



MAGAZINE

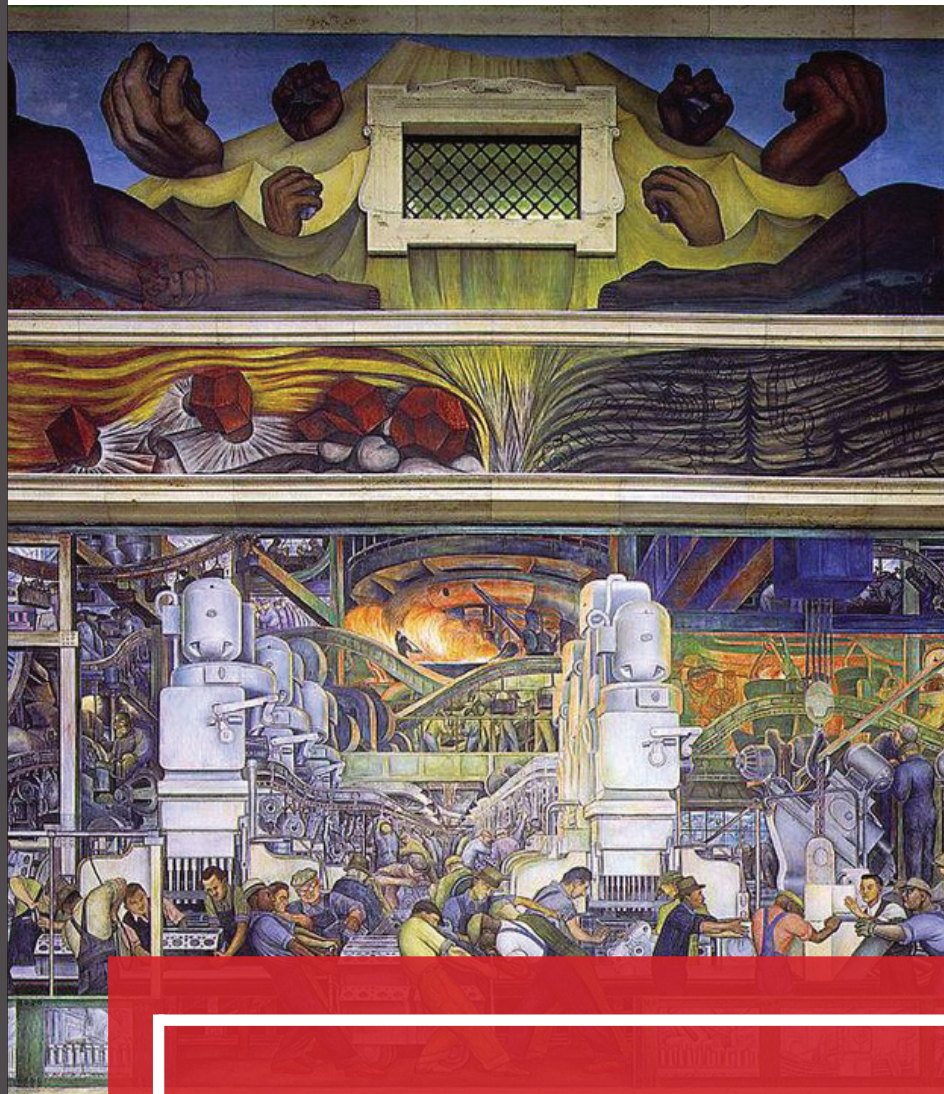
JULY 2025

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Revolution

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*“The wretched of the
earth have taken the
global stage by storm.
Class consciousness
is on the rise.”*

- William I. Robinson



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The Thirdworldization of the Global Working Class

William I. Robinson

The global conjuncture we face may appear as mindboggling yet one way to piece together this “big picture” is to take a local starting point and build up to the global. Let us hone in on and read between the lines of an underreported speech given on July 8 by U.S. secretary of agriculture Brooke Rollins. Responding to concerns by agribusiness that the deportation campaign is undermining the labor supply and could lead to food shortages, Rollins warned that mass deportations will continue and there will be “no amnesty under any circumstances” for agricultural workers. “Ultimately, the answer to this is automation, also some reform within the current government structure,” she said. “And then also, when you think about, there are 34 million able-bodied adults in our Medicaid program. There are plenty of workers in America.”

There is an underlying logic, despite the appearance of incoherence, to recent U.S. actions – the mass deportations, the tariff war, the budget bill passed by the Congress, interference in Brazil’s internal politics, a new round of intervention in the Middle East, brokering a “peace agreement” in the Congo, and so on. It all has a unity of purpose, in a nutshell, to address the crisis of global capitalism by liberating transnational capital to pursue a new round of predatory expansion around the world through digitalization, extractivist seizure of resources, war and repression, the degradation of the working and popular classes, and the radical restructuring of the capitalist state towards authoritarian and neofascist forms. The crisis of overaccumulation, chronic stagnation and a declining rate of profit can only be overcome by violently cracking open new spaces for accumulation, by transferring the cost of the crisis to the working and popular classes through wage compression and austerity, and by aligning states and political systems worldwide with this agenda.

Enter Rollins’s speech. Transnational migrant workers are vulnerable and susceptible to super-exploitation by national borders and the division of the global working classes into citizen and immigrant labor. Immigrant workers in the United States make up nearly 20 percent of the total labor force. They are concentrated in the lowest-rungs of the economy, including construction, agriculture, natural resources, maintenance occupations, and transportation and manual services, where they can be super-exploited and super-controlled by the transnational capitalist class (TCC) in its drive to maximize the extraction of surplus value.

The goal of the capitalist state under the Trump administration is to impose the conditions in which immigrants toil on native workers as well. This degradation of native labor can only be achieved if mass deportation is coordinated with the panoply of attacks on the multinational working class, from drastic cuts in social services, to union busting, the gutting health and safety protections, the dismissal of hundreds of thousands of civil servants, the weakening of federal labor laws, restricting access to unemployment benefits, and so on.

Native workers must be forced by deprivation and insecurity to take up the jobs abandoned by deported workers. The recently passed budget bill will result in a lowering of income for the bottom 40 percent and a loss of healthcare and food assistance for millions. The bill drastically cuts spending on Medicaid and at the same time makes public healthcare benefits contingent on recipients securing employment. As Rollins made clear, millions of workers will lose their health benefits unless they are willing to replace immigrant workers in agricultural and other low-paid sectors under conditions of superexploitation.



"Labor Solidarity has no Borders." This mural by Mike Alewitz was painted in Los Angeles in 1992 to advocate for immigrant worker's rights. The green monster- "the green monster of capitalism" was also seen in a 1985 mural for Hormel strikers painted by the same artist.

Social spending on welfare, unemployment insurance, social security, food and medical assistance allow those in need to withdraw from the labor market, making them unavailable for exploitation and also strengthening the bargaining position of those in the labor market. They are therefore not in the interests of capital, which needs a mass of insecure and unemployed workers, what Marx termed an "industrial reserve army," to hold down wages and subject itself to super-exploitation in desperate bids to survive. Mass struggles around the world in the twentieth century forced capitalist states to adopt New Deals and other social democratic welfare programs that linked social reproduction to capital accumulation.

Capital went global starting in the late twentieth century to escape from nation-state constraints to its freedom to exploit and accumulate. For nearly half a century of globalization the ruling groups have fought to impose austerity on working and popular classes, to dismantle social welfare states and replace them with social control states. Higher education, for instance, is hollowed out and public education decimated since mass education is less necessary or desirable when work is deskilled by artificial intelligence

(AI) and less workers are needed, and when private corporations have taken over AI-driven research. What remains of this link between social reproduction and accumulation, steadily eroded by the neoliberal counteroffensive that began at the end of century, is now being viciously severed at every level as those sectors of global labor that enjoyed some protection from the worst ravages of exploitation are subject to a process of "Third-worldization."

The Global War Economy: Accumulation by Militarization and Repression

One way to reverse the decline in the rate of profit is to cheapen labor and degrade working conditions so as to increase the rate of exploitation. This is known as expanding absolute surplus value and explains the relocation of production and services to low wage zones over the past half century of globalization as well as the incessant attacks on workers' rights and social programs. The other way is to replace labor with technology through automation, as mentioned by Rollins, a process that expands what is known as relative surplus value, since more value is pumped out of less labor.

This process has been underway for several decades and is now being turbocharged through digital technologies driven by AI, resulting in a rapid expansion worldwide of surplus labor. The ranks of surplus humanity, those structurally excluded and relegated to the margins of existence, now number in the billions as social disintegration spreads. Whole countries and regions face collapse as competing warlords, political and economic mafias, paramilitary organizations, and criminal gangs fill power voids. China now produces general purpose robots. The Xiaomi “lights-out” factory – the first but not the only one – operates round the clock producing for the global market one smart phone per second with zero humans employed. New technologies based on automation and AI combined with displacement generated by conflict, economic collapse, and climate change are exponentially increasing the ranks of surplus humanity.

Digital industries, including ecommerce, AI software and services, cloud services, autonomous vehicles, cybersecurity, robotics, biotech, and others, have a vested interest in an increase in relative over absolute surplus value. As these industries move to the very center of the global economy, the handful of corporations that develop and control digital technologies are accruing unprecedented power over states, political systems, commerce, and the military. Tech billionaires, especially from the emerging sectors within tech capital that are coming to dominate surveillance and the global police state, such as Palantir and Accenture, are lodged deeply within the Trump regime, which has tapped Palantir to create and manage an AI driven centralized data depository, the first step in a more sweeping privatization and automation of the state itself.

Transnational investors desperate for new investment opportunities have poured billions of dollars into the tech and platform companies as an outlet for their surplus accumulated capital, inflating values and producing multiple speculative bubbles. Global industry is underutilized. Markets are saturated. Automation as a strategy for weakening the working class also generates acute contradictions. It is only the labor of workers that generates

surplus value. As the mass of surplus labor expands so too does the mass of surplus capital. Unprecedented global inequalities aggravate the crisis of overaccumulation. Mass markets shrink and consumer-driven growth stagnates. Global markets cannot absorb the output of the global economy. States must manage spiraling crises of legitimacy as the social fabric disintegrates. An economic crash on the scale of or exceeding that of 2008 is all but inevitable.

When it hits there will be mass uprisings that further destabilize states and political systems and fan the flames of military conflict. The ruling classes will double down on the global police state and authoritarian and neofascist modalities of domination. Silicon Valley titans such as Palantir and Accenture are at the epicenter of a new military-industrial complex involving the marriage of tech with the traditional military corporations and high finance as they employ AI and digital technologies to carry out warfare and repression, from AI-guided genocide in Palestine to automated drone warfare in Ukraine, biometric surveillance of migrants and refugees and tech-fortified borders.

An Anti-Capitalist Phoenix?

The fascist state must contain mass rebellion by attacking civil and political rights and instilling fear to impede the development of revolutionary subjects. Whipping up nativism and nationalism and criminalizing immigrants and refugees is but one tactic to confuse, divide and disorganize the working classes. The whole global economy is becoming organized around what I have termed militarized accumulation and accumulation by repression. The global police state serves a dual purpose. It is an instrument to surveil, control, and repress the global working and popular classes at a time of escalating class struggle. At the same time, wars, state-sponsored violence and systems of transnational social control and repression, including border control and deportation regimes, are outsourced to transnational capital and are wildly profitable. They provide an ever-expanding outlet for overaccumulated capital.

The world is now in a process of rapid remilitarization as the war and repression economy becomes embedded. Global military spending reached an unprecedented \$2.72 trillion in 2024, an increase of nearly 10 percent from the previous year, the steepest rise since the end of the Cold War, with over 100 countries raising their military budget. The new Trump budget allocates an staggering \$1 trillion for the Pentagon and \$170 billion for border and immigration enforcement. The NATO countries have committed to spending 5 percent of GDP on the military, up from the current 2 percent. China, India, Russia, the Middle East, Japan and Mexico among others, have all announced steep increases in military spending for 2025.

As I showed in my 2020 book, *The Global Police State*, war, repression, surveillance and social control are woven into each and every circuit of global capital. By way of example, back to Rollins and her promise to continue mass deportations, the “homeland security” market was worth \$568 billion in 2023 and is forecast to reach \$1 trillion by the 2030s. The immigrant detention complex grew twentyfold from 1979 to 2024. CoreCivic and Geogroup, the two leading private, for-profit immigrant detention centers, run the majority of than 100 prisons throughout U.S. territory and also run electronic monitoring programs. Transnational finance capital is heavily invested in both and in numerous other private “border security” companies. Already monstrous, under the Trump regime the industry will experience an explosion of growth, including a doubling of detention space, 10,000 new ICE agents, and miles of new border wall and surveillance towers equipped with artificial intelligence.

The more global capitalism spirals into crisis the more bellicose it becomes as states attempt to externalize internal tensions and to target vulnerable groups as scapegoats. The power blocs in states are being reconfigured amidst fierce infighting among competing elites who are deeply divided and increasingly fragmented as the post-WWII international order cracks up and as geopolitical

confrontation escalates. Democratic government, human rights, and international law are impediments. From Orban in Hungary to Milei in Argentina. Erdogan in Turkey, Modi in India, Ruto in Kenya, and many others, Trumpism appears as the particular U.S. variant of a transnational model of twenty-first century authoritarianism, far-right populism, dictatorship and fascism that seeks to profoundly restructure state power into a more direct instrument of transnational capitalist domination. The fascist elite is constructing ideologies and paradigms to legitimate the extermination impulse that has taken hold of global capitalism, symbolized above all by the genocide in Gaza.

This International of Fascism is on the offensive but faces intractable contradictions internal to global capitalism at its moment of decadence as well as roadblocks thrown up by mass resistance from below. The wretched of the earth have taken the global stage by storm. Class consciousness is on the rise. A popular uprising from the barrios is pushing back against the ICE terrorism in Southern California, from where I write. Milei has faced several general strikes and cannot subdue mass protest. There has been no letup in Israel’s genocide but Palestine solidarity has ignited millions around the world. Kenya’s youth refuses to submit. In the last 12 months no less than 164 major protests have erupted in more than 73 countries in every continent, according to the Global Protest Tracker of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

The global correlation of political and class forces hangs in the balance. We may be able to – must – beat back fascism but behind the fascists stands the dictatorship of transnational capital. The popular and working classes must move from the defense to the offense. Our best defense, and the only one that can save us in the long run, is to link the struggle against state repression and the threat of fascism and ecological collapse to a transnational proletarian struggle against the TCC. It has never been truer that for the working and popular classes anticapitalism is self-defense.

The Rage of Billionaires and the Frenzy to Stop Zohran Mamdani From Becoming New York's Mayor

Norman Solomon

The Supreme Court's first chief justice, John Jay, would have empathized with the billionaires who've been freaking out ever since Zohran Mamdani won the Democratic primary for mayor of New York last Tuesday. "Those who own the country ought to govern it," Jay insisted. But now, oligarchs accustomed to such governance are furious that the nation's capital of capitalism is in danger of serving people instead of megaprofits.

Meanwhile, among progressives, euphoria is especially fitting because the Mamdani campaign's win was truly a people-powered victory, thanks to active efforts of 40,000 volunteers. In a city where registered Democrats outnumber Republicans six-to-one, the Democratic nomination would ordinarily be a virtual guarantee of winning the general election. But the forces of oligarchy now mobilizing could disprove a claim that "Mamdani's widespread appeal represents the total collapse of a Democratic Party establishment."

Such a collapse is very far from certain.

On the surface, Andrew Cuomo's decision to stay on the fall ballot as an "independent," while incumbent Mayor Eric Adams does likewise, seems to foreshadow splitting the anti-Mamdani vote. But Cuomo still has a substantial electoral following. And the corrupt Adams – who cut a deal with President Trump to viciously betray immigrants and got his criminal indictment thrown out by Trump's Justice Department – has no better ethics than the disgraced former governor Cuomo. Bankrolled by wealthy donors, the pair

might make some kind of pact, with one of them telling his followers to unify behind the other before voting begins this fall.

In any case, a key context of the upcoming election battle is that hell hath no fury like corporate power scorned.

A social-media screed by hedge-fund manager Bill Ackman (net worth: upward of \$9 billion) was damn near apoplectic that activists and voters had so terribly transgressed. Ackman described himself as "a supporter of President Trump" while expressing a fervent desire "to save the Democratic Party from itself." Mamdani's policies, Ackman wrote late Wednesday night, "would be disastrous for NYC. Socialism has no place in the economic capital of our country."

But Ackman held out hope that those owning the city of New York could continue to govern it: "Importantly, there are hundreds of millions of dollars of capital available to back a competitor to Mamdani that can be put together overnight ... so that a great alternative candidate won't spend any time raising funds. So, if the right candidate would raise his or her hand tomorrow, the funds will pour in. I am sure that Mike Bloomberg will share his how-to-win-the-mayoralty IP [intellectual property] and deliver his entire election apparatus and system to the aspiring candidate so that the candidate can focus all of his or her energy on the campaign."

Another aggrieved hedge-fund multibillionaire, Daniel Loeb, opted to be concise: "It's officially



Mamdani's volunteer based campaign. (Photo: SWinxy)

hot commie summer.” Many other moguls have also sounded alarms. But beneath all the froth and bombast, extremely wealthy individuals are busy gauging how to prevail against the threat of democracy and social justice.

In the Empire State, there are many ways for the empire to strike back. The constellation of forces now regrouping with a vengeance includes titans of Wall Street, enormous real estate interests, pro-Israel groups, corporate media, the anti-progressive rich and assorted smear artists.

In recent weeks, the completely false charge of antisemitism has escalated against Mamdani. He has taken a principled and consistent stand on behalf of human rights for all – in the process, denouncing Israel's war on Palestinian civilians in Gaza – while at the same time opposing rapacious corporate power. So, it's no surprise that New York's most powerful Democrat, Senate minority leader Chuck Schumer, has been dodging the question of whether he'll endorse Mamdani in the general election.

For decades, Schumer's campaign coffers have bulged while he has been hugely compensated by Wall Street. He has also remained a staunch supporter of Israel, despite its systematic ethnic cleaning and genocide against Palestinian people. A few months ago, Schumer declared: “My job is to keep the left pro-Israel.”

What happened in the state's second-largest city in 2021 is important to understand. Democratic socialist India Walton was the candidate of a grassroots campaign that stunned the party establishment in the Democratic primary when she defeated Buffalo's corporate mayor, four-term incumbent Byron Brown. As the Democratic nominee, she seemed set to win the general election in the blue city. But a coalition of furious Democratic power brokers and deep-pocketed Republicans, including racists and vehement haters of the left, aided by much of the city's mass media, teamed up to smear her and ending up getting Brown elected as a write-in candidate.

Last weekend, I asked India (now a colleague at RootsAction, where she is senior strategist) how she saw the Mamdani campaign. “Watching the New York City mayoral primary from Buffalo last Tuesday gave me a familiar feeling,” she said. “As I watched the results come in, I felt a flutter in my gut and a sense of pensiveness. A feeling of overwhelming joy and a fear that it would be snatched away despite my attempts to cling to it. I imagine that as Zohran watched, he also felt a sense of familiarity. In 2021, Zohran Mamdani supported my run for Buffalo mayor; I was a first-time unknown candidate challenging a 16-year incumbent, and conventional wisdom said it was an impossible race to win. Now, in 2025, Zohran has once again toppled the establishment. I'm starting to think that populist policies that focus on working people are a winning strategy.”

That strategy is now striking fear into the hard hearts of insatiably greedy billionaires.

Now What? Unify and Fight

Michael Albert

Epstein. What can I say? How about nothing? Or how about Epstein was disgusting and Trump is Epstein writ large. Should we look away even while we cautiously hope that Trump has fatally skewered himself? Should we fear he may be about to skewer everyone else? At those extremes, Epstein's legacy may end Trump's reign. How ironic. But flip it like so much else has flipped, and Epstein's legacy may entrench the beast. How horrid. USA! USA! Can you imagine any other contemporary society slithering like the USA now slithers? Hmmm. I bet you can. Our future: Unify and fight our way out of this place or pitch tents for a long stay.

Fascism is not just racist negation. It is not just misogynist relegation. Not just repressive threats, heinous actions and a lot of people wildly assaulting one another. Not just hate, cowardice and hypocrisy. Not just books burned. Not just truth toppled. It is all that and more.

Fascism doesn't just turn a political party into a cult. It doesn't just bully lawyers. Threaten judges. Capture universities. It doesn't just trounce education. Corrupt culture. Sink science. Fascism doesn't just rip food from hungry children. Rip medicine from vulnerable adults. Dehumanize opponents. Fascism grows Alligator Alcatrazes from coast to coast and finances a domestic army to round up sought inmates. Fascism uses fear, confusion, pay-offs, and chaos to establish a new normal. Fascism institutionally revamps, reorders, and restructures. It makes transforms institutions to enforce extreme daily horrors.

Fascism unfolds all around us. Can you hear it, see it, smell it? Do you feel it encroach? Challenge fascism? Fascism smirks. Fascism shrieks. You can't stop the rain. You can't stop me. Do you wonder, will I be cowed or will I have courage? Will I succumb or will I resist? It isn't too late to resist, but it is getting there. If you aren't already resisting, it is

time to do so. Together.

Fascism is a vile, pathetic, lying, cowardly, bad joke of a creature who seduces sufficient support and sullies sufficient minds to grab the reigns of current government sufficiently to assault law, knowledge, health, and even human compassion and empathy. Fascism reconstructs government, education, health care, law, communication, economy and culture. It parades a repressive, perverse, caricature of civility and caring. Fascism establishes a click bait society, an atomized society, a police state society all built on invidious individualism of the most debilitating sort. Fascism is Trump and Company unless we stop them.

Now what? Let's turn to stopping Trump and Company, turn to stopping fascism. But before we do, I mentioned clickbait. I mentioned invidious individualism. Do they seem to you a bit minor, a bit marginal to have brought up? I think not.

Clickbait is when an author or media venue offers an article, interview, video, or whatever with a title that promises X to attract eyes. Eyes arrive. X is absent. Eyes leave. Each clickbait instance perfectly embodies two themes. Seek profit before all else. Lie with total impunity as if to lie is a virtue and to be truthful is naive stupidity. But what does clickbait damage?

Someone clicks on a lying title. They read, view, or hear the titled item. The title proves to have been clickbait. They got tricked. Now what? Do they get angry? Do they swear off the venue that tricked them? Do they consider the author a lying manipulator? I think all that is warranted but quite rare. I think nearly always we just roll with the punch. It wasn't a knockout blow. We survived. So we moved on. To have gotten outraged might have led to our being perpetually outraged because click bait is everywhere. So we suck it up and move on. We



Photo: Paul Goyette

passively resign to it. Our passivity sublimates our passion. Clickbait not only attracts our eyes, it infantilizes us. Clickbait produces the human trajectory that fascism needs.

Each new venue decides that to not use clickbait, to not become really good at clickbait, will lose audience to whoever click-baits better. To not like, much less to not accept lying becomes naïve. So we manipulatively lie and we passively accept others' manipulative lying. We “go along to get along.” We join the survival slide. We make modestly self-aggrandizing personal choices that yield unmitigatedly awful collective collapse.

Consider another nasty nightmare. Call it invidious individualism. We confront a difficult situation. We assess only implications for self, for some close family members and friends, or maybe even for our tribe. Our workplace faces Trumpian-imposed job cuts. We expect a pink slip. We don't join with other workmates to sit down and collectively refuse our dismissals. Collectivity doesn't surface even as a passing thought. I, me, mine calculus takes command. Invidious individualism is us.

Or consider another example. We hate Trump. We stew in anger but don't contemplate ways to work with others against Trump. To collectively resist doesn't enter our consciousness. Donald threatens. Our anger rises but we don't show it. We don't harp on it. We might lose a friend. We conclude it is better to bow and proceed obediently.

Or, perhaps we are in high school or college. Our classes don't discuss oncoming fascism and what to do about it. Not a word. Think about that. And there's too little discussion of fascism in our dorms and dining halls as well. But we don't initiate discussion. We don't want to offend anyone. We don't want to stand out. There is a lot of talk all around about solidarity and mutual aid. Invidious individualism nurtures Fascism's game plan.

Or perhaps your law firm sells out. You are a lawyer. A para legal. A secretary. Whatever. Now what? Or maybe you work in some other firm. What to do? Pre-censor your words and actions to not anger the beast? Or resist?

Perhaps your medicine and doctor's appointments end. The clinic that serves your community closes.

Now what? Or maybe masked marauders have come for your neighbor or your workmate. What do you do?

The sounds of silence, reverberate. The sounds of pain and violence, the cries of the bombed and the moans of the starved echo and crescendo. It's today's soundtrack. You hear it. Perhaps you yourself moan. You yourself cry. The soundtrack includes you, but what do you do? Or perhaps you don't moan. The evil hasn't come explicitly for you. But it has come for others. So what do you do?

I recently saw a film titled *Deaf President Now*. The title wasn't clickbait. And the film is currently on Apple TV, assuming it hasn't been removed since I saw it. The film recounts the 1988 struggle at Gallaudet University for the deaf to successfully win a demand to install a deaf president.

Yes, I know, the campaign didn't win student/faculty self management. It didn't even seek it. It wasn't anti imperialist. It wasn't overtly feminist. It wasn't overtly anti-capitalist. But I watched and I thought this film is highly relevant to our time precisely because not very political and horribly subordinated students got shocked by gross mistreatment, got angry at raging hypocrisy, got organized, got strategic, and won.

The film shows the many lies, fears and obstacles that assaulted the students, including from their own prior commitments. The film reveals what grassroots anti-fascism can look like. Yes we have to go further than the Gallaudet struggle went. But I took inspiration from seeing their story. You don't need more inspiration? Great, but perhaps show it to your parents or your children, your schoolmates, workmates, or friends. And then perhaps talk together about it. That would be some serious socializing.

About a month ago a bunch of committed organizations selected July 17th for the next day of anti-Trump demonstrations around the country. These would be called Good Trouble to honor John Lewis, whereas last month's demos were

called No Kings to trounce Trump. It is purely anecdotal but I saw almost nothing about the Good Trouble planned events until July 14th and even then not very much. I asked others who said the same. Then I saw some messages indicating the time and place to come out to join the events, but the messages had little about why to come out, about what the day's events would accomplish, and particularly about how to get involved beyond the day's events.

The turnout? I am not sure, but it seems to have been a small fraction of the earlier No Kings turnout. Millions had demonstrated in June, and would hopefully have come out again. Additional anecdotal evidence suggested militance may have grown and focus may have enlarged, but numbers seriously declined. Why?

One explanation is Good Trouble was on a week-day compared to the No Kings weekend time slot. But another explanation may be that the No Kings demonstrations didn't sufficiently convey to their participants that to succeed they would need to return and bring others. No Kings may have left many participants feeling we came out and it changed nothing so no more of that for us. Likewise, the call for the Good Trouble demonstrations may not have conveyed convincing reasons to turn out.

So, now what? The task remains as it has been. Resistance needs to spread understanding and commitment that fuels persistent, growing activism. Resistance needs that activism to say to elites the cost to you of your agenda will keep growing. To avoid the costs that resistance imposes on you, you must back off. You must give in. But what can convincingly convey such a message?

Paramount is that elites see that resistance is not going away or even stabilizing. Resistance is getting broader, stronger, and more effective. This isn't complicated. Smaller than earlier says to elites, wait it out. It will dissipate. Larger than earlier says to elites, worry about what's coming. To get larger, resistance must continually welcome

new participants. Immigration, tariffs, misogyny, racism, climate, and war will upset steadily more people. Resistance must speak with and involve those new people.

Resistance must actively involve millions of already justifiably scared young people, and even more millions of already furious, outraged, scared, and in their hearts progressive and not so young people who, however, exhibit all their pain and fear only to a spouse over dinner, or when standing in front of a mirror, or when cursing while taking a shower but not yet visibly, not yet publicly, not yet on the streets or in a job action.

It is critical but it is not sufficient that resistance mobilize folks who are already eager to participate. But resistance must also reach out to folks who are not yet eager to participate, and even to folks who disagree with us.

What about our movement getting broader and stronger? When anger grows at a Trumpian policy Trump backs off a bit and throws up distractions even as he plans to later revisit his disruptive intentions. Trump and Company need to see resistance getting less atomized and more generalized. They need to feel us getting more intent on collectively stopping and reversing the whole fascist makeover of government, economics, education, health, science, culture, upbringing, human emotion, and even empathy.

Elites need to see people who are outraged at genocide aid people who are horrified at health cuts. People who defend and celebrate immigrants also defend and celebrate teachers who resist regimentation. People who slam Tesla also slam Palantir. People who slam Fox News also move on to challenge the New York Times and all mainstream media. People who demand an end to ecological suicide also demand an end to billionaire domination.

Elites need to hear a distant but growing ringing of revolution. They need to think to themselves, oh shit, we don't want to provoke that. We need to reconsider our choices.

But what specifically can send that message to their board rooms and gated communities? How about if our mass demonstrations include side trips to board rooms and gated communities? How about if some already eager employees and students don't give in or leave when ordered to but instead dig in and fight? Fired employees refuse to leave and instead sit in to demand changes in work day length and pay? Outraged students lock up their campuses and demand changes in curriculum and hiring? How about we grow and also we work toward that?

How about if our artists stand on stage and convey that it is time to fight and then engage with and perform at demonstrations? Bruce, yes, of course, but also Taylor. How about if our demonstrations demand a massive wealth tax and display signs in the crowd that say no more corporate greed, no more private ownership? How about if a huge rally spins off marches to some fascist corporate bosses' homes to block the streets where the richest live? Cops come. There are two thousand of us. Picture it. What do the cops do, tear gas Scarsdale? Bring it on.

How about if we carefully, thoughtfully do that which tells elites that there are more and more of us and we are more and more unified and more and more energized. We do what doesn't alienate but organizes. We do what welcomes still more growth. We do what says to elites, hey, look, look closely, you see our most militant part, you see our most radical part, that is what the whole resistance is threatening to become. That is what you are provoking. We can get more militant. We can diversify our demands. We can come directly after you. And at the same time we will not alienate or repel but instead attract, welcome, and elevate new allies.

Can you hear us? Can you see us? Can you smell us? Do you feel us encroaching? You will be cowed. You won't have courage. It isn't too late for you, but it is getting there. If you haven't already, it is time for you to switch to our side or to surrender.

Bringing Down a President

Timothy Braatz

Critical Mass

Imagine a cartoon: Unarmed protesters surround a palace. Inside, the royal mathematician frantically scribbles numbers. Nearby, an unhappy king slumps in his throne. His bags are packed. He says, “Let me know when it hits 3.5.”

As you may have heard, every unarmed resistance campaign in recent memory that mobilized at least 3.5 percent of the population for an action against rulers they considered illegitimate forced the desired regime change. This so-called “3.5 percent rule” is merely an academic curiosity. It explains nothing about what came before the “peak event” of participation, nothing about how that event contributed to regime change, nothing about what followed.

The tiny number—Just 3.5 percent!—may give resistance organizers hope. Less helpful, it may cause them to focus on crowd size rather than fundamental movement-building. Recently, when I invited a local 50501/Indivisible coordinator to attend my nonviolence workshop, she replied, “We just do big events.”

Internet communication makes it relatively easy for rally organizers, like her, to generate satisfying turnout. But casual participation, however impressive at the outset, is unlikely to persist in the face of suffering and disappointment. Movement commitment is more likely to come through person-to-person engagement. Here’s a more useful “rule” to ponder: Organize collective work and shared risk-taking—you can’t achieve much without it.

Here’s another: The more a ruling group must rely on threat power, rather than voluntary cooperation, the more fragile their regime. Removal of an unpopular dictatorship is, in theory, relatively simple. Inspire a critical mass to withdraw their obedience;

persuade the armed enforcers not to inflict harm; when the institutionalized fear is gone, the dictator flees. History suggests this may be easiest in a small country with a narrow economy and just one or two major cities.

But what if you’re challenging the policies of a corrupt, sociopathic, authoritarian head of state who, thanks to a sophisticated propaganda system, most voters accept as democratically elected and lawfully governing, and who has the political approval of a substantial minority? And what if this is in an enormous country with numerous major cities, a highly diverse population, and a complex and de-centralized economy? In other words, how does an antifascism movement halt and reverse the expansion of Trumpism?

Perhaps the U.S. antiwar movement of 1965-75 offers some clues. After all, it caused two elected presidents to give up the presidency.

Pressure

In 1965, President Lyndon Johnson significantly expanded the U.S. war against Vietnamese independence. The antiwar response was broad (peace groups, college students, Black liberation organizations, political radicals, women’s groups, war veterans, clergy) and multifaceted (teach-ins, picketing, canvassing, marches, rallies, fasts, draft-card burning, lobbying Congress, hounding top officials, etc.). For many participants, the primary concerns were the military draft and U.S. combat deaths.

In 1967, the Spring Mobilization saw 400,000 protesters marching in New York City—at the time, the largest political demonstration in U.S. history—and 100,000 in San Francisco. Yet Johnson kept increasing U.S. troop levels in Vietnam.

In October, the umbrella National Mobilization



A woman basks in the sun next to a copy of the Washington Area Spark and "Impeach Nixon" signs October 27, 1973 at an impeach Nixon rally on the Ellipse. Nixon resigned less than two weeks later, on August 8, 1974.

Committee, shifting to nonviolent intervention, sponsored "Stop the Draft Week." At the University of Wisconsin, the Oakland (CA) Induction Center, and the Pentagon, unarmed occupiers encountered police brutality. Public approval of Johnson as commander-in-chief reportedly dropped to 28 percent, as domestic turmoil, more than overseas slaughter, troubled the average citizen.

By making Johnson's war policy controversial and, therefore, newsworthy (compared to, say, U.S. war policy in Afghanistan, 2001-21), the antiwar movement generated pressure. In this context, pressure means political conditions that cause ruling elites to believe they must choose between two or more undesirable options, i.e., a dilemma. To maintain false claims of "progress" in Vietnam (a political necessity for his reelection campaign), Johnson believed he had to send even more troops. But troop increases, he understood, would bring increased antiwar activism, which would further erode his public approval numbers (a campaign disaster).

By early 1968, Johnson and "Defense" Secretary Robert McNamara were politically stalemated and emotionally exhausted. "Losing Vietnam," they now understood, was inevitable: The mighty U.S. military state, stymied by domestic disapproval and Vietnamese violent resistance, couldn't permanently maintain the southern half of Vietnam as a client state.

After secretly recommending a slaughter slowdown, McNamara left office on February 29. Similarly, his replacement opposed troop increases because the war was "hopeless" and "domestic unrest" was "rampant." On March 31, Johnson announced he would begin war "de-escalation" and wouldn't seek reelection; the antiwar movement had, in effect, chased him into early retirement.

When the next president—Richard Nixon, inaugurated in 1969—didn't halt the slaughter, the antiwar movement went mainstream. The New Mobilization Committee appealed to labor unions, high school students, military members,

and religious groups. The moderate Vietnam Moratorium Committee tried to reach middle-class voters in every congressional district.

In mid-October, the Moratorium to End the War drew large turnout in major cities, including 250,000 for a candlelight march in Washington D.C. and 100,000 for a polite rally in Boston. In response, Nixon canceled Duck Hook, an unannounced military operation which would have escalated the destruction of North Vietnam, possibly with nuclear weapons. In mid-November, a Mobilization drew over 500,000 protesters to Washington, while 250,000 marched in San Francisco.

Statistically, October-November 1969 may have been the peak of civilian participation in the antiwar movement. Moratorium and Mobilization participants nationwide engaged in diverse local actions, from prayer services to high school walkouts, which cultivated more antiwar sentiment. (If two million people took part, that's 1 percent of the population.) According to some observers, half the population now rejected U.S. war-making in Vietnam.

Under antiwar pressure, Nixon reluctantly began withdrawing U.S. ground troops. To delay "losing" South Vietnam, he employed "secret" bombing campaigns—secret from the U.S. public—and strengthened the surrogate South Vietnam military. Without fail, Congress approved his war funding requests.

Antiwar actions continued, highlighted by campus uprisings in May 1970 (which likely shortened a U.S. invasion of Cambodia), massive marches in Washington and San Francisco in April 1971, the May Day occupation of Washington in 1971, and growing resistance from active-duty soldiers (which unsettled high-ranking officers). The movement triggered Nixon's personal and ideological paranoia—he imagined an international communist conspiracy—but the constant threat of popular uprising kept him reducing troop levels.

The resultant decline in U.S. draftees and U.S. casualties contributed to a decline in antiwar participation. In 1972, with ground troop withdrawal almost complete, Nixon easily won reelection over antiwar candidate George McGovern. At that point, it appeared U.S. officials could perpetuate airborne slaughter, despite body count now in the millions, so long as U.S. boys weren't dying. Nixon's public approval rating in January 1973, shortly after his brutal "Christmas bombings" of North Vietnam, was reportedly 68 percent.

Critical Networks

Now for a closer look:

Sometime around 1946, in California's Bay Area, a bookstore clerk allowed a penniless young man to take a book on Gandhi. Anyone who wanted such a book, the clerk told him, could be trusted to come back and pay for it. Thus began Ira Sandperl's career as a scholar of nonviolence. With folksinger Joan Baez, his most enthusiastic devotee, Sandperl participated in many civil rights and antiwar actions, advised Martin Luther King, and, in 1965, founded the Institute for the Study of Nonviolence.

In March 1967, Sandperl protégé David Harris initiated an anti-draft network. In October, Harris helped organize Stop the Draft Week actions in Oakland, which left him, Baez, Sandperl, Roy Kepler (a Second World War conscientious objector), and two hundred other participants briefly imprisoned.

Among them was Randy Kehler, a Stanford graduate student who had been attending a workshop led by Sandperl, Baez, and Kepler. Incarceration was Kehler's first experience with "a community of people that were committed to something larger than themselves." He quit school and accepted Kepler's invitation to work for the War Resisters League, a branch of War Resisters International (WRI).

Meanwhile, on the East Coast, Harvard graduate student Janaki Natarajan joined the antiwar movement. Natarajan was well-versed in Gandhian philosophy, having participated in the Sarvodaya Movement in her native India. In 1968, at a conference co-sponsored by the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), she charmed a military state insider named Daniel Ellsberg (Marine Corps, RAND Corp., State and “Defense” departments) and inspired him to read about nonviolence.

In 1969, Natarajan invited Ellsberg to a WRI conference. One of the speakers was Kehler, who explained that he would soon be joining friends in prison for draft resistance and said “there was something really beautiful about it.”

Ellsberg had volunteered for combat in Vietnam as a counter-revolution analyst and had worked on a secret study, commissioned by McNamara, called U.S. Decision-Making in Vietnam, 1945-68 (aka “the Pentagon Papers”). He had grown skeptical of the war, knew of the secret nuclear contingency plan, and was dismayed to learn that Nixon secretly intended to maintain a residual force of 50,000 U.S. soldiers in South Vietnam.

But encountering Kehler’s moral courage and clarity was, for Ellsberg, like “an ax had split my head, and my heart broke open.” The former Marine sobbed for an hour, then pondered what he could do to end the war, now that he, too, was prepared to go to prison. An active loyalist had defected to the active opposition: Ellsberg resolved to leak the Pentagon Papers to reveal how presidents had repeatedly misled the public.

“No Kehler, no Pentagon Papers,” Ellsberg later acknowledged, and we should add Natarajan, AFSC, and WRI. Indeed, the list of indispensable influences behind Ellsberg’s conversion includes Sandperl, Baez, Kepler, Harris, and all the other anti-draft campaigners who inspired Kehler.

Safe to say, none of them anticipated the remarkable repercussions. In June 1971, when newspapers, in collaboration with Ellsberg, began publishing

Pentagon Papers excerpts, Nixon overreacted. Goaded by “National Security” Advisor Henry Kissinger, he arranged a counter-intelligence team to discredit Ellsberg (who “knew too much”) and blackmail him into silence. These so-called “Plumbers” attempted a physical assault on Ellsberg and burglarized his psychiatrist’s office.

When the Plumbers, in 1972, were caught wiretapping a Democratic Party office, Nixon tried to cover up this smaller crime (which he hadn’t ordered) because he didn’t want his criminal conspiring against Ellsberg exposed. Nixon’s obstruction of justice became, in 1973, the centerpiece of the Watergate scandal, with Ellsberg’s espionage trial producing key revelations.

The scandal deflated Nixon’s public support numbers, allowing otherwise deferential legislators to oppose him. Lobbied by peace groups, Congress—at long last—voted to defund Nixon’s bombing campaigns and the South Vietnam military. In August 1974, facing ouster by Congress over Watergate, Nixon resigned the presidency. When Kissinger and President Gerald Ford, in early 1975, requested new funding for South Vietnam, Congress said no. In short, war resisters had driven Nixon into greater domestic criminality, which, when exposed, undermined his ability to continue a war made unpopular by the antiwar movement.

Hope

U.S. political elites will publicly deny an anti-violence movement’s influence over policy decisions. Organizers have to take it on faith that their efforts, one way or another, are grinding away at the ruling regime, stressing fault lines, troubling consciences, inflaming personality disorders, bringing out the best in some insiders, the worst in others. Political lobbying and public outreach—face-to-face—are essential, as are nonviolent direct action and civil disobedience. It may take years (and perhaps some luck), but the combination of critical mass, critical networks, and moral integrity will produce unexpected yet desirable results. Keep the pressure on: you never know what will pop out.

It's the Culture, Stupid: Why the Populist Right Will Fail

Roger Hallam

The climate activist movements that follow Extinction Rebellion and Just Stop Oil must face complex questions of power, decision making and culture head on.

Justin Rowlatt, the BBC's environment correspondent, recently sent me a bunch of questions about the winding down of Just Stop Oil's direct action operations. I wrote back to say that the most important thing about JSO was its culture of respect, service, and trust.

This was the goose that laid the golden eggs of sustained mass civil disobedience. Unsurprisingly, even though I am a co-founder and coordinated the dramatic mobilisation of the organisation, this key point did not find its way into his report.

What really creates success is largely invisible. When I was doing my years of research at King's College on the dynamics of mobilisation, I was amazed at how little attention there was in politics on culture as opposed to power.

Proactively

The fact is, however, that culture trumps power. Nowhere is this seen more clearly than on the populist right.

There's a widespread defeatist assumption in progressive circles that the domination of the far right is now a foregone conclusion — with Donald Trump's second term as president in the US, and Nigel Farage's massive surge in the recent council elections in the UK.

I totally disagree. As usual, people on the left

tend to buy into the right's frame and world-view — and then unsurprisingly conclude it's all hopeless.

In my view, the reason why Extinction Rebellion and then Just Stop Oil became social movements involving tens of thousands of people was because of proactively designed, pro-social cultures.

Some readers may remember that before these organisations emerged, direct action groups rarely grew to a large size.

Serving

Actions involved a few dozen people, occasionally a few hundred. The networks were closed, highly ideological, and lacked diversity — mainly just young, middle-class people.

To build a movement, you need a systematic, outward-facing mobilisation strategy that goes directly to the public across the country, via public meetings, assemblies, and social media.

As ever, it's the small things that count: being welcomed at the door; splitting into small groups for a chat; clear options for further action.

Basically, people need to be nice. "Nice" is a terribly vague word, but we all know what it means.

There needs to be check-ins at the start of meetings. People don't want to be interrupted, shamed, or pushed out. There needs to be a clear moral code: serving the good, rather than grasping for power.



Extinction Rebellion occupy Oxford Circus, London, 18 April 2019

Machiavellian

People need to work in teams where everyone is respected and things are done together. Organisers need to be appreciative, supportive, and show their vulnerability when they mess up.

It's not about telling people what to do all the time — not micro-management.

Of course, and I would be the first to say, XR and JSO were far from perfect. But this isn't about abstract utopianism. It's about the ordinary, everyday things that ordinary people really like, things they don't experience in most workplaces or political organisations.

And this is where the “nasty” parties lose out.

Their cultures rely on strict hierarchies of control, which is why they tend to need a single, indispensable, all-powerful leader: a Farage or a Trump. Without them, it falls apart.

Second, believing that all that exists is “power”, far-right parties are full of Machiavellian backstabbing and all that nasty stuff normal people hate.

Fragility

It's no surprise that such spaces attract dodgy people — the corrupt and power-crazy — and so they get brought down by scandals and criminality.

The underlying issue is: these people do not know how to work together.

Teams have been shown to outperform rigid hierarchies again and again. See the book *The Culture Code* for a survey of the literature.

In far-right, top-down cultures, the default motivator is fear, not cooperation. These parties are dominated by men of my own generation: men over 50 who, to be blunt, have few social skills and even less ability to deal constructively with conflict. We all know the types!

This is a recipe for internal fragility and external failure. You cannot run a council, never mind a country, with the culture of the strongman. And lying all the time only gets you so far. As Trump is finding out.

Mutual

Of course, all this applies to conventional politics as a whole. You only have to watch the documentary, *The Labour Files*, to see how power corrupts. But the far right is the extreme case.

Many of us sense a massive opportunity to create a left populist alternative not just in the UK but across the Western world. We can already see early discussions happening in the Green Party and among those associated with Jeremy Corbyn, the socialist MP and former leader of the Labour party.

But the key to success here is not just policies and messaging — vital as they are — but respectful, team-based organisational cultures.

In some ways, I think that as former XR and JSO people bring this culture into wider local communities and green/left networks, they could have a dramatically positive influence, far greater than their numbers suggest.

A similar thing happened when the organisational skills and ethical standards of the Methodists were brought into working-class political and mutual aid projects in the 19th century.

Power

We have to realise people need attention — and to be treated well. Most people care more about community than power. They want to play their part in social and political life, but are endlessly put off by anti-social and unethical behaviour.

This cannot be left to chance. Ethical and community values must be explicit, and systematically communicated through: inductions; trainings; reviews.

If a new movement-party project can do this, it will attract not just thousands, but millions. Beyond the “politically homeless” on the Left, there are even more people who are “socially homeless”.

The deep paradox here is: by being less obsessed with power and more focused on culture, we can attract these people into mass movements — which in turn enables us to take real political power, as the radical right inevitably messes up.

It’s not just about being nice — it’s smart strategy.

Transformative

That said, we need to get a move on. We need leadership and initiative. Time is short.

Unless we provide a real alternative, when the Farages and Trumps of this world fail, they will be replaced by real fascists who use political violence. And then it will be game over.

The underlying principle in designing this project is ecology — the creation of connectivity. And I say this not just because this article is written for *The Ecologist* magazine.

We have to understand just how radical and transformative this way of seeing the world can be. In my next articles, I’ll show how vigorous ecological thinking can help us design, grow, and succeed with the big social movements we need.

Is it Strategic to Refocus Towards Climate Adaptation?

Adam Aron

In London, UK, last week, on a rare overseas trip, I attended the launch of a new campaign initiated by the Climate Majority Project to refocus the efforts of climate advocates from mitigation (cutting greenhouse gases) to what they referred to as “strategic adaptation”. The approach is outlined in the report they released called SAFER: Strategic Adaptation For Emergency Resilience.

Many climate advocates have been resistant to talk about adaptation because, as the report recognizes, it appears to encourage giving up on mitigation, and it also appears to abandon communities in the Global South who are more at the frontlines of climate damages while having done much less to incur them. However, the proponents of SAFER argue for a more expansive form of adaptation. Their “strategic adaptation” is not simply reactive to disaster but also builds resilience, fosters agency, grows climate awareness, and transforms, for example, food systems; and, they argue, it will help mitigation. They recognize that without cuts to emissions we are on course for hothouse planet (runaway temperatures within decades) so they are not giving up, but rather arguing that the way to achieve mitigation is to not focus directly on it but instead to focus now on adaptation.

While I think SAFER gets many things right, I was perplexed by the way the event was launched, by the statement of untested assumptions as apparent facts, by the absence of an organizational strategy, and by the overly depoliticized language. Overall, I want to argue that given the ever-expanding impacts of climate breakdown, the approach of the Climate Majority Project of taking gentle steps rather than engaging in serious political struggle seems seriously misguided.

The presentation, in a packed lecture hall at University College London, started with the recognition that our valiant social mobilization for climate mitigation has mostly failed. Some facts that are salient for me are that the numbers engaging in rallies, sustained group organizing and even advocacy are clearly tiny in all our populations; global heating and climate damages are accelerating; fossil fuel finance and extraction are at record levels; and there is now, in the US and EU, a political backlash that threatens to erase the meager mitigation policies. And even when those policies were instituted, they were seldom made directly by the state, but instead outsourced to for-profit interests (see the case of Germany), and even then mostly concerned electricity supply and hardly transportation, buildings, agriculture and consumption, which is still encouraged almost everywhere under the mantra of economic growth.

The core theory of SAFER is that a refocus on strategic adaptation can build a bigger climate mobilization. This is because adaptation is in the material interest of local communities, and by concretizing climate action locally it will build consciousness for climate change as a reality, leading ultimately to a stronger climate movement for mitigation. This comes out of three key assumptions in the report:

1. Committing to adaptation overcomes the problem that the public in the UK is mostly complacent in fighting for climate action since they are lulled by the government’s promise to achieve Net Zero decades in the future, which is mostly a scam. Also, as the authors argue “the problem of climate change is an abstract story of invisible gases”. Instead, adaptation makes climate breakdown real through local, concrete action to address tangible threats.
2. Committing to adaptation might help working class and other communities overcome perceptions



Illustration: Jeanne Macaigne

of climate action as leftist, hypocritical or irrelevant by addressing people's immediate concerns such as rising energy costs and food security. 3. If many communities do join adaptation efforts, including pushing the government to prepare for heat waves, flooding, disruptions to food supply and the eventual likely collapse of the Atlantic Current that could reduce winter temperatures by 20 C (36 F) in some years, and if there is a serious national commitment to adaptation, then it will become obvious that adaptation is not enough, strengthening the case for mitigation.

I very much agree with SAFER's focus on people's material interests and the need to prepare and defend locally, but it has problems including the lack of a broad coalition at the start, the statement of untested assumptions as apparent facts, the apparent absence of an organizational strategy to bind communities together, and an overly depoliticized approach.

First, the launch of SAFER did not showcase the kind of wide coalition that is necessary to build a movement. It was launched not merely as a report but as an appeal for funds to "[build] a powerful community gathering". It included presentations from Retrofit Balsall Heath in Birmingham, UK, which is trying to retrofit homes to improve insulation, and from

Greener Henley, which hosts hundreds of thousands of visitors at boating regattas on the river Thames, and is now seeking protections from flooding. Yet the line-up of 7 speakers did not apparently include anyone from the working class or unions or from the kind of multiracial coalition which would be needed in Britain to build a movement.

Second, it is a big assumption that doing local adaptation action will make the climate breakdown threat visible in a way that galvanizes people to want to struggle for mitigation later. It's like assuming that because workers in a particular union learn to advocate for their own material interest that they will then want to also help the wider working class. But this is mostly contradicted by what many unions have become.

Now it might be, as the presenters argued, that people in hundreds of local communities who are engaged in adaptation actions in the UK do develop a wider consciousness that they are part of something bigger, that they are linked-up by some shared ideological understanding. But that will require SAFER to do a stellar job at on-the-ground organizing to build a movement of those hundreds of local communities. A major impediment to this might be that many Britons are currently facing profound

inequality, affordability, health-care provision and housing crises and a general disenchantment with the standard political parties. So, SAFER campaigns need to connect directly with those kind of material interests, which are inherently political. But dealing with this is affected by the next problem.

Third, SAFER will be hampered by the Climate Majority Project's commitment to "depolarizing" the climate issue. As the report explains, they want to depolarize after observing how the early successes of Extinction Rebellion in the UK led to a societal backlash against the "radicals" and how the right has brought climate into the culture wars. But in the SAFER report the world "capitalism" does not appear once, nor does "ownership". And this in a country with privatized utilities for water, electricity and rail.

In San Diego California we have built a campaign to mobilize the city population to confront the investor owned utility (owned by a fossil fuel company) that controls our electric grid, extracting over half a billion dollars per year in profit. This campaign for public not-for-profit ownership is very much in the spirit of SAFER: it connects with people's material interest by promising lower electricity prices, it prepares for a climate damaged future by emphasizing local rooftop solar and storage instead of building long-distance transmission lines to remote solar mega-projects, and it likely achieves lower emissions by accelerating the renewable transition. Unlike SAFER however, it is explicitly political – the issue is about ownership, about changing social relations. We have seen that we can also appeal to some conservatives, who also don't like monopoly corporate control. Perhaps then the challenge for SAFER is to build a progressive populism that is targeted at elite / corporate power without being encumbered with typical socialist connotations?

Fourth, if the proponents of SAFER believe that an adaptation-engaged climate-realist populace will then be ready for the mitigation struggle, and if they can actually build the mass movement of connected organizations to do that, it will need to be militant, even revolutionary, which appears completely at odds with their framing. The mitigation struggle is a

confrontation with the interests of fossil fuel finance, fossil fuel extraction, and US and other military hegemony. Beyond that, unless we entertain the unsubstantiated assumptions of green capitalism of a nice, clean, green technical transition, it is also a confrontation with the core aspect of modernity – endless economic growth. Indeed, quite apart from the problem with carbon we are now superseding 7 of 9 planetary boundaries (i.e. boundaries beyond which our world is not in a safe operating space, of which changes in nitrogen and phosphorous cycles and a thousand-fold increase in species extinctions are other examples). If we keep growing then a big shift to wind and solar and electrifying nearly everything will continue to add to rather than replace fossil fuel energy, and will also push us further beyond the other planetary boundaries.

SAFER could look at what some social movement scholars are calling the most successful climate movement of our recent times *Soulèvement De La Terre* (Earth Uprisings) in France. A central organizing group is coordinating multiple communal home-grown struggles, such as fighting back to preserve local water supplies, knitting them together and providing key practical support, even while retaining a commitment to anti-imperialism and anti-fascism. In our world now, where international law is in tatters and, relatedly, the prospect for internationally-binding action on climate blown, where authoritarian forces grow and local populations even in the Global North are immiserated, we should not put all our confidence in SAFER's depolarized politics that hopes to not offend.

As global heating accelerates and climate damages mount all around us, and as climate organizations and activists grow desperate about what to do, SAFER provides important new thinking. The challenge, one of the biggest of our times for organizers, theorists and social scientists, is how to bring this idea into our various countries at an organizational level. In the end, the path forward will require thousands of local communities to link up in a common movement so that they engage in coordinated political action that must be radical in the sense of changing social relations.

Apartheid Apartments: A Showroom for a Genocide We're Still Furnishing

Jack Clarke

I arrived in Doncaster on one of those sticky, humid Fridays where everything feels like it's wearing a damp jumper. My journey from Salford was a slow, passive-aggressive trudge through Britain's train system, £20 lighter and 90 minutes older, all for the privilege of sitting on a damp seat next to a teenager vaping Elf Bar smoke that smelled like artificial remorse. Northern Rail, as ever, managing to simulate both stagnation and forward motion at once.

But I wasn't here for a scenic rail-induced breakdown. I was in town to meet with Mike Stubbs, the formidable curator, filmmaker and currently Creative Director at Artbomb, to talk through a potential short film project with my partner Ciara O'Rourke. We'd been speaking about making something rooted in Doncaster itself, its peculiar rhythms, empty high streets, accidental poetry.

Mike, being Mike, generous, sharp, and operating somewhere between encyclopedic arts oracle and whirlwind of loosely-connected genius, suggested we meet at Art Bomb, a former estate agency turned experimental art space on Hall Gate. We were barely five minutes into catching up, talking about everything from regional funding gaps to whether Doncaster could sustain a grassroots film scene, when he suddenly stopped mid-sentence, squinting toward a brightly lit window like something had just occurred to him from another dimension.

"Oh!" he said, voice skipping a gear. "You've got to see this. Darren Cullen's got a new thing in there, Apartheid Apartments. Just opened. It's brilliant. You'll like it"

And with that, we were off, led by a man who might casually mention he once ran a moving-image biennial in a decommissioned submarine while unlock-

ing the door to a building now housing the sharpest anti-Zionist satire in South Yorkshire.

Only moments later, we stepped inside, and it hit me immediately. Apartheid Apartments wasn't just an installation, it was a confrontation. The building's past life as an estate agency lent the whole experience a bitter irony. Here, where keys once changed hands for leases and mortgages, Cullen had recreated the cramped, subdivided, hyper-surveilled interior of a Palestinian apartment under occupation.

The spaces are dissected by clear plastic sheeting, suggesting a home where privacy has collapsed into performance, where every movement is watched or limited by force. It felt like entering someone else's memory, one full of bruises and bureaucracy.

Cullen's video work, created in collaboration with the supremely talented Michelle Tylicki, adds a ghostly, digital unease: furniture shifts without touching, light flickers like a nervous system, and unseen presences stalk through walls. It's surreal, but not fantasy, it's a political haunting.

If you know Darren Cullen's work, none of this will feel entirely out of the blue. The Leeds-born artist has been skewering British militarism, consumer culture, and state hypocrisy for over a decade. His 2014 anti-recruitment comic *Join the Army* lives in the V&A's permanent collection. His viral *Action Man: Battlefield Casualties* ads, made with Veterans for Peace, remain some of the UK's most piercing anti-war media.

Apartheid Apartments is a natural evolution, his satire sharpened into spatial politics. No gag. No slogan. Just the cold reality of how daily life is disassembled in Gaza.



Apartheid Apartments, an art installation by Darren Cullen | Image credit: Jack Clarke

And Doncaster isn't just a backdrop, it's a crucible of working-class strength and international solidarity. From the Great War, the town's Royal Engineers, raised in local factories, were among the first British units to campaign in Sinai and Palestine in 1917, bridging Doncaster's steel and sweat with far-reaching theatres of conflict.

During WWII, local regiments mobilised and served in Palestine and Syria, troops from across Doncaster signing up not just for national defence, but into global history. Doncaster's resilience has also stabilised newer arrivals. From Belgian refugees in 1914 to modern-day migrants, many seeking safety in the UK, this is a town that rolls up its sleeves when the world unravels.

And today the Doncaster PSC (Palestine Solidarity Campaign) continues that lineage, standing guard through every Gaza bombing campaign, small-town activism in service of global justice.

It's not just grassroots protest that's being criminalised. Palestine Action, a group targeting weapons manufacturers, was officially banned this month

under anti-terror legislation. Supporting them, even in words, now carries up to 14 years in prison. The vote wasn't close: 385 MPs in favour, only 26 against.

This installation arrives at a time when even standing still in solidarity can land you in handcuffs. In the last few weeks, over 70 people have been arrested in the UK for protesting Israeli actions in Gaza, 42 in London alone, many of them simply holding signs reading "I oppose genocide, I support Palestine Action."

As the legal noose tightens around political dissent, the art world continues to flutter in a safer realm, where critique is celebrated, as long as it remains in the gallery, behind plexiglass.

That contrast became sharply apparent at Bob Vylan's recent London show. The punk-rap duo, fresh off being blacklisted from festivals over a Glastonbury chant of "Death to the IDF," returned to stage defiant—but shifted the chant to "Free, free Palestine."



It was a clever sidestep. Not because they feared being inflammatory, but because they wanted the message to land. They understood, as Cullen does, that sometimes delivery matters more than volume. The walls aren't just physical, they're linguistic. Say the wrong phrase, and you're silenced. Say the right one, and maybe you open a door.

Cullen's transparent walls and the UK's police kettling of peaceful protestors are, in their own way, architectural siblings. One imprisons speech. The other imprisons bodies. Both turn living space, mental or physical, into hostile terrain.

Where Bob Vylan pivots to keep the message alive, Cullen builds a structure you can't argue with. He doesn't shout. He shows. And in doing so, he dares you to look through the wall, not just at it.

Standing inside Apartheid Apartments, I found myself thinking not only about Gaza, but about us, about the slow, stealthy way Britain has been constructing its own apartheid of empathy. Not with checkpoints or tanks, but with legislation, head-

lines, and the framing of protest as crime.

The installation runs 24/7. The lights never go off. That, too, is a metaphor. Oppression doesn't sleep. Neither should witness.

The line from Doncaster to Gaza isn't straight, but it is real. Artists, organisers, cultural workers, even the odd dazed writer on a Friday afternoon, all find themselves drawn into the same circuit of resistance. Not because it's glamorous. Because it's necessary.

We're watching a shift: from gallery art to frontline installation. From passive viewing to direct confrontation. From private outrage to public solidarity. Whether it's Cullen's plastic sheeting or Bob Vylan's rewired chant, there's a movement forming—and it's as translucent as it is tough.

Apartheid Apartments isn't just an art piece. It's a proposition: look through the wall. Ask what's beyond it. And decide, finally, whether you're walking away, or walking in.

Between Bombs and Pages: A Student's Struggle in Gaza

Yahia Al Masri

I never imagined I would be forced to evacuate once again—especially not from Al-Mawasi, the area ironically designated as the “humanitarian zone.” At the time, I was preparing for my master’s thesis defense, coordinating with my supervisor to set a date for the online discussion. What preoccupied me most was how to obtain a printed copy of my thesis, as one of the examiners had specifically requested a hard copy. It seemed like such a small, simple request—but in the middle of war, nothing was simple.

I started writing my thesis before the war, managing to finish the first two chapters in a more stable time. The rest, however, I had to write amid the chaos of war and displacement. It took me much longer than expected—not just because of the circumstances, but because I wasn’t fully myself. The forced displacement disrupted everything. I was forced to move seven times, living in an UNRWA school, in tents, and even on the streets like what happened to me in Rafah on 25th of December, 2023. It was winter, though luckily not rainy. I still remember the cold dew settling on the blue cover I used to wrap around myself to stay warm. On the morning of that night, I woke up and hurried to check on my laptop, which I kept inside my backpack. I felt moisture on it, wiped it quickly, and, with a deep breath, powered it on. Thankfully, it still worked—though some keys had stopped responding because the dew had seeped inside. Days later, after we set up the tent and got a little settled, I tried to find someone who could repair it, but there was no one doing so due to the electricity outage. So, I ended up buying an external keyboard just to keep going.

Days passed in anxious thought. Every printing shop had been destroyed in the ongoing war. Eventually, I took my friend Mohammed and set out on a quest to find anyone who could print documents. We wandered from place to place, asking passers-by, until

someone directed us to a man operating a printer from inside a tent. We found him, and I asked him to print a single copy. The cost was exorbitantly higher than what it used to be before the war—but I had no choice. The price was several times what it normally would have been, but the value of that copy, to me, was priceless. It was the tangible proof of years of hard work and hope. I wish I could have been able to get several copies of it.

With the copy in hand, we set off to deliver it to the examiner who had requested it. We walked long distances under the scorching sun, across dusty roads lined with rubble from bombed-out homes, until we finally reached him. Then, we returned to the shelter we had been displaced to weeks earlier.

During this period, I began preparing the presentation required at the start of the defense, as per university protocol. I tried to block out the relentless bombardment and focus on the task. This defense meant the world to me—I had dreamed of this moment for years. But focus was elusive. It wasn’t only the ceaseless shelling; my empty stomach made it worse. I hadn’t eaten properly in days. No flour had entered Gaza for over three and a half months. Hunger gnawed at me constantly, a sharp reminder of the larger cruel siege around us.

On top of that, I was emotionally broken seeing my mother, lying listlessly on her mattress, drained of energy. My mother, in her sixties, suffers from diabetes. She couldn’t take her medication—it requires proper, balanced food. My younger brother, Rafiq, and I would stay by her side, trying to lift her spirits, to soothe her suffering. My heart ached watching her in that state. Despite her pain, she encouraged me to press on with my studies. That’s who she is—resilient and selfless.



A Palestinian searches through rubble of his destroyed home hit by Israeli strikes in Towers Al-andaa - the northern Gaza Strip.

Still, I gathered myself, fueled by my family's warmth. I revised my thesis and finalized the presentation. I was just waiting for my supervisor to confirm the defense date.

This thesis was never just a degree requirement—it was a culmination of every sleepless night, every internet outage I'd worked around, every book I had to review page by page through unimaginable suffering. It was about the Palestinian narrative, about reclaiming the right to speak and be heard in academic spaces. I had envisioned defending it in a large classroom, maybe with applause, maybe even with my mother watching cheerfully and proudly. Not like this—not online, not surrounded by misery, not while hungry.

Then, one morning, I walked to the solar-powered charging shop nearby, as I often did to charge my laptop. I noticed people's pale, haunted faces. They spoke in whispers, some to themselves. I sensed something terrible had happened. My heart tightened. Soon, I received the news: military operations were expanding near our area.

The following days were sheer terror. Explosions rocked the air. Ambulance sirens wailed. Families screamed. Sleep became impossible. Eventually, we received a call at our shelter—an urgent order to

evacuate westward immediately. We rushed to check on each other, gathered what few belongings we could carry, and left on foot. We all knew too well the consequences of delay.

We kept walking west until we reached the farthest part of Al-Mawasi. Night was falling. Thankfully, we had a tent and managed to pitch it. Many others weren't as lucky—they slept in the open streets. The scenes were heart-breaking.

As night darkened, I lay on the mattress I managed to carry with me. My body ached. My spirit ached even more. I stared at the ceiling of the tent and wondered: Are we invisible? Does anyone see us?

I also wondered what it means to pursue education under bombs. Is it resistance? Is it madness? Or both? I think of the other students like me—some in Rafah, some in Jabalia—who had exams, deadlines, hopes. Where are they now? What thesis lies buried under rubble? What ideas were never defended? If the world cannot hear our screams, perhaps it will listen to our pages—if we can keep them safe long enough to be read.

Questions I ask myself with every displacement—and never find an answer.

The “Economy of Genocide” Report: A Reckoning Beyond Rhetoric

Ramzy Baroud

Francesca Albanese, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in occupied Palestine, stands as a testament to the notion of speaking truth to power. This “power” is not solely embodied by Israel or even the United States, but by an international community whose collective relevance has tragically failed to stem the ongoing genocide in Gaza.

Her latest report, ‘From Economy of Occupation to Economy of Genocide,’ submitted to the UN Human Rights Council on July 3, marks a seismic intervention. It unflinchingly names and implicates companies that have not only allowed Israel to sustain its war and genocide against Palestinians, but also confronts those who have remained silent in the face of this unfolding horror.

Albanese’s ‘Economy of Genocide’ is far more than an academic exercise or a mere moral statement in a world whose collective conscience is being brutally tested in Gaza. The report is significant for multiple, interlocking reasons. Crucially, it offers practical pathways to accountability that transcend mere diplomatic and legal rhetoric. It also presents a novel approach to international law, positioning it not as a delicate political balancing act, but as a potent tool to confront complicity in war crimes and expose the profound failures of existing international mechanisms in Gaza.

Two vital contexts are important to understanding the significance of this report, considered a searing indictment of direct corporate involvement, not only in the ongoing Israeli genocide in Gaza, but Israel’s overall settler-colonial project.

First, in February 2020, following years of delay, the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) released a database that listed 112 companies involved in business activities within illegal Israeli settlements in occupied Palestine. The database exposes several corporate giants – including Airbnb, Booking.com, Motorola Solutions, JCB, and Expedia – for helping Israel maintain its military occupation and apartheid.

This event was particularly earth-shattering, considering the United Nations’ consistent failure at reining in Israel, or holding accountable those who sustain its war crimes in Palestine. The database was an important step that allowed civil societies to mobilize around a specific set of priorities, thus pressuring corporations and individual governments to take morally guided positions. The effectiveness of that strategy was clearly detected through the exaggerated and angry reactions of the US and Israel. The US said it was an attempt by “the discredited” Council “to fuel economic retaliation,” while Israel called it a “shameful capitulation” to pressure.

The Israeli genocide in Gaza, starting on October 7, 2023, however, served as a stark reminder of the utter failure of all existing UN mechanisms to achieve even the most modest expectations of feeding a starving population during a time of genocide. Tellingly, this was the same conclusion offered by UN Secretary-General António Guterres, who, in September 2024, stated that the world had “failed the people of Gaza.”

This failure continued for many more months and was highlighted in the UN’s inability to even



Francesca Albanese in Ljubljana, Slovenia presenting the latest report, Photo: Črt Piksi

manage the aid distribution in the Strip, entrusting the job to the so-called Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, a mercenary-run violent apparatus that has killed and wounded thousands of Palestinians. Albanese herself, of course, had already reached a similar conclusion when, in November 2023, she confronted the international community for “epically failing” to stop the war and to end the “senseless slaughtering of innocent civilians.”

Albanese’s new report goes a step further, this time appealing to the whole of humanity to take a moral stance and to confront those who made the genocide possible. “Commercial endeavors enabling and profiting from the obliteration of innocent people’s lives must cease,” the report declares, pointedly demanding that “corporate entities must refuse to be complicit in human rights violations and international crimes or be held to account.”

According to the report, categories of complicity in the genocide are divided into arms manufacturers, tech firms, building and construction companies, extractive and service industries, banks, pension funds, insurers, universities, and charities.

These include Lockheed Martin, Microsoft, Amazon, Palantir, IBM, and even Danish shipping giant Maersk, among nearly 1,000 other firms. It was their collective technological know-how, machinery, and data collection that allowed Israel to kill, to date, over 57,000 and wound over 134,000 in Gaza, let alone maintain the apartheid regime in the West Bank.

What Albanese’s report tries to do is not merely name and shame Israel’s genocide partners but to tell us, as civil society, that we now have a comprehensive frame of reference that would allow us to make responsible decisions, put pressure on, and hold accountable these corporate giants.

“The ongoing genocide has been a profitable venture,” Albanese writes, citing Israel’s massive surge in military spending, estimated at 65 percent from 2023 to 2024 — reaching \$46.5 billion.

Israel’s seemingly infinite military budget is a strange loop of money, originally provided by the US government, then recycled back through US corporations, thus spreading the wealth between governments, politicians, corporations, and numerous contractors. As bank accounts swell, more Palestinian bodies are piled up in morgues, mass graves, or are scattered in the streets of Jabaliya and Khan Yunis.

This madness needs to stop, and, since the UN is incapable of stopping it, then individual governments, civil society organizations, and ordinary people must do the job, because the lives of Palestinians should be of far greater value than corporate profits and greed.

Stop Israel's Dystopian "Humanitarian City" Plan — Before It's Too Late

Medea Benjamin

The Israeli government has just put forward one of the most brazenly genocidal schemes in modern memory—and unless we act immediately, the world will once again let it happen.

As reported in Haaretz, Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz is proposing to force some 600,000 Palestinians—and eventually the entire population of Gaza—into a fenced-in “humanitarian city” to be built on the ruins of Rafah in southern Gaza. The plan is to “screen” the population, separate out alleged Hamas members, and then pressure the remaining civilians—men, women, and children—to “voluntarily” leave Gaza for another country. Which country? That hasn’t even been determined. The point isn’t relocation—it’s erasure. This reflects a long-standing goal among many Israelis, especially on the right, to take full control of Gaza and clear it of Palestinians.

The UN has warned that the deportation or forcible transfer of an occupied territory’s civilian population is strictly prohibited under international humanitarian law and “tantamount to ethnic cleansing”.

While all eyes are focused on a possible ceasefire, Gallant is not interested in peace—he’s interested in a “final solution.” A speeding up of the second Nakba we have been witnessing for the past 20 months. In fact, he has stated that construction would begin during a 60-day ceasefire. So what’s the point of a ceasefire, if it’s used to build a concentration camp?

Once Palestinians are herded into this camp, they will not be allowed to leave for other parts of Gaza. They won’t be allowed to return to what’s left of their homes, their neighborhoods, their farms, their schools. They will be trapped inside this militarized

zone, under constant surveillance, held at gunpoint until Israel can arrange their deportation.

Just think of the tragic, unbearable irony: the Israeli government—founded in the aftermath of the Holocaust—is now building a massive concentration camp for an entire population.

If that sounds unthinkable, look at what Israel has already gotten away with.

For the past 20 months, the world has watched—and largely enabled—a genocidal campaign in Gaza. Over 55,000 Palestinians have been slaughtered, the majority of them women and children. Israel has bombed hospitals, schools, refugee camps, and mosques. It has flattened entire neighborhoods with AI-generated kill lists. It has assassinated journalists, targeted ambulances, destroyed bakeries and water systems.

It has used hunger as a weapon of war, deliberately blocking aid trucks, attacking convoys, and starving the population into desperation. And in a cruel twist, it has created the U.S.-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation—a scheme to funnel aid through Israeli-controlled routes and sideline the UN and experienced NGOs. Its so-called “distribution points” are really death traps, where desperate people have been shot day after day as they risk their lives to get a bit of food.

This engineered starvation is not an accident. It is a strategy—a form of collective punishment on a scale rarely seen in modern times.

We have already failed the people of Gaza—again and again. We failed when we looked the other way as children were buried in rubble. We failed when

we allowed our tax dollars to fund the very bombs that wiped out refugee camps. We failed when we kept pretending there was still a line Israel wouldn't cross.

Now Katz is telling us—explicitly—what comes next: mass internment and forced expulsion. And unless we rise up with every ounce of outrage we have, we will fail again.

Let's be absolutely clear: the infrastructure for this plan is already being built. Netanyahu and Trump are lobbying corrupt governments in the Global South to accept the deported. This is not a negotiating tactic to strengthen Israel's position in ceasefire talks—it is the next phase of a genocide we've been watching in real time for nearly two years.

And what is the U.S. government doing? Still issuing meaningless statements about "Israel's right to defend itself." Still shipping weapons. Still blocking accountability at the United Nations—and even sanctioning officials like UN Special Rapporteur Francesca Albanese for daring to speak out.

President Trump could stop this today—by cutting off military aid, backing the International Criminal Court's investigations, and declaring that forced displacement of Palestinians will not be tolerated. But instead, he's still dreaming of turning Gaza into a Middle Eastern resort for the ultra-rich.

Meanwhile, more Arab governments stand ready to normalize ties with Israel, making deals with war criminals while their fellow Arabs are starved, bombed, and now threatened with mass exile. Where is the outcry from Cairo, Riyadh, Amman? Is there absolutely no red line?

One bright spot on the international scene is the Hague group, which will convene an emergency meeting in Colombia on July 15–16. This growing bloc of nations has joined South Africa's genocide case against Israel at the International Court of Justice. These countries are taking a courageous stand to uphold international law and defend



Palestinian life. Every nation that claims to value justice must join them—immediately.

And here in the United States, every member of Congress must be pushed—loudly, relentlessly—to take a public stand. No more vague language. No more hiding behind mealy-mouthed scripts. We demand immediate, public opposition to this “humanitarian city” plan—and a full cutoff of military support to Israel. This is a moment of moral reckoning. Choose a side.

Don't fool yourself into thinking this can't happen. It is happening. The groundwork is being laid. The walls are going up. The deportation flights are being negotiated.

There is no neutral ground. This is not a policy debate. This is genocide—on camera, with diplomatic cover, and with our tax dollars.

The time to stop Israel's dystopian plan is not tomorrow. It is now.

Rise up. Speak out. Flood the streets. Bombard Congress. Demand accountability.

Stop the plan. Save Gaza. Before it's too late.