia is currently a member of the Security Council and, by virtue of its function, is obliged to serve as a role model in the international community by concretely prosecuting those responsible for the genocide in Gaza. The Public Prosecutor's Office is Slovenia's representative in this regard and is also obliged to initiate criminal prosecutions against those accused.

The wider Slovenian civil society has in the last 15 months held demonstrations, press conferences, public discussions and faculty sit-ins to remind the Slovenian government of its obligations to international law in regards of the Israeli genocide of Palestinians in Gaza. In the last month, it has also been revealed that the Slovenian government still buys weapons from Israel, despite claiming it had stopped in October 2023. These revelations have caused a great uproar among civil society and in most centre and left-wing media.

By January 2025, the Specialised State Prosecutor's Office informed the coalition that it has started pre-trial procedures. The Ministry of Justice has not yet replied about whether they have granted permission for the prosecution and has not yet answered the follow up question about if they intend to do so. The coalition has therefore filed an administrative complaint for silence on the part of an authority.

The legal action of the Slovenian NGO's against Israel is one of many around the world that is currently taking place and whose goal is to punish those responsible for the genocide and displacement of the Palestinian people.

Palestinian March of Defiance and Israeli Trashing of International Conventions

M. Reza Behnam

Palestinians for decades have stood their ground and against all odds have continued to live where they rightfully belong: their ancestral homeland.

Beginning with the current ceasefire of 19 January, they have begun their march of defiance north to a Gaza which has been leveled by genocidal Israelis.

The inspiration of Palestinian resistance and steadfastness against Israel's apocalyptic campaign in Gaza has thrown America's hegemonic "world order" into disorder. The global community has been shaken by America's ruination of the "rules-based order," in which there is one set of rules for Israel and another for the rest of the world.

Washington has spared no effort and expense to maintain its Central Command military agent in the Middle East, even at the expense of weakening and destroying, the very institutions and organizations it created to provide order and stability after the devastation of the Second World War.

While the U.S. and Israel have tried to control and manipulate the fate of Palestine, it is important to recognize that international law is on the side of the Palestinians. And as they lay waste to the rule of law in their pursuit of dominance, it is necessary to focus attention on the framework of cooperation among nations and protocol of rights that were adopted after 1945 to create order out of chaos. This is especially the case since Israel continues to act as if it were uniquely above all international laws and norms.

A recent example among many of Israel's contempt for United Nations organizations established to oversee the execution of international

law and humanitarian relief is passage of legislation by the Israeli Knesset banning the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) from operating in war-ravaged Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

After World War II, four treaties, the 1949 Geneva Conventions, were adopted to insure that the systematic atrocities committed against civilian populations, particularly the genocide committed against European Jews, never happened again. The Conventions and two additional protocols (1977 and 2005) have become the foundation of modern international law.

In an ironic twist of history, Israel, the self-proclaimed haven for Jews, has blatantly and continuously violated the Geneva Conventions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory—Gaza Strip, the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

The following are a number of examples of Israel's refusal to be accountable to the rule of law and willingness to trash the international order to maintain power.

Israel's illegal Occupation of Historic Palestine

Now more than ever it must be emphasized that a country cannot keep and occupy land it has taken by force. The prohibition on territorial conquest is enshrined in the 1945 UN Charter, specifically Article 2(4). To acquire territory after a war, a peace treaty must be negotiated and agreed upon by all parties involved.

Since its declaration of statehood in May 1948, Israel has engaged in two major wars with its Arab



neighbors. It has never negotiated a treaty or returned Palestinian land it has seized by conquest in its wars in 1948 and 1967.

By the end of the 1948 war, Israel controlled not only the land the United Nations General Assembly suggested for a Jewish state, but also 60 percent of the area proposed for the Palestinian state. And since its preemptive war of 1967, Israel has continued to illegally control the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the Syrian Golan Heights.

In a landmark ruling on 19 July 2024, the International Court of Justice (ICJ), also known as the World Court, concluded that Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories after 1967 amounted to de facto annexation, which violated the UN Charter's

prohibition against the acquisition of territory by war. It ruled that Israel's occupation was unlawful and must end.

Although the Court limited its ruling to the prolonged occupation, settlement and annexation of territory after 1967, its decision, however, could easily have been applied to Palestinian land seized and occupied in the 1948 war — land renamed Israel.

The ICJ has ruled that Israel must begin to decolonize. As a member state of the United Nations and party to the Geneva Conventions, it has an obligation to comply. In addition, all parties to the Convention have the duty to insure Tel Aviv's compliance. Instead of compliance, Israel has truculently entrenched its presence, increased its

violence and planned for annexation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

Right of Return

The right of return of refugees is considered a fundamental principle of international law derived primarily from the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 13). Additionally, UN General Assembly Resolutions 194 and 3236 further reaffirmed the principles and rules already anchored and binding in humanitarian and refugee law.

Israel's 1948/1967 wars of expansion have made Palestinians refugees in their own land. In keeping with the Zionist project to ethnically cleanse Palestine, Israel has consistently rejected their right of return to their homes.

The World Court ruled unequivocally that all Palestinians displaced during the 1967 occupation must be allowed to return to their original place of residence and that Israel is obligated to “evacuate all settlers” from existing colonies established during the occupation.

Resettlement (euphemism for removal) to other countries has always been Israel's solution to what they term the “refugee problem.” The country's racist politicians have embraced President Donald Trump's proposals to “clean out” Gaza by removing Palestinians to Jordan and Egypt; a plan advocated in 2023 by Israeli Finance/Defense Minister Bezalel Smotrich.

This became clear during a White House “press conference of the absurd” on 4 February, when convicted felon turned president, Donald J. Trump, and indicted war criminal, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, arrogantly discussed Gaza in terms of a potential real estate venture.

In absolute disregard for international law, Trump talked of taking permanent control of Gaza, saying “We'll own it.” He also proposed moving (ethnically cleanse) Palestinians to other

countries, redeveloping the territory and turning it into the “Riviera of the Middle East.” There was not a word of rebuilding Gaza for Palestinians or words of securing a peace.

Politicians, like Trump, are incapable of understanding the deep roots that displacement and removal have in the historic struggle of Palestinians and in their determination to remain on the land until they achieve their national aspirations.

Right to Resist

The global community has agreed that all people have the right to freedom and self-determination. To appease Israel, Palestinians have been made the exception.

The Palestinian right to resist Israeli domination and apartheid colonization has been expunged from most reporting by the U.S. legacy media. Instead, their struggle for self-determination is described as “terrorism” and those who resist characterized as “extremists and terrorists.”

The Fourth Geneva Convention and Additional Protocol I explicitly recognize the right to resist occupation as part of the right to self-determination—a fundamental human right.

Protocol I, which updated the 1949 law, extended the definition of international armed conflict to include wars of national liberation. It explicitly affirms the right to resist occupation, including armed struggle, in situations of colonial domination, foreign occupation and against racist regimes. The amendment gave legal legitimacy to the “resort to arms by national liberation movements.”

It is important to underscore that international law effectively underpins and codifies not only the right to resist occupation, but also the legitimacy of resistance groups like the Palestine Liberation Organization, Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) and Islamic Jihad.

Right to Water

Israel's Zionist founders were mindful that their dream of a Jewish homeland in Palestine was sustainable only if they controlled all the water resources of Palestine, parts of Jordan, Lebanon and Syrian Golan Heights. Plans to dominate the water resources were set in motion soon after 1948.

Following its 1967 war, Israel placed the water resources of the West Bank, East Jerusalem, Gaza Strip and Golan Heights under its military control. In 1982, authority over Palestinian water was transferred to the Israeli national water company.

In its October 2023 war on the Gaza Strip, Israel has deliberately obstructed Palestinian access to adequate amounts of water needed for survival. Much of the water that Gazans have had access to has been unsuitable for drinking.

Access to clean water is a fundamental human right. In its 2024 advisory opinion, the ICJ concluded: "In depriving the Palestinian people of its enjoyment of the natural resources in the Occupied Palestinian Territory for decades, Israel has impeded the exercise of its [Palestinians] right to self-determination."

Since its initial July ruling, the Court has issued provisional measures reaffirming its prior order. Israel has violated all ICJ orders, including access to adequate food and drink.

Conclusion

Currently the world is experiencing much of the same shock and insecurity that was widespread after the Second World War. To preserve Israeli hegemony in the Middle East, the United States, contrary to its own interests, has made a mockery of the very framework of international cooperation it played a major role in constructing.

It has been dismissive of the World Court by failing to act on its ruling that obligates UN member states "not to recognize as legal the unlawful presence of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory" or render aid or assistance in maintaining the occupation.

Israel's politics of force and cruelty have prevailed due to the absolution and apologia afforded it by the United States and compliant Western governments. Powerful political, academia, corporate and media forces have labored to render the United Nations irrelevant and have strained to silence the Palestinian narrative and voices.

Silence has been the breeding ground for genocide and chaos. German Lutheran pastor, Martin Niemöller (1892-1954), imprisoned for his opposition to Nazi rule, understood that national environment well when long ago he reminded us:

"First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a socialist.

Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a trade unionist.

Then they came for Jews, and I did not speak out—because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me."

Interestingly, the Old Testament Genesis 27:36 also speaks to the travails that Palestinians have endured: "And Esau cried, is not he rightly named Jacob (supplanter)? For he hath supplanted [deceived] me these two times; he took away my birthright and behold now he hath taken away my blessing."

Palestinians guided by international law are the only ones to decide the future of the state of Palestine. Not the United States and certainly not Israel.

Review: The Heat Will Kill You First: Life and Death on a Scorched Planet

Kim Scipes

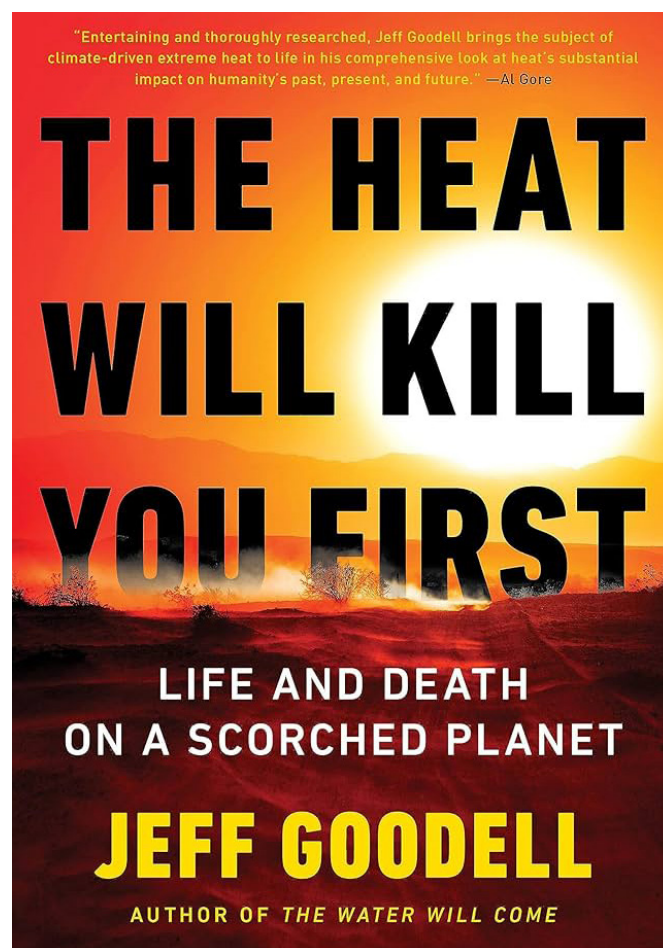
Jeff Goodell's latest book is a detailed examination of heat and its dangers on a warming planet. It deserves wide readership. Presented cogently and beautifully written in an accessible style, he powerfully examines his chosen subject from a myriad of angles. And from a global perspective. Ultimately, however, it is a very frustrating book.

The title basically makes his argument: of all the threats to human, animal, and plant well-being on the planet, as well as to the environment overall, "The Heat Will Kill You First." He unequivocally states, "The Earth is getting hotter due to the burning of fossil fuels." Further, "... global temperatures have risen 2.2 degrees [all temperatures in the book, unless otherwise noted, are on the Fahrenheit scale-KS] since the preindustrial era and are on track to warm to 6 degrees or more."

But he wants you to understand that heat is more than an increase in temperature; he wants you to understand that "... heat is an active force, one that can bend railroad tracks and can kill you before you even understand that your life is at risk." To explain what's going on, he gives a powerful example: "... by one measure, the ocean absorbs the equivalent of the heat released from three nuclear bombs every second (emphasis added)." He sums it up clearly:

"This heat we are pumping into the sky is the prime mover of the climate crisis. The climate impacts you hear about most often, from sea-level rise to drought to wildfires, are all second-order effects of a hotter planet. The first-order effect is heat. It is the energy of planetary crisis...."

He takes it a little further: "Extreme heat is remaking our planet into one in which large swaths may become inhospitable to human life." And, not only important is the amount of increased heat but the



rate of change beyond that normally experienced, especially by animals and plants: "... if the temperature they're used to ... changes too far, they die."

With that beginning, Goodell tells a story about a family (which I assume he knew) who lived in the Sierra Nevada foothills of California, near Mariposa. The young couple and their daughter went out for a day hike. Tragically, all three never made it back home; they didn't really consider the heat they might be facing.

He travels the world to discuss various issues. One thing that grabbed my attention: in 2003, over

70,000 people died in Europe in over a few days because of the heat which, as Goodell notes correctly, is more than all of the US servicemen and women who were killed during the Vietnam War!

That same year—the warmest to date in human history—he points out.

Nobody expected a 70-degree hump in temperature during the heat wave in Antarctica in 2023. Yet it happened. Nobody expected 121 degrees in British Columbia. And yet it happened. Nobody expected 104 degrees in London. As of 2023, the current record in Phoenix is 122 degrees.

He examines the impact on agriculture in the Rio Grande Valley in Texas, the warming of the oceans and the dangers to the global aquamarine food chain, the widening expansion of viruses around the globe, the dangers to those who must work outside in the heat, the importance of air conditioning, the introduction of naming heat waves so as to draw much greater attention to these killers before they strike, the importance of parks and greenspaces to urban landscapes, ending with his account of a skiing trip across Baffin Island in the Arctic and his encounter with a mama polar bear and her two cubs.

By the end of the book, the reader will have a strong exposure to the issue of heat and the dangers therein. Written by someone who often writes for *Rolling Stone*, where I first came across his work, he utilizes a number of stories to convey the situation and the dangers of doing nothing. There is no doubt in my mind as to Goodell's having nailed the issue of heat to the wall.

However, this is where he drops the ball: he doesn't say anything beyond heat is bad and we need to do something about it.

Accordingly—and this is where my frustration comes in—is that he presents no solutions nor even system-wide analysis. Here's a big problem, which he exquisitely details in much if not all of its complexity, but he fails to pull it together in a way that at least suggests possible ways forward: ok, it's

hot and it's going to continue to get hotter if we do nothing, but ...?

The reality is that our economic system, our capitalist economic system, is killing us. Capitalism depends upon continued expansion, growth, to survive. Yet, it is this growth—more, more, more!—that is killing us.

The fact is that continued expansion depends on increased energy use. Most of our energy utilized today is still derived from fossil fuels—again, the collective name for oil, methane (or natural gas), and coal—and when these fossil fuels are burned, they emit what are called “greenhouse gases.” These gases—carbon dioxide or CO₂, methane or CH₄, nitrous oxides or NXO, and water vapor—when emitted, attack the atmosphere that protects humans, animals, and most plants from solar heat and light. (The atmosphere—a chemical concoction that is approximately 78 percent Nitrogen and 21 percent Oxygen and held in place around the planet by Earth's gravity—surrounds the planet and protects the Earth by reflecting most of the solar energy that strikes it into space, away from the planet, although it also allows a certain amount of heat and light to enter inside of the atmosphere.) By attacking the atmosphere that surrounds the planet, more heat gets inside the atmosphere, and more of what gets in is trapped, further warming the planet. This, in turn, causes ice to melt (reducing its reflexivity of solar energy, allowing more heat to remain inside of the atmosphere), oceans to rise, the oceans to warm even more, etc., etc., in an extended positive feedback loop, worsening everything, including the temperature.

We simply cannot live as we are today; continuing the growth model that we are on, our established production system, will endanger the survivability of large numbers of humans, animals, and many plants into the 22nd Century. We are going to have to drastically reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and quickly. From the science I'm reading, there is no alternative.

As has been known for over 100 years, scientists have shown that adding carbon dioxide (CO₂) into the atmosphere has raised the temperature of the Earth. We now know that for over 800,000 years—no misprint!—the amounts of CO₂ in the atmosphere have never exceeded 300 parts per million (ppm). Yes, natural processes, such as exploding volcanoes have released CO₂ into the atmosphere, causing heating to increase and decrease over time, but never in this time period has it ever exceeded 300 ppm. Until around the year 1911. Today, according to NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration), one of the most scientifically renowned bodies in the world, it is 425 ppm (see NASA, 2025). This has warmed the planet approximately 1.5 degree Centigrade since the 1850-1900 period, roughly the beginning of widespread industrialization.

While that might not seem like much of a warming, nonetheless, it has caused myriad changes to our planet as was mentioned above.

To prevent this problem from escalating further, emissions must be stopped and, ideally, the CO₂ and associated chemicals removed from the atmosphere; but in any case, stopped.

And not in the real-distant future: according to the best science available today, if we don't make major changes by roughly 2030, we're going to see the beginning of extermination of the human species by the turn of the 22nd Century, a mere 75 years from now. That's within the lifetimes of many of us, and certainly within the lifetime of Gen Z's children.

However, even at best, most writers ignore the issue of power and domination beyond the economic system. In other words, I argue that there is more to the world than economics; that there is also a political realm that is not limited by economic production, distribution, and consumption. [There are other realms as well—such as community and kinship—but I want to limit my comments here to the political aspect.] In other words, this political realm operates on its own dynamic—the striving

for power and domination—that is not constrained by economics.

This is important in that it allows us to include the concept of “Empire” in our analysis. Basically, the idea of Empire incorporates much of human history, where those having power actively seek to dominate and control not only people and area of their own land, but also those of other lands, whether because of seeking economic resources (such as raw materials, natural resources, related production, and/or human beings for home-country development), geo-strategic advantages (such as naval base locations), or even social benefits [such as demonizing “others” (i.e., “minorities”)] so as to buy social acquiescence from the majority), or any other reason that those seeking this power can put forth; a capitalist analysis simply cannot encompass all of this without stretching itself all out of shape.

In other words, Empire allows us to understand how one capitalist—or usually, one group of capitalists—can either seek to dominate or protect itself from another group of capitalists: by mobilizing the productive capacity of multiple capitalists and converting some of their economic resources into military weaponry under military leadership of armies, navies, and air forces, as well as other forces such as the CIA and/or the NED (the so-called National Endowment for Democracy), they extend the reach of their power. Thus, capitalists within an empire are able to project their control and/or defend their land in ways simply unavailable through general capitalist production. And, when used offensively, an empire can secure more economic resources, geo-strategic advantages and/or social benefits for enhanced capitalist production and profitability not only in the “home” country but in the subjugated lands as well. This is known as imperialism.

Goodell makes the same mistake that many leftists today make: they do not recognize that the United States of America is the homeland of the US Empire, the greatest, strongest, and most destructive empire (to date) that the world has ever seen. Accordingly, there is no discussion in this book of the US Empire seeking to maintain control over as

much of the world as possible since at least 1945, if not earlier.

Nonetheless, the cost of the US Empire has been great on the world's peoples, with the costs escalating dramatically since 1981, with the Reagan Administration but continuing under both subsequent Democratic and Republican administrations. Its military is the single largest polluter in the world, and each invasion involves much killing and destruction, and is an environmental nightmare that continues for decades if not longer: Vietnam is still suffering from Agent Orange and unexploded ordnance utilized in the American war, which ended in 1975, 50 years ago, and Iraq and Afghanistan are suffering as well, along with the other countries bombed by the US Empire but not invaded (Libya, Syria, Yemen, Palestine, and former Yugoslavia come immediately to mind although the list is much longer.)

Over \$18 trillion dollars of US taxpayer money has been spent on the Empire's war machine alone—I refuse to call it “defense”—over the past forty years, (1981-2021, before the Russian invasion of Ukraine), and these are resources stolen from the American people or other good people around the world that could have been utilized for advancing education, providing health care, improving the infrastructure, addressing social inequities, aiding environmental recovery, addressing homelessness, and mitigating against climate change here at home. Somehow, this was not mentioned, much less addressed, by Goodell. [While I am commenting specifically on Goodell's positions, I do not mean to demonize him; most leftists still do not understand the US Empire, and I am arguing it is way past time that each of us incorporate this understanding into our respective analysis.]

However, an Empire cannot depend solely on its economic and military power alone; it must gain acquiescence if not active support from its “home” population; after all, this home population is where it has got to obtain “soldiers,” the cannon fodder, for the imperial armies. Thus, there needs to be a cultural apparatus to tell the population that basi-

cally—and traditionally—“war is good business; invest your sons” (and more recently, daughters), and encourage them to do so. This gets projected in many ways, starting with the education system, and this usually includes the religious system, but this is where plays, novels, TV, radio, film, and much of social media come into importance; seize the imagination, seize the acquiescence!

If you think I'm exaggerating, think about all of the cultural energy in the United States that goes into sports (local high school and college, as well as professional, not to mention the Super Bowl in and of itself); explicit sexual material (“pornography” and all things related); celebrity gossip; beauty, fashion, and modeling; and news production; each intended to draw attention away from problems such as hunger, poverty, and inequality, much less capitalism, war, empire, and the climate crisis.

And these “diversions” are not “small” things; each of these areas require overall investments in the multiple billions of dollars, seeking even greater profits.

And we on the left have generally failed to include the mainstream corporate media and their role in “setting the agenda” in our analysis as to what people should focus upon. During late 2023 and most of 2024, an incredible amount of attention was paid to Donald Trump's attempted coup on January 6, 2021—as it should have been—but there was so much focus on the details of this that the climate crisis had all but disappeared from US news reporting. Then, after October 7, 2023, when Hamas launched its military attack on Israel, almost all coverage was of Israel as “victim,” and for a long time, was the only perspective seriously reported; it was only after massive protests across the US that some news from a Palestinian perspective or even from critical Israeli sources even was shown.

At the same time, despite all of the extravaganza, our political elections are generally devoid of providing substantive information and addressing real issues, usually only providing to audiences of Americans the “thinking” of those who have been

able to raise the most money from the rich. Money buys further attention which, in turn, attracts further financial contributions, which allows the successful candidate to represent the interests of contributors, not constituents. And much of the political “debate” is in-fighting among political candidates; and almost as soon as one election cycle is completed, other candidates emerge and start the diversionary process anew, always seeking money, time, and attention.

At the same time, however, even these people are constrained by the interests of the “news” producers, who do not allow candidates to address issues inimical to their’s, or to go beyond their limited parameters; think how little time has been devoted to the climate crisis in contemporary mainstream political discussion/debate, such as last year’s presidential election.

And yet, the consequences of such elections can have profound impacts on people around the globe, both abroad and at home. They behoove those of us who are politically aware to participate, at least to certain extents.

In short, this larger “ideological apparatus” is as important to the Empire as is the economic system or the war machine although perhaps not as immediately noticeable.

And, once established, cultural norms become especially important because of the dominative power they project over subjects; questioning established norms, and especially challenging them individually, risks making oneself vulnerable to counterattack, however defined, but covering the range from denigration, mockery, to being made to feel vulnerable and, ultimately, physical violence.

Thus, central for effective cultural domination is the establishment of individualism as desirable; “I don’t want to be with anyone else; they’ll betray me, they’ll cheat on me, they’ll make me limit my desires.” And they may persuade me to look at things differently than I would on my own.

Yet—and this is the key point—individualism precludes resistance at much of any level. And this is illustrated by the old saying, “You can’t fight City Hall,” a warning, if there ever was one, of the futility of challenging power, whether structurally, culturally, or even normatively.

However, that saying and all it suggests can be easily undermined by simply adding one word, which illuminates the power of collectivity: “You can’t fight City Hall alone!” Add that one word, and you change everything: broadscale social change, while perhaps extremely difficult it might still be, is now possible when you seek others to join you in the same project.

This is where we come back to capitalism, which is essential to confront. The fact is that capitalism is killing us. And it’s killing us through growth; an essential requirement of capitalism is that it must grow to survive; i.e., it is a growth machine. And it is so much of a growth machine that it must grow beyond what is needed for survival or even living at a sustainable level by every human being on the planet; it must create the demand for growth beyond what is naturally there. In other words, to put it in terms perhaps more metaphorically understandable, it is like a cancer that must continue to grow even if it destroys the host, ultimately causing its own destruction and demise.

In plain language, we either kill the cancer or we kill the host: there is no alternative.

As I finish this review essay of Jeff Goodell’s excellent, albeit limited book, in the aftermath of the fires in LA and 9 inches of snow in Florida and New Orleans during January 2025, and Hurricane Helene striking western North Carolina last Fall, it is clear that the cumulative assaults on our atmosphere are having detrimental effects on our environment and life of humans, animals and most plants. You cannot claim you were not warned. It’s time, as I titled a previous essay, “It’s Time to Organize or Die!”