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★ The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point is to *change* it. —Karl Marx ★

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WE SAY: U.S. HANDS OFF VENEZUELA AND CUBA!

Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson Calls for a General Strike

By Kelby Vera

October 19, 2025—Summoning people of all backgrounds to unite and take a stand against President Donald Trump's "tyranny," the "ultra-wealthy" and corporate greed, Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson said, "We are going to make them pay their fair share in taxes to fund our schools, to fund jobs, to fund healthcare, to fund transportation."

"Democracy will live on because of this generation," he proclaimed. "Are you ready to take it to the courts and to the streets?"

It was an audacious declaration from the mayor, who has risen to the top of Trump's list of enemies as he resists the vicious immigration operations and arrival of hundreds of National Guards currently shaking Chicago.

There has never been a true, nationwide general strike in the United States, though a series of post-World War II work stoppages remembered as the "great strike wave of 1946" mobilized five million American workers demanding leaders to address economic instability and untenable working conditions.

In its aftermath, Congress cracked down with the Taft-Hartley act, a legislation prohibiting a broad range of union tactics, including calling for political strikes. The 1947 law is still in place, despite repeated attempts to repeal it.

While Taft-Hartley's restrictions make it all but impossible for labor unions to orchestrate anything akin to a national general strike, it does not dictate how grassroots activists and coalitions could organize, as long as those efforts do not include the help of legally-recognized labor unions.

Johnson's call to action made it clear he wasn't afraid to stay in Trump's crosshairs, weeks after the president demanded he be jailed in a post on Truth Social.

—*Huffpost*, Oct 19, 2025

https://www.huffpost.com/entry/chicago-mayor-brandon-johnson-general-

Mayor Brandon speaking to hundreds-of-thousands of protesters in Chicago on No Kings Day, November 18, 2025.

Continued from page 67

wanting to "liberate" the country from the Maduro regime, opposition leader (and now, Nobel Peace Prize winner) Maria Corina Machado gave full support to Trump's plans despite its consequences for the Venezuelan masses. The collaboration between the U.S. regime and the Venezuelan opposition is evident: both sides share a vision of regime change that subordinates the dignity and autonomy of the Venezuelan people to U.S. imperialist interests.

We cannot afford to stand by as the Trump administration engages in imperialist adventures that inflict suffering on millions. From the heart of U.S. imperialism, the working class and all those who despise its bloody domination and oppression of our siblings across the world must mobilize to put an end to U.S. aggression and interference in Venezuela and Latin America. The working class in Venezuela must be free to fight for its own interests, free from the boot of U.S. imperialism.

—*Left Voice*, December 17, 2025

https://www.leftvoice.org/trumps-escalation-against-venezuela-demands-working-class-resistance/

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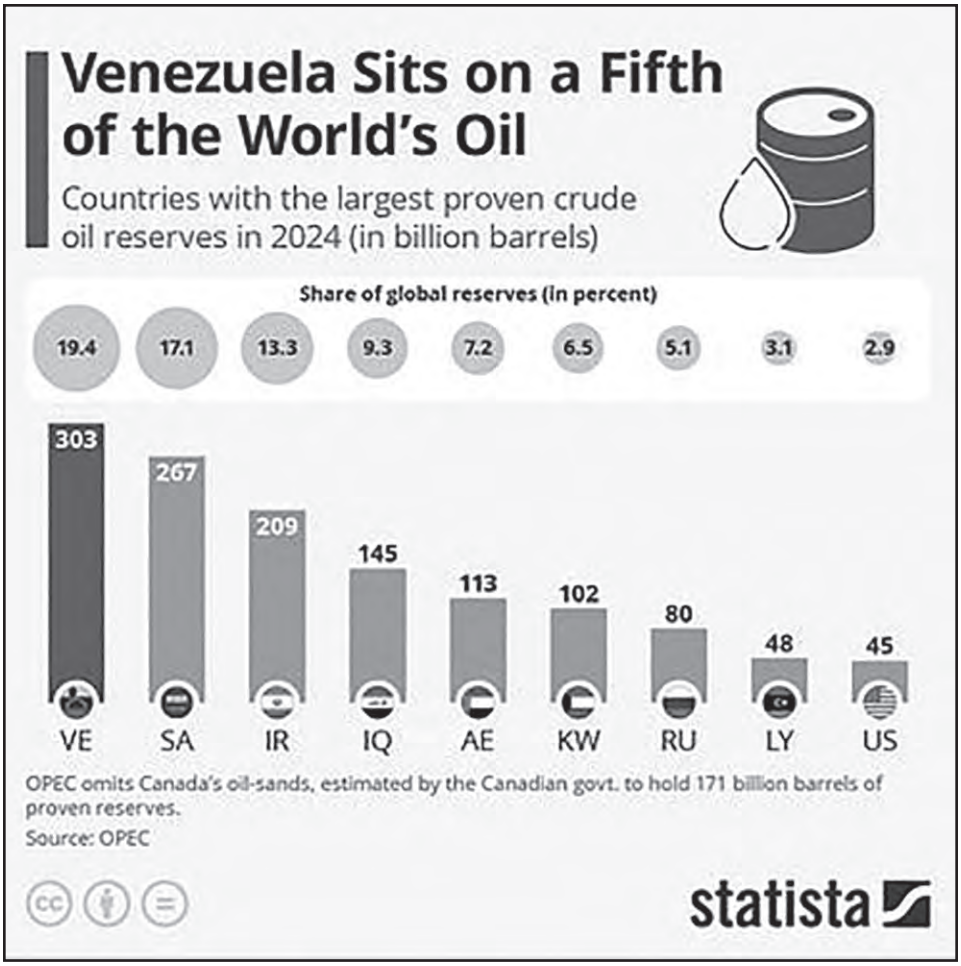
Democracy for the Rich Versus Democracy for All

By Bonnie Weinstein

Capitalism has turned democracy into its opposite—democracy for the few and brutal dictatorship over the many.

The U.S. touts itself as the quintessential leader of democracy in the world yet it costs tens-of-millions-of dollars to win an election here—and this true for all capitalist countries who call themselves democratic. Whether they have a parliamentary system, or a presidential system within a federal republic like the U.S.—it is the wealthy elite who rule over the majority. This is also true for countries who do not call themselves democratic.

The exception is Cuba—a tiny country with very limited resources. While they have a single "leader," industry is nationalized and based upon production for need, not profit. They also have community councils that democratically govern community concerns at the ground level. Unfortunately, they are also in a severe economic crisis due to a worldwide U.S. blockade and embargo stripping them of their ability to trade for the things they need to improve the quality of life for the Cuban people—and everything to do with thwarting their ability to carry out the gains of the Cuban socialist revolution.



The U.S. war on Venezuela (and Cuba, Palestine, Syria, Nigeria, Sudan, to name a few) exposes the true nature of U.S. "democracy"

The assault on Venezuela, Cuba, and other countries the U.S. military is targeting has nothing to do with bringing democracy or economic stability to the people and everything to do with gaining control over their natural resources for U.S. private investment interests.

The U.S. first started investing in Venezuela in the 20th century spurred by major oil discoveries in the 1920's making it a major oil producer with U.S. corporations claiming ownership of Venezuelan oil and the territory it sits on. In a December 18, 2025, *New York Times* article by Sam Sifton titled, "Is It About the Oil?" the author explains:

> "…Trump remembers a past when South and Central America were open markets. Before Venezuela nationalized its oil industry in 1976, foreign companies accounted for 70 percent of production there. American drillers like Exxon, Mobil and Gulf Oil were major players. (Today, only one American company, Chevron, still operates in Venezuela.) … Stephen Miller, the White House homeland security adviser, recalled that bygone era on social media. … 'American sweat, ingenuity and toil created the oil industry in Venezuela,' he wrote. 'Its tyrannical expropriation was the largest recorded theft of American wealth and property. These pillaged assets were then used to fund terrorism and flood our streets with killers, mercenaries and drugs.'"

And in a December 17, 2025, *New York Times* article by David E. Sanger, titled, "For Hegseth, There Is One Boat Strike He Doesn't Want the Public to See," (specifically, the U.S. murder of two survivors

of a U.S. targeted boat strike who were seen clinging to flotsam and waving for help then blown up by a U.S. drone.):

> "Mr. Trump suggested the real objective [of the boat strikes] was to get Venezuela to return 'all of the Oil, Land, and other Assets that they previously stole from us.'"

So, the U.S. owners of corporate investments everywhere in the world claim that their ownership gives them the right not only to the natural resources, but to the very territory they sit upon or are extracted from.

This includes the U.S. factories around the world—in China, India, Vietnam, to name a few. U.S. corporations claim the right to invest in virtually every country where there is a profit to be made.

According to capitalist democracy, it is the democratic right of corporations to compete for and own property anywhere in the world they so desire. And this right is claimed not only by major U.S. corporations, but by corporations everywhere—placing U.S corporations in the forefront of fierce competition with corporations from other countries.

The right of the private ownership of the means of production under capitalism supersedes all other rights and can be enforced by any means necessary, including nuclear war.

Capitalists make the laws—including laws regarding democratic rights—and enforce them through the threat of war, the police, the courts and incarceration.

The democracy they fight for is the right of the rich to privately own and control the wealth and resources of the whole world at the expense of everyone else—the masses of the poor and the working class.

That's why, under capitalism, only they can own and control the means of production. Only they can lay claim to the tremendous profits produced by our labor—our sweat and blood—and all too often, our lives in the case of war.

The democratic rights of workers under capitalism

The democratic right of the masses—all of us who do not own the means of production—is the right to vote for one wealthy representative of the capitalist class over another.

As a Democratic or Republican candidate, you must support capitalism to survive in any capitalist party—to garner the millions of dollars of donations from wealthy capitalists in order to win an election.

We do not live in a democracy. We live in a capitalist dictatorship of the wealthy over the poor.

There is no democracy on the job. The boss is in charge, and workers have no right to vote on who will be the boss. Just as we have no right to vote on how much pay we earn; how much our rent is; how much we must pay for healthcare or education; how much in taxes we must pay or how much we must pay for a stick of butter. Prices are dictated to us by the corporations and enforced by the government—the police and the military.

Worker's democracy

Worker's democracy is defined by majority rule. A strike is an expression of worker's democracy on the job. A strike is effective only if the majority of workers participate in it. And this depends on how well workers are organized in their own defense against the controlling minority—the capitalist class.

A victorious strike reinforces the reality that unity and solidarity toward a common goal can be victorious over the bosses because workers *are* the majority and if we go on strike and don't work, the capitalist engine of production stops and so does their flow of profits.

Strikes are also an example that we who do the work could, in our numbers, completely control production without the capitalist class.

If workers were in ownership and control of production, we could stop the production of products designed to break down—creating not only financial hardship by having to replace things over and over again but creating trillions of dollars in waste of materials that become mountains of trash that pollute our environment.

In just the last ten years I have had to replace two refrigerators, a stove, two washing machines and two dryers that broke down and were unrepairable in spite of the "protection plans" I had been paying for regularly—the plans simply didn't cover the specific parts that were planned to break down first!

Capitalist production is irrational because it is production for nothing else but profit. Having to buy products over and over again because they are designed to break down benefits the owners of the means of production—to the detriment of the owners of the shabby products they produce and to the horrendous detriment of our planet's environment.

If the working class owned and controlled the means of production, we could produce products built and designed to last and that can be repaired instead of replaced. We could make waste obsolete.

It's the workers who know how to run the factories, stores, hospitals, schools, construction, power and water services, farms, railroads, airlines—workers know how to work—proving that capitalists are completely superfluous to production. Their only role is to keep control of the profits, and that's what they designed the capitalist state to do.

Unions

The major labor unions in the U.S. are run by a labor bureaucracy that acts in partnership with the bosses. They funnel union funds into the Democratic and Republican parties—the parties of the bosses—claiming that donating these union funds to capitalist party candidates will strengthen the union's partnership with the bosses which will benefit the workers in the long run.

These labor fakers are paid many times more than the average worker in their industry. In the case of the auto industry, labor leaders earn around four-and-a-half times what the average auto worker makes.

United Auto Worker (UAW) President Shawn Fain earned a gross salary of $229,514, with total payments (including expenses/benefits) reaching $274,407. The average auto worker's pay varies, but generally falls around $23-$28 per hour or $49,000-$50,000 annually, though top-tier union (UAW) assembly workers at the "Big Three" (Ford, GM, Stellantis) can earn much more, with experienced workers hitting $33+ per hour and total compensation potentially reaching $90,000+ with benefits, while newer hires start lower, around $17 per hour.

The high salaries for union leaders tend to conservatize them making them more likely to want to maintain the *status quo* of partnership with the bosses rather than putting up a real fight for better pay and benefits for the majority rank-and-file membership.

And far too often, workers are asked to vote on contracts, sight-unseen, upon the recommendation of the labor leadership. Union meetings are too frequently called to rubber-stamp decisions already agreed upon between the union leadership and the bosses behind closed doors.

This really puts a damper on union attendance by the rank and file and, without their participation in the decision-making process, the bosses essentially have no opposition.

To correct this, unions have to be democratized. Contracts should be negotiated and discussed and voted upon by the whole membership in detail, and labor leaders chosen based upon their independence from the bosses and their agreement with the decisive vote of the membership on the contracts. All union leaders and officials should come from the rank and file who have had experience actually working on the job. Shop stewards should come from the union membership not from graduates of "labor studies" courses in college.

Labor leaders must carry out the will of the majority of the rank and file. Labor leaders should be paid no more than the highest rate of pay of the average worker and the membership should be able to change that leadership if they do not carry out the will of the majority.

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Workers are the majority and we should have the right to control our organizations without interference from the capitalist class.

We are the majority; we create all the wealth in the world and should have the right to own and control that wealth for the benefit of all of us.

Political organizations

Today we find ourselves splintered, divided, blinded by bigotry and hate to our universal common interests of freedom, justice and economic and social equality—the right to all the necessities of life and happiness—free from capitalist exploitation, starvation and war.

The only solution is to create an economy based upon production for the needs and wants of all by ending production based upon the private ownership of the means of production benefiting only the wealthy while condemning us to a life of servitude and ever-increasing poverty.

We need to build workers' organizations that empower the entire working class to control our own destiny by rejecting capitalism's minority rule over us.

We must, as the most powerful class in the world, reject bigotry of all kinds, unite in pursuit of our common interests—through cooperation, democratic discussions of the issues we face in common and democratic decision-making that allow we, the majority, to rule our own lives and livelihoods to benefit all of us everywhere in the world.

All workers' political organizations—from united front coalitions to independent working-class parties—must be organized and run democratically—one-person-one-vote and majority rule.

Capitalist rule is from the top down—the wealthy rule—and the masses of workers and the poor must serve this tiny minority or starve.

Only well-organized, democratically run organizations of the working class and our allies can turn capitalist rule

upside-down and take the control of our social structure and resources out of the hands of the capitalist class and into our own hands.

United Front-type organizations

United fronts are powerful tools for organizing massive support for particular issues that affect masses of people such as immigrant rights, free speech, the right to protest, the fight against war and genocide, LGBTQ rights, democratic rights, the right to healthcare, education, housing, *etc.* anyone can be a part of a coalition no matter who they are if they support the demands of the democratically organized coalition. They need not agree on other issues to form a powerful battle for the demands they do agree upon.

Participating in a united front type of organization should be a lesson in democratic decision-making including planned conferences and conventions, free and open discussions that include the right of the minority to participate fully in debates, *etc.*, and ultimately, the right of the majority and the leadership it chooses, to rule until the next planned conference or convention.

The majority must have the right to carry out their program. That means that while the minority has a right to their opinions, they are obligated to respect and carry out the will of the majority until the next democratic decision-making body has had the time to evaluate the effectiveness of their program in the real world.

Again, any compensation paid to the leadership of any workers' organization must not exceed highest wages of the average worker. And the rank and file must have the right to remove leaders who do not carry out the decisions of the majority.

A labor party

An independent labor party can represent the most rational alternative to the capitalist parties that are dead ends on the road to social and economic equality and freedom and justice for all.

Any labor party must, first and foremost, be completely independent of all capitalist parties. Capitalism, by its very nature, is undemocratic. It's the rule of a tiny minority over the lives of the overwhelming masses of people in the world through the use of force and violence—to maintain their rule over us and the vast wealth produced from our labor—of which we get only a tiny portion. And we have to fight bitterly for every penny we get.

An effective labor party can bring the united front organizations together with the unions to democratically develop a common program to fight *against* war, violence, racism, sexism, and bigotry—all the things that capitalism has devised to divide us and make us feel helpless—and fight *for* the common needs and wants of all.

United, we will have the power and the strength we need to rid the world of the despotism of capitalism's tyranny and establish a socialist society under the democratic control of *we* who do the work, to create a bounty of wealth we all can share.

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1 History of U.S. involvement in Venezuela's petroleum industry

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_U.S._involvement_in_Venezuela%27s_petroleum_industry#:~:text=The%20history%20of%20U.S.%20involvement,to%20400%2C000%20barrels%20in%202020.

2 *CBS News* and *Reddit.*

How much does the average auto worker make

Terms of Surrender

By Craig Mokhiber

November 3, 2025—In the wake of two years of the globally broadcast extermination of the people of Palestine, three distinct tracks of international response have emerged. One is grounded in justice, international law, human rights, and accountability. Two others are dedicated to impunity, the continued subjugation of the victims, and the normalization of the perpetrator regime.

In the diplomatic struggle that has ensued, the justice track is under sustained attack. Left to their own devices, most states—the directly complicit and the timid alike—will undoubtedly take the easy way out, opting for impunity and normalization. But a growing people's movement from across the globe is mobilized to demand justice.

A textbook genocide

The roots of the genocide in Palestine run deep, through a century of racist colonization, the Nakba of 1947-1948, eight decades of apartheid, 58 years of brutal occupation, and generations of persecution.

Now, for the past two years, the world has watched in horror as the Israeli regime planned, announced, perpetrated, and celebrated the accelerated genocide of the Palestinian people. Adding to the horror of this historic atrocity has been the ruthless complicity of so many governments, media corporations, weapons and tech companies, and Israel proxy groups planted among the populations of the West.

The unprecedented nature of this genocide has been driven home by so many terrifying "firsts."

The first live-streamed genocide, witnessed by millions around the world. The first hi-tech genocide, perpetrated with state-of-the-art weapons

systems, killer drones, autonomous weapons, surveillance technologies, and artificial intelligence. And the first globalized genocide, perpetrated with the direct and enthusiastic participation of so many governments (foremost among them the U.S., U.K., and Germany), and the active complicity of so many corporations and organizations across the globe. Zionist repression has extended far beyond the shores of Palestine, with complicit Western institutions using state power to oppress and silence all who dare to speak out against the genocide and their government's complicity in it.

At the same time, in just two years, the Israeli regime has shattered record after bloody record for the murder of several categories of protected persons, including medical personnel, journalists, aid workers, UN staff, and children, as well as one of the highest civilian casualty rates ever recorded.

And it has achieved the dubious distinction of creating the widest global consensus on the perpetration of the crime of genocide ever recorded, with declarations of genocide issued by the UN's Commission of Inquiry, its independent human rights rapporteurs, leading international human rights organizations like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, leading Palestinian and Israeli human rights organizations, the leading association of genocide scholars, and international lawyers across the world.

This is quintessential genocide, its genocidal intent declared out loud by Israeli leaders from the start, followed by a horrific catalogue of genocidal acts carried out with a violence as ruthless as it is systematic. Neighborhood after neighborhood, town after town, hospital after hospital, school after school, shelter after shelter, church after church, mosque after mosque, field after field, food store after food store.

Two years of siege, blocking aid, food, water, medicine, fuel, and every essential of human life. A chain of massacres, mass abductions, torture camps, sexual violence, intentionally imposed disease and starvation. Palestinian toddlers shot by snipers for sport. Palestinian captives tortured to death. Gaza reduced to a moonscape.

Photograph by Nathaniel St. Clair

The justice track

So blatant were its crimes that within months of the launch of its genocidal onslaught, the Israeli regime was on trial for genocide in the World Court (ICJ) and its leaders were indicted for crimes against humanity at the International Criminal Court (ICC). Indeed, experts had sounded the genocide alarm already in October of 2023. And since then, human rights monitors have collected volumes of evidence.

Even as complicit states worked to buttress the impunity of the Israeli regime, the global public demand for accountability grew ever louder. It would ultimately compel the government of South Africa to brings it historic ICJ case against the regime under the United Nations Genocide Convention in December of 2023. The Court found the allegations of genocide plausible in January of 2024 and issued what would be the first of a series of provisional measures binding on the Israeli regime. Months later, the Chief Prosecutor of the ICC issued arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant for crimes against humanity.

In July of 2024, the ICJ would also issue a landmark advisory opinion concluding that Israel was committing apartheid and racial segregation, that all of the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza are unlawfully occupied, that Israel must remove all settlements, settlers, soldiers, and occupation infrastructure, dismantle the apartheid wall in the West Bank, provide reparations to the Palestinians, and allow all those forced out to return home. The Court said that all states have a legal obligation not to recognize or assist the occupation and are obliged to help to bring an end to Israel's occupation and other violations. And it found that all states must end all treaty relations with Israel that relate to the Palestinian territories, cease all economic, trade, and investment relations connected to the occupied territories.

Importantly, the Court rejected arguments by the U.S. and other Western governments that sought to claim that the Court should defer to post-Oslo negotiations between the occupier and the occupied, and to the politics of the Security Council, rather than the application of international law. The Court, in rejecting these claims, declared that such negotiations and agreements do not and cannot trump the rights of the Palestinians and the obligations of Israel under international human rights and humanitarian law. The Court found first that, in any event, the parties have to exercise any powers and responsibilities under those agreements with due regard for the norms and principles of international law.

Invoking article 47 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, the Court then put the matter to rest for good, reminding states that, as a matter of law, "the protected population 'shall not be deprived' of the benefits of the Convention 'by any agreement concluded between the authorities of the occupied territories and the Occupying Power.'"

"For this reason," the Court continued, "the Oslo Accords cannot be understood to detract from Israel's obligations under the pertinent rules of international law applicable in the Occupied Palestinian Territory." With the bang of a gavel, the Court had ended decades of Israeli legal exceptionalism and launched a process for the dismantling of the Western constructed Israeli wall of impunity.

In the meantime, at the United Nations, international human rights investigators were issuing their own findings of Israeli regime apartheid and genocide. The UN's Special Rapporteur on human rights in Palestine issued a series of powerful reports documenting these crimes, followed by further reports from the UN's thematic human rights rapporteurs, and, ultimately a UN-mandated Commission of Inquiry.

Outside the UN, international human rights organizations, as well as those in Palestine and Israel, joined the global consensus, as did prominent international lawyers and the International Association of Genocide Scholars, sealing the global consensus on genocide in Palestine.

Thereafter, the findings of the judicial and expert bodies of the international system finally broke through to the political bodies of the UN. On September 18, 2024, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a dramatic resolution effectively codifying the findings of the ICJ, declaring the occupation and apartheid unlawful, demanding an end to the entire occupation and the assault on Gaza, and setting a one-year deadline for Israeli compliance, after which the UNGA promised further measures.

For the first time in decades, the stage was set for real Israel regime accountability.

Global civil society activists, led by representatives of Palestinian civil society, seized on the unprecedented opportunity of the one-year deadline (violated entirely by the Israeli regime) to formulate an agenda for Israeli accountability and Palestinian protection. They developed a plan for adoption in the UNGA at the end of the deadline that would use the extraordinary power of the Assembly under the Uniting for Peace process to circumvent the U.S. veto in the Security Council and mandate concrete measures for accountability and protection.

This would include a UNGA call for sanctions, a military embargo, the rejection of the credentials of the Israeli regime, the establishment of a criminal tribunal, the reactivation of the UN's anti-apartheid mechanisms, and the mandating of a UN protection force to protect civilians, ensure humanitarian aid, preserve evidence of Israeli crimes, and facilitate reconstruction. Importantly, the protection force would be mandated on the basis of Palestinian consent, with no Chapter 7 power to impose itself against the will of the indigenous people, thus obviating fears of a proxy occupation.

The initiative was subsequently embraced by Colombian President Gustavo Petro, who, in his speech before the 80th Session of the UNGA, promised to introduce the proposal, as a draft resolution was prepared and diplomatic action proceeded to secure other co-sponsors.

The French-Saudi track

But the unprecedented possibility for Israeli accountability presented by the UNGA resolution and deadline was not lost on Israel's allies either, who worked feverishly to forestall any possibility of such accountability coming into force.

The tactics they adopted had become all too familiar during the decades of Oslo: divert attention away from accountability under international law and into a loose political process and the promise of a possible Palestinian state at some point in the future; compel Palestinians to negotiate for their rights with their oppressor; and work to normalize the Israeli regime as it consolidates its conquest of Palestine.

In sum, the true focus of these initiatives is not on saving Palestine, but rather on saving Israel and Zionism, even in the wake of a genocide.

French President Emannuel Macron made the intentions of his initiative clear in a letter to his Israeli regime counterpart in September of 2025. In it, he openly brags about his efforts in France to equate anti-Zionism with antisemitism in order to punish dissent to his pro-Israel rule, and then tells Netanyahu that his actions at the UN (including recognizing an unarmed Palestinian Bantustan) are meant "to transform the military gains Israel has achieved on regional fronts into a lasting political victory, to the benefit of its

security and prosperity…to [secure] Israel's …full regional integration in the Middle East…its normalization… [and] the end of Hamas."

In other words, the French-Saudi proposal is not about holding the regime accountable for its genocide and aggression in the region, but rather to shore up the Zionist project in Western Asia, to consolidate its unlawful gains, and to normalize it on the international stage.

The final product of the French-Saudi proposal was the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, endorsed by the UNGA in September of 2025, just eight days before the expiration of the deadline for Israeli compliance set by Assembly. Notably, the declaration mentions neither the genocide nor the crime of apartheid and contains no accountability measures for the Israeli regime whatsoever. It was, in effect, a last-minute defensive maneuver to preserve the wall of Israeli impunity that the West had so carefully built up over eight decades.

In essence, the declaration reads like a blueprint for the further entrenching of the unjust *status quo* that existed before October of 2023, but with some extra rewards for Israel, and an amorphous promise of a limited Palestinian state somewhere down the road. Indeed, it promises to advance normalization and regional cooperation for Israel on trade, infrastructure, energy, and security. Ignoring justice and accountability altogether, the declaration instead dedicates itself to "peace, security, and stability," reduces the genocide in Gaza to an armed conflict in which both sides are at fault, and declares yet another political process toward a "two-state solution" as the only way forward. Ignoring the U.S. role as a co-perpetrator in the genocide, it explicitly supports the role of the U.S. as a mediator (alongside Egypt and Qatar).

While it demands that Hamas free all Israeli captives, it only provides for the "exchange" of some Palestinian captives. And in flagrant disregard for the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people, it purports to impose its own governance framework, with the Palestinian Authority (with "international support") to be in charge of all Palestinian territory, and Hamas to be excluded from governance in Gaza. Eventual elections would be open only to those committed to respect the PLO (and therefore the PA) political platform.

...the Israeli regime has shattered record after bloody record for the murder of several categories of protected persons, including medical personnel, journalists, aid workers, UN staff, and children, as well as one of the highest civilian casualty rates ever recorded.

Palestinian resistance groups defending their land and people against occupation, apartheid, and genocide are to be disarmed under the plan, while the Israeli perpetrator regime faces no such disarmament, and any eventual Palestinian state is itself envisaged by the plan to be a disarmed and defenseless entity. In other provisions, the plan would promote "deradicalization," a dangerous concept born of the so-called "global war on terrorism," in which populations are subjected to propaganda programs (and often punitive measures) designed to discourage resistance to foreign domination and abusive regimes—despite the fact that such resistance is a right under international law.

The plan also proposes the deployment of troops to Palestine under a "stabilization mission" to be mandated by the UN Security Council. While the mandate of the mission would include civilian protection and security guarantees for Palestine, it would also be responsible for transferring "internal security responsibilities" to the security forces of the Palestinian Authority, disarming all other factions, providing "border security" (i.e., ensure no Palestinians escape from the Gaza cage), and for guaranteeing security for the (hyper-armed, nuclear capable, and thoroughly militarized) Israeli regime.

In other words, the mission would keep an eye on all Palestinian resistance and guarantee the impunity of the Israeli regime.

The Trump track

Following up on his earlier King Leopold-esque promise to "own Gaza" and to build a colonized Riviera on the bones of its genocided population, Trump announced his 20-point plan at the end of September.

In the long-standing tradition of Western imperial arrogance in Palestine dating back to Sykes-Picot and the Balfour Declaration, Trump's 20 points were not negotiated with the Palestinians before he issued them. Indeed, Palestinians were not consulted or involved in their drafting. Rather, in a blatant act of 21st Century gunboat diplomacy, they were presented as a unilateral dictate from the U.S.-Israel axis, accompanied by violent threats of total destruction if they were not accepted.

The document was the product of an international rogue's gallery of characters—which, in addition to genocide-complicit Trump and ICC-indicted fugitive Netanyahu, included notorious figures like Iraq war criminal

Tony Blair and Trump's billionaire son-in-law (and family friend of Netanyahu) Jared Kushner. The group did consult some of its complicit Arab and Muslim allies, but they subsequently complained that the document had been changed in fundamental ways by Trump and Netanyahu after their endorsement.

Netanyahu, who was allowed to make last-minute changes to the text before issuance, then stood with Trump to say he agreed to it—but within hours, was publicly renouncing elements of the plan and pledging that there would never be a Palestinian state, and that Israeli soldiers would not leave Gaza.

To be clear, this is not a peace plan or a plan for ending the Israel Palestine conflict. It provides no promise of Palestinian liberation, no restoration of the rights of the Palestinian people, and no guarantee of Palestinian statehood and self-determination. Instead, it provides a vague and hyper-qualified reference to "conditions" that "may emerge" sometime in the future, if Gaza re-development advances, and if the PA reforms to the satisfaction of the U.S. imperial overlords. Outrageously, the plan concludes with the U.S. arrogating to itself the role of mediator between Palestine and its Israeli occupier for any future political settlement, which would guarantee many more horrific decades of Palestinian persecution as they are forced to negotiate for their rights with their oppressor and that oppressor's chief sponsor.

Tellingly, the 20 points contain not a word about the genocide, about apartheid, or about root causes. There is to be no accountability for the perpetrators. No redress for the victims. And the plan promises not the deradicalization of the regime perpetrating genocide, but rather of the Palestinian victims of that genocide. It is directed at ensuring that the exterminated people of Gaza "pose no threat" to its neighbors, with no guarantee that the Israeli regime, the perpetrator of the genocide, the occupier of three Arab nations, and the author of serial aggression against half a dozen neighboring countries and a spate of transnational assassinations will pose no threat. Palestinian security forces will be vetted by the U.S.-led stabilization force. There will be no such vetting of Israeli forces, the ranks of which are rife with perpetrators of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide.

...for a people enduring genocide, any ceasefire is to be celebrated. But few are under the illusion that this ceasefire means a definitive end to the genocide, or the beginning of Palestinian freedom.

The roots of this plan in Trump's earlier threat to "own Gaza" and to exploit a "Gaza Riveria," are revealed in the text itself. Under Trump's new plan, Gaza will be ruled by a colonial body headed by Donald Trump himself, with another prominent place on the body held by disgraced UK politician Tony Blair. The body, in typical Trumpian style, is dubbed "The Board of Peace."

This body would set the framework and handle the funding for the redevelopment of Gaza (through the "Trump Economic Development Plan,") positioning it to control all resources coming in from Gulf and European donors, with no oversight. The possibility of staggering levels of corruption would seem self-evident. The unchecked external control, extraction, and exploitation of Palestine's economic resources would be inevitable. And note that there is no mention of Israel's international legal obligations to provide compensation and reparations for the damage it has inflicted on Gaza.

While the plan usurps Palestinian agency by controlling Palestinian resources and designating Palestinian leaders, it also purports to exclude some Palestinians from the right to be involved in the governance of their own country. The role of Hamas, for example, should be a matter for Hamas and the Palestinian people to decide. Under this plan, Hamas is to be excluded not by decision of the Palestinian people, but rather by dictate from the U.S., which has decreed that Hamas ("and other factions") will not have any role in the governance of Gaza, "directly, indirectly, or in any form."

And in other provisions, the resistance is to be entirely disarmed, and its military infrastructure destroyed. Notably, the plan also provides for the destruction of Gaza's tunnels, which have been essential not only for the defense of the territory, but also for the critical movement of persons and goods during the many unlawful Israeli sieges on the territory.

Reminiscent of the Eight Nation Invasion of China in 1900, the plan even proposes a multinational proxy occupation force led by the U.S. with the participation of "Arab and international partners" that will "stabilize" Gaza, impose "internal security," secure the borders (*i.e.*, ensure the continued caging of the Palestinians), and prevent the Palestinians from rearming, leaving them defenseless against Israeli aggression.

The plan provides no expectation of a complete Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, only the possibility of a phased redeployment to the margins of Gaza and the maintenance of an Israeli "security perimeter" to remain indefinitely inside Gaza. And any partial withdrawal of Israeli regime forces that may occur is to be based on as yet undefined "standards, milestones, and

time frames" that are linked to the disarming of Palestinians, and that will be determined by the U.S., by the stabilization force headed by the U.S., and by the Israeli forces that are armed, funded, and supported by the U.S.—yet another indicator of the proxy occupation nature of the plan.

While the plan provides for a significant increase in aid to the survivors of the genocide in Gaza, that aid is (unlawfully) conditioned on the acceptance by Hamas of Trump's terms—and even then, aid quantities would be limited by the terms of the previous ceasefire of January 19, 2025. Similarly, opening of the Rafah crossing is to be subject to the same mechanism implemented under the January agreement, and thus will be still subject to continued restrictions. And it provides for the possible denial of humanitarian aid to certain areas of Gaza if Hamas is deemed to have delayed the process.

Where key details are scarce in the plan, there is also reason for worry, given that the document explicitly cites Trump's 2020 peace plan (as well as the French-Saudi proposal described above) as part of the basis for subsequent stages in the process. Readers will recall that the 2020 plan included the further expansion of Israeli territory, the annexation of much of the West Bank, the renunciation of all Palestinian legal claims against Israel, the exclusion of Palestine from East Jerusalem, and the creation of an archipelago of Palestinian Bantustans surrounded by Israeli settlements, borders, and walls.

Even the more concrete elements of the plan are heavily weighted in favor of the Israeli perpetrator and against the besieged and persecuted Palestinian people.

For example, the release of all Israeli captives (of whom there are only a few dozen) is to take place within 72 hours. The release of Palestinian captives unlawfully held by Israel (of whom there are some 11,000) on the other hand, will only include a small proportion of those held at some unspecified time after all Israelis are returned. In all, less than 2,000 of the 11,000 Palestinian captives held by Israel are to be released.

Similarly, the remains of approximately 25 Israeli captives are thought to be held in Gaza, while the remains of some 2,000 deceased Palestinians are held by the Israeli regime. While the Trump plan stipulates the release of all Israeli remains, it only provides for the release of a portion of the Palestinian remains.

And some potentially positive provisions of the document are undercut by contradictory provisions elsewhere in the document.

Normalization of the Israeli regime and its crimes must end. Genocide must be a red line. And Palestine must be free.

For example, the document promises a ceasefire, amnesty, and safe passage for Hamas members; a commitment that no one will be forced to leave Gaza and that those who wish to leave will be free to do so and to return; that Israel will not occupy or annex Gaza; and that aid will flow through the UN and Red Crescent without interference.

However, while committing to the free flow of aid, it elsewhere implicitly imposes restrictions on aid. While promising no Israeli occupation, it also implies that Israeli regime forces will remain in Gaza indefinitely. And vague wording leaves unclear whether the essential role of UNRWA (which the U.S. and Israel have falsely claimed is associated with Hamas) will be allowed, and whether the genocide-complicit role of the perfidious Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF) scheme (which the U.S. falsely claims is not associated with the Israeli regime) will be allowed to continue.

In parts, the Trump plan itself is unlawful. The conditioning of humanitarian aid, implicit threats of collective punishment if Hamas does not agree, the explicit denial of Palestinian self-determination, restrictions on political rights, the requirement that Palestinians negotiate for their inalienable human rights with their oppressors, and the failure to seek accountability for Israeli crimes including genocide, are all breaches of the international legal obligations of the United States.

For its part, Hamas seized on the practical and implementable elements of the first phase of the plan (ceasefire, exchange of captives, etc.) for negotiation while refusing to surrender the cause of Palestine or to submit to the remainder of the document. Hamas said that the rest of the issues in the document were to be "discussed within a comprehensive Palestinian national framework, in which Hamas will be included and will contribute with full responsibility."

And the outright rejection of the plan by representatives of Palestinian civil society demonstrates the dignified steadfastness of Palestinian society in struggling for their freedom, even in the darkest of times.

The struggle continues

As this goes to press, moves are underway to effectively merge the French-Saudi plan with the Trump plan, and to have it blessed in the UN Security Council. But the colonial machinations of Trump, Macron, and others cannot obscure the fundamental reality confronting the world today: a single colonial regime planted in the heart of Western Asia is perpetrating apartheid, genocide, belligerent occupation, and serial aggression across the region and corrupting governments and institutions far beyond.

The unprecedented, Western-sponsored impunity of that regime is undercutting the very sustainability of international law, trampling on human rights, and jeopardizing peace and secu-

rity across the region. Finally holding that regime accountable remains a vital, even existential imperative for the world.

In the meantime, for a people enduring genocide, any ceasefire is to be celebrated. But few are under the illusion that this ceasefire means a definitive end to the genocide, or the beginning of Palestinian freedom. No sustainable peace can be built on the weak foundation of Trump's vanity and greed, Macron's colonial nostalgia, or Netanyahu's deceit and racist brutality.

Only justice can provide that foundation. And among the three tracks discussed in this article, only one travels toward justice.

Palestinian society has pointed the way, the UN human rights mechanisms, the ICJ, and the landmark United Nations General Assembly resolution of September 2024 have joined the cause, and the world has risen up in solidarity. Now more than ever, that solidarity must be sustained, multiplied, and acted upon. The Israeli regime, its co-perpetrators in Washington, its proxies across the West, complicit governments, media companies that have supported the genocide, and corporations that have profited from it must all be held accountable if justice is to be done.

Normalization of the Israeli regime and its crimes must end. Genocide must be a red line. And Palestine must be free.

Craig Mokhiber is an international human rights lawyer and former senior United Nations Official. He left the UN in October of 2023, penning a widely read letter that warned of genocide in Gaza, criticized the international response, and called for a new approach to Palestine and Israel based on equality, human rights, and international law.

—*CounterPunch*, November 3, 2025

https://www.counterpunch.org/2025/11/03/terms-of-surrender-the-conspiracy-to-obstruct-justice-in-palestine/

Palestinians Say Trump's Plan is a "New Occupation"

By Tareq S. Hajjaj

November 18, 2025—The UN Security Council voted on November 17th in favor of a U.S.-backed resolution establishing an "International Stabilization Force" (ISF) in Gaza under a "Board of Peace" headed by U.S. President Donald Trump.

Under a two-year mandate, the stabilization force is reportedly planned to have an "executive" role in Gaza, not just as a peacekeeping force. The ISF is being established under Chapter 7 of the UN Charter, which means it is being granted the authority to disarm Palestinian resistance factions, aligning with Israeli demands, and could be established unilaterally, without the approval of the Palestinians.

The UN Security Council resolution voted 13-0 in favor of the resolution, with two permanent members, Russia and China, abstaining from the vote.

Hamas rejected and condemned the resolution, asserting that it does not satisfy the rights of the Palestinian people and imposes an international system of "guardianship" over Gaza, something the Palestinian people and Palestinian factions reject.

The Palestinian Islamic Jihad also rejected the resolution, saying it amounts to a new Western "mandate" over Palestine.

In Gaza, local reactions to the UN vote varied, but very few viewed the development as hopeful.

Nader Qassem, one of the displaced in Gaza City, expressed his resentment over the resolution to *Mondoweiss*, pointing out that it is nothing more than a retrenchment of the Israeli occupation.

"Receiving the news was highly shocking to many families, including mine," Qassem said. "After a long episode of suffering that has lasted through two years of death…after all this, we're placed under international supervision?"

"It's as if we are a people without a right to self-determination or the right to decide who protects us and manages our affairs," he continued. "This is a

A view of the extensive destruction in the Zeitoun neighborhood southeast of Gaza City on November 17, 2025. Photo: Omar Ashtawy/APA Images.

disregard for our suffering in Gaza. The world is conspiring against us through international agreements that don't serve the citizenry, helping out the occupier and its partners instead."

"It's as if we are a people without a right to self-determination or the right to decide who protects us and manages our affairs," he continued. "This is a disregard for our suffering in Gaza.

Qassem adds that the ISF will not help preserve stability either. "This force will not be in a position to maintain security if it does not represent the Palestinians and if it does not result from a joint Palestinian process."

"This force will increase the burdens of the Palestinian people and increase their suffering," Qassem said.

"It's as if we in Gaza have no opinion, no sovereignty over ourselves, not even a decision on who governs us," Qassem continued.

Qassem also said that such decisions make Palestinians lose hope in reconstruction and returning to live in proper homes instead of tents. He also added that the vote makes it clear that the world is ignoring Palestinian rights and sovereignty when it gives guardianship to those who have no right to be in this land.

"These international forces," Qassam explained, "belong to their countries and will not be closely connected to the Palestinians. They will not know the requirements of the Palestinian people and will not be able to provide them with safety or protection, because they do not know what the people of Gaza suffer or what they need. Whoever governs us must be from among us, aware of our suffering, so that they can solve these problems and provide us with a dignified life. These forces will not provide political, economic, or even social support to the population in Gaza."

Others in Gaza agree that the stabilization force is a recipe for disaster. The minute it arrives in Gaza, it will be forced to engage in armed confrontations and start arresting people in Gaza, following Israeli recommendations. This will turn the international force into "a new occupation," Gaza residents say.

The UN is rewarding us with a new occupation.

Samir Al-Bakri, a resident of Gaza City, says that any force that is formed will be totally rejected by Palestinians so long as it isn't formed through a Palestinian national consensus process.

Al-Bakri tells Mondoweiss that the international force will constitute a new occupation of the Strip. "Look at Lebanon. There is an international force operating in Lebanese territory, but does it prevent the daily shelling of Lebanon?" al-Bakri says. "No. Every day, we see Israeli shelling of Lebanese land and continual Israeli violations."

"It is as if the mission of the international force coming to Gaza is to protect Israel's borders from Palestinians without offering anything in return to us," al-Bakri continued. "And it won't even offer us any real protection either; it won't prevent Israel from carrying out its military operations or aerial bombardments of Gaza. It may even help Israel achieve its goals."

The greatest fear, according to al-Bakri, is the confrontation between Palestinians in Gaza and these international forces, and the emergence of new problems with the countries that send these forces—including Egypt and Qatar. "We fear that our disputes will become with Egypt instead of Israel, and with Qatar as well, and this is what they are trying to establish."

"If the international force arrests one of my relatives, there will be no enemy to confront except this international force composed of Egyptians and Qataris," he explained. "They will become our enemies instead of the Israelis. And this force will serve as a helping hand for the Israelis to achieve their objectives."

"After all this suffering, the Palestinian people deserve a unified Palestinian force, of the people and for them, to manage their affairs," al-Bakri added. "It is a renewal of the Israeli occupation. The UN is rewarding us with a new occupation."

—*Mondoweiss*, November 18, 2025

https://mondoweiss.net/2025/11/palestinians-in-gaza-reject-un-security-council-approval-of-trumps-plan-its-a-new-

"Look at Lebanon. There is an international force operating in Lebanese territory, but does it prevent the daily shelling of Lebanon?"

The U.S.-Israeli Scheme to Partition Gaza

By Ramzy Baroud

December 2, 2025—United Nations Security Council Resolution 2803 is destined to fail. That failure will come at a price: more Palestinian deaths, extensive destruction, and the expansion of Israeli violence to the West Bank and elsewhere in the Middle East.

The resolution, passed on November 14, 2025, was a consolation prize to Israel after failing to achieve its ultimate objective from the two-year Gaza genocide: the ethnic cleansing of the population and the complete takeover of the Gaza Strip.

Gaza shattered a core Israeli doctrine: the absolute certainty of its military supremacy to subdue the Palestinian people using far superior U.S. and Western-supplied technology. Though the occupation was never expected to be easy—as Israel's history of violence in the Strip attests—the complete takeover was, in the mind of the Israeli leadership, a certainty. In August, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stated with total confidence that Israel aimed to "take control of all of Gaza." That proved to be wishful thinking.

How Israel has failed to subdue an impoverished and besieged population of two million people, subjected to a blockade, a famine, and one of the world's most horrific genocides, is a question for future historians. The immediate consequence, however, is political: Israel and its Western backers, especially the U.S., understand that an utter Israeli failure in Gaza would be interpreted by Israel's victims as a pivotal sign of the times.

In fact, the notion of Israel's implosion and the end of the Zionist project has moved from the margins of intellectual conversation into the center. These ideas are bolstered by the Israelis themselves and are a recurring topic in Israeli media. Such a headline in *Haaretz* on November 15 is hardly shocking: "At a Secret Harvard Site, a Massive Archive of Israeliana Is Preserved—in Case Israel Ceases to Exist."

Thus, U.S. President Donald Trump's so-called "Comprehensive Stabilization Plan for Gaza," signed in Sharm el-Sheikh on October 30, 2025, was the official start of the American scheme to save Israel from its own blunders. That supposed "ceasefire" was meant to give Israel the chance to maneuver. Instead of occupying all of Gaza and pushing Palestinians out, Israel would now use social and political engineering to achieve the same goal.

The first phase of the plan, which placed most of Gaza under Israeli military control in anticipation of a gradual withdrawal, is already proving to be a sham. As of the time of writing this article, Israel, according to the Gaza government media office, has violated the agreement nearly 400 times, killing over 300 Palestinians. Israel continues to systematically demolish Palestinian areas and has increasingly begun operating west of the Yellow Line, which separates Gaza into two regions.

Worse still, according to Gaza authorities, Israel has been expanding its share of Gaza, estimated at approximately 58 percent, westward. The "ceasefire" has effectively enforced a new mechanism that allows Israel to carry out a one-sided war—with further territorial expansion, destruction, assassination, and occasional massacres—while Palestinians expect nothing but the mere slowing down of the Israeli death machine. This is not sustainable, especially since Israel has also violated the most basic principle of the imaginary ceasefire: allowing vital aid to enter Gaza.

UNSC 2803 endorses the "Comprehensive Stabilization Plan for Gaza" without placing any legally binding expectations on Israel. It establishes a Transitional Administration and Oversight Council (TAOC), which entirely excludes Palestinians, including the Western-supported Palestinian Authority.

The separation wall. Image by Dylan Shaw.

The executive branch of this TAOC would be the International Stabilization Force (ISF), whose sole job is to "stabilize the security environment in Gaza" on behalf of Israel, notably by disarming Palestinian groups. The ISF, according to the resolution, operates "in close consultation and cooperation," meaning the force is tasked with achieving Israel's military objectives, thereby allowing Israel to determine the timing and nature of its supposed gradual withdrawal.

Since Palestinians refuse to disarm—as unconditional disarmament without meaningful international guarantees would surely lead to the full return of the Israeli genocide—Israel will certainly refuse to leave Gaza. Netanyahu made that clear on November 16, when he stated that "Israel would not withdraw" without disarming Hamas, "either the easy way or the hard way."

The partition of Gaza is a U.S.-led attempt to change the nature of the challenge for Tel Aviv but ultimately aims at achieving the same original objectives. The resolution has served Israel's interests fully, hence Netanyahu's enthusiasm, yet Israel is still refusing to respect it, making it clear there will be no phase two of Trump's original plan.

It is crucial that people around the world understand this next phase for what it is: a diplomatic maneuver designed to facilitate the ongoing Israeli plan to control the Gaza Strip and ethnically cleanse its population.

The entire political scheme, however, is doomed to fail. Though Palestinian suffering will certainly worsen in the coming months, the U.S.-Israeli gambit is fundamentally flawed: it is built on trickery and coercion, resting on the false assumption that Palestinians, fearing genocide, will accept any plan imposed on them. This premise ignores history. Palestinians have consistently defeated such sophisticated mechanisms designed to break them, meaning this new arrangement is equally unsustainable.

Ultimately, the failure of UNSC Resolution 2803 confirms one enduring truth: the Israeli war on Gaza has not stopped. It has simply changed form. It is crucial that people around the world understand this next phase for what it is: a diplomatic maneuver designed to facilitate the ongoing Israeli plan to control the Gaza Strip and ethnically cleanse its population.

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https://www.counterpunch.org/2025/12/02/the-us-israeli-scheme-to-partition-gaza-and-break-palestinian-will/

The U.S. War on China, Venezuela, and the International Left

By Megan Russell and Michelle Ellner

Everywhere you look, the United States is at war—at home, through military occupation of cities, institutional violence, and state-sanctioned kidnappings—and abroad, through economic coercion, proxy warfare, and endless intervention. In times like these, when it is far too easy to be overwhelmed by the inexhaustible nature of the war machine, we must remember that these are not separate crises, but different fronts of the same struggle. And to resist one is to resist them all.

The enemy, in every case, is U.S. imperialism.

Resistance movements against U.S. imperialism have sprouted up all over the world in response to its indiscriminate violence and disregard for human life. Together, they form the living front of the international left, a network of people and organizations that seek liberation from the same systems of domination and colonial control. While their forms differ, from student encampments to workers' strikes, the purpose remains the same: an end to empire and the creation of a new multipolar world rooted in the simple truth of our shared humanity and the equal worth of every nation and people.

The enemy, in every case, is U.S. imperialism.

The alliance between China and Venezuela is part of this broader project. And the U.S. push for war against both nations is but a violent reaction to the impending truth that U.S. hegemonic status is slipping, and with it, its control on global resources, political power, and the ability to dictate the terms of development and sovereignty for the rest of the world.

Control

Over the past month, the Trump administration has unleashed a series of strikes on Venezuelan fishing vessels, claiming they are cracking down on drug smugglers. The lie is as unoriginal as it is absurd, and a stark example of the waning *façade* of the supposed

"morality" of liberal internationalism. Truth is often exposed during these periods of turbulence, when agitation overrides calculation; the knowledge of its imminent demise is so dire that the empire is barely trying to hide its true intentions anymore.

What is the truth, then? The truth is that the U.S. war on Venezuela has nothing to do with drugs and everything to do with control. For years, Venezuela has faced relentless pressure, economic warfare, sanctions, and constant threats designed to undermine its sovereignty and keep it under the boot of U.S. empire. As with most nations, U.S. interest in Venezuela is about strategic resources and power. First, Venezuela sits atop the largest proven oil reserves in the world, along with significant deposits of gold, coltan, and other minerals critical to technology and energy production. Control over these strategic resources means control over global markets and energy security. Second, Venezuela's geographic location within Latin America makes it a pivotal point of leverage within the region.

Yet Venezuela's defiance did not emerge in a vacuum. It followed more than a century of U.S. domination across the hemisphere, from the invasion of Haiti and the occupation of Nicaragua to the *coups* in Guatemala, Chile, and Honduras. What unites these histories is a single message from Washington: no Latin American nation has the right to chart an independent course.

The Bolivarian Revolution, launched with Hugo Chávez's election in 1998, was a direct challenge to that order. Emerging from the ruins of neoliberal collapse, it confronted Venezuela's historical condition as a rentier state subordinated to U.S. interests. Chávez redirected oil revenues to social programs, such as mass education and healthcare, while expanding access to political participation through communal councils and cooperatives.

Venezuela's defiance took continental form 20 years ago, in November 2005, when Latin American leaders gathered in Mar de la Plata, Argentina, for the Summit of the Americas. There, Washington sought to impose the Free Trade Area of the Americas (ALCA)—a hemispheric agreement that would have locked the region into permanent subordination to U.S capital.

The truth is that the U.S. war on Venezuela has nothing to do with drugs and everything to do with control.

Rebirth of Latin American sovereignty

The summit instead became a turning point in modern Latin American history. Before tens-of-thousands of people chanting "*ALCA, ALCA, al carajo!* [go to hell]" the governments of Venezuela, Brazil, Argentina, and others rejected the deal. That rejection, led politically by Hugo Chávez and supported by social movements across the continent, signaled the collapse of the neoliberal consensus and the rebirth of Latin American sovereignty. Out of that victory came ALBA (Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America) and Petrocaribe[1], mechanisms of regional cooperation that prioritized social development over corporate profit. The U.S has spent decades trying to reverse it through sanctions, *coups*, and now, open militarization in the Caribbean.

Today, matters are complicated by the introduction of a new, increasingly powerful actor. China has, over the past few decades, maintained a strong alliance with Venezuela. Starting in the early 2000s, China began providing Venezuela with tens-of-billions of dollars in loans to be repaid in oil shipments. This has enabled Venezuela to fund social programs and infrastructure while bypassing Western-controlled financial systems like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank. A U.S. Institute of Peace report states, "China's industrialization boom in the early 2000s created new opportunities for its resource-rich trade partners in Latin America and Africa. Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez … was enthusiastic about advances from China."

Since then, China has also helped Venezuela build railways, housing projects, and telecommunications infrastructure as part of its broader Belt and

Image by Wang Binghua.

Road Initiative (BRI) to foster development across the Global South. The partnership, unlike the U.S., is not coercive but strictly non-interventionist. China does not advocate for regime change like U.S. leaders, but maintains steadfast diplomatic support, referring to itself as an "apolitical development partner" while criticizing the history of U.S. interference in the internal affairs of Latin American and Caribbean countries. Meanwhile, the U.S. criticizes China's lack of desire to instigate regime change.

China's role

Because of the economic and political alliance between China and Venezuela, it is impossible to understand the growing push for war on Venezuela without also considering the buildup to war with China as well. They are, after all, part of the same battle. As the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) report writes, "Venezuela will remain a key site for the rapidly expanding strategic rivalry between the United States and China." U.S. leaders are fully willing to sacrifice the lives of Venezuelan civilians if it means destroying the Venezuelan economy, installing a U.S. puppet government, and destroying the budding solidarity movement between the two nations. As it stands, Venezuela has also provided a source of economic sovereignty to China by helping diversify its energy sources away from the Middle East and U.S.-controlled suppliers, acting as a lifeline against U.S. sanctions and economic isolation.

So, though the U.S. certainly has a vested interest in Venezuela itself, the nation is also another battlefront for the U.S. war on China, which under the Trump administration has manifested as an escalating trade battle over strategic resources, a hyper-militarization of Pacific allies around China, and a domestic crackdown on Chinese nationals and Chinese Americans in the U.S. Of course, China is no existential threat to U.S. citizens themselves. The only threat it poses is to a U.S.-dominated world system and the perpetuation of the international division of labor that keeps a few Western elites wealthy, while the rest of the world struggles.

...where there is a U.S.-backed war or intervention, you are likely to find some strategic resource or monetary interest beneath it. This is what it means to be an imperialist power.

The U.S. push for war on China is part of an ongoing campaign to hinder China's rise. While the world hurtles inevitably toward a new multipolarity, U.S. leaders lash out through military posturing, economic coercion, and war propaganda. Trump's recent tariffs on China are only one small part of that larger strategy. At the heart of this confrontation lies a struggle over control of the strategic resources and technology that will define the future—rare earth minerals, semiconductors, AI, and more. China currently dominates the global supply of rare earth elements, the essential components in everything from smartphones and wind turbines to missiles and fighter jets. For the U.S., this is intolerable. It threatens its monopoly over high-tech production and, by extension, its military and economic supremacy. That's why you'll see political leaders and media sources perpetuate the narrative that China is weaponizing trade, even though it's Western countries that have killed millions of people through unilateral sanctions since WWII. But China, as a sovereign nation, has the right to protect its strategic resources, especially when they are being used against it. Rare earth minerals, for example, are used by the U.S. to create advanced weapons systems in preparation for war with China. And if economic warfare fails to hinder China's rise, which it undoubtedly will if the recent Trump-Xi meetings are anything to go by, then it is increasingly likely that U.S. leaders will force a physical confrontation, and those weapons will be used.

This isn't the first time the U.S. has waged war over strategic resources while using propaganda to paint a prettier picture. The Gulf War and invasion of Iraq, while justified as "defending democracy" and "protecting the world from weapons of mass destruction" that didn't actually exist, were ultimately about carving up Iraq's oil fields for U.S. corporations. The NATO bombing campaign in Libya was in response to Gaddafi's nationalization of oil and the threat to the U.S. dollar. The continued occupation of Syria is about securing oil and gas fields. The overthrow of Bolivian president Evo Morales was connected to his nationalization of lithium, often referred to as the "new oil," as well as attempts to thwart competition with Russia and China. The list goes on and on and on.

The lesson is clear: where there is a U.S.-backed war or intervention, you are likely to find some strategic resource or monetary interest beneath it. This is what it means to be an imperialist power. In order to sustain its dominance, the U.S. must continually extract, control, or deny access to the materials that sustain global industry and technology, such as oil, gas, lithium, and rare earth minerals. And when another nation dares to assert sovereignty over its own resources, it is branded a threat to freedom, sanctioned, bombed, or toppled to keep it dependent, weak, and loyal. China, Venezuela, and all nations seeking sovereignty over their own development in ways contradictory to the capitalist imperial order threaten this, and that is why they are targeted—not for any moral or legal reason. As

we've so clearly seen from two years of U.S.-funded genocide in Gaza, neither morality nor legality guides U.S. policy.

The struggle against U.S. imperialism is a global struggle. To stand with Venezuela, with China, or with any nation resisting domination is to stand for the possibility of a new internationalism rooted in solidarity across borders. That is our task—to connect these struggles, to see in every act of resistance the reflection of our own, and to build a world of shared humanity and global equality.

Megan Russell is CODEPINK's China is Not Our Enemy Campaign Coordinator. Her research focuses on the intersection between U.S.-China affairs, peacebuilding, and international development.

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1 Petrocaribe was a 2005 Venezuela-led oil alliance providing discounted fuel to Caribbean and Central American nations. It collapsed in 2019 due to the decline in Venezuelan oil production.

As with most nations, U.S. interest in Venezuela is about strategic resources and power. First, Venezuela sits atop the largest proven oil reserves in the world, along with significant deposits of gold, coltan, and other minerals critical to technology and energy production.

U.S. Hands Off Venezuela! No Deportations!

By Pete Seidman

Forty people demonstrated at downtown Miami's Torch of Friendship on the evening of Tuesday, December 23, 2025, against Washington's accelerating moves towards war on Venezuela. The protesters rallied at the call of a newly formed Miami Hands Off Venezuela Coalition. The Coalition's two points of unity in action are U.S. Hands Off Venezuela! and No Deportations!

The turnout was particularly remarkable as that the action had originally been scheduled for the same time but at the Miami International Airport's "First Amendment" area. A permit had been granted on Friday by airport authorities. But organizers received notice only one day before the event that this permit had been cancelled at political levels above the day-to-day administrators of the airport.

Anticipating that under conditions where the blood and guts of the drive towards war in Washington, DC would likely seep down into Miami's notoriously corrupt political machinery, a backup permit had been secured.

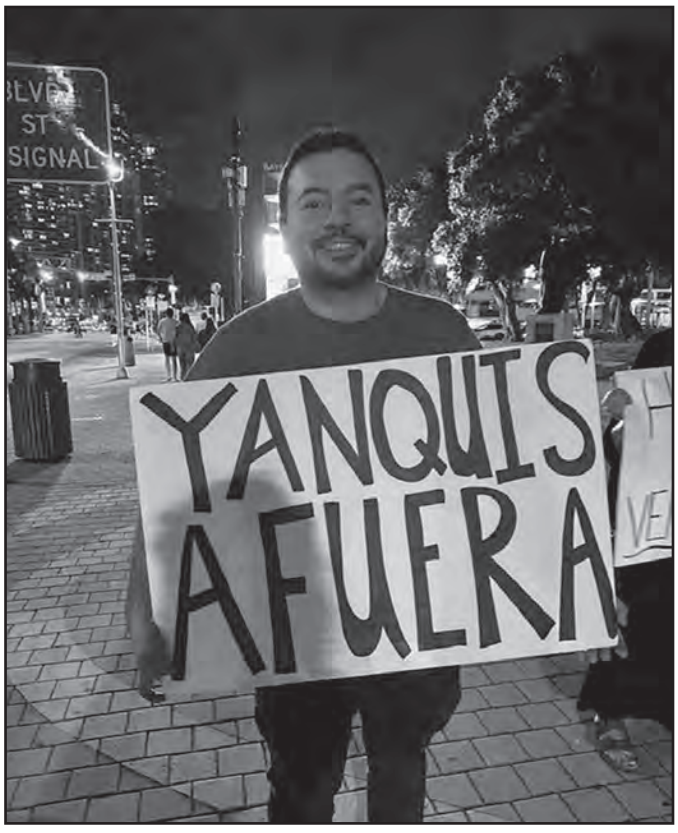
Organizations that individuals who launched the new coalition included: Miami Coalition to End the U.S. Blockade of Cuba, Miami-Dade Green Party, *Casa Colombianidad*, National Lawyers Guild, Party for Socialism and Liberation, *Diaspora Pal'ante* Collective, Freedom Road Socialist Organization, Miami Democratic Socialists of America, Black Alliance for Peace-South, and Jose Marti Cultural Association.

The demonstration was well received by passersby. There was only one minor incident of confrontation with two individuals that was quickly isolated and peacefully handled by volunteer marshals.

Many participants expressed a certain pride in having helped build such a united action at a key juncture in the start-up to war against the peoples of Venezuela, Cuba, and the broader Caribbean.

—*Facebook*, December 24, 2025

https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=pfbi



Young man carrying a sign demanding "Yankees Out" in Spanish on December 23, 2025 in Miami, Florida. (Photo by noted cinematographer Catherine Murphy [Maestra] who took part in the demonstration)

Julian Assange Files Criminal Complaint over 2025 Nobel Peace Prize

By Al Mayadeen English

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange filed a criminal complaint on December 17, accusing 30 individuals linked to the Nobel Foundation of serious offenses under Swedish law, including gross misappropriation of funds, facilitation of war crimes and crimes against humanity, and financing the crime of aggression.

The complaint, submitted to both the Swedish Economic Crime Authority and the Swedish War Crimes Unit, demands the immediate freezing of the SEK [Swedish currency] 11 million ($1.18 million USD) Nobel Peace Prize funds awarded to Venezuelan opposition figure María Corina Machado.

Assange argues that the disbursement would violate Alfred Nobel's will and fund actions that have led to "extrajudicial killings of civilians and shipwrecked survivors at sea."

"This complaint seeks the immediate freezing of all remaining funds and a full criminal investigation lest the Nobel Peace Prize be permanently converted from an instrument of peace into an instrument of war," Assange stated.

Machado accused of inciting U.S. aggression in Venezuela

According to the complaint, Machado's endorsement of foreign military intervention in Venezuela, including her praise for the Trump administration's escalating military buildup, renders her categorically ineligible under Nobel's original peace criteria.

Citing direct quotes from Machado, Assange claims she has openly supported U.S. military action, including:

- Calling U.S. strikes on civilian vessels "justified" and "visionary"
- Declaring that "military escalation may be the only way"
- Publicly dedicating her Nobel Prize to U.S. President Donald Trump
- Endorsing the U.S. strategy to prioritize "maximum lethality" in Venezuela

Assange's filing states that the disbursement of prize funds to Machado would directly support ongoing U.S. military aggression, and those overseeing the transfer are therefore complicit.

Julian Assange

Nobel prize fund misuse violates Alfred Nobel's original will, says Assange

Assange's legal argument centers on the claim that the award violates Alfred Nobel's 1895 will, which mandates that the peace prize be given to the individual who has done "the most or the best work for fraternity between nations, for the abolition or reduction of standing armies and for the promotion of peace congresses."

"Alfred Nobel's endowment for peace cannot be spent on the promotion of war," the filing states. "Any disbursement contradicting this mandate constitutes misappropriation from the endowment."

The complaint highlights that the Nobel Foundation has previously withheld prize disbursements, such as the Literature Prize in 2018, and therefore has both the authority and the obligation to intervene.

War crimes, conspiracy, and misappropriation cited under Swedish law

Assange argues that awarding the Nobel Peace Prize to Machado, given her calls for the overthrow of Venezuela's government and support for U.S. military operations, violates several articles of Swedish and international law.

Citing Article 25(3)(c) of the Rome Statute, the complaint alleges that Nobel Foundation officials are facilitating war crimes and crimes against humanity by knowingly enabling a political figure whose actions have led to civilian deaths and regional destabilization.

He calls on Swedish authorities to:

1. Freeze the pending Nobel disbursement and secure the return of the prize medal

2. Investigate all suspects for breach of trust, conspiracy, and war crimes facilitation
3. Seize communications, financial records, and internal minutes
4. Interrogate Foundation Chair Astrid Söderbergh Widding, Executive Director Hanna Stjärne, and other suspects
5. Refer the case to the International Criminal Court if necessary

International reactions question Nobel's credibility

The filing also includes a long list of critical reactions from global experts and human rights groups. Among them:

- 21 Norwegian peace organizations declared that "Machado is the opposite of a peace laureate."
- Nobel laureate Adolfo Pérez Esquivel condemned the award as "a mockery of Alfred Nobel's will."
- The Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) confirmed that Machado had "called for military intervention in Venezuela."

Assange asserts that allowing the prize to proceed undermines the Nobel Foundation's global credibility and violates both its fiduciary duty and moral obligation under Swedish law.

—*Al Mayadeen* English, December 17, 2025

https://english.almayadeen.net/news/politics/julian-assange-files-criminal-complaint-over-2025-nobel-peac

Your Party Founding Conference Speech
by Zarah Sultana

"Your Party" is a new UK socialist political party launched in November 2025 by former Labour Party leader, Jeremy Corbyn, and Zarah Sultana who was a Member of Parliament representing the Labour Party from 2019 to 2024. Your Party aims to be a left alternative to the Labour Party—rooted in the working class, trade unions and social justice movements with a member-led democratic structure. This is the transcript of the speech by Zarah Sultana at the founding conference.

November 30, 2025—Thank you, Conference. Thank you for being here in sunny Liverpool today. And it gives me extra pleasure in saying that as a Liverpool fan and as always, you'll never walk alone.

I want to start off by thanking all the workers that have made this conference possible. I want to extend my solidarity to Public and Commercial Services (PCS) union and the tape workers on strike. You have our solidarity.

I am so honored to co-found this party with Jeremy Corbyn, who I have an enormous amount of admiration and respect for. I know that I speak for all of us when I say he gave us hope when he became leader of the Labour Party.

But now we are building something new, Your Party, with more than 55,000 members. In just a few months, we have built something no one in Westminster believed was possible—a mass democratic working-class movement, the largest socialist party in the UK since the 1940s. And this, our inaugural conference, is historic. There are more than 2,000 delegates in this hall with thousands more watching online and voting.

And today we will finalize the structures of a party that belongs to its members—not to Members of Parliament (MPs), not to donors, not to nameless, faceless, unelected bureaucrats, but you, its members.

Some will say that the decision to adopt the collective leadership model is a win for me. It is not. It is your win. It is you, the members who have won. But you need to deliver that win. So, if you're watching at home, take out your phone. If you're in this hall, vote yes to the Constitution as amended.

But before we move forward, we have to confront what took place yesterday. The expulsions, the bans, the

Zarah Sultana

censorship on conference floor are unacceptable. It's undemocratic. It's an attack on members and this movement. And those decisions were made at the top, not by you.

Many of those people who were expelled found out only after they had arrived in Liverpool. People who had traveled across the country, took time off work, booked hotels, spent hundreds of pounds that they could not easily spare, discovered at the door that they had been barred. And the shocking sight of a Muslim woman being manhandled and dragged out of conference is something that should shame any party that claims to stand for equality and justice.

These actions come straight out of the Labour Rights handbook. The same playbook we have all lived through for years. The witch hunts, the smears, the intimidation, the bullying, the legal threats, and the leaks of the Murdoch press.

Let me be absolutely clear. The members will not stand for this. The movement will not stand for this. And I will not stand for this. I did not leave the Labour Party; you did not leave the Labour Party to create another Labour Party. And everywhere I've traveled in over 30 towns and cities across the country, from Worthing to Glasgow, from Merthyr Tydfil to Birmingham, working-class people have said the same thing: This party must be run by its members, not MPs. This party must never be captured from above. This party must never become a Labour 2.0.

And that is why we are here to build a new kind of politics—democratic, principled, and rooted in the power of the working class. Everyone in this room and everyone outside of this room knows what's wrong with Britain. Nothing works and nothing gets better. This country is rigged to serve the rich and powerful who bought and paid for it. And we plan on beating them before they lead us into fascism to protect their own wealth and power.

Our diagnosis is simple. In the last 20 years, mega donations to political parties from the rich haven't just doubled. They haven't just trebled; they have gone up sevenfold.

When prices go up on your weekly shop, supermarket bosses are pocketing that and then buying politicians. When your rents soar, landlords use your cash to lobby MPs, so their interests are protected. When the seas rise and our towns flood, energy bosses buy another private jet while we all pay the price.

This country is rigged to serve the rich and powerful who bought and paid for it. And we plan on beating them before they lead us into fascism to protect their own wealth and power.

The billionaires buy up our newspapers, our social media platforms, our TV channels to gaslight us into blaming our neighbors for the mess. They want you angry, just not at them.

Our message to our friends and our neighbors is if you want to know why your life is getting harder and why everything keeps getting worse, know that the people who control your food, your home, your energy, and your media, they are sending billions of your hard-earned money to the Cayman Islands. And they've got three political parties, Labour, the Conservatives, and Reform—all sewn up. So, you work harder for longer, for less, while politicians take money from poor kids and pensioners. Everything gets difficult so offshore bank accounts get fatter.

The only thing that none of these old parties will ever say is that there is enough room for everyone in this country except for the rentiers who own Britain and charge us just for living in it. They are the real parasites and it's about time they got taken on and taken down.

And we have a weak and pathetic Labour government that is pushed this way and that way with the political winds because it does not have the political will to confront the parasites who own Britain.

We are here to break up a system that humiliates our disabled friends and neighbors and deprives them of the cash that they need while funneling an extra 11-billion-pounds-a-year to arms companies. That's right. Keir Starmer wants an extra 11 billion pounds on defense every year and all the old parties back it—£350 of our money every second on war.

That's money into the pockets of shareholders for the merchants of death after two years, where our money has funded daily spy flights over the ruins of Gaza, aiding and abetting a genocide. This is a Labour government happy to oppress people abroad and at home. This isn't a coincidence. The politicians who attack the disabled in Liverpool and demonize the desperate arriving on small boats, they are the same people who blow up our world with war, occupation, and genocide.

But we know that the real enemy of the working-class travels by private jet, not migrant dingy. So, it's not about stopping the boats, it's about stopping the private jets.

Ordinary humans suffer everywhere so the mighty and powerful can sleep in silk sheets in their blood-soaked mansions. And as socialists, we stand with the oppressed everywhere from Sudan to Congo to Palestine. And let me say this loudly and proudly. I am an anti-Zionist. And if we fight for it, your party will be an anti-Zionist party. Free, Free, Free, Palestine!

So, we must sever all ties with the genocidal apartheid state of Israel. We must expel the ambassador and shut

down the embassy and stand with the Palestinian people until every inch of their land is free. From the river to the sea—a single democratic state with equal rights for all. And we must ensure there is a day of reckoning for those who have enabled genocide—Keir Starmer, David Lammy, Shabana Mahmood, and all responsible—are held in the docks of the Hague.

And as a movement, we care so deeply about Palestine, in part because we know that the starvation and annihilation of a people in distant lands shows what our political class would do to us if they thought they could get away with it.

The same people who run Britain want you to believe that every refugee is a rapist while they grab 12 million pounds of taxpayers' money to protect a parasite called Andrew Mountbatton-Windsor.

Andrew Mountbatton-Windsor, who has never seen the inside of a cell or a courtroom. Because what matters to the rulers of Britain is not the safety of women and girls, it's the peace and pleasure of the powerful.

What a sick society we live in where our political and media class bend over backwards for the Royal Family including Prince Andrew—close friends with notorious pedophile Jeffrey Epstein.

That's our money that provided him housing. That's our money that defended him in court. That's our money that put food on his table. Well, not anymore. We shouldn't just abolish Andrew's titles. We should abolish the monarchy itself.

The truth is we have an epidemic of fake populists who rail against every elite until someone mentions a wealth tax and then suddenly, they go quiet. Just look up Reform's donors. They are bought and paid for by the parasites. But the real scandal is that this Labour government is mimicking them.

When Farage says, "Kick an immigrant," Starmer replies, "How hard?" and shamefully uses the same language as Enoch Powell, calling us an "island of strangers."

We are not an island of strangers. We are an island that is suffering. And we see politicians constantly shifting the blame from people who actually have all the money.

And then we have our home secretary, Shabans Mahmood, talking about seizing jewelry from refugees endorsed by fascist Tommy Robinson.

And our politics desperately needs an organized working class that fights back and says, "If you come for any of us, if you come for the pensioners among us, the disabled among us, the immigrants among us, the queer and trans among us, if you come for any of us, you will have to fight all of us."

So, we must sever all ties with the genocidal apartheid state of Israel. We must expel the ambassador and shut down the embassy and stand with the Palestinian people until every inch of their land is free. From the river to the sea—a single democratic state with equal rights for all.

And a politics that does not center the most marginalized isn't worthy of the name socialism.

That means saying loudly and unequivocally, refugees are welcome here and trans rights are human rights. The rise in transphobia we are seeing is deliberate. It is being stoked as a wider culture war designed to divide us. And just like with Muslims, with migrants, with disabled people, the goal is always the same. Find a scapegoat to distract people from those who really holds the power.

It is an old tactic of the ruling class—divide and rule. And our movement has to say with one voice, we will not play your game. We stand with our trans siblings, with migrants, with Muslims, with disabled people. We stand with the most marginalized.

And I stand before you as a proud child from Lozells in Birmingham. My grandparents came to this country after Britain's rulers looted their homeland. We are here, as Sivanandan[1] said, because "you were there."

I grew up being told by politicians and police officers that my neighborhood was suspicious or worthless because we committed two offenses as soon as we were born. We were Muslim and we were working-class, and I will never apologize for either.

And yes, the stakes are enormous. The old is dying and if the new cannot be born, this will be the time of monsters. Centrist politicians presiding over decline and decay, pushing people's rage towards the far right. But from New York, in the very heart of empire, a new politics emerges. Zohran Mamdani— unapologetically socialist, unapologetically Muslim, unapologetically immigrant—built a campaign that proved what is possible when the working class unites people who look different, play, pray differently, and love differently, but all want a life of dignity where people and planet thrive.

If we don't win this global fight, decay will give way to fascism. And people who look like me will be imprisoned in tents and deported to war zones while everyone gets poorer except for the hedge fund managers who donate to Labour, the Conservatives and Reform. But if we win, we will hand over a world renewed for future generations.

And I've been thinking a lot about these stakes. It is a huge responsibility to carry. And you may have noticed

that the process of starting up this party has had some hiccups. Some of that is my fault and for that I am sorry. But I want you to know that my aim from the very start has been to ensure that this party is led by you, the members, and not MPs. None of us have ever set up a new party before, never designed it—structures from scratch—and that process has been messy.

We have to get better at working with each other. We have to ensure that the best cure against any culture of backroom deals is people power. And that's why I've been fighting for maximum member democracy. And we saw your hard work pay off this morning.

I know that I speak for many when I say I don't want a party of witch hunts and stitch-ups. I want to work with every socialist in a spirit of comradeship and equality. And I want the working class to control this party as one day they should control the country.

We know that control of our economy has to be taken away from the parasitical profiteers and put into the hands of workers who actually generate our collective wealth. We are not here for tweaks of a broken system. We are not here just to lower some bills and sprinkle a wealth tax. We are here for a fundamental transformation of society to replace capitalism with socialism.

That means democracy in every workplace, every community, every corner of life. So yes, we will reverse the failed experiments of Thatcherism by taking water, energy, our railways, transport and communications back into public ownership.

But that cannot be the limits of our ambition. We must seek new horizons. The banking industry, food production, construction, and so much more. Because we know this fundamental truth. The working class can run society better than the billionaires, the profiteers, and the war criminals who rule over us today.

Finally, as a country, we face a stark choice. It's socialism or barbarism. And we choose socialism.

People used to say that a week was a long time in politics. These days it feels like everything can change in an hour or a day. Whatever difficulties we've had in founding this party that won't matter, if from today, from now, we face the working class in all of its diversity and say with a united voice something that all the capitalist politicians have given up on saying—that in the sixth richest country in the world life can be better. You can breathe clean air, eat good food, and live in warm homes. You can spend less time working and more time with your loved ones. And you can look at your neighbors and know that they're doing okay, too. Unless they happen to be billionaires, of course.

Finally, as a country, we face a stark choice. It's socialism or barbarism. And we choose socialism.

And I will leave you with one of my favorite quotes and I've used this at every event I've spoken at. It's a quote from Arundhati Roy who says, "Another world is not only possible. She is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing."

Solidarity. Thank you so much.

Note: This speech was transcribed from the YouTube video of Zarah Sultana's full speech at the Your Party founding conference in Liverpool on November 30, 2025.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZdObTwNrWWs

1 Ambalavaner Sivanandan, commonly referred to as A. Sivanandan or "Siva", was a Sri Lankan Tamil and British novelist, activist and writer, emeritus director of the Institute of Race Relations, a London-based independent educational charity.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ambalavaner_Sivanandan

The Mineral Wars

How Ukraine's critical minerals will fuel future geopolitical rivalries

By Robert Muggah and Rafal Rohozinski

With the war between Ukraine and Russia moving toward a precarious resolution, 2025 could be a watershed for global security. Assuming a hurting stalemate persists on the battle front and U.S. military assistance is rolled back, the odds are that Russia will hold on to much of the roughly 20 percent of Ukraine it has occupied since 2022. Nevertheless, the likely outcome of the war—a Korean Peninsula-style demilitarized zone—is unlikely to satisfy Ukrainians, Russians, or many of their respective backers. Whatever compromise is reached in 2025, it will reflect the new geopolitical circumstances hastened by the election of President Trump. Yet, beneath the surface of military maneuvers and episodic peacemaking lies a deeper and often overlooked driver of the armed conflict: Ukraine's immense natural resources.

Russia's calculated focus on resource-rich provinces of Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk, and Zaporizhzhia, together with Crimea and the Black Sea, underscores the war's economic and strategic dimensions. These marine areas and border territories, abundant in hydrocarbons and critical minerals such as graphite, lithium and uranium, are not only pivotal to Ukraine's sovereignty but also to Europe's energy independence and the competition between the United States and China for technological dominance. Control over these resources is a

decisive if underrated factor in shaping the conflict's trajectory and will almost certainly influence the contours of its resolution. While often left out of the headlines, Ukraine's resource endowments are a central piece of an evolving geopolitical chessboard.

A critical mineral superpower

Ukraine has long been described as a critical minerals' powerhouse. Prior to the 2022 Russian invasion, Ukraine registered 20,000 deposits (8,700 of them proven) of ore-bearing minerals, including 117 of the 120 most globally used metals and minerals. Ukrainian and international authorities reported that the country was home to the world's top recoverable coal, gas, iron, manganese, nickel, ore, titanium, and uranium reserves. Before the war, Ukraine was among the largest suppliers of noble gasses such as neon (for micro-chip-making) and boasted the most significant known lithium and rare earth deposits in Europe. Most of these minerals are in the so-called "Ukrainian shield," spanning Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporzhizhia, and Dnipropetrovsk to Korovohrad, Poltova, and Kharkiv.

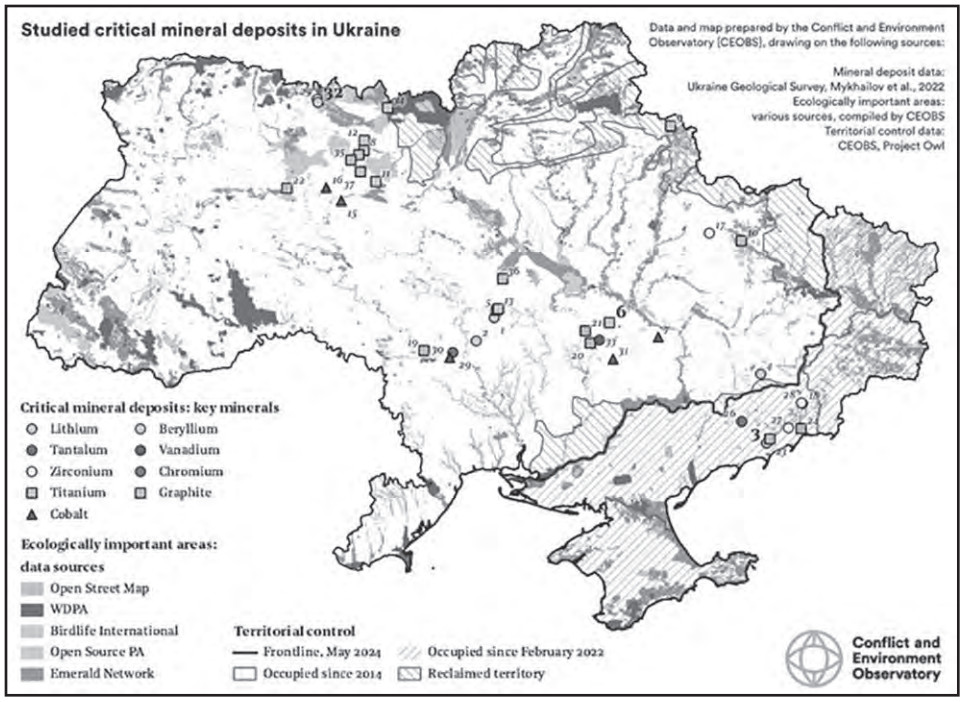
Ukraine's hydrocarbon, critical mineral, and agricultural wealth, coupled with its infrastructure outlay, human capital, and proximity to European markets, amplifies its international geostrategic importance. In a bid to exert its energy independence from Russia, Ukraine launched oil and gas privatization efforts in 2013. However, these were stymied by Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea and its subsequent military operation in Donbas. After launching a new national energy strategy in 2017 and accelerating licensing of critical mineral concessions in 2021, Ukraine's moves were again thwarted by Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022. Ukraine's formidable agricultural output has likewise been set back, both through the military targeting of land and assets as well as the occupation and disruption of ports, transportation hubs, and supply chains.

Russian control over minerals

The geographic focus of Russia's occupation efforts is hardly coincidental. Indeed, Ukraine's Dnieper-Donetsk region alone accounts for 80 percent of known conventional oil, gas, and coal production and reserves. Most identified critical minerals, especially Ukraine's 22 rare-metal formations, are concentrated in Donetsk, Dobra, and Kruta Balka. And while Ukraine's key cash crops—wheat and beets—are produced primarily in central and southern areas, several critical products such as barley, corn, and sunflower oil are harvested in eastern and southeastern Ukraine. Control over Ukraine's resources—ranging from hydrocarbons to rare earth elements—is pivotal to Ukraine's economic recovery, Europe's green future, and Russia's energy dominance. In the emerging geopolitical order, whoever controls Ukraine's resources will wield considerable influence.

Ukraine's resource wealth is vast and varied. The Donbas and Crimea, both focal points of Russian occupation since 2014, host significant coal deposits, natural gas fields, and critical minerals. Within months of invading Ukraine in 2022, Russia controlled over $12.5 trillion worth of Ukrainian mineral and gas. The most lucrative assets included more than 56 percent of Ukraine's hard coal reserves, among the largest in the world and valued at approximately $12 trillion. Russia also held 20 percent of Ukraine's gas fields and 11 percent of its oil fields, the second largest in Europe and worth approximately $85 billion. What's more, by the end of 2022, Russia controlled between 50 and 100 percent of Ukraine's reserves of lithium, tantalum, cesium, and strontium, metals that are critical for green energy technologies and defense industries. Before 2022, Ukraine was a major supplier of iron ore, lithium, manganese, and steel to Europe. However, the Russian invasion derailed these supply routes.

Ukraine holds significant reserves of highly sought-after minerals and metals. The country has Europe's largest deposits of uranium, an estimated two percent of world reserves. Uranium is key to the expansion of nuclear power to support rapidly expanding data center and AI-related needs. As of 2022, Ukraine also had among the largest suspected supplies of recoverable rare-earth resources in Europe. Unconfirmed reserves of lithium, believed to exceed



500,000 tons in Kruta Balka, Dobra, and Shevchenkivske could be among the largest in Europe. In addition to confirmed deposits of beryllium which is crucial to nuclear power, Ukraine is also the world's fifth largest gallium producer and a major producer of neon, supplying 90 percent of the highly purified semiconductor grade neon to the U.S. chip sector. Indeed, its proximity to European Union markets ensures lower transportation costs, making its resources potentially more attractive to investors and governments than alternatives from Africa or Asia, especially China.

Energy-based imperialism

Russian-Ukrainian relations have long revolved around energy. Among other things, Ukraine has traditionally served as a critical transit hub for Russian fossil fuels destined for European markets. Even at the height of the ongoing war and amid sweeping international sanctions, Russia's state-controlled gas producer, Gazprom, delivered billions of cubic meters of natural gas to Europe, underlining the deep interdependence of these energy systems. The Bratstvo, Druzhba, Soyuz, and Ukrtransafta pipelines that traverse Ukraine were until recently vital arteries for the transport of oil and gas, generating billions of dollars in transit fees for Kyiv. The indefinite suspension of Nord Stream 2—a project designed to bypass Ukraine's transit infrastructure—combined with the sabotage that severely damaged the pipelines, underscores the strategic importance of Ukraine's extensive network (often cited at around 28,000 miles), reaffirming the country's role as a key transit corridor in Europe's energy landscape.

Russia's military interventions reflect a strategic intent to secure valuable coal, steel, and agricultural assets in eastern and southern Ukraine, thereby consolidating its influence over these resource-rich regions. These areas not only hold significant strategic value as transit hubs but also harbor vast deposits that could secure Russian energy dominance in Europe. By one estimate, Ukraine's Black Sea reserves contain up to two trillion cubic meters of natural gas, and Russia now controls approximately 80 percent of these deposits. Beyond hydrocarbons, eastern Ukraine has recoverable rare earths and lithium supplies, both of which are vital for renewable energy technologies and the global transition to green energy systems. Historically, controlling energy and raw materials has played a key role in Moscow's broad strategy to exert geopolitical influence—an approach traced back to the Cold War era, when the Soviet Union leveraged its dominant oil and gas exports to maintain influence over Eastern Bloc allies.

...in 2024, U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham proclaimed that the United States should send weapons to Ukraine precisely because "they're sitting on a trillion dollars' worth of minerals that could be good to our economy."

Control over Ukraine's coal mines, gas fields, and rare earth deposits amplifies Russia's ability to dominate, or at the very least influence, global supply chains. For example, following the annexation of Crimea in 2014, Russia disrupted Naftogaz's 2013 plans to explore 32 gas blocks in the Azov Sea, integrating the region's resources into its own production and export networks. The physical proximity of the Donbas to European markets makes these assets even more valuable, allowing Moscow to reduce transportation costs and directly challenge European suppliers. Russia's refining capabilities enhances this advantage, enabling it to maximize the economic and geopolitical returns on these resources.

The strategic value of the Donbas

The Donbas, encompassing the resource-rich Donets Basin, has historically served as Ukraine's industrial and agricultural heartland. Rich in coal and iron ore, the region underpins much of the country's heavy industry and energy production. Beyond its mineral wealth, the Donbas also plays a pivotal role in agriculture, with its water resources sustaining farming operations across southern Ukraine and supplying Crimea, a region suffering from chronic water scarcity. In 2021, Ukraine's agricultural sector produced over 46 percent of global supplies of sunflower and safflower oil. It also generated over 18 percent of the world's barley, 16 percent of corn, and 12 percent of wheat. The total value of exports in 2021 amounted to roughly $27 billion, including over $7.6 billion in sales to the EU, $4.2 billion to China, $2 billion to India, and $1.5 billion to Egypt and Turkey. While the Donbas links some local agricultural output to global commodity markets, its broader significance for Ukraine—and the region's economic stability—has traditionally centered on its role as a European industrial and resource powerhouse.

For Russia, the Donbas is not just an economic prize—it is a geopolitical lever. By framing its territorial claims through the "Novorossiya" narrative, Moscow seeks to advance both economic objectives and efforts to erode Ukraine's sovereignty. According to this line of thinking, large swathes of southeastern Ukraine are considered historically Russian lands, thereby justifying Moscow's occupation and ensuring the conflict's trajectory will ensure Russia's advantage. For Ukraine, retaining control of the Donbas is essential both for economic recovery and preserving its sovereignty in the face of relentless external pressure.

Since the 2022 invasion, Ukraine's economy has been highly disrupted,

sharply reducing and in some cases halting production in key sectors while threatening future productivity through damage to infrastructure and machinery. Yet for Moscow, control over the Donbas's hydrocarbon reserves and critical minerals provides leverage in global markets—especially amid rising demand for resources linked to renewable energy technologies and AI. Russia's historical claims also have implications for any post-conflict settlement: by insisting on Russia's enduring ties to the region, the Novorossiya narrative legitimizes territorial demands and positions the Donbas as a bargaining chip in future negotiations.

Resources as bargaining chips

The immense natural wealth of the occupied areas of Ukraine remains central to any potential resolution, whether a ceasefire or a broader peace settlement. While the domestic implications of territorial concessions on Ukraine are far-reaching, there are also wide-ranging realpolitik considerations—namely, how control over hydrocarbons, critical minerals, and agricultural output will shape the contours of a ceasefire, the negotiating positions of the key stakeholders, and the likelihood of war reigniting in the future. The geopolitical stakes are high: control over Ukraine's resources will not only shape the country's economic recovery and sovereignty but also Russia's regional influence and Europe's energy security. The pressure these dynamics impose on Ukraine's future decisions amount to a kind of Sophie's choice.

The first scenario involves Ukraine ceding control of resource-rich territories in exchange for international security guarantees. While this may provide short-term stability, it risks hollowing out Ukraine's economic foundations, as the Donbas accounts for over 50 percent of the country's coal reserves, 20 percent of its gas fields, and vast critical mineral deposits essential to renewable energy technologies. Ceding these regions would leave Ukraine reliant on European and American support for its economic survival—a dependence that would strain Europe's resources and potentially complicate its own green transition. Given these stakes, such a concession would be politically difficult for Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who has repeatedly insisted (as recently as November 2024) on a commitment to securing a resolution that does not compromise Ukrainian sovereignty.

Historically, controlling energy and raw materials has played a key role in Moscow's broad strategy to exert geopolitical influence—an approach traced back to the Cold War era, when the Soviet Union leveraged its dominant oil and gas exports to maintain influence over Eastern Bloc allies.

A second scenario envisions an armistice and demilitarized zone with international oversight of resource management. While this approach might theoretically preserve access to key agricultural, hydrocarbon and critical mineral assets, its implementation would require unprecedented levels of trust between Russia and Ukraine and the establishment of robust confidence-building and verification mechanisms, including security guarantees and a pathway to eventually joining the EU and NATO. Managing critical resources equitably under such an arrangement would also require sustained European and American engagement, creating additional burdens on global supply chains, discussed in more detail below. While appealing in theory, the political acceptability of this scenario may wane owing to limited appetite from the United States and the immense pressure on Europe to support both Ukraine's economic recovery and its own energy diversification needs.

The third and most likely scenario involves a *de facto* partition, solidifying Russian control over Crimea and parts of the Donbas. As noted earlier, this outcome would entrench Russia's dominance over trillions of dollars' worth of resources, including 80 percent of Ukraine's Black Sea gas reserves and significant shares of its lithium and rare earth deposits. From the EU's vantage point, this scenario would exacerbate energy and mineral dependencies on Moscow, further undermining long-term diversification and the green transition. For Ukraine, it would likely create lasting vulnerabilities, requiring deeper reliance on Western allies, particularly the United States, to sustain its economy. The political implications of this scenario are profound, as it could force Zelenskyy into a difficult negotiation position, balancing domestic pressures for sovereignty with international demands for resolution.

Ultimately, these scenarios highlight the tightrope that Ukraine must walk in 2025. As the G7's support for Ukraine in 2024 demonstrated, Zelensky's negotiating position does not depend solely on Ukrainian or Russian military gains, as important as these are, but also on its ability to align resource sovereignty with European, United States and wider international economic stability. Indeed, the war's eventual resolution will hinge on a delicate interplay of military, economic, and political factors, with Ukraine's resource wealth playing a decisive role in shaping the geopolitical landscape for years to come. From Ukraine's perspective, the more entangled its economy is with the U.S. and the EU, the better.

Resource-centric diplomacy

The second Trump Administration faces the complex and delicate task of addressing Ukrainian sovereignty, countering Russian influence with its neighbors, and safeguarding EU security. With the fate of Ukraine's resource-rich territories, a critical if rarely discussed factor shaping the conflict's resolution, U.S. policy must balance strategic, defense, economic, and ethical considerations. Of course, American engagement does not occur in a vacuum: the United States has played a decisive role in shaping European security for decades, including through its involvement in Ukraine's energy sector. For example, before 2022, the United States government (and companies) sought to strengthen Ukraine's energy independence and reduce reliance on Russian supplies.

Specifically, government-subsidized programs such as USAID's Energy Security Project allocated over $160 million to diversify Ukraine's energy sources, improve EU connectivity, and expand renewable energy. Meanwhile, American firms such as Chevron, ExxonMobil, and Halliburton, have explored and cashed in on Ukraine's shale gas reserves, while agreements with companies like Venture Global LNG supplied liquefied natural gas to further reduce dependence on Russian pipelines. These efforts were hardly selfless acts of altruism: they reflect a strategic and commercial alignment between United States economic interests, EU energy security, and Ukraine's energy resilience.

As is well known in Washington D.C., U.S. collaboration with Ukraine was not uncontroversial. Hunter Biden's 2014 appointment to the board of Burisma Holdings, a Ukrainian gas company facing corruption allegations, raised questions about conflicts of interest and political patronage. Similarly, Paul Manafort's financial dealings as a consultant for Ukraine's pro-Russian leadership underscored the murky nexus of energy politics, national security, and international lobbying. These controversies culminated in Donald Trump's 2019 impeachment over allegations that he pressured Ukraine's leadership to investigate Hunter Biden in exchange for military aid. While these incidents fueled partisan narratives in the U.S., they also highlighted broader governance challenges in Ukraine's energy sector.

Since 2022, American involvement in Ukraine's energy sector has shifted toward privatization, investments in recovery, and promoting resilience. Repeated Russian attacks on Ukraine's critical infrastructure have amplified the importance of sustained U.S. investments vital for maintaining electricity and heating across Ukraine. American firms are focused intently on repairing pipelines and power plants, while new liquefied natural gas (LNG) agreements and renewable energy projects aim to bolster Ukraine's long-term energy independence. There is also interest in expanding uranium mining and processing, though security guarantees are essential to attract international investment. Despite these efforts, the Biden Administration's emphasis on transparency and anti-corruption underscored the need for greater accountability to avoid the mismanagement and inefficiencies that have historically plagued the sector.

The Trump Administration's foreign policy, characterized by a transactional approach that maximizes domestic economic advantage, complicates the U.S. response to Ukraine's evolving resource politics. On the one hand, American and EU sanctions are intended to deter Russian aggression and signal support for Ukrainian sovereignty by targeting critical sectors of the Russian economy, including finance, energy, and defense. While not as effective as many expected, these sanctions have restricted Russia's access to international financial markets, prohibited the transfer of vital technologies for oil and gas exploration, and frozen the assets of key Russian officials and entities.

More recent measures, such as bans on Russian oil and gas imports to Europe and the G7 price cap on Russian crude, have further demonstrated a coordinated effort to weaken Moscow economically while reinforcing Ukraine's resource sovereignty. However, the administration's uneven coordination and unpredictable relationships with allies could undermine the efficacy of these measures, and at the very least complicate their implementation and reduce their potential to pressure Russia into compliance. Targeted sanctions on Russian-controlled resources in occupied territories could isolate Moscow further while safeguarding Ukraine's critical economic assets, but these require a cohesive and reliable international approach to succeed.

In 2017, during the first Trump Administration, the U.S. encouraged energy and mining companies to invest in Ukraine as part of broader efforts to strengthen Ukraine's energy independence and open new markets for American firms. These initiatives were designed to stimulate Ukraine's economic recovery while reducing Europe's reliance on Russian-controlled resources. Then U.S. Energy Secretary Rick Perry played a prominent role in advancing this agenda, actively promoting American energy interests in Ukraine. Perry facilitated discussions between Ukrainian officials and American companies, paving the way for business deals that aligned with the administration's broader objectives. Beyond official channels, individuals with ties to the administration also pursued private business ventures in Ukraine's energy sector, reflecting a convergence of political and commercial interests.

These and other efforts exemplified the Trump Administration's strategy of leveraging U.S. energy resources as instruments of foreign policy. The goal was to strengthen alliances, diversify energy supplies, and assert American energy dominance on the global stage.

Yet, this strategy—assuming it continues under the new Trump presidency—risks being perceived as self-serving, especially if American firms prioritize profit over Ukraine's broader recovery and development needs. Indeed, on at least two occasions in 2024, U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham proclaimed that the United States should send weapons to Ukraine precisely because "they're sitting on a trillion dollars' worth of minerals that could be good to our economy."

Energy diplomacy with Europe also remains a critical avenue for U.S. influence. The first Trump Administration's push for European imports of U.S. LNG aimed to diminish reliance on Russian gas, aligning with Ukraine's energy diversification goals. However, this strategy periodically clashed with U.S. support for Ukraine, as prioritizing American exports risked sidelining Ukraine's potential as a regional energy supplier. Balancing these interests requires nuanced diplomacy to ensure Ukraine's resources are not overshadowed by U.S. commercial ambitions.

A new era of resource politics

As the war in Ukraine enters a new and dangerous phase, its resolution will hinge as much on resource politics as on military and diplomatic measures. The distribution of Ukraine's vast mineral wealth will not only shape the outcome of the conflict but also influence Europe's energy future and the global supply of critical minerals and rare earths, not to mention hydrocarbons and agricultural commodities. A settlement that secures Ukraine's resource sovereignty could empower the country as a vital player in Europe's regional economy. Conversely, leaving significant assets under Russian control would perpetuate energy dependencies and geopolitical instability.

The Trump Administration's role in resolving the Ukraine conflict is likely to align closely with its broader energy strategy, focusing on deepening EU dependence on U.S. energy exports while maximizing resource politics to push allies for increased defense spending. Trump's repeated threats of tariffs, unless the EU increases its purchases of U.S. oil and gas, exemplify a transactional approach to resource diplomacy, where energy supply becomes both a carrot and a stick in transatlantic relations. By promoting U.S. energy dominance, the Trump administration aims to weaken European reliance on Russian resources and simultaneously secure long-term economic gains for American energy companies. At the same time, the strategy could also amplify tensions across the Western alliance. This is because Trump's unpredictable foreign policy risks alienating European allies even as it seeks to strengthen NATO's military capacity by advocating for increased defense budgets. These competing dynamics create opportunities for bold, unconventional resource diplomacy but also raise the stakes for the United States in shaping the resolution of the Ukraine-Russian war.

Ultimately, the riches of eastern Ukraine and the sea of Azov, from hydrocarbon resources to critical minerals and agriculture, are a linchpin to European security. Despite the centrality of these resources to European stability, the United States also seems to hold an outsized role in determining their future. These dynamics underscore the paradox of Europe's reliance on external powers to resolve a conflict that impacts its own sovereignty and security most directly. Whether this leads to a more resilient Europe, or entrenched dependencies will define not just the resolution of the Ukraine conflict but also the future of transatlantic relations in an era of global resource-driven geopolitics.

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—Horizons, Winter 2025

https://www.cirsd.org/en/horizons/horizons-winter-2025-issue-no-29/the-mineral-wars

Note to readers: While this article is neither anti-capitalist nor pro-socialist, it does expose in detail that the war on the people of Ukraine is essentially a scramble among the world's major powers—the United States, Russia and China—for hegemony in capital investment in the country's rich mineral resources. —Socialist Viewpoint Editors

Fighting Back ICE

An interview with a Chicago teacher

Gwen Lee Interviews Gabe Paez

November 10, 2025—Left Voice *spoke with Gabe Paez, a socialist teacher in Chicago, about how teachers, students, and communities are organizing to defend immigrant students from ICE and the role of educators in fighting against Trump's attacks.*

Since early September, Chicago has been the latest target of the Trump administration's brutal Immigration Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) raids. Trump has declared war on the city and threatened to send in the National Guard—as he has done in Los Angeles and Washington, DC—with the intent of undermining what few protections exist for immigrants living in these cities and expanding federal repression against working-class and oppressed communities as a whole.

Over the past two months, ICE has terrorized communities daily, including military-style raids in apartment buildings and even entering a daycare and abducting a teacher in front of her students. At the same time, there has been a significant response from workers and activists in Chicago against these attacks, and the recent mobilization of over 100,000 people in the city pushed Brandon Johnson to utter the words "general strike."

In the context of this important struggle, Left Voice *spoke with Gabe Paez, a bilingual middle school teacher for the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) and a member of the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU). The interview below is an adapted version of a video interview recently conducted with Gabe.*

Gwen Lee: Could you introduce yourself?

Gabe Paez: My name is Gabe Paez. I'm a bilingual middle school teacher. I teach Spanish language arts, English as a Second Language (ESL), and social studies, to kids in seventh and eighth grade who are in their first couple of years in the country. And I teach at one of the largest public elementary schools in the city of Chicago, with over a thousand students.

Last year, when Republican governors Greg Abbott of Texas and Ron DeSantis of Florida were busing migrant children from their states and dropping them off under viaducts in the middle of the night, my school was one of the places that received many of those kids. We now have over a hundred students who were likely sleeping in the police precinct across Pulaski Avenue, which is the major street near our school. Like many schools in CPS, we've become a welcoming site for newly arrived migrant students.

Chicago teachers protesting ICE.

I've spent the past 11 years in CPS teaching migrant children from first through eighth grade. I also served as a bilingual education coordinator for seven years, and this year I'm back in the classroom teaching full-time.

Gwen Lee: Chicago has been the target of ICE raids and a potential National Guard deployment by the Trump administration. What's the situation right now in Chicago? How have teachers and communities been fighting back and organizing to defend immigrant communities?

Gabe Paez: What's happening right now is literally a campaign of state terror against the city of Chicago. This isn't just the run-of-the-mill Biden-Obama deportation machine. What we're seeing is a particularly abhorrent piece of political propaganda. Even before Trump was reelected, he was openly promising a war against major American cities.

He doesn't like us because we have a labor history, a history of working-class resistance, because we welcome immigrants into our communities. That runs directly against the one-dimensional country he and his posse envision. They believe in using state power to control the demographic shift happening in this country—very explicitly and very openly—to maintain a white majority in the United States. People like Steve Bannon and Stephen Miller see ICE, Homeland

Security Investigations (HSI), and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) as forces to ethnically cleanse the country, as Dolores Huerta recently said on *Democracy Now!*

In Chicago, we're seeing daily raids across the city—south side, west side, north side. It began when they paraded militarized Proud Boys through downtown, grabbing anyone who was brown. You might have seen that viral video of a man on an electric bike escaping them. That's where it started, and now it's happening every single day.

I live in Albany Park, on the northwest side. I wake up around 5:30 in the morning, and soon after, I hear federal helicopters hovering over our neighborhood—right above our school buildings. They're flying so close that last Friday, our pre-K students had to cancel recess because the helicopter was shaking the building.

Imagine a child who already arrives with trauma, with their guard up, ready to learn and engage—and all they hear is the sound of helicopters. It's not only damaging to teachers, to our morale and our ability to do our jobs effectively—it's also shaping how these children experience school for the first time in their lives. They're learning to associate school with fear, with the sound of surveillance. Even the little ones know what's going on.

It's affecting everyone. Just last week, we heard neighborhood volunteers blowing their whistles from inside my classroom. At Funston Elementary, they had to call a lockdown because ICE dropped tear gas canisters right outside the school. Example after example of how schooling is being interrupted.

We still have our challenges, but compared to where we've been, we have 80 percent of kids who are graduating. Chicago Public Schools, not that long ago, was graduating 50 percent of kids. We are making growth. And now what we're seeing is a federal government who is impeding us moving in the right direction. They're suing CPS for our Black Student Success Plan. They've already pulled $8 million, which in CPS terms isn't that much, but that's just the beginning. They're dismantling the Department of Education that pays $20 billion to Title I schools like mine. And we know they want to also slash Title III funds, which are for immigrant English language learners (ELLs).

This is a program of austerity—one that has long been part of the Democrats' agenda—but now it's mixed in with an ethnonationalist fascism that wants to use every state organ and every state institution to instill an extreme right-wing agenda through every mechanism that it can.

...during the No King's Day March, the mayor of Chicago Brandon Johnson called for a general strike. And I think that's the language we have to start getting more comfortable with, even though it's fallen out of favor for a very long time in the U.S. There's a history of mass strike actions in this country

What that doesn't capture are the human consequences. The kids showing up to school after having their parents abducted. The ones going home to find their houses empty. The growing number of absences. Parents who are too afraid to enroll their children in after-school or before-school programs. Families who are too afraid to show up for report card pickup. It's tearing at the fabric of our school communities in ways that are impossible to fully convey in this conversation.

They have now even gone onto school campuses. Two weeks ago, federal agents went on to Decatur Classical Elementary School, which is very close to where I teach, and they grabbed someone who was doing yard work, an employee who was hired to be at the school, and they grabbed him from campus. If you can imagine them stepping to a green space at a school with children inside of the building, we know that the next step is going to be for them to try to come into the buildings.

We've had to harden our schools in ways we should never have to. Our jobs are already hard enough—we shouldn't have to worry about whether secret police are going to show up to take our students or their parents. We were already teaching in a carceral state, in overpoliced neighborhoods where mass incarceration has been devastating communities for decades. Now, on top of that, we're facing a secret police force tasked with snatching brown people off the streets—without informing their families, without their Alien Registration numbers appearing in the ICE database.

I know people who have simply been grabbed and disappeared—now rotting away in secret torture prisons in Libya, El Salvador, Louisiana—places with no oversight, no due process, no access to legal representation. This is the secret prison state the United States has always maintained—but now it's on steroids.

Gwen Lee: What organizing has been happening at schools, including your own school, to respond to these attacks?

Gabe Paez: Child Protective Services (CPS) and Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) to have come to an agreement that every school needs a sanctuary team. I'm on my school's team but I believe that the sanctuary team needs to be active in preparing schools, not just for if ICE comes knocking. What if they take a parent while the kids are at school? What if they show up at a field trip or a school event or during recess around the school building?

Education workers are the ones actually seeing kids day in and day out. So, it started just on a building-to-building level, but we quickly realized that it needed to become a formalized process. We're now talking beyond just a know-your-rights workshop, which we should be doing in every building. We're talking about creating procedures that we've never had to consider: what happens if a kid doesn't get picked up? What happens if a brother or sister gets taken?

It took the union pushing for CPS to agree to allow us to formally have these teams.

And we had to push for a very long time to get them to agree to it.

The walking school bus is one thing we've been doing. For folks who don't know what that is, it's a group of adults who will help parents who can't or don't want to leave the house for safety issues to walk their kids safely to and from school.

We're also having massive donations of groceries and food out to parents who cannot or are too afraid to go out to the grocery store. That's happening all the time in my school building.

Another thing is lines of communication. We do have a signal chat going on with our sanctuary team. And we're also very connected to the 33rd Ward, our alderperson is Rossana Rodriguez. She's a democratic socialist who is our city council representative, essentially, our alderperson. They've been very proactive with putting together these neighborhood watches, these volunteers, who I see as early as 6:30 in the morning, standing on every street corner around the school buildings in the neighborhood with their whistles, with their phones in hand, keeping an eye out.

There are lines of communication that have been vetted between those folks and then people in the school buildings. That way, if we see something, we let them know. If they see something, they let us know. If there's been raids during the school all day while we're in the building—and there have been many—we will often see them lining the sidewalks as we're dismissing kids out. It really is something you can feel. It's something that you can perceive. Something is really different. The community has been proactive in getting organized.

Gwen Lee: The Trump administration has been systematically attacking public education—dissolving the Department of Education, defunding schools, attacking Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), trans students, academic freedom, on top of the broader attacks on living conditions that impact people's ability to live and learn in safety. What do you think is the broader role that educators and workers at schools can play in fighting back against Trump's attacks on education?

I got tear-gassed in the West Bank, and then I got tear-gassed on my street, on the corner that I live in, in Chicago, in the third largest city in the U.S. And the manufacturer of that tear gas is the same company.

Gabe Paez: I think we need to recognize why they're coming after public education. Public education has always been a thorn in the side of the right-wing of this country. And now they have an opportune moment and the political machinery to finally dismantle the last universal system that is for everybody in this country. They can't stand the idea that every single child—any child who happens to be in the United States—has the right to an education. They can't stand being taxed for it. And what particularly triggers them is that undocumented children get to have a free education —although there are serious barriers to higher education for undocumented students in the U.S. But at least for K-12, this is the final frontier around a universal, freely accessible program in the United States. And that's why they want to privatize it to the end, and they want to cut it up—death by a thousand cuts.

That's why Linda McMahon is the perfect Education Secretary for them. This is someone who doesn't even have a substitute's license and couldn't do what we do for a single day. Yet now she is charged with basically destroying the Department of Education by design.

Our role as teachers is deeply intertwined with our role as members of the working class—as organized labor. Historically, that's the role we've always played in relation to right-wing politics. We've been the first and strongest line of defense against fascism and totalitarianism, because we have both the numbers and the productive power that the billionaire class simply doesn't.

So, if educators decided that there was going to be a general strike from coast to coast, that means that parents would also have to stay home. And if parents also have to stay home, that means that the employers and the corporations that depend on their labor would grind to a halt. The crux of creating the general strike today is through public education. We have to come to a halt to stop their machinery from kidnapping our children, from kidnapping our parents, from terrorizing our communities.

That's why during the No King's Day March, it went viral that the mayor of Chicago Brandon Johnson called for a general strike. And I think that's the language we have to start getting more comfortable with, even though it's fallen out of favor for a very long time in the U.S. There's a history of mass strike actions in this country that we just don't learn about. In fact, they've been purposely removed from popular education to make us believe that the labor

movement has always been as weak and as disempowered as it currently is.

But I do see a turn coming—through people who are already in unions, people who are going to be in unions, and people who are not in unions. We're workers, right? We're hurting more than we have in for a very long time.

I think that at the crux of it is the general strike, and that there is a rising tide of class consciousness that the Left has to jump on and push to its furthest degree. We have to bring those contradictions to light in a way that is not just theoretical. We're talking about seeing it in our neighborhood, seeing how the mechanism of the state is very openly crushing the working class, and the working class is disproportionately Brown and Black in this country, immigrants, and undocumented. They've always hated the poor, they've always hated the working class, and we've always fought back. This is how we got the eight-hour workday. This is how we got the right to unionize. This is how we got children out of mines, right? So, let's talk about how the few protections we do have were won because of the labor movement.

That's why it's time for a new labor movement. It's time for a new wave of labor actions and labor power.

Gwen Lee: An inspiring international example has been workers taking up the power of the strike to fight against the genocide in Palestine, to defend the Global Sumud Flotilla. Could speak to the connections between these issues and to the power of workers and taking up these struggles?

Gabe Paez: That's great that you brought that question up. So, in 2018, I spent two weeks in Palestine in Hebron with an organization called Youth Against Settlements. We were documenting road closures and all the daily harassment that Palestinians in Hebron have to live under. There's literally a street in the old town of Hebron where there's fencing above your head because Israeli settlers have taken over the second floor. They throw piss, and they throw bleach, and they throw rocks, and it's just really violent. It is apartheid. There's no doubting it.

But I bring that up because I got tear-gassed in the West Bank, and then I got tear-gassed on my street, on the corner that I live in, in Chicago, in the third largest city in the U.S. And the manufacturer of that tear gas is the same company.

...the connections between imperialism abroad and the oppression domestically is not just the actual weapons, but also the know-how and the ideology of using state power to crush the people at the bottom

All those weapons that were manufactured, all that know-how in oppression, all that surveillance—federal agents now have drones and helicopters in Chicago. All that machinery of war was fine-tuned and tested in Palestine. And now in Venezuela, the U.S. is about to start another war. In Libya, when the Obama administration destabilized that country, it left a place where people are still being sold into modern-day slavery and facing atrocities every day.

We know the list of U.S. interventions around the world, but that was never going to stay outside of the borders of the United States. That came home. It's been home. And now it's finetuned to a degree that we can't doubt the connections between an internal oppressive apparatus of the state and imperialism in other countries.

So, the connections between imperialism abroad and the oppression domestically is not just the actual weapons, but also the know-how and the ideology of using state power to crush the people at the bottom. And that's what's happening right now.

But what's also happening—because of this gut-wrenching genocide that everyone has now seen on their phones, on every single screen—is that it's pushed the American population in a way we can't come back from. There is no going back. There's no consensus on Israel anymore. It's broken. And thank God it's broken.

Gwen Lee: What else would you tell rank-and-file educators about how to organize to defend their immigrant students and fight for our rights?

Gabe Paez: I'd say, don't fall for the trap of, "You have to bargain for your wages, or you have to bargain for the well-being of your students." We can have both. We work our asses off. We work unpaid hours before school, after school, weekends. So, when we're talking about salary and benefits, and when we're talking about the rights of our students to dignity, to come to school without fear of deportation, to not have to worry about someone snatching their parents away—both of those are what we have to bargain for.

I would say that we have to stay united in our unions, but if at some point, leadership is drawing this false dichotomy of wages or bargaining for the common good—that needs to go. You simply cannot teach and then close your door and ignore the society and context in which you teach. So many of us are burning out because we've been taught to just close the door and teach your lesson. And then your kids are having a hard time academically or behaviorally, and you feel unsatisfied at work. And your test scores are showing that you're not teaching. And then suddenly teaching is undoable and we're out the door. Half of us leave by year five. And then let's talk

about teachers in West Virginia or in Florida who are basically in poverty teaching full-time, ununionized, and who are getting bullied out of their classrooms for putting a rainbow up.

This is where we're at with public education in the U.S. So, organize your unions along your values. If your values are liberation and working-class organization, then that's how your contracts need to look. Teachers, especially now, are more receptive than we've been in a long time. We feel like we're part of a civil rights movement because we are part of a civil rights movement. We're fighting for the civil right of every child to receive an education. Whether that child sleeps under a viaduct, or whether that child crossed the Darién Gap, or whether that child has a parent or doesn't, or anything, they need to have a safe and educational place that's paid for by the taxpayer, and that is a public good for everybody. And that's why we do what we do.

I'm a bilingual teacher because within this context of an underfunded, understaffed, underinvested in public education sphere, it's even more dire for our immigrant kids who are learning English, who are new to the country. They are dealing with acute physical and mental trauma. These are wonderful kids who have walked across war zones and across continents to make it into your classroom. They need teachers who can understand them, who understand their culture, and who can help connect them to the resources.

If there's young folks who are coming into their professional career or career changers out there, if you are bilingual, especially if you are a Spanish speaker, we sorely need you in Chicago public schools and in any large school district in the country.

—*Left Voice*, November 10, 2025

https://www.leftvoice.org/it-is-harming-the-fabric-of-our-school-communities-an-interview-with-a-chicago-teacher-on-fighting-back-ice/

The Working Class Can Win Universal Healthcare

By Kimberly Ann and Mike Pappas

On September 7, Zohran Mamdani stepped onto a Brooklyn College stage with a packed audience as a part of Bernie Sanders' Fight the Oligarchy campaign. He began a series of chants to highlight his wildly popular campaign promises, but when he yelled "universal," aiming to elicit the call for "childcare," the audience instead responded, "healthcare!" He tried again and the calls grew louder, with the crowd demanding "Universal Healthcare!"

And yet, while sharing the stage with Sanders, one of the figureheads of the fight for Medicare For All who put universal healthcare at the center of his extremely popular agenda during his two electoral campaigns, Mamdani's campaign has remained silent on the issue. Despite the profound crisis of care and the widespread support for universal healthcare in New York City and around the country, this policy is nowhere to be found in his platform, even as he proposes free, universal childcare.

As New York City's mayor elect, Mamdani's victory is a mandate against the *status quo* of capitalism. His campaign was built on the demands of free childcare, high-quality and low-cost public transit, and affordable rent. His rise from a little-known state assemblymember to mayor of the financial capital of the world is the result of a working class that has both hope and the will to reclaim their city from the stranglehold of the billionaires and be controlled by the people. His message resonated with voters who are increasingly squeezed by the cost of living in a city that's effectively a playground for the ultra-wealthy.

And while we fight for these demands and beyond, we need to be clear about the limits of Mamdani's platform—which does not include universal healthcare, despite the majority of Americans supporting a single-payer system—and the limits of solving the crisis of care under capitalism. Our fight for healthcare needs to come from below and go far beyond the ballot box. It can't be left in the hands of the capitalists, bourgeois politicians, and labor bureaucrats who aren't just

Zorhan Mamdani (center) speaking to healthcare workers in New York.

responsible for our current system but are unwilling and unable to change it.

A crisis of care in New York City and beyond

In NYC over half-a-million residents do not have health insurance, and far more are underinsured with insufficient coverage. For those that do have healthcare, costs have soared: the monthly premium for the average family has increased by 52 percent in the last ten years, and employer-based insurance is set to rise by six or seven percent in 2026 alone. Just seeking healthcare can be financially devastating—medical debt is one of the largest drivers of bankruptcy across the country.

Under these circumstances, it's no surprise that Mamdani's focus on affordability has made him popular not just in New York City, but nationally. Zohran is speaking to masses of folks who see themselves struggling to make ends meet, while the wealthy see their fortunes explode.

Circumstances stand to get more difficult for poor and working-class folks as President Trump and the Far Right continue to push policies that benefit the richest in our society. For example, Trump's "Big Beautiful Bill" (BBB) was a direct attack on public health which will see the gutting of healthcare for those who most need it while passing tax cuts for the most wealthy. Millions across the country risk being kicked off their insurance, and over 300 rural hospitals face closure.

In New York City, average monthly healthcare costs could rise by 38 percent and nearly two million people across the state could lose coverage altogether. There are now concerns that one-third of hospitals will have to close as a result of the BBB's cuts to Medicaid.

Trump has tried to push policies that would disproportionately hurt Democratic cities—for example, his recent claims that, as a result of the ongoing governmental shutdown, "we're only cutting Democrat programs." But cutting programs like Medicaid will also hurt his base, as revealed during a viral town hall that saw a Republican representative, Mike Flood, being screamed at and booed over Medicaid cuts in the deep red state of Nebraska.

Our fight for healthcare needs to come from below and go far beyond the ballot box. It can't be left in the hands of the capitalists, bourgeois politicians, and labor bureaucrats who aren't just responsible for our current system but are unwilling and unable to change it.

This explains the massive pushback even from Republicans around the BBB's passage—and why Trump is now trying to shore up his base through policies like his new TrumpRx, which aims to address rising pharmaceutical costs. Of course, drug costs are unlikely to drop significantly for most under TrumpRx, nor do drug companies see their profits threatened, as those participating saw their share prices increase post Trump's announcements.

On some level, Trump and the right also see the crisis of affordability under capitalism, and hope policies like TrumpRx can at the very least help with a perception that they are responding to crises that working-class people face.

Healthcare under capitalism: profits over health

The recent government shutdown exemplifies the crisis of the U.S. healthcare system. The shutdown itself is the Democrats' response to Trump's attempts to eradicate the already limited provisions of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). The funding package put forward by the Republican Party would send insurance premiums skyrocketing, effectively cutting off the 24 million people who do not get insurance from a job, from access to healthcare. It would also keep in place the cuts to healthcare programs for working and poor people established in the BBB.

But the crisis of care isn't the fault of individual policies or the current administration's far-right maneuvers. While Republicans—Trump and Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., in particular—have been at the vanguard of undermining public health, Democrats, too, have fought to keep the harmful profit-driven system in place. For years, despite occasionally holding congressional majorities, Democrats have been unwilling to pass universal healthcare or meaningfully rein in the industry's massive profits. After all, it was President Obama who passed the conservative, Heritage Foundation-inspired Affordable Care Act (ACA), and President Biden refused to endorse a universal healthcare system, vowing instead to strengthen the existing system.

Under both parties, the underlying reality of healthcare delivery in the U.S. remains unchallenged: corporate profits are put before health. The system relies on private insurance companies, pharmaceutical corporations, and for-profit hospitals that inflate costs and lead to unequal access to care. As we have explained:

> "Today, the capitalist economic model consolidates healthcare distribution into large, factory-like corporate centers of care where patients are just another number. In these centers 'health delivery' is seen as a 'product.' Institutions push for greater and greater 'efficiency' in the hopes of maximizing profits. While individual healthcare workers very likely care about giving the best care possible to each patient, this is not the goal of the health systems that they work under."

All private entities involved in healthcare—whether hospitals, pharmaceutical companies, insurance companies, care homes, or others—prioritize their bottom line over patient health. This is particularly true for Black, immigrant, and Indigenous communities, who are disproportionately likely to lack insurance and access to healthcare, and face discrimination in healthcare settings.

Under both parties, the underlying reality of healthcare delivery in the U.S. remains unchallenged: corporate profits are put before health.

The numbers speak for themselves: the U.S. spends the most on healthcare out of all high-income countries but has the worst outcomes.

In this sense, the struggle for a healthcare system that puts health over profits isn't being thwarted by individual bad actors, nor can it be solved by voting for the "right" candidates and canvassing for the "right" bills. Rather, our current system is the outcome of capitalism, and both parties are beholden to capitalist interests rather than working-class needs.

Mamdani can't guarantee universal healthcare, but the working class can

Mamdani's platform falls far short of a socialist program for healthcare.

He promises to, for example, "create a new corps of outreach workers to support New Yorkers navigating the healthcare system," increase hospital funding, and reject Medicare Advantage, a capitalist scheme to privatize Medicare and create a new frontier for the extraction of profit from the public healthcare system. He has also vowed to spend more on mental healthcare and prevent hospital closures.

These measures amount to tinkering at the edges of profit-driven healthcare and are grouped under the general goal of "tak[ing] on the fragmented, for-profit healthcare system and lower[ing] costs for everyone." In other words, his focus is on preserving the broken *status quo*, rather than building a healthcare system that puts people before profits.

Notably, he makes no mention of rank-and-file healthcare workers, only "unions and city and state partners." This sets himself up as ready to take on the role of middleman, between the CEOs of our exploitative healthcare institutions and the union bureaucrats that represent healthcare workers, leaving the rank and file out of the equation after they find their way to the ballot box.

But even if Mamdani explicitly proposed universal healthcare for New Yorkers—such as the New York Health Act (NYHA), which he supported as Assembly member but is now silent on—can he make it a reality once he assumes office? And why has Mamdani, who once openly supported the NYHA, now not even mentioned it?

We need look no further back than the 2016 and 2020 presidential campaigns of Bernie Sanders to see the fate that befalls politicians who want to take on the healthcare industry. Despite putting forward a vision of universal healthcare that inspired millions—many of whom now support Mamdani—Sanders's presidential campaigns were crushed by the Democratic establishment. Even as the electorate moves left on issues like healthcare, the Democrats will, at best, make vague promises to lower drug prices and maintain ACA subsidies.

We have seen how the Democratic Party pulls even the most progressive and combative politicians to the right, co-opting Sanders and the Squad and keeping them in line with the party's central goal of keeping the capitalist class content and in power as a party for the bourgeoisie, not the working class. This helps explain why Medicare For All has not been actually fought for, let alone achieved, through the Democratic Party, as it would drastically cut into the healthcare industrial complex's immense profits.

Workers have the power to fight for more

With Mamdani's momentous victory, there is a lot of well-earned excitement from the hundreds-of-thousands that mobilized to get their priorities to the top of the ticket. But this moment also requires a working-class strategy to win—and go beyond—Mamdani's limited platform.

Universal healthcare is not a fantasy; most countries already have some form of it. It can exist under capitalism, but it will not be won without a fight, especially in the era of capitalist crisis and decline of imperialist hegemony.

The numbers speak for themselves: the U.S. spends the most on healthcare out of all high-income countries but has the worst outcomes.

Workers—nurses, doctors, social workers, care workers, and others—make the healthcare system run. We don't need parasitic insurance, pharmaceutical, or hospital executives. Instead, we need to fight for worker-run healthcare that prioritizes patient health, not profits. This fight needs to come from the rank and file, not from union bureaucrats who often operate as top-down organizations, beholden to the bosses stifling the militancy of the rank and file.

The fight also needs the full solidarity of the rest of the working class. Attacks on healthcare can't be separated

from other attacks, like those on immigrants and other marginalized communities. Unions across sectors need to take up the fight for a healthcare system that puts people over profits.

We don't have to start from scratch—we've already seen many examples of rank-and-file organizing in the healthcare sector that show that we have the power to win our demands. We don't need our healthcare to be a talking point to draw voters towards the dead-end Democratic Party; we need it now, free, and under worker's control.

—*Left Voice*, November 11, 2025

https://www.leftvoice.org/universal-healthcare-is-missing-from-zohran-mamdanis-agenda-but-the-working-class-can-win-it/

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The Voices of Many Jews

By Patrick Lawrence

October 25, 2025—At last, at last, Jews with powerful voices have gathered *en masse*—a critical mass, I would say—to condemn Israel and the savage spree of murder, starvation and terror it inflicts as we speak upon the Palestinians of Gaza and the Occupied Territories of the West Bank.

You may by now be aware of the open letter signed by 450–plus American, European and Israeli Jews and made public this week. In it, this sprawling group of distinguished personages denounces the criminality of the Zionist regime and asserts "the universality of justice and the fair and equal application of international law." The signatories also call for the international community to impose immediate sanctions on apartheid Israel.

This is very big, in my read. I say this not because of what is in this document—calls for justice of this kind are by now many—but, straight to my point, for whose names are on it.

You may know of this letter, and you may not, I ought to add: *The Guardian* reported it in its October 22 editions. *Anadolu Ajansi*, the Turkish wire service, also had the story right away. *Arab News* had it, too. So did *Middle East Monitor*, *The New Indian Express*, and, stateside, *Common Dreams*. In Britain, *Jewish Voice for Liberation*, *J.V.L.*, picked it up.

But the British daily is, at this writing, alone among major Western media to report on this momentous call for worldwide action against the Zionist state. We read nothing of it in major Western media and hear nothing from the mainstream broadcasters. I will return to this important point shortly.

"Join the Worldwide Jewish Call," as the letter is titled, was organized and put out by an apparently ad hoc "coalition" called Jews Demand Action. The document and various appendages explaining it are here[1]. As the Jews Demand Action website makes clear, the intent is to announce a continually

Not In Our Name demonstration, Washington, D.C., November 4, 2025. (Diane Krauthamer, Flickr, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

engaged movement in the cause of justice—justice for Palestinians, justice for the Zionist fanatics guilty of perpetrating a genocide, a term the group uses with obvious conviction and also with obvious anger. Among much else, the letter features a form by way of which Jews can sign the petition and receive updates on actions to come.

"At last, a serious global Jewish call for sanctions on Israel," J.V.L., the British version of Jewish Voice for Peace in the United States, proclaimed in the above-noted report.

Yes, at last.

Lots of other Jews have stood publicly against the apartheid state, many for a long time. There is Rabbi Yaakov Shapiro, the wonderfully outspoken rabbi and author of *The Empty Wagon: Zionism's Journey from Identity Crisis to Identity Theft* (Bais Medrash and Primedia eLaunch, 2020). There is the aforementioned Jewish Voice for Peace, and the Jewish organizations and students active on university campuses and in the streets of major cities. Unqualified praise to them and the many like them I cannot list in full.

I have no certain idea why it took these hundreds of influential people with self-evident consciences so long to join these others against the entity that insists on calling itself "the Jewish state." To hazard a surmise, the past two years of Israel's unspeakable barbarism have surely been a torment for the signatories of this letter, as for countless Jews the world over, as they have sought to distinguish their faith and their traditions from the conduct of the ultra-nationalist regime that is supposed to merit their allegiance but has emphatically lost it.

If I had to choose one sentence in this letter above all others for its significance and power it would be this: "Our solidarity with Palestinians is not a betrayal of Judaism, then, but a fulfillment of it."

After this truth comes these:

> "When our sages taught that to destroy one life is to destroy an entire world, they did not carve exceptions for Palestinians. We shall not rest until this ceasefire carries forward into an end of occupation and apartheid."

"Our solidarity with Palestinians is not a betrayal of Judaism, then, but a fulfillment of it."

This is the conceptual frame within which the signatories address António Guterres, the U.N. secretary-general, as well as "presidents, prime ministers, heads of state, [and] permanent representatives to the United Nations." While approving of the ceasefire, or what remains of it at this point, the letter states,

> "And yet there should be no doubt that this ceasefire is fragile: Israeli forces remain in Gaza, the agreement makes no reference to the West Bank, the underlying conditions of occupation, apartheid, and the denial of Palestinian rights remain unaddressed."

> "As Jews and as human beings, we declare: Not in our name," the letter states. It then lists the four key demands the signatories advance in their names: Respect for the authority of the International Court of Justice (Yes!), a rejection of the complicity Western governments have forced upon their citizens, a full military withdrawal, the supply of aid and everything else needed to reconstruct Gaza, and, finally, "to refute false accusations of antisemitism that abusively deploy our collective history to tarnish those with whom we stand together in the pursuit of peace and justice" (Yes again times ten!)

You find some big names among the signatories (and the open letter does not give the full list): Daniel Levy, previously a "peace" negotiator for Israel and now a prominent critic; Gabor Maté, the physician-psychotherapist; Wallace Shawn, the playwright, actor, and reliable old leftie; Amy Eilberg, an American rabbi and activist; Peter Beinart (one of the organizers of Jews Demand Action), Naomi Klein, the "progressive" Canadian writer; Yuval Abraham, who co-directed *No Other Land*, the documentary that took an Oscar last year.

If I do not put the point too simply, these people speak not for the destruction of Israel but for its restoration to sanity—and, so, its salvation. They do not mention the two-state solution in their letter, but one gains the impression it is this for which they hope. One may differ strenuously with them on these points (as I do, emphatically), but what I will shorthand as their moderation is part of what makes their open letter so important: These are (shorthand again) mainstream Jews.

Who can say how carefully or how many presidents, prime ministers, U.N. reps, *etc.* will consider this letter? But this is not the salient point. This letter marks out the significantly worsening alienation between world Jewry and the state that is supposed to represent its home. And in so doing it widens and deepens the already evident isolation of the Jewish state. This latter effect may not be the intent of the open letter's signatories, but it will prove unmistakably to be among the document's consequences.

A growing consensus

"We represent the growing consensus of world Jews, not the Israeli government," the letter declares in one of its subheads. Exactly so. And as *The Guardian* piece cited above points out, the open letter should be read alongside some stunning numbers coming out of the most recent opinion polls. In a recent *Washington Post* survey, 61 percent of American Jews asked think Israel has committed war crimes in Gaza; just under 40 percent stand with the open letter's signatories: We witness a genocide.

In a poll that does not distinguish between Jews and non–Jews, The Brookings Institution finds that 45 percent of those surveyed think Israel is committing genocide. A recent poll conducted by Quinnipiac University indicates 50 percent of register voters agree; among Democratic voters the number is 77 percent. On Thursday *Reuters* published a survey indicating that 59 percent of the Jews and non–Jews polled think the United States should recognize Palestine as a sovereign state.

I see a highly significant conflict growing ever sharper between the increasing number of outspoken Jews of conscience and those many—and they remain very many—who continue to defend the righteousness of the Israeli terror machine. Things are getting especially awkward for mainstream media such as the Zionist-supervised *New York Times*, wherein we find no mention of Jews Demand Action and its forthright open letter. This cannot end well for the *Times* and all the pilot fish that follow it.

However long the *Times* stays silent, however many media billionaire Zionists take over and corrupt, however many Bari Weisses (Editor-in-Chief *of CBS News*) they put in high places, this will do nothing other than discredit these media. They are effectively complicit in the Zionists' defacement of the Judaic tradition. This is another way the open letter is important.

The world has long and urgently needed to hear from the "we" whose names are on this letter. Non–Jews need to learn of and make the distinction between Judaism and the frenzied Zionism that now rules Israel so they can think clearly of these questions. And as they are well aware, those Jews who reject Israel's ultra-nationalist Zionism must make themselves heard for the sake of Judaism, too.

I do not accept that any great wave of antisemitism is breaking upon us—there is no "ferocious surge," in Joe Biden's preposterous phrase. But the potential for such a turn, given the extent of Israel's inhumanity in combination with its claim to be "the Jewish home," is obvious.

The Zionist hoards love the threat of antisemitism: How well it serves their pernicious purpose. At last, this insidious ruse is countered by those whose voices count for most—the voices of Jews.

Patrick Lawrence, a correspondent abroad for many years, chiefly for the International Herald Tribune*, is a columnist, essayist, lecturer and author, most recently of* Journalists and Their Shadows*, available from Clarity Press or* via *Amazon. Other books include* Time No Longer: Americans After the American Century. *His Twitter account, @thefloutist, has been restored after years of being permanently censored.*

—*Consortium News*, October 25, 2025

https://consortiumnews.com/2025/10/25/patrick-lawrence-the-voices-of-many-jews/

1 JOIN THE WORLDWIDE JEWISH CALL *https://jewsdemandaction.org*

Malcolm X's Daughters Sue NYPD, FBI About Their Role in His Assassination

By Michael Smith

Malcolm X was assassinated 60 years ago in the Audubon Ballroom in Harlem. Assassination is a political murder. Will the truth about the role of the New York Police Department (NYPD) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in the murder and coverup finally come out? Malcolm X's daughters are plaintiffs in a lawsuit in Federal District Court in New York City to expose the NYPD and the FBI.

They have retained some of the great police misconduct litigators in the country including Chicago attorneys Flint Taylor and Ben Elson of the Peoples Law Office (PLO), Jonathan Moore and Luna Droubi in New York City, nationally recognized civil rights attorney Ben Crump and his associate Nabeha Shaer, and Newark attorney Ray Hamlin, who has represented the family for years.

The PLO got into the case because of their reputation in successfully suing the Chicago Police Department and the FBI years ago for their role in the murder and coverup of the 1969 assassination of the charismatic Black Panther Party chairman Fred Hampton.

In a recent interview, PLO attorney Flint Taylor told this writer that he believes Malcolm X, just like Fred Hampton, was targeted, in the words of FBI director Hoover, "to prevent the rise of a Messiah who could unify and electrify the militant Black Nationalist movement."

Malcolm X was 39-years-old. He lived in Queens with his wife and four

Malcolm X

daughters. On February 9, 1965, 12 days before his murder, he was denied entry to France because the French government was tipped off, likely by the CIA, about the plot to kill him and did not want it to happen on French soil. Five days later, Malcolm was back home in Queens when the house he lived in with his family was firebombed. They barely escaped. He was finally gunned down on February 21 as he was about to speak before his Organization of Afro-American Unity about his potentially very effective plan to bring the United States in front of the United Nations for racism.

The story we were all led to believe was that Malcolm X, who had been a member and leader of Elijah Muhammad's Nation of Islam, had developed differences with Elijah Muhammed, left the group, and was then killed by members of the Nation who were in the ballroom and shot him as he began to speak.

There's more to the story

But as we have recently learned, this is not the full story. The truth started coming out when Netflix did a six-part documentary on the assassination. This was followed up by a collaborative reinvestigation of the case by the Innocence Project and the New York County District Attorney's Office (DANY) which resulted in the exoneration of two of the falsely imprisoned, supposed killers. These two men, Muhammad Aziz and Khalil Islam, sued the NYPD and the FBI. They settled their lawsuit with the City of New York in 2022 for $26 million and their case against the FBI remains pending.

Documents in the Hampton murder revealed that the police in Chicago had an informant provocateur planted in the Black Panther Party. It was this person who drew up the floor plan of Hampton's apartment where he lay sleeping when he was killed. He was given money as a bonus for his good work.

The patterns revealed in the Hampton murder and the Malcolm X murder are substantially the same. It is suspected that the NYPD and the FBI collaborated in killing Malcolm just as the local police and the FBI had four years later in the murder of Hampton, and that they did not prevent the assassination of Malcolm X but rather encouraged it and then covered up who the real killers were.

The man who fired the shotgun blast that killed Malcolm X is now widely believed to be William Bradley, a member of the Nation of Islam's Newark *Mosque*. According to Attorney Taylor, there is evidence that Bradley may well have been an FBI informant. Attorney Taylor told this reporter that the FBI had a substantial file on Bradley and that several years after the assassination Bradley was arrested for robbing a New Jersey bank and when he appeared in court for his plea hearing, he passed a note to the judge, who then reduced his bail, and the Department Of Justice (DOJ) later dismissed the charges against Bradley but not against his co-defendant.

The lawsuit, one year later

Where does the suit stand now? It was brought a year ago. The defendant FBI has filed a motion to dismiss based on the statute of limitations having run. Three years. After all, the case is 60 years old.

In their response, plaintiffs' attorneys argued that the FBI cannot claim the statute of limitations bars the claim because it was their cover-up that prevented the true facts from coming out and thereby denied Malcolm's family their constitutional right to access to the courts.

The NYPD and the FBI have been slow to reveal the documents that were produced to the New York District Attorney during its reinvestigation that resulted in the exonerations of Aziz and Islam, but recently a large batch of documents were produced by DANY and the FBI. They were heavily redacted with black lines striking out names of informants, and other witnesses, sources, places and events.

Malcolm's family wants accountability and transparency. They want to lift the veil on what the federal and city police have done to them. And, as a part of any future settlement, they want funding made available to teach the truth about what happened in New York City public schools.

This is a form of reparations. It was awarded to the community in Chicago where now both eighth and tenth graders are taught that the Chicago Police Department tortured Black people to get false confessions. This was a victory won by community activists and the People's Law Office. Malcolm's family and their lawyers are now calling on Mayor-elect Zohran Mamdani and New York City, 60 years after the assassination, to give proper compensation to the family and restorative justice in the form of reparations to New York City, the nation and the world.

Malcolm X has been relegated to a harmless icon, the fate of many revolutionaries as V.I. Lenin, the leader of the Russian revolution, wrote. Malcolm's picture is even on a U.S. postage stamp. But this is now, who can tell the future.

It is altogether possible that what Malcolm X stood for, Black consciousness, unity in action, identity with those struggling against imperialism worldwide, independence from the two capitalist parties, self-defense by any means necessary, and a deep sense of love, as Che Guevara famously said, will be part of the consciousness of people in the struggles that are now unfolding.

—*The Indypendent*, December 19, 2025

https://indypendent.org/2025/12/malcolm-xs-daughters-sue-nypd-fbi-about-their-role-in-his-assassination/

No Contract, No Coffee

Starbucks baristas walk out

By Jenny Brown

Chanting "What's outrageous? Starbucks wages! What's appalling? Starbucks stalling! What's disgusting? Union busting!", Starbucks workers at stores across the country walked out November 13, 2025. They are on strike against unfair labor practices and the company's stonewalling at the bargaining table.

The strike started with 65 stores in 40 cities and could spread to as many as 550. The union, Starbucks Workers United, said it is prepared to make this the "longest and largest unfair labor practice strike in Starbucks history." After rounds of practice pickets in October and November, workers voted 92 percent to strike.

The strike started on Starbucks' big annual promotional "Red Cup Day," a day many workers dread, Sabina Aguirre, a Columbus, Ohio, barista told the *Labor Notes Podcast*. Starbucks distributes a re-usable cup with most drinks as a promotion, leading to long lines. "It's one of the busiest days for Starbucks all year," said Aguirre. "It's so well known to be a day of overwork and frustration on behalf of the employees."

Shun all Starbucks brew

The union has organized 650 stores, but the company operates 10,000 stores in the U.S., so striking baristas are asking everyone to shun all Starbucks stores, whether union or not, for the duration of the strike, and tell the company why.

Starbucks started bargaining with its unionized workers in February of 2024, after inflicting record unfair labor practices starting in 2021, when the first stores in Buffalo organized with Starbucks Workers United, a division of Workers United/SEIU. But then progress stopped.

"It was just very disheartening, because so much progress was made in the earlier part of 2024, before the new CEO, Brian [Niccol], took over in September of last year," said Tyler Cochran, who works in downtown Manhattan. "Obviously, we knew that getting to the economic portion of the bargaining is always going to be the most challenging part. So, the timing kind of aligned with Brian taking over." Niccol came from Chipotle, where the company closed the first store that filed to unionize, later paying $240,000 to workers in a settlement with the National Labor Relations Board. Niccol makes 666 times the pay of the average barista, Cochran said.

Niccol makes 666 times the pay of the average barista, Cochran said.

In the face of flagging sales, Niccol launched a billion-dollar program to refurbish stores to get people "Back to Starbucks," but baristas consistently say that adequate staffing is the main thing that would make stores more appealing to customers. Lines are often out the door, baristas said.

They also say that the company scrimps by not fixing broken equipment—they pointed to busted pitcher washers, leaking cold brew machines, and a refrigerator that wasn't fixed for a week, necessitating storing milk on the counter.

The company has dozens of unresolved unfair labor practices, most of them related to the company illegally punishing or surveilling workers for union activities, but also over workplace safety violations, said Aguirre. In addition to those, the top grievances strikers hope to fix with a contract are inadequate hours and pay that leaves them applying for food stamps.

Starbucks pays between $15 and $19-an-hour, except where the minimum wage is higher. Aguirre, in Columbus, said she makes $15.50. "Contrast that with earlier in the year when they threw a store manager convention in Las Vegas which cost an estimated $80 million," said Cochran. "It's like, you know, they have money that they're choosing to spend in certain ways."

Many baristas can't get health insurance or other benefits because they don't consistently get enough hours. Even for those that do receive it, if they drop below the hours limit over a six-month period they can lose their health insurance for another six months.

Paradoxically, while baristas are asking for more hours, understaffing persists. "It feels like we're constantly being made to do more with less," Aguirre said. "They assume that by placing a time constraint on [orders] it will automatically solve the problem when, as we all know, staffing fixes these issues, nothing else."

To learn where to support picket lines and help in other ways, go to nocontractnocoffee.org.

—*Labor Notes*, November 14, 2025

https://labornotes.org/2025/11/no-contract-means-no-coffee-starbucks-baristas-walk-out

Starbucks workers on strike.

Eve of Destruction

The devastating legacy of nuclear weapons tests

By Mac William Bishop

Lemeyo Abon learned about snow from the movies played on projectors by visiting American sailors. But living on Rongelap—a remote tropical atoll in the central Pacific Ocean—she had never seen it.

So, when soft flakes began falling from the sky, the then 14-year-old girl and her friends were enchanted by the new experience. They excitedly began playing with the fluffy white material.

But it wasn't snowing.

What was falling from the sky was highly radioactive pulverized coral ash, fallout from the largest nuclear explosion in history up to that date.

Abon felt her eyes and her respiratory tract burning as she played with the ash. By evening, everyone on the island was critically ill.

For years, the United States used the Marshall Islands, where Rongelap is located, as a testing ground for its nuclear program. The test on March 1, 1954, was called Castle Bravo, and it was 1,000 times more powerful than the bomb dropped on Hiroshima.

The detonation didn't go as planned. The bomb was more powerful than scientists had expected. Test observers were surprised by the blast's intensity, and rapid spread of fallout. They were forced to shelter in place in a protected bunker. Some 7,000 square miles of ocean would be contaminated. So were inhabited islands.

The Marshallese living in surrounding atolls didn't have protected bunkers. There was no warning to locals about the test, no mandatory evacuations in case something went wrong. In the days after Castle Bravo, residents of Rongelap were evacuated by the U.S. Navy, told they would be able to return home in a few weeks.

"It doesn't get any more pro-life than preventing the annihilation of humanity and potentially all of life on the planet."

"There's a picture of my grandfather holding a baby as they wait to be evacuated from Rongelap," Ariana Tibok, a member of the country's National Nuclear Commission, tells *Rolling Stone*. "You can see the scabs that are already forming on their skin."

Within a week of the incident, the U.S. government began a secret program to evaluate the impact of radiation on the islanders. Twenty of the 29 children on Rongelap would later develop thyroid cancer.

A fierce advocate for nuclear survivors, Abon told her story for decades, providing testimony to the United Nations. She died in 2018, without ever returning home.

More than 70 years later, and Rongelap—like three other atolls across the northern Marshalls: Bikini, Rongerik, and Eniwetok—is multigenerationally uninhabitable due to contamination from nuclear tests.

Arms race

"Because of other countries' testing programs, I have instructed the Department of War to start testing our nuclear weapons on an equal basis. That process will begin immediately,"

Castle Romeo was the code name given to one of the tests in the Operation Castle series of American thermonuclear tests beginning in March 1954 at Bikini Atoll.

President Donald Trump wrote in a post on social media on October 29, 2025.

The president's declaration appears to have been provoked by advanced weapons tests conducted by Russia.

Earlier in the day, President Vladimir Putin announced Russia had carried out successful tests of a torpedo called "Poseidon" and a cruise missile called "Storm Petrel." Both can carry nuclear warheads, but that isn't their distinguishing feature: They each use nuclear propulsion, enabling them to travel extremely long ranges.

"Both of these systems are designed to defeat U.S. missile defenses," says Dr. Jeffrey Lewis, an arms control specialist and professor of global security at Middlebury College. "They are ideas that date to the 1980s, when the Reagan administration was considering SDI (the Strategic Defense Initiative, also known as "Star Wars.") They were revived in the early 2000s, when George W. Bush pulled out of the ABM (Anti-Ballistic Missile) treaty, and they remain relevant because they would be used to evade Golden Dome," Trump's planned missile defense program.

In the wake of Trump's statement, officials offered equivocations about the administration's nuclear plans.

Vice Admiral Richard Correll, Trump's nominee to lead U.S. Strategic Command—which is in charge of America's nuclear arsenal—appeared in a confirmation hearing before the Senate on October 30th. He dismissed speculation about explosive testing of warheads. "I believe the quote was, 'start testing our nuclear weapons on an equal basis.' Neither China or Russia has conducted a nuclear explosive test, so I'm not reading anything into it, or reading anything out. To my knowledge, the last explosive nuclear testing was by North Korea, or Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)—and that was in 2017."

Most experts agree.

"As best I can tell there have been no tests of warheads," says Lewis. "These are just tests of delivery systems. The Russians ended explosive nuclear testing in the early 1990s and signed the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)."

Nevertheless, in an episode of *60 Minutes* on November 2, Norah O'Donnell asked Trump to clarify whether the U.S. was going "to start detonating nuclear weapons for testing?"

Trump replied: "I'm saying that we're going to test nuclear weapons like other countries do, yes."

"Russia's testing, and China's testing, but they don't talk about it," Trump later insisted, adding: "We're gonna test, because they test and others test."

Washington is rarely interested in having to pay for its sins, whether nuclear or otherwise.

Trump may have been referring to subcritical testing, in which small amounts of nuclear material are subjected to explosives without generating a nuclear chain reaction. The purpose is to assess the "safety, security, reliability, and effectiveness of America's nuclear warheads, without the use of nuclear explosive testing." All major nuclear powers conduct such tests—the U.S. completed a series of such experiments in July.

What, then, does "equal basis" mean? Experts say if there is evidence Russia and China are conducting something other than subcritical testing, it hasn't been made public. Lewis points out that the U.S. also regularly conducts tests of its nuclear delivery systems, including land-based and submarine-launched ballistic and cruise missiles.

Indeed, on November 5, the Air Force fired a warhead-less LGM-30 Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missile, or ICBM, from Vandenberg Space Force Base in California, across the Pacific to the Ronald Reagan Ballistic Missile Defense Test Site—on Kwajalein Atoll, in the Marshall Islands. Lieutenant Colonel. Karrie Wray, commander of the 576th Flight Test Squadron, said the test was designed "to verify and validate the ICBM system's ability to perform its critical mission."

"The idea that we aren't testing on an equal basis seems very strange to me," Lewis says, "except in the sense that we don't have exactly the same forces—so, we don't have a nuclear-powered cruise missile. On the other hand, we don't need a nuclear-powered cruise missile. The Russians don't have an amazing air defense network that we need to evade in a circuitous route."

Apparently in response to Trump's statements, Putin on November 5 ordered officials to start preparing for a "possible" resumption of explosive nuclear tests. He said Russia had adhered to its obligations under the CTBT, but that if the United States or any nuclear power carried out a test, Russia would do so, too.

Later that night the American president doubled down, again writing the U.S. would "start testing our Nuclear Weapons on an equal basis."

Experts are alarmed.

"All of the rhetoric that's been flying around about a potential return to testing is really disturbing," says Dr. Emma Belcher, president of the Ploughshares Fund, a nonprofit that works to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons. "We do know that there are people inside the administration—and outside the administration—who want the United States to return to testing."

During Trump's first term, administration officials awarded a contract to replace the Minuteman III with a new generation of ICBMs, the LG-35A Sentinel. The push to modernize America's nuclear "ground-based

deterrent" meshes with the collection of policy proposals written by the conservative Heritage Foundation, known as Project 2025. That proposal discusses the nation's nuclear program dozens of times, saying the U.S. must "indicate a willingness to conduct nuclear tests in response to adversary nuclear developments if necessary."

It also advises the Trump administration to "restore readiness to test nuclear weapons at the Nevada National Security Site," update nuclear forces "in light of China's modernization breakout," and pull out of the CTBT, which the U.S. signed, but never ratified.

The U.S. is far ahead of its nuclear adversaries in research and data about nuclear warheads, and experts *Rolling Stone* interviewed for this article believe explosive testing is not only strategically unnecessary, but, as several put it, "insane."

They're worried that the bulwark of cooperation intended to stave off nuclear disaster—nonproliferation treaties—is being dismantled, piece by piece. The U.S. has already withdrawn from two major agreements: The Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty in 2002, and the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty in 2019.

"On this issue, I really feel so strongly that it needs to be a bipartisan issue, that actually this should be the ultimate pro-life issue," says Dr. Ivana Hughes, a chemistry professor at Columbia University who studies the impact of nuclear testing, and who is the president of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation. "It doesn't get any more pro-life than preventing the annihilation of humanity and potentially all of life on the planet."

There are currently around 12,000 functional nuclear weapons worldwide. China is rapidly increasing its arsenal. In addition to the U.S. and Russia, other nuclear powers—like France and the U.K.—have ambitious plans to modernize theirs.

"We made lots of progress after the end of the Cold War and brought those numbers down, but now the numbers have either stayed the same or are really increasing—like in the case of China," Hughes says.

She desperately hopes the nonproliferation regime can be salvaged, including New START, a nuclear arms reduction treaty between Russia and the U.S. that is set to expire in February 2026.

In total, the U.S. detonated 1,054 nuclear weapons between 1945 and 1992.

Some Republicans hope to walk away from the accord. "New START was a one-sided agreement negotiated by Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton, and extended by Joe Biden," Senator Tom Cotton, R-Ark., posted on social media on November 6. "It's time to let it die its natural death and accelerate U.S. nuclear modernization."

Belcher, of Ploughshares, worries about the future of New START. "I actually have serious questions about whether the two sides can come to an agreement," she says. "The main point here is that when we abandon diplomacy, we signal that both restraint and transparency are optional."

"The crumbling of the nonproliferation regime is really worrying, because treaties that create the regime have the architecture to address challenges and violations," she adds. "And when there aren't any treaties, the only solution you've got is the building and deploying of more weapons."

Lewis, the arms control expert, is not optimistic.

"I used to say that it wasn't a race, but that we are lacing up our tennis shoes. Now I think we're jogging around the track and starting to accelerate," he says. "This won't happen all at once. It's not a race in the sense that there will be a starting gun. The whole process will just kind of pick-up momentum almost imperceptibly, until ten years from now we're all sitting in the midst of a really serious arms race, wondering: 'How did we get here?'"

"Gifts From God"

On a balmy weekday morning in Majuro, young children play fearlessly in the lagoon. Young boys commandeer sheets of wood from a pile of construction debris and use them as makeshift rafts that they row with planks, kayak-style. The boys are probably ten to 12 years old, and as they stroke in unison on alternate sides of their improvised craft, they sing cadence in their mother tongue. The scene is a miniature echo of the paintings of Marshallese warriors in traditional canoes, arms raised in unison mid-stroke, that grace the walls of a local hotel.

The world has long forgotten the early Cold War's nuclear tests. The Marshallese have not. The children aren't in school because it is Nuclear Remembrance Day, a national holiday in the Marshall Islands.

The collection of coral atolls, known historically by locals as *jolet jen Anij*—"Gifts from God"—were first settled by humans approximately 4,000 years ago. Starting in the 16th century, they changed hands between a series of imperial powers.

The tiny atolls have little in the way of resources; their primary value for outsiders is their strategic location. By the outset of World War II, the Japanese controlled the Marshalls, key outposts in their chain of defenses intended to keep the U.S. at bay.

In 1944, the U.S. Navy—at that point in the war a seasoned fighting force that had nearly perfected amphibious operations—reached the Marshalls, destroying the Japanese garrisons there. The battles killed more than 11,000 Japanese—and the forced laborers they had brought with them—with just over 600 Americans dying in the fighting.

A year later, the war ended when America used its newly developed atomic weapons on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.

When peace came, Europe was divided between the Soviet Union and its former Allies, and the Cold War had begun. The United States, still the world's only atomic power, wanted to demonstrate the awesome might of "The Bomb." It looked to the Marshall Islands.

President Harry S. Truman ordered the U.S. Navy to conduct an atomic test in 1946. The Soviets were invited to witness it. Dubbed Operation Crossroads, it was the first test since Trinity. The site chosen was Bikini Atoll, its massive lagoon filled with an armada of ships, allowing the military to study the effects of an atomic weapon on naval vessels.

But there was a catch: Bikini was inhabited. So, the Navy devised a plan to relocate the islanders, promising them they could later return. In truth, no one really knew the effects a nuclear test would have on the island.

There's archival film of U.S. Navy Commodore Ben H. Wyatt making the case to the Bikinians. Clad in his khaki service uniform, Wyatt sits on the trunk of a coconut palm, speaking through his interpreter: "Alright now James, will you tell them that the United States government now wants to attempt to turn this great destructive force into something good for mankind—and that these experiments here in Bikini are the first step in that direction."

The translator has a brief exchange with a man Wyatt calls "King Juda"—the *Iroij*, or paramount chief, of Bikini Atoll—who explains that his people understand and will agree to move, concluding simply: "Everything is in God's hands."

Wyatt replies: "That's fine… everything being in God's hands, it must be good."

The narration captures the hopes of the Atomic Age—or at least, the government's spin about nuclear testing:

"Concealed within the fiery terror that is the atomic bomb, are hidden the broader and nobler aspects of its mystery—the power for good rather than for evil. The ability to save, not destroy mankind. To build him a whole new world of atomically powered peace. It is to this glorious opportunity that the humble Bikinians are contributing their little all. I wonder… would you so readily give up your everything?"[1]

All of the world's nuclear powers combined have detonated some 2,000 nuclear weapons since 1945.

Nuclear sins

Alson Kelen remembers his ancestral home as a paradise. A Bikinian born in exile, his parents were forced to leave ahead of Operation Crossroads. They were told they would soon return.

It was 23-years-later when Bikinians were first allowed to go back. Without human inhabitants, the atoll had become a cornucopia of fruit and fish.

"You could walk out into the lagoon and just pick up fish in your arms," Kelen tells a reporter for *Rolling Stone*. "You didn't need fishing gear."

There is no word in Marshallese for "radiation." The closest approximation is "poison." When people talk about it, they simply use the loanword bomb or "*baam*," to describe radiation exposure.

"King Juda," who led his people into exile at the behest of the U.S. government, died of cancer in 1968, a year before his people started returning to the island.

The homecoming was premature.

"Although some radioactive contamination was still known to linger, it was believed at the time that restrictions on the consumption of certain native foods and provision of imported foods would make Bikini habitable," the Department of Energy notes in its report on Human Radiation Experiments. "Unfortunately, these assumptions proved wrong."

Scientists monitoring Bikinians became increasingly alarmed at evidence of cumulating radiation exposure. The island was re-evacuated in 1978.

"I can safely say that more than 95 percent of Bikinians, maybe even 97 percent of Bikinians, have never seen Bikini before," says Kelen, who served as mayor-in-exile of the atoll from 2009 to 2011. To most, "it's a myth."

"We don't want anybody else to go through what we went through. 'For the good of mankind' this happened, to bring peace to the world," he says. "That journey to bring peace to the world is still there, but we sacrificed everything for it."

In 1986, the U.S. ratified a "Compact of Free Association," or CFA, governing its relationship with the Marshall Islands. Washington effectively subsidizes the Marshallese government in exchange for military access—the most recent update of the CFA provides $700 million over four years.

The original CFA included a clause promising "a just and adequate settlement" to those harmed by nuclear testing. A $150 million trust fund was established to pay compensation. The independent tribunal adjudicating claims eventually awarded over $2 billion in damages. By 2000, it was clear the fund was insufficient to meet demand; most claims are unpaid. The tribunal effectively ceased operation in 2011; requests by Marshallese for the U.S. to replenish the nuclear compensation fund have been ignored.

Washington is rarely interested in having to pay for its sins, whether nuclear or otherwise.

Atmospheric testing, in particular, "caused the largest collective dose from man-made sources of radiation" in recorded history, researchers say.

Mary Dickson, who lived in Utah in 1962, blames the nuclear testing conducted in nearby Nevada for its lifelong impact on her health. She has worked for years trying to prove that her neighborhood, ensconced in a canyon near Salt Lake City, was particularly hard-hit from radiation exposure.

"We had no idea all that time what was working its way through our bodies. Sometimes it takes decades for the cancers to show up after exposure," she says. "I was in my 20s when I was diagnosed with thyroid cancer."

Dickson is a "downwinder," the term used to describe people exposed to radiation from atmospheric nuclear tests due to prevailing winds depositing dangerous levels of fallout.

"The government never did a very good job of tracking it, of monitoring it," Dickson says. "The vast majority of people who were affected will never know they were. They won't know that's what made them sick."

Throughout the Cold War, the U.S. continued conducting tests in the Pacific, and also on its own soil—in Nevada, where there were 100 atmospheric tests and some 800 underground tests, as well as in Alaska, where there were a series of underground tests. In total, the U.S. detonated 1,054 nuclear weapons between 1945 and 1992.

All of the world's nuclear powers combined have detonated some 2,000 nuclear weapons since 1945. The radioactive fallout from these tests has spread across the globe. Atmospheric testing, in particular, "caused the largest collective dose from man-made sources of radiation" in recorded history, researchers say.

Radionuclides—unstable elements that release radiation as they decay—from the tests will continue to spew their doses into the environment for centuries to come. With sufficient accumulation, radiation exposure can increase an individual's risk of multiple types of cancer. As data accumulates, understanding of the broader impact of testing is evolving—but there's obvious evidence people closest to the tests were the most affected.

A decades-long effort to get the U.S. government to acknowledge this resulted in the passage of the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act, or RECA, in 1990. The government has now paid out over $2.6 billion to more than 41,000 claimants in a dozen states since RECA was first passed.

Dickson was part of an effort to update and expand RECA, which passed earlier this year with bipartisan support in Congress. The expansion acknowledged that communities as far away as Missouri—where waste from the Manhattan Project was stored—had been affected by nuclear tests.

Nevertheless, Dickson notes, ultimately the burden of proof is on the individual, who must seek out decades-old medical records and proof of residence—in her case, from when she was a child—to file a successful claim.

"How unconscionable is it to even think about testing those weapons again, when we know the damage that they cause? We know there are real people who were harmed by those tests," Dickson says. "And I hate to call them tests. They are actual detonations of nuclear weapons."

Many questions remain about Trump's nuclear intentions. But the most fundamental question may be: Is explosive testing worth the cost?

Perhaps the answer can be found on Bikini Atoll.

—*Rolling Stone*, November 9, 2025

https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/politics-features/trump-test-nuclear-weapons-devastating-legacy-1235461867/

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1 This passage is a fictional quote attributed to a character named "The General" in an obscure science-fiction book titled *Project Mastodon* by David Omick, published in 1953. It does not represent a real-world historical quote or sentiment from an actual figure involved in atomic development or policy.

https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q="Concealed+within

Radionuclides—unstable elements that release radiation as they decay—from the tests will continue to spew their doses into the environment for centuries to come.

The Battle Over Israel Within the U.S. Labor Movement

Michael Arria Interviews Author Jeff Schuhrke

Haymarket Books, October 28, 2025

This year, on the eve of International Workers' Day, General Federation of Trade Unions in Gaza, published a call to the U.S. labor movement.

"This war would not have been possible without the unlimited U.S. support for the occupation, whether through military funding, political and diplomatic backing, or arms deals that kill our children, women, and elderly every day," it read. "The U.S. administration under Trump has continued what the previous administration started, becoming a direct accomplice in genocide, ignoring the voices of millions inside and outside of the United States, and an overwhelming majority of the nation, who reject this brutal aggression."

"Therefore, we call on you, the American labor unions, to translate your solidarity into effective actions that go beyond statements and speeches and create real pressure to stop this dirty war," it continued.

Over the years, many rank-and-file U.S. workers have engaged in such effective actions, but labor leadership has consistently backed Israel and even cracked down on organizers who have taken a stance on the issue.

Labor historian Jeff Schuhrke has published an important new book on this disconnect. No Neutrals There: U.S. Labor, Zionism, and the Struggle for Palestine *details how U.S. labor unions have played a key role in building and maintaining the state of Israel.*

Mondoweiss *U.S. correspondent Michael Arria recently spoke with Jeff Schuhrke about the book.*

Michael Arria: How was Zionism originally perceived by the U.S. labor movement? How was it specifically perceived by Jewish union members?

Jeff Schruke: When Zionism first emerged as a deliberate political project in the 1890s and early 1900s, its main spokespeople and champions were primarily middle- and upper-class bourgeois Jews in Europe, such as Theodore Herzl. The participants were not working-class Jewish folks. They were not leftists.

Working-class Jews, particularly in Eastern Europe, had their own organization that was founded the same year as the Zionist organization, called the Jewish Labor Bund. It was a socialist group. It was working-class Jews, men and women, who were rebelling against the Tsarist regime and the Russian empire, and also fighting back against exploitative working conditions.

Many of them worked in the factories in newly industrializing cities across Eastern Europe. They regarded Zionism as a major distraction from class struggle. It was a nationalist movement, and as socialists, they rejected nationalism. They believed that the working class should unite worldwide, regardless of nationality.

They also viewed Zionism as something of a fantasy, the idea that Jews were going to go to Palestine, which was already populated and, at that time, part of the Ottoman Empire. The idea of creating your own state seemed absurd, and it seemed much more practical to the working-class socialist Jews to work on improving their lives and their conditions where they already were.

It wasn't until around the 1910s that labor Zionism emerged as an attempt to fuse the nationalist and settler colonialist ideology of Zionism with the more socialistic, working-class-oriented politics of the Jewish Labor Bund.

The Labor Zionists, who were mostly working-class Jews, regarded the more bourgeois mainstream Zionists as having an inefficient way of going about settler colonialism. They thought the middle-class and upper-class Zionists were simply trying to appeal to major world powers like the British Empire, the U.S., or the Ottoman Empire and win a Jewish state through these diplomatic channels.

The Labor Zionists thought the best way to establish a Jewish state in Arab Palestine was to just literally go there and start colonizing the place. To start building their own economy, communal farms, cooperative villages, housing programs, schools, and industrial businesses. A transportation network, their own healthcare system, their own workers' bank, and literally lay the foundations for a Jewish State.

They wanted to do the settler colonialism themselves as workers and have

it all be centered on this ideology that sounded like socialism, but was actually premised on the exclusion, dispossession, and expulsion of the native Palestinian Arab population. They were consciously saying "Jews Only," and they weren't open to Palestinian workers.

If a Jewish employer was hiring native Arab workers, Zionists would go and try to literally force out those workers through direct physical force.

Slowly, this argument began to be made to working-class socialist Jews in Eastern Europe and in the United States that supporting Zionism was not so much about supporting nationalism; it was actually about [Jewish] working-class solidarity.

Starting in 1920, the primary instrument of this Zionism was the Histadrut, an organization often referred to as a trade union federation. In some ways, it was that, but it was so much more. The Histadrut was doing all the things I just mentioned. Setting up farms, healthcare networks, and a workers' bank. It was a major employer and paved the way for the eventual establishment of the state of Israel.

They were enforcing this racial line, excluding Palestinians and pushing them off to the margins economically in the hopes that this would push them off the land altogether.

Histadrut officials would appeal to Jewish American labor leaders, many of whom had come from the Jewish Labor Bund and were socialists. They were traditionally anti-Zionists, but the Histadrut appealed to them on the grounds that this was a matter of worker solidarity. They were asking Jewish-led unions in the U.S. for financial contributions for all of their settler colonial projects that they were doing in Palestine.

Michael Arria: Can you talk about the creation of Israel in 1948 and the role that unions played in that process?

Jeff Schruke: Over the last two years of genocide, whenever unions in the U.S. or union members have put forward statements in support of a ceasefire, or an arms embargo, or a boycott, critics will jump in and ask, why are unions talking about Palestine in the first place? Why are unions talking about Israel? This has nothing to do with the work of unions. They should just stay out of it.

The most basic argument of my book is that this position is completely ridiculous because unions in the U.S. have always been very much involved in this issue. They have never been neutral or silent on the question of Palestine.

Before 1948, the communist movement worldwide had been consistently anti-Zionist due to the belief that the entire working class needed to be united. So, they saw labor Zionism as being basically just a nationalist, racist form of worker organizing and generally rejected it in favor of having Jewish and Arab workers organizing together in Palestine.

In 1948, the U.S. labor movement was at its peak in terms of historic strength, thanks to the New Deal, World War II, and numerous major organizing campaigns that occurred in the 1930s and 1940s, as well as general support from the federal government. One in three workers in the U.S. was unionized, and unions had considerable economic and political strength during this period, exerting significant influence.

U.S. labor support for Zionism began as early as 1917, during World War I. The American Federation of Labor endorsed the Balfour Declaration in 1917 as part of its broader support for U.S. entry into the war. Then, as I mentioned, in 1920, the Histadrut was convincing Jewish American labor leaders to donate some of their union funds to help projects on the ground in Palestine under the guise of worker solidarity.

By the 1940s, support for Zionism extended beyond Jewish American labor leaders. It was supported, really more significantly, it was the non-Jewish Christian labor leaders. People like William Green, who was president of the AFL at the time, and Philip Murray, who was president of the CIO. Well-known, non-Jewish labor leaders like Walter Reuther, George Meany, and Jimmy Hoffa were strongly supporting Zionism by this point, partially because replacing class struggle with class collaboration in the service of nationalism was very similar to how the U.S. labor movement approached unionism at the time, but also because these high ranking U.S. labor officials were very much invested in U.S. empire and showing how they were loyal patriots supporting the U.S. government in the hopes of getting a seat at the table.

In terms of how they were supporting it, there were continued donations, with millions of dollars from union treasuries, union pension funds, strike funds, and healthcare funds going to these settler-colonial programs that were being established.

They were also lobbying President Harry Truman to immediately recognize Israel. The Truman government had actually imposed an arms embargo to try to reduce the bloodshed in the area, but U.S. unions were demanding that he lift that and send weapons to the Zionist militias like the Haganah, which became the IDF.

In 1948, approximately 30,000 members of the garment unions went on a

half-day strike. They left work early and traveled to Yankee Stadium in the Bronx for a large pro-Zionist rally, demanding that Truman immediately recognize Israel, lift the embargo, and send weapons to these Israel militias that were carrying out an ethnic cleansing campaign. In some cases, the garment unions were even voluntarily stitching together uniforms and caps for Zionist soldiers.

Michael Arria: Did the Red Scare and McCarthyism have an impact on U.S. union support for Israel? Would things have been any different if there hadn't been a purge of Communists from unions and a wider crackdown on the left?

Jeff Schruke: I think in the longer term, it could have gone a different way, but what's particularly complicated about that moment is that the Soviet Union initially supported the creation of Israel.

Before 1948, the communist movement worldwide had been consistently anti-Zionist due to the belief that the entire working class needed to be united. So, they saw labor Zionism as being basically just a nationalist, racist form of worker organizing and generally rejected it in favor of having Jewish and Arab workers organizing together in Palestine.

From about 1950 on, the Soviet Union's official policy was anti-Zionist, and it was highly critical of the state of Israel, supporting the surrounding Arab countries and the Palestinian liberation movement, but in that brief period around 1948, in the aftermath of World War II, the official Soviet policy was supporting Israel and that trickled down to many communist groups across the world. The Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc states were the crucial votes at the UN General Assembly when the 1947 partition plan, which basically set the stage for the Nakba, was passed.

It was also the communist government of Czechoslovakia that provided weapons to the Zionist militias that carried out the Nakba, because, as I said, the U.S. and the U.K. were enforcing an arms embargo at that time.

So even communist trade unionists in the U.S. were supporting Zionism and Israel, and then by the 1950s, they kind of went back to being anti-Zionist. Maybe if communists hadn't been systematically purged from the U.S. labor movement during the McCarthy period, then labor's position might have been different, but in that moment, at least in 1948, everyone was basically on the same page, unfortunately.

One idea that was popular in the 1980s, which I think should make a comeback within the labor movement, is what was called "economic conversion" for workers in the weapons industry. Today, we might call it a just transition but discussing how workers in the weapons industry can produce products that are not weapons, bombs, or missiles.

Certainly, after the post-World War II Red Scare and the onset of the Cold War, U.S. labor officials shifted significantly to the right, including those who had traditionally been more progressive, and this included many Jewish American labor leaders who had emerged from the Jewish labor movement.

They embraced anti-communism, in part because they believed in it ideologically, but it was also a political calculation. They were reacting to McCarthyism and Red Scare tactics that were always trying to paint unions as some kind of Soviet conspiracy. So, they tried to distance themselves from any left-wing radicalism. Many U.S. labor officials really became full-throated cold warriors.

Then you had the Vietnam War and the AFL-CIO's formal partnership with the CIA and the State Department. They were trying to undermine any kind of left-wing type of labor movement all around the world, not just actual communists, but anyone, any type of union that was oppositional to the power of imperialism. The AFL-CIO worked with the U.S. government to try to undermine those unions. The more radical and left-wing elements of the labor movement had already been marginalized and sidelined, so all this went largely unchallenged.

Michael Arria: We've been discussing union leadership, and there's obviously been a long history of solidarity efforts among rank-and-file workers that defy the reality you're detailing. Your book details important organizing efforts from the 1970s and 1980s, such as the Detroit autoworkers' strike for Palestine in 1973.

Can you talk about some of that organizing and the reaction from union leadership?

Jeff Schruke: I always try to make it clear when I talk about U.S. labor support for imperialism, Zionism, and colonialism that it's not the labor movement writ large; it's the labor officialdom. It's the high-ranking leaders, union presidents, and so on. The rank-and-file members might have different ideas. This is why union democracy is so vital in all these questions.

Throughout all this history, there have been various examples of rank-and-file union members protesting against their own union leaders' support for Israel.

A great example, like you said, is 1973 when 2,000 Arab-American auto

workers in Detroit who were members of the United Auto Workers, led a wildcat strike for one day at the main Dodge assembly plant and shut down production to protest not just constant racial discrimination and harassment that they were facing from their employers and union representatives, who were pretty much all white, but also the fact the UAW had invested about $780,000 into the state of Israel.

They did it through Israel Bonds. They were using union members' dues money to invest in the oppression of Palestinians, and many of these Arab-American auto workers were understandably upset that their own dues money was being used for this purpose.

One of the workers' demands was for union leadership to divest its bond holdings from Israel. They formed an Arab worker's caucus within the UAW to try to assert their voices, not only around Palestine and the bond issue, but also to demand more representation in the union itself, more democracy in the union, and the direct election of union representatives.

That's something that only, finally, happened in 2022 with the election of Shawn Fain. That was the first time the union had a direct election, with members voting directly for the union's top officers. That was something that these Arab workers had proposed back in the 1970s.

Then, moving ahead to the 1980s during the First Intifada, there was a growing number of rank-and-file union members trying to educate and organize within their unions about Palestine and making the direct comparison to apartheid South Africa.

Many U.S. labor leaders were, to their credit, enthusiastically supporting boycotting and divesting from apartheid South Africa. They were supporting Black South African trade unionists who were facing repression and pressuring the Reagan administration to impose sanctions on South Africa until apartheid was ended.

Many rank-and-file union members were clearly supporting those efforts, including many African American workers, so it was natural to make the comparison to say, look what Israel is doing to Palestinians, especially in the West Bank and Gaza, while the Intifada was happening.

So, for the first time, there started to be a more coordinated effort from rank-and-file union members to show solidarity with Palestine and to challenge the labor officialdom's traditional support for Israel. In 1988, there was the first delegation of U.S. Unionists going to the West Bank to see what conditions were like for Palestinian workers living under the military occupation. Such incidents were beginning to occur.

There has to be a transition to a more humane, rational kind of economy that isn't premised on death and destruction.

If we fast-forward to the Second Intifada, when the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement was first officially launched in 2005, around the same time, in 2004, a group of rank-and-file union members and local union leaders around the country founded Labor for Palestine as a permanent network of organizing within the U.S. labor movement that stands in solidarity with Palestine and tries to push unions to support the boycott movement.

This prompted a crackdown from high-ranking union officials who were trying to make sure that their unions would not embrace BDS and would not become too critical of Israel.

That's pretty much been the story for the last twenty years. Whenever UAW members or another union pass a BDS resolution democratically, the high-ranking national union officials will overturn that decision.

Again, it comes down to union democracy. The rank-and-file are democratically and collectively saying, we don't want to continue our union support for the state of Israel, and the leadership is rejecting that

Michael Arria: Polling shows that support for Israel has dropped among the U.S. population, particularly among Democratic voters. The Democrats are still associated with the labor movement to some extent, and I'm wondering if you believe that's shifted the unions in any capacity.

Jeff Schruke: I think if we're just talking about rank-and-file union members, there's definitely been a shift.

For example, every year, *Labor Notes*[1] hosts a large conference of rank-and-file union activists in Chicago. I was at last year's conference, and you saw people wearing *keffiyehs* [Palestinian scarves] everywhere. There were at least four or five panels about Palestine. All pro-Palestine. Panels about how the labor movement can show more solidarity with Palestinians mainly.

Each of those panels was jam-packed. It was standing room only. That anecdote shows you the prevailing attitude among union activists.

In the last couple of years, there have been multiple efforts at the grassroots level, where union members are demanding a ceasefire, demanding an arms embargo, and pushing for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) on Israel.

At the University of California, graduate workers, postdoctoral scholars, and other academic staff, represented by UAW Local 4811, went on strike for several weeks in the spring of 2024 in solidarity with the Gaza solidarity student encampments. So that's all very significant. I think we've seen

more Palestine solidarity in the U.S. labor movement in the last two years than at any other time in history.

You even had high-ranking union leaders and labor union presidents call for a ceasefire. Last summer, seven unions, including two of the largest unions in the country, the National Education Association and the Service Employees International Union, sent a letter to Joe Biden demanding an arms embargo on Israel.

This is all significant. However, the problem is that all that has come from high-ranking union officials have just been statements and resolutions. There hasn't been much actual action.

Take the UAW, for example. They called for an immediate ceasefire and then turned around to endorse Joe Biden in the presidential race without attempting to secure any concessions from him on the issue. At least there were no efforts we could see publicly.

So, there's been a shift in language, but not enough action.

Michael Arria: What are some concrete things unions could do to wield their power on this issue?

Jeff Schruke: The divestment of union pension money from BDS targets. Having that be an official policy and then actually doing it.

A boycott on products moving to or from Israel. That's especially relevant for logistics workers, dock workers, railroad workers, and warehouse workers.

We've seen tech workers take a lot of action on this issue, even though they're not unionized. Microsoft workers have pressured the company as part of the No Azure for Apartheid[2] campaign.

You have university workers and engineering students whose research at the academic level supports the technology of the Israeli war machine and the U.S. military industrial complex. I think the unions that represent those workers need to provide more political education and clearly explain the realities of the labor they're doing and the destruction it's contributing to.

One idea that was popular in the 1980s, which I think should make a comeback within the labor movement, is what was called "economic conversion" for workers in the weapons industry. Today, we might call it a just transition but discussing how workers in the weapons industry can produce products that are not weapons, bombs, or missiles. Socially useful civilian products, like medical equipment, green energy components, public transit vehicles, and things like that.

The companies these workers work for, these executives at these companies are the ones who are making huge profits off of death and destruction that the U.S. government is giving them through contracts. That's who the real enemy is.

There has to be a discussion of what happens to these workers' livelihoods. There has to be a transition to a more humane, rational kind of economy that isn't premised on death and destruction. So having those kinds of conversations, doing that kind of political education, that's something unions really can and should be taking the lead on.

Democrats also rely on unions, not just for donations to their campaigns, but especially for get-out-the-vote efforts, where union members go door-to-door and canvass for political candidates.

So, it's important for unions to have a policy that says we're not going to support candidates who are blindly pro-genocide and who will just stand by Israel no matter what. They're going to have to say, we will only support and lend our resources, time, and energy to supporting candidates who are in favor of Palestinian liberation and are not going to be just blindly backing Israel.

—*Mondoweiss*, November 20, 2025

https://mondoweiss.net/2025/11/the-ongoing-battle-over-israel-within-the-u-s-labor-movement/

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1 *https://labornotes.org*

2 *https://noazureforapartheid.com*

To Free Labor

The triumphs and travails of American Marxism.

By Robin Blackburn

University of Chicago Press, May 29, 2025

Karl Marx never visited the United States, but he was long fascinated by the lure—and contradictions—of American freedom. As a young man, he applied for permission to emigrate to Texas. But he couldn't tear himself away from the debates gripping the Young Hegelians as Europe's old order crumbled in the 1840s. Later, he would correspond with many of his contemporaries who traveled across the Atlantic, including a set of comrades who would go on to publish two of his outstanding early works: *The Communist Manifesto*, coauthored with Friedrich Engels, published in German and French in 1838 and in English in 1850, and *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, first published in German, in New York, in 1852.

More surprisingly, Marx's gifts as an essayist and social observer led *The New York Tribune* to appoint him as its London correspondent. Between 1853 and 1861, he contributed 487 articles to the *Tribune*, a journal with around 200,000 subscribers in the 1850s, making it the second-most-read American newspaper.

In the years that followed, movements and parties would rally under the banner of his socialist politics. While Marx did not necessarily become a household name in the United States, he would nonetheless motivate generations of radicals to take up the cause of socialism.

In *Karl Marx in America*, Andrew Hartman provides us with a kaleidoscopic vision of Marxism in the United States in the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries. Responding to Marx's fiercest critics—Mikhail Bakunin, Friedrich Hayek, Leszek Kołakowski, Isaiah Berlin—as well as his staunchest admirers and collaborators—Engels, Jack London, John Reed, C. Wright Mills, Howard Zinn, and Fredric Jameson—Hartman tells the story of how Marx and his followers "put their stamp" on American life and thought. Taking the Civil War as his starting point for this trenchant survey of the American left, Hartman offers us dozens of portraits of Marxism's main protagonists—including Eugene Debs, W.E.B. Du Bois, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Louise Bryant, Harry Haywood, Daniel De Leon, Mother Jones, Claude McKay, Oliver C. Cox, and C.L.R. James—and charts their triumphs and travails all the way up to the present.

The North America that Marx once contemplated moving to was defined by industrialization, labor unrest, and the expansion of slavery. The United States of the 1840s was not yet industrialized, but it was moving in that direction with the construction of roads, canals, and railroads and the emergence of a large, mobile, and varied workforce. At the same time, the country's increasingly commercialized agricultural sector—farms as well as plantations, storekeepers as well as merchants, indebted producers as well as addicted consumers—also began to channel a rural labor surplus to the advancing frontier of commodity production and wage labor.

Hartman stresses the impact that slavery in the U.S. had on Marx's thoughts on labor, freedom, and capitalist exploitation. Recent findings by the economic historians John Clegg and Bonnie Martin have also emphasized the connection between slavery and capitalism, explaining how Southern planters were able to obtain ever-larger loans from merchant bankers by offering their slaveholdings as collateral for further investment in the cotton economy. While the boom phase of the cycle spelled more broken families for the enslaved, the bust phase spelled ruin for those—whether planters, farmers, merchants, or storekeepers—who had overborrowed. Merchant creditors had sought to limit losses by persuading British Parliament to enact the Act for the More Easy Recovery of Debts in 1732, which would allow them to seize slaves and land to satisfy delinquent debts of slaveholders. Under these new creditor-debtor relations, the supply of credit increased while interest rates decreased, thereby boosting trade in the colonies. The credit regime installed by the act carried over into the post-colonial era, and while it worked for wealthy planters and the state, who could invest surplus cash into the economy, it led to a new age of speculative fevers and burst bubbles, which both alarmed the heavily indebted slave owners and spurred them—along with all the other colliding factors in the prewar years—to the desperate gamble of secession.

Marx followed this war of secession closely when it arrived. He was convinced that labor in a white skin could not be free if labor in a Black skin was still in chains. Marx's ideas became more popular among those wage workers in the North who found that abolition and Reconstruction had not changed employers' virulent hostility to trade unions and strikes. Yet neither had it fully emancipated the workers in the South. The Civil War marked the end of slavery, and the contours of a multiracial democracy began to emerge in its place, with Reconstruction administrations sponsoring public schools, clinics, and even police. But when the Union forces finally departed, they left behind a vacuum that white Southerners, in particular the Ku Klux Klan and the creators of Jim Crow laws, would exploit to reorganize white supremacy in the South.

Working men and women started to look for answers—and one place they looked was in the writings of Marx, in particular his masterpiece *Capital*. Published in German in 1867 and in English in the 1880s, it was the cornerstone of Marx's reputation as a political economist, but it also helped inspire a set of new labor movements and political parties throughout the North Atlantic as more and more workers, frustrated by the modest gains afforded to them under the capitalist system, sought to do something about it.

By the early decades of the 20th century, the United States had two trade union federations, three socialist parties, four socialist publishing houses, at least a half-dozen left-wing magazines, and many scores of American Marxist and socialist authors. First came the Socialist Labor Party, founded in the late 19th century, then the Socialist Party of America, founded in the early 20th century, and the Communist Party of America, which emerged in the wake of the 1917 revolution in Russia. Because of the vast and varied nature of the continental United States, as well as the diverse cultural and religious affiliations of its huge influx of immigrants, the European model of a national social democracy would prove difficult to imitate.

All of these parties were, in one way or another, followers of Marx and Engels, and yet each had its own blind spots and shibboleths. They breathed a spirit of syndicalist resistance and rallied to the defense of strikes, but they also shared a vein of religiosity. They held meetings and social gatherings and circulated magazines and newspapers even as they offered differing views of the same political tradition. Daniel De Leon, the leader of the Socialist Labor Party, lectured on international law at Columbia University, while Eugene Debs was wary of "intellectuals." Some labor leaders condemned slavery and racism, and a few were radical abolitionists, but they often did not encourage Black self-organization and cultural expression.

Meanwhile, some members of the Socialist Party took a different approach: They responded to the social devastation of capitalism by opting for a municipal or "sewer" socialism—a set of reforms that created mini welfare states within cities that might alleviate the deprivation faced by workers. This development caused Vladimir Lenin some concern: He worried that these socialists would leave behind the grand goals of socialism in the midst of all their reformism and would also forget the imperatives of class struggle, writing that in elevating "municipal socialism to a special 'trend' precisely because it dreams of social peace, of class conciliation," they risked diverting "public attention away from the fundamental questions of the economic system as a whole…to minor questions of local self-government."

Lenin was, of course, wrong to treat sewers as an unimportant component of public health. In many instances they have doubled life-expectancy, and the Bolsheviks did not neglect sewers and positively gloried in the underground, as in Moscow's magnificent metro. But Lenin's criticism did signal a larger rupture to come. As most socialists directed their attention to opposing the United States' entrance into World War I while also attempting to avoid arrest in the midst of a vicious Red Scare in 1919, a group of younger radicals, inspired by the Russian Revolution, formed what became a unified Communist Party, with a membership reaching around 66,000 in the 1930s.

The Communists mounted imaginative recruiting campaigns among autoworkers, miners, textile workers, and the cultural workforce in Hollywood. They also committed themselves to the cause of civil rights and Black independence throughout the Union. In New York, New Jersey, Chicago, San Francisco, and a few other industrial and proto-industrial enclosures, capitalism was surging ahead, and they were determined to resist it.

As Hartman shows, the term Marxist really belongs to the 20th century, but these growing parties and movements were part of several cohorts willing to reinvent Marxist ideas as well as pay homage to their progenitor. Marx insisted that his socialism was "scientific" and that its values were those developed by the workers' movement in its resistance to capitalism, and so in a way it was fitting that his ideas were then adapted to meet the exigencies and needs of labor's continuing struggle against capital. Even the chroniclers of the Roaring Twenties came to find something they could admire in Marx. F. Scott Fitzgerald insisted to his daughter that she read "the terrible chapter in *Das Kapital* on the Working Day, and see if you are ever quite the same."

Karl Marx in America includes a photo of Leon Trotsky and a brief account of his ten-week stay in New York in 1917. But Trotsky's main influence on America came later. As

Hartman observes, it was when he went into exile for the second time, in 1929, that Trotsky was adopted as a guide and authority by a generation of New York intellectuals that included Sidney Hook, Max Eastman, James Burnham, Irving Howe, Mary McCarthy, and many other contributors to left-wing magazines such as *The Masses* and *Partisan Review*.

Hartman charts how a revulsion at Stalin's tyranny motivated many of Trotsky's American followers, who were drawn to his vigorous critiques of the USSR. But as fascism began to spread in Europe, these American radicals also found themselves drawn to Trotsky's eloquent warnings of the mortal threat to democracy that Hitler's rise represented. While the corruptions of "bourgeois democracy" were an unlovely spectacle, Trotsky urged that all sections of the workers' movement should rally to the defense of representative institutions and freedoms. As his biographer Isaac Deutscher has insisted, this was an important clarification, and one that would be elaborated by George Novack and others who remained aligned with Trotsky.

Parallel to the much-heralded New York Intellectuals, another Marxist tendency also emerged in the United States. Raya Dunayevskaya, a Russian *émigré* who once served as Trotsky's secretary, had a special concern for placing Marx's ideas within the American context. She argued that liberal representative regimes were too distant from the mass of citizens while all too open to the imperatives of capital.

Hartman also examines later Marxists such as Angela Davis, who came of age in the late 1960s, and those who were not Marxists but avowed many of Marx's ideas in their critiques of Cold War and post–Cold War America. Noam Chomsky, for example, cannot be called a Marxist—he has often pointed instead to his anarchist origins and commitments—but he too has been a vigorous critic of corporate liberalism. And Naomi Klein, with her broad scope and admirable tenacity, has also revisited and updated many of Marx's concerns in her critiques of globalization and disaster capitalism.

..."the 'NLRA' was also a clear means of reducing labor militancy. It brought an unruly working class into the fold of the Democratic Party.... The Second New Deal, even in its most pro-labor form, was by no means Marxist."

In *Karl Marx in America*, Hartman sticks mainly to the world of ideas; there is little here on the outcomes of elections, barricades, or battles. But he also considers how Marxism in the United States was both shaped and hindered by more mainstream liberal politics. In a section on the New Deal, for example, he examines how Franklin Roosevelt, a patrician who wanted to "save capitalism from itself," initiated a series of crucial innovations in the United States, most of them aimed at restoring financial stability, that also ended up buttressing a wave of trade union and progressive mobilization.

While perhaps none of the radicals whom Roosevelt had to turn to for support were Marxists, they would eventually hold his feet to the fire and ensure that his Second New Deal of 1935 reached farther than the first. Radicals who were competing for his base of supporters would push him farther to the left as well. The Louisiana politician Huey Long's "Share Our Wealth" program, premised on a radical redistribution of wealth and massive public works spending, spurred Roosevelt to embrace more audacious approaches to economic planning, including the Works Progress Administration, which went even farther than his earlier works projects in putting millions of the unemployed to work on infrastructure. Meanwhile, a movement led by California doctor Francis Townsend "helped shape Roosevelt's 1935 Social Security Act," Hartman notes, and "a rapidly growing and increasingly militant labor movement" spurred the Democratic-controlled Congress to pass the Wagner Act, or as it was formally known, the National Labor Relations Act, which "forbade employers from interfering with employee efforts to form unions and included the mechanisms to enforce this."

Hartman describes the Wagner Act as "an unparalleled victory for the American working class." Yet he notes as well that "the 'NLRA' was also a clear means of reducing labor militancy. It brought an unruly working class into the fold of the Democratic Party.... The Second New Deal, even in its most pro-labor form, was by no means Marxist."

For Hartman, this was part of the quandary that Marxists and socialists faced: The New Deal may have uplifted labor, but it disempowered it as well. Those elements of the New Deal that helped labor—the NLRA, Social Security, the welfare agencies—did not place decision-making or the means of production into the hands of the working class. Instead, they were highly complex instruments that required intricate, well-informed, and deliberate coordination by liberal technocrats.

A group of Marxists involved with the magazine *Science and Society* warned of the dangers of imagining that there could be an enduring alliance with big business. In 1966, Paul Sweezy and Paul Baran's impressive book *Monopoly Capital* buttressed this argument by situating it within fascinating debates on the history of capitalism.

But socialists and Marxists also faced new challenges that they had not anticipated and could not fully overcome. The Cold War placed additional pressures on the provision of social goods, saw the emergence of a strident anti-communism, and marked the gradual erosion of benefits as classical, as well as neo-national, business competition created openings that both neoliberals and neoconservatives would go on to exploit. In the end, some American socialists had to support what they otherwise might have been critical of: Many ended up defending the welfare state as a progressive and worthy cause, even if it did not lead to the further empowerment of labor.

Upon completing *Karl Marx in America*, I found myself thinking about who else Hartman might have included in a book that already includes so much. William Morris surely had some American followers (and *The Masses* must have had a cover that he devised?), and Raymond Williams as well. These two men were not American-born and did not spend much time in the United States, even if they influenced American thought. Simone de Beauvoir, who has only one mention in the book, also comes to mind, though citations of Juliet Mitchell's and Shulamith Firestone's work help make up for this. Charlie Chaplin could have possibly been given a cameo, and Bertolt Brecht makes only two, fleeting appearances. These artists had the genius to convey the conflicting moods and responsibilities of the period—and to sound the alarm.

There is also the question of where American Marxism fits in today. Hartman sees the extraordinary perils of a new Cold War, of a dead planet, of the imperatives of social justice, and of irresponsible tech companies all lending great relevance to the story of *Karl Marx in America*.

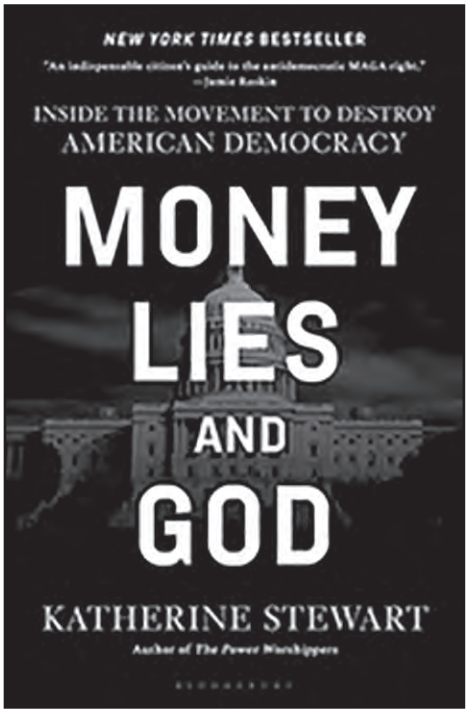
The last quarter of the 20th century saw the country moving away from decently furnished public education and health services and toward outrageous inequality, privatization, and reinvented myths of racial destiny. Yet the first quarter of the 21st century has witnessed great arcs of resistance aimed at rescuing the promise of decolonization, democratization, and public welfare. When the great monopolies and cartels begin to destroy themselves and the creativity of the people is put to the test, we can finally say it is redemption time.

—*The Nation*, October 13, 2025

https://www.thenation.com/article/society/karl-marx-in-america-marxism-in-

Christian Right on the March

By Guy Miller



Money, Lies, and God
Inside the Movement to Destroy American Democracy, By Katherine Stewart
Bloomsbury Publishing, 2025

Katherine Stewart's interest in the Christian Right was triggered when she became aware of an insidious project of piggy-backing an evangelical propaganda machine, masquerading as a school club, in her daughter's public school building.

This resulted in her 2012 book *The Good News Club: The Christian Right's Stealth Assault on America's Children*. In 2020 Stewart wrote *The Power Worshippers: Inside the dangerous rise of religious nationalism*. In 2025, she has completed her trilogy with *Money, Lies and God* (*ML&G*).

In *ML&G* Stewart wastes no time. In its first paragraph she parachutes us into a Reawaken America Tour stopover in July 2023 in Las Vegas. At the meeting Stewart noticed a dramatic change in tone: the rhetoric was harsher and the t-shirts nastier.

The Reawaken America Tour, founded in 2021, was a tour that promoted Christian Nationalism and conspiracy theories including the lie that the 2020 election was "stolen."

At the meeting Stewart encounters a participant wearing a MAGA cap and a t-shirt emblazoned with "Size Matters." The t-shirt also pictures an array of ammunition ranging from handgun size to bazooka grade. This is not the sedate world of Billy Graham.

On the new normal of the Christian Right, Stewart comments:

> "It can sometimes seem that the anti-democratic reaction snuck up on us and suddenly is in our living room. I confess that when I look back over the last decade and a half that I have spent reporting on the subject the escalation of the threat appears breathtaking." (Page 4)

Stewart isn't the only one whom the explosion "snuck up on." Mark Galli, the former editor of *Christianity Today*, the foremost evangelical journal in the

United States, just weeks before the 2016 presidential election, claimed that he did not know a single evangelical who was going to vote for Trump. That November, Trump received 81 percent of the white evangelical vote.

Material roots of "nihilism"

ML&G does a solid materialist job in tracking the roots of right-wing evangelicalism. The book points to the massive increase in income inequality and deindustrialization that have resulted in economic dislocation since the 1970s.

Stewart doesn't view this as the only cause, but as a major contributor in what she calls "status anxiety." Her overall diagnosis for this new mood is "reactionary nihilism."

The action, characters and organizations in this 245-page book move around at dizzying speed. To make sense of this torrent of information, Stewart provides a useful—if admittedly simplistic—guide.

She breaks down the division of labor of the Christian Right into five categories: Funders, Sergeants, Infantry, Thinkers and Power Players. It's helpful to keep Stewart's definitions of these actors' different functions in mind. (Pages 9-13)

Stewart also provides another useful guide for what she calls the four basic dispositions that characterize Christian Nationalism—Catastrophism, Identitarianism, Persecution Complex, and Authoritarianism.

I use CIPA as a mnemonic device for this summary:

1) *Catastrophism:* Time is running out. Thanks to the unbelievers, the nation is doomed, only spiritual warfare can save us. The end is nigh!

2) *Identitarianism:* it's up to American (White) Christian Nationalists to take total charge and rule the country.

3) *Persecution complex*: Conservative Christians are the principal victims of discrimination.

4) *Authoritarianism:* Children must obey their parents, wives must obey their husbands, workers must obey their bosses, and everyone must obey the strong leader (*e.g.* Donald Trump).

In the chapter "A Tale of Two Busches," Stewart looks at the Roman Catholic component of the primarily Protestant story of Christian Nationalism.

Robert Busch is a "Francis Catholic." This places him in the progressive tradition of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). Timothy Busch (no relation,) on the other hand, is on the opposite end of the spectrum, about one good confession away from the Christian Nationalists.

While right-wing Catholics may lack the pizzazz of their Protestant brethren, they make up for it in their behind-the-scenes importance. Consider this roster of right-wing Catholic influencers: Five of the nine Supreme Court Justices; Vice President J.D. Vance; Leonard Leo, the point man of the Federalist Society; Christopher Rufo, the man responsible for destroying New College in Florida; and Kevin Roberts, president of the Heritage Foundation and the driving force behind Project 2025.

Power couple

Katherine Stewart calls the partnering of the New Right and Christian Nationalism, the "Power Couple" of our time. While not exactly marital bliss, this combination seems to work, as both partners have the same ultimate goal: the destruction of liberal democracy.

Moreover, they are willing to wage a long-term war of position to get there.

In the middle chapters, Stewart shifts her attention to the more secular half of the power couple.

At least in my little corner of the American left, the word "woke" is hardly, if ever, spoken or written. But when reading books about the Christian Right, the word is ever-present.

Stewart asks herself: "(W)here did this one tune of the anti-woke anthem come from?" Steward soon answers her own question: "The Claremont Institute."

Since its founding in Claremont, California in 1979, the Institute has always been a voice on the right. Its public face, the *Claremont Review of Books*, was designed to mimic the layout of the genteel *New York Review of Books*.

In their early days both the Institute and the Review strived for a veneer of respectability. No longer: In recent years Claremont has, in Stewart's words, "gone off the rails."

Claremont specializes in handing out fellowship programs designed to boost the careers of young right wingers. Many of Claremont's alumni make up a significant number of the players who now inhabit the Trump orbit.

ML&G strings together a number of quotes from the more traditional right wingers, who have taken their distance from the Institute. Bill Kristol calls it "off putting and depressing and stupid."

My favorite quote comes from Steve Schmitt, a co-founder of the Lincoln Project, who doesn't mince words, "It (Claremont) is becoming like the West Point of American Fascism."

Stewart traces the intellectual roadmap of the Claremont Institute. It runs from its long-time professor and distinguished fellow Henry Jaffa, who was mentored by Leo Strauss, who as a model looked to—wait for it—the arch-Nazi Carl Schmitt.

Several of Schmitt's ideas have filtered down to much of the New Right, including the idea that all politics boils down to a war between friends and enemies. (Neither Schmitt nor Claremont does nuance.)

Schmitt's hatred of Weimar Germany translates, for his followers, into a hatred of all liberal democracies. Schmitt also taught that the real enemy is the enemy within. Unless there is an illustrated edition of Schmitt's writing, it's unlikely that Trump has ever read

his books—yet Trump certainly reflects Schmitt's world view.

New Apostolic Reformation

The driving force of contemporary Christian Nationalism is the New Apostolic Reformation (NAR)—a movement more than a denomination.

In fact, non-denominational is where the action is in today's American Christendom. It allows for freedom to improvise and adjust. At the same time, the movement is highly coordinated and capable of acting as a unit: Witness the massive, though underreported, intervention of the Christian Right into January 6.

NAR's theology is a mash-up of two very disparate Christian traditions:

Charismatic/Pentecostal and Calvinism. The charismatic component features healing, speaking in tongues, prophecies and miracles. (In one of the few humorous episodes of *ML&G*, parishioners at a church in Odessa, Texas tried to get Katherine Stewart to speak in tongues. She tried, but she just couldn't fake it.)

If the charismatic aspect fills an emotional need in new converts, then the Calvinist emphasis on Dominionism appeals to a need for order. The concept of Dominionism has its roots in Genesis 1:28, where God instructs humans "to have dominion … over all the earth."

Dominionism leads to the Seven Mountain Mandate, a blueprint for attaining absolute power over the state. This is to be done by achieving hegemony over: government, the media, education, arts and entertainment, business, family and religion.

Religious historians often point to R.J. Rushdoony, a member of the hardcore Calvinist Orthodox Presbyterian denomination, as the inspiration for the Seven Mountain Mandate.

The MAGA movement has been active in six out of those seven mountains. Education: The attack on academic freedom at universities (Columbia, *etc.*), the abolition of the Department of Education. The Family: The Dobbs Decision[1]. Media: Defunding *PBS* and *NPR*. Business: Tariffs and the resulting potential trade wars. Government: The Republican Party is now a fully owned subsidiary of the Christian Right. Entertainment: Driving *Stephen Colbert* and *The Late Show* off the air.

As for religion…God help us.

The media treat the dangerous threat of Christian Nationalism with deference and little research. For example, the decades-long deep involvement of Vance Boelter—the assassin of Minnesota House Speaker Melissa Horton and her husband Mark—is treated as an almost irrelevant aside.

In reality, the line between spiritual warfare and actual warfare is rapidly fading. Katherine Stewart describes this process well on page 5 of The Power Worshippers:

> "[Christian Nationalism] is not a social or cultural movement. It is a political movement, and its ultimate goal is power. It does not seek to add another voice to American pluralism, but to replace our foundational democratic principles and institutions with a state grounded in a particular version of Christianity."

—*Against the Current*, No. 239, November/December 2025

https://againstthecurrent.org/atc239/christian-right-on-the-march/

1 U.S. Supreme Court decision overturning *Roe v. Wade* which legalized abortion.

INCARCERATION NATION

Mumia Abu-Jamal: Innocent and Framed!

By Rachel Wolkenstein

- *Thirty Years Solitary Confinement on Death Row*
- *Fourteen Years on Slow Death row (Life Without Possibility of Parole)*

Forty-four years ago, December 9, 1981, Mumia Abu-Jamal was arrested for shooting and killing Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner. Mumia was tried, convicted and sentenced to death within six months in a politically motivated, racially biased prosecution, denied all basic constitutional protections to a "fair trial." The so-called evidence of Mumia's guilt was manufactured. The evidence of Mumia's innocence was suppressed and covered up.

During the past two decades the mainstream "Mumia Movement" has ignored and often actively suppressed the importance of Command Inspector Alfonzo Giordano in the frame-up of Mumia, and the confession of self-described hitman Arnold Beverly as key evidence of Mumia's innocence.

Mumia's legal team of the last twenty years was silent about the frame-up of Mumia for the shooting death of police officer Daniel Faulkner. Legal challenges did not include argument and facts of Mumia's actual innocence. With the exceptions of the work of the Partisan Defense Committee and the Labor Action Committee to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal, the fight for Mumia's freedom has not been rooted in the fact that "Mumia is Innocent and Framed."

Mumia's eldest son Jamal Ibn Mumia initiated the Freedom from Frame-Up Foundation, based on the fact that his father is innocent!

December 9, 1981, Center City Philadelphia

In the early morning hours of December 9, 1981, at about 3:30 A.M., a Philadelphia cop, Daniel Faulkner, was shot and killed in the Center City "red light" district after stopping a car reportedly for an illegal wood rear bumper. The driver was Mumia's brother, Billy Cook, and his friend Kenneth Freeman, was a passenger. Police officer Faulkner called for back-up because there was more than one man in the car being stopped.

The after-hours clubs were closing. Many people were on the street; taxi cabs were driving through the area. Witnesses reported uniformed police as well as undercover cops in the area. Police radio transmission records establish that in less than two minutes after Faulkner requested back-up, a half-dozen police cars arrived at the scene.

That night, Mumia was driving a cab in the Center City area. He had been fired as a radio broadcaster and commentor, allegedly for "bias" because he reported on police harassment and brutality against MOVE. Mumia had grown dreadlocks, showing solidarity with MOVE, an environmental religious organization of mostly Black members. He dropped off a fare less than a block from his brother's stopped car. Mumia saw his brother hit by a police officer and heard gun shots as he ran toward his brother. Witnesses reported at least two men running away, one of whom was wearing a green army jacket.

Faulkner was already shot and "down" as Mumia approached his brother's car, and a uniformed cop shot him in the chest, critically wounding him. A half-dozen cops kicked and beat Mumia, used his head as a battering ram, then threw him into a police van.

Photos taken by a free-lance photographer who arrived immediately after the shootings show a uniformed police officer holding two guns in his bare hands. That cop was in the first team to call from the scene to Central command—before the arrival of the police assigned to respond to Faulkner's call for back-up. It was hours later until those guns were turned in for identification and testing.

From the moment Mumia arrived on the scene, after Faulker was already shot and "down," Mumia's guilt in the shooting death of Faulkner was being manufactured.

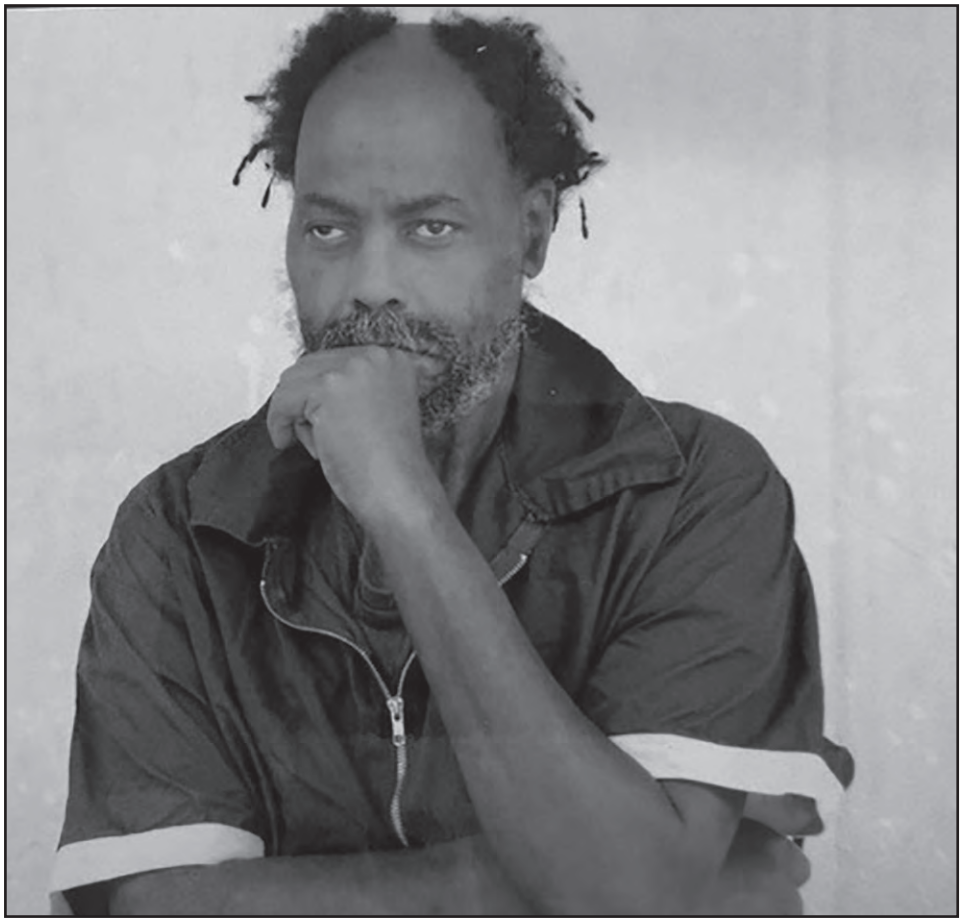
Philadelphia police Command Inspector Alfonzo Giordano (third in the order of command in the Philadelphia police force) arrived seconds after Mumia had been thrown into the police van. Giordano's first act was to further assault Mumia, hitting him in the head with a police radio while hurling racial slurs.

Inspector Giordano knew exactly who Mumia was—from his teenaged days as a Black Panther Party spokesman, then radio journalist, and MOVE supporter. Giordano took the lead as architect of the frame-up case against Mumia.

Mumia Abu-Jamal's only "crime" was that he survived being shot and beaten by police officers on the scene and again at the hospital.

Inspector Giordano was the central source of information relied on by the media and was the main prosecution witness against Mumia in the first court proceedings. Giordano reported that Mumia confessed, that two witnesses saw Mumia run toward Faulkner gun in hand, and that Mumia's legally registered handgun was the murder weapon. All lies!

Information from police and prosecution files, including medical, ballistics and other forensic reports, photographs from the scene, court testimony and interviews with numerous persons



Mumia Abu-Jamal, 2024.

who were on the scene and/or prosecution witnesses contradict and completely demolish the police and prosecution falsifications.

Evidence of Mumia's innocence was suppressed and covered-up!

Not known at the time Faulkner was murdered was that the FBI and Justice Department were running three parallel investigations into robbery, drug trafficking, gambling and prostitution conducted by organized crime in collaboration with corrupt police in the Philadelphia Center City Central Division and the 6th Police District. Police suspected that a police officer in the 6th district was working undercover for the FBI.

There was no public information about these Justice Department investigations until 1983, when the first of 30 police were charged and convicted on corruption charges. Mumia was already tried and convicted and sentenced to death. The convicted police included the entire police chain of command in the prosecution of Mumia Abu-Jamal, including the head and deputy head of the Philadelphia Central Police Division and the head of the Homicide Division. Inspector Alfonzo Giordano was convicted in 1986.

Investigation on behalf of Mumia led to confirmation that a police officer from the 6th district, who had a brother who was also a police officer, had worked as a confidential informant for the FBI in those cases. Daniel Faulkner fit that description. Faulkner owned a Top-Con camera, regularly used by FBI. It was used by Faulkner that evening in the police station. The camera and film was not part of Faulkner's effects after the shooting, but "disappeared."

Arnold Beverly confesses to killing police officer Faulkner

In 1999 Arnold Beverly, a career criminal and self-described hit man, confessed to being hired by Philadelphia police to murder police officer Daniel Faulkner in 1981. He was wearing a green army jacket. Arrangements for the hit were made by Philadelphia police officer Larry Boston. Beverly's sworn and videotaped confession includes:

> "I was hired, along with another guy, and paid to shoot and kill Faulkner. I heard that Faulkner was a problem for the mob and corrupt policemen because he interfered with the graft and payoffs made to allow illegal activity including prostitution, gambling, drugs, without prosecution in the center city area.
>
> "Faulkner was shot in the back and then in the face before Jamal came on the scene. Jamal had nothing to do with the shooting…. I shot Faulkner in the face at close range."

The convicted police included the entire police chain of command in the prosecution of Mumia Abu-Jamal, including the head and deputy head of the Philadelphia Central Police Division and the head of the Homicide Division.

Beverly's description of Mumia being shot by a cop on the scene, not Faulkner, fits with a Medical Examiner's record that Abu-Jamal was shot by "arriving police reinforcements."

Beverly's description of the shooting of Daniel Faulkner by more than one shooter from different directions explains the location of bullets and fragments recovered at the scene, the location of sidewalk bloodstains, none of which support the prosecution scenario. The absence of divots in the sidewalk exposes the falsity of the prosecution's central claim that Mumia stood over Faulkner, who was lying on his back on the sidewalk, and shot directly at his face, with one bullet striking between his eyes and three others hitting the sidewalk.

Beverly's confession also explained the unaccounted-for copper bullet jacket at the scene, and other evidence that more than one weapon using different caliber bullets was fired at Faulkner. The medical examiner reported a sizeable bullet fragment recovered from Faulkner's head wound, that was not produced as part of the prosecution's evidence.

In short, Arnold Beverly's confession, with its description of what happened on the scene and why, is supported by substantial evidence, including from forensic reports and other documents from prosecution files and corroborated by witness statements.

In 2001, the Beverly confession with corroborating evidence was submitted to the Pennsylvania and the federal courts. Neither court held an evidentiary hearing nor allowed any legal argument in open court. Instead, both courts dismissed the evidence of the frame-up and Mumia's innocence without any consideration of the legal claims of suppressed evidence of innocence and the intentional presentation at trial of false testimony. The courts dismissed the evidence presented to reverse Mumia's conviction as "not timely filed."

The facts of Mumia's frame-up expose and explain the forces that have aggressively and relentlessly sought Mumia's execution and then his life imprisonment—from the Philadelphia police and the nation-wide Fraternal Order of Police, prosecution beginning with Ed Rendell, the Philadelphia District Attorney to the U.S. Justice Department with the complicity of the judiciary. The efforts to silence Mumia, including by medical neglect and malfeasance continues. Moreover, the continued cover-up of the "Beverly evidence" makes it clear that the injustice to Mumia Abu-Jamal was not the action

of one rogue cop or prosecutor or judge, but a concerted effort to silence an unbending, outspoken political opponent of this racist, repressive, exploitive, murderous capitalist system.

Addendum: The falsification of Mumia's "hospital confessions"

Shortly before Mumia's trial in June 1982, Judge Sabo ruled that Giordano could testify that Mumia had confessed, although Mumia had not been given Miranda warnings. Then, without explanation, Giordano did not testify. Instead, the prosecution told Mumia that two police officers at the hospital emergency room heard Mumia confess. Those reports were dated two months after the shooting.

One of those police reports was made by police officer Gary Wakshul who was one of the police who transported Mumia to the hospital. Wakshul's December 9, 1981, report stated, "The Negro male made no comments." At his trial, Mumia tried to call Wakshul as a witness, but racist, cop-loving Judge Albert Sabo refused, stating Wakshul was not available.

The reason why Giordano didn't testify against Mumia at his June 1982 trial is that Giordano was a target of ongoing FBI investigations into Philadelphia police corruption. Those investigations were not publicized until indictments were brought beginning in 1983. The District Attorney's decision to pull Giordano, who had been the primary witness against Mumia, had to have been made by collaboration between the FBI/Justice Department and Philadelphia District Attorney Ed Rendell. The probable reason was to protect the impending charges against police from the Central Division and 6th Precinct AND the murder prosecution of Mumia Abu-Jamal. (Knowledge that Giordano, who manufactured Mumia's supposed confession, two "eyewitnesses" and the murder weapon had been under investigation for corruption would have given Mumia substantial trial arguments as well as grounds to overturn his conviction.)

Giordano's police personnel records show that in February 1982 Giordano was removed from his inspector command post and transferred to a desk job in the police personnel division. Not a coincidence, in early February 1982 the prosecution conducted a "roundtable meeting" with potential police witnesses to "discover" whether police, other than Giordano heard Mumia confess. This was the origin of the false report that police heard Mumia confess in the hospital emergency room. Medical reports and doctor statements state that Mumia was in critical condition and not able to speak.

Giordano retired from the police force at full pay the day after Mumia was sentenced to death. Unlike other police who were convicted on corruption charges in 1983-4 and received prison terms, Giordano got a plea deal in 1986 with no jail time and a minimal fine. This was after Mumia's first legal appeal had already been filed.

NOTE: For more information, including viewing the Beverly Confession and links to other information, go to freedomfromframeup.org.

Rachel Wolkenstein is an attorney from Freedom from Frame-Up Foundation, Inc. She has been a political and legal advocate for Mumia Abu Jamal since 1987; Staff Counsel, Partisan Defense Committee, 1985-2010; Consultant, From Death Row, This is Mumia Abu-Jamal, *1990; Co-counsel for Mumia during his first Pennsylvania Post-Conviction proceedings, 1995-9; Chief Legal Consultant,* Manufacturing Guilt, *2013.*

Trillions for Human Needs, Not War

Kevin Cooper's solidarity message to antiwar conference

To friends and supporters of Kevin Cooper:

Kevin Cooper was invited to make a presentation at a November 15, 2025, conference that advocated for "Free Palestine, Hands Off Venezuela, and No to ICE Raids!" He delivered the following message over a phone call from prison. It was very well received by the audience of antiwar, and prisoner solidarity activists.

"Good afternoon, I am Kevin Cooper and I am calling from the California Health Care Facility at Stockton—another name for a modern-day plantation. I am an Innocent Man On Death Row In This State's Injustice System. I am an oppressed man, and, as such I am in support of, and in complete solidarity with all oppressed people in this country and throughout the world. Especially our innocent Palestinian sisters and brothers who are having genocide done to them by the Israeli government with the support and bombs of our government.

"The late Paul Robeson stated that the way to end injustice is not to silence the critic, but to end the injustice. We will not be silent or silenced because we know that silence is betrayal, and we will not betray ourselves, our ancestors, or our children.

"To close, I would like to quote one of our greatest fighters today and warrior queens—a friend who I never met in person, but I hope to one day, Ms. Pam Africa. While I cannot say it exactly like she did when I first heard her on *KPFA* radio when I was at San Quentin prison, she said: 'Down With This Rotten Ass System!' To that I wholeheartedly agree.

"In Struggle and Solidarity, I'm Kevin Cooper"

Introduction by Carole Seligman

I was honored to introduce Kevin as follows:

I am a friend and supporter of Kevin Cooper for the last 20 years, so am honored to introduce him to you today. An integral part of the Human Needs we must consider at this conference is the struggle for Justice!

The case of Kevin Cooper lacks any semblance of justice because Kevin is an undeniably innocent man who has spent over 41 years on death row at San Quentin state prison and now at the California Health Care Facility prison in Stockton.

The good news I have to report today is that Kevin has a new ability to appeal his 1985 conviction for the brutal murder of the Ryan family and their child guest Christopher Hughes because the state of California has been caught out upholding long prison sentences of mostly Black and Brown people whose convictions were based on out-and-out racist acts by cops, courts, and prosecutors. Kevin Cooper is one of many prison inmates whose conviction was rife with racism on every level.

Due to the passage of, and amendments to, the California Racial Justice Act, lawyers for Kevin Cooper can now appeal his conviction proving that it was tainted with racism from the very beginning. Here are some examples:

- The surviving child victim of the murder of his family told police that the culprits were three white or Mexican men. Even when he saw Kevin's picture on TV he said, "that's not the man who did it."
- More than one witness near the home of the victims reported seeing three white men in a station wagon matching the description of the Ryan's car.
- Three white men, one wearing bloody coveralls, were seen in a bar near the crime scene.
- Demonstrations outside the court carried a monkey and used racial epithets calling for Kevin's conviction.
- Evidence in the case—crucially important evidence—including bloody coveralls worn by one of the likely killers was turned in, but discarded by the cops, blood evidence was mishandled, mixing Kevin's blood with someone else's, blood was removed from the lab out of the chain of command.

These are just a few of the egregious examples of the out-and-out mishandling of this case. And Kevin came within less than four hours of being executed by the state, when he won a last-minute reprieve while he was in the execution chamber, with the big clock ticking and volunteer executioners glaring at him and cracking jokes.

The murderous regime running the U.S.—a regime that enables, funds, and supplies a genocide in Gaza, carries out a military assault on Venezuela, and attacks the immigrants who people the U.S. with raids, and violent physical assaults—cannot be expected to act with justice with due process while they continue to uphold the death penalty. We must fight to end it, to free Kevin Cooper, Mumia Abu-Jamal, and thousands of other prisoners.

I'm honored to introduce Kevin Cooper.

In Solidarity,

Carole Seligman

Kevin Cooper

Kevin Cooper is an innocent man on death row. He continues to struggle for exoneration and to abolish the death penalty in the whole U.S. Learn more about his case at: www.kevincooper.org

Write to Kevin Cooper at:
Kevin Cooper C65304
CHCF Unit E1C 101
P.O. Box 213040
Stockton, CA 95213-9040
www.freekevincooper.org

End Texas Torture of Revolutionary Elder Xinachtli

Letter for organizations to demand the immediate medical treatment and release of Chicano political prisoner Xinachtli (Alvaro Hernandez #00255735)

To the Texas Department of Criminal Justice,

We, the undersigned organizations, write to urge immediate action to protect the life, health, and human rights of Xinachtli (legal name Alvaro Hernandez). Xinachtli is a 73-year-old Chicano community organizer from Texas who has spent 23 years in solitary confinement and 30 years incarcerated as part of a 50-year sentence. His health is now in a critical and life-threatening state and requires prompt and comprehensive medical intervention.

Since his conviction in 1997, Xinachtli has spent decades in conditions that have caused significant physical and psychological harm. As an elder in worsening health, these conditions have effectively become a *de facto* death sentence.

Xinachtli's current medical condition is severe. His physical, mental, and overall well-being has declined rapidly in recent weeks. He now requires both a wheelchair and a walker, has experienced multiple falls, and is suffering from rapid weight loss. He is currently housed in the McConnell Unit infirmary, where he is receiving only palliative measures and is being denied a medical diagnosis, access to his medical records, and adequate diagnostic testing or treatment.

A virtual clinical visit with licensed medical doctor Dr. Dona Kim Murphey underscores the severity of his condition. In her report of the visit, she wrote: "Given the history of recent neck/back trauma and recurrent urinary tract infections with numbness, weakness, and bowel and bladder incontinence, I am concerned about nerve root or spinal cord injury and/or abscesses that can lead to permanent sensorimotor dysfunction."

Despite his age and visible disabilities, he remains in solitary confinement under the Security Threat Group designation as a 73-year-old. During his time in the infirmary, prison staff threw away all of his belongings and "lost" his commissary card, leaving him completely without basic necessities. He is experiencing hunger, and the lack of consistent nutrition is worsening his medical condition. McConnell Unit staff have also consistently given him incorrect forms, including forms for medical records and medical visitation, creating further barriers to care and communication.

A family visit on November 29 confirmed the seriousness of his condition. Xinachtli, who was once able to walk on his own, can no longer stand without assistance. He struggled to breathe, has lost more than 30 pounds, relied heavily on his wheelchair, and was in severe pain throughout the visit.

In light of these conditions, we, the undersigned organizations, demand that Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) take immediate action to save Xinachtli's life and comply with its legal and ethical obligations.

We urge the immediate implementation of the following actions:

- Immediate re-instatement of his access to commissary to buy hygiene, food, and other critical items. Immediate transfer to the TDCJ hospital in Galveston for a full medical evaluation and treatment, including complete access to his medical records and full transparency regarding all procedures.
- Transfer to a geriatric and medical unit that is fully accessible under the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Xinachtli requests placement at the Richard P LeBlanc Unit in Beaumont, Texas. Approval of Medical Recommended Intensive Supervision, the release program for individuals with serious medical conditions and disabilities, in recognition of the severity and progression of his current health issues.

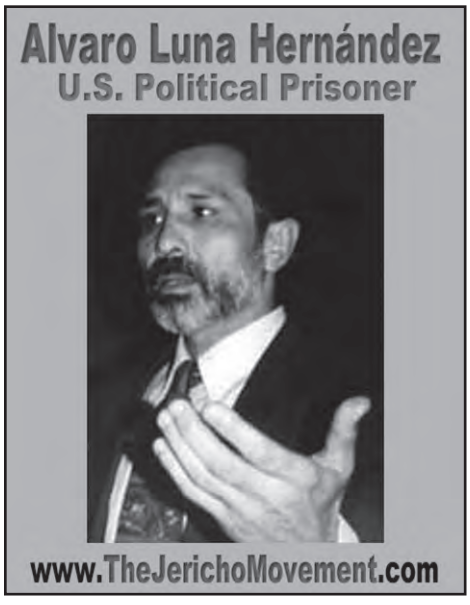
Failure to act will result in the continued and foreseeable deterioration of Xinachtli's health, amounting to state-sanctioned death. We urge TDCJ to take swift and decisive action to meet these requests and to fulfill its responsibility to safeguard his life and well-being.

We stand united in calling for immediate and decisive action. Xinachtli's life depends on it.

Signed, Xinachtli Freedom Campaign and supporting organizations

Endorsing Organizations:

Al-Awda Houston; All African People's Revolutionary Party; Anakbayan Houston; Anti-Imperialist Solidarity; Artists for Black Lives' Equality; Black Alliance for Peace - Solidarity Network; Columbia University Students for a Democratic



Xinachtli

Society; Community Liberation Programs; Community Powered ATX; Contra Gentrificación; Diaspora Pa'lante Collective; Down South; DSA Emerge; Entre nos kc; Fighting Racism Workshops; Frontera Water Protectors; GC Harm Reductionists; JERICHO MOVEMENT; Jericho Movement Providence; Montrose Anarchist Collective; NYC Jericho Movement; OC Focus; Palestine Solidarity TX; Partisan Defense Committee; Partido Nacional de la Raza Unida; PDX Anti-Repression; Red Star Texas; Root Cause; San Francisco Solidarity Collective; Shine White Support Team; Sunrise Columbia; UC San Diego Faculty for Justice in Palestine; Viva Palestina, EPTX; Water Justice and Technology Studio; Workshops4Gaza.

Sign the endorsement letter for your organization here:

https://cryptpad.fr/form/#/2/form/view/MiR1f+iLiRBJC7gSTyfhyxJoLIDhThxRafPatxdbMWI/

Write to:
Alvaro Hernandez CID #00255735
TDCJ-W.G. McConnell Unit
PO Box 660400
Dallas, TX 75266-0400

Gary Tyler Spent 42 Years in Prison for a Crime He Didn't Commit

Lora Strum Interviews Gary Tyler

Gary Tyler, 67, spent more than four decades in one of the most notorious prisons in the country for a crime he didn't commit.

In 1974, Tyler was one of a group of Black students bused into a formerly all-white Louisiana high school under court-ordered desegregation. When a white mob attacked their bus on October 7, a white boy was killed. Tyler became a suspect, was tried as an adult and convicted of first-degree murder by an all-white jury. Tyler received a death sentence and was sent to Angola, the largest maximum-security prison in the country, at only 17.

Tyler's case represents how racial discrimination and systemic injustice continue to infect our legal system. As a new ACLU report explains, the modern death penalty grew directly out of the racist legacy of lynching, and that history continues to shape who is charged, convicted, and sentenced to die today.

Since 1973, shortly before Tyler's arrest, at least 200 people have been exonerated from death row. More than half were Black. Our research shows the same patterns again and again: official misconduct is the leading cause of wrongful capital convictions, especially for Black defendants; false testimony appears in nearly 70 percent of wrongful death-penalty cases; eyewitness misidentification contributes to more than one in five; and unreliable or discredited forensic evidence plays a role in about a third. These errors are compounded by juries that are disproportionately white—like in Tyler's case—due to discriminatory jury selection, and by police, prosecutors, judges, and jurors operating under both implicit and explicit racial bias.

The human toll of each wrongful conviction is enormous. Tyler spent more than 40 years in Angola. During that time, his supporters and lawyers attempted to raise awareness about the racial discrimination that plagued his case. In 2016, 42 years after he was wrongfully convicted, Tyler was released from prison at age 57. Many people like

Gary Tyler, 67, spent more than four decades in one of the most notorious prisons in the country for a crime he didn't commit.

Tyler are never released. Since 1976, at least 21 people have been executed even though they were very likely innocent.

Tyler's memoir, Stitching Freedom, *exposes the injustices in the American legal system, tracing his journey from his arrest and conviction as a teenager, through the brutal realities of Angola prison, to his eventual release and ongoing fight for justice. Tyler recently joined the ACLU to discuss how discrimination in the American legal system can lead to wrongful convictions and devastating sentences for the innocent.*

Lora Strum: Your story shows how quickly a community's fear and anger can turn into a demand for punishment. When you look back on the external pressure to "solve" the crime in your case, what do you see about how that pressure shaped what happened to you?

Gary Tyler: At the time of my trial, white Americans in the South were actively pushing back against the freedoms the Civil Rights Movement were securing for Black Americans. That included busing Black children to white schools. White Americans felt they'd been personally targeted. This political environment directly impacted the outcome in my case.

For Black defendants like me, there was no benefit of the doubt or real due process. That's why we had so many Blacks lynched and murdered. Any Black person who spoke up about mistreatment was automatically targeted and treated like a perpetrator. The police department would get a defendant and beat him, trying to get a confession.

Exacerbating the bias in my case was that, at the time of my arrest, Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke had been in Boston protesting busing with former Representative Louise Hicks, a staunch opponent of integration. Duke saw what happened in my small Louisiana town as a chance to galvanize the white community to foment racial hatred and take vengeance. This meant a Black person accused of killing a white person was going to have to pay with his life.

Lora Strum: You've spoken about the misconduct and false testimony that led to your conviction. What do you think drives people within the system—police, prosecutors, even witnesses—to cross that line between mistake and misconduct?

Gary Tyler: What drives far too many police and prosecutors is racial bias and wanting to hold onto power by criminalizing the innocent. In my case, they coerced the students on the bus to get them to say things that fit the police narrative. Officers preyed on the fears of adolescents, threatening long prison terms if these young people didn't lie in their testimony. It was an abuse of power designed to protect the power they claimed for themselves. It was clear the priority was to reach a conviction, regardless of whether or not they had the right person.

...the modern death penalty grew directly out of the racist legacy of lynching, and that history continues to shape who is charged, convicted, and sentenced to die today.

Lora Strum: Our report points out that wrongful convictions are not accidents but predictable outcomes of bias and pressure. From your perspective, what changes—or reckonings—would have to happen before you'd call the system "just?"

Gary Tyler: We need big, systemic changes to stop injustice and make a difference. Prisons shouldn't be for warehousing people and making profits for big corporations. When I went to prison in 1974, there were 300,000 people in prisons across the country. Now there's more than 2.2 million. The prison-industrial complex is about profiting off people's free labor, imposing excessive sentences, and forcing people to confess in plea deals.

We need to mandate changes so due process is implemented across the board. There needs to be thorough investigations; vetting of police methods to stop coerced confessions and plea deals; fair and proper representation for the accused, not just a public defender who lacks experience and funds to effectively represent their client; and trials that are actually speedy. We need an end to the death penalty and excessive sentences, greater reliance on restorative justice. Importantly, juries need to be thoroughly vetted and chosen according to the racial make-up of the area to really be a jury of peers. Ultimately, we need a reimagination of the system from one that is designed for profit, utilizing human labor for pennies, to one that is a place for education, training, and rehabilitation.

Lora Strum: You spent more than four decades inside Angola, a prison built on the grounds of a former plantation. How did that setting shape your understanding of race, punishment, and the legacy of slavery in America?

Gary Tyler: I didn't know the prison was a former slave plantation when I got there. I also didn't know about the convict leasing that took place after the Civil War, where states leased out prisoners, overwhelmingly Black men, to private businesses as a source of cheap labor. I didn't know about the laws that allowed police to arrest Black people for so-called "vagrancy" just to force them to work, often for the same plantations that had enslaved them.

But I saw that the way Black Americans were treated when we were enslaved was replicated at the prison: guards were brutal, prisoners were forced to work in the fields to pick cot-

ton for practically nothing, and prisoners were denied education. I saw how the prison allotted certain privileges to white prisoners, how cells and dorms and jobs were all segregated.

Older, politically-engaged prisoners helped educate me about these racist legacies, and about the need to inform the public about what had happened to me. They gave me books about class and race and the history of the 13th Amendment that abolished slavery except for those convicted of a crime.

Ultimately, we need a reimagination of the system from one that is designed for profit, utilizing human labor for pennies, to one that is a place for education, training, and rehabilitation.

Lora Strum: In *Stitching Freedom*, you write about turning to quilting as a form of survival. How did creativity become a path to reclaiming your humanity when the system tried to strip it away?

Gary Tyler: During my time at Angola, I joined a hospice program to support my fellow inmates, including those impacted by the AIDS crisis in the 80s and 90s. Quilting was a way for hospice volunteers to do something for the program. We had only meager donations. We wanted to meet the needs of the dying, give them decent things like a radio, soap, books and magazines, good food, pajamas and slippers. Once I realized that I could use *applique* in quilting, I started making quilts with artistic designs and themes like the rodeo, quilts that had a message and dealt with prison life. My friends called me *Nyeusi Kuumba*, or Black Creativity. I knew this was an avenue for me to keep my sanity and humanity, knowing it would bring a smile to those I made the quilts for and also tell a story.

After I got out, I wanted my quilts to reflect on the lives of those serving time in prison. I wanted to reflect my experience at Angola and my encounters with other people, and how my life transitioned into what it is today. I wanted to show defiance, and the humanity of those incarcerated.

Lora Strum: Now that you're free and sharing your story, what do you hope people understand, not just about wrongful convictions, but about the human cost of a system that still carries those same roots of racial violence?

Gary Tyler: The human cost is enormous. It is impossible to measure the psychological trauma and economic hardship imparted on the incarcerated, their families and their communities. This carceral system uses the labor of Black people for private profit and, at the same time, denies them effective medical attention, decent nutrition and access to a high standard of education that allows them to be employed once they're out. People question the high rate of recidivism without realizing how it is related to the lack of economic opportunity and preparedness. Marginalizing people has devastating consequences and adds to the growing inequality that maintains poverty and great harm for children, families and communities.

—*American Civil Liberties Union*, November 20, 2025

https://www.aclu.org/news/criminal-law-reform/gary-tyler-spent-42-years-on-death-row-racism-put-him-

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Note to Readers:

Socialist Viewpoint magazine has been edited and distributed by revolutionaries who share a common political outlook stemming from the old Socialist Workers Party of James P. Cannon, and Socialist Action from 1984 through 1999.

After being expelled from Socialist Action in 1999, we formed Socialist Workers Organization in an attempt to carry on the project of building a nucleus of a revolutionary party true to the historic teachings and program of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky.

What we have found is that our numbers are insufficient for this crucial project of party building. This problem is not ours alone; it is a problem flowing from the division and fragmentation that has plagued the revolutionary movement in capitalist America and the world since the 1980s.

What we intend to do is to continue to promote the idea of building a revolutionary Marxist working class political party through the pages of *Socialist Viewpoint* magazine. We continue to have an optimistic outlook about the revolutionary potential of the world working class to rule society in its own name—socialism. We are optimistic that the working class, united across borders, and acting in its own class interests can solve the devastating crises of war, poverty, oppression, racism, sexism and environmental destruction that capitalism is responsible for.

We expect that revolutionaries from many different organizations, traditions, and backgrounds will respond to the opportunities that will arise, as workers resist the attacks of the capitalist system and government, to build a new revolutionary political party. Just as we join with others to build every response to war and oppression, we look forward to joining with others in the most important work of building a new mass revolutionary socialist workers' party as it becomes possible to do so.

Trump's Escalation Against Venezuela Demands Working-Class Resistance

By Sou Mi

December 17, 2025—As part of his escalating campaign against Venezuelan president Nicolás Maduro, Donald Trump announced a "total and complete blockade" on Venezuelan "sanctioned oil tankers" in a Truth Social post this evening. "For the theft of our Assets, and many other reasons, including Terrorism, Drug Smuggling, and Human Trafficking, the Venezuelan Regime has been designated a FOREIGN TERRORIST ORGANIZATION," Trump wrote, "Therefore, today, I am ordering A TOTAL AND COMPLETE BLOCKADE OF ALL SANCTIONED OIL TANKERS going into, and out of, Venezuela."

...this military strategy is a blatant regime change operation, aiming to topple the Maduro government and install a puppet regime for U.S. imperialist interests.

This declaration comes on the heels of increasing military deployment and aggression against Venezuela, culminating in a crisis that threatens the lives and livelihoods of the Venezuelan people. In recent months, the U.S. military presence surrounding the country has intensified. Since September, the Trump administration has attacked over 36 alleged "drug boats" and killed over 115 people. Over the last two weeks, Trump announced an air blockade, and U.S. forces seized at least two oil tankers, reinforcing the reality that this military strategy is a blatant regime change operation, aiming to topple the Maduro government and install a puppet regime for U.S. imperialist interests.

Trump's only intention in "combatting" drug-trafficking is to wield it as a weapon to undermine any political regime that it sees as its adversary and replace it with a regime that aligns with Washington's interests. Indeed, the hypocrisy is glaring, especially as Trump has supported political leaders linked to drug trafficking, including granting a pardon to Honduras's ex-President, Juan Orlando Hernandez, who was held in prison for smuggling 400 tons of cocaine into the United States.

This blockade and continued military escalation are only going to impoverish and hurt the Venezuelan working class, who face not only an acute economic and social crisis due to imperialist sanctions and increasing military attacks, but also repression by the Maduro government. Oil-related products account for nearly all of Venezuela's export revenues which, in turn, is used to import necessities, like food. By tightening the blockade on oil tankers, the U.S. will only exacerbate the economic hardships inflicted by years of sanctions by the United States and Europe that have already compounded widespread shortages of food, medicine, and basic goods in the country.

By tightening the blockade on oil tankers, the U.S. will only exacerbate the economic hardships inflicted by years of sanctions by the United States and Europe that have already compounded widespread shortages of food, medicine, and basic goods in the country.

Moreover, Trump's military strategy operates in concert with right-wing factions within Venezuela that seek to subordinate the nation to U.S. imperial interests. Indeed, despite her claims to

Continued on page 2

People gathered in downtown Gainesville, Florida on December 6th to protest the United States' foreign policy regarding Venezuela.

The separation wall. Image by Dylan Shaw. Read *The US-Israeli Scheme to Partition Gaza* on page 15.

On the Front Cover: Hundreds gathered in protest in downtown Chicago after U.S. forces captured Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and his wife in an overnight military operation the evening of January 3, 2026. Read *Democracy for the Rich Versus Democracy for All* on page 4. ▶

Read *Julian Assange Files Criminal Complaint over 2025 Nobel Peace Prize* on page 20.

Read *Malcolm X's Daughters Sue NYPD, FBI About Their Role in His Assassination on* page 39.

Attention Prison Mail Room:

Prisoners retain their free speech rights under the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. That means you cannot legally suppress the expression and consideration of ideas. Prison walls do not form a barrier separating prisoners from the protection of the Constitution, according to the Turner v. Safley ruling. [482 U.S. 78, 107 Sct 2245 (1987)] If you exclude printed matter on an improper basis, or give a false pretext or rationale for its exclusion, because of the ideas expressed in it, you are breaking the law. The prisoner denied access to material he wants to read can bring a civil rights lawsuit against you with cause for seeking punitive damages. In the case of Police Department Chicago v. Mosley, 408 U.S. 92, 95, 92 Sct 2286, 2290 (1972) the court found that "[A]bove all else, the First Amendment means that government has no power to restrict expression because of its message, subject matter or content."