



MAGAZINE

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Analyze, Strategize,
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"Capitalist globalization has linked the economies of the world together; it has not only produced shared challenges but also created new conditions for transcontinental solidarity that can transform women's struggles from isolated local battles into a global social movement more conscious of itself and its goals."

- Bayan Saleh



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Monument to the Liberation at Rijeka.
sculptor Vinko Matković

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March 8th Between The Legacy Of Working Women's Struggles And Socialist Feminism

Bayan Saleh

The beginnings: when working women paved the way for us today

On March 8, we do not recall a passing memory; we recall a history of fire, struggle, and confrontation against the conditions that weighed heavily on working women. This day was shaped by the hands of women workers in factories and raised by the voices of women militants in the streets until it became an international day to renew the commitment to justice, equality, and a classless socialist system. It is a day that does not live by emotional speeches alone; it lives by returning to the historical contexts that produced it and by recognizing the central role played by the socialist feminist movement in documenting it and advocating its adoption as an international occasion uniting women's voices across borders.

March 8 was not born from a vacuum. Its roots go back to the protests of textile workers in New York in 1857, when thousands of women marched against meager wages and working hours that extended to sixteen hours a day, under conditions that were not very different from disguised slavery. Although the police suppressed that movement, it planted the seeds of women's trade union organization and instilled among working women the idea that silence was not an option and that the street was a legitimate arena for demanding rights.

More than half a century later, on March 8, 1908, the streets of New York were again filled with the footsteps of fifteen thousand women carrying the slogan "Bread and Roses": bread as a symbol of economic security and dignity of life, and roses as a sign of their right to a humane life that does not reduce women to machines of production. They demanded shorter working hours,

the prohibition of child labor, and the right to vote, which at that time was treated as a privilege rather than a natural right. That moment was exceptional because it united in one image the economic demand and the political demand, declaring that the women's cause is indivisible.

In 1909, the American Socialist Party declared the first National Woman's Day in honor of the struggles of textile workers. The idea then spread beyond the United States and found resonance within labor and socialist movements in Europe. In 1910, during the Conference of Socialist Women in Copenhagen, a proposal was introduced to designate an international women's day. Among the most prominent advocates was the German socialist militant Clara Zetkin (1857–1933), who devoted her life to linking the women's cause with class liberation and played a central role in establishing this day as a mobilizing struggle rather than a ceremonial celebration. The conference unanimously approved the proposal, indicating that the idea expressed a genuine need felt by militant women everywhere.

In the following year, hundreds of thousands of women in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and Denmark took to the streets to mark the day for the first time. But the moment that cemented its revolutionary symbolism came in 1917, when Russian women workers in Petrograd went on strike demanding "bread and peace" amid a devastating war that was draining the lives of the people and the food of families. That strike, which erupted on February 23 according to the Russian calendar, corresponding to March 8 according to the Gregorian calendar, was the first spark of the Russian Revolution that overthrew Tsarism. Thus the day transformed from a moment of demands into an event that changed the



course of history and gave March 8 a revolutionary dimension that it has not lost to this day.

March 8 remained present in socialist countries for many decades, retaining its militant and class character, until the United Nations officially recognized it as International Women's Day in 1977. Thus the day brings together the endurance of working women in America, the courage of

women in Russia, and the awareness of socialist militants in Europe, remaining a renewed promise that rights are not granted but won through organized struggle, and that the march toward equality is still ongoing, carried by generations indebted to those who came before them and determined to continue the path to its end.

Socialist feminism: when liberation became a matter of daily struggle

Socialist feminism, which took shape in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, formed one of the most solid theoretical foundations for explaining women's oppression and defining the conditions of their liberation. It was associated with the names of prominent militants and thinkers, from Clara Zetkin, Rosa Luxemburg, and Alexandra Kollontai to Flora Tristan, Clara Lemlich, and Sylvia Pankhurst, and later developed with generations of theorists and activists in the twentieth century.

These currents did not view women's oppression as a phenomenon independent from the prevailing social system; rather, they considered it an integral part of the very mechanism of capitalist exploitation, nourished by it and reproducing it at the same time. In this perspective, the working woman is subjected to a double exploitation that cannot be understood separately: she is exploited as a worker through wages lower than those of men in the labor market, and she is exploited within the family through unpaid domestic labor that ensures the reproduction of labor power without costing capital a single penny.

From this deep understanding, socialist feminism criticized what was known as "bourgeois feminism," the movement that focused its efforts on political and legal rights such as the right to vote, access to education, and participation in public life. While acknowledging the importance and necessity of these demands, socialist feminists argued that they did not touch the core of the problem for working-class women, because legal equality alone does not end economic dependency or break the chains of material exploitation. A woman who has the right to vote but lives in extreme poverty and depends economically on a man because the labor market does not offer her work or a fair wage remains effectively unfree, regardless of the rights she formally possesses on paper.

Therefore, these currents emphasized that women's struggle must not be separated from the broader class struggle, since it is in essence part of a wider movement aimed at transforming the very relations of production. They did not see an inherent conflict between men and women within the working class; rather, they believed such a view served the interests of a system that seeks to fragment the working class and divert it into internal conflicts instead of confronting the side that accumulates profit at the expense of labor. From this standpoint, the organizational activity of the socialist feminist movement was closely linked to the broader labor movement, organizing working women within a revolutionary political framework that unites rather than divides.

These currents also advanced a comprehensive vision for reorganizing society so that women could achieve economic independence through full integration into social production, alongside the provision of broad public services such as childcare centers, care institutions, and collective kitchens. Such measures would ease the immense burden of domestic labor placed on women and break their structural dependency within the traditional family. Women's liberation, in this perspective, was not merely a moral, cultural, or rhetorical issue; it was a matter of economic infrastructure requiring a radical transformation of relations of production, ownership, and power.

In this radical sense, socialist feminism viewed socialism not as an optional political addition that could be attached to the women's cause from the outside, but as the fundamental condition for achieving real and lasting liberation. Through this profound and coherent connection between feminism and class struggle, these currents helped shape a robust theoretical vision that continues to resonate strongly in contemporary debates about the dialectical relationship between the women's question and the struggle over the economic structure of society.

The industrial context: capitalism and the birth of working women's consciousness

In the late nineteenth century, Europe experienced enormous industrial expansion that transformed the continent and reshaped the map of its social relations. Factories multiplied, and cities swelled with human waves arriving from the countryside. Yet the immense wealth that accumulated was not shared by those who created it with their hands and labor. Women, alongside men and children, worked long exhausting hours under harsh conditions lacking even the most basic standards of health and safety, for wages far lower and without genuine legal protection against arbitrary dismissal or workplace injury.

In this specific context, women's oppression was not merely a cultural issue related to customs and traditions; it was an inseparable part of a capitalist economic structure that directly benefited from cheap female labor and from the fragility of women's social position and their lack of legal or organizational leverage.

Within this charged climate, the socialist movement emerged as a political expression of the interests and aspirations of the working class in a more just world. Women militants joined its ranks with a firm intellectual conviction formed through years of observation, study, and direct struggle: women's oppression is a direct and deliberate result of a system whose essence lies in exploiting labor and maximizing profit at the expense of human lives and rights.

Socialist feminism clearly distinguished between the cause of working women and that of bourgeois women, emphasizing that merging them under a single label obscures real contradictions and serves the interests of the dominant class. While liberal currents focused on obtaining the right to vote within the existing system without challenging its economic structure, socialist feminists argued that this approach addressed visible symptoms without approaching the deep roots. The uncompromising question remained: what

kind of liberation grants a wealthy woman the right to vote while the working woman remains trapped in the mud of poverty and daily exploitation? And what kind of equality is built upon a fractured foundation of economic injustice?

Through the writings and militant platforms established by socialist feminism, the organic relationship between capitalism and the oppression of women was analyzed with rare depth. Capitalist economy did not exploit women despite its awareness of the dual nature of their position; it exploited them precisely because of it, benefiting from every step they took between factory and home.

These currents did not call for a struggle between women and men that divides what should be united. At their core they called for a clear struggle between capital owners and the working class, linking women's liberation to a comprehensive transformation that changes the very conditions of production and dismantles the system that makes the exploitation of women a structural component of capitalist economy.

The Global South: when the factories still keep their name

If the struggle launched by the textile workers of New York in 1857 began in textile factories, those same factories still exist today. Yet they have moved to places where labor is cheaper, laws are weaker, and oversight is more fragile. They have moved to Bangladesh, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Morocco, and other countries of the Global South that have become cheap back workshops of global capitalism, producing what the North wears and consumes while their workers remain outside any real protection.

In Bangladesh alone, more than four million women work in the ready-made garment sector, producing goods exported to markets in Europe and the United States for wages that in the best cases do not exceed 95 dollars a month. When the Rana Plaza building collapsed in 2013, kill-

ing more than 1100 workers beneath its ruins, that collapse exposed a single scandalous truth: the thread linking a dress sold in Paris for two hundred euros and a woman dying under rubble in Dhaka is a capitalist thread stretching across borders. Reports by the International Labour Organization and several human rights organizations documented this catastrophe as one of the worst industrial disasters in the history of the garment industry.

Yet the Global South is not only the factory. In the Gulf countries, hundreds of thousands of domestic workers from the Philippines, Indonesia, Ethiopia, and Sri Lanka live under the kafala system, a system that ties the legal status of the worker to the employer in a way that turns any complaint of exploitation or violence into a risk of deportation rather than a path to justice. These women are not only absent from international debates; they are absent from the very laws that are supposed to protect them, because domestic work in many of these countries is excluded from labor law altogether.

In Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa, women bear a double burden under austerity policies imposed by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank over decades. When public services in education, health, and social care are reduced, these services do not truly disappear; their burdens move into the household sphere, where women compensate for the cuts in state budgets through additional unpaid labor and exhausted time. In this sense, austerity is not a neutral economic policy; it is a policy with clear social and gendered consequences whose cost is paid first and most heavily by women.

Here the theoretical legacy of socialist feminism acquires a new dimension beyond the Europe where it originated. When these currents linked women's liberation with the liberation of the working class from capitalist exploitation, they laid the theoretical foundation that explains what happens today in the factories of the South, the homes of the Gulf, and the impoverished neigh-

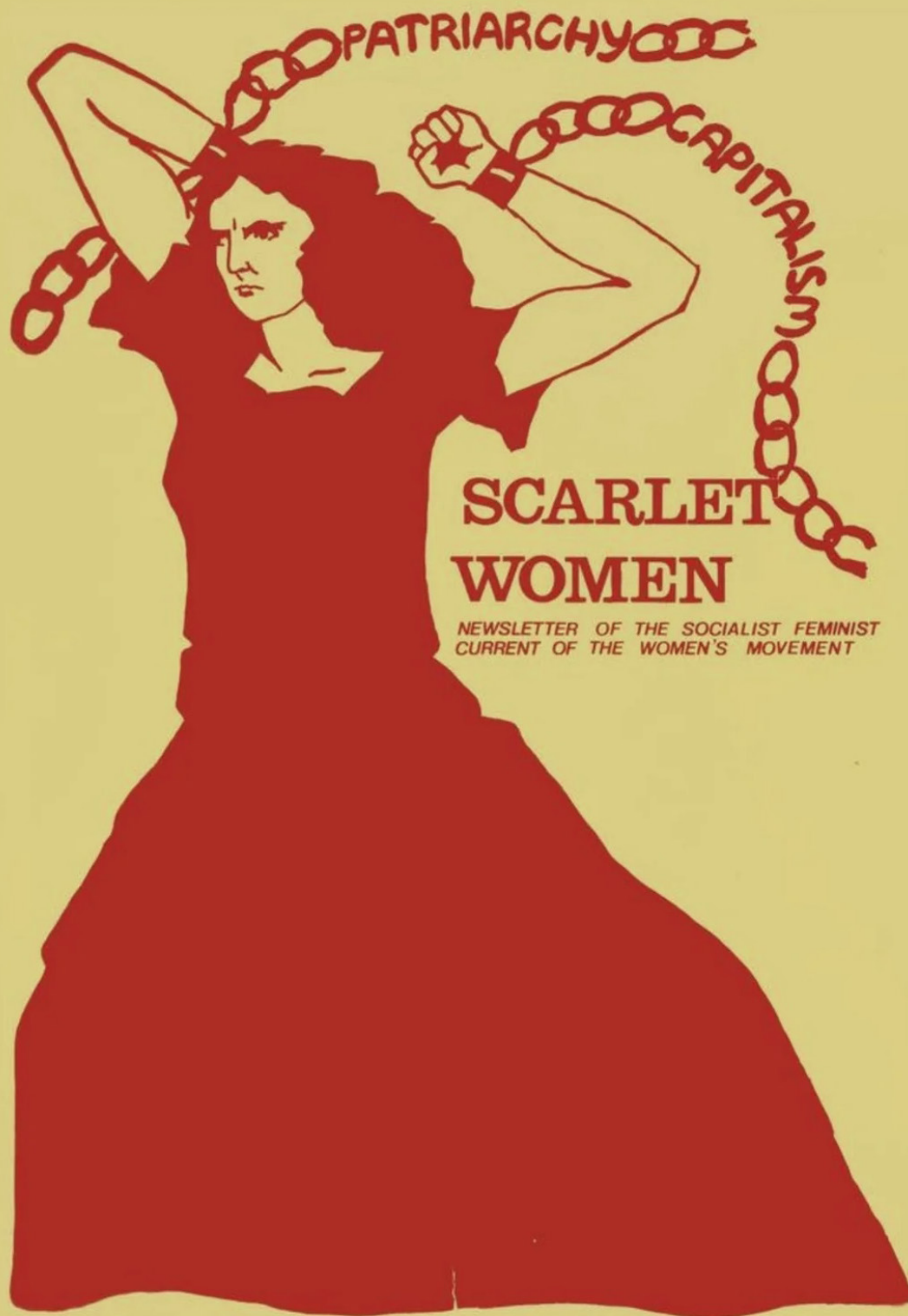
borhoods of Cape Town, Lima, and Karachi. Because the issue is essentially one: a system that requires cheap labor, fragile bodies, and porous laws, and it finds all of this most easily in a poor woman in the Global South.

Nor can the discussion of women's realities in the world be complete without also considering those pushed to sell their bodies for survival in unjust economies where existence itself becomes dependent on the body and precarious work. As occurs in many places across the world, from poor tourist countries to large cities living on shadow economies, women's bodies become the last available resource in the face of poverty and marginalization.

Therefore, March 8 cannot be a truly global day unless the factory worker in Dhaka, the domestic worker in Riyadh, the market vendor in Addis Ababa, and the woman struggling daily for survival in harsh informal economies are present at its center rather than its margins; not as victims invoked to stir emotion, but as actors in a struggle that has not stopped and will not stop until the structural conditions that make their exploitation possible, profitable, and continuous are transformed.

Crises reveal the truth: the fragility of gains under capitalism

This structural fragility experienced by women in the South does not concern them alone. Economic crises reveal that women in the North as well have achieved gains that remain suspended without deep roots in the structure of the system itself. Experiences in countries described as advanced in gender equality clearly show that these gains, despite their great importance, remain fragile and susceptible to erosion within a capitalist system whose basic structure has not changed. At every economic crisis, calls return urging women to withdraw from the labor market under arguments that appear social in form but economic in essence, such as reducing unem-



ployment, lowering public spending, or returning to the “natural role” of women in the home and family.

Even in Scandinavian and European countries often presented as models of equality, women’s participation in top leadership positions remains relatively limited. In many sectors it does not exceed 25 to 35 percent of senior management roles and falls to around 10 to 15 percent in the highest executive positions, while wage gaps persist at an average of 10 to 13 percent. Shelters for victims of domestic violence also receive hundreds of women each year, demonstrating clearly that legal equality engraved in constitutions and legislation does not necessarily mean the end of real oppression experienced daily.

This fragility is not confined to the South alone. The same economic system that pressures the wages of women workers in the factories of Dha-ka also drives austerity and privatization policies affecting the lives of women workers in hospitals, schools, and care institutions in Europe. Thus the fragility of gains becomes a shared phenomenon taking different forms between North and South but arising from the same root.

These painful realities confirm that rights gained through struggle and sacrifice can gradually erode unless the deep economic structures that sustain relations of exploitation and discrimination are transformed. A right granted within a system that does not truly believe in equality remains a suspended right, one that can be withdrawn whenever the interests of that system require it.

When female advancement does not mean a feminist victory

The presence of a woman in a leadership position does not necessarily represent a victory for women’s causes. This is not merely a theoretical paradox; history provides concrete examples. One of the most striking examples is the experience of Margaret Thatcher (1925–2013), the first

woman to become Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, who ruled between 1979 and 1990. Her rise to the highest level of power was symbolically significant in a society where political life had long been dominated by men. Yet this rise did not translate into policies that strengthened social equality or protected the working class from exploitation.

On the contrary, her era was closely associated with extensive privatization policies and systematic economic austerity that weakened trade unions, struck hard at workers, and deepened social inequality. Women, especially working and poor women, paid a disproportionate and painful price for these policies.

It is not enough for women to reach positions of power if working conditions remain unjust. It is not enough for the discourse of “empowerment” and “breaking the glass ceiling” to circulate while domestic and care work remain socially unrecognized and excluded from the calculations of the formal economy. This experience reminds us that women’s liberation is not measured by the gender of the person sitting in the seat of power but by the nature of the policies implemented and their real alignment with the interests of the oppressed majority.

Women’s presence in leadership and decision-making positions is an important and necessary step toward equality, as it breaks the historical monopoly of power and grants women a long-awaited political and institutional presence. Yet the true measure of social progress is not the number of seats occupied by women in corporate boards or parliamentary halls, but the tangible improvement in the lives of the most marginalized women: low-paid workers, women trapped in inherited poverty, refugees fleeing wars and oppression, and victims of austerity policies who pay the price for crises they did not create. From this radical perspective, March 8 remains a day of deep questioning of the existing system, its policies, and its structure, rather than an occasion to accommodate or flatter it.

March 8: how we struggle, not how we celebrate

At the end of this long historical path stretching from New York to Petrograd and from Copenhagen to every city where women have taken to the streets demanding their rights, remembering March 8 is not a sentimental return to the past. It is a conscious recovery of its original meaning, which many forces attempt to beautify and empty of its class and militant content. Reclaiming this day does not mean denying the reformist struggles that achieved gains that cannot be underestimated; it means reconnecting those gains to their social and class roots in order to protect them from regression and retreat.

Despite all the rights won through decades of struggle, blood, and sacrifice, the deep structures that reproduce discrimination daily in every factory, office, and home have not disappeared. The exploitation of women continues in a labor market built upon systematic wage gaps, unpaid work absent from official statistics, and inherited economic vulnerability passed from generation to generation. The system that women workers resisted in textile factories remains alive, changing its forms and mechanisms yet preserving its core based on domination and systematic exploitation.

The legacy left by socialist feminism was not a call for an annual celebration where banners are hung, roses distributed, and conferences held before everyone returns to their lives unchanged. It was an urgent call for organization and struggle across borders, cultures, and languages, linking equality with a critique of the capitalist class system and linking the liberation of women with the liberation of society as a whole from the logic of exploitation.

Yet the most pressing question remains: how do we struggle? What forms of organization are needed today? Is it a traditional socialist political party, decentralized social networks, or transnational feminist organizations? How can

a garment worker in Bangladesh be connected with a consumer in Europe in a way that creates shared awareness of global chains of exploitation rather than hiding them? How can austerity policies imposed by international financial institutions, whose consequences fall most heavily on working and poor women, be confronted?

The answers cannot be reduced to a single organizational formula valid everywhere. Political and social conditions differ from one context to another. However, contemporary experiences point to several clear directions, including strengthening independent feminist organization and building cross-border networks of feminist and labor solidarity. Some leftist parties and progressive forces have also played roles by supporting gender equality and the demands of the feminist movement, whether through parliamentary work or alliances with social movements.

In this context, it becomes important to connect feminist struggle with broader social struggle against austerity and privatization policies and to develop new forms of organization combining political action, social mobilization, and trade union pressure. Capitalist globalization has linked the economies of the world together; it has not only produced shared challenges but also created new conditions for transcontinental solidarity that can transform women's struggles from isolated local battles into a global social movement more conscious of itself and its goals.

Therefore, on March 8 and every day that follows, the central question is not how we celebrate this occasion. The real question is how we struggle, organize, and build. Rights won yesterday require renewed awareness and sustained organization to protect them today, and they require a revolutionary left feminist will that does not tire of expanding them day after day until full equality is achieved—an equality that accepts neither halves nor crumbs.

War Against Iran: The Big Picture

Daniel Axelrod

The US's strategic goal in the Middle East for decades has always been dominance for US economic interests. In line with this long-term strategy, the present US/Israel war against Iran is fundamentally about three interrelated things: oil, China, and nuclear weapons.

But first, we must recognize what this war is NOT about. Despite what the corporate-backed politicians and billionaire-owned media suggest, the war is NOT mainly about the obvious personality defects of US and/or Israeli leaders, nor irrationalities of Islamic or Zionist actions based on historical theologies, nor a deliberate distraction from the Epstein files, nor the influence (and money) of the "Israeli lobby" that buys American politicians through AIPAC and others. All of these factors exist but they are NOT the root causes. The US is NOT being jerked around by Israel (the "tail wagging the dog" theory); clearly the US can cut Israel off and collapse its military and economy anytime it wants. But it chooses not to do so.

Iran NEVER posed an immediate direct military threat to the US². Unlike Israel, Iran does not (yet) have nuclear weapons, and (unlike Israel) has verifiably obeyed all international agreements concerning nuclear nonproliferation, and was open to inspection. Unlike the US and Israel, Iran has never initiated a full-scale war against another country in modern history and follows a "no first use" nuclear doctrine. US/Israel arguments about Iran being a threat are entirely fraudulent, much like the Gulf of Tonkin lie or the "domino theory" of Chinese expansionism that were the first excuses deployed against the public for the US invasion of Vietnam, or the "weapons of mass destruction" fabrication that hoaxed the American public into initially supporting the invasion of Iraq.

Oil

The current attack against Iran is not in response to anything specific that Iran has done recently. Rather, the US currently is trying to reverse Iran's long-term recurrent tendency to defy rather than buckle under US demands for control of Iranian oil. The history "goes way back" as they say. In 1951, a progressive nationalist secular government was democratically elected by the Iranian people, headed by Mohammed Mosaddegh. His administration instituted social security, land reforms, and women's rights. His government's most significant policy was the nationalization of the Iranian oil industry. The US CIA thereby was engaged in 1953 to overthrow the progressive Mosaddegh government and institute a harsh, basically fascist dictatorship under a previous royal family member (the Shah Pahlavi). For the next two decades, the Shah then allowed foreign companies to control 80% of Iranian oil production, thereby pleasing private Western oil interests. Illegal detentions and torture of domestic protestors of both the religious right and the intellectual left became common in the Shah's regime.

The Shah's monarchist rule engendered deep opposition among the people of Iran, and he was overthrown in 1979. It is this event that the US has been trying to reverse ever since. Ever since 1979, the US has tried to overthrow the Iranian government and seize back control of Iranian oil, with tactics including CIA subversion, kidnappings, killings, and attempted invasions through proxy armies.

One proxy army was that of neighboring Iraq under Saddam Hussein, who the US supported at the time although he was known as a dictator. In 1982, the US (and Germany) supplied Iraq with arms, money, and materials to make chemical weapons with which to attack Iran in the 1980-1988 Iraq-Iran War. The direct US invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq from 2001 to 2021 had direct motivations (in

part, control of Iraq's oil and control of Afghanistan's rich lodes of lithium and rare earth minerals). Neither nation was defeated. But if they had been defeated, that would have enabled the US to militarily surround Iran, with Iraq on the long western border and Afghanistan on the long eastern border. The US also imposed a long series of severe economic and banking sanctions on Iran ever since 1979, in an effort to foment a counter-revolution. The present attack on Iran is clearly not new: it is a continuation of the policy of the last 47 years.

Control of Middle East oil is the real reason that the US supports Israel as a military arm. That support has little to do with moral sympathy for the descendants of the surviving victims of the World War II Holocaust. Prior to 1979, Israel was friendly with the dictatorial Shah regime in Iran. But since then, Israel (like the US), has carried out multiple covert assassinations and bombing operations on Iranian soil. Back in 1986, then Senator Joseph Biden announced how Israel provided the US with an essential military foothold in the Middle East. He said that supporting Israel "is the best three billion dollar investment we make. Were there not an Israel, the United States of America would have to invent an Israel to protect her (US) interests in the region." The US and Israel share an extensive and deep overlap in military, intelligence, military secrets, surveillance, and high tech weaponry industries. So Israel is not jerking around the US; both nations have common interests, with the US the dominant partner because it is much larger and supplies all the money.

Given the history, it is no surprise that Iran feels threatened by both the US and Israel and especially by the combination of the two. The present unprovoked attack by the US and Israel proves Iran was right feeling that threat. As a defense, Iran has established close ties with foreign political parties and resident armed militant groups in the Middle East including Hezbollah (in Lebanon), Houthis (in Yemen) and Hamas (in Palestine).

But what does the phrase "control of oil" mean? The US itself already has a lot of oil because of envi-

ronmentally destructive fracking in our heartland. But the ability to control the international supply provides the controller, at will, the power to turn on or off the spigot and affect prices to both "adversaries" and competitors. A prominent example of this kind of "control" is Venezuela's forced cut-off of oil exports to China right after the Jan 2026 US kidnapping of the Venezuelan president. The US did not have a dire need for Venezuelan oil but wanted to be sure that China would get little of it.

China

Ever since WWII, the US has been the dominant economic power in the world. More precisely, US-based corporations have been the dominant power. But corporate power is an ever-shifting shapeless monster, as corporations buy and sell and merge and align and compete with each other, even (or especially) across legacy national boundaries, always in the interest of the bottom line, always seeking markets, lower wages, fewer live human employees, fewer environmental safety restrictions, etc. But since about 2010, the shifting has developed a new reality: the rise of China. China, partly capitalist and partly socialist, has become the world's second largest economy and is headed toward becoming the largest. The US is predicted to lose its absolute economic dominance in international manufacturing (it already has) and in finance (coming soon but not quite yet). This pending loss stimulates a kind of desperation among sections of the US corporate elite, a need to secure its hegemonic control over uncontested areas of the world and to gird for war over contested regions.

Some "globalist" US corporations – some of the largest – have deep investments in China and want continued cooperation there. But others – mainly more US national-based ones – find China to be a dire threat, as China produces more and better products, and sells them more cheaply around the world. Any corporate-bought US politician (i.e., most of them) will find themselves pushed and pulled by this tension among the lobbyists representing the divergent interests of capitalists.



A Final Toast by Mr Fish

The US corporate elite class may be unified internally in their opposition to sharing its wealth with working people (who are the real enemy from their perspective), but it still does have a range of views, depending on where its investments reside. Some in that class want the US policy to “pivot to Asia” (meaning East Asia), directly competing with China over land, resources and military power. Others want to place a hegemonic economic and military clamp upon the Western Hemisphere (South and North America, including Greenland). But the Middle East remains a consensus zone of interest and contention, both for its oil and its strategic location near shipping lanes around the Red Sea and Persian Gulf.

This context explains why the US urgently wants to take back Iran after the debacle of the 1979 Iranian Revolution and why it uses Israel to achieve that goal. The goal is NOT to “protect Israel”. In fact, the US policy greatly endangers the people of Israel, as

they currently experience heavy retaliatory bombing after foolishly poking a hornet’s nest.

Likewise, the US policy is NOT molded just by the “Israel Lobby”, a circle of super-rich donors in the US consisting of Bible-thumping Zionist Jews and Christians who boast of their ethnic or moral superiority, allegedly granted to them thousands of years ago by a supernatural being. As usual in history, organized religion is used as a tool of the dominant economic class to secure property and recruit fanatics. It is true: the Israel Lobby buys US politicians and staffs executive offices and mainstream media outlets, while smearing, denouncing, and harassing (and sometimes getting the government to beat and deport) many people, including many US Jews who do not support Zionism.

But the real engine driving this war is the pressing need felt by the US capitalist class to slow its decline relative to China, in part by securing control of oil

in the Middle East. Securing that control, with all its world-wide geopolitical benefits may well involve nuclear weapons. Introducing nuclear weapons into a conventional conflict is a well-established part of US nuclear strategy.

Nuclear weapons

Many nuclear weapons experts in the US now agree that the world is closer to nuclear war than ever before. The most-likely immediate finger on the trigger is that of Israel, which currently is subject to an ongoing beating from Iran's (non-nuclear) missiles and drones. The beating from Iran is universally recognized as retaliatory self-defense, launched only after the unprovoked joint US/Israel bombing beginning on Feb. 28 against Iranian civilian and military facilities, schools (including elementary schools), hospitals, and water supply infrastructure; creating toxic air-pollution; and including targeted assassinations of officials. If Israel gets to the point where it feels it cannot take any more punishment from the Iranian retaliation, it will likely order nuclear bombing of Iran. Then the "gloves are off", and Iran (or more likely its allies Russia and China) may respond with nuclear weapons, even after weeks or months. Fallout in radioactive clouds will be world-wide, with few areas exempt. So it is important, even essential, for Americans to be completely clear about what is going on, in a confrontation that, at first, seems so far away, but may well become world-wide as long-lasting cancer-producing toxins appear in our air and water and food.

The present attack on the Iranian homeland may well convince the Iranians (and many other nations) that, going forward, it is a good idea to possess a small stock of nuclear weapons to deter a future attack on their territory.

US nuclear threat-making that involves Iran is not new: it has been going on for eighty years, because of issues around the control of oil. Back in 1946, Iran was a major target of world powers as the US and the Soviet Union made competing oil concession claims. The Soviets tried to enforce, with tanks, a WWII agreement between the US, Brit-

ain, and the USSR to split Iran's oil. Betraying the prior agreement, the US delivered an ultimatum in March, 1946: either remove your Soviet troops from northern Iran in 48 hours or "we" (the US) will nuke "you" (the USSR). The USSR withdrew in 24 hours.

Nuclear threats in the Middle East have not always been about Iran, but also about other places in the Middle East as well. According to President Nixon and his Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's own statements, nuclear threats directed against the Soviet Union have been invoked in the course of numerous Middle Eastern crises (for example: the 1956 Suez crisis; the 1970 propping up the King of Jordan; and the 1973 Arab attempt to retake lands stolen by Israel in 1967) to maintain US dominance in the Middle East, bolster Israel, and keep the USSR out.

The Future

Essentially, the war's three participants – Iran, Israel, and the US – are all fighting a war against the future. The governing theocracy in Iran did not start this war. At least that fact is to their credit. But the Iranian theocracy has been fighting for decades against the best of modern humanitarian ideas, like women's rights, freedom from religious oppression, and real secular democracy. Israel has been fighting (even with genocide) the modern idea that all people everywhere have equal value and none have been especially selected for favors by a supernatural being. And the US has been fighting against the modern ideas that oil as a fuel is fast becoming dangerous to the environment and thereby obsolete, and that the military and nuclear bullying required to seize and control it is exceedingly dangerous. It is ironic that the US corporate ruling class (now called the "Epstein class"³) considers China to be a threat. China, despite all the defects in their own system, at least follows a fossil fuel-free path to the future with regard to pioneering solar power and batteries. Hopefully, our future will include the development of a mass movement of ordinary Americans that forces the ruling elites to move away from war.

Triple Rejection: Neither the US-Israel, Nor the Mullah Regime, Nor the Shah

Mahir Engizek

What is being experienced in Iran today is not a crisis of regime, but a cracking of a state ontology. This crack is not merely a fracture created by palaces, mullahs, generals, or foreign intervention plans. It is deeper, older, and more rooted. What is cracking is the very way the state has established itself throughout history as a transcendent subject that speaks before society, above society, and on behalf of society.

When this ontology dissolves, it is not just an apparatus of power that is shaken. The very ideas of history, legitimacy, and order are displaced. To say “Neither the Mullah Regime, Nor the Shah, Nor the US-Israel” is therefore not an act of neutrality, but an ontological rebellion. This sentence does not merely reject a choice between states; it targets the state-centered political imagination itself.

The theocratic structure in Iran is not merely a religious regime. The Islamic Republic of Iran does not present itself as an ordinary power. It establishes itself as a historical necessity, a divine order, and a national destiny. Therefore, political obedience here becomes not just a legal obligation, but an ontological one. The state exists not to receive consent from the people, but to reproduce the people within its own regime of meaning.

Sovereignty is derived not from election, but from transcendence. The figure embodied in this transcendence is not an ordinary politician, but a representative of truth. Ali Khamenei, or Ruhollah Khomeini before him, were not merely rulers. They were the theological body of the state. When this body is criticized, it is not just a leader who is questioned, but the metaphysics of the order.

However, this ontology did not begin with the Islamic Republic. During the era of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the state also established itself as the

mandatory engine of modernization. The monarchy argued that centralization was inevitable in order to overcome the nation’s backwardness. Thus, the state spoke not to liberate the people, but to transform them.

There were ideological differences between the two periods. But what was common was the non-recognition of society as the constituent subject. The state always came before society. Society was able to exist only to the extent that it conformed to the state’s project.

This continuity is the deepest structural reality of Iranian history. Forms of power changed, dynasties collapsed, revolutions occurred. But the way the state established itself as a transcendent necessity did not change. The state was never the product of a social contract. It functioned always as a destiny placed before society. For this reason, regime changes in Iran are often not changes of state.

1979 is the most striking example of this. When the streets filled, when neighborhood committees were established, when workers took over factories, history opened another possibility for a brief moment. But this possibility could not become institutionalized. The revolution did not produce a stateless political form. The power vacuum was filled by cadres representing the state reflex. The mullahs did not create the revolution. They filled the void that the revolution failed to build.

Here, the historical responsibility of the left is revealed. The left confused the overthrow of the monarchy with the overcoming of the state. It was assumed that freedom would come spontaneously with the fall of the Shah. However, the state is not a dynasty, but a logic of power. As long as this logic is not shattered, who manages it is secondary.

The discourse of anti-imperialism became the ideological armor of this blindness. Anti-USA sentiment rendered domestic domination invisible. Imperialism was read only as foreign intervention. Internal hierarchy and patriarchal domination were subordinated. Thus, the left, without realizing it, became articulated into the state's regime of meaning.

Today, saying "Neither the Mullah Regime, Nor the Shah, Nor the US-Israel" is precisely the rejection of this historical error. Because imperial intervention and theocratic authoritarianism are not alternatives to one another. They are oppositions that feed each other. The external threat justifies internal pressure.

Internal pressure produces the justification for external intervention. Calls for monarchical restoration consist of nothing more than re-establishing this cycle with another symbol. The nostalgia for the Shah calls back the transcendence of the state. The bombardment that comes with the promise of democracy derives sovereignty not from the people, but from global strategy. All three suspend the subjectification capacity of society.

The real fracture was revealed in the resistance led by women. The state's most intense area of domination became the body. The discipline established over the body is the micro-physics of the political order. Mandatory veiling is not just a matter of clothing. It symbolizes the state's authority to define life. The assumption is that when the female body is controlled, society is controlled. But when women physically suspend this control, the ontological claim of the state is shaken. Because power operates not only through force, but through the internalisation of the norm. If the norm dissolves, power becomes alienated.

Therefore, the resistance led by women is not a demand for reform, but a challenge directed at political ontology. What is demanded here is not a better administration. What is demanded is the questioning of the mode of being governed itself. The state's monopoly over life is being rejected. This rejection is not a romantic call for chaos. It is embodied through horizontal solidarity networks,

neighborhood collectives, and non-state forms of relationship. The political appears no longer as a central will, but as a plural practice of construction.

Imperial intervention does not strengthen this practice. On the contrary, it chokes it. External attack triggers nationalist consolidation. The state reproduces legitimacy once again through the discourse of "national defense." The distance between society and the state closes. Thus, the possibility of liberation melts away within security paranoia.

For this reason, opposing imperialism is not defending the regime. On the contrary, it is protecting the society's own capacity for transformation. Likewise, opposing the regime is not justifying imperial intervention. The radical position is to be able to reject both sides.

This rejection does not create a vacuum. It opens a new political horizon. Sovereignty is derived not from a transcendent center, but from the immanent relations of life. This is also a break from the classical revolutionary understanding of power. The goal is not to seize the state, but to dismantle the state's capacity to encompass society. The decentralization of power is the condition of freedom. If the revolution establishes a central authority once again, history repeats itself. This is the tragedy of Iran: every moment of fracture has ultimately produced a new center.

Now the question is: can it be different this time? If "Neither the Mullah Regime, Nor the Shah, Nor the US-Israel" remains only as a slogan, then no. But if this expression shifts the center of political imagination from the state to society, then yes. For this, the left must also transform its own ontology. A left that does not abandon the desire to seize the state inadvertently reproduces the state logic. Freedom cannot be established with another version of centralization. Freedom is the practice of decentralization.

Therefore, the radical attitude is to establish the triple rejection not strategically, but as a matter of principle. Neither alongside the theocratic state, nor

in the dream of monarchical restoration, nor in the shadow of imperial bombardment. The side is not the states, but life itself. This life can be organized, defended, and expanded within solidarity. But it can only be liberated to the degree that it rejects the transcendence of the state.

The crack opened in Iran today is not a definitive victory, but it is an irreversible question. The state may still be strong. But it is no longer convincing. And when power loses its credibility, history opens a new door. To pass through that door is not to rebuild the state, but to overcome the idea of the state itself.

The state is not just an administrative apparatus. It is a regime of being. It is an ontological matrix that determines how people relate to one another, what is possible and what is impossible, which lives are valuable and which lives are expendable. Without deconstructing this matrix, any political transformation remains on the surface.

What is breaking in Iran today is precisely this matrix. Because the state is now being questioned not only as a force that applies pressure, but as a center that produces meaning. When the capacity to produce meaning weakens, force alone is not enough.

Although the relationship between Theocracy and Imperialism appears to be an opposition on the surface, it is structurally symmetrical. Theocracy establishes sovereignty through divine representation. Imperialism through the rhetoric of global order and security. But in both cases, the people are not the decision-makers, but the objects of the decision. One speaks in the name of the “ummah,” the other in the name of “stability.” In both, the social subject is suspended. For this reason, even if imperial intervention aims to overthrow the theocratic state, it reproduces its ontological logic: sovereignty comes from above. The people are a being to be saved or disciplined.

Seeing this symmetry is the starting point of radical politics. Because often leftist movements oscillate between these two poles. They either take a stand

behind the regime against foreign intervention or open space for foreign intervention against the regime. In both cases, state-centered thought is not abandoned. Whereas the real issue is not which state will prevail, but the questioning of the state form itself. If the state remains a transcendent center that constantly represents society, the hierarchy continues even if the flag changes.

The metaphysics of the state is built upon the idea of “necessity.” It is said that without the state there will be chaos, that without central authority society will collapse, that without security freedom cannot live. This discourse produces fear. Fear takes the place of consent. In Iran, this fear has been fed by both the threat of external enemies and the paranoia of internal division. Labels such as “separatism,” “terrorism,” and “foreign agent” fortify the state’s regime of meaning. Thus, even when society voices its own autonomous demands, it is pushed into a criminal position.

But fear has a limit. If the state constantly has to produce crisis, this state of crisis becomes ordinary after a while. A crisis that becomes ordinary loses its capacity to produce fear. This is exactly what is happening in Iran. Crisis is no longer the exception; it has become the norm. And a crisis that has become the norm erodes the state’s discourse of exceptionalism. When people get used to the extraordinary, extraordinary governance loses its legitimacy.

At this point, the theoretical meaning of the resistance led by women becomes clearer. The state materializes its existence through the domination it establishes over the body. The body is the first laboratory of discipline. Clothing, behavior, public visibility all are micro-mechanisms of the political order. When women suspend these mechanisms, the metaphysics of the state dissolves at a concrete level. Because the state lives not only by law, but by habit. When the habit is broken, the law is stripped bare.

Here, revolutionary radicalism diverges from the classical strategy of seizing power. Seizing power

carries the risk of reproducing the existing center. The state apparatus transforms the subject that enters it. History is full of examples of this. For this reason, radical politics should aim to deepen decentralization rather than seizing the center. This is not an anarchic dissolution, but a political plurality where multiple centers coexist. Horizontality is not merely an organizational preference, but an ontological necessity.

The idea of monarchical restoration is the clearest reaction against this plurality. The promise of a strong leader, a strong state, order, and stability becomes attractive in moments of social uncertainty. But the price of order is often obedience. The monarchy resacralizes the state with the claim of historical continuity. This sacredness may be secular. But it is still transcendent. The people fall once again into the position of being represented. Yet, a radical break is not possible without questioning the logic of representation.

Imperial intervention is another form of representation. This time, there are global powers speaking on behalf of the people. Concepts like “democracy,” “human rights,” and “stability” become the cover for military strategy. But foreign intervention does not strengthen the social subject; it passivates it. Because when salvation comes from outside, the internal constituent will weaken. Therefore, the radical leftist position must simultaneously reject both imperial aggression and domestic authoritarianism. This simultaneity is difficult because both sides present themselves as the only alternative. But the real alternative can be established outside of this duality.

When the ontological superiority of the state is dissolved, politics is redefined. Politics is no longer the art of governing, but the practice of building together. This practice begins at small scales. In the neighborhood, at the workplace, in the school, on the street. Solidarity networks, collective decision mechanisms, horizontal assemblies. These are not romantic but constituent experiences. As non-state areas expand, the absoluteness of the state narrows. This process may be slow, it may be

suppressed, it may retreat. But once experienced, it is not forgotten.

The most radical aspect of the young generations in Iran is their distance from the state rather than a desire to seize it. This distance is not nihilism, but a new political intuition. This intuition may not yet have gained a theoretical integrity. But it is within the practice. As the gap between the state’s regime of meaning and the society’s experience grows, this intuition strengthens. And this power can go beyond classical revolutionary programs.

The hardest part of the radical position is accepting uncertainty. A political imagination without a state does not offer definitive guarantees. Questions such as how security will be ensured or how the economic order will be established without a central authority are legitimate. But the guarantee of historical repetition is centralism. The tragedy of Iran is that every crisis has ultimately produced a new center. If a center is not produced this time, a new political form may be possible.

“Neither the Mullah Regime, Nor the Shah, Nor the US-Israel” is therefore not just a negative slogan. Negativity here is constituent. Rejection opens space. The triple rejection leaves society alone with its own constituent capacity. This is risky. But there is no other way to freedom. Until the metaphysics of the state is shattered, freedom is always postponed.

Now the issue is to make this ontological break sustainable. If the resistance remains only as a reaction, the state will regroup. But if the resistance transforms into a constituent practice, the transcendence of the state will not return. This is a long struggle. And this struggle is not a choice between states, but a choice between modes of existence.

The issue is no longer just diagnosis, but a constituent orientation. Because if the triple rejection is not linked to a constituent line, it remains a historical gesture, and the state ontology returns in another guise. When we say “Neither the Mul-

lah Regime, Nor the Shah, Nor the US-Israel,” we are actually rejecting not three separate political forms, but three appearances of a single logic of sovereignty. The transcendent center, the monopoly of representation, and the ideology of necessity.

This rejection does not force us into a vacuum but forces us to rethink the source of sovereignty. If sovereignty does not belong to the state, to whom does it belong? If order cannot be established without a central authority, how will we explain all the non-state forms of solidarity that have existed until today? If security can only be provided by a military apparatus, why do the most militarized regimes have the most fragile social structures?

Radical politics begins right here: by seeing everything presented as a necessity as a historical construction.

In the example of Iran, the state, whether in monarchical or theocratic form, established itself as the necessary carrier of historical continuity. The state existed, and society had to adapt to it. Because the revolution could not reverse this priority relationship, it could not overcome the state. The opportunity now opening up is a political horizon where the state does not come before society.

This horizon aims not for a change of power in the classical sense, but for the distribution of power. To neutralize the center instead of seizing it, to horizontalize the hierarchy instead of taking it over, to build directly instead of representing. This requires the concept of revolution to be rethought as well. Revolution is no longer storming the gates of the palace, but making the redundancy of the palace visible within social practice.

At this point, the position of the world left is decisive. The left has historically fallen into two great errors: first, the error that seizing the state apparatus is equivalent to freedom. And second, the error of tolerating domestic authoritarianism against imperialism. These two errors are fed from the same root: the assumption that the state is nec-

essary. If the state is necessary, the issue is reduced to who manages it.

However, the radical line questions the necessity of the state. This questioning does not mean an abstract theoretical position, but a concrete political stance. To clearly oppose an intervention centered on the US or Israel, but at the same time not to line up behind domestic authoritarianism, not to give credit to calls for monarchical restoration, and to defend the self-organization experiences of the people.

This simultaneity is difficult because geopolitical language wants to divide everything in two. But the revolutionary attitude is precisely to reject this division into two.

In terms of the Kurdistan Freedom Movement and the Revolutionary Movement of Turkey, this is an even more vital issue. Because in this geography, the state worked not only as an administrative apparatus but as a constituent power shaping national identity. When the critique of the state remains superficial, the struggle for freedom easily enters the risk of a new centralization.

However, the horizontal organization practices, collective defense, and solidarity networks developed under the leadership of women have shown that non-state political areas are possible. These experiences are not only a regional strategy but a laboratory for post-state politics. If these laboratory experiences are not expanded and are reduced only to military or diplomatic balances, the historical opportunity will be wasted.

The ultra-radical position must rely on a few principles programmatically. First, the direct constituent power of the people as the source of sovereignty—that is, a political structure that minimizes the chain of representation and localizes and pluralizes decision-making processes. Second, the shattering of the gendered structure of power. Because until the patriarchal hierarchy is dissolved, the state ontology is not dissolved. Women’s freedom here is not a matter of “rights,”

but the center of the reconstitution of the political structure.

Third, the dismantling of economic centralism. Because the concentration of capital reproduces political centralism. Fourth, the military apparatus ceasing to be a caste separate from society. The evolution of defense into a form open to social control, rather than being delegated to a professional class. Fifth, the definition of national identity not as a singular essence, but as a plural practice of living together.

These principles cannot be fully realized within the classical state form. Therefore, the transition period will be critical. While the radical line risks conflict with the existing state, it must simultaneously build alternative institutions. Dual power situations are historically short-lived. Either the center wins, or the center dissolves.

If alternative institutions do not deepen sufficiently, the center will regroup. This is what happened in Iran in the past. Now the lesson is clear: self-organization should not be a temporary tool, but a permanent foundation. Neighborhood assemblies, workers' councils, women's collectives, youth networks these should be thought of not as kernels of moments of crisis, but as the core of the new society.

On the international level, Internationalism must be redefined. Internationalism is not the diplomatic alliance of states. It is the direct solidarity of peoples. The bond between the people's movement in Iran and the movements in Turkey, Kurdistan, Palestine, or another geography must be established through grassroots organizations, not through governments. Such a network renders both imperial intervention and domestic authoritarianism illegitimate. Because legitimacy is no longer produced from above, but from below.

The risk here is great. When the state ontology dissolves, the possibility of chaos arises. But the fear of chaos is often the excuse for postponing freedom. The way to prevent chaos is not to

strengthen the center, but to deepen social bonds. The stronger the solidarity networks are, the more redundant the center becomes. This process is painful. Regressions may occur. Pressure may increase. But once the ontological threshold is crossed, the return is never complete. Even if the state becomes strong again, it is no longer sacred.

Ultimately, "Neither the Mullah Regime, Nor the Shah, Nor the US-Israel" is not a policy of balance, but a politics of break. This break is not neutrality, but the courage to position oneself outside the game between states. This courage demands not only criticism but constituent practice. If constituent practice develops, the crack opened in Iran could be the beginning of a regional transformation. If it does not develop, history will close once again with a centralist restoration.

For the radical left, the task is clear: Not to legitimize the authoritarian state while opposing imperial aggression; not to open space for imperial intervention while opposing the authoritarian state; and to reject not only the past but also the centralist future while opposing monarchical nostalgia.

To place women's freedom and horizontal organization at the center of the political program. To take sovereignty from the state and return it to social relations. This may seem difficult and dangerous in the short term. But in the long term, it is the only consistent revolutionary position.

States can be destroyed, rebuilt, flags can change. But if the idea of sovereignty does not change, domination persists. Therefore, the real revolution is to change the place of sovereignty. From the state to the society. From transcendence to immanence. From representation to direct construction. If this displacement occurs, the triple rejection will not be a historical moment, but the beginning of a new era. If it does not occur, the slogan remains and the center returns.

The choice is no longer between states, but between ontologies. And this choice cannot be postponed.

Which BRICS Bark at Imperialism – and Which Are its Running Dogs?

Patrick Bond

Three months before taking power in 1949, Mao Tse-tung wrote of the solidarity required for the Chinese people's revolution, remarking that a "principal and fundamental experience" was to "unite in a common struggle with those nations of the world which treat us as equals and unite with the peoples of all countries."

Mao warned, though, of "domestic and foreign reactionaries, the imperialists and their running dogs."

Fast forward to last week (March 9), as Indian writer Arundhati Roy rebuked Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government: "Some of you will remember how we used to joke about that florid, overblown Chinese communist term, 'Running Dog of Imperialism.' But right now, I'd say, it describes us well."

Are BRICS rising? Or spalling? Or running (dogs)?

Does the critique of Modi's allegiance to Donald Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu apply more broadly, when we consider the Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa (BRICS) bloc, now adorned with five (or six) others? In 2023 at the Johannesburg summit, new BRICS were added: Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), with Saudi Arabia an ambiguous invitee (Riyadh has never formally accepted). In early 2025 another new full member joined: Indonesia.

And at the Kazan Summit in 2024 hosted by Vladimir Putin, there were more 'partner' invitations – a category reflecting the bloc's indigestion after the 2023 expansion – offered to Belarus, Bolivia, Cuba, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Nigeria, Thailand, Uganda, Uzbekistan and Vietnam, all of which were accepted. (Only Algeria and Türkiye turned down partner status.)

As a result of the apparent strengthening of the bloc, by July 2025, geopolitics podcaster Ben Norton could remark with unparalleled BRICS-hype:

"The Non-Aligned Movement was founded in the 1960s by former formerly colonized countries almost all with socialist governments, the initial founders of the Non-Aligned Movement, saying that they refused to go along with US imperialism in the first cold war against the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. So, BRICS is now bringing back this anti-colonial mantle. They've picked up the anti-colonial mantle and they're fighting against US dollar hegemony which is a which is a form of imperialism. They're fighting against western imperialism."

But the BRICS bloc is not up for this fight, it is now apparent. In a March 9 Johannesburg discussion with leading local political broadcaster Mbuyise-ni Ndlozi, Tricontinental director Vijay Prashad warned, "If the BRICS countries don't wake up to the reality of trying to stop this conflict by any means possible, trying to stop this conflict now, if they don't recognize this reality, the entire project of peace and development is in jeopardy."

Likewise, just after the Trump-Netanyahu regimes began bombing Iran, ambitious hopes for BRICS were promoted by renowned economist Jeffrey Sachs on March 2:

"It's not only Trump but there's no brake, there's no foot on the brake. This is only an accelerator towards expanded war right now. And the only way that it can stop is if the BRICS countries – and that means India, that means Brazil, that means Russia, that means China, that means South Africa and others – and it's Iran, which is a member of the BRICS, says, 'This is not the way the world can

work.' They have to stand up to American hegemony. This is the only way the world can be safe. And so this is actually a responsibility of the BRICS right now, which is the only standing bulwark against America's global empire."

This 'only standing bulwark' is, in reality breaking up, or 'spalling,' i.e. (as I've mentioned before), a construction-industry term referring to a process in which – mainly due to the freezing-thawing cycle – "a wall's masonry and bricks crack, crumble, flake, and even pop out of the wall."

Expel running-dog India, along with any other Israel-collaborationist (?)

From hype to hope to helplessness seems like the inevitable emotional slide-away for BRICS-watching multipolaristas. By March 11, one of the most ebullient of multipolar journalists, Thailand-based Brazilian journalist Pepe Escobar, despaired – on Danny Haiphong's podcast – that the BRICS bloc was now spalling beyond repair. So Escobar boldly recommended that one in particular be popped out by the others:

"India betrayed two top BRICS sequentially, Russia and Iran. That's extremely serious. This would be grounds for expulsion of India from BRICS... The problem is what's going to happen to BRICS this year, considering that India is the BRICS chair in this year when they betrayed two BRICS."

The next day, Escobar told a podcast hosted by a former Fox News legal commentator Judge Andrew Napolitano, "BRICS would have grounds to expel India considering that India betrayed sequentially two top BRICS, founding member Russia and a new member Iran in several levels because of American pressure. When the Trump administration told India you cannot buy Russian oil, the Indian said okay, okay, master."

(Tehran was forgiving: on March 14 two tankers carrying liquefied natural gas to India were allowed through the Strait of Hormuz. Perhaps this reflected compensation for both countries' pain when

Tehran's battleship Dena was sunk by a U.S. submarine's torpedo on March 4 – killing 87 Iranians – just after it left naval exercises in the Indian city of Visakhapatnam. As a former Indian military officer, Arun Prakash, complained to The Guardian, "The U.S. navy could have sunk this ship anywhere on the way back to the Persian Gulf. We are supposed to be friends and partners of the USA. To bring the war to right to our doorstep was a perverse act." But one that New Delhi didn't have the guts to criticise.)

On March 11, Escobar diagnosed the bloc's feebleness: "At the moment, BRICS is in a coma. It's very painful to admit it, but we have to be realists. It's in a deep, deep coma, blown up by one of its founding members. And obviously, don't expect anything coming from Brazil or South Africa."

Escobar recalled that on February 26, "48 hours before the decapitation strike that killed Ayatollah Khamenei and very important people at the top of the government in Tehran, Modi was in Israel being best buddies with the war criminal Netanyahu. Because he wanted to clinch weapons deals with Israel, which they did, by the way. So we have a founding BRICS member completely aligned with Israel, which for the other BRICS, practically, all the other ones and the partners as well, this is unthinkable."

But sadly, it's not so 'unthinkable': the harsh realities of economic alignment to the Tel Aviv genocidaires can be discerned when BRICS hucksters open their minds and finally question the actual content of supposedly-multipolar 'thinking', which is oriented first and foremost to profiteering.

Since the outset of the BRICS bloc in the late 2000s, and even more so since the genocide began in late 2023, its capitalists and state agencies have increasingly linked themselves to Israel's apartheid economy:

- Since late 2023, more than 3 million tonnes of South African coal has been sent from mines owned jointly by Glencore and by the richest black South African, Patrice Motsepe (President

Cyril Ramaphosa's brother-in-law and potentially, his replacement in spite of recent denials) – providing the primary supply for 15% of Israel's grid electricity by late 2025 (after Colombia finally imposed a boycott mid-year_ – and yet while the National Union of Metalworkers of SA and SA Transport and Allied Workers Union are both rhetorically opposed to genocide and some staff do protest alongside Palestine-solidarity activists, their members facilitate the supply by digging and transporting the coal, just as the rhetorically-solidaristic Hague Group has repeatedly turned a blind eye to co-chair Pretoria's coal-fuelling of the Israeli military;

- Russian-speakers in Israel, estimated at from 1.5 million to 'nearly two million' (according to Putin), provide the genocidal military with around 30,000 soldiers, and in addition to wheat and metals, Russia sells coal and – in just the two years since the genocide began in 2023 – made 105 oil transfers comprising 30% of Israel's total crude and 45% of refined petroleum imported, via Novorossiysk (originating from BRICS-partner Kazakhstan);
- Chinese drones (tens of thousands by now) made by DJI and Autel buzz Gaza and the West Bank, and are used to drop grenades on civilians (as Al Jazeera reported), in spite of activist and human-rights NGO demands their supply be halted (even before a DJI Avata helped kill Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar in October 2024), and moreover, a Chinese parastatal owns the new Haifa Bayport while another built the 'union-busting' Ashdod harbour, which together have facilitated a 5% annual increase in bilateral trade since 2021, confirming Netanyahu's 2017 term for the two economies, namely, a "marriage made in heaven";
- Brazilian parastatal Petrobras supplies oil, at one point meeting 9% of Israeli needs directly, and from 2024 operating via Italian middlemen;
- New Delhi assures a strengthened Israeli-Indian military alliance, the September 2025 Bilateral Investment Treaty, and Modi's 'Special Strategic Partnership' solidaristic visit to the Knesset featuring 'immense progress' in 'defence, security, and more';

- the UAE has, since the 2020 Abraham Accords, rapidly increased annual trade – led by Emirati exports including oil and diamonds – to more than \$2 billion;
- Egypt has made recent oil deals with Israel, agreeing in 2025 to facilitate \$35 billion worth of Leviathan gas field exports, while not only opposing Iran's firing on U.S. bases in the region, but also offering U.S.-German military logistical support for the Israeli genocidaires;
- Given extremely warm Addis-Tel Aviv relations, Ethiopia abstained in 2024 and 2025 UN votes condemning Israeli's occupation of Palestine, while 4% of the estimated 130,000 Israelis of Ethiopian descent serve in the Israel Defense Forces – losing their lives at more than double their rate of residency (4.5 to 2%) – not to mention their role as low-paid workers suffering systemic racism (a feature of Ehud Barak's demographic discussions with Jeffrey Epstein in which, he said, a million more Russian immigrants were sought from Putin);
- After the genocide began, there was rising Indonesian-Israeli trade, especially huge recent palm oil and electronics exports from Indonesia.

So they should all be expelled from the BRICS, by Escobar's logic of banishing 'unthinkable' alliances with Israeli genocide-capitalism, especially since nearly all such relations have intensified since 2023, leaving only Iran in the bloc. But the very idea of Boycott Divestment Sanctions against the genocidaires, has been expelled by the BRICS elites.

Board of war, genocide and recolonization

Even more unthinkable would be formal membership in Trump's sordid new 'Board of Peace,' a network of 28 imperialist, subimperialist and peripheral rightwing-ruled states, all of which are guilty of substantial human rights violations, according to The Intercept's Nick Turse. Yet six of these are BRICS members and partners.

Trump announced the Board last October – and tellingly launched it at the Davos World Economic Forum on January 22 – in order, first, to recolonize



BRICS summit 2024

Gaza under conditions of ongoing Israeli genocide and displacement, and to then extend its tentacles across the world as a mafioso-type enforcement gang. The Board may become an anti-UN run-around strategy in case the General Assembly belatedly grows hostile to Washington's brazen imperialism, e.g. one day perhaps even attempting a 'Uniting for Peace' (U4P) strategy to counter U.S.-Israeli warring.

As Naomi Klein observed, the Board of Peace is a 'parody of a colonial body' and a form of 'disaster capitalism.' It's obvious why the Board of Peace was invented: "They don't want there to be a UN, because the UN represents as weak and disappointing as it is, it represents the possibility of accountability, whether it's on a climate change, whether it's on genocide."

The UN's International Court of Justice in The Hague is one site for such accountability but on March 12, Washington joined Israel in opposing the South African case there – originally filed at the end of 2023 – because the slowpoke "Court should maintain its standard for inferring intent. Lowering the standard risks broadening the application of the term 'genocide' such that it no longer carries its

original weight and meaning, and invites attempts to misuse the Genocide Convention as a gateway for bringing extraneous disputes before the Court." (In reality, South Africa's original statement to the Court proved genocide intent beyond a doubt.)

Trump's genocide-denialism was, of course, expected. But perhaps as also would be expected, Pretoria found very limited support from the other 19 BRICS members and partners: only Brazil, Cuba, Egypt and Malaysia made official submissions backing the genocide charge.

Still, even without more BRICS allies, the slackers in Pretoria could and should have done far more on this front: first by going back to the Court for more injunctions against Israeli genocide, as Palestinian-American journalist Sam Hussein argued in his recent visit to South Africa, and second, by endorsing and activating U4P – so as to assert General Assembly jurisdiction against the Security Council (following Colombian leader Gustavo Petro's unfulfilled promise to do so last September).

In contrast to offering Palestine solidarity, a half-dozen BRICS members and partners joined Trump at the Board of Peace inaugural February

19 conference at the 'Trump Institute of Peace' in Washington: Egypt, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, UAE, Uzbekistan and Vietnam. (On March 2, Indonesia temporarily paused its participation, yet in late February Jakarta's nationalist-populist leader Prabowo Subianto had offered 8000 troops to enforce Trump's 'Riviera of the Middle East' vision requiring massive forced displacements of Gazans.)

India was also a formal observer at that Board of Peace session, whereas – unlike European countries which turned down membership – Brazil, China and Russia were invited by Trump but did not immediately reject his overtures. Moscow even appeared open to spending Trump's requested \$1 billion membership fee – 'to support the Palestinian people' – using funds frozen after the February 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

Worse, Russia and China had let the malignant Board of Peace notion fester last November 17 at the Security Council, by failing to veto the Gaza re-colonization strategy Trump imposed, on grounds the deal was then actively supported by BRICS members Egypt, Indonesia and UAE (and other Arab tyrannies) as well as by the quisling Palestinian Authority.

(Three other BRICS members – South Africa, Ethiopia and Iran – did not receive invitations. Here, we are not counting as a BRICS member Saudi Arabia – which if included would dramatically increase the weight of the running-dog case – because it has an in-again out-again posture, going to many 2025 Brazil meetings and listed as a member by host India this year.)

The geopolitical economy of running dogs and their Western canine handlers

All this leaves an extremely complicated, contradiction-riddled political terrain on which the BRICS as a whole appears to have simply slipped from the earlier 'alternative-to-Western-imperialism' rhetorical foothold.

In a February 24 podcast introducing his latest

book, *The Story of Capital*, Marxist geographer David Harvey explains why such geopolitical fracturing cannot simply be read off countries' corporate economic interests:

"The interplay between the capitalist and territorial logics of power is a defining feature of modern geopolitics. Marx noted that the concept of national wealth creeps into the work of the economist and its competition over that national wealth becomes predominant. But under the regime of competing ethnic nationalisms, the production of wealth by capital is primarily put to work to serve national interests rather than those of capital alone. These two logics are not merely competing forces, but ones that are deeply intertwined, influencing how states navigate global and domestic challenges. The dual role of the state-finance nexus becomes particularly evident during crisis. The state as both an enabler and a mediator of accumulation occupies a central political position in capital social formation. However, its dual logics of power, capitalist power and territorial power, create tensions that shape the trajectory of global and domestic politics."

In short, even if the BRICS are generally united (excepting Iran) as a subimperial pack of hounds when profiting from Israel's genocide, naturally, there are bound to be major differences between the West and BRICS given the depth and breadth of world capitalist crisis. These differences include military and oil alliances, as are being played out in the Gulf now.

After all, in any imperial/subimperial relationship in which occasionally-divergent state-territorial logics and corporate expansionism generate all manner of frictions, there exists what Ruy Mauro Marini termed 'antagonistic cooperation' (as he put it in his classic 1973 *Dialectics of Dependency*).

Such collaboration becomes, ultimately, more durable due to mutual interest in improving the global terrain for capital accumulation and profiteering, than might be suggested by multipolar rhetoric or than is indicated by sporadic sites of struggle:

- the current Iranian fight-back and de facto closure of the Strait of Hormuz to U.S. allies;
- China's brief threat to ban sales of rare-earth minerals to Trump's U.S. and its eventual retaking of Taiwan;
- the South African case against Israeli genocide at The Hague; and

Russia's 2014 and 2022 invasions of Ukraine.

These incidents of apparent anti-imperialism create genuine antagonisms, to be sure. But the overarching process is cooperation between imperial and subimperial powers, especially when it comes to surplus value extraction from the world's workers, super-exploitation of the world's women involved in social reproduction, and the abuse of nature as a 'free gift,' to quote Marx.

BRICS promote global-corporate power under the cover of multipolarism

To those ends, the BRICS elites advance the agenda of corporate imperialism because they are completely committed to strengthening the tools of neoliberal multilateral power on behalf of their largest firms – especially the deadly fossil fuel industries – and banks.

Consider the case of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, so vital for the sake of future generations and potential avoidance of planetary ecocide. But the tragic conclusion we must draw is that both G7 Western politicians and BRICS ruling elites continue working closely together to prevent bans on fossil fuels or greenhouse-gas emissions cuts to the extent necessary for fending off climate catastrophe.

Starting with the 2009 Copenhagen climate summit, then U.S. President Barack Obama "blew up the United Nations," as Bill McKibben explained at the time. "He formed a league of super-polluters, and would-be super-polluters. China, the U.S., and India don't want anyone controlling their use of coal in any meaningful way. It is a coalition of foxes who will together govern the henhouse." (The leaders of South Africa and Brazil were also part of

formulating that deal in a secret side room.)

Since then, the G7 and BRICS have also been utterly unwilling to acknowledge polluter-pays climate-debt obligations to poorer countries and to their own internal victims of extreme weather – even after last July's International Court of Justice advisory opinion insisting on the validity of reparations demands from 27 youth from a sinking Tuvalu.

Indeed, given how much the world's corporations and banks rely upon the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and World Trade Organization (WTO) for a 'rules-based order,' it is no surprise to find BRICS leaders' annual statements supporting these agencies of imperial power. The BRICS currently lead the calls for their refunding and re-legitimization, even at a time Trump's (occasional) paleo-conservative hatred of 'globalists' signals his retreat from climate summits, refusal to boost the Bretton Woods Institutions' funding, and sabotage of the WTO.

Why, when neoliberal multilateral institutions are more shaky than ever, do the BRICS give them unwavering support? Simply, for the sake of their capitalists' own accumulation strategies: global value chain exploitation, raw-materials extractivism, Intellectual Property protection, unchecked emissions and fossil fuel exploration, sleazy trade and investment deals, and debt squeezes on poorer economies where BRICS banks stand exposed.

If Mao warned against "domestic and foreign reactionaries, the imperialists and their running dogs," maybe – in spite of select surface appearances – that epithet "describes the BRICS well," as Arundhati Roy might also conclude.

Mostly, though, the subimperial BRICS bloc is the rabies-addled 'dog that didn't bark,' when confronted by even Trump's excesses of imperialism and Netanyahu's genocide. But occasionally when some in the pack do bark left, we should not be distracted or surprised when – as any Palestinian knows – they simultaneously bite right.

The Geography of Hope: Why Palestine is the Middle East's Only Way Out

Ramzy Baroud

Let us imagine a liberated Palestine. Let us consider how justice for the Palestinian people would reshape not only the region but, indeed, the entire globe.

This is not a conversation about a “political solution” in the narrow, bureaucratic sense. Such solutions require no particular genius: true justice can only occur when the Palestinian people are granted the totality of their rights and the fulfillment of their political aspirations.

Equally true is the reality that no such justice can manifest so long as Israel remains committed to its current Zionist ideology—a framework predicated on racial supremacy and the systematic eradication of the indigenous Palestinian Arab population. Once the shackles of this ideology are broken, the exact political mechanics become secondary; history suggests that the future would lean toward a shared coexistence rather than a continuation of the current segregation along ethnic lines.

To some, discussing a liberated Palestine now may appear slightly—though not entirely—removed from the current war ravaging the region. It is a war that, if not permanently halted, will continue to devastate the peoples of the Middle East, inviting further militarization, runaway defense spending, and cycles of violence. On the contrary, this is the most critical discussion we can have today.

In his seminal documentary, the late Australian journalist and filmmaker John Pilger summed up the centrality of Palestine to the Middle East in these prescient words:

“A historic injustice has been done to the Palestinian people, and until Israel’s illegal and brutal occupation ends, there will be no peace for anyone — Israelis included.”

These are not mere words of posturing; they are an undeniable historical truth. Palestine has remained the beating heart of every Middle Eastern war and every persisting conflict. For Israel, the occupation has served as the linchpin for its military incursions across borders. For Palestine’s neighbors and allies, it remains the unhealed wound of a region historically unified by political, cultural, linguistic, and religious continuity.

Even during periods when Palestine was seemingly relegated to the periphery of regional diplomacy, Israel was keen to remind its neighbors that its designs were never limited to the Palestinians alone. Whether in historic Palestine or the Shatat (Diaspora), the Zionist project has always signaled broader ambitions.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has explicitly confirmed this expansionist intent, recently declaring that he is on a “historic and spiritual mission” to realize the vision of a “Greater Israel.” By openly connecting with a map that swallows Palestinian land and threatens the sovereignty of neighboring Arab states, he has made it clear that the erasure of Palestine is merely the first step in a much larger colonial design.

The current war confirms this centrality. Its origins, the ensuing political discourse, and the clashing visions of a ‘post-war’ reality all pull Palestine back to the center of the global stage. To discuss Palestine as if it were an isolated issue—as some unfortunately do—is a profound historical mistake. Conversely, to discuss the future of the Middle East without centering Palestine is equally delusional. Therefore, we must insist on the Palestinian discussion now more than ever. Once a just outcome to the Palestinian struggle is achieved, the positive shock-



Photo: Montecruz

waves will transform the region. Only then can we move from a state of perpetual warfare to a future rooted in genuine, collective liberation.

That said, do not expect a list of dry political recipes to follow. We already know, instinctively, what justice for Palestinians looks like. The freedom to live, to be treated with equality, to enjoy sovereignty, and to demand accountability and respect—these do not require exhaustive citations of international legal or humanitarian law. These are natural rights; they flow through us, individually and collectively, as surely as the blood in our veins.

The fact that Israel and its enablers refuse to respect international law, or to adhere to any common humanitarian principle, is no fault of the Palestinians or the other victims of Israeli aggression. The moral and legal burden must be shouldered entirely by those who have abused, disregarded, and dismantled the international legal order for far too long.

Today, the Palestinians—much like the people of Lebanon, Syria, and other nations across the region—are doing exactly what every oppressed nation must do: they are remaining steadfast. This Sumud

is the key, now more than ever before. The ultimate outcome of this conflict will not be determined by lopsided death tolls or the sheer scale of structural destruction, but by the unyielding resilience of the people. History is a patient teacher; it tells us that if the rightful owners of the land hold their ground, they will eventually win.

Richard Falk, the former UN Special Rapporteur on Palestinian Human Rights and a prominent legal scholar, refers to this phenomenon as winning the ‘War of Legitimacy’. It is a war fought not with fighter jets, but with the moral clarity of those who refuse to disappear.

If true justice prevails in Palestine, it will inevitably prevail in Lebanon, in Syria, and beyond. The exhausted branding of the Middle East as a ‘war-torn region’ will finally vanish. A just peace will invite more than just the absence of war; it will invite opportunity, reconstruction, a collective regional rise, and—most importantly—the restoration of hope.

This is not a desperate wish whispered in a time of darkness. It is the only way out.

Trump Can't Blockade Love: Why I'm Going to Cuba

Leonardo Flores

I'm traveling to Cuba for the first time on March 21 to be in Havana with the Nuestra América Convoy, in which people from dozens of countries representing a variety of organizations will break the blockade, bringing much-needed supplies to the island. CODEPINK is bringing 6,300 pounds of medical equipment and medicine with help from Global Health Partners and others. These supplies will be given to clinics, hospitals, and maternity centers as Cuba deals with the latest horrifying crime against humanity perpetrated by the United States.

The U.S. is blockading oil, seizing and chasing away Cuba-bound tankers in the Caribbean. No oil whatsoever has entered the island since early December. Trump characterized Cuba as an “unusual and extraordinary threat,” paving the way for more unilateral coercive measures (so-called sanctions). Rubio, in his dual positions of Secretary of State and National Security Advisor, twists the arms of countries around the world to expel Cuban doctors.

On top of this are the repeated threats of military strikes from Trump and his allies, along with worrying events: a failed incursion by a group of ten Cuban Americans, including two on Cuba's terror watch list; and an uncovered plot in which ten Panamanian residents of Cuba were to be paid to spread “subversive content” with the hopes of starting protests. These extremists want war with Cuba and see “no reason to show them mercy,” as an anonymous member of the Cuban American diaspora told Politico.

Bombs have not fallen, but Trump's economic warfare is killing children. “In the 0 to 5 age group, cancer is the leading cause of death. And it is heart-breaking to face a child with a disease that we know ... there is a chance of curing, and we can't do it because we can't access those resources,” said Cuban Dr. Carlos Martínez in a press conference. Whether

in Tehran, Havana, or Epstein Island, it is as Silvio Rodríguez sang in *Días y Flores* fifty years ago: “The rage, a child-murdering empire.”

Part of the economic attack is against Cuban doctors who serve the poorest communities throughout the world. Cubans have treated 2.3 billion patients in 165 countries in the history of their medical cooperation programs. These doctors are paid by the countries they serve, as is the Cuban government, which then uses the funds to train more doctors. The payments vary by country, with richer countries like Italy paying more. Due to U.S. pressure, in the past year, Cuban medical missions have been asked to leave Guyana, Jamaica, Honduras, Guatemala, Paraguay, the Bahamas, and Antigua and Barbuda. The main victims in this case aren't Cubans, but the patients Cuban doctors were forced to leave behind — many will now go without health care.

What can we do in the face of these crimes? We can push for bills in the House and Senate to end the embargo, for the War Powers resolution introduced in the Senate, and for the New Good Neighbor Act introduced by Rep. Nydia Velázquez. We can hold teach-ins, webinars, events, and rallies aimed at political education and building consciousness.

But one of the most important things we can do, and the first reason I'm going to Cuba, is to offer material aid in the form of donations and travel. It's an honor to be part of the Nuestra América convoy, and it could not have been done without thousands of people donating to the various campaigns to bring medicine, food, and solar panels. This will save Cuban lives, and to paraphrase José Martí's “amor con amor se paga,” it is a way of repaying love with love. We need to keep raising money for Cuba — it is the most urgent form of solidarity we can express at this time.

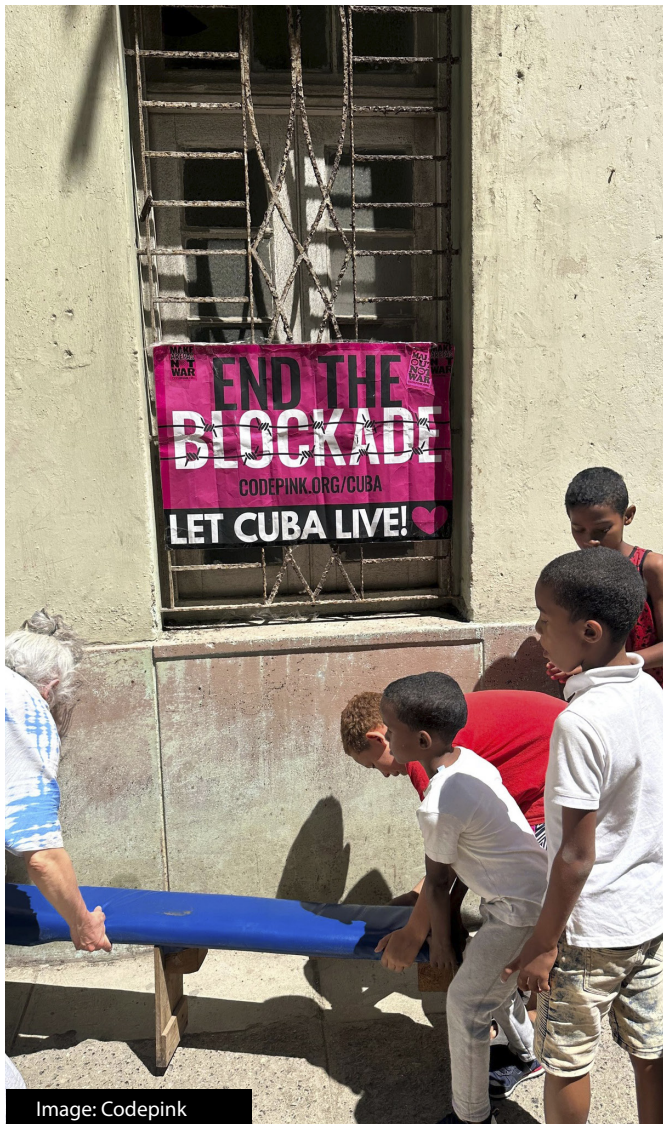


Image: Codepink

Those who can should travel to Cuba. The message from Congressional Republicans is “No Oil. No Travel. No Oxygen.” Visiting Cuba is poner tu granito de arena, doing something small but meaningful — an act of defiance in the face of an empire gone mad. Not all of us can do this as individuals, but together, our communities, movements, and organizations can send people to Cuba. Visitors can take a suitcase of aid and conduct people-to-people diplomacy while helping the local economy.

The second reason I’m going to Cuba is more personal. My father-in-law passed away last July, a Cuban American who dedicated a large part of his life to anti-imperialist solidarity. He was part of the 1977 Antonio Maceo brigade, the first delegation of Cu-

ban Americans to go to Cuba. On the CODEPINK delegation, we’ll be joined by Cuban Americans for Cuba, who are building on that legacy of countering the extremists of their diaspora. The delegation will also include a member of the first Venceremos Brigade, a coalition of anti-imperialist solidarity that began traveling to Cuba in 1969. All together, we are a group of peace activists, teachers, doctors, journalists, influencers, artists, and organizers. We are members of diasporas, including Palestine, El Salvador, and Venezuela.

The third reason I’m going to Cuba is because I’m from Venezuela. On January 3rd, when the U.S. bombed my country and kidnapped President Nicolás Maduro and First Combatant Cilia Flores, they killed over 100 people. Among them were 32 Cubans. Venezuelan Defense Minister Padrino López said they were “murdered in cold blood.” When I first heard him say that, I was filled with a profound sadness. The Cuban people have given so much to my country, and now they have spilled their blood for Venezuela as well.

Through ALBA, the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our Americas, Cuba and Venezuela founded teleSur, PetroCaribe, a development bank, and numerous social programs. Cuba’s solidarity and cooperation helped rid Venezuela of illiteracy. Cuba provided doctors and a path for transforming Venezuela’s health system.

Now, the U.S. is trying its best to divide Venezuela from Cuba. Its warships continue to prevent shipments of oil. They may stop the oil, but they won’t be able to divide us. The Venezuelan and Cuban people have too many ties and too much love to ever turn against each other.

At the end of that Silvio Rodríguez song, he offers love as the antidote to that rage brought about by war, empire, and its daily crimes. Trump can’t blockade love. And there are millions around the world who love the Cuban people — a people who have fought capitalism, imperialism, Apartheid, and Zionism. A people who are always the first to offer aid and solidarity.

We're Tired of Marco Rubio Speaking for Us: A New Cuban-American Movement

Justine Medina

“Put three Cubans in a room together, you’ll have five different opinions,” a Cuban friend of mine likes to joke. He was referring to debates in the town-hall meetings during Cuba’s constitutional convention process of 2018. But I immediately thought, of course, of any Nochebuena celebration at my dad’s house, just a few hundred miles north. Siblings, cousins, babies, abuelas, family, and friends of all ages and political opinions gathered around a brilliant feast. Between the devouring of lechón, yuca, plátanos, and flan, a flurry of back and forth between English and Spanish. Everyone hugging, praying, laughing, and occasionally yelling. Well, maybe more than occasionally.

The existence of contradictory political opinions across generations will come as no surprise to diaspora families from all over, and my Cuban family is no exception. My abuelo participated in the Cuban Revolution against Batista before being turned off by what he saw as the horrors of communism. My family moved to Miami, and after being jailed for counterrevolutionary terrorism, my grandfather then defected and fought for the U.S. in the Bay of Pigs. (A Brigada 2506 flag hung on the wall of my childhood home.)

Like many Cuban-Americans growing up in Florida, I was taught countless criticisms and failures of the government of Cuba by family members. But my proudly capitalist father also raised his children to lobby against the U.S. embargo on Cuba. And as an adult, I learned about the positive aspects of Cuba’s policies, such as the nation’s historic biomedical achievements, or the remarkable advances of LGBTQ rights under the recent Families Code referendum. Today, my older brother and I are openly Marxists and organize as such for labor, social, and environmental justice. As you may guess, sometimes things get a little complicated!

Following the festivities this past December, one of mis primos worried to me about her brother who lives on the island. With increasing blackouts and energy strains, a stressed economy, and hawkish U.S. policies towards her first homeland, things were only getting harder. “The only people who pay attention to what’s happening in Cuba are Cubans,” we lamented. “Hopefully that will change.”

Then 2026 came. With it, the Trump administration’s war games: Kidnapping presidents, murdering leaders in other countries, seizing foreign oil, and threatening sovereignty. People were paying attention.

People are starting to learn about the 66 years of failed U.S. policy against Cuba. People are learning about the trade restrictions that prevent medicine, food, and fuel from getting to the island. People are learning about the starvation, pain, disease, and death that come from these policies. And people are also beginning to notice that Cubans across the political spectrum want something different than what the U.S. provides!

There has long been a particular image, a particular idea, of what it means to be Cuban-American. You know it well: “The Miami Cuban.” The man opposed the communist policies in Cuba so much that he’s willing to go to war with the island, that he’s willing to bomb, and destroy. And this hyper-machismo image, along with intergenerational trauma in Cuban families, has been used for decades to push US policies against Cuba that do nothing but harm the people of the island. That harms our family, our friends, and a country that we deeply love.

I’m tired of the extremist “Miami Cuban” propaganda machine. I’m tired of the Marco Rubios and



Ted Cruzes of this country claiming to speak for Cuban-Americans.

I know, however varied our politics, what my family wants is this:

We want the embargo to end. We want the cruel, inhumane oil blockade by the Trump regime to end. We want the current administration's posturing towards war games and invasion to end. We want engagement, not escalation. We want friendship. We want trade. We want to gather with our families, watch béisbol, and drink cafecitos by the Malecón.

Despite what the Marco Rubios, Maria Salazars, and Carlos Giménezes of the world try to tell people, this is what most Cubans in America want.

Ready to speak up, a group of us has come together to build the Cuban Americans for Cuba movement. We have launched an open letter against the current U.S. policies towards Cuba (CubanAmericansForCuba.Org/Letter), so other Cubans can sign on and show the world the true values of Cuban-Americans. Our organization is growing, with members all over the United States, and we span a variety of opinions. What we share is the belief that the future of Cuba should be left to Cubans on the

island to decide without U.S. interference and meddling. We work together across our differences to end the Embargo, knowing that this is the best way to allow for freedom for all to flourish.

And that is why a delegation of Cuban-Americans is going on the Nuestra América convoy later this month with other Cuba solidarity activists, a delegation which I am proud to join. We are going to deliver thousands of pounds of medical aid to the people and communities that we love. We are going to show that Cuba is not alone, and that the working people of the USA stand with them. We are going to build bridges of friendship and solidarity and a better world where we all have liberation. A world where we all have peace.

Some, including Republicans in the US Congress, have accused the convoy of being an anti-American venture and the participants of being communist agents. But just like Cubans and Cuban-Americans, the Nuestra América convoy and our supporters are made up of people across the political spectrum. The out-of-touch politicians who seek violence may not understand this, but here's the truth: the only thing you need to be to oppose the US Embargo on Cuba and the Trump administration's war games is a human being.

The Shield of Monroism: The Angry Tide and the Neo-Colonial Order in Latin America

Carlos Ron

On 7 March 2026, at the Trump National Doral Golf Club in Miami, Donald Trump inaugurated the “Shield of the Americas” summit, convening right-wing leaders from Latin America and the Caribbean’s “Angry Tide” around what he called a ‘counter-cartel coalition’. Washington’s recipe was stated plainly: “The only way to defeat these enemies is by unleashing the power of our military.” Monroism is on the offensive, and the Angry Tide has become its shield—not against cartels, but against people-centered projects of national sovereignty.

The invited leaders—Milei of Argentina, Paz of Bolivia, Bukele of El Salvador, Noboa of Ecuador, Asfura of Honduras, Peña of Paraguay, Chaves of Costa Rica, Mulino of Panama, Abinader of the Dominican Republic, Ali of Guyana, Prime Minister Persad-Bissessar of Trinidad and Tobago, and President-elect Kast of Chile—are all to the right of the political spectrum. Conspicuously absent were the progressive leaders of Latin America’s largest economies: Brazil, Colombia, and Mexico. Of Mexico, Trump declared: “The cartels are running Mexico. We can’t have that.”

The images from Miami stood in stark contrast to regional gatherings of the last two decades, where Latin American leaders met on equal standing to build frameworks for political coordination and cooperation—such as the Council of South American Defense and the South American Health Council, of UNASUR, for example. In Miami, the assembled presidents competed in a publicity stunt to see who would stand closest to Trump in the photograph or keep the commemorative pen with which he signed the agreements.

Fifty Years of “War on Drug”: A Failed Policy
It is alarming that this coalition commits to

deeper collaboration with the United States on fighting cartels, given the balance sheet of US-led drug control. The Addicted to Imperialism study series, co-produced by the Tricontinental Institute for Social Research with the Lawfare Observatory, CEPDIPO, and COCCAM, lays out the record with devastating clarity: after more than fifty years of the ‘War on Drugs’, the DEA acknowledged before the US Congress that the Sinaloa and Jalisco cartels alone have ‘associates, facilitators and intermediaries in all 50 states of the United States.’ This is the outcome of half a century of the most expensive and militarized drug control effort in human history.

The aggregate data confirms the verdict. In 2023, 316 million people consumed illegal drugs worldwide—a 22 percent increase from a decade prior. The US government has invested over \$10 billion in counternarcotics efforts in Colombia since 1999, yet cocaine production more than tripled between 2013 and 2017. The study shows that between 2016 and 2022—a period of intense US-Colombian cooperation—potential cocaine production in Colombia rose from 1,053 to 1,738 metric tons, while seizures and forced eradication also increased simultaneously. More eradication, more production. More cooperation, more cocaine.

Ecuador: A Dramatic Example

No contemporary case illustrates this more starkly than Ecuador, whose president Noboa stood prominently at Trump’s event in Miami. As the Addicted to Imperialism studies documents, Ecuador has been subjected to a process of foreign interference since at least 2017—producing marked deterioration of the social rule of law and a progressive militarization of public security

across four structural axes: foreign interference, economic liberalization and external debt, institutional deterioration, and the securitization of social problems.

Under Moreno (2017–2021), Ecuador restored US security ties suspended by Correa, rejoining Southern Command exercises. Under Lasso (2021–2023), a Memorandum of Understanding was signed, modelled explicitly on Plan Colombia, with a projected budget of \$3.1 billion over seven years—repositioning Ecuador as the top recipient of US Foreign Military Financing in the region, with \$310 million between 2022 and 2023, surpassing Colombia.

Under Noboa, after presidential candidate Fernando Villavicencio was assassinated during the 2023 campaign, General Laura Richardson of US Southern Command traveled personally to Ecuador to agree a ‘joint plan’ including the deployment of US military personnel with full immunity from Ecuadorian justice—the same conditions applied in Colombia, immediately dubbed a “Plan Ecuador”. The homicide rate reached 47 per 100,000 in 2023. Noboa’s Plan Fénix deployed armed forces in city streets, built mega-prisons modelled on Bukele, and sought a constitutional reform to permit foreign military installations—such as the base in the Galápagos. The militarization of public security has not resolved the crisis. It has deepened it, while subordinating Ecuador’s sovereignty to Washington’s hemispheric agenda.

Two Hundred Years After Panama: The Amphictyonic Compass

The militarized drug war framework does not protect populations from narco-trafficking. It protects political elites from democratic accountability and normalizes authoritarianism under the banner of security. Addicted to Imperialism documents that in 2008, 35 percent of Colombian senators and 13 percent of House representatives were under investigation for links to paramilitary groups that simultaneously ran drug trafficking operations. The “War on Drugs” did not disman-

tle these networks. It provided them with political cover.

This is not surprising when we recall the framework’s origins. Nixon’s chief domestic policy advisor admitted decades later that the 1971 declaration of drugs as ‘public enemy number one’ had a different target:

“The Nixon White House, after that, had two enemies: the antiwar left and black people... We knew we couldn’t make it illegal to be either against the war or black, but by getting the public to associate hippies with marijuana and blacks with heroin, and then criminalizing both heavily, we could disrupt those communities. We could arrest their leaders, raid their homes, break up their meetings, and vilify them night after night on the evening news. Did we know we were lying about the drugs? Of course we did.”

On a regional scale, from Plan Colombia to the Shield of the Americas, the alleged combat against cartels has consistently served as a pretext for military spending, interventionism, and the displacement of populations from their territories. The most recent illustration is Venezuela: the abduction of its sitting president, Nicolás Maduro, was framed as an anti-drug operation—but swiftly revealed as a mechanism for reinserting Venezuela into Washington’s oil economy.

In 1826, Simón Bolívar convened the Amphictyonic Congress of Panama with a vision of extraordinary clarity: a confederation of Latin American republics acting collectively, guaranteeing their independence, and negotiating with great powers from a position of sovereign equality. The Angry Tide is today’s antithesis of that spirit. At Miami, Trump declared: “we will not allow foreign hostile influence to establish itself in this hemisphere—including the Panama Canal”—while Panama’s president Mulino sat in the audience and listened in silence. It is Monroism at its most undisguised.



Latin America and the Caribbean—its movements, parties, and progressive governments—needs a renewed regional agenda of sovereignty and concrete cooperation, including institutions capable of coordinating a sovereign response to the drug economy. The price of a kilogram of cocaine rises from approximately \$1,500 at the point of production in Colombia to \$20,000 in the United States. The producers—the peasant farmers—capture less than 1 percent of the global cocaine market’s value. Meanwhile, over 70 percent of the weapons fuelling cartel violence in Mexico are manufactured in and flow from the United States. The drug war, in its hyper-milita-

rized version, creates the institutional framework for precisely the kind of health concerns, corruption, and impunity it claims to be fighting.

The first quarter of this century offers proof that a different ambition produces results. Operación Milagro restored sight to over 3 million people. The ALBA literacy programs eradicated illiteracy in Bolivia, Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Ecuador. Regional unity with a true purpose of reaffirming sovereignty and guaranteeing a dignified life for the population must not be abandoned for failed policies and publicity stunts.

Trumpism à la Banana Republic: Authoritarian Destruction of the Public Sphere in Ecuador

Pilar Troya Fernández

The situation in Ecuador under Daniel Noboa's government is one of authoritarianism advancing on several fronts simultaneously to consolidate neoliberalism and total submission to the US international agenda. These are not isolated measures, but rather a coordinated strategy that combines job insecurity, the dismantling of the welfare state, unrestricted access to mining, the continuation of oil exploitation without environmental considerations, the centralization of power through the financial suffocation of local governments, and the systematic criminalization of all forms of opposition and popular organization.

Security Crisis and Abandonment of the Public Sphere

Noboa lost all four questions in the November 2025 referendum: there will be no Constituent Assembly, no foreign military bases will be installed—at least officially, although in practice several secret agreements with the United States allow the presence of US security personnel on Ecuadorian soil—political parties will continue to receive public funds, and the number of assembly members will not be reduced. With the democratic facade fallen, the government is seeking to impose the agenda it lost at the polls by other means—reduction of public spending, legal reforms, decrees and ministerial agreements, but also militarization. Since coming to power in 2023, Noboa has been cutting state spending. Two examples of the current effects: patients are dying in public hospitals where they cannot receive dialysis because these hospitals have only 30 percent of the supplies they need, and the budget for universities has been cut by \$128 million, or 12.7 percent. Public health and education, which are essential for a minimally democratic society, are being systematically dismantled. The year 2025 was the most violent since statistics have been kept: 51

homicides per 100,000 inhabitants, six coastal cities among the 10 most dangerous in the world, and 183 people killed in prisons, with a total of 500 since 2021. Ecuador, which was one of the safest countries in the region until 2017, is now one of the most dangerous not only in Latin America but in the world. The economic crisis that has been dragging on since the pandemic, the reduction in public spending, and collusion with drug trafficking explain these figures.

Job Insecurity

On 19 February 2026, the Ministry of Labor issued a ministerial agreement establishing 12-hour workdays. This measure represents a historic setback in terms of workers' rights and continues the series of measures to increase job insecurity determined in the agreements signed with the IMF, favoring the interests of capital over the well-being of workers.

Defunding of Local Governments

Decentralized autonomous governments (GAD), in some cases the only safeguard for public policies aimed at the population and not at capital, will be hit by a recently approved law that requires them to allocate a minimum of 70 percent of their budget to infrastructure. It sounds good, but it is a trap: it seeks to force them to stop investing in education, culture, and other social programs, and to lay off staff. The bill imposes central government control over the GADs, undermining their autonomy and contradicting the principle of decentralization. If they fail to comply, a penalty reduces their transfers to the constitutional minimum, which would paralyze their operations. There is also obvious cynicism in this area: the Association of Municipalities of Ecuador has reported that the central government itself owes \$543 million to the GADs, suffocating their finances.

Extractivism without Environmental Controls

Noboa also managed to pass, as an urgent economic measure, the Law on Strengthening Strategic Mining and Energy Sectors. Among its most dangerous provisions: the environmental license will be replaced by a simple 'environmental authorization,' private military protection in mining projects will be legalized, prior consultation with indigenous peoples will be eliminated, and the fragmentation of mining concessions and mining in the Galapagos Islands, a supposedly protected nature reserve, will be allowed. Complemented by Executive Decree 273 of December 2025, this law paves the way for the reopening of the Mining Registry and the massive expansion of concessions without environmental regulation or respect for the rights of the affected populations. Noboa and his family have links to mining companies that have already received licenses or are in the process of obtaining them.

Criminalization of Politics and Popular Organization

Judicial persecution is a systematic tool of the regime. In the 2023 referendum, citizens voted to stop oil exploitation in the Yasuní ITT, but the government has done nothing to comply with that mandate; the response to environmentalists' demands has been repression and lawfare. The attacks against the Citizen Revolution (Correísmo) that began in 2018 continue unabated. On 4 February 2026, the homes of four leaders of the movement were raided for an alleged case of corruption. They attempted to revoke the mandate of the mayor of Quito, Pabel Muñoz, against whom they fabricated a false case of corruption, and imprisoned the mayor of Guayaquil, Aquiles Hervas, also of the Citizen Revolution, on the basis of another fabricated case. The repression also affects the indigenous movement. Leonidas Iza, former president of the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE) and current president of Ecuvarunari (an organization of indigenous peoples of the Sierra), faces multiple investigations and reports of covert police surveillance. Nayra Chalán, former vice president of Ecuvarunari, and the Kitu Kara people denounced the deactivation of their bank accounts. During the 2025

National Strike, the accounts of 21 social organizations were frozen without a court order. Unfounded proceedings have been brought against them for financing terrorism and illicit enrichment, using a narrative of narco-terrorism similar to that of Trump, who, without any evidence, extrajudicially executed more than 80 people on boats in the Caribbean.

Corruption in the Presidential Entourage

While criminalizing the opposition, Noboa's entourage is riddled with scandals. Six people are being prosecuted after 2.6 tons of cocaine were found in a container belonging to Blast S.A., a company linked to the presidential circle. This case, one of several, highlights the strategy of a government that prosecutes social leaders and political opponents while coexisting with drug trafficking networks in its inner circle, as well as several other cases of corruption.

Submission to US Imperialism

At the time of writing, the Noboa government has just expelled the Cuban ambassador and all Cuban diplomats from Ecuador, declaring them *persona non grata* and giving them 48 hours to leave the country. The reason? Nothing more than obedience to the orders of the Trump Administration and its illegal hybrid war against Cuba. At the same time, the US Southern Command said in X that Ecuadorian and US military forces 'launched operations against designated terrorist organizations,' setting an example of cooperation for the region in the fight against narco-terrorism. This concept is the same label that Noboa uses against all social movements that oppose his policies. The analogy with Trumpism is not rhetorical: like his US counterpart, Noboa governs for capital, seeking to destroy the public sector and reduce the state to its bare minimum, using militarization and political violence as instruments to achieve this, and submitting absolutely to US dictates. The difference is the context: in Ecuador, this model is applied to a society already battered by violence, poverty, precariousness, and a lack of basic services, which multiplies its capacity for harm. Stopping these attacks is a necessary condition for Ecuador's survival as a democracy.

Quelling the Polycrisis

Jeremy Brecher

Unpredictability is a core feature of the polycrisis. There is much speculation about what will come next in the world order, but there are scant grounds for predicting anything beyond more polycrisis. This commentary offers neither a prediction nor a plan, but a perspective on what might begin laying the basis for quelling the polycrisis.

What new configuration of the world order will emerge out of the polycrisis? Many scenarios have been imagined or predicted, including:

- Three “spheres of influence” dominated by the world’s three superpowers
- Polarization into a new cold war led by two Great Powers
- Unending territorial struggles among territorial empires, along the lines of Ukraine and Greenland
- US hegemony reestablished via country-by-country submission to the threat or reality of US attacks
- A new global order imposed by Trump’s Board of Peace
- An alliance against US domination that significantly reduces US power or leads to a new global polarization
- Rule by a global kleptocracy
- Rule by a global Tech Bros oligarchy
- Fragmentation of the world order into a war of all against all
- Rivalry of random overlapping blocs-of-convenience
- Global depression, runaway inflation, or stagflation
- Any of these scenarios spilling into large conventional wars
- Small or large wars spilling into nuclear holocaust

Some of these may be plausible hypotheses. But in the context of the polycrisis all such hypotheses

about possible futures are highly speculative. For example, after the US decapitation of Venezuela, speculation was rife about a new world order based on “spheres of influence.” But that ignored the vast economic power of China in Latin America. And it was rapidly followed by US bombings in countries around the world and its claims on Greenland. Even though each such speculation may be somewhat plausible, none of them has much chance of establishing itself before it is destabilized by others. The forces of chaos are at this point sufficient to undermine “the best laid plans of mice and men” – witness the escalation and proliferation of war in the Middle East and beyond following the US/Israeli attack on Iran. So, the most likely outcome is an ongoing struggle among disparate forces none of which, notwithstanding short-term successes, is likely to impose its will on the world. As Adam Tooze put it, we’re not even in an interregnum because “an interregnum implies another regnum afterward.” Call it polycrisis 2.0.

The polycrisis is inhospitable to many forms of social change intended to create a better world, like national or global reform, national or world revolution, or even conventional coalitions. There are several reasons for this. The weakening or breakdown of multilateral forums for global cooperation like the UN and many others eliminate the main means through which governments have cooperated in pursuit of common interests and values. However detrimentally great power leadership was exercised, abandonment of leadership by great powers leaves a vacuum that is not easy to fill. The problem of amassing enough power to impose an alternative structure at any level is daunting. Multiple forms of fragmentation and chaotic, unpredictable conditions impede construction of stable coalitions and alliances. And overcoming the polycrisis requires not just overcoming an oppressive power through resistance but also overcoming disorder through new forms of cooperation.



An image posted on 20 January 2026 by Donald J. Trump, the U.S. president at the time, during the Greenland crisis onto his "Truth Social" account.

On the other hand, the breakdown of the pre-polycrisis world order has some benefits. The power of the Great Powers, and especially the US, to shape the rest of the world has been significantly diminished. While they may have powers to destroy, their ability to determine outcomes is more questionable. For example, consider the failures of the Trump administration to block trade deals among other countries or to halt Greentech initiatives outside the US.

While large scale global transformation is difficult to envision in the context of the polycrisis, there are some objectives that might be realized at least in part. First is simply self-protection of the vulnerable; this can be seen in the scramble of many countries to form multiple trading and other relations in the face of tariff and other attacks. A second is harm reduction: for example, many countries outside the US have continued their efforts at climate protection in spite of fierce opposition from the Trump administration. Third, although the polycrisis impedes cooperative planning for the future, it is possible to build formal or informal bases that can serve as launching points for cooperation and restraint of destruction. For example, the Interna-

tional Solar Alliance, initiated in the leadup to the Paris climate summit by India with support from France, initially signed up fifteen nations to accelerate fossil-free energy production in the developing world; this has become an alliance of 120 nations using their joint purchasing power to cut the price they pay for solar production.

Polycrisis 2.0 exhibits several overlapping possibilities that might help quell the polycrisis:

In response to the rise of great power rivalry, aggravated by Trump's aggressive use of tariffs, countries around the world have been rapidly moving toward "poly-alignment" – building multiple relationships in multiple spheres and at multiple levels. This is exemplified by new deals between Canada and China and between the EU and India. Ravinder Kaur writing in the Guardian says that, while initially focused on trade, "The overarching EU-India comprehensive strategic agenda is really much larger in scope, taking in defense and security, commitments to multilateralism, mobility and cooperation in a range of areas." It remains to be seen whether such multiple alignments will generate wider cooperation rather than new rivalries.

A widely noted speech by Canadian prime minister Mark Carney, declaring that the old world order was facing not a transition but a rupture, called for an alliance of “intermediate powers” to “build a new order that encompasses our values, such as respect for human rights, sustainable development, solidarity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the various states.” He argued that the middle powers “must act together.” He said that “to help solve global problems,” Canada was “pursuing variable geometry, in other words, different coalitions for different issues based on common values and interests.” That is creating “a dense web of connections across trade, investment, culture.” He noted that in the previous few days, Canada had concluded “new strategic partnerships with China and Qatar” and is “negotiating free trade pacts with India, ASEAN, Thailand, Philippines and Mercosur.” The potential of intermediate powers to discipline the Great Powers and the polycrisis as a whole remains to be seen.

Where specific aspects of the polycrisis can be isolated, coalitions can be organized to force cooperation or block actions that augment destruction. For example, in January 2025, Bolivia, Colombia, Cuba, Honduras, Malaysia, Namibia, and South Africa joined to form the Hague Group to coordinate legal and diplomatic measures in solidarity with the Palestinian people. In July 2025 it convened thirty governments for an Emergency Conference on Palestine which unanimously agreed “that the era of impunity must end—and that international law must be enforced without fear or favor through immediate domestic policies and legislation.” Twelve of the participating states committed to implementing six measures to end their complicity with Israel’s genocide of Palestinians, such as “preventing the provision of weapons, military equipment, and dual-use items to Israel, including ending the transit of any such materials through their territories or transport on any ships bearing their countries’ flags.”

(The US government has accused the Hague Group of trying to “weaponize international law as a tool to advance radical anti-Western agendas.”)

Unexpected breakthroughs are making energy produced by sun, wind, and water cheaper, safer, and

more efficient than energy produced by fossil fuels. This is already transforming the way the world produces and uses energy and it will further transform economics, politics, and society. This is a global revolution, but it has so far been largely driven by China’s huge advances and investments in “Greentech” – technology that reduces or repairs harm to the environment. Greentech includes ways of producing energy like solar and wind power; ways of distributing it in time and space like energy storage and energy grids; and ways of using it like EVs and heat pumps. Countries and people around the world are producing and installing Greentech. In 2024, renewables worldwide made up 92% of all new electricity capacity additions. In the first six months of 2025, the world added 380 GW of new solar capacity — 64% higher than the 232 GW installed during the same period in 2024. The necessities of climate protection combined with the opportunities presented by a fossil free energy system could create a global dynamic with forms of cooperation that transcend the polycrisis.

The elements of the polycrisis are doing unlimited harm to people in every country. In Polycrisis 2.0, popular movements can and are playing a role in contesting the governments that are aggravating war, impoverishment, authoritarianism, plutocracy, kleptocracy, climate catastrophe, and other elements of the polycrisis – and that are refusing to cooperate to reverse that aggravation. A dramatic example is the mass popular opposition that has developed to authoritarian rule in the US. This has ranged from the 7-million strong No Kings Day protests to the street-level resistance to attacks by ICE thugs on American cities. Such movements represent challenges not only to para-fascism and the destruction of democracy, but to the warmongering and obliteration of international cooperation they promote. Successful opposition to Trump and Trump-style rulers around the world is a first condition for quelling polycrisis 2.0.

Quelling the polycrisis will ultimately require coordinated worldwide action by the world’s people to impose cooperation on the battling power centers that are threatening our life on earth. A prime example is the movement to support the Palestinian peo-

ple against Israel's genocidal attacks. Nearly 48,000 demonstrations in 137 countries and territories were held globally in the two years following the start of the Gaza war. In Europe, dockworkers refused to load weapons for Israel; in Italy millions participated in two general strikes and demonstrations for Palestinian rights. Such global social movements can play a crucial role in quelling the polycrisis. International linkages are developing that can augment them: For example, in January, delegates from twenty countries issued the San Carlos Declaration, pledging to coordinate action against coercion in the Americas. An International Antifascist and Anti-imperialist Conference is scheduled in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in March, called by signatories from more than 50 countries. And the Permanent Assembly Against the War brings together immigrants, workers, and activists from across eastern and western Europe, including both Ukraine and Russia, to organize for a "transnational politics of peace." Such transnational linking organizations can help open a pathway to pacification of the polycrisis.

There are obviously contradictions among these varied forces. But that does not make their cooperation impossible, especially in the face of devastating threats. The challenge is how to navigate those contradictions to begin to quell the polycrisis.

The polycrisis is unlikely to be overcome by a return to a real or imagined past. Conversely, the chaotic nature of the polycrisis makes it fruitless to offer a plan or program to establish another "regnum." The guidelines I present here simply offer a perspective on how to begin to move beyond the polycrisis.

First, recognize, align with, and support common human interests. These include the human rights of all people; government of the people, by the people, and for the people; the conditions of our earth and its climate that make our life possible; the constitutional principle that government must be accountable to law; global cooperation to provide a secure future for our people and planet; and our ability to live together in our communities, our countries, and our world. While people, institutions, and nations inevitably will act in pursuit of limited, short-term

goals, we must make them do so in ways that advance rather than undermining common human interests. Otherwise, they will only aggravate the polycrisis and bring further ruin down on themselves.

Second, construct "patchworks" that bring together diverse actors around common interests. A fascinating study of "International Cooperation in Times of Polycrisis" describes "patchworks" as "patches or islands of creativity and refiguration forming in nodes or knots of assemblages across time and space." They create limited islands of cooperation and peace in the polycrisis war of all against all. One example given by the study is the International Solar Alliance, described above. Another is the High Ambition Coalition, initiated by the Marshall Islands, which played the role of "global bridge builder" for a coalition that "straddled negotiating blocs organized around traditional North – South lines" to demand stronger climate agreements. It significantly influenced the content of the Paris climate agreement. The fragmenting world of the polycrisis opens up spaces for patchworks and other collective initiatives and may make it harder for any one power to destroy them. The notion of patchworks can encourage creativity in bringing together diverse movements, institutions, and countries to impose partial pacifications of the polycrisis.

Third, use patchworks to establish new practices of global cooperation. This involves reconstituting the UN and the 60-plus organizations for international cooperation that the Trump administration has recently quit, expanding their missions and power through "coalitions of the willing." When that proves elusive, a "shadow UN" and similar alternative vehicles can temporarily fill in. If patchworks invent new forms of cooperation, those can be expanded to develop new international institutions and practices to start quelling the polycrisis.

In the words of Ray Acheson of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, "Building transnational networks of mutual aid, collaborative campaigns, and political education are going to be a key part of building a new world order."

DNC Approach to Israel Is Political Malpractice and Moral Failure

Norman Solomon

When the governing body of the Democratic Party convenes next month, it will face a challenge to its support for Israel. The Democratic National Committee has evaded the fact that large majorities of Democrats oppose continuing military aid to Israel and believe it has committed genocide in Gaza. The stage is set for jarring discord when the DNC's 450 members gather in New Orleans.

An NBC poll released this week underscores the depth of the DNC's political folly. The results were lopsided, by a 67-17 percent margin in favor of Palestinians, when the survey asked Democrats: "Are your sympathies more with the Israelis or more with the Palestinians?"

The DNC leadership has stayed on a collision course with political realities about Israel. Last August, while a Gallup poll was showing that just 8 percent of Democrats approved of Israel's military actions in Gaza, DNC chair Ken Martin said at a meeting of delegates from across the country that "there's a divide in our party on this issue." He didn't acknowledge that the crucial divide is actually between the party's leadership and Democrats nationwide.

At that summer meeting, amid contention over U.S. policies toward Israel, Martin withdrew his party-line resolution after it won and after a pro-Palestinian rights measure lost. He called for "shared dialogue" and "shared advocacy," announcing that he would appoint a task force "comprised of stakeholders on all sides of this to continue to have the conversation." Martin declared that "this crisis in Gaza is urgent" and an "emergency."

But the "emergency" lost its urgency as soon as the DNC adjourned and the media spotlight disappeared. Six months passed before the first meeting of the task force, which by then had been downgraded to a "working group."

The working group's convener (selected by Martin) is James Zogby, a longtime advocate for Palestinian rights. Zogby had greeted Martin's task-force announcement with praise, calling it "politically thoughtful" and a recognition of "the reality that the status quo has become unacceptable and untenable."

But more than six months later, the status quo remains undisturbed as the DNC's Middle East Working Group proceeds at a snail's pace. And the composition of the eight-member panel makes it foreseeably incapable of reaching its purported goal to "help us sort out how our party deals with America's policies in the Middle East."

The working group is an oil-and-water mix of fully incompatible views on Palestinian rights and Israeli power. Some on the DNC panel want an embargo on U.S. arms to Israel, while others firmly oppose any such step. One member of the working group, Andrew Lachman, has led fights inside the California Democratic Party to thwart actions or statements critical of Israel. He is currently the president of Democrats for Israel – California.

How the DNC's appointed group is supposed to "sort out" a Democratic Party position on U.S. policy in the Middle East is inexplicable. But the project does have an evident function. The Middle East Working Group has proven itself to be a stalling mechanism. And the pretenses behind it



DNC delegates unfurl banner during Biden's speech at the DNC | Photo credit: Esam Boraey

have become even more fanciful as the U.S.-Israel military alliance persists with a war of aggression on Iran that has been setting the region on fire.

No matter how much the DNC leadership tries to shunt it aside, the burning issue of U.S. policy toward Israel will not go away. This year, it has become key in one Democratic primary race after another, putting incumbent members of Congress on the defensive for their timeworn efforts to justify support for Israel or acceptance of funding from the AIPAC lobby. Yet the DNC stance is that the party establishment is wise to seal itself off from such unpleasantness.

The DNC's refusal to make public its autopsy of the 2024 election is tangled up in dodging the autopsy's reported conclusion that Kamala Harris's rigid support for arming Israel was a significant factor in her defeat. Keeping the official autopsy under wraps, supposedly in order to improve the prospects of future election victories, actually makes such victories less likely by mystifying instead of clarifying electoral history.

Martin told Fox News viewers in late February that concentrating on the future would be better than trying to "relitigate" the 2024 election. But hiding the autopsy amounts to condescension, assuming that only a small elite party circle should be privy to the results of the party's extensive (and expensive) research. Many Democratic activists and candidates would benefit from candor instead of stonewalling.

Weeks ago, the annual convention of the California Democratic Party responded to growing pressure from grassroots activists by adopting a platform that advocates for "an immediate end to the mass civilian casualties, destruction, displacement and starvation of Palestinians in Gaza." The platform says that "Palestinians in Gaza should be able to rebuild without displacement, with international humanitarian, economic and security assistance," and it calls for "the immediate rebuilding of Gaza with the provision of humanitarian aid, restoration of funding for an UNRWA that serves the Palestinian people."

But the Democratic National Committee, like the bulk of Democrats in Congress, lags far behind such grassroots outlooks. The top-down culture that prevails in the national party has stultified internal debate, rendering it scarce and pro forma. Despite Martin's reform talk, whatever the DNC chair says goes. "I've been more and more disappointed with him," a progressive DNC member told me days ago. "He says he loves internal debate and small-d democracy. I think it's a talking point. I don't know that he really wants that."

After a little more than a year in the job, Martin has cleared the low bar set by his immediate predecessor, Jaime Harrison, who dutifully served President Biden for four years. But the DNC is still largely paralyzed with pressure from its old guard and insistence on being unaccountable to the party's rank-and-file. The Democratic Party is in dire need of democracy.

On no issue is that more apparent than the DNC's insistence on treating Israel as above serious reproach. The ruse of forming and then slow-walking the Middle East Working Group may have bought some time for the Democratic Party's status quo of complicity with genocide in Gaza and U.S.-Israeli war crimes elsewhere in the region. But party activists genuinely committed to human rights will not be fooled and will not be silent.