



MAGAZINE

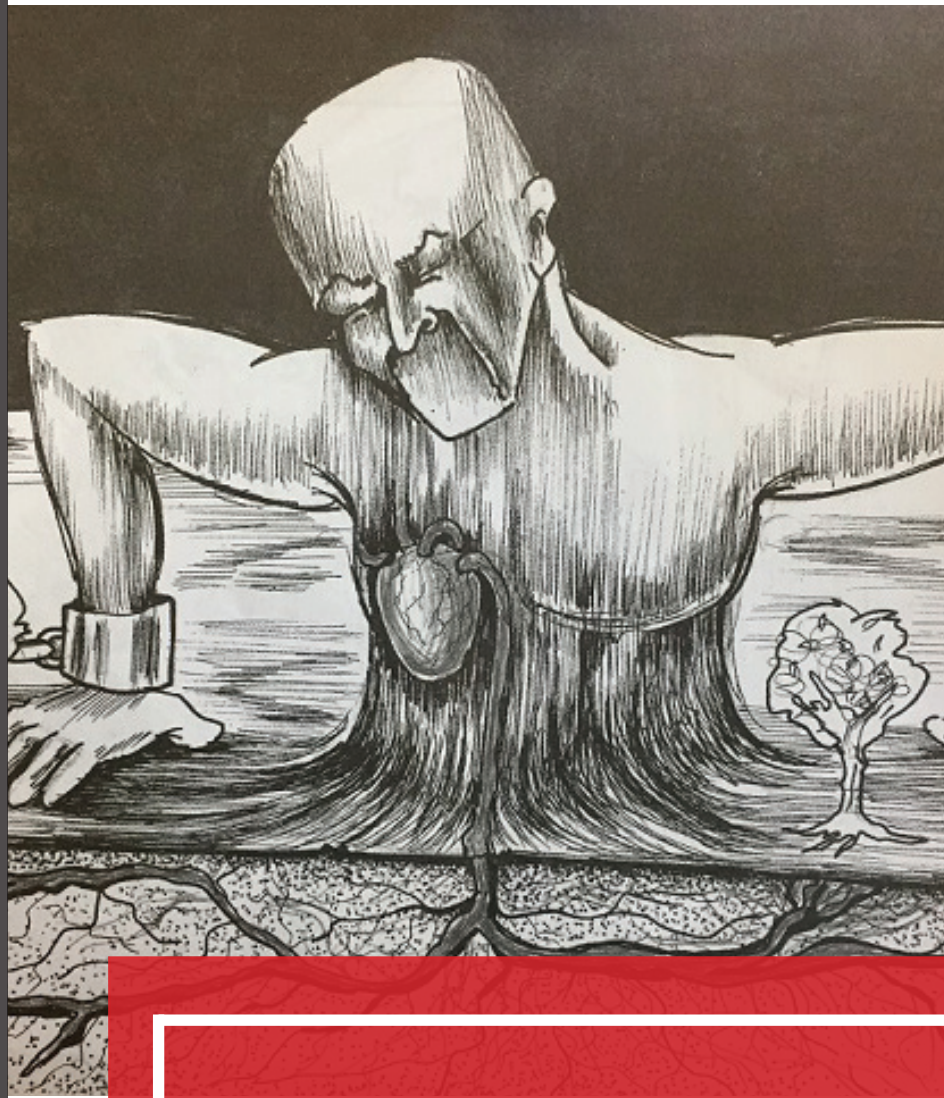
OCTOBER 2025

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Free Palestine

Activism Against
Authoritarianism

Internationalist Vision &
Strategy



*“The hope scarcity
is being created and
capitalized on with
deliberate, anti-people
policies designed to keep
people disheartened
and passive, in order to
maintain elitist power.”*

- Tamara Pearson



www.znetwork.org

Title image by: Mohammad Sabaaneh

OCTOBER 2025

Urgent Next Steps for Palestine at the UN by Nicolas J.S. Davies	3
Meloni's Gaza Challenge: The People vs. Netanyahu's Cronies by Ramzy Baroud	7
Ireland Shows That Divesting From Israeli Crimes Is Possible and Necessary by Richard Solomon	9
Why Wasn't October 7 Avoided? by Dan Steinbock	11
9 Ways Hope Is Being Systematically Depleted And How To Reclaim It by Tamara Pearson	14
A Movement-Based Opposition to Trump and MAGA by Jeremy Brecher	19
Wake Up, America: Democracy Is Disappearing Before Our Eyes by Martina Moneke	21
Admirals and Generals Will Not Save US-Agency Rests In the Hands of the Public Alone by Phil Wilson	25
Ripped From Home: The ICE Raid That Exposed a North Country's Divide by George Cassidy Payne	27
Will Teachers Save Our Democracy? by Jeff Bryant	30
Green Capitalism in the Americas: False Solutions, Real Threats by Sabrina Fernandes	33
Capitalism and Endless War by Sona Prakash	37
Gen Z 212 and Youth Protests in Morocco: From the Digital Sphere to the Street by Rezger Akrawi	43

Urgent Next Steps for Palestine at the UN

Nicolas J.S. Davies

As U.S. President Donald Trump surely intended, his “20-point Gaza plan” succeeded in upstaging calls by many other world leaders at the UN General Assembly for concrete, coordinated UN-led measures to force Israel to end its criminal genocide in Gaza and the illegal occupation of Palestine.

Trump’s White House meeting with Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu on September 29th coincided with the last day of the annual meeting of the UN General Assembly in New York, where Trump had met with eight Arab and Muslim leaders at the UN and won their support for a proposed plan for Gaza. In a textbook bait-and-switch, Trump then allowed the Israelis to significantly alter his plan before he unveiled it to the world at his meeting with Netanyahu, but pretended it was the same plan that the leaders of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the UAE and other countries had endorsed.

Trump’s plan was based on cornering Hamas into a series of steps it hadn’t agreed to: freeing all the Israeli prisoners in Gaza without a full Israeli withdrawal; surrendering its weapons and its role in Palestinian politics; and handing Gaza over to a new phase of Israeli occupation. Gaza would be governed by a “board” headed by Trump and former U.K. prime minister Tony Blair, who not only invaded Iraq alongside the U.S. in 2003, but at the same time masterminded a dirty war against Hamas that led to the isolation and blockade of Gaza, and ultimately to the current crisis.

On October 8th, after unprecedented pressure from Arab and Islamic mediators, Hamas dropped its insistence on a full Israeli withdrawal from Gaza as a precondition for the prisoner exchange. Other details remained to be worked out, but all sides seemed to believe they were

close to an agreement. A source close to the negotiators told Drop Site News that Hamas was willing to gamble on Trump’s promise to prevent the Israelis from resuming the genocide once Israel had its prisoners back.

Under Trump’s plan, Israel would agree to end its genocidal assault on Gaza and partially withdraw its forces, but only his word would prevent it relaunching the genocide once it had the Israeli prisoners in Gaza safely back. Israel reportedly agreed to begin allowing 600 truckloads of aid to enter each day, but it would retain control of Gaza’s borders with Israel and Egypt, and could again restrict the entry of food, medicine and rebuilding materials at any point.

Prime minister Netanyahu has said publicly that Israel will not withdraw its forces from Gaza until Hamas and other Palestinian forces have been removed from power and disarmed, while Hamas insists it will not disarm until the occupation of Palestine ends and its fighters can hand over their weapons to the new armed forces of the sovereign nation of Palestine.

Hamas also responded to Trump that it has no authority to act as the sole negotiator in talks on the future of Palestine. It said Palestine must be governed by Palestinians, not Trump or Blair, and that its future must be negotiated between representatives of all Palestinian factions.

So Trump’s plan is still rife with unresolved disagreements, but it may at least lead to a ceasefire and a prisoner exchange, and the ceasefire could possibly become permanent. But in any case, it is clearly designed to perpetuate, not to end, Israel’s illegal occupation of Palestine. As the Progressive International said in a statement on October 7th:



The 56th session of the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council in Geneva, Switzerland (Photo via Xinhua)

“Far from paving a path to peace, it offers a blueprint for the further colonisation and subjugation of the Palestinian people — the culmination of decades of dispossession and destruction that reached its dark zenith in the ongoing genocide in Gaza.”

Whatever the result of these negotiations, the UN and the world’s governments should not sit idly by as passive observers. The UN should urgently prepare to take the concrete steps that leaders from around the world called for at the General Assembly in September, to give force to UN General Assembly resolutions calling for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza, the unrestricted restoration of life-saving humanitarian aid, and a final end to the brutal Israeli occupation of Palestine.

In July 2025, the UN General Assembly organized a “High-level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution.” The conference was chaired by

France and Saudi Arabia, and its goal was “not only to reaffirm international consensus on the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine but to catalyze concrete, timebound and coordinated international action toward the implementation of the two-State solution.”

The conference produced a lengthy “New York Declaration,” which was endorsed by the General Assembly in a resolution on September 12th, by a vote of 142 to 10, with 12 abstentions.

But this was a plan for the “day after,” which, by itself, failed to bring that day any closer, because it deliberately avoided taking the “concrete, timebound and coordinated international action” that the conference’s mandate had explicitly called for.

The declaration was based on the deliberations of 8 working groups, co-chaired by representatives of 15 different countries, the Arab League and the European Union, which each drew up plans for the aftermath of a hypothetical perma-

ment ceasefire in Gaza, with topics like “Humanitarian Action and Reconstruction” and “Security for Israelis and Palestinians.”

Three roundtables at the July conference, chaired by former Irish president Mary Robinson, former Colombian president Juan Manuel Santos and former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid bin Ra’ad of Jordan, agreed that the General Assembly’s first step should be the international recognition of the state of Palestine.

UN recognition requires the approval of both the General Assembly and the UN Security Council. However, with such a large majority of countries supporting recognition, and the United States abusing its veto to sideline the Security Council, the General Assembly can call an Emergency Special Session (ESS) to act alone under the “Uniting for Peace” principle, to officially recognize Palestine and welcome it as a full UN member.

Instead, while several Western countries finally recognized Palestine, bringing the total number who have recognized its independent statehood to 157, the declaration was endorsed in a regular session of the General Assembly that lacked the power to grant formal UN recognition.

But the most serious omission from the July 2025 conference and the September 12th resolution was that they failed to take concrete, coordinated UN action to impose a ceasefire in Gaza, the vital first step to get to the “day after” that the working groups at the conference were tasked with planning for. Trump took advantage of that omission to propose an end to the genocide in Gaza on terms that would perpetuate the Israeli occupation instead of ending it.

It was entirely predictable that Israel would reject and ignore the New York Declaration, and prime minister Netanyahu did just that in his General Assembly speech on September 26th. But after most of the delegates walked out and left Netanyahu ranting to a nearly empty hall,

the Hague Group of countries led by Colombia and South Africa hosted a meeting with representatives of 34 countries to plan the coordinated, concrete action the UN must now take to end the genocide and the occupation.

As Cuban foreign minister Bruno Rodriguez Parilla told the General Assembly in his speech the next day, it should convene an Emergency Special Session “without further delay” to take concrete measures for Palestine, including a binding resolution on full UN membership.

If the General Assembly is serious about ending the genocide and the occupation, the Emergency Special Session must also debate and vote on a UN-led arms embargo, economic boycott and other concrete measures designed to force Israel to comply with international law, international court rulings and UN resolutions on Palestine.

The UN Human Rights Office in Geneva already has a database of 158 Israeli and multinational corporations that are complicit in Israel’s illegal occupation, so an international boycott of those companies could take effect immediately.

Israel is a small country, dependent on trade and economic relations with countries all over the world. If the large majority of countries that voted for the New York Declaration are ready to back their words and their votes with coordinated action, a UN-led trade boycott, divestment campaign and arms embargo can put enormous pressure on Israel to end its genocide in Gaza and its illegal occupation of Palestine. With full participation by enough countries, these steps could quickly make Israel’s position very difficult.

Many speakers at the 2025 General Assembly called passionately for this kind of decisive action to bring about a ceasefire in Gaza and end the occupation. King Abdullah of Jordan asked, “How long will we be satisfied with condemnation after condemnation without concrete action?”

President Lula said that Brazil already has an arms embargo against Israel and has cut off all trade with its illegal settlements; Türkiye severed all trade links with Israel in August; Dutch prime minister Dick Schoof called for an arms embargo and the suspension of the EU's trade agreement with Israel; and Chadian prime minister Allah-Maye Halina declared, "Our duty from this moment on is to transform this strong declaration into concrete acts and make the Palestinian people's hope a reality."

The Hague Group of countries was formed by the Progressive International to support South Africa's genocide case at the International Court of Justice and war crimes cases against Israeli officials at the International Criminal Court. In a meeting at Bogota in Colombia in July, twelve of those countries committed to an arms embargo and other concrete measures against the Israeli occupation. In his speech to the General Assembly on September 23rd, Colombian president Gustavo Petro called for an Emergency Special Session on Palestine and for a UN peacekeeping force to "defend Palestine."

A previous Emergency Special Session in September 2024 demanded that Israel must end its post-1967 occupation of Palestine within a year. Israel's refusal to even begin to do so, and its defiant escalation of its genocide in Gaza, increasing repression in the other occupied territories and attacks on other countries provide all the grounds the General Assembly should need to take the concrete, coordinated measures that many countries are calling for.

Tragically, instead of applying the diplomatic and economic pressure it will take to secure a ceasefire and end the occupation, France, Saudi Arabia and their partners instead relied on dangling carrots in front of Israel, such as regional economic integration and recognition by Arab and Muslim countries, to try to seduce or bribe Israel into complying with international law and UN resolutions.

This was never going to work. The toothless New York Declaration, and now Trump's new occupation plan for Gaza, offer little hope for the future to the besieged, starved, bombed people of Gaza. The UN General Assembly must follow up on these flawed initiatives with decisive UN-led action to ensure a real, permanent end to the genocide and the occupation, by imposing economic sanctions, an arms embargo and other measures to diplomatically and economically isolate Israel.

There is nothing to prevent the UN General Assembly from quickly convening a new meeting of its Emergency Special Session on Palestine. The ESS can finally take the "concrete, time-bound, coordinated international action" that the French- and Saudi-led initiative promised but failed to deliver – what Malaysian foreign minister Mohamad Hasan described to the General Assembly as "concrete action against the occupying force."

Across the world, ordinary people are rising up to demand that their governments take action, while flotillas of activists set sail to breach the blockade of Gaza that their governments have failed to challenge.

The Emergency Special Session of the UN General Assembly, meeting under the Uniting for Peace principle, can debate and pass binding resolutions on UN recognition of Palestine, a UN-led international arms embargo, economic boycott and disinvestment campaign, war crimes prosecutions, and other measures to diplomatically isolate Israel.

By responding to calls of conscience from their own people, voting for these measures at the UN and acting quickly to enforce them, the governments of the world have the collective power to end this genocide and the brutal, illegal occupation of Palestine that it is part of. Now they must use it.

Meloni's Gaza Challenge: The People vs. Netanyahu's Cronies

Ramzy Baroud

What is happening in Italy regarding Gaza is unprecedented in the history of solidarity between the country and any other international cause anywhere. A popular uprising is underway, the consequences of which are likely to alter, not only Rome's position on the Israeli genocide in the Strip, but the country's own political structure altogether.

To understand why such a conclusion is a rational one, we must consider two important factors: the popular mobilization throughout the country and the historical context of Italy's political attitude towards Palestine and the Middle East.

When the Israeli genocide in Gaza started, the language and political posturing of the far-right government of Giorgia Meloni were more or less consistent with the political positions adopted by other European leaders.

In her visit to Israel on October 21, 2023, Meloni's language was that of unconditional condemnation of Palestinians for the October 7 attack and equally unconditional support of Israel and its 'right to defend itself'.

That position remained consistent throughout the war until a few months ago, when the Israeli genocide reached levels too extreme even for Meloni to ignore. This was expressed in the words of Italian Defense Minister Guido Crosetto, who stated, last August, that Israel "lost its sanity and humanity."

Despite this, Italian weapons continued to flow into Israel. Even when Rome decided not to ship new weapons to Tel Aviv, old military contracts previously signed with the Italian arms giant Leonardo were still being honored, despite the fact that these weapons were used directly in the Israeli genocide in Gaza.

Not only did Meloni 'honor' the country's commitment to Israel at the expense of hundreds of thousands of innocent Palestinians in Gaza, but also at the expense of Italy's progressive constitution, which states that "Italy rejects war as an instrument of aggression against the freedom of other peoples".

On the other side, Italian society, at least for a while, remained confused and apparently docile in the face of the Israeli crimes and the support of their government for the ongoing genocide.

Their apparent docility did not necessarily reflect the Italian people's lack of interest in events outside of their borders. Instead, it was a reflection of three major political and historical factors that are worth noting:

One, Italian media has, as of late, been divided into two main groups: private media, owned largely by the family of the late Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi – a far-right media mogul and close ally of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu; and public media, beholden to the dictates of the government. Expectedly, both remained committed to the Israeli hasbara line that criminalized the Palestinians and absolved Israel.

Two, the lack of organizational platforms in Italy, which in the past have been positioned within the activities of popular-based unions. Historically, Italy's powerful unions were directly linked to political parties that had substantial representation in the Italian parliament. Together, they have managed not only to pull political strings but even to influence policies, nationally and internationally.

Three, all of the above is related to the major repositioning of Italian politics between the post-WWII First Republic (1948-1992) and the Second Republic, from 1992 to the present. That major realignment was



Thousand of people marched in Genoa, Italy to bid farewell to the Global Sumud Flotilla.

directly related to the collapse of the Soviet Union, the dismantling of Italy's communist party – once the West's most powerful and relevant communist party – and the rise of center-right politics.

The latter event not only forced a dramatic change in Italy's domestic politics, but also its foreign policy's attitude, thus moving away from the far more balanced position regarding the Israeli occupation of Palestine, for example, to the near embrace of Israel's most far-right politicians in later years.

This embrace became most apparent during the years of Berlusconi, but even more accentuated in Matteo Salvini's Lega party, known even among Italians for being the natural inheritor of Italy's fascist legacy.

But things began changing, thanks to the extent of Israel's criminality in Gaza, the rising global solidarity for Palestine and the elaborate grassroots mobilization within Italy itself since the start of the genocide.

On September 22, Italian dockworkers led a nationwide strike against the war on Gaza and arms shipments to Israel. The action drew on a long history of worker resistance to militarization, especially in ports repeatedly used to transport weapons. Organized by grassroots unions and solidarity networks, the mobili-

zation underscored a broad refusal among workers to be complicit in government policies that sustain war and genocide.

Suddenly, Italian unions are back on the streets, not simply to negotiate better wages, but to reclaim their position as a vanguard of solidarity at home and abroad. The consequences of this event alone could usher in a major change in the political attitude of the Italian people.

As Meloni's government refuses to recognize the state of Palestine, she positions herself in direct opposition to the aspirations of her own people, from all political and ideological backgrounds. This could cost her dearly in future elections.

Italy is now on the cusp of another historical moment, the outcome of which could either entrench the country further in the far-right camp or take it back to a position that is far more consistent with its radical history of anti-fascism, social mobilization, and internationalist resistance.

Regardless of where the pendulum of history will swing, there is no denying that what is happening in Italy at the moment is no less than an actual political uprising, an Intifada.

Ireland Shows That Divesting From Israeli Crimes Is Possible and Necessary

Richard Solomon

In the 1840s, a million people in Ireland died of starvation in a famine called the An Gorta Mór aggravated by British colonial policies and a providential ideology that preached the poor deserved their fate. Nearly a million others fled to the United States, forming the ancestral taproot of a diaspora that encompasses some 31 million Americans.

Now starvation haunts Gaza: over a third of Palestinians there go days without food. In August, the UN-backed IPC declared famine in Gaza City and its periphery, covering some half a million people. At least 440 people in Gaza have died of starvation since the start of the war. Over 20,000 children were admitted to hospitals for acute malnutrition between April and mid-July. Aid trucks sit on the Egyptian border, spoiling with maggots in the baking sun.

Palestinians and scholars of mass violence call it a genocide, and we should heed their warnings. For months, Israel has prevented the world from moving food and medicine into Gaza, creating pervasive shortages. Israeli forces corral Palestinians into smaller and smaller areas destroying their homes to leave nothing to return to.

By July, 88% of Gaza fell under forced displacement orders or closed zones according to the World Health Organization where anyone can be labeled a terrorist and killed. As an Israeli soldier once admitted, “it’s permissible to shoot everyone, a young girl, an old woman.” Another source in the military’s Southern Command clarified that air strikes are “carried out to ensure that rescue efforts do not take place. First aid providers, rescuers – kill them. Attack again, on them. This is the procedure.”

The Prime Minister advocates depopulating Gaza under the pretext of “voluntary migration”, as if any departure from Gaza can be considered voluntary under current conditions. The Israeli Communications Minister Shlomo Karhi put it more vividly: “voluntary is at times a state you impose until they give their consent.” According to a grim poll by Israeli researchers, 82% of the Israeli Jewish populace support such “transfer” measures.

These atrocities are enabled by the U.S. government, which arms Israel with heavy weapons and pays 70% of war costs, at taxpayer expense.

Ireland has charted a different policy. This fall, Irish lawmakers are considering a bill to restrict trade with Israeli settlements. Ireland joined South Africa’s genocide case against Israel, and Sinn Féin and other left-wing parties are calling for a fuller embargo. In August, the Irish president urged the UN Secretary-General to invoke powers under the UN Charter to authorize military action to break the siege, and the Irish central bank has confirmed it will no longer approve sale of Israeli ‘war bonds’.

As students, we’re often told divestment is an impossible taboo. But in June, Ireland’s Trinity College Dublin and Queen’s University Belfast ended all Israeli investments and severed institutional ties to Israel after mass protests.

If Ireland can do it, why can’t Americans? The United States has divested before. One example is Massachusetts, the heart of Irish America: in 1982, it became the first state to divest pension funds from South African apartheid. In 1984, Boston became the first major city to divest municipally, and Massachusetts schools like Am-



herst were also first movers on divestment.

That legacy inspires us. This fall, Massachusetts lawmakers are considering bills to divest state pension funds from Israel and adopt an investment policy that excludes arms makers. In Somerville, activists are fielding a municipal ballot question on divestment. On August 7, Medford's City Council voted 5-1 on a sweeping divestment measure. In Congress, some Massachusetts representatives are sponsoring the Block the Bombs Act.

Students are also saying enough. At the Massachusetts Institute of Technology where I study, the Israeli military sponsors laboratory research. The majority of students demand MIT end it, as confirmed by three separate votes in our Undergraduate Association, Graduate Student Council, and Graduate Student Union. We know MIT has ended recent engagements over human rights

concerns in Saudi Arabia and Ukraine; it can do it again.

Let's throw our weight behind these efforts and reinvest public funds away from apartheid and towards our communities as we brace from the impact of Trump's trade wars, austerity, and tax cuts for the 1%.

The stakes couldn't be higher. Palestinians are under grave attack, but they're not so different from us. "I was born just like you" wrote the poet Mahmoud Darwish: "I have a mother and a home with many windows. I have brothers, friends and a prison with one cold window. A wave stolen by seagulls..."

Divestment is a concrete way for people of conscience to work together to end the occupation so Palestinians can live with dignity, in a state that values all human life.

Why Wasn't October 7 Avoided?

Dan Steinbock

On October 7, 2023 – two years ago – the Hamas-led offensive was portrayed as “Israel’s 9/11” that came out of the blue. This assumption is not supported by the facts. The attack was avoidable.

After the Hamas-led assault, the Netanyahu cabinet and other high-level Israeli political, military and security authorities vehemently condemned what they called “our September 11” as a “surprise attack.”

For a presumably astounding shock, it was a remarkably uniform, orchestrated response.

Yet, the hard questions remain ignored. Why were the Israeli hostages abandoned? Why were the strategic border communities neglected? And why was the abundant intelligence on the Hamas attack shunned?

Abandoned hostages

On October 7, 2023, as part of the overall Hamas-led offense, 251 people were abducted from Israel to the Gaza Strip. The next day, Prime Minister Netanyahu appointed ex-military commander Gal Hirsch to coordinate the cross-governmental response to abducted civilians and soldiers.

Internationally, the appointment was portrayed as the PM’s proactive move to ensure the timely release of the Israeli hostages. But it was a farce.

As brigadier general, Hirsch had commanded an IDF division during the 2006 Lebanon War, which saw the first test of The Obliteration Doctrine, premised on the destruction of civilian infrastructure and genocidal atrocities. Yet, Hirsch was responsible for the blunder resulting in an

abduction by Hezbollah militants and two failed battles, despite heavy casualties.

Following a barrage of criticism, Hirsch was forced to resign. Later, he joined the right-wing Likud party at the behest of Netanyahu himself and became the favorite for the role of the national police chief in 2021. Until he and his business partners were indicted for tax evasion of \$1.9 million in a case of arms sales to Georgia.

If Netanyahu was serious about saving lives, why did he appoint as his hostage tsar a general who had already blundered one high-profile abduction, failed to protect his soldiers and had been indicted for corruption?

Soon, the families of the hostages concluded that, to the Netanyahu government, the fate of the hostages was secondary to Gaza’s destruction.

And then, there was the odd issue of the Israeli communities surrounding the Gaza Strip. Why were they left vulnerable for years before October 7?

Neglected Israeli communities around Gaza

When Israel was established, its founding fathers considered its border areas strategic. Adjacent to the Gaza Strip, these are the so-called “Gaza envelope”; the populated Israeli settlements within 7 km of the Gaza border and thus within the range of mortar shells and Qassam rockets.

Over time many of these localities were neglected by the government. Following Israel’s unilateral withdrawal from the Gaza Strip in 2005 and increased cross-border shelling and rocket attacks,

the parliament enacted a law to assist the “confrontation-line communities.”

But when these measures expired in 2014, the IDF cut the associated budgets, especially after the 2014 Gaza War which sparked rocket and mortar attacks, tunnels, intrusions, even incendiary kites. Moreover, these Gaza Envelope communities were “slated for abandonment following the November 2022 elections.” Subsequent per capita budgets were a third lower. (It was only after the mass killings that the Netanyahu government approved a 5-year \$4.9 billion plan to rehabilitate and develop the Gaza envelope area.)

Israeli authorities did construct a high-tech underground border wall. On October 7, the IDF over-relied on remote-controlled surveillance systems and weapons that were swiftly disabled by drones and snipers, enabling infiltration and onslaught. In fact, the builder of the barrier warned already in 2018 that it was not designed to prevent a mass assault. Although the “Iron Wall” was considered impenetrable, on October 7 Hamas operatives breached the border barrier at 44 different points.

Worse, Israeli intelligence authorities had been aware of the threat for more than a year yet ignored it.

Shunned intelligence

Just days after October 7, testimonies from members of the mainly female lookout units bolstered accusations that Netanyahu’s leadership fatally misread the dangers from Gaza. In an Israeli TV segment, two soldiers, Yael Rotenberg and Maya Desiatnik, recounted their experiences in the months before the attack.

Rotenberg frequently saw many Palestinians dressed in civilian clothing near the border fence with maps, scrutinizing the ground around it and digging holes. “It’s infuriating,” said Desiatnik who served in Nahal Oz, where

20 other female surveillance soldiers were killed by Hamas. “We saw what was happening, we told them about it, and we were the ones who were murdered.”

The fatal mistakes went back to the aftermath of the Gaza war in 2021, when it was decided to cease intelligence-gathering on Hamas’ tactical array and the intermediate ranks of its military arm, to focus only on few individuals. Opposing views to this intelligence concept were marginalized.

Yet, based on more than 1 year of evidence, Hamas militants had trained for the blitzattacks in at least six sites across Gaza in plain sight and less than 1.5 km from Israel’s heavily fortified and monitored border.

Code-named Jericho Wall, a 40-page blueprint outlined a lethal invasion. It had been circulated widely among Israeli military and intelligence leaders who determined an attack of that scale was beyond Hamas’s capabilities.

Right after October 7, several Israeli media released several reports indicating that many intelligence analysts’ warnings were ignored. Subsequently, in November 2023, this was reported even by the mainstream CNN and the New York Times.

Discounted (buried?) evidence

After October 7, a high-level Egyptian intelligence official said Israel had ignored repeated warnings that “an explosion of the situation is coming, and very soon, and it would be big.” Netanyahu denied receiving any such advance warning. Yet, the Egyptian confirmed that the Israeli PM had received direct notice from Cairo’s intelligence minister. Similarly, Michael McCaul, Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, told reporters of the alleged warning.

Worse, many testimonies by Israeli witnesses to the Hamas attack indicate that the Israeli mili-

tary killed its own citizens struggling to neutralize Palestinian gunmen, in accordance with the Hannibal Directive. As one witness said to Israel Radio: “[Israeli special forces] eliminated everyone, including the hostages.”

Introduced in 1986, this is a controversial doctrine intended to prevent enemy capture of Israeli soldiers by neutralizing the hostages themselves. The goal is to avoid their kidnapping and the consequent prisoner exchanges. In 2016, the Directive was revoked by then-IDF Chief of Staff Gadi Eisenkot; ironically, the architect of the obliteration doctrine behind Gaza’s devastation today. But the directive did not disappear into history.

Amid the Hamas offensive, the IDF was ordered to prevent “at all costs” the abduction of Israeli civilians or soldiers. Israeli soldiers knew the meaning of the code words. Indeed, the Hamas-led offensive was compounded by what some Israeli soldiers subsequently called a “mass Hannibal.”

The uses of October 7

By May 2024, new evidence indicated that Israel’s intelligence failure was the net effect of a “chain of failures” that pervaded the entire security sector, both in the Shin Bet and the IDF.

In March 2025, the Israeli Defense Forces’ landmark investigations into the October 7 attack disclosed severe, deep-rooted intelligence miscalculations and fundamental misconceptions on the nature of Hamas and its intentions by both the Israeli government and military.

Probing the same attack, Shin Bet, Israel’s internal security service, has pointed fingers at Prime Minister Netanyahu. Just as 9/11 was used by the Bush administration as a pretext for the misguided war against Iraq and war on terror, Netanyahu used the Hamas offensive to legitimize the subsequent ground assault and mass atrocities, which was hoped to result in

ethnic expulsions that would open Gaza for Jewish resettlement and facilitate the annexation of the West Bank to Israel.

Through his U.S. neoconservative friends, Netanyahu knew that a “Pearl Harbor-like” mass tragedy was vital to legitimize rearmament and foster unity.

The leading neoconservatives, who gathered around the Project for the New American Century long before 9/11, were commissioned by Netanyahu to prepare a separate policy document A Clean Break (1996) for Israel.

“It was no surprise”

A day after October 7, 2023, CNBC, the global financial news giant, interviewed myself and Eurasia Group’s Ian Bremmer. Echoing the official Israeli narrative, Bremmer said that the “massive attacks by Hamas leadership into Israel ... is no less than Israel’s 9/11.” By contrast, I said that the attack “certainly did not come out of the blue.”

Weeks after October 7, Israeli media investigations suggested that the IDF had detailed knowledge of the Hamas offensive three weeks before the attack, based on information from military intelligence’s 8200 Unit. Highlighting the extent to which the IDF’s Gaza Division was aware of a potential attack on Israel’s southern border communities, the document disclosed a series of exercises conducted by Hamas’ elite Nukhba units in the prior weeks.

One of the most shocking sections of the IDF report featured instructions relating to the taking of hostages, the number of which was estimated to be between 200-250, coming close to the actual 251 captives.

The writing was on the wall. So, why was it ignored?

October 7 was avoidable.

9 Ways Hope Is Being Systematically Depleted And How To Reclaim It

Tamara Pearson

“They sowed fear in us, we grew wings,” goes the song in Spanish by Vivir Quintana, about women in Mexico resisting femicide.

Amid the protests, a global collective hope crisis is also simmering, with many people hurting, criminalized, repressed, and doubting that justice and dignity are possible. The old fable of a stable job, home, family and retirement is crumbling. For many, it is becoming very hard to plan ahead, to dream. This, while also experiencing an ongoing, crippling concern for planet and people; a state of prolonged alarm at an abyss of too-big problems.

The hope scarcity is being created and capitalized on with deliberate, anti-people policies designed to keep people disheartened and passive, in order to maintain elitist power. But, things are much more hopeful than they initially seem. We can come out of this growing wings. There is possibility built into uncertainty and all this disillusionment. The lack of safety and a clear path forward, however, has many people understandably focusing on gloom.

Globally, there are significant increases in depression, especially among young adults and in parts of Africa, and happiness among young people in North America has nose dived. Happiness rates have also dropped in South Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa. Downward trends in hope are contributing to rising numbers of deaths of despair (suicide, overdoses and alcohol-related mortality) in the US. A Lancet global survey found that 60% of young adults were experiencing climate anxiety.

The hope crisis isn't equal. Young people with the biggest fears around climate change live in the Global South, with people in the Philippines and India feeling that “humanity is doomed” and “the future is frightening.”

The crisis also isn't entirely new; the horrors of inequality, imperialism, and the recklessness of corporations are old, ongoing patterns. Now, though, the climate crisis has declared deadlines. The hazardous weather and floodscapes are less and less limited to just the Global Majority regions. Social media stupefaction is concerning. The ineffectiveness of global bodies like the UN to stop obvious horrors, while the ear-clogged baboon beings in power are also unable or unwilling to do anything about any of it, is perturbing. An emboldened right wing is dismantling care services and with them, the future. Most governments are going to increasing lengths to discourage resistance and initiative, and repress protests.

Why hope is so important and 9 ways they stifle it

Collectively, hopelessness has political implications. Hope supports resilience. It is based on self belief and on deep understanding of processes, history, and our ability to enact change, at many levels.

Critical hope (as distinct from blind hope, which sustains that things will work out without anyone doing anything) counters impotency and resists despair and paralysis. It spurs on action – which is what the baboons don't want. Hope, as a vision for the future, helps determine what we believe we can achieve, what we deserve, and what we demand. CEOs and their political puppets prefer consumers and voters to be passive and dim, so they strangle hope in the following ways:

1) Criminalisation

There is an increased criminalisation of solidarity

with migrants in Europe, with prosecutions last year up from the previous two years, and protest movements there are also increasingly criminalized. Globally, more countries are passing anti-protest laws in order to silence and isolate, and protesters are being repressed in the US, UK, Indonesia, Argentina, Mexico, Panama, and more.

Here in Mexico, land defenders are frequently imprisoned for years without trial, while organized crime and transnationals have killed or disappeared hundreds of activists. As a result, there is a lot of trauma, distrust, self-censorship, and fear in communities and movements. There is also courage and resistance, but activists often aim low, and a lack of clear victories compounds the sense of hopelessness.

Using stigmatizing language in the media, arrests, and heavy police presence, authorities can turn the bravest, kindest people (activists, migrants, unionists etc) into a perceived threat. The chilling effect sees the communities of those targeted also going quiet out of fear and disbelieving in the possibility of change. Surveillance causes people to become less vocal, erodes trust, and discourages engagement with monitored groups. Such disempowerment leads to hopelessness.

2) Sanctions and hunger

Similarly to criminalisation, sanctions on countries like Cuba (since 1962) and Venezuela (since 2017), that have refused to do the US's bidding, are designed to wear the populace down, while also demonizing those countries and discouraging outsiders from having hope in the possibility of alternative political and economic models. Venezuela's revenue loss has crippled its ability to import essential products, including life-saving medicine like insulin and crucial food items. US sanctions likely contributed to at least 40,000 deaths there in 2017-2018 alone.

Hunger is being used as a weapon by Israel against Gaza and by both forces in Sudan as a means to demoralize, subjugate, and control. Some 25 mil-

lion people are facing acute hunger in Sudan, and 2 million are facing famine. In Gaza, journalists have described how children no longer dream of toys, but only of bread. Hunger leads to physical and mental helplessness. Those with food – governments, aid distributors, food companies, and armies become the masters over life. Hunger can also cause impaired cognitive function, as well as impaired memory and low self-esteem. Food-insecure people tend to fixate on meals, experience apathy and irritability and have feelings of despair.

3) Austerity, privatization, and anti-care policies

The rawness of inequality is magnified by insufficient or non-existent healthcare, deficiencies in workers' rights, disability support, and housing access. Some 4.5 billion people lack basic health services and half the world has no access to social protections or social security. Retirees in Argentina have been protesting weekly because their pensions are so low they have to work to survive.

While governments prioritizing military budgets and corporate subsidies over care systems may not have hopelessness as their primary goal, the extreme levels of vulnerability created can have that effect. Without health, retirement, or safety, people can't think about the future. The prolonged nature of the adversity and repeated exposures to negative situations can cause people to feel like circumstances can't be changed.

4) Bureaucracy, dysfunctional institutions, and the irrelevance of effort

Earlier this year, a Nestlé worker in Pakistan self-immolated in a Lahore court after a nine-year battle. Asif Jutt had tried to form a union in 2016 and was fired despite winning his case and a labor court order to reinstate him. But the powerful company delayed that order and dragged Jutt's case on for over nine years. Jutt had to sell his home. He was victim of a scheme to wear him down and cause him to lose hope.

A Gaza writer wrote before the current genocide that she felt naive for believing hard work was all it took to start her small business, after it was bombed and destroyed in 2018. And even in the US, the belief that hard work automatically leads to positive outcomes is waning. Deliberate obstruction, bureaucracy, institutional weaponized incompetence, combined with inequalities and violence inhibit the impact of our efforts, making them feel pointless.

Call centers use queues, AI bots, menus, and waiting, as a kind of corporate diplomacy to cushion customer frustration while not genuinely caring about customers nor about resolving issues. It is PR, aimed at postponing action—not unlike many politicians who blather about topics without confronting the monetary interests underlying them. These systems, like complex visa processes (especially for Global South migrants) are deliberate deterrence and debilitation methods to discourage action.

5) Climate inaction

Over the past five years, there has been a dramatic rise in frequency, duration, and severity of weather events like floods and droughts—with areas affected reaching 6,100 km² last year, compared to 2,000 km² in 2004 to 2018. As noted, climate anxiety is increasing as well, with the People's Climate Vote 2024 finding that 56% of people are thinking about the issue daily or weekly, and people are more worried now than a year ago. The unmet climate change deadline is a lived experience, multiplied in the Global South by insufficient infrastructure and transnational pillaging of resources like water and land.

In contrast, the annual COP meetings are failing to reach effective agreements, and the most polluting countries aren't sticking to whatever weak targets are set. The space has become an enabling event for business deals (1,700 coal, oil, and gas lobbyists participated in last year's COP), so rather than alleviate worries, it is perpetuating inaction and hopelessness.

6) Habituation and desensitization

With incremental and long-lasting mistreatment and slow-building threats, people's tolerance levels are building up. What it takes for us to speak up, to stop business as usual, is an increasingly higher bar. The horrors in Gaza get worse and worse, and most of society gets on with life. The US has bombed Venezuelan boats in international waters, violating human rights and international law, and barely anything has happened. By declaring various groups in Latin America as terrorists early this year, the US is eroding standards for how it treats the continent. It's similar to how domestic abuse often works, where the victim rationalizes and dismisses incrementally worsening behavior until the worst is tolerated. Habituation fosters learned helplessness, where people perceive that action is futile in a persistently stressful environment—and so rather than rebel or leave, they adjust.

Habituation is being employed as public education systems are privatized one small piece at a time, rights are eroded, and prices of essential goods and services increase – one month at a time. Rationalizing the unjust, from the looting of the Global South to the objectification of women not only lowers the bar, but fosters a climate of permissibility, passivity and lethargy, where it can feel pointless to constantly challenge things, and so hopelessness is deepened.

7) Discrimination and dehumanization

In many regions, we're seeing an increase in racism, deportations, attacks on women's health rights, transphobia, and more. A right-wing offensive (Trump, Musk, Milei, Bukele, Subianto etc) is translating to more open acts of discrimination and harm. This can push whole communities into despair about their future; if your group is hated on, how can you feel confident of getting work, or being accepted by others?

For targeted groups, everything they do can feel like a battle. It can be hard to wade through all the exploitation, disrespect, lack of voice, lack of safety,



A protest in support of Gaza - Mexico City, September 13, 2025. Photo by Tamara Pearson

and still end on a hopeful note. It is an external environment that needs to change, and that seems outside of one's control. Discrimination and dehumanization lay the groundwork for further abusive actions and policies, but the immediate consequence for victims can include feeling undeserving of reasonable treatment, which then has a silencing effect on them.

8) Suppressing and limiting agency and creativity

The best books, journalism, art, and music are buried under a litany of consumer products, advertising, and banal ten-second videos. Addictive consumerism and social media are numbing not just feelings and exhaustion, but also critical thought capacity and the desire to create or speak up. Agency (empowerment to take action) is fuelled by meaning and working with others, and these highly profitable industries counter that by isolating and pacifying.

Average daily social media use has increased to 141 minutes per day, up from 90 in 2012, and consumers today purchase 60% more clothing than 15 years ago.

Online content algorithms deprioritize meaningful, critical content because it's less profitable or addictive, and they deprioritize the views and voices of oppressed peoples. On Instagram, for example, influencers are more likely to be white and young, and such bias is also reflected in the media, entertainment, and education. People can struggle to be hopeful when their voices and creativity are muzzled.

9) Violence and fear

Violence and fear are paralyzing. I see it here in Mexico, in my community, where organized crime is prominent and people refuse to talk about it. The immediate and intergenerational impact of colonialism, invasion, violent security forces, sexual violence, corruption and extortion can be of deep trauma, ongoing freeze or flight mentalities, and despair. Fearing walking in the street, the sound of bombs, the police, attacks, the violence of water contamination by companies like Shell—can instill a sense of impotence. For the Mazatec people in Eloxchitlan, Mexico, for example, who have been detained and tortured for over a decade for defending their river, it's understandable

if that resistance feels pointless sometimes and not worth the cost (yet many don't give up).

Fear is, by nature, submissive rather than assertive. It stops action. The media and politicians can either conjure it by inventing enemies (like the terribly scary “illegal” migrants) or by employing violence. At the moment, most people are aware that their governments, complicit in some way with the genocide against Gaza, clearly can't be trusted and are unsafe. Further, systemic violence can lead people to feel that negative outcomes are inevitable, thereby reinforcing hopelessness.

Reclaiming hope to reclaim the future

Of course, the first hope is that despite this sophisticated anti-hope machinery, most people still manage to be kind, thoughtful, engaged, and incredible. The second hope is that most of the above has its counterpoints; disillusionment with global institutions and governments can encourage people to realize the importance of their own role and to stop waiting for the people in power to solve everything. AI is taking from creatives, journalists, and researchers, but the phenomenon is also challenging people to appreciate the uniqueness of humanity. The climate deadline causes anxiety, but it also hastens action. The climate emergency and the droughts affecting Mexico to Ethiopia, the fires burning from the US to Australia, remind us that air and water are shared, and the battle for justice is ultimately global. Gaza has put the violence of colonialism back in people's minds. Imperialism against the Global South isn't academic, it is an ongoing lived atrocity.

The lack of faith in a better tomorrow, as agonizing as it feels, is precisely the catalyst needed for people to fight today. This current crisis is ripe with change, because it is prompting questioning. It's not just us facing instability, the old and problematic ways of doing things are also unstable. Systems of subjugation aren't everlasting. The crisis comes with considering new things. It shouts that the future is not predetermined. That makes space for action, agency, adventure and non-conformity.

To reclaim hope, we must lose the passive tense. “It will get better” – the notion that things improve on their own, is a fallacy. Yes, the body heals itself sometimes, but within human systems, we are the ones who improve things. Delusion and baseless optimism presume a successful end without action, vindicating the status quo. Critical hope understands that the effort is worth it (despite the effort-outcome gap).

Information and clarity are vital for hope, so boycott pro-billionaire media. Perspective is important too, because a long view of history demonstrates what agonies we have got through and how far we have come.

There are hints of unraveling right now. Shifts. Strikes, riots, protests, discontent, and a loss of faith in the callous and boring billionaires. There is daily, unreported tenderness and victories despite the odds. There are people refusing to serve in the IDF, despite the social pressure and material consequences. There are people overcoming horrific traumas and managing to be kind despite suffering. Fear and apathy are infectious, but so is solidarity, bravery, initiative, and organizing. Given a choice, most people prefer the latter—and that is very hopeful.

Our hope for justice and a future multiplies when connecting and organizing with others. Humans are both capable and imaginative. Someone imagined aqueducts, anesthesia, and electrical lighting systems. We can also imagine, hope for, and create a just and thriving society.

The flotilla is a strong metaphor for the ongoing struggle for justice. The participants went on a long and uncomfortable journey, but in the process they demonstrated solidarity between nationalities. Though their immediate goal of breaking the siege on Gaza may not be achieved (at the time of writing, nine boats have been intercepted), they are strengthening the cause and movement, in unmeasurable, profound ways.

A Movement-Based Opposition to Trump and MAGA

Jeremy Brecher

As President Donald Trump launches illegal armed attacks against American cities, peaceful civilians, and people in foreign countries that have not attacked the US, it may look like a sign of strength and a harbinger of a future of total domination. But Trump's turn to such extreme forms of violence is less an expression of growing power than an attempt to distract from the growth of opposition, the loss of public support, and the splits within the ranks of his own supporters. It is a sign not of strength but of weakness. This report lays out a strategy to take advantage of that weakness to defend society against Trump's MAGA assaults. That strategy is based on the principle of "social self-defense" – that all the people and institutions harmed by Trump's autocracy can and must come together to protect society against his assault.

Resisting and eventually eliminating Trump and his MAGA tyranny requires more than his loss of popularity. It requires a concerted opposition that can rally powerful social forces to undermine his means of domination. In our two-party system, the responsibility for opposition lies on the opposition party – the Democratic Party. Unfortunately, with a few outstanding exceptions, the leadership of the Democratic Party has so far failed in its duty to oppose Trump's burgeoning autocracy.

In response to the intensifying attack on democracy, millions of people in thousands of locations have joined actions to oppose his juggernaut. In the absence of adequate resistance in the electoral arena, an alliance of popular movements is functioning as the primary opposition to Trump's authoritarian rule.

This "movement-based opposition" has emerged rapidly during the first year of Trump's presidency. It is represented by the mass nonviolent resistance to ICE in Los Angeles and elsewhere and the five mil-

lion participants in No Kings Day and other national days of action. It is developing significant power as more and more people see and experience the harm the Trump administration and the MAGA Congress are inflicting on individuals, groups, and society as a whole. This movement-based opposition is no longer a marginal force but is now MAGA's most powerful opponent.

Sometimes called a non-electoral or independent opposition, such a movement-based opposition is a convergence of social movements that performs some of the classic functions of an opposition party without the goal of itself taking power in government. It draws diverse constituencies out of their silos to combine their power, but uses direct action rather than electing candidates as its means to exercise that power. Like a political party, it brings together different constituencies around common interests, exposes the lies of those in power, and wins support for alternatives.

This movement-based opposition can mobilize popular rejection of the MAGA agenda, block Trump's initiatives, prod Democratic politicians into action, split off Republicans, and help lay the groundwork for "people power" non-violent uprisings – aka "social strikes" — if they prove to be necessary to overcome authoritarian rule.

Trump's authoritarian juggernaut is currently entering a more violent, militarized phase. At home, this includes the huge expansion of ICE, the military occupation of American cities, and the political repression using the assassination of Charlie Kirk as a pretext. Abroad, it means the bombing of Iran, the illegal, unprovoked attacks on Venezuelan boats, and on-going collusion with genocide in Gaza; who knows what else is in the works.



The opposition is also entering a new phase. This was heralded by the resistance to ICE and military occupation in Los Angeles that included community-based support groups; constant identification, tracking, and filming of ICE agents; mutual aid support for targets of ICE attacks; ongoing opposition from state and city officials; refusal of the Dodgers to let ICE enter their stadium; and refusal of grand juries to indict — out of the 38 felony cases filed by Trump’s U.S. Attorney, only seven have resulted in indictments. Opinion polls indicate that such exposure of ICE abuses had led public opinion in California and nationwide to shift against Trump’s anti-immigrant policies.

Chicago, Washington, DC, New York, Memphis, and other cities are readying for similar resistance. An estimated 25,000 demonstrated in DC against the occupation of the city. The National Guard troops sent into Los Angeles and Washington, DC have been widely reported to be antagonistic to their assignments. The majority of Americans are opposed to Trump’s deployment of troops to American cities and feel their own rights and freedoms would be less secure as a result. The opposition to Trump’s plan to occupy Chicago with the National Guard met so much resistance from Chicago citizens and unions, the mayor of the city, and the governor of Illinois that he suddenly reversed himself and announced that he was not going to send the troops because a railroad executive had advised him, “You’re gonna lose Chicago, sir.”

As RFK, Jr. gutted America’s vaccine programs and other defenses against COVID and other health threats, major medical associations such as the American Academy of Pediatrics denounced the new policies and promulgated their own treatment standards. Top officials in the CDC and other health agencies publicly resigned in protest — and hundreds of CDC employees, including some in full service uniforms, gathered outside the agency, cheering and clapping for the three officials who had quit. Four states, flouting Trumpian policy, announced a “health alliance” that made its own, science-based, standards for vaccination. Florida’s plan to eliminate all vaccine mandates was reversed in just two days following a furious backlash from medical experts and political opponents.

There are three mutually reinforcing strategies for the movement-based opposition’s struggle against Trump’s domination: nullifying his initiatives, voting his supporters out of office, and mass “social strikes” that mobilize enough people to make his continued rule impossible.

The emerging movement-based opposition aims to halt and undo the harm that has been done by the Trump regime, but it is not directed toward returning to the world as it existed before Trump. That is clearly not what the people want, and it offers little hope of solving our real problems. The movement-based opposition includes many different groups with different visions of the future. It is based on agreement about the immediate aim, plus agreement to disagree about other things. It should encourage discussion of areas of disagreement while bracketing them when they might interfere with immediately necessary collaboration. The process of working together and defining common interests itself can help identify new areas of agreement and encourage mutual acceptance of differences. Indeed, Social Self-Defense against the MAGA juggernaut can be the starting point for creating the world we want beyond MAGA. As Abraham Lincoln said of the Civil War, it can become the means for a new birth of freedom.

Wake Up, America: Democracy Is Disappearing Before Our Eyes

Martina Moneke

For generations, Americans have been taught that the United States is the world's beacon of democracy. Politicians across the spectrum speak of the nation as a "shining city on a hill," a place where freedom and the rule of law set the standard for the rest of the world. But the truth is harder to swallow: the U.S. is drifting away from liberal democracy and toward authoritarianism.

A survey of more than 700 political scientists conducted by Bright Line Watch in 2020 found that the vast majority believe the U.S. is rapidly moving toward some form of authoritarian rule. Scholars rated American democracy on a scale from zero (complete dictatorship) to 100 (perfect democracy). After Donald Trump's first election in November 2016, they gave it a 67. Several weeks into his second term, the score had plunged to 55. Elections, rights, and freedoms are under attack—and America is running out of time to save its democracy. The experts' warnings are not abstract; they reflect a country where voter suppression, gerrymandering, corporate influence, a compliant Supreme Court, and executive overreach are eroding the foundations of democratic governance. When citizens are uninformed—or choose not to vote—the systems of power tilt toward elites, making it easier for authoritarian forces to consolidate control. Authoritarian forces also thrive on fear—fear of immigrants, political opponents, or anyone deemed an outsider—turning Americans against one another and eroding the inclusive ideals that once defined the nation as a melting pot.

One of the hallmarks of authoritarian systems is the concentration of power in a single office. In the U.S., the presidency has been steadily amassing authority for decades. Presidents of both

parties have expanded executive power—from Woodrow Wilson, who during and after World War I oversaw a massive expansion of federal authority, centralized control over the economy, and signed the Espionage and Sedition Acts to suppress dissent, to more recent administrations. After September 11, 2001, Congress handed the executive branch sweeping powers through the Authorization for Use of Military Force, essentially giving presidents a blank check for war. Since then, presidents have increasingly governed through executive orders and "emergency" declarations, bypassing Congress altogether. Barack Obama further expanded executive authority through extrajudicial drone strikes, targeting individuals abroad without judicial review or due process, demonstrating that executive power can be exercised unilaterally and with limited accountability. Meanwhile, Congress has been paralyzed by polarization and gridlock, leaving lobbyists and corporate donors to fill the vacuum. The Senate's structure, which gives Wyoming and California the same representation despite a 70-fold population difference, allows minority rule to dominate national policy. Gerrymandering and voter suppression further hollow out electoral accountability. A government that concentrates power in the executive while undermining the voice of ordinary citizens is not functioning as a democracy.

Authoritarian governments also justify extraordinary powers in the name of "security." The U.S. is no exception. The National Security Agency's mass surveillance programs, exposed by Edward Snowden in 2013, revealed a government that watches its citizens on a scale once unthinkable. At home, local police departments increasingly resemble military units, rolling out armored



Image via Veterans Against Fascism

vehicles and tear gas against peaceful protesters. We saw this during Occupy Wall Street, Standing Rock, and Black Lives Matter uprisings. The deployment of force against citizens exercising their constitutional rights should alarm anyone who values democracy. Yet the normalization of militarized policing has created what philosopher Giorgio Agamben wrote as a “state of exception”—where emergency measures become everyday tools of governance.

Yes, Americans still enjoy constitutional rights—but too often these rights exist more on paper than in practice. Free speech? Tell that to whistleblowers like Chelsea Manning, Snowden, or Reality Winner, who were prosecuted under the Espionage Act for revealing government misconduct. Voting rights? They’ve been under relentless attack, especially since the Supreme Court’s

2013 decision in *Shelby County v. Holder*, which gutted protections for minority voters. States have since imposed strict voter ID laws, purged voter rolls, and closed polling places in Black and Latino communities. Even fundamental rights like reproductive freedom are being stripped away. The Supreme Court’s 2022 decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization* overturned *Roe v. Wade*, unleashing a wave of state-level abortion bans. Millions of women and people who can become pregnant no longer have control over their own bodies. That’s not democracy; that’s state control of private life.

Another clear sign of authoritarian drift is the domination of politics by wealthy elites. Since the Supreme Court’s 2010 *Citizens United v. FEC* decision, corporations and billionaires have been able to pour unlimited money into elections.

Political campaigns are dominated by super PACs and billionaire donors. Our democracy is no longer guaranteed—from Wall Street to the White House, power is slipping into the hands of a few. Political scientists Martin Gilens and Benjamin Page found in 2014 that “the preferences of the average American appear to have only a minuscule, near-zero, statistically non-significant impact upon public policy,” leaving ordinary voters almost powerless to shape the laws that govern them.

The authoritarian character of the United States cannot be understood solely within its borders. With more than 750 military bases worldwide and a defense budget larger than the next ten nations combined, the United States functions as a global empire. Military interventions—from Iraq to Afghanistan to drone strikes across the Middle East and Africa—have often been launched without meaningful Congressional approval. Empire abroad normalizes authoritarianism at home. Militarized policing, mass surveillance, and a bloated national security state are justified by the logic of “permanent war,” which also benefits defense contractors, private security firms, and other corporate interests that profit from endless conflict. As Hannah Arendt wrote, imperialism abroad often requires repression at home. That warning has become reality.

The United States still holds elections and maintains a written constitution, but appearances are misleading. The U.S. still calls itself a democracy, but in practice, authoritarian forces are calling the shots. What makes American authoritarianism distinctive is its velvet glove: it is not a dictatorship in the classical sense but a regime where democratic symbols cloak undemocratic realities. Its most effective disguise is the illusion of freedom itself—an ideology of free market capitalism that promises choice while consolidating power in the hands of a few. Americans are told they live in the land of opportunity, yet the choices available to them—whether in the marketplace or at the ballot box—are increasingly constrained by corporate monopolies and two political parties

beholden to the same economic elites. Recognizing this drift is the first step toward reversing it. Unless structural reforms are undertaken—curbing corporate power, restoring voting rights, protecting civil liberties, and demilitarizing both foreign and domestic policy—the United States risks cementing its place not as the defender of democracy but as an exemplar of its decline.

It is a bitter irony that 66,000 living World War II veterans—who risked everything to fight authoritarianism abroad—now witness the creeping authoritarianism at home and the steady erosion of the freedoms they fought to secure. Their sacrifices are a reminder that democracy is fragile and must be actively defended.

Democracy is not self-sustaining. If Americans care about preserving freedom, they must act: vote in every election—from school boards to city councils to state legislatures—and recognize that their power extends beyond the ballot box. As consumers and shareholders, they can choose carefully which corporations they support, amplifying businesses that align with democratic values while withdrawing support from those that undermine them. Citizens can also engage directly with elected officials, starting meaningful discussions to make their voices heard, and volunteer with nonpartisan nonprofit advocacy organizations and watchdog groups that protect the democratic process, civil rights, and corporate and government accountability and transparency. Pushing for structural reforms that rein in executive power and corporate influence, challenging fear-mongering narratives, and defending the rights of marginalized communities are all essential steps to reclaiming and preserving democracy.

We each have a role to play. Wake up, America. It's one thing to recognize the nation's slide toward authoritarianism and complain about it—it's another entirely to take action. Be no bystander; democracy depends on participation. We ignore its demise at our peril.

Admirals and Generals Will Not Save US – Agency Rests In the Hands of the Public Alone

Phil Wilson

The Nazi holocaust did not begin with The Wannsee Conference. Prior to the German invasion of the Soviet Union, representatives of the racial state – most likely Reinhardt Heydrich would have led this contingent – communicated with Wehrmacht generals to define the nature of military conduct in a war that Hitler conceptualized as a merciless struggle for racial supremacy. Twenty four German generals were indicted for war crimes at Nuremberg. Nazi troops coordinated with the Einsatzgruppen, participated in roundups and mass executions of Soviet commissars, Jews, partisans, Soviet prisoners of war, Slavic racial inferiors and anyone deemed to be an enemy of the Nazi regime. One should not view the July, 20, 1944 plot against Hitler as a gauge of Wehrmacht moral discomfort, but as a belated coup attempt to hasten German surrender. The generals involved understood that Hitler failed to acknowledge hopeless military realities.

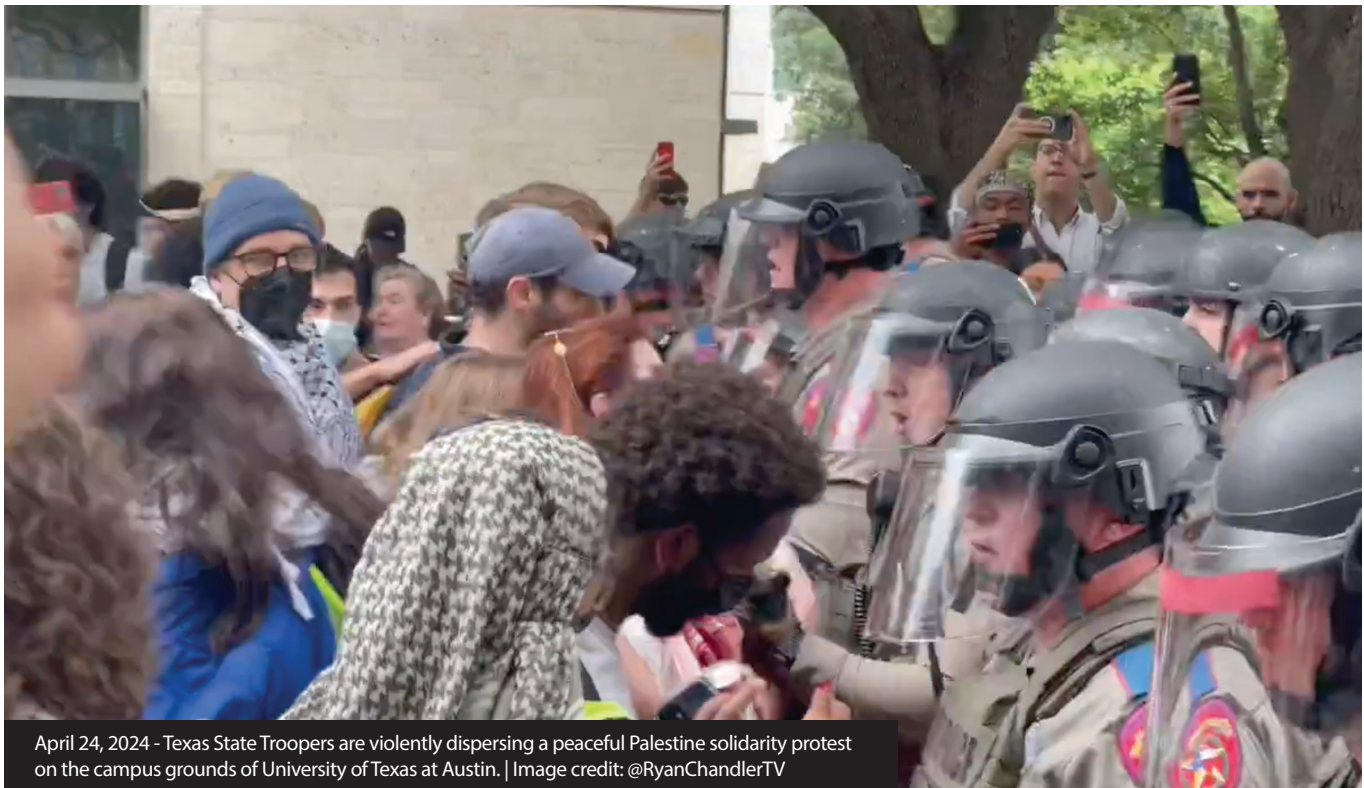
The worst crimes of fascism invariably begin with military complicity. That understanding provides the critical context to the surrealistic, horrifying meeting between Pete Hegseth, Donald Trump and the massive assembly of high level military staff members being lectured, bullied and threatened into surrendering to the fascist order at Quantico, Virginia.

Two themes emerged in Hegseth's hyper-fascist, self-aggrandizing monologue: 1) that military violence must no longer be constrained by moral guardrails such as the rules of war as specified in the Geneva Convention 2) That military force can and will be enacted against US citizens. Hegseth and Trump clearly attempt to circumvent the Posse Comitatus Act of 1878 that forbids federal troops from engaging in police action against civilians.

Trump, in a rambling, disjointed series of narcissistic fantasies spoke of "straightening out the cities" run

by "radical left Democrats." He called the inner cities, "a big part of war" and bizarrely likened domestic military operations to training exercises for international wars to come. As if Trump's rant wasn't delusional enough, he contrived a tale of "animals" shooting at firemen while they were up on ladders. While Trump has yet to declare martial law as a means of suspending constitutional protections for his "enemies," the convenient use of the word "invasion" implies that the MAGA regime has reason to take emergency measures. Trump, who once created the fiction of a "migrant invasion," now warns of an "invasion from within." These invaders wear no uniforms – Trump tells us. If they did the invaders from within would be "taken out." This ought to be terrifying enough to convince many misguided optimists that TACO is no longer a thing. Trump's explicitly promised intention to initiate acts of unrestrained force, via domestic military deployment, ought to clarify our predicament, but the habit of denial has deeply entrenched roots in our national psyche.

Across social media, the public is being told that military authorities blanched upon hearing the masculinist bile and the Trump/Hegseth call to legitimize federally authorized lethal force against US residents. This mandate for systematic, unambiguous violence ran side by side with an attack on the allegedly feminized military that Hegseth sneeringly categorized as "soldiers in skirts." It may well be that some generals recoiled at being fat shamed and dressed down by a Trump appointed novice who only reached the rank of major and had limited combat engagement. But the public discussion taking place seeks to consider something more than the private dismay of US military elites. A dangerous fantasy about high level military resistance to MAGA will inevitably disrupt the public understanding of its own agency. Whether we believe that Trump will imminently drop dead of a heart attack, or that he has advanced dementia, or



April 24, 2024 - Texas State Troopers are violently dispersing a peaceful Palestine solidarity protest on the campus grounds of University of Texas at Austin. | Image credit: @RyanChandlerTV

that the MAGA base will abandon Trump over tariffs and inflation, or that the right will implode with the release of the Epstein Files, we disempower ourselves. We ought not dilute our resolve with fatuous hopes.

Eugene Fidell – a Yale faculty authority on military law – told Juan Gonzales in a “Democracy Now” interview, that high ranking military officials ought to consult with private attorneys regarding the legal risk of violating the Posse Comitatus Act. While Fidell’s suggestion strikes me as good personal advice, it rather conveys an overly optimistic perspective on the moral autonomy of those within the military hierarchy. The idealization of US military brass dangerously disempowers the will to organize and resist. Military leaders will not, using history as a guide, save us from fascism.

In the long history of US colonial expansion and military adventures to maintain its empire, active generals have never pushed back against war crimes and corporate interests. Carpet bombing in Vietnam and Southeast Asia with massive civilian casualties provoked a huge international protest movement and

condemnation from human rights organizations, but inspired no resistance from top level military brass. Danny Sjursen, in a 2020 piece published in Open Democracy, observed:

“Today, with about 900 generals and admirals currently serving on active duty, including 24 major generals in the Marine Corps alone, and with scores of flag officers retiring annually, not a single one has offered genuine public opposition to almost 19 years worth of ill-advised, remarkably unsuccessful American wars. As for the most senior officers, the 40 four-star generals and admirals whose vocal antimilitarism might make the biggest splash, there are more of them today than there were even at the height of the Vietnam War, although the active military is now about half the size it was then. Adulated as many of them may be, however, not one qualifies as a public critic of today’s failing wars.”

While the Posse Comitatus Act may seem to introduce a new moral hurdle for military brass, committing war crimes by employing massive air superiority against defenseless civilians has been an almost mundane feature of US military strategy. The proxy geno-

cide unfolding in Gaza with US encouragement and military hardware might be seen as a continuation of US habits of war established in Korea, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Iraq, and Afghanistan. Many of the military officials listening to Hegseth and Trump were involved in perpetrating the nearly half million civilian deaths in post 9/11 wars. Do we really expect generals with blood drenched hands to act as a moral barrier against Trump?

Hamilton Nolan recently wrote a compelling piece – an open letter of sorts to the captive military brass forced to endure the humiliating Hegseth lecture and the meandering, unhinged Trump explanation for the planned unleashing of military violence against US civilians. Nolan encourages top military leaders to resign:

“They took an oath to “support and defend the Constitution of the United States,” and to imply that their allegiance to that oath would prevent them from carrying out truly unjust orders.....

Like any large organization, the military is full of all types of people who got into it for all types of reasons. Despite my own objections to the things that politicians make the military do, I do believe that the military itself is full of people who sincerely value patriotism, sacrifice, and public service. And there can be no doubt that the military is full of people who have demonstrated great personal bravery, perseverance, and willingness to overcome daunting obstacles in order to do a job that they believe is honorable and necessary. In 2025, all of these admirable qualities demand a very particular action: to leave the military. Before you find yourself doing things that do not comport with the values that you hold. Before you find that you have become the bad guy. If you can run into a gunfight, you can find the bravery to quit. That’s what patriotism means today.”

Like Eugene Fidell’s suggestion that military elites “lawyer up,” Nolan’s advice is morally sound. I doubt, however, that generals and admirals will pay any attention to either Fidell or Nolan. Their true audience, consumers of alternative, left leaning media may get the false notion of a military hierarchy rife with rebellious agency.

The true importance of the meeting with the military brass seems clear enough – Trump and Hegseth need the cooperation of the military to completely dismantle constitutional protections, and to unleash violence sufficiently fierce enough to destroy the resolve of US residents to resist.

Resistance within the military does have a significant precedent during the Vietnam war era, but it did not emerge from the ranks of generals, but from ordinary recruits and draftees. Men returned home in flag draped coffins or in wheel chairs for an abstract cause. Some suffered life-long complications and risks from “agent orange,” while others had their dreams destroyed from concussive, brain damaging explosions. The “domino theory” lost credibility in direct proportion to US body counts. Troops printed antiwar newsletters and forged connections with the larger antiwar movement. On occasion platoon leaders took gunfire in the back.

This historical context may not have relevance to Trump’s intent to use military force against poor people, the homeless, immigrants or political dissidents. Soldiers assaulting unarmed civilians will endure virtually no risk of becoming casualties. There is no war to be fought, only atrocities to commit. The Nazi military leaders dealt with squeamish murderers by excusing them from the traumatic task of shooting women, children and elderly victims at point blank range. Those who lacked the fortitude for such necessary jobs were assigned to do paperwork or sort the belongings of the victims. Perhaps soldiers who haven’t the stomach to punish the “invaders from within” will be reassigned to less stressful activities.

I believe that the performative chaos of Trump and his appointees distracts us from a simple narrative – fascism will either evolve into daily rituals of violence, terror and capitulation, or people will organize and destroy Trump’s fascism before it consolidates. The generals have no ambiguous role to play. Veterans will be a major factor in organized civil disobedience, military leaders will not be. They will not save us, we can only save ourselves.

Ripped From Home: The ICE Raid That Exposed a North Country's Divide

George Cassidy Payne

I live in Rochester, New York, now. I've called this city home for the past 20 years. But I come from a place where the cows outnumber the people.

Lowville, New York — my hometown in rural Lewis County — is nestled deep in the North Country, a region defined by dairy farms, long winters, and tight-knit communities. I grew up playing basketball and lacrosse against kids from West Carthage, just twenty minutes away. Some of my best friends were born there. We'd spend Saturday nights partying in the fields under stars so clear they made you believe in something bigger.

For all my efforts to outrun the identity, I was — by most measures — a country boy from the sticks.

So, when I learned that Tom Homan, acting director of ICE and a central architect of the Trump administration's immigration crack-downs, was born and raised in West Carthage, I felt two things at once: surprise and recognition. Surprise, because very few people from my neck of the woods rise to national prominence in government. Recognition, because Homan's brand of xenophobic nationalism — his cold efficiency in tearing families apart — is not some foreign strain in the North Country. It's native to the soil.

Folks don't just vote for Trump here. They adore him.

In the most recent presidential election, 75% of voters in Lewis County cast their ballots for Donald Trump — up from 68% in 2020. In

neighboring Jefferson County, home to Sackets Harbor, Trump's support jumped from 54% to 61%. According to Jefferson County Democratic Elections Commissioner Michelle LaFave, many of these were first-time voters — an eerie indication of which vision of America is motivating people to the polls.

It's in this political climate that a recent tragedy unfolded.

On March 27, a mother and her three children — one in third grade, the other teenagers — were arrested by ICE agents during a search warrant operation at a local dairy farm in Sackets Harbor. They were detained not for any crime, but because they were “illegal aliens” encountered on-site. Despite having declared themselves to immigration judges, attending court dates, and following the legal process, the family was flown 1,800 miles away to a detention center in Texas.

Three kids. Ripped from their school. From their friends. From their community.

The story made national news. Protesters marched through the streets of Sackets Harbor — some of them my parents' neighbors — demanding the family's release and directing their outrage at Tom Homan's home. “Our students are not criminals,” said Sackets Harbor School Principal Jaime Cook. “What happened was traumatic and unjust.”

Homan, in an interview, doubled down. “We have to ensure any children in the area are safe,” he said, suggesting the family may be material witnesses or somehow connected to the crime

ICE was investigating — a case involving child sexual abuse materials. The implication was vague but chilling.

This wasn't a raid, he insisted. But for the children in handcuffs, it certainly felt like one.

My parents have lived in Sackets for more than two decades. I've walked those streets, attended Fourth of July celebrations in the park, and watched boats come in at sunset. It's a beautiful place. And like so many beautiful places in America, it is politically split but increasingly leaning right. The North Country is not MAGA-curious. It is MAGA-converted.

In West Carthage, Tom Homan is seen by many as a local hero. The fact that he now resides in Sackets Harbor is no accident. He lives comfortably in a community where the majority of people agree with him — or at least won't challenge him. His vision of America — cold, guarded, fearful — has taken root in this region. But as Mark Twain once said, "Patriotism is supporting your country all the time, and your government when it deserves it." Loving your hometown doesn't mean staying silent when it veers away from justice.

This is personal for me. Not just because I know the towns, the roads, and the rhythms of rural life. But because I know how easy it is to let silence fester into complicity. As Elie Wiesel wrote, "The opposite of love is not hate, it's indifference." I've been in rooms and said nothing when someone told a racist joke or made a remark that was dehumanizing to migrants. I know the pain of loving a place that taught me how to work hard and be loyal, even as it turned its back on compassion.

Here's another truth: we are all immigrants. Even those New York residents who claim 100% Indigenous roots trace their origins, ultimately, to somewhere else. Migration is the human story. Borders are the fiction. Empathy is what makes us civilized.

The family has now been released from the detention center, thanks to an extraordinary wave of public pressure and advocacy. Nearly 1,000 people rallied in Sackets Harbor demanding the children's release. Local teachers and administrators, trusted figures in small towns, stood up and said this was wrong. The New York Immigration Coalition and civil liberties groups amplified the story. The Governor herself weighed in, calling ICE's actions "cruel" and "unfathomable," and demanded the family be returned.

National media coverage spotlighted the injustice. And crucially, the fact that the family had been complying with the immigration court system exposed ICE's action as overreach, if not outright abuse of discretion. Put simply: the government backed down because ordinary people, institutions, and leaders refused to let them get away with it.

This wasn't just a lucky break or an isolated case. It offers a model for resistance. Sackets Harbor showed us that when a community mobilizes quickly, centers the human story, uses respected local voices, and demands accountability, even a federal agency like ICE can be forced to reverse course. Not every town will have the same conditions, but the principles are universal: act fast, speak clearly, and make injustice visible.

I am immensely proud of the people of the North Country who showed up — those who stood firm in the face of fear and refused to look away. Without them, this family would still be in custody. It was a powerful reminder of what communities can accomplish when they choose what is right over what is easy.

Because this isn't just about one family, one ICE operation, or one political figure. It's about a country deciding who belongs, and who doesn't. It's about whether we want our small towns to be places of welcome or places of fear.



And it's about those of us from these places finding the courage to speak up, even when the barn doors are closed, the porch lights are off, and the neighbors are watching.

How Sackets Harbor Won: A Community Playbook

Act Fast. Nearly 1,000 people rallied in the streets within days.

Make It Human. The story centered on kids torn from classrooms, not abstract laws.

Use Trusted Voices. Teachers and principals

said, "Our students are not criminals."

Link to Bigger Networks. Statewide groups amplified the outrage.

Turn Up Political Heat. Gov. Hochul demanded the family's return.

Keep Cameras Rolling. National media showed the injustice to the world.

Expose the Truth. The family had followed the law — ICE had overreached.

The Takeaway: This wasn't luck. It was strategy. Communities can fight back — and win — when they act with speed, clarity, and unity.

Will Teachers Save Our Democracy?

Jeff Bryant

With nearly every day presenting more evidence of America's eroding democracy, it's understandable to wonder whether a countervailing force will come forward to ensure—to paraphrase Lincoln—that the government of, by, and for the people will endure.

Mass protests with catchy themes like “Hands Off” and “No Kings” seem to offer more symbolism than substance. Court cases often fail to uphold key democratic provisions such as voting rights and press freedoms. The political party representing opposition to the current “anti-democratic” presidential regime is more unpopular than ever. Prominent political experts caution that campaigning to protect and uphold democracy isn't a winning strategy. And leading historians warn that the country is sliding toward fascism.

But a new book suggests that a powerful force for democracy and against fascism is indeed at work every day, despite all that's being done to undermine it. And it's not in the halls of Congress. It's in public school classrooms.

In her new book, *Why Fascists Fear Teachers: Public Education and the Future of Democracy*, president of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) Randi Weingarten, makes the case that democracy doesn't only happen when political candidates vie for office, citizens post their opinions on editorial pages and social media, and voters show up at the ballot box. Democracy is also at work, she explains, when public school teachers engage in the seemingly mundane tasks of educating students.

Engaging in this work, Weingarten contends, has always made teachers a target for dictators—would-be and otherwise—who seek to undermine democracy and impose autocratic rule.

Drawing from history, from stories of frontline teachers, and from her experiences as a former teacher—a champion for educators and a lightning rod for criticism from politicians in both political parties—Weingarten argues that public schools and teachers are “inextricably linked” with protecting democracy and ensuring its enduring presence in the nation's politics and governance.

Weingarten's case comes across most vividly in her examples of teachers who resisted fascist dictators in 20th-century Germany. In 1940, when Adolf Hitler's Nazi army invaded Norway, teachers were among the frontline resisters to the takeover, she recounts. They refused to join a Nazi imposed teacher corps, even when German soldiers came into their schools and beat them. And when the Nazis eventually closed schools, teachers kept teaching students in secrecy.

In Poland, when Nazi forces shut down an orphanage for Jewish children run by Henryk Goldszmit, a Polish Jew who became a teacher and prominent author of children's books under the pen name of Janusz Korczak, Goldszmit continued to teach his students, staying with them even when they boarded trains to the concentration camp, after which he and his students were never heard from again.

Another educator in the Nazi resistance was Lucie Aubrac, a French teacher who helped publish an underground newspaper and delivered communications and packages for the French Resistance.

Weingarten also tells of dedicated teachers in the U.S. during the Jim Crow era of racial segregation who protested, with their students, the appalling conditions in schools Black children attended. Their advocacy on behalf of their students helped



Photo: Charles Edward Miller

bring about the legal actions that would eventually lead to the Supreme Court's *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling that made racially segregated schools illegal.

Weingarten also recounts how former President Lyndon Johnson drew inspiration and insights from his experiences as a schoolteacher in a rural, impoverished community in Texas to press for his vision of a "Great Society" during his presidency. His political leadership eventually led to the enactment of numerous landmark progressive legislations, including the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

In the present day, Weingarten writes about Clare Berke, an English teacher in Washington, D.C., who runs a journalism class where students report about real-world events and people. The students' reports often become national stories. She tells of Jeff Adkins-Dutro, a teacher and local AFT union leader in Peoria, Illinois, who brought together leaders from local businesses and the community to create an integrated system of career and

technical courses to ensure students have career opportunities once they graduate high school. And she recounts how Lillian Keys, a teacher in rural McDowell County, West Virginia, left her community to attend a university and earn her degree, but then returned to her hometown to teach in a community school that provides the county—which struggles with poverty, homelessness, and drug addiction—with education programs and nutritional support, healthcare, career education, and other student and family services.

What makes teaching an inherently democratic act, according to Weingarten, is that it involves creating a shared, public space that invites all children—regardless of race, income, religion, and ability—to engage in learning together, unencumbered by the prejudices and social hierarchies that fascism imposes.

Teachers impart essential knowledge and skills to their students, such as the ability to communicate effectively, solve problems, and think critically

about news and information—abilities that run counter to top-down, autocratic government control.

Teachers also create opportunities for their students by encouraging them to pursue their interests and dreams and by providing programs and courses of study that prepare them for a future they, not government officials and big businesses, imagine for themselves.

And teachers create agency, not only for themselves, but also for others, by organizing labor unions and other cooperatives and supporting democratically governed efforts to press for societal advantages, such as fair wages, positive working conditions, and government funding for public services—things that a fascist system beholden to billionaires abhors.

“Fascists and autocrats fear what teachers do because they know their brand of greed, hierarchy, and extremism cannot survive in a democracy of diverse, educated citizens,” Weingarten writes, so the “authoritarian playbook” always includes efforts to destroy the credibility of teachers and dismantle public schools.

It would be good for other factions claiming to form the resistance to fascism to recognize the power teachers wield and to build strong alliances with them. But this is not always the case, as Weingarten alludes to when she mentions “neoliberal Democrats who have intentionally or unwittingly aided the right in their agenda to destroy public schools.”

In addressing that faction, Weingarten briefly mentions prominent Democrats who have promoted a market-based approach to education policies, such as Arne Duncan, the former CEO of Chicago schools and former secretary of education under President Barack Obama. She calls Duncan a “prime example” of someone who “bought into the idea that public schools would miraculously work better if they were run like corporations.”

And while she roundly criticizes the rollout of school vouchers and hails their defeat in states such as Nebraska and Kentucky, her take on charter schools, a darling of the neoliberal agenda, is more nuanced. She recalls her previous support for the idea of charters but also expresses her disappointment that charters often lack accountability, “pick and choose” their students, and operate “like businesses” more focused on market competition and profit rather than the needs of children and their education.

Because of her nuanced take on charter schools, ardent supporters of public education might come away dissatisfied that Weingarten doesn’t name more names in the neoliberal faction and highlight more of the actions they’ve taken to prepare the ground for right-wing factions to privatize education.

But clearly, the aim of the book is to build solidarity among opponents of fascism rather than promote intra-party factionalism at a time when that solidarity seems more important than ever. Her call for this solidarity makes the book a good read for those who may not closely follow education policy and politics but who welcome some hope and encouragement that they are not alone in their resistance to autocracy and are allied with a deep and broad coalition that includes millions of practicing educators and public school employees.

Why Fascists Fear Teachers is also a much-needed reminder of why the United States, since its founding, has made public schools fundamental to the well-being of its people and the success of the nation. During a time when prominent Republicans are calling for public education’s demise, Democrats often respond with vague, uninspiring arguments about why public schools are needed to overcome inequality or economic competitiveness instead of rousing voters to a cause that goes back to the origins of the country. For this reason, those who follow political rhetoric will want to see how Democrats, who are ramping up their campaigns for the 2026 midterm elections, take lessons from Weingarten’s book to heart.

Green Capitalism in the Americas: False Solutions, Real Threats

Sabrina Fernandes

The promise of a green transition has become a key narrative of our time. Despite persistent climate denialism, governments, corporations, and multi-lateral institutions present themselves as champions of sustainability, climate action, and environmental protection. In the Americas, this discourse has taken root with force, rebranding old forms of extractivism and accumulation under the guise of “green” development. But beneath the surface, the reality is stark: the transition being promoted today is not a break from fossil capitalism—it is its reinvention as a kind of fossil gattopardismo, in which energy demand expands and the extraction of hydrocarbons intensifies as part of the approach to energy transition, under the illusory umbrella of “net zero” policies. As Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa wrote in his 1958 novel *Il Gattopardo* (The Leopard), “If we want things to stay as they are, things will have to change.”

In this special issue of the NACLA Report on the Americas, we critically examine the rise of green capitalism in the region. We analyze how its logics and instruments are shaping policy and territory, enabling new forms of dispossession, and deepening historical inequalities. We expose the traps of a corporate-led transition that claims to be clean and just, but in practice reinforces systems of exploitation and domination. And we highlight the movements, communities, and visions from below that challenge these false solutions and point the way toward just ecosocial transitions.

The idea that capitalism can solve the climate and ecological crisis it has created is not only misleading but also dangerous. Today’s green capitalism extends the reach of markets under the banner of sustainability, expanding profit frontiers while coopting environmental narratives under a new

capitalist “decarbonization consensus.” Under this framework, nature is positioned as a financial asset, territories as green sacrifice zones, and Indigenous and traditional communities, once again, as obstacles to development. The result is a green colonialism that naturalizes dispossession, often in the name of climate justice, creating new dynamics of extraction and appropriation of raw materials, natural goods, and labor, all in service of a so-called “green” energy transition.

In this context, COP30—set to take place in Belém, in the Brazilian Amazon, in November 2025—is both a symbolic milestone and a political paradox. While grassroots organizations prepare to bring local demands and climate justice agendas to the global stage, corporate actors and states continue to define the rules of the game. As Gina Cortés Valderrama and Isadora Cardoso remind us in this issue, the dominant frameworks of climate policy reproduce colonial and racist logics, marginalizing decolonial and intersectional approaches that center justice, autonomy, and care.

The Corporate Transition and the New Face of Extractivism

Green capitalism thrives on rebranding. Across the Americas, extractivism is being painted green to fit into the transition discourse. In Brazil, for example, the so-called “Lithium Valley” exemplifies this shift: a region marked by water scarcity, community resistance, and environmental degradation is now being promoted as a hub for sustainable development and climate leadership. As Bárbara Magalhães Teixeira and Marina Paula Oliveira demonstrate in their contribution, the violence of extractivism persists, even when disguised as energy transition.

A similar dynamic unfolds in Chile, where lithium extraction and green hydrogen initiatives are creating new modalities of sacrifice zones in Antofagasta and the Atacama Desert. In their article, Gabriela Cabaña and Ramón Balcázar Morales reveal how these projects reproduce patterns of territorial appropriation and environmental racism under the guise of decarbonization. The Caribbean, too, is facing new forms of green colonization, as Colin Bogle details in his article on the controversial push for deep-sea mining. This modality absorbs critiques of social conflict connected to mining to recast the ocean as the ultimate “conflict-free zone”—a space empty of social struggle where environmental destruction can proceed unchallenged, treating other species and ecosystems as even more disposable in the absence of humans.

The corporate transition is global in scope but deeply rooted in local contexts. Lital Khaikin documents how Canadian mining companies are expanding into the Colombian Amazon, claiming to advance climate goals while displacing Indigenous communities. In the Brazilian Cerrado, Morena Hanbury Lemos and Shanna Hanbury Lemos trace the unchecked advance of eucalyptus monocultures—another example of greenwashed agribusiness that rarely receives the scrutiny it deserves. Indeed, agribusiness often slips through the cracks in debates on climate and extractivism. Yet it is a key driver of emissions through animal exploitation, soil degradation, deforestation, and land use change. Across the Americas, land grabbing, water depletion, and biodiversity loss are increasingly greenwashed and repackaged under the labels “low carbon agriculture,” “bioeconomy,” and “climate-smart food systems” in a system that continues to perpetrate profound violence against campesino, Indigenous, and other traditional communities.

Debt, Finance, and the Trap of Green Sovereignty Loss

Green capitalism also reshapes the financial architecture of climate action. Beyond traditional loans and structural adjustment programs, new financial instruments are emerging that present themselves

as benevolent solutions, including debt-for-nature swaps, green bonds, and climate-related development financing. While often framed as innovative and progressive, these mechanisms often produce new forms of dependency and erode both state and popular sovereignty. Nonetheless, they have been embraced by governments on both the right and the left.

Sophia Boddenberg’s piece on the Galápagos Islands provides a striking example. There, the largest debt-for-nature swap in history has introduced a form of green militarization, further restricting the autonomy of local communities while aligning conservation efforts with the interests of international creditors. In Honduras, as Jennifer Moore, Aldo Orellana, Karen Spring, and Luciana Ghiotto demonstrate, corporate lawfare is being used to suppress community resistance and secure green energy concessions, threatening the right to self-determination. Similar dynamics can be observed in Pará, Brazil, where Claudia Horn and Carlos Ramos examine how green infrastructure and carbon market schemes undermine democratic participation and perpetuate existing inequalities.

It is important to recognize that green capitalism does not always rely on new political actors. More often than not, the very corporations, elites, and institutions that fueled the fossil economy are now at the helm of the so-called green transition. In Brazil, the federal government continues to support offshore oil exploration even as it champions renewables and green hydrogen. In Colombia, despite some advances, President Gustavo Petro’s bold stance against new oil exploration has also opened space for new forms of megaprojects, including controversial energy ventures. In Jamaica, official support for deep-sea mining contradicts the island’s image as a climate-vulnerable nation. And while tourism is often touted as a cleaner source of income and even an opportunity to protect ecosystems, it is increasingly being used to justify land dispossession, loss of sovereignty, and the creation of green enclaves—as seen in the Galápagos and parts of Jamaica and Honduras.



Photo: Chris Yakimov / Flickr

Between Resistance and Ecosocial Transformation

Despite the aggressive expansion of green capitalism across the Americas, the story is not one of dispossession and false solutions alone. Across the region, powerful struggles and alternatives are taking root. Communities are resisting land grabs, denouncing the greenwashing of extractivist violence, and organizing to reclaim autonomy over energy, food, territory, and ways of life. These movements not only expose the cracks in the dominant transition model—they also offer grounded, collective visions of real alternatives.

In Puerto Rico, for instance, we find one of the most concrete and inspiring proposals for energy justice in the region. After years of corruption, blackouts, and the failures of utility privatizations

that have deepened energy poverty, local communities have developed concrete plans and infrastructure projects towards a decentralized, community-based solar energy transition—one less tied to commodification. As Jesse Kornbluth shows in this issue, these struggles go beyond renewables: they constitute an anti-colonial fight for democracy and a people-centered model for energy futures across the Global South.

This spirit is echoed in the social movements and urban actors organizing for the right to the city in Belém, the host of COP30. Mariana Guimarães and Rosaly Brito document how grassroots resistance in Belém confronts the contradictions of a green summit hosted in a city marked by environmental injustice, deep inequality, precarious housing, and the marginalization of Black and Indigenous residents. In parallel, Claudia Horn and Carlos Ramos expose how carbon markets and green infrastruc-

ture projects in the state of Pará are undermining local democracy while concentrating power in the hands of economic and political elites.

In Honduras, the Garífuna struggle is also emblematic of the broader resistance to green capitalism's territorial ambitions. As Giada Ferrucci details, Garífuna communities are defending their ancestral lands not only against tourism expansion and agroindustrial projects, but also against new green investment schemes that present themselves as sustainable while continuing to perpetuate dispossession. Their resistance is rooted in a long tradition of autonomy, cultural identity, and territorial defense that offers valuable lessons for other struggles across the Americas.

What unites these movements is more than opposition—they are building visions of collective life that reject extractivist paradigms altogether. These alternatives are grounded in diverse worldviews but share some key features: a commitment to relational understandings of nature, the defense of territorial sovereignty, and a belief in transitions that emerge from below rather than being imposed from above.

In this sense, resistance and the construction of alternatives are not separate processes. They are two sides of the same struggle: rejecting the commodification of life while creating other ways of organizing energy, food, land, and political power. These are not abstract utopias, but rather concrete and situated practices that emerge from lived experience, historical memory, and political experimentation. Many of the contributions in this issue illuminate this dual process of resistance and renewal. The testimony of activists in Pará, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, Honduras, Putumayo, and the Brazilian Cerrado speak to the creativity and persistence of popular struggles under immense pressure. Some fight in courts—others in assemblies, in the streets, and on occupied lands. They cultivate new forms of cooperation, revive ancestral practices, and build bridges across struggles—from Indigenous self-determination to feminist economies of care.

Importantly, these movements also raise fundamental questions about power that we center in this issue of the NACLA Report: Who controls the means of transition? Who defines what sustainability means? Who decides which territories are sacrificed and which are protected? These are not just technical or economic questions—they are political and ethical ones. Although these initiatives begin locally, they form the seeds of what we identify as an emerging eco-territorial internationalism.

Looking Ahead to COP30 and Beyond

As COP30 approaches, the Amazon will become a global stage for climate discourse. This moment brings both opportunity and danger. On the one hand, it offers renewed visibility for grassroots movements and highlights the region's ecological importance. On the other, it risks becoming yet another green spectacle that deploys symbolic imagery of nature and Indigenous cultures while legitimizing false solutions, corporate capture, and new rounds of green extractivist investment—a growing trend at the COP meetings.

We must be alert to both dynamics. The Amazon cannot be reduced to a carbon sink for the Global North or a marketplace for green finance. It is home to vibrant societies, cultures, and ecosystems whose futures cannot be dictated by boardrooms or summit declarations. The same holds true for lithium-rich deserts, bioeconomy zones, and energy corridors across the region. These are not “resources”—they are territories of life, struggle, and possibility. This issue of the NACLA Report aims to contribute to this broader political debate. By documenting the mechanisms, impacts, and contradictions of green capitalism in the Americas, we seek to equip readers with critical tools to understand and challenge dominant transition narratives. At the same time, by lifting up the voices of those who are resisting and reimagining transitions on their own terms, we hope to amplify pathways toward truly just, democratic, and sustainable futures. Transitions will happen. The question is: whose transitions—and toward what kind of world?

Capitalism and Endless War

Sona Prakash

Europe is on the war path with grandiose plans for building a war economy akin to the American military-industrial complex. As always, drumming up public support for war – manufacturing consent – calls for narratives ranging from spurring ‘growth’ at home to combating threats from foreign regimes that obstruct the west’s monopoly on endless capital accumulation. At any rate, European leaders’ enhanced belligerence is inextricably related to safeguarding the interests of monopoly capitalism, while Europe has made itself redundant through its unconditional servitude to the US.

Surplus absorption, endless war and wasted lives

Monopoly capitalism is characterised by a strong and systematic tendency for economic surplus to rise – absolutely as well as a share of total output – as shown by Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy in their seminal treatise on monopoly capital. Samir Amin further estimated that the economic surplus of advanced capitalist economies grew from 10% of GDP in the nineteenth century to 50% in the first decade of the twenty-first, a significant portion of which came from imperialist rent extracted from Global South countries. Capitalism thus has to continuously find new forms of surplus absorption to counter this overaccumulation. In general, surplus can be absorbed through (1) consumption (2) investment and (3) wasteful activities. David Harvey has also often discussed capitalism’s increasingly wasteful forms of surplus absorption, of which war is the most destructive. Governments play an important role in absorbing surplus that would otherwise not be produced, such as by subsidising the weapons industry (through military Keynesianism) to enable wars that facilitate further profit extraction, and so on in an endless doom loop.

The military-industrial complex has been the USA’s main industry policy under post-war military Keynesianism, as Yanis Varoufakis and others have pointed out. Now Europe is on the same path, diverting state funds to the production of weapons that destroy lives, societies and the environment under narratives of ‘self-defence,’ job opportunities while jobs in socially useful sectors remain vastly inadequate, and ‘growth’ that contributes no value – only waste and destruction. To quote Michael Roberts, “Keynesianism advocates digging holes and filling them up to create jobs; military Keynesianism advocates digging graves and filling them with bodies to create jobs.” Pouring billions into the war machine forebodes a policy of endless war to keep it greased and running, as well as a new wave of austerity for the many in Europe. Otherwise the growth spurt will be history – as will the political leaders who created it, their countries riddled with mountains of debt.

Capital’s profits from war extend way beyond weapons production. The destruction of war leads to plummeting living standards, devaluing natural resources and labour power i.e. the necessary labour required for survival (food, shelter, medicine, a healthy environment), increasing the rate of profit, the extraction of imperial rent, and access to resources and new markets in the wastelands it creates, primarily in the Global South. As Ali Kadri described in his analysis of the accumulation of waste, premature death, wasted nature and wasted lives are among the products of the war industry, commodities produced for profit, and which we consume.

It is clear that war is hugely profitable on multiple grounds, and the advanced capitalist world’s major preoccupation over the last decades. European states are now in the process of making it pivotal to their economies. The common narrative of ‘self-defence’ from hostile regimes necessitates the

perpetual existence – or indeed, production – of such enemies. The multiple times this narrative has exploded in our faces, and literally in the lives of people elsewhere, does not seem to detract from its continuous reproduction. It is exploding right now in the form of a full-blown genocide in Palestine, and related proxy wars across the entire Middle-East, enabling massive profits for western arms companies and other corporate conglomerates involved in the economy of genocide, as well as further capital accumulation.

Military Keynesianism and Neo-Imperialism

The bipartisan US policy of military Keynesianism, which made the military-industrial complex a cornerstone of its economy after WWII, included virulently neoliberal anti-Keynesians like Ronald Reagan who invested heavily in the weapons industry, deploying Cold War rhetoric to orchestrate an arms race against the Soviet Union. To sustain the industry you need to keep waging and inciting wars. And they've been so very good at that, as we know – at starting new wars, escalating and sustaining old ones, and promoting conflicts where, directly or indirectly, American weapons often even end up on both sides. The neo-imperial mission of controlling the Global South's vast resources, and ensuring the continuation of compliant political regimes, lay at the root of most of these conflicts.

Before the fall of the Soviet Union, the assault often relied on narratives of a 'communist threat,' especially in the US 'backyard' of Latin America. After 1990, it became heavily concentrated in the Middle-East, where the need to maintain the military-industrial complex was supplemented by the lure of monopolising the oil industry and strengthening the US dollar by, inter alia, recycling petrodollars, as well ensuring the perpetuation of the genocidal settler-colonial state of Israel to control and secure US interests in the region. Since the Cold War ended, we have been in the throes of a protracted "third world war" in the sense not only of the looming prospect of an im-

perialist WWIII (the recent assault on Iran being a case in point) but of a continuous or intermittent war against the third world in general, and the Middle-East in particular.

The motives of colonialism remain intact in the 'post-colonial' or, more accurately, neo-imperialist era: the perpetuation of global capitalism by resolving the capital-labour contradiction in the North and enabling accumulation by dispossession in the South. The means, though they have evolved, remain a closely intertwined and mutually reinforcing combination of military and multiple forms of economic warfare, such as unequal exchange through trade and the imposition of sanctions. The trade and finance regimes of institutions such as the WTO and IMF mimic and extend old colonial patterns of resource extraction and expanded market access.

Warfare, not welfare: Europe's choice

Europe's 'landmark' Readiness 2030 or ReArm Europe plan for unlocking up to \$910 billion in combined military spending is part of military Keynesianism's huge revival, endorsed by leaders across Europe and the UK. It is now being reinforced with a commitment from NATO countries to spend 5% of GDP on the military, as demanded by the USA in its bid to stop paying for the military 'protection' of Europe. With Europe's military capacity already eroded by the Ukraine war, the investment opportunities created for US companies are enormous; billions of dollars worth of US-built weapons for Ukraine are already being financed by Europe. Purchases of new anti-drone systems, air and missile defence capabilities and the most powerful cyberwarfare systems are on the horizon, along with AI and quantum computing systems, all part of Europe's commitment to build a force "fit for purpose in tomorrow's world" – for which they're now busy creating 'tomorrow's world,' a world of endless war.

All this takes place under the auspices of a NATO led by an accomplished ultra-neoliberal warmonger who, after having expertly destroyed remain-



Photo: Max Böhme

ing vestiges of the Dutch welfare state, remains committed to wreaking maximal havoc in the rest of the world. No surprise; neoliberalism and military Keynesianism have been bedfellows for a long time. Keynesian policies are acceptable to neoliberals when they concern military spending. When it comes to public services such as education, healthcare, and environmental protection, they appeal to constraints of ‘fiscal responsibility’ or ‘balancing the budget,’ which are in fact baseless myths. Now resources risk being diverted away from Europe’s just transition to realising a war-mongering future, stalled initiatives on upskilling/reskilling for green jobs to jobs in the military sector.

In his recent critique of military Keynesianism, Michael Roberts cited arguments currently being offered for rearming European capitalism by liberal Keynesian economic gurus and other

apologists for the military state, including claims by the director of Chatham House that defence spending “is the greatest public benefit of all” as it is necessary for the survival of ‘democracy’ against authoritarian forces and “politicians will have to brace themselves to reclaim money through cuts to sickness benefits, pensions and healthcare.” So we can expect more austerity here, wasted lives elsewhere, and a reinforced assault on the environment globally. While supporters of the war economy emphasise ‘growth,’ even that claim appears to be unfounded: Michael Hudson estimates that Germany’s announced increase in military spending from under 2% to 3.5% will shrink the economy by 1% a year, and the non-military part by about 5%. This means more unemployment and cutbacks. Moreover, Europe is not even in a position to pull this off the way the US could thanks to its fiscal power, as Yanis Varoufakis pointed out.

However, Europe has declared its determination to pursue a warmongering future. The European Council's press release a year ago unequivocally stated that Europe is shifting to a war economy. This involves doubling arms purchases from European industry by 2030 to "give more predictability to weapons corporations, including multiyear contracts to incentivize them to ramp up their production capacity." The aim is to strengthen the European defence industry, and enhance "defence readiness, while creating jobs and growth across the EU." "If we want peace," the headline reads, "we must prepare for war." The only sane response to that is an emphatic no; if we want peace, we must prepare for peace.

Manufacturing public consent

War economies rely on endless war to ensure their sustenance. As this occurs at the expense of public welfare at home, the war machine deploys its trusted ally, the propaganda machine, for producing narratives to justify its existence and actions. For instance, settler-colonial Israel needed to 'defend itself' against the indigenous inhabitants of the land it occupied by western decree. It thus obtained carte-blanche for genocide as well as invading Lebanon and Syria, and attacking Iran. Over the decades we've been fed innumerable such spurious narratives on regimes in the resource-rich Middle-East. 'Authoritarian' regimes need to be toppled when they safeguard their sovereignty and resources, or obstruct the expansion of western client regimes.

Similarly, the main narrative deployed for Europe's Readiness 2030 plan is about defending Ukraine and Europe against the age-old Russian 'enemy' – Orwellian newspeak for NATO countries' unrelenting escalation of the Ukraine-Russia conflict, as borne out by a wide spectrum of experts including Jeffrey Sachs, John Mearsheimer and Noam Chomsky, as well as international observers on the ground. Since 2008 the US/UK/NATO nexus aborted peace negotiations between Russia and Ukraine multiple times, finally sabotaging the Minsk Accords in 2022. President Volodymyr

Zelenskyy was repeatedly dissuaded with reassurances of reinforced military aid and empty promises of NATO membership, seemingly aimed more at provoking Russia than helping Ukraine. In 2022 Noam Chomsky described the west's intransigence as having left "the domain of rational discourse." A closer examination of the west's role in the conflict therefore seems in order.

Regardless of other aspects of the current Russian regime, its security concerns on being surrounded by a hostile military alliance, as well as for the safety of the Russian minority in Ukraine, are legitimate. It is also well documented by Ukrainian scholars, including Volodymyr Ischenko, that most Ukrainians favoured neutrality before 2014; only a tiny minority supported NATO membership. The neutral stance of democratically elected former President Viktor Yanukovych was thus fully in line with public opinion. Support for NATO rose to about 40% right after the Maidan massacres, partly because millions of ethnic Russians from Crimea and Donbas were excluded from the poll, as Ischenko pointed out. Still, what is crucial here and was suppressed until very recently, is what transpired at Maidan: the massacres were committed by far-right elements of the US-backed opposition, who then framed Yanukovych for them. These revelations in detailed analyses (2023) by Ukrainian-Canadian scholar Ivan Katchanovski, as well as documented on film, were recently confirmed in declassified Ukrainian documents and have now been published in journals and books – after years of censorship by western publishers, as well as Ukrainian media and government authorities, with considerable personal and professional consequences for Katchanovski. To date no one has been indicted for the massacres.

What followed Maidan is better known, but selectively disseminated: Yanukovych was ousted on the basis of these trumped-up allegations in a US-backed coup, which installed US client Arseniy Yatsenyuk. The ethnic Russian regions of Donbas broke away immediately after. Russia then annexed Crimea amidst fears it might become a NATO base. The west imposed sanctions on Russia far exceed-

ing those on any other country; Ukraine's military, spearheaded by the neo-fascist Azov regiment, invaded Donbas, where 14,000 were killed according to the UN. Between 2014 and 2021 Russia called for the political autonomy of the Donbas regions that had seceded, which was rejected with the Minsk sabotage. Russia then invaded Donbas in 2022, and the US confiscated Russia's foreign exchange reserves. The war has had a huge economic impact on the rest of the world, in particular on the Global South. Meanwhile Ukraine has sold its farmland and mineral resources to American firms to pay its war debt, and any dissent against the Zelenskyy regime is severely repressed.

None of this is about European security; it's the follow-up of trouble that started 35 years ago, in the context of the imminent reunification of Germany and disintegration of the USSR. President Mikhail Gorbachev proposed a Eurasian security system from Lisbon to Vladivostok with no military blocs. The US rejected this: NATO stays, they insisted, but the Warsaw Pact dissolves. However, it is an established fact that US and European leaders guaranteed multiple times in return that NATO would not expand even "one inch farther" (interestingly, President François Mitterand had initially indicated his preference for Gorbachev's proposal). The west repeatedly reneged on those guarantees, exacerbating the situation by plundering Russia's economy through the subsequent western-client regime of Boris Yeltsin. From a rival, Russia was reduced to an arena for western capital investment and a source of raw materials and low-wage highly skilled labour: a treatment generally reserved for the Global South. President Vladimir Putin's regime is at many levels a consequence of this history. Taking that fact into account in diplomacy could set us on a path of de-escalation instead of the escalation currently underway.

Europe's subjugation to American interests made it a laughing stock when it went as far as parroting the US narrative on the Nord Stream sabotage, accusing Russia of blowing up its own pipeline – despite the huge profits for the US at the ex-

pense of European citizens, energy security and the economy. Now that the US is showing signs of bowing out, the conflict could become a full-scale European proxy war, at the cost of European taxpayers, as well as Ukrainian and Russian lives. The current priority of the US is to isolate China, and as part of that to simultaneously win over and control Russia in a complicated geopolitical dance, a repetition-in-reverse of Kissinger's divide-and-rule tactics in the 1970s, isolating Russia by engaging with China. Ukraine now faces a worse deal than the one it was dissuaded from accepting in 2022, while the destruction continues. But the prospect of any kind of brokered peace in Ukraine is leaving European leaders feeling abandoned rather than relieved; once bitten by the bug of war they no longer want to, or know how to, prepare for peace.

'Defensive' weapons strategy is an oxymoron when you simultaneously actively hinder peace. It also works reciprocally and could be self-fulfilling, unleashing another unfettered arms race. And once these weapons are produced, they are always used, generating more protracted proxy wars. The next target could be China, for the crime of undermining the imperial arrangement on which western capital accumulation depends – or likewise Iran and Venezuela. Media narratives and propaganda on all three countries is being ramped up accordingly.

Breaking the cycle of accumulation, waste and endless war

Apart from military expenditure, capitalism also depends on other wasteful forms of surplus absorption. David Harvey has identified endless urban transformation as another major one, which he once called the "American habit of getting out of crises by constructing more buildings and filling them with things." The resultant urban and suburban sprawl of shopping malls and consumer palaces – mindless reconstruction projects that are essentially destructive, uprooting local working-class communities and attendant social structures, and demolishing affordable housing

to sell goods that soon need to be replaced – contribute nothing to society, accumulating waste and destroying the environment. The Iraq war, for instance, combined both these consummately wasteful mechanisms: first death and destruction for profit, completely flattening the country, and rendering it a prime location for US corporate conglomerates to then take over ‘reconstruction’ by grabbing land and resources, and privatising services – a perfect example of disaster capitalism and accumulation by dispossession. An even more tragic case is unfolding right now in Gaza, in plans for the ‘day after’ or ignominiously named ‘Gaza Riviera,’ enabled by genocide. Harvey observed that capitalism’s inability to sustain accumulation through expanded reproduction is paralleled by a rise in attempts to accumulate through dispossession, a hallmark of neo-imperialism.

Perpetual growth for its own sake and surplus production are the very lifeblood of capitalism, necessitating a perpetual cycle of increasingly exploitative capital accumulation and wasteful surplus absorption, destroying the planet and human lives. From narratives on rogue regimes and terrorists across the world, to the obsession for guns among vigilante racist squads in the American mid-west to the necessity for Europe to ‘defend itself’ against a non-existent enemy, all are manifestations of demand created by an economy reliant on war and wasted lives.

The writing has been on the wall for a while. We urgently need to break out of the cycle by building economies that prioritise human and planetary welfare instead of perpetual growth: public services from healthcare and education to public transport and affordable housing, pensions and care for the elderly, job creation and guarantees in socially useful sectors, nature protection and the phasing out of fossil fuel dependence. Though beyond the scope of this article, there already exists a wealth of scholarship on designing degrowth economies – for instance by Jason Hickel, Giorgos Kallis and many others, and it is growing rapidly, including some brilliant ideas on applying modern monetary theory. Degrowth socialism is far from

an impractical or idealist dream, yet capitalism remains entrenched. Ideological defeatism and the TINA (There Is No Alternative) mentality continue to reign. We cling to what exists because we can no longer imagine better alternatives. David Graeber attributed this to the final effects of the militarisation of American capital itself:

It could well be said that the last thirty years have seen the construction of a vast bureaucratic apparatus for the creation and maintenance of hopelessness, a giant machine designed, first and foremost, to destroy any sense of possible alternative futures ... To do so requires creating a vast apparatus of armies, prisons, police, various forms of private security firms and police and military intelligence apparatus, and propaganda engines of every conceivable variety, most of which do not attack alternatives directly so much as create a pervasive climate of fear, jingoistic conformity, and simple despair that renders any thought of changing the world seem an idle fantasy.

Militarism is an essential feature of contemporary capitalism, and targeting this malign partnership in economies of war, genocide and dispossession, has to be the immediate priority. But the challenge extends way beyond that, in that capitalism continuously evolves increasingly exploitative means of accumulation and wasteful surplus absorption. That’s how it survived for so long. Real change will not come until capitalism is dismantled – through collective struggles in the Global South and North. As Northern workers pay with their taxes and their labour for the annihilation of Southern workers’ lives through war and genocide, a new International has never been more desperately needed.

As for Europe – if it wants to count at all in a rapidly changing world order – it needs to break away from the US-led imperialist axis and engage in partnerships elsewhere. It’s high time NATO was dissolved. As historian Richard Sakwa observed, “NATO’s existence became justified by the need to manage threats provoked by its enlargement.”

Gen Z 212 and Youth Protests in Morocco: From the Digital Sphere to the Street

Rezger Akrawi

Morocco is currently—Autumn 2025—witnessing a broad youth-led mass protest wave that has brought back to the political arena fundamental questions about social justice, basic rights, the deterioration of public services, and the political legitimacy of the regime. This movement, which took the name “Gen Z 212”*, after the country’s international dialing code, did not arise from a vacuum; it emerged from a long accumulation of marginalization, poverty, the absence of essential services in health and education, and the spread of unemployment and corruption. The movement erupted spontaneously after a tragic incident at Hassan II Hospital in the city of Agadir, where women died during childbirth due to a lack of care. That spark turned into a social uprising that quickly spread to major cities such as Rabat, Casablanca, Fez, Marrakesh, Taroudant, Salé, and Oujda, rapidly becoming an expression of a comprehensive crisis experienced by an entire generation of Moroccan youth, especially from the working and poor classes.

What distinguished this movement was not only its breadth and geographic spread, but also its reliance on new mechanisms of organization and mobilization that began in the digital sphere and reverberated on the ground. Here the relationship between the Moroccan experience and the concept of “the electronic left and electronic struggle” is manifest, where a tangible social dimension meets a technological-organizational one to produce a new form of political action. The core power of this model is that it reclaims politics from old elites and returns it to the street and to the youth. It constantly affirms that technology is not neutral; it is a tool of domination in the hands of capitalism and authoritarian regimes, yet it can at the same time become a tool of liberation if employed in a progressive, left-wing, organized manner. What happened in Morocco

reflects this possibility: with simple means, young people built an alternative, free digital public sphere in which they voiced their rejection of authoritarianism, corruption, injustice, and the marginalization of their daily lives. Short videos, memes, and online debates turned into real tools for political mobilization, organization, and the production of a critical mass consciousness—away from official media that sought to smear the movement and confine it to acts of violence and vandalism.

1. Networked digital organization of youth transcends traditional mechanisms and creates a new left-wing arena of struggle

What sets this movement apart is not only its just demands—focused on improving health and education, providing jobs, holding corruption to account, and achieving social justice—but, more importantly, its electronic-digital organizational form and tools that precisely embody the ideas of the Electronic Left**. To a large extent it organized itself outside the traditional frameworks of parties and unions, which for many reasons had weak connections with the new generations and had, in the eyes of many young women and men, ossified into rigid bureaucratic structures no longer able to express people’s concerns. In contrast, the digital sphere opened up horizons for a wholly different way of organizing—based on flexibility, speed, and openness. Platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook became tools of mobilization and rallying, while Discord servers turned into something like “digital people’s centers” for debate, planning, and collective, horizontal decision-making.

This new organizational pattern represents a fundamental move beyond the concepts of individual leadership or strict hierarchical centralism. There is



Protesters in Morocco. Photo: Izquierda Diario

no longer a single leader or pyramid of leadership committees controlling events; rather, there are horizontal networked groups, each making its own field decisions within shared general goals. This decentralization was not a sign of weakness, but a source of strength, because it made it difficult for the authorities and security services to penetrate the movement or decapitate it by targeting a single leadership. Even when accounts were shut down or activists—women and men—were arrested, the movement remained able to reproduce itself and expand its organizational space. This capacity for survival and renewal reflects the true spirit of electronic-digital organizing and contention, where organization is not a rigid apparatus but a living network capable of expanding and transforming according to circumstances.

The networked architecture allowed the movement to spread quickly and easily across a wide geography—from major cities to peripheral areas—and enabled it to circumvent field repression and digital surveillance. Authorities repeatedly tried to shut accounts, block content, or target coordinators, but the decentralized nature of the movement limited

the impact of those attempts. At the moment one account is closed, another opens; the moment an organizational link is broken, alternative channels emerge. This dynamic presents the authorities with a real dilemma: they face a “mass organizational process” in a new form that is hard to control, not a traditional organization that can be dismantled by arresting its leaders.

Networked digital organization is a new form of political culture and organizing common among today’s young women and men. Debates on Discord servers were not confined to slogans or field plans; they became a shared educational space where youth exchanged experiences, discussed strategies, and wove a common language of struggle. In this sense, the digital sphere was a means of communication that transformed into a “multi-platform collective left school” producing a new political consciousness that goes beyond the tutelage of traditional parties and elite intellectual discourse. What we witness here is a real birth of a new left space arising from below, from self-initiatives, from collective work—grounded in technology as a liberatory tool rather than remaining a tool of domination under the control of digital capitalist corporations and authoritarian states.

We can say that the networked digital organization created by Moroccan youth is the practical expression of the Electronic Left’s proposition that the digital sphere has become an important arena of class struggle today. Just as factories, farms, and offices are the primary arenas of confrontation between capital and labor, the internet has become the new complementary “factory” for producing consciousness and organizing resistance. The difference is that this new factory is not a material site enclosed by walls; it is an open, mobile space where circles of debate expand and initiatives emerge with great ease—granting it a global, international character because it breaks national borders and creates possibilities for communication and coordination among movements distant geographically but similar in essence.

If we compare the Moroccan movement with other

experiences in the region, we find it has a distinctive character. In Tunisia, for example, digital platforms were used for mobilization since 2011, but in an initial way. In Lebanon in 2019, WhatsApp and Telegram became central tools for organizing demonstrations. In Morocco in 2025, however, we witnessed the entry of an entire generation that knows politics only through digitization and sees the digital sphere as a natural extension of its life. This is what makes the “Gen Z 212” movement the first almost fully digital uprising in the Arab world, and confirms that the future of left-wing struggle will not be possible without absorbing these transformations and using them effectively—by building digital left internationals and progressive technological alternatives that transcend national borders and coordinate and link experiences across the world.

2. The raised demands reflect the living core of the left—social justice and the needs of the masses

What draws attention in the Moroccan youth experience is that the demands they raised in the street and online, despite their direct simplicity, carry a deeply left substance even though most of them do not belong to any political organizations. These young people realized—consciously or through a collective political intuition—that the strength of any emancipatory movement lies in building common ground. They did not get absorbed in elite ideological skirmishes and disputes. Although such debates are important for the left’s intellectual development, they have for decades depleted and fragmented left forces among rival schools and theoretical details. These youth moved beyond that intellectual fatigue and reset the compass toward what actually concerns the working poor masses—starting from reality on the ground toward theory, not the reverse. Here the left is not measured by who raises Marxist slogans or merely writes or repeats socialist policies in theory, but by who contributes practically and theoretically, on the ground, to improving the lives of the working poor in health, education, work, dignity, rights, and justice, influencing the path of their daily struggle—even if in limited, gradual steps.

The demands they formulated revolve around improving public education, guaranteeing free and effective healthcare, providing jobs that ensure human dignity, fighting corruption, and achieving social justice in the distribution of resources. These demands represent the living core of left thought because they place injustice, class struggle, and people’s daily needs at the center—from which action proceeds.

3. Field and digital repression reveal modern control mechanisms—but they also strengthen awareness of digital resistance

The youth movement in Morocco was not a mere peaceful protest wave met with political discourse or promises of reform; from the first moment it was treated as an existential threat to the regime, reflected in the harsh field repression the youth faced. Security forces used live ammunition in some areas—especially in Lqliâa near Agadir where martyrs fell to gendarmerie bullets—along with tear gas, baton beatings, nighttime pursuits, and the arrest of hundreds, a high proportion of them minors. This repression was not an uncontrolled reaction but a calculated policy aimed at terrorizing an entire generation and breaking its will before its organizational consciousness could take root. Field repression was accompanied by a systematic method of isolating inflamed areas through security checkpoints, cordoning popular neighbourhoods, and blocking roads to prevent protesters from moving between cities. Mass arrest was used to empty the streets. Most importantly, the authorities focused on targeting youth and minors because they were the backbone of the movement—revealing an awareness that the real danger comes from this new generation that fears not the street and possesses digital organizing tools resistant to containment.

This crude face of field repression coincided with a soft digital face. Digital detention and digital assassination are parallel mechanisms targeting the movement’s online sphere. Accounts were deleted, content blocked, and access to group discussions restricted in an attempt to sever the street from

the digital sphere that nourished it. Thus we saw the authorities practice “dual repression”—in the street with batons and bullets, and on the network through algorithms and platform throttling.

But what the authorities did not expect is that this repression, instead of stopping the movement, strengthened awareness of both digital and field resistance. On the street, youth invented new forms of gathering: mobile nighttime demonstrations, reliance on small groups instead of large marches, and using neighbourhoods as spaces for localized protest. This tactic made it difficult for police to crush the movement in one swoop and opened possibilities for grassroots local organizing. In the digital sphere, debate shifted quickly from blocked accounts to alternative ones and to more secure platforms, with widespread use of VPNs and encryption.

Field repression revealed the limits of the authoritarian system because it no longer faced just an angry crowd but a digital generation capable of adaptation. With each attempt at repression, youth reproduced their organization more flexibly and developed an awareness that the struggle with the state is not partial but comprehensive—targeting the body in the street and consciousness on the network. Here the essence of what the Electronic Left calls the “digital class battle” appears, where modern tools of repression meet classic ones.

It has become clear that control of the street cannot be separated from control of the digital sphere, and that when the state unleashes bullets on bodies, it simultaneously drops blocks on accounts. But resistance also develops along both vectors: in the street by expanding popular field tactics, and on the network by inventing protection tools and alternative organizing. This interaction between field and digital opens a real horizon for the Electronic Left to develop an internationalist project to liberate both humanity and technology. The capacity to transcend digital repression reflects a growing political awareness of the need to control the tools and build alternative progressive left technologies, rather than

leaving them entirely in the hands of monopolistic capitalist companies and authoritarian states.

4. Transforming spontaneous youth energy into a radical, organized emancipatory project

Despite the strength of this model, the challenges remain significant. The absence of central coordination may become a weakness if a long-term strategic vision does not crystallize. More importantly, partial demands need to be tied to a comprehensive emancipatory horizon so the movement does not remain in the realm of mere reforms. Here emerges the necessity for a grounded—electronic left to be organized as an intellectual and organizational current working to convert spontaneous energy into a political emancipatory project that unites digital and on-the-ground struggle, links immediate demands to a radical socialist vision, and is based on broad, inclusive common ground that builds wide alliances to achieve transformative change.

This youth and mass movement clearly reflects the spirit of an open left that refuses self-isolation within elite circles and works to open multiple forums for debate and joint action. In the digital debate spaces there was neither an ideological custodian nor excessive hierarchy, but free discussions, multiple voices, and freedom to propose ideas. What was consolidated, sustained, and translated into political action were those points touching people’s lives. Here the true meaning of participatory grassroots democracy is realized: collective organization becomes a tool to unify efforts around what serves the masses—not what pleases elite intellectuals. This orientation opens a historic opportunity for the left to renew itself, on the condition that it abandons the tendency to monopolize thought and the culture of division that has paralyzed it for so long.

Young women and men sent a clear message: we will not wait for top-down solutions, nor will we be distracted by sterile disputes. We will build our work around issues that matter to people’s daily lives. This practical dialectical awareness gives the movement its power and enables it to spread and extend. Manual and mental workers are not primar-

ily concerned with whether the canonical text is by Marx, Lenin, Trotsky, Mao, or others—despite their great historical role in human thought—but with finding a properly equipped hospital, a respectable school, a job opportunity, equality, and dignity in daily life—far from corruption and authoritarianism. These are the common points that formed the meeting ground—and they can become the basis for the left to build a radical emancipatory project that transcends the current situation and reclaims its role as a tool of change toward socialist liberation.

5. From the network to the street... horizons of a renewed left

It is important to emphasize that the Electronic Left does not present itself as a substitute for the historical forces of the left or for organizational experiences that have accumulated enormous struggles across all fields over decades. Rather, it continues, develops, and complements them, adding a new dimension to the political, organizational, and intellectual tools used by the left in its long and complex battle against capitalism and authoritarianism. What distinguishes it is that it responds to a new reality shaped by the digital revolution, where tools of struggle have expanded to include the digital sphere, platforms, and networks that control mass consciousness and steer the trajectory of public debate.

Thus, it does not negate the role of left parties, unions, and existing social movements, but calls on them to innovate and renew, to integrate the digital dimension into their organizational and political strategies, and to overcome bureaucratic rigidity and ideological closure. The challenge the left faces today is not only confronting traditional capitalism and authoritarian regimes, but confronting digital capitalism, which has reproduced class control in softer, more hidden forms—through data, algorithms, and pervasive digital surveillance.

What youth created in Morocco is an explicit, urgent call to all forces of the left. Political organization is no longer a one-track option; it must be

multi-platform, open, flexible, and transparent—dealing intelligently with the tools of the digital age. This complementary vision does not mean abandoning classic structures that have accumulated a history of class struggle; it requires rebuilding them horizontally and flexibly to be closer to the masses and capable of rapid response—especially with younger generations. The Moroccan youth experience is a living example through innovating effective networked digital formations—but this does not eliminate the urgent need for political, organizational, and trade union frameworks capable of protecting these energies, guiding protests, and turning them into lasting gains.

This requires achieving a dialectical integration between the old and the new: between field struggle and digital momentum; between the left's historical experience and the boldness and flexibility the digital generation brings. This dialectic between continuity and renewal may grant today's left the possibility to rise again, locally in the Global South and globally in general. Therefore, the Electronic Left is a call to renew the entire left project—by developing and updating its organizational, political, intellectual, digital, and technical tools, and more—alongside joint work and alliances based on essential meeting points. It also stresses the need to strengthen the leadership role of youth within left organizations, ensuring intellectual and organizational renewal and opening space for their creative, ever-renewing energies to be at the heart of decision-making and militant work. And it strengthens the left's relationship with the lives of the working poor and younger generations in a time of capitalist hegemony and authoritarianism. The future belongs to the left that understands the arena of class struggle today extends from the depths of the street to the farthest point in the digital sphere. The Gen Z 212 movement has proven that the relationship between left forces and younger generations can only develop and take root by integrating on-the-ground struggle with digital organizing tools and new forms of organization and political discourse. It is a lesson not only for dear comrades in the left and progressive forces in Morocco, but for the global left as a whole.