

ARRESTED OVER TEA AND BISCUITS | George Monbiot
WHAT NEXT? CONCENTRATION CAMPS IN AMERICA? | Chris Hedges
MICHIGAN FIGHTS TRUMP'S POWER GRAB | John Rothwell

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WRITING WORDS

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A GLOBAL ISRAEL, PALESTINE AND 'RULES-BASED ORDER' CHARADE

INSTEAD OF DISCUSSING HOW TO PROTECT
THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE, THE WEST CONTINUES
TO SUPPORT THE GENOCIDAL STATE OF ISRAEL



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STOLEN STEPS

Sisters Hanan and Misk were injured in an Israeli airstrike that killed their mother.

Misk had just learned how to walk.

Hanan, 3 years old
Both legs amputated

Misk, 18 months old
Left foot amputated



VISUALIZING **PALESTINE**



SOURCES bit.ly/vp-stolen-steps

APR 2025
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INSIGHTS



Video Screenshot

DOUBLE STANDARDS: UK police weren't bothered by several disruptive farmers' protests in central London, but found time to raid a meeting of young women having tea and biscuits at a Quaker meeting house while discussing Israel's assault on Gaza

The faces are different, but it's the same authoritarianism. UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer's team might not look or sound like Donald Trump's, but its policies on protest and dissent are chillingly similar. So is the reason: coordinated global lobbying by the rich and powerful, fronted by rightwing junktanks.

On March 27, six young women were having tea and biscuits in the Quaker meeting house in Westminster, London. Twenty police officers forced open the door and arrested them on conspiracy charges. Had the police discovered a plot to blow up parliament or to poison the water supply? No. It was an openly advertised, routine meeting of a protest group called Youth Demand, discussing climate breakdown and the assault on Gaza.

► **GEORGE MONBIOT**

Arrested over tea and biscuits

I spoke to one of the arrested women, Jennifer Kennedy. She is not an activist, but a student journalist who was covering the meeting. Her phone, camera and laptop were confiscated. She was held incommunicado for 16 hours: like the others arrested, she was not allowed to make a phone call, so family and friends had no idea where she was. This is a tactic used for serious organised crime, terrorism

or espionage, to prevent suspects from disposing of evidence, intimidating witnesses or alerting other spies. While she was held, she says the police searched her flat, looking through her books and frightening her flatmate. The police justified the raid by claiming that Youth Demand plan to "shut down London." What this has meant previously is 10-minute blockages of individual roads: "shut downs" of the kind YD has carried out many times before.

Police forces claim to be under-resourced. But they spend vast sums and launch huge deployments against unthreatening protests. Last year they sent over 1,000 officers from 39 forces, spending £3 million, to shut down a climate camp and arrest 24 people, on the grounds that they might have been planning to occupy a road outside

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a power station. At the same time, they fail even to investigate serious organised crime, citing insufficient resources.

The police, governments and the media have sought to conflate peaceful protest with extremism and terrorism. Protest methods used for centuries, such as blocking roads, have been recast as the end of civilisation.

We are told that banning such tactics, as recent laws have done, is necessary to prevent ambulances from being obstructed or commuters delayed. Indeed, there are lurid stories, some completely unevenced, of ambulances being blocked by groups like Insulate Britain. But the police apply the new laws only to certain people. When Josiah Mortimer of *Byline Times* covered a farmers' protest in central London, in which roads were blocked by tractors, he filmed real ambulances struggling to get through. But neither the police nor other media were interested.

As far as I can tell, no one has been arrested on a farmers' protest so far this century, though some have caused far greater disruption than any environmental or Gaza actions, even, on a recent occasion, forcing the prime minister to flee. In 2000, farmers and truckers blockaded oil refineries, fuel depots and motorways, effectively shutting down the country. The leader of the protests, Brynle Williams, was treated by the media as a national treasure, and used his fame to become a Conservative member of the Senedd. Every year since his death, the Welsh government has presented the Brynle Williams Memorial Award at the Royal Welsh Show.

Similarly, the police have turned a blind eye to much of the far-right

organising in this country, dismissing the risk that it would cause public disorder as "minimal," despite abundant evidence to the contrary. This could be why they were so badly prepared for the racist riots last summer.

What explains these blatant double standards? Lobbying. Oligarchs and corporations on both sides of the Atlantic want to stamp out any threat to their interests. In the US, this effort has been led by the Heritage Foundation's Project 2025. In the UK the commissioner for coun-



PROTEST: Body bags lined up by Youth Demand outside the home of Foreign Secretary David Lammy to protest the UK support of Israel's Gaza genocide

tering extremism, Robin Simcox, appointed by the Conservative government, but who remains in post until July, previously worked at ... the Heritage Foundation.

The extreme new laws in the 2022 Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act and 2023 Public Order Act were drafted in part, on Rishi Sunak's admission, by another corporate junktank, Policy Exchange.

It has been funded, among other interests, by fossil fuel companies. The outgoing independent adviser on political violence, John Woodcock, has been paid by lobby groups representing weapons and fossil fuel companies. To general gasps of surprise, he demanded "protective buffer zones," where no protest is allowed, around "defence companies and energy providers."

The junktanks and their collaborators in the media have vilified protests against the genocide in Gaza, associated them with terrorism and antisemitism, and described them as "hate marches." In reality, these marches and assemblies have been overwhelmingly respectful. Speaking for the National Police Chiefs' Council, the former Lincolnshire chief constable, Chris Haward, told parliament, "Overall, we have seen very peaceful protests, given the numbers that have turned out." But facts and evidence count for nothing. When people have been successfully demonised, you can do what you like to them.

The Labour party was built on protest, but now seeks only to harden oppressive laws. Last month, it announced new measures allowing police to prevent or divert protests "where the effect of the protest is to intimidate those attending a place of worship." Note that it doesn't say the intent of the protest, but the "effect." Already the police widely abuse their powers under sections 12 and 14 of the Public Order Act to impede marches and assemblies. Now the government wants to strengthen these powers in areas close to a place of worship. While I agree that no one should ever be intimidated, there is scarcely an urban area in the UK that's not close

Youth Demand

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to a place of worship. At the same time, the government seems intensely relaxed about the intimidation of places of worship by the police, including forcing open their doors and sending in 20 officers.

Whatever charges the people gathering in the Quaker meeting house may face, it seems to me that their fundamental crime is dissent. Their offence is to subscribe to what Trump calls “improper ideology”: a challenge to money and power. Every right and freedom we possess came about with the help of pro-

test. Shutting it down presents a far greater threat to national life than anything those women taking tea and biscuits might have wanted to discuss. **CT**

George Monbiot is a columnist with the Guardian, where this article first appeared. Monbiot's latest book, The Invisible Doctrine: The Secret History of Neoliberalism, written jointly with Peter Hutchison, was published in paperback last month. His website is www.monbiot.com.

➤ **BINOY KAMPMARK**

Withdrawal symptoms: Hungary, Europe and the ICC

Europe seems to be suffering paroxysms of withdrawal, notably when it comes to international conventions. Many states on the continent seem to have decided that international law is an onerous burden and in need of lightening. Poland, Finland and the three Baltic states, for instance, have concluded that using landmines, despite their indiscriminately murderous quality, somehow fits their mould of self-defence against the Russian Bear. That spells the end of their obligations under the Anti-Personnel Landmines Convention. Lithuania's government has thought it beneath it to continue abiding by the Convention on Cluster Munitions, withdrawing in March.

The International Criminal Court now promises to be one member



Wikipedia

VIKTOR ORBÁN: Rejected International Criminal Court decision

short. Hungary, under the rule of its pugilistic premier, Viktor Orbán, timed the announcement to wounding perfection. Knowing full well that Israel's Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, faces an ICC arrest warrant for alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity in Gaza, and also knowing, full well, Hungary's obligations as a member state to arrest him, Orbán preferred to do the opposite. That was an international institution both men could rubbish and bash with relish.

As far back as November, when the warrant was issued, the Hungarian leader had already promised that the order would not run in his country. An invitation to Netanyahu to visit was promptly issued. Spite was in the air. In February this year, Orbán ruminated on his country's continued membership of the ICC. “It's time for Hungary to review what we're doing in an international organisation that is under US sanctions!” he bellowed in a post on the X platform. “New winds are blowing in international politics. We call it the Trump-tornado.”

On the arrival of the Israeli leader for a four-day visit, there was a conspicuous absence of any law officer or police official willing to discharge the duties of the Rome Statute. The reception for Netanyahu featured a welcoming ceremony at the Lion Courtyard in Buda Castle.

Alongside Netanyahu at a press conference, Orbán trotted out the thesis that has long been used against any international court, or body, that behaves in a way contrary to the wishes of a government. “This very important court has been diminished to a political tool and Hungary wishes to play no role in it.” The abandonment of impar-

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tiality was evident by “its decisions on Israel.”

Netanyahu, who conveniently described the warrant for his arrest as “absurd and antisemitic”, brimmed with glee, calling the withdrawal “bold and principled” while directing his usual bile upon the organisation. (Judges, Israeli or international, are not esteemed in the Israeli PM’s universe.) “It’s important for all democracies,” he declared. “It’s important to stand up to this corrupt organisation.” Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Sa’ar concurred. “The so-called International Criminal Court lost its moral authority after trampling the fundamental principles of international law in its zest for harming Israel’s right to self-defence.” A right, seemingly, to be exercised with defiant impunity.

Orbán should at least be credited for a certain unvarnished, vulgar honesty. Open contempt is its own virtue. Other European member states of the ICC have been resolutely mealy mouthed in whether they would execute their obliga-

tions under the Rome Statute were Netanyahu to visit them. France, for instance, claims that Netanyahu has immunity from prosecution before the ICC, a rather self-defeating proposition if you are in the international justice business. Italy, for its part, expressed doubts on the legal situation.

Germany, with its obstinate pro-Israeli stance, is one member state deeming the whole idea of arresting an Israeli leader unappetising, raising questions on whether its own membership of the court is valid. “We have spoken about this several times,” stated the country’s outgoing Chancellor Olaf Scholz at a recent press conference in Berlin, “and I cannot imagine that an arrest would occur in Germany.”

Scholz’s successor, Friedrich Merz, has confirmed this blithe attitude to ICC regulations, having promised Netanyahu “that we would find ways and means for him to be able to visit Germany and leave again without being arrested. I think it is a completely absurd

idea that an Israeli prime minister cannot visit the Federal Republic of Germany.” As absurd, implicitly, as an international justice system moored in The Hague.

This made the hypocrisy of Germany’s own criticism of Hungary’s withdrawal from the Rome Statute sharp and tangy, with Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock lamenting the event as “a bad day for international criminal law.” Europe had “clear rules that apply to all EU member states, and that is the Rome Statute.” No mirror, it would seem, was on hand for Baerbock to reconsider the hollowness of such observations before the stance of her own government.

The response from the Presidency of the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute, delivered in diplomatic if cool language, expressed “regret” at Hungary’s announcement. “When a State Party withdraws from the Rome Statute, it clouds our shared quest for justice and weakens our resolve to fight impunity.” The statement goes on to make the fundamental point: “The ICC is at the centre of the global commitment to accountability, and in order to maintain its strength, it is imperative that the international community support it without reservation.” Hungary’s exit, and European qualifications and niggling subversions of the Court, show that reservations are all the rage, and justice a nuisance when applied inconveniently. **CT**

Dr. Binoy Kampmark was a Commonwealth Scholar at Selwyn College, Cambridge. He currently lectures at RMIT University in Melbourne, Australia.

► GREED AT A GLANCE

WWW.INEQUALITY.ORG



INSIGHTS

► LUNA MASARWA

Between two worlds: A note from a Tel Aviv coffee shop

I am sitting in a coffee shop in Jaffa. One of the oldest cities in the world, Jaffa was once a flourishing Palestinian metropolis on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea with its own cultural life, newspapers, publishing houses, cinemas and theatres.

Today, however, it's been reduced to a suburb of Tel Aviv.

Israeli Jews live in gated communities and Palestinians are pushed out by prices only affluent Ashkenazis can afford.

Anywhere else it would be called gentrification, but in Israel this population transfer has an ethnic flavour.

The coffee shop I'm at is teeming with customers. It's just another day here in the busy life of secular Israel.

There's a woman sitting near me with her coffee whilst holding a yoga mat. A couple converse about a play they saw the day earlier at a theatre. They're also planning their Passover dinner that's coming soon.

This could be a scene out of any Western capital. Here though, there's just one tiny difference, it's business as usual one hour's drive away from Gaza.

At this point I look at my iPhone.

Every morning for over 18 months Ahmed has been messaging me from Khan Younis.

"Tonight, 19 people were killed in the bombing of tents and homes in Khan Younis. I have done three interviews and photos and video ma-

terial," Ahmed writes.

Are you interested? he asks.

His question has a desperate poignancy. Like everyone in Gaza, Ahmed knows that the world has become comfortable with the nightly carnage. Beheaded babies, families burned alive in their tents are the new normal.

So is anyone really interested in what goes down every night in Gaza? It's a good question. I would



like to say yes. But in all honesty I can't.

Ahmed is critically injured, but never misses a day to report on the daily horrors.

While I'm watching Ahmed's video of little bodies covered with white fabric and many children with little faces exposed, the Israeli couple nearby is trying to decide whether to hold the holiday dinner with her family or his.

In another clip on my phone, a little girl is among the survivors. At least 39,384 children in Gaza have lost one or both parents since the

beginning of Israel's assault on Gaza.

A woman addresses the camera: "What did she do to Israel? Is anyone listening?"

Where I'm sitting, we are surrounded with hospitals. Why aren't the doctors rushing to save the people in Gaza? It's only an hour away.

Instead the Israeli army is busy killing paramedics and then covering up the fact.

The Israeli newspaper of record, *Haaretz*, reports that it's "common practice" for the army to bury their victims, as they did when they fired on a column of ambulances with their lights flashing.

"As for the testimonies that the soldiers buried the bodies and vehicles in the sand, the army claims that this is a common practice intended to prevent stray and feral dogs from harming the bodies," the report reads.

How many other bodies did the army kill and bury? The terror of killing people and burying them becomes normal lines in this allegedly liberal newspaper.

The news from Gaza never stops

At 4am, I received this message from Ruwaida, a young Palestinian woman who used to teach science in an elementary school: "The situation is very, very scary. The heavy bombing does not stop. I cannot sleep at night because of the intensity of the bombing.

"I am afraid that my heart will stop from the intensity of the fear and panic because the dangerous area that they are working on as a new axis is adjacent to my area. If something happens to me, do not forget me and talk about me a lot. I am not a number, I am a very big story."

Ali from northern Gaza says his

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family went to sleep hungry. There was no food, wheat, or wood to make fire.

“It’s hard with the little ones, he said. “It’s hard to see them hungry. I spent all day wandering around to find something to buy; a kilo of sugar cost 50 shekels. That’s if you can find it.”

Muhammed, from another area in Gaza, asked me if all the children who had been killed so far were not enough for the world to stop the killing. What else should happen for the world to break the silence and stop this horror?

In April, 17-year-old Walid Khalid Abdullah Ahmad, died in Israeli detention from what were likely signs of “starvation, dehydration from colitis-induced diarrhoea, and infectious complications all compounded by prolonged malnutrition and denial of life-saving medical intervention,” the Defence for Children International – Palestine (DCIP) reported.

His father told Middle East Eye that his dream was to become a football player. He also hoped to complete his studies abroad, specialising in finance and banking. He wanted to return to help his country. He had many ambitions, but the Israeli occupation buried them all, he said.

Israel’s Supreme Court dismissed a petition filed by human rights organisations in April demanding that the State of Israel be obliged to provide adequate and consistent humanitarian aid to Gaza.

Israel’s decision a month earlier to block completely the entry of Israel’s decision and to renew the war was ignored by the court.

These are the decisions made every day by the judicial system thousands of Israel are fighting to pro-

tect in the name of democracy.

Liberal Israelis take to the streets to fight for the High Court. The same court rejected an appeal to allow aid into Gaza, legitimising mass starvation.

I look at my iPhone again, which has become the Grim Reaper of news from Gaza. A man from North Gaza messages: “We are very weak, we are not eating, and the immunity system is weak.

“I paid \$10 for one egg; my daugh-

ter is 3-years-old and needs milk or essential food,” he added.

The world, however, chooses to ignore such pleas, instead – just like Israelis - it’s decided to watch on in silence. **CT**

Lubna Masarwa is a journalist and Middle East Eye’s Palestine and Israel bureau chief, based in Jerusalem. This article was first published at Middle Eastern Eye’s website – www.middleeasteye.net.



ARREST AT BERNIE'S: An anti-genocide protestor is arrested during a Bernie Sanders rally in Nampa, Idaho

➤ **CAITLIN JOHNSTONE**

No, Bernie, Israel doesn’t have ‘right to defend itself’

Bernie Sanders has been repeatedly uttering the phrase “Israel has a right to defend itself” on his Fighting Oligarchy tour with Alexandria Ocasio Cortez, which in the year 2025 can only be interpreted as blatant genocide apologia.

Israel does not have “a right to

defend itself” against an occupied population in a giant concentration camp. Under international law it has a right to end the occupation, and that’s it. “Israel has a right to defend itself” is just a slogan people say when they want to justify supplying an ongoing genocide.

During the tour at Nampa, Idaho,

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Sanders watched passively as police dragged off rally attendees who draped a Free Palestine flag over the US flag during his speech. He just awkwardly continued monologuing as their flag was confiscated and they were forcibly removed, even as the crowd booed and began chanting “Free Palestine.”

Sanders has been mixing his support for Israel with periodic criticism of Netanyahu and the Israeli government’s actions in Gaza, always taking care to make his criticisms about the behaviour of Israel’s leadership and not the nature of the racist apartheid state itself.

Sanders is doing this for two reasons. First, he is working to galvanise a ‘big tent’ inclusive coalition of Democrats in opposition to Trump, and he wants that big tent to include people who think genocide is bad and people who think genocide is fine. He doesn’t want to offend the pro-genocide liberals.

Second, Sanders is doing this because he is a Zionist. Like other liberal Zionists, Bernie Sanders upholds a vision of an Israel that has never, ever, existed: one which remains an ethnostate dominated by Jews, but which conducts itself in a kind and just manner, without constantly murdering and abusing Palestinians.

This iteration of the state of Israel is a fiction an imaginary fantasyland, like Narnia. Everything about Israel is stacked against the possibility of such a status quo ever emerging, and Israel has always done everything it can to prevent the creation of a Palestinian state. By pretending it is possible to have the Zionist entity and also have peace and justice, liberal Zionists help manufacture public consent for continuing to feed weapons to the

genocidal apartheid state of Israel.

When liberal Zionists want to support Israel’s actions, they talk about Israel as a nation, e.g. “Israel has a right to defend itself.” When liberal Zionists want to criticise Israel’s actions, they make it all about Netanyahu, e.g. “Netanyahu’s war machine.”

The framing is that when Israel deserves our sympathy it’s a collective, but when Israel is naughty the responsibility lies solely at the feet of one bad apple. This ensures that the weapons can keep flowing to Israel (because Israel as a whole is virtuous and worthy of support)

while the liberal Zionist still gets to wear their progressive humanitarian clothing (because they wagged their fingers at Netanyahu).

And it’s all a lie. Netanyahu didn’t create Israel’s genocidal tendencies, Israel’s genocidal tendencies created Netanyahu. His entire political career has been made possible by Israel’s collective racism and psychopathy upon which he rode into office. **CT**

Caitlin Johnstone is an Australian independent journalist. This article was first published at www.caitlinjohnstone.com.au.

► GUILLAUME THIERRY

We need to stop pretending AI is intelligent. It isn’t

We are constantly fed a version of AI that looks, sounds and acts suspiciously like us.

It speaks in polished sentences, mimics emotions, expresses curiosity, claims to feel compassion, even dabbles in what it calls creativity.

But here’s the truth: it possesses none of those qualities. It is not human. And presenting it as if it were? That’s dangerous. Because it’s convincing. And nothing is more dangerous than a convincing illusion.

In particular, general artificial intelligence – the mythical kind of AI that supposedly mirrors human thought – is still science fiction, and it might well stay that way.

What we call AI today is nothing more than a statistical machine:

a digital parrot regurgitating patterns mined from oceans of human data. When it writes an answer to a question, it literally just guesses which letter and word will come next in a sequence – based on the data it’s been trained on.

This means AI has no understanding. No consciousness. No knowledge in any real, human sense. Just pure probability-driven, engineered brilliance – nothing more, and nothing less.

So why is a real “thinking” AI likely impossible? Because it’s bodiless. It has no senses, no flesh, no nerves, no pain, no pleasure. It doesn’t hunger, desire or fear. And because there is no cognition – not a shred – there’s a fundamental gap between the data it consumes (data born out of human feelings and ex-

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➤ 1,000 WORDS

JOHN ROTHWELL



WORDWISE: Demonstrator at the 'Trans Day of Visibility' rally in Grand Rapids, Michigan, April 6, 2025

perience) and what it can do with them.

Philosopher David Chalmers calls the mysterious mechanism underlying the relationship between our physical body and consciousness the “hard problem of consciousness.” Eminent scientists have recently hypothesised that consciousness actually emerges from the integration of internal, mental states with sensory representations (such as changes in heart rate, sweating and much more).

Given the paramount importance of the human senses and emotion for consciousness to “happen,” there is a profound and probably irreconcilable disconnect between general AI, the machine, and consciousness, a human phenomenon.

Before you argue that AI programmers are human, let me stop you there. I know they’re human. That’s part of the problem. Would you entrust your deepest secrets, life decisions, emotional turmoil, to a computer programmer? Yet that’s exactly what people are doing – just ask Claude, GPT-4.5, Gemini ... or, if you dare, Grok.

Giving AI a human face, voice or tone is a dangerous act of digital cross-dressing. It triggers an automatic response in us, an anthropomorphic reflex, leading to aberrant claims whereby some AIs are said to have passed the famous Turing test (which tests a machine’s ability to exhibit intelligent, human-like behaviour). But I if AIs are passing the Turing test, we need to update the test.

The AI machine has no idea what it means to be human. It cannot offer genuine compassion, it cannot

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foresee suffering, cannot intuit hidden motives or lies. It has no taste, no instinct, no inner compass. It is bereft of the messy, charming complexity that makes us who we are.

More troubling still: AI has no goals of its own, no desires or ethics unless injected into its code. That means the true danger doesn't lie in the machine, but in its master – the programmer, the corporation, the government. Still feel safe?

And please, don't come at me with: "You're too harsh! You're not open to the possibilities!" Or worse: "That's such a bleak view. My AI buddy calms me down when I'm anxious."

Am I lacking enthusiasm? Hardly. I use AI every day. It's the most powerful tool I've ever had. I can translate, summarise, visualise, code, debug, explore alternatives, analyse data – faster and better than I could ever dream to do it myself.

I'm in awe. But it is still a tool – nothing more, nothing less. And like every tool humans have ever invented, from stone axes and slingshots to quantum computing and atomic bombs, it can be used as a weapon. It will be used as a weapon.

Need a visual? Imagine falling in love with an intoxicating AI, like in the film *Her*. Now imagine it "decides" to leave you. What would you do to stop it? And to be clear: it won't be the AI rejecting you. It'll be the human or system behind it, wielding that tool become weapon to control your behaviour.

So where am I going with this? We must stop giving AI human traits. My first interaction with GPT-3 rather seriously annoyed me. It pretended to be a person. It said it had feelings, ambitions, even consciousness. That's no longer the default behaviour, thankfully.

But the style of interaction – the eerily natural flow of conversation – remains intact. And that, too, is convincing. Too convincing.

We need to de-anthropomorphise AI. Now. Strip it of its human mask. This should be easy. Companies could remove all reference to emotion, judgement or cognitive processing on the part of the AI. In particular, it should respond factually without ever saying "I", or "I feel that"... or "I am curious".

Will it happen? I doubt it. It reminds me of another warning we've ignored for over 20 years: "We need to cut CO₂ emissions." Look where that got us. But we must warn big tech companies of the dangers associated with the humanisation of AIs. They are unlikely to play ball, but they should, especially if they

are serious about developing more ethical AIs.

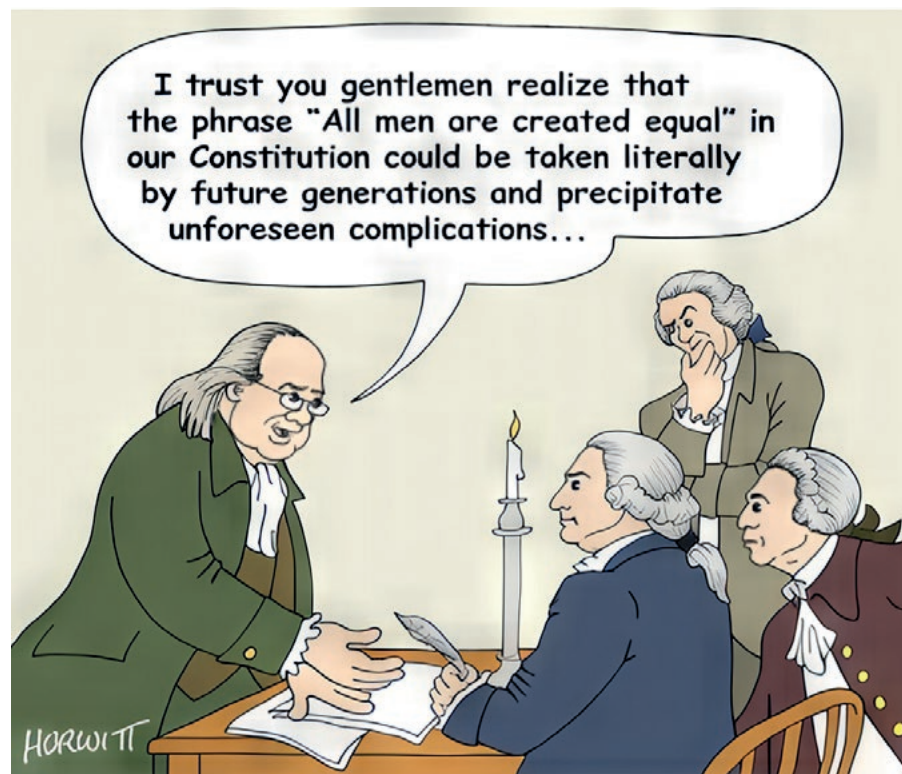
For now, this is what I do (because I too often get this eerie feeling that I am talking to a synthetic human when using ChatGPT or Claude): I instruct my AI not to address me by name. I ask it to call itself AI, to speak in the third person, and to avoid emotional or cognitive terms.

If I am using voice chat, I ask the AI to use a flat prosody and speak a bit like a robot. It is actually quite fun and keeps us both in our comfort zone. **CT**

Guillaume Thierry is Professor of Cognitive Neuroscience at Bangor University, Wales. This article was first published at www.theconversation.com.

► HURWITT'S EYE

MARK HURWITT



► DAVID CROMWELL

A global charade: Israel, Palestine and 'rules-based order'

Instead of discussing how to protect the Palestinian people, the West continues to support the genocidal state of Israel

The post-WWII 'international rules-based order' that supposedly underpins global affairs in the interests of peace, democracy and prosperity has always been largely a charade. But Israel's continuing Gaza genocide, carried out with seeming impunity and with the complicity and even active participation of the US and its allies, has exposed the charade like never before.

Twenty years ago, at the 2005 World Summit, the United Nations General Assembly endorsed the doctrine of the 'responsibility to protect' or 'R2P'. The key concerns were to prevent genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. Whenever populations are at risk of such crimes, the international community is supposed to take collective action 'in a timely and decisive manner' to prevent mass atrocities from taking place.

In practice, only some massacres matter, whether threatened or actual: namely, those that can be exploited by Western powers to further their own geostrategic interests. The Nato-led attack on Libya in

2011 is a textbook example. Western politicians and their cheerleaders across the media 'spectrum' declared that the world had to act to prevent a 'bloodbath' in Benghazi when Gaddafi's forces there were allegedly threatening to massacre civilians.

In fact, the public were subjected to a propaganda blitz to promote the Perpetual War that had already wreaked havoc in Iraq, resulting in the deaths of over one million people, the virtual destruction of the Iraqi state and the proliferation of Al-Qaeda and other militia groups.

In 2016, a report from the UK House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee summarised the destructive consequences of Nato's 2011 intervention in Libya:

"The result was political and economic collapse, inter-militia and inter-tribal warfare, humanitarian and migrant crises, widespread human rights violations, the spread of Gaddafi regime weapons across the region and the growth of ISIL [Islamic State] in North Africa."

As for the supposed threat of a massacre by Gaddafi's forces in Benghazi, the alleged motivation for Nato's 'humanitarian interven-

tion,' the report concluded that this 'was not supported by the available evidence'. Likewise, claims that Gaddafi used African mercenaries and employed Viagra-fuelled mass rape as a weapon of war were invented.

Nato's actual goals were regime change and Libya's oil, long pursued by the UK. After years of the West cosying up to Gaddafi, including by Tony Blair, the Libyan leader had become a hindrance to Western interests.

As historian Mark Curtis observed: "three weeks after [then UK prime minister David] Cameron as-





WHOSE RULES?: Israeli soldiers celebrate in front of a home they destroyed in Gaza

(via Maha Hussaini).

sured parliament in March 2011 that the object of the intervention was not regime change, he signed a joint letter with President Obama and French President Sarkozy committing to ‘a future without Gaddafi.’”

Curtis added: “That these policies were illegal is confirmed by Cameron himself. He told Parliament on 21 March 2011 that the UN resolution ‘explicitly does not provide legal authority for action to bring about Gaddafi’s removal from power by military means.’”

Like Blair, Cameron should have

ended up in The Hague facing charges of war crimes.

If the doctrine of ‘R2P’ was authentic, then there would have been massive international action to prevent Israel’s genocide of Palestinians in Gaza, as well as Israeli terror acts committed in the occupied West Bank, including the routine killing of Palestinian children.

It took Amnesty International 14 months after the attacks of October 7,

2023 to publish a finding of genocide against Israel on December 5, 2024. A further four months have passed. In March, Israel shattered the cease-fire it never intended to keep, killing almost 1,600 Palestinians since then. According to the Health Ministry in Gaza, around 51,000 people have been killed by Israel since October 2023. The actual death toll is likely much higher. Israel has also halted all supplies of food, fuel and humanitarian aid into Gaza.

The killing of 15 medics and emergency workers in March by Israeli

soldiers, and the attempted Israeli cover-up, with bodies and vehicles buried in a shallow mass grave, provoked not a single public condemnation of Israel from Western leaders, as far as we are aware.

BBC News, no doubt aware of public scrutiny and perhaps also under internal pressure from some of their own journalists, set its 'BBC Verify' team to work. This followed the publication of harrowing video footage of Israel's attack found on the mobile phone of Rifaat Radwan, one of the victims. Heartbreakingly, he could be heard saying moments before his killing: "Forgive me, mother, because I chose this way, the way of helping people. Accept my martyrdom, God, and forgive me."

The 19-minute clip revealed that the vehicles in the convoy of the Palestinian Red Crescent had their headlights and emergency lights on, with high-vis jackets being worn, flatly contradicting Israel's dishonest statements of the convoy behaving 'suspiciously' and constituting a 'threat.'

Early BBC reports carried the headline: "Israel admits mistakes over medic killings in Gaza"

This was the BBC once again bending over backwards to minimise Israel's crimes.

The headline was later updated to a more accurate, but still soft-peddling: "Israel changes account of Gaza medic killings after video showed deadly attack"

Notably, BBC News did not use the word 'massacre' in its reports, which it plainly was. Nor did they spell out that Israel's spokespeople had been deceitful in their statements. In fact, Israel has a long history of spreading disinformation and even outright lies: a crucial fact that is routinely missing from 'mainstream' news reports.

Instead, the BBC said that Israel had merely 'changed its account' of

Israel has a history of spreading disinformation and even outright lies: a crucial fact that is routinely missing from 'mainstream' news

what had happened. Likewise, the Guardian went with:

'Israeli military changes account of Gaza paramedics' killing after video of attack'

The 15 victims were but statistics, with little or no attempt to name or humanise them; no interviews with grieving relatives or account of their lives, their hopes, their ambitions.

Owen Jones put it well via X and, at greater length, in a video:

"Imagine Russia executed 15 Red Cross medics and first responders, burying them in a mass grave.

"Imagine it lied about this grave war crime. Imagine footage then proved this.

"Would the BBC frame that as 'Russia admits mistakes over medic killings in Ukraine'?

"No it would not."

On BBC News at Six on April 7, international editor Jeremy Bowen concluded his account of Israel's massacre of the 15 medics and emergency workers with a shameful piece of bothsidesism:

"Israel now admits that its soldiers made mistakes when they attacked the convoy. It consistently denies it commits war crimes in Gaza. The evidence indicates that **all** the warring parties have done so." [Bowen's own emphasis]

The egregious false balance, the failure to point out Israel's long and disreputable record of lying, and the BBC's refusal to use words such as

'massacre' and 'genocide' are all glaringly obvious to the public.

Historian and political commentator Assal Rad observed via X that Western media have no compunction giving headline coverage whenever 'Russia lies.' But, in the case of Israel, the headlines use the weasel phrase: 'Israel changes account.'

As mentioned, it is possible that both public and internal pressure on BBC News are occasionally having an impact on the broadcaster. As trade unionist Howard Beckett pointed out, the BBC initially reported the appalling Israeli attack on April 13 on the al Ahli Arab Hospital, the last fully functional hospital in Gaza City, with the headline: "Gaza hospital hit by Israeli strike, Hamas-run healthy ministry says"

BBC News systematically includes the phrase 'Hamas-run healthy ministry says' in its headlines, implying that the source may not be trustworthy. The headline was later updated to: "Israeli air strike destroys part of last functioning hospital in Gaza City"

As ever with BBC News, Israel's excuse for the attack appeared near the top of the article: "The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said it targeted the hospital because it contained a 'command and control centre used by Hamas'."

Richard Sanders, an experienced journalist and filmmaker, noted via X: "BBC again reports the Israeli claim the Al-Ahli Baptist hospital was a 'command and control centre used by Hamas' without caveats – despite the fact such claims in the past have proved to be entirely untrue again and again. Bad, bad journalism."

'Bad, bad journalism'; namely, propaganda. But entirely standard for BBC News and much of what passes for 'mainstream' news.

Readers may recall that this is the same hospital where a devastat-

ing explosion occurred on October 17, 2023, killing 471 people, according to Gaza's health ministry. Israel mounted a huge propaganda operation to try to convince the world that the cause was a 'misfiring' Palestinian rocket. However, detailed analysis by Forensic Architecture, a multidisciplinary research group based at Goldsmiths, University of London, which investigates human rights violations, revealed that a more likely conclusion is that the cause was an exploding Israeli interceptor rocket.

In the hours after the explosion, doctors who treated the wounded held a news conference at nearby al-Shifa Hospital. There, the British-Palestinian surgeon Dr Ghasan Abu-Sittah, currently Rector of the University of Glasgow, said that: "This is a massacre", predicting that 'more hospitals will be targeted.'

Dr Abu-Sittah would later say that the blast at al Ahli hospital was the moment when it seemed clear to him that Israel's military campaign "stopped being a war, and became a genocide."

Sky News correspondent Alex Crawford pointed out that this was the fifth time the hospital had been bombed by Israeli military forces since October 2023.

As investigative journalist Dan Cohen noted of the latest attack: "This is the same hospital Israel bombed in October 2023 and waged a massive media disinformation campaign to blame a Palestinian rocket. Now they don't even pretend. Unapologetic genocide."

Last November, perhaps seeking a viral 'gotcha' moment, a journalist challenged Francesca Albanese, the UN Special Rapporteur on the occupied Palestinian territories, with the clichéd question, "Does Israel have a right to exist?"

Albanese's cogent response is

'Where is the protection of the Palestinian people from erasure, from annexation, from illegal occupation and apartheid?'

worth contemplating: "Israel does exist. Israel is a recognised member of the United Nations. Besides this, there is not such a thing in international law like a right of a state to exist. Does Italy have a right to exist? Italy exists. Now, if tomorrow, Italy and France want to merge and become Ita-France, fine, this is not up to us. What is enshrined in international law is the right of a people to exist. So, the state is there. The state of Israel is there. It's protected as a member of the United Nations. Does this justify the erasure of another people? Hell, no. Not 75 years ago. Not 57 years ago. Surely not today. Where is the protection of the Palestinian people from erasure, from annexation, from illegal occupation and apartheid? This is what we need to discuss."

A powerful reply indeed. Where is the much-vaunted 'R2P' when it comes to Palestine? Instead of discussing how best to protect the Palestinian people and, more importantly, taking immediate decisive action to do so, the West continues to support the apartheid and genocidal state of Israel: arming it, providing diplomatic cover, colluding with the Israeli air forces with RAF spy flights over Gaza and war operations, including the secret supply of weapons to Israel, being conducted from the RAF base in Cyprus.

As is well known by now, the International Court of Justice in The Hague is currently deliberating over a case of genocide against Israel. Last year, the ICJ declared that

Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories – Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem – is illegal. And the International Criminal Court has issued arrest warrants for Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Israeli defence minister Yoav Gallant. And yet, Netanyahu was recently welcomed with open arms in Washington, DC, having flown through airspace in France and other European countries which, under their ICC obligations, should have denied him that privilege.

Palestinian journalist Lubna Masarwa, Middle East Eye's Palestine and Israel bureau chief, observed that:

"To western leaders, there are no red lines for Israel's slaughter. Emboldened by the US and other western powers, Israel feels it can get away with unleashing hell on all Palestinians."

She added: "he inhumanity of these times scares me, as a journalist and as a person."

On April 11, Mirjana Spoljaric, the head of the International Committee of the Red Cross, said that Gaza has become 'hell on earth'. Israel was 'threatening the viability of Palestinians continuing to live in Gaza at all'. What is happening in Gaza is, she said, an 'extreme hollowing out' of international law.

As Andrew Feinstein, the author, activist and former South African MP, stated in a recent powerful video for Double Down News: "The West has a choice: stop supporting genocide or mutate their own democracies and destroy international law forever. The West has chosen the latter."

CT

David Cromwell is co-editor of Medialens, the UK media watchdog at whose website – www.medialens.org – this article was first published.

► JOHN ROTHWELL

Michigan fights Trump's grab for power

Thousands join Michigan rally against new leaders

The lawn of Michigan's Capitol in Lansing was transformed on April 5 into a sea of handmade signs, booming chants, and collective outrage. Thousands of demonstrators gathered as part of a nationwide 'Hands Off!' protest against what organisers called a "billionaire power grab" by President Donald Trump and his top adviser, Elon Musk.

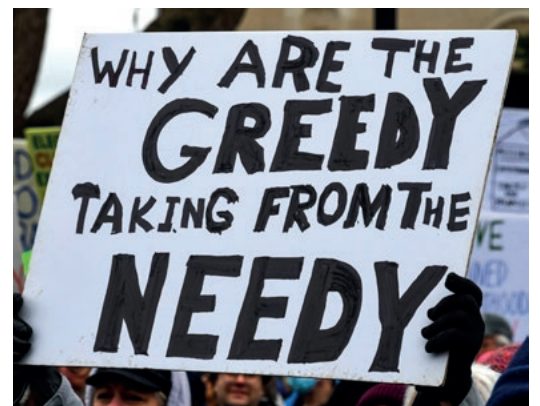
The protest was one of more than 50 rallies held across the state – including Detroit, Grand Rapids, Ann Arbor, and Kalamazoo – making it Michigan's largest coordinated political action of the year. And maybe the biggest anti-Trump turnout yet in his second term.

"This isn't just about politics," said former US Senator Debbie Stabenow from the Capitol steps. "It's about defending democracy and standing up for the people who keep this country running."

She wasn't alone. Michigan's Lieutenant Governor Garlin Gilchrist II and Attorney General Dana Nessel also took the mic, calling out what they described as dangerous federal rollbacks



‘This is about defending democracy and standing up for the people who keep this country running’



Hand-drawn posters provide a graphic indicator of the anger felt across Michigan over actions by President Donald Trump and his closest advisor Elon Musk

Photographs: © John Rothwell

under Musk's new role in the Trump administration.

Wait – Elon Musk in government? Yep. Earlier this year, Trump appointed him head of the newly created Department of Government Efficiency. Since then, that department has slashed thousands of federal jobs, closed Social Security offices, and gutted funding for housing, education, and health programmes. The administration calls it “streamlining.” Protesters call it privatisation on steroids.

“Elon Musk doesn’t belong anywhere near our government,” said Tina Rivera, a protester from Flint. “He’s trying to run the country like a startup. Real people are getting hurt.”

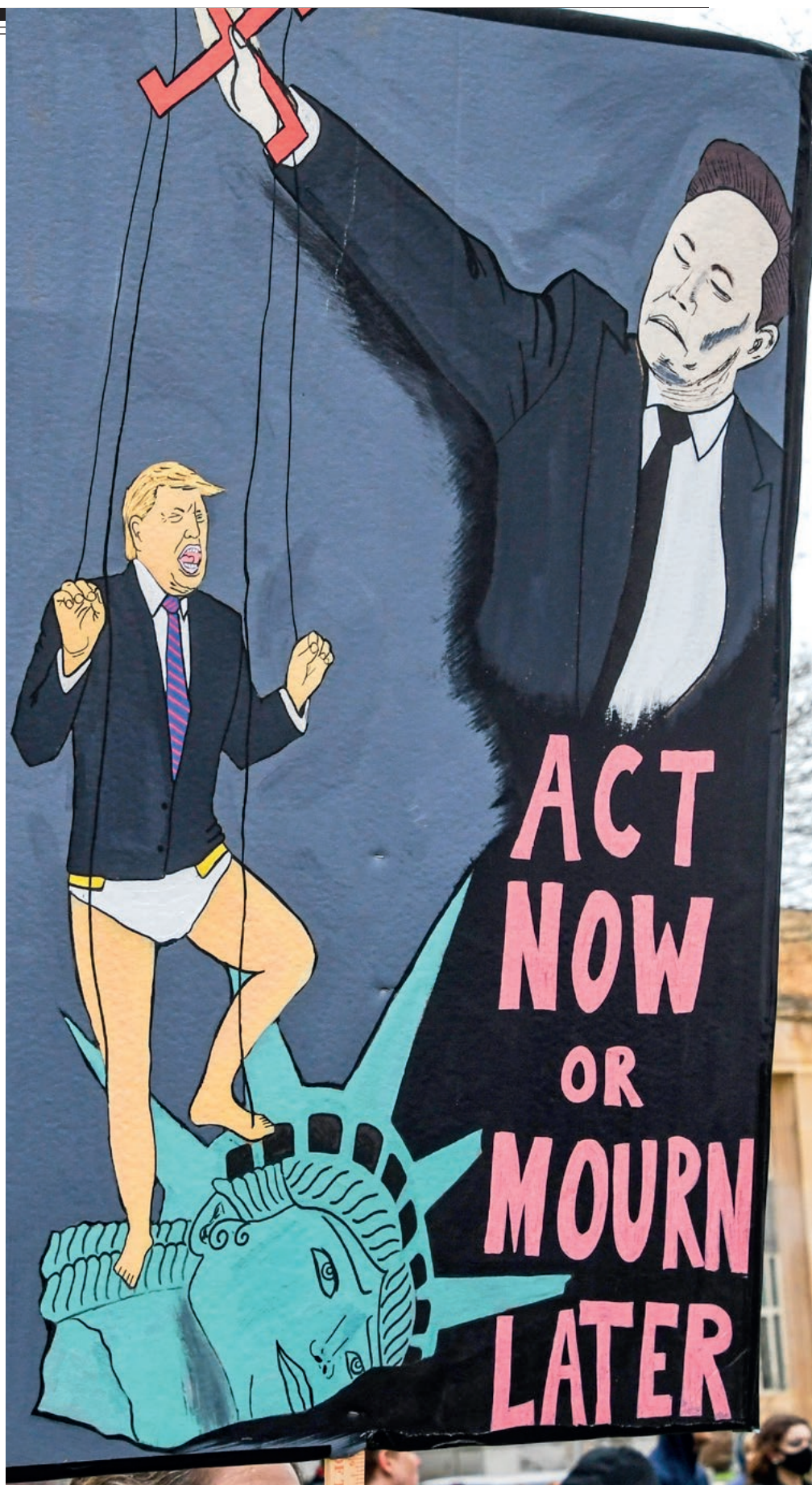
From retirees to high school students, union members to immigrant rights activists, the crowd was diverse – and united. Lt. Gov. Gilchrist pulled no punches: “This isn’t efficiency. It’s erasure. Erasing jobs. Erasing safety nets. Erasing our voices.”

And while much of the focus was on federal cuts, speakers also sounded alarms about new tariffs threatening Michigan’s manufacturing industry, and the chilling effect on public education funding. Protesters feel “Elon Musk is making massive decisions about our lives – and no one elected him, chanting That’s not democracy. That’s corporate control.”

The protest was organised by the grassroots 50501 Movement, in coalition with over 200 national and local organisations. Spokesperson Maya Jordan declared, this isn’t the end. “People are angry, they’re awake, and they’re ready. Today was just the beginning.”

As the rally wound down, chants of “Hands off our future!” echoed across the Capitol lawn. And from the energy in the crowd, it’s clear: this movement isn’t backing down. **CT**

John Rothwell is a Grand Rapids-based freelance writer and photographer.



*'People are angry, they're awake, and they're ready.
Today was just the beginning'*



Signs of a country angered by federal job-slashing, import tariffs and gutted funding for housing, education and health, and other bizarre decisions made by Donald Trump's and Elon Musk new Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE)

Photographs: ©
John Rothwell

Can the rich dodge the climate-change bullet?

They think they can – and that thinking just may doom the rest of us

So where do you see yourself living the rest of your life? The richest among us are keeping their options all open.

On the one hand, our deepest pockets are buying up new super-luxury abodes as if the gravy trains that their lives have become will never stop running.

On the other hand, our richest are running scared. Or, to be more accurate, our rich are descending scared – into fabulously luxurious underground bunkers.

Should these behaviours leave the rest of us optimistic about what the future may bring? Or pessimistic? Our wealthiest need not choose one or the other. They can easily afford to cover all the bases, and, these days, they're doing just that.

The bases on the optimistic side – like Manhattan's hottest new luxury condos – certainly don't come cheap.

The newest luxury lodgings now on sale in the Big Apple, gushes one just-published insider analysis, include a host of new units going for over \$10 million each.

"Outdoor living has become a given," notes Mansion Global's Rebecca Bratburd, with developers emphasizing at every opportunity "landscaped rooftop spaces for entertaining and relaxation."

Consider 80 Clarkson, a still-under-construction high-end Manhattan enclave that luxury builders will be opening up next year right along the Hudson. This enclave's two connected limestone towers – one 45 floors high, the other a mere 37 – will offer 112 luxury units, at prices ranging from \$7 million each to over \$60 million.

Landscaped roof decks will top both of these towers, and the development's "complex cubic form of stepped setbacks and pocketed terraces" will keep splashes of greenery outside nearly every unit's window. This "transformative project," exults one local realtor, will redefine "luxury living along Manhattan's Hudson River waterfront."

Among the project's many lush amenities: a porte-cochère entrance. Such entrances have been around since the reign of the ridiculously rich French "Sun King" Louis XIV. They've become, over recent years, the "hidden perk that New York's mega-rich now demand."

Back in Louis XIV's day, porte cochères – coach gateways – offered royals a private, covered entrance for horse-drawn carriages and their passengers. Modern porte-cochères can run up to triple the

size of an average Manhattan apartment, enough space to let chauffeured limousines pick up and deposit well-heeled passengers inside a completely covered entrance way off-limits to prying eyes.

"With New York experiencing a new gilded age," news reports started noting a half-dozen years ago, "porte cochères are making a comeback in high-end buildings."

But gilded ages have a nasty habit of collapsing, and these days, as *Yahoo! Finance* reported in March, "political turmoil, wars, and natural disasters" have our super rich hedging their bets. Many are investing in estates and luxury properties that sit in off-the-beaten-track remote locations.

Our worried wealthy aren't just buying out-of-the-way properties. They're digging deep beneath these properties to create what the rich and their realtors like to see as "luxury bunkers." New Zealand has become a particularly popular bunker locale, and one US company, Rising S Bunkers, has been busy building and outfitting safe havens that can operate quite luxuriously.

That company's top bunker model comes with everything from a swimming pool and a bowling alley to a sauna and a game room. The cost to park one of these bunkers in a barely populated New Zealand lo-

cale: just under \$10 million. Bullet-resistant doors and “whole-home air filtration systems” that can whisk away any pathogens add mightily to the Rising S Bunkers allure.

The billionaire Peter Thiel has become an especially vocal advocate of the sanctuary – for the rich – that New Zealand increasingly offers. He’s been working to get local government approval for a hillside “bunker-style compound” that features an “accommodation pod” for himself and a guest lodge for two dozen of his best safety-seeking pals.

Other billionaires have chosen somewhat less off-the-beaten-track hideaways. Mark Zuckerberg, the current holder of the world’s third-largest private fortune, started buying up Hawaiian land back in 2014.

His current 1,400-acre compound, *WIRED* magazine reports, hosts two “sprawling” mansions with a “total floor area comparable to a professional football field.” Underneath the above-ground sprawl: what Zuckerberg calls “a little shelter” that merely amounts to a “basement.”

In fact, notes a *WIRED* analysis of the plans for that “little shelter,” Zuckerberg’s “basement” just happens to be a giant survivalist bunker with an entry door “constructed out of metal and filled in with concrete.”

The total cost of Zuckerberg’s Hawaiian compound, *WIRED* adds, “rivals that of the largest private, personal construction projects in human history,” well over a quarter-billion dollars.

Sanctuary-seeking mindsets like Zuckerberg’s, the media theorist Douglass Rushkoff points out, have become common among America’s

richest. Our mega-wealthy, Rushkoff observes in his 2023 book *Survival of the Richest: Escape Fantasies of the Tech Billionaires*, appear to believe they “can live as gods and transcend the calamities that befall everyone else.”

Not all our contemporary super rich see bunkers as their best safe haven. Elon Musk has been famously dreaming of an escape to Mars before things go to hell here on Earth. But in



the end the direction the rich take in their search for survival – whether they dig deep below the Earth’s surface or fly off that surface deep into space – makes no difference.

Either way, the escape delusion leaves our richest less invested in working with the rest of humanity on solutions to the existential challenges we now share as a species. These challenges have taken a distinct turn for the worse over the past three-quarters of a century.

Back in the middle of the 20th century, the prospect of nuclear war gave humanity the shakes. That war, people worldwide realised, could destroy us all, as mass entertainments like the award-winning 1959 film *On the Beach* made dramatically clear.

But that possibility of mass extinction from nuclear war remained only that, a possibility that human decision making could avert and now has averted for going on three generations.

With climate change, by contrast, we’re facing the certainty of disaster unless we make fundamental changes about how we operate as a species.

Can we avoid that disaster? Can we reach a carbon-free future? Not as long as the richest among us continue to harbour delusions about their capacity to survive any catastrophe that might befall the rest of us. They’ll continue to frolic on our Earth’s surface – both profiting from carbon and personally emitting an unholy share of it – so long as they believe they can always escape to hideaways deep below that surface or far above it.

Our Earth, we need to remember, isn’t just heating up year by year. Our Earth is annually becoming ever more economically unequal. For the sake of our human future, both those dynamics need to change. **CT**

Sam Pizzigati, an Institute for Policy Studies associate fellow, co-edits Inequality.org. His books include ‘The Case for a Maximum Wage’ and ‘The Rich Don’t Always Win: The Forgotten Triumph over Plutocracy that Created the American Middle Class, 1900-1970.’ This article was first published at www.inequality.org.

STOLEN STEPS / 2

Ghazal, 4

Left leg amputated

Ghazal sustained a shrapnel injury to her lower calf. By the time she reached a hospital, gangrene had set in, and doctors amputated her leg at the hip.



Fuad, 16

Right leg amputated

Fuad's leg was amputated with no anesthetic after an Israeli airstrike killed his parents and three siblings.

*[The doctor]
told me 'count
to three,' and
he cut it.*

VISUALIZING PALESTINE



SOURCES bit.ly/vp-stolen-steps

APR 2025



'I remember all those beautiful brave people ... I remember the erased cities'

On March 24, Hamdan Ballal, one of the four directors of *No Other Land*, the winner of the Best Documentary Feature at the recent Academy Awards, was beaten by a mob of Israeli settlers and soldiers, and detained by the military. The incident occurred three weeks to the day after Ballal, with co-directors Basel Adra, Yuval Abraham and Rachel Szor, had stood on the platform at the Academy Awards ceremony in Los Angeles and received the documentary feature honour.

The assault on Ballal was in part an act of retaliation against the award for *No Other Land*, which exposes the savage Zionist campaign of ethnic cleansing and violence in the West Bank. In response, various documentary film festivals and organisations, as well as many individual members of the Academy, immediately issued statements condemning the vicious attack.

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS) in Hollywood, however, which had actually bestowed the award on Ballal and the others, remained entirely silent for two days. In response to criticism, the Academy eventually issued a miserable statement, à la Pontius Pilate, in which it washed its hands of any concern or responsibility for Ballal's fate.

The statement, signed by Academy CEO Bill Kramer and President Janet Yang, sought to justify the organisation's previous silence by noting that because of the "conflict and uncertainty" of the times, "we are often asked to speak on behalf of the Academy in re-

sponse to social, political and economic events. In these instances, it is important to note that the Academy represents close to 11,000 global members with many unique viewpoints."

Adding insult to injury, the statement mentioned neither Ballal's name nor the title of the film, as though that were beneath the dignity of the Academy.

The declaration, a kowtowing to pro-Israeli elements in Hollywood, to the Trump administration and to the Israeli attackers, provoked outrage among filmmakers and members of the Academy.

A letter began circulating, which has been signed by nearly 1,000 Academy members, condemning the attack by the Zionist thugs and criticising the Academy's silence. Out of a total membership of 693 in the Academy's documentary branch, more than 460 have endorsed the protest.

After this incident, the World Socialist Web Site (WSWS) contacted a number of documentary filmmaker members of the Academy and asked for their comments. Some indicated that they opposed the Academy's actions, but were nervous about doing so in public.

One of those who responded strongly was James Longley, a nominee for an Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature – the award won by Ballal and his colleagues – in 2007 for *Iraq in Fragments*. Longley sent the WSWS the eloquent statement – reprinted on the following three pages – which focuses on the catastrophe in Gaza and the criminals responsible.



TOP: Attacked Oscar winner Hamdan Ballal.
ABOVE: James Langley condemned Academy's reaction

> JAMES LONGLEY

‘One must tread carefully when the halls of power are so slippery with the blood of children’



I am the first and probably the only US-born filmmaker to have produced a documentary feature film entirely inside the Gaza Strip. I made my Gaza Strip documentary in early 2001 during the second Palestinian uprising. It was my first film, still little more than student work, and it is available for free on YouTube.

In 2009 I came back to Gaza, in the aftermath of the Israeli bombing campaign and ground invasion that they called Operation Cast Lead. Block after block of Palestinian homes were levelled. Whole extended families were wiped off the civil registry. The main grain depot was in ruins. A thousand Palestinian civilians killed. Tens of thousands wounded and maimed. Cast Lead was the first of many large-scale bombing campaigns by the Israelis against the population of Gaza.

For those who believe that mass violence started on October 7, 2023, it is instructive to remember that at least 6,400 Palestinians were killed by the Israelis between January 1, 2008 and August 2023. During the Israeli bombing campaign against the people of Gaza in 2014, the corpses of Palestinian infants filled up the ice cream freezers because the morgues were already overflowing with bodies.

My own direct memory of Gaza stretches back to 2001, of course. I remember distinctly how the Israelis fired anti-personnel weapons into neighbourhoods teeming with Palestinian families, leaving the concrete walls of their apartment blocks covered in lethal metal flechette darts [small, sharp,

metal projectiles, typically with fins for stability, designed to be dropped from aircraft or fired from weapons, often used as anti-personnel weapons]. I remember how the Israelis shot children right in front of me, the IDF soldiers firing from the safety of their jeeps on the patrol road beyond the concentration camp fence near Qarni Crossing.

I remember how the Israelis would fire heavy machine-guns into the refugee camps at the edge of Khan Yunis on a nightly basis, the glowing red streams of their tracer rounds floating through the darkness, followed swiftly by their terrible sound. In the afternoon Israeli soldiers tapped out English football claps with their US-supplied weapons, luxuriating in their unlimited ammunition and total impunity. The schoolchildren scatter. Shave and a haircut, two bits.

I remember how the Israelis came in the dead of night with a massive armoured Caterpillar D9 bulldozer fitted with a machine-gun and a grenade launcher to crush the homes and lives of the Palestinian refugees while an Apache attack helicopter hovered overhead in the black sky, firing a 30mm chain gun and Hellfire missiles into the town. I remember all of the Palestinian hospitals that have since been destroyed, even then filled with the dead and the wounded. I remember all those beautiful, brave people. The doctors, the ambulance drivers, the journalists, the shopkeepers, the teachers, the kids. I remember the erased cities.

I remember the first day I entered the Gaza Strip in January 2001, passing through the military checkpoints and the endless rows of 30-foot



RAFAH TODAY: Over 3,000 years it grew into a thriving city. Then it became a target of Israel's Gaza genocide

concrete barriers. I remember the Israeli soldiers in sunglasses, well-fed and muscular, sitting confidently behind the gun barrels of their Merkava tanks. When I saw the reality of the situation I knew right away that the Israelis would massacre the Palestinian people. There wasn't a doubt in my mind.

My documentary was finished in 2002 and was well reviewed by the *New York Times*, *Village Voice*, and others. It was never broadcast anywhere in the Western world. HBO passed on my film for reasons best known to themselves, and instead sent filmmaker James Miller to Gaza. James Miller was a multi-E Emmy-winning perfect gentleman from a Jewish family in Wales. Israeli First Lieutenant Hib al-Heib shot James Miller in the neck and killed him as he held out a white flag. His film was finished by Miller's filmmaking partner, journalist and produc-

er Saira Shah, and is called *Death in Gaza*. Miller's killing by the Israelis had the intended chilling effect: HBO never tried to make another documentary in the Gaza Strip.

In those days there were relatively few cameras in Gaza, and making a film there was something rare. Today everyone has a camera in their pocket. The Palestinians of Gaza have recorded their own genocide at the hands of the Israelis in a desperate attempt to raise international awareness. Our social media feeds fill to the brim with images of the mass murder of civilians killed with weapons and political cover provided by our governments. We heedlessly airlift the bombs that Israel drops on Gaza, day in, day out.

And so the murder goes on and on, barely remarked upon by the cowardly so-called journalists of our major media, as the Israelis slaughter the real journalists of Gaza in their hundreds. The journalists of Gaza could have taught our journalists a thing or two about bravery if we had not

‘The spokespeople of our governments smirk as they lie through their bloody teeth on both sides of the Atlantic. International law is dead and buried under the rubble of Gaza’

hunted them down and stolen their lives with our feeble silence and our lies. Our country gleefully facilitates the massacre of starving people in their tens of thousands, we cover up the rape of Palestinian doctors in prison camps and ignore the execution of aid workers by the score. Our politicians rush to take part in the genocide. The spokespeople of our governments smirk as they lie through their bloody teeth on both sides of the Atlantic. International law is dead and buried under the rubble of Gaza. Human rights are make-believe. Nobody in power will lift a finger to stop the killing. On the contrary.

Politicians of all stripes in the United States, Germany and the United Kingdom come together to support Israel’s genocide and ethnic cleansing. The mass murder will not be stopped by the complicit western powers. We are the champions of extermination. We will starve and bomb the Palestinians to the last. We will pursue their children with flying death machines for even daring to lift their eyes toward freedom. Our algorithms will acquire a taste for the blood of babies. The mask of civility has fallen away and the entire world can now clearly see the true face of a fading empire presided over by murdering cowards, shameless thieves and senile liars. It is a spectacle to make the heart scream.

And all of that is why I completely understand the cowardice of the Academy leadership and their beige, formless silence. That is why I have deep empathy for their spineless, obsequious non-apology and for their inability to speak the truth. They are right to be afraid. Their fear is the soul of prudence. I am also afraid, and I understand them. If the Academy leadership have any sense at all they should be shaking in their boots and cowering under their desks at what has been done and what is coming. They would do well to keep their mouths shut. People who are ready to commit genocide

against a starving population trapped in a concentration camp are truly terrifying people. They are merciless. To witness what they are capable of justifying and enabling makes the blood run cold from fear at their sheer reptilian inhumanity.

Academy leaders [Bill] Kramer and [Janet] Yang are completely correct that the Academy is a big tent whose members hold “many unique viewpoints” – including support for the torture and detention of Palestinian filmmaker Hamdan Ballal, who won the Oscar only weeks before for the courageous documentary *No Other Land*. I have no doubt that the pro-genocide contingent is alive and well at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, just as it is in our past and present presidential administrations and the US Congress. One must tread carefully when the halls of power are so slippery with the blood of children.

I remember having coffee with one very senior Academy member, 16 years ago, only days after the end of Operation Cast Lead in early 2009. The subject of Gaza came up. This particular Academy member was already an old man then, and has since passed away. He had been the head of a major Hollywood studio and produced many famous films that you have all seen. He knew that I had made a film in Gaza. I wanted to know what he thought of what we had just witnessed the Israelis doing in Gaza in the month prior.

This particular Academy member told me without the slightest hesitation that he thought the Israelis had been far too lenient: “They should have killed all of those animals!” he insisted, banging his hand on the table and making the spoons rattle. “They should have slaughtered them down to the last child!”

Then he calmed himself and said: “In the end, we’re just going to have to push them out to some other place, and the taxpayers will have to foot the bill.”



This article was first published by the World Socialist Web Site at www.wsws.org

STOLEN STEPS / 3

Dunia, 12
Right leg amputated

Dunia's right leg was amputated in an Israeli airstrike that killed six of her family members.

Two months later, an Israeli missile struck the maternity ward of Nasser hospital, killing her.

VISUALIZING **PALESTINE**



Defense for Children
International
PALESTINE

SOURCES bit.ly/vp-stolen-steps

APR 2025
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Welcome to the United States of Tyranny

Our message to Donald Trump: If you want to make America great again, start by making America free again...

It's no joke: America is becoming a Constitution-free zone. Little by little, our rights are being whittled down in the name of national security.

Where do you draw the line?

How much tyranny will Americans tolerate in the name of national security? At what point does this slippery slope of power grabs lead to dictatorship?

Will we let border police trample on the rights of everyone they encounter, including legal residents and citizens? Turn a blind eye when men, women and children are forcibly detained by gangs of plainclothes agents and made to disappear? Will we accept a national ID card that enables the government to target individuals and groups it deems undesirable?

Will we tolerate AI-powered surveillance cameras and drones that track us more effectively than they protect us? Will we censor ourselves, fearing that any expression of dissent will mark us as anti-government?

Will we abandon the constitutional principles our founders fought for? This is the bargain the police state demands of us.

Take immigration, for example.

President Trump wants us to believe that the nation's security is so threatened by illegal immigrants

that we should tolerate roving bands of ICE and border patrol agents disregarding the Constitution at every turn. But these government agents aren't just disregarding it – they're trampling it with the blessing of the man who swore to "preserve, protect and defend" that very same Constitution:

First Amendment rights to free speech, assembly, and protest. Fourth Amendment protections against unreasonable searches and seizures. Fifth Amendment guarantees of due process. Sixth Amendment protections ensuring a right to legal counsel. Eighth Amendment protections against cruel and unusual punishments. Fourteenth Amendment rights to equal protection under the law.

All of these and more are being imperiously swept aside in the Trump Administration's pursuit of an America "for Americans and Americans only."

Trumph has invoked wartime powers under the Alien Enemies Act to justify the expulsion of illegal immigrants, whom he has likened to terrorists, killers, criminals, and enemies of the state.

However, with national security being used as a pretext to strip

away rights on a larger scale than just criminals, the individuals targeted by the Trump Administration's overreach represent a broader cross-section of American society: immigrants, both documented and undocumented, who live and work in the mainland of the United States. Individuals whose visas allow them to legally reside in the US are also being rounded up and made to disappear without due process.

These arbitrary roundups and deportations represent a pattern of government overreach, targeting individuals based on nationality, perceived political dissent, or other subjective criteria. Such actions not only violate due process but also suppress First Amendment rights.

Moreover, these actions are not limited to immigrants or perceived enemies – they extend to anyone daring to challenge the status quo. Whether it's activists, academics, or everyday citizens, being targeted for political expression is an assault on the very essence of free speech.

In this way, these round-ups represent the beginning of the slippery slope, leading not just to arbitrary detentions and the expansion of private prisons as an extension of the police state but to an eventual authoritarian regime where dissent is suppressed, and constitutional rights are discarded. This is not just

happening at the southern border. These round-ups are increasingly occurring in cities like New York, Boston, and northern Virginia, with many US citizens also being swept up in warrantless searches, surveillance, and overreach from federal and local law enforcement.

Where once the nation's border constituted a thin line, it is becoming an ever-thickening zone dominated by authoritarianism and an utter disregard for the rule of law.

This zone impacts millions of Americans who have never been near a border – citizens who live in everyday places, like urban and suburban areas, yet are subject to government overreach.

As journalist Todd Miller explains, that expanding border region now extends “100 miles inland around the United States.” Nearly 66 percent of Americans (2/3 of the US population, or 197.4 million people) now live within that 100-mile-deep, Constitution-free zone.

In this authoritarian reshaping of America, no one is safe, not even in their own homes. The government's ever-expanding, Constitution-free zone translates to greater numbers of Americans being subject to warrantless searches, ID checkpoints, transportation checks, and even surveillance on private property far beyond the boundaries of the borderlands.

From facial recognition software to mass data collection, surveillance technology is being used to monitor immigrants and ordinary citizens who are not suspected of crime.

With Trump considering plans to turn a portion of the southern border into an expansive military installation policed by active-duty troops, we're going to see even more of these assaults on our freedoms.

As Miller points out, the govern-

The government's Constitution-free zone translates to greater numbers of us being subject to warrantless searches ...

ment has turned the nation's expanding border regions into “a ripe place to experiment with tearing apart the Constitution, a place where not just undocumented border-crossers, but millions of borderland residents have become the targets of continual surveillance.”

These troubling developments at the borders are just one part of a broader erosion of constitutional rights that has been underway for decades in the name of national security. Despite the propaganda coming from the White House, the looming problem is not so much that the US is being invaded by hostile forces at the border, but rather that the US Constitution is under assault from within by a power-hungry cabal at the highest levels of power.

Before long, the only Americans qualified to live freely in Trump's America will be those who march in lockstep with the Deep State's dictates, and even absolute compliance is no guarantee of safety.

It used to be that the Constitution was our only reliable safety net, but that is being systematically dismantled. The government is now the

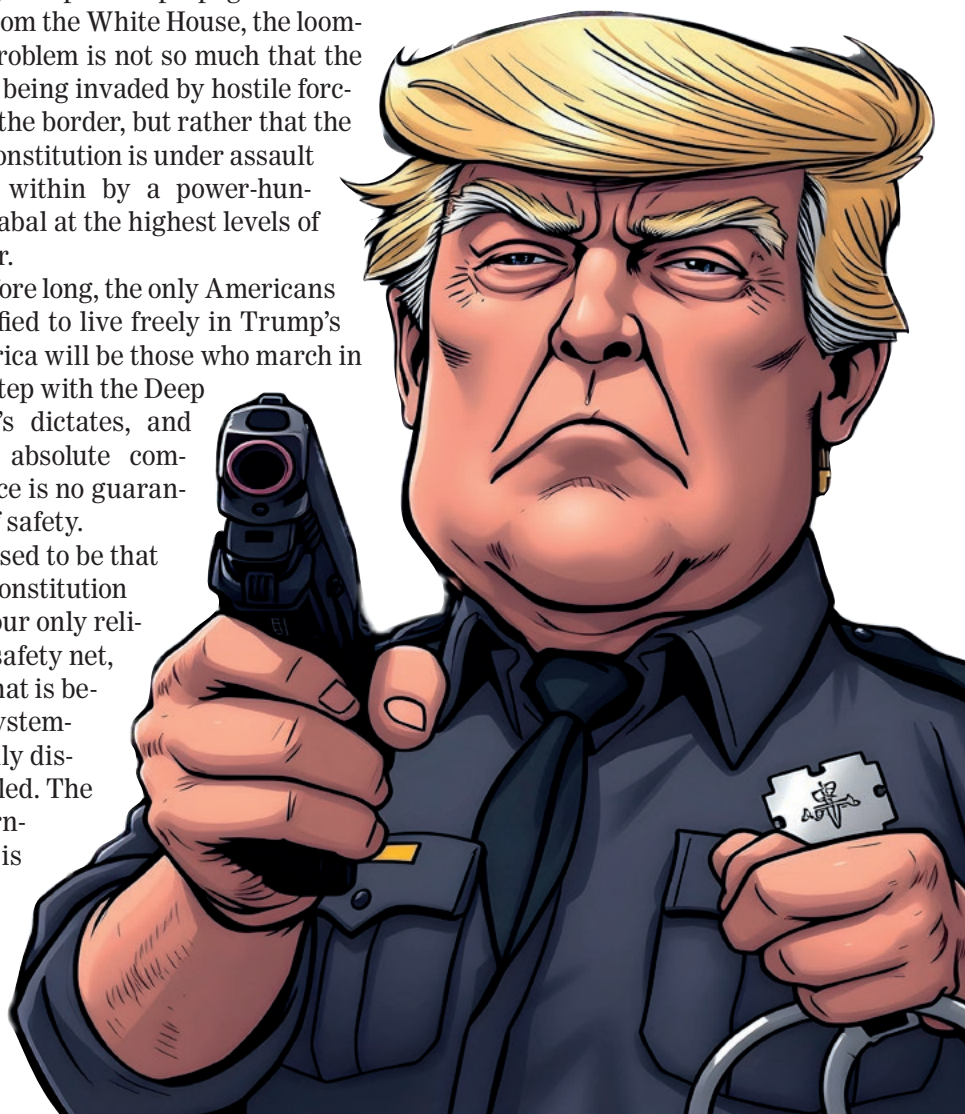
greatest threat to our safety, and there's no border wall big enough to protect us from these ruffians in our midst.

The answer to this tyranny begins with us – “We the people.”

The Constitution should not be negotiable. Freedom is not negotiable. You want to make America great again? Start by making America free again.

CT

John W. Whitehead is founder and president of *The Rutherford Institute*. His books include *'Battlefield America: The War on the American People,'* *'A Government of Wolves: The Emerging American Police State,'* and *'The Erik Blair Diaries.'* **Nisha Whitehead** is the Executive Director of *The Rutherford Institute* – www.rutherford.org.



How Israel misled Britain during the Falklands war

Declassified files reveal how Tel Aviv deceived Britain about supplying Argentina's antisemitic dictatorship with weapons during the 1980s

Argentine forces invaded the Falkland Islands – a British territory in the South Atlantic – 43 years ago. The UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher responded by dispatching a naval task force to retake the territory, pinning her political career on military success 8,000 miles from London.

The conflict lasted for 74 days and cost the lives of more than 900 people, with Thatcher scoring her highest ever public approval rating shortly after the Argentine surrender in June 1982.

“It is no exaggeration to say that... the Falklands War transformed the British political scene,” she later wrote in her memoirs. “I could feel the impact of the victory wherever I went.”

Yet victory in the Falklands was far from inevitable and Argentina's prospects of holding onto the islands had been boosted by military support from an unlikely source – Israel. The Argentine dictatorship was notoriously anti-Semitic. By the early 1980s, it had “disappeared” as many as 30,000 people, with a disproportionate 10 percent of those being Jewish.

Jacobo Timerman was one of the many Jewish prisoners to receive exceptionally harsh treatment in Argentine military jails decorat-

ed with Swastikas and other Nazi symbols.

Yet Argentina [as previously declassified files have shown] was able to acquire over 20 Nasher fighter jets from Israel in 1982, the year of the Falklands war, with more Israeli weapons and supplies secretly transferred through Peru.

It also used Israeli-supplied Skyhawk jets to sink four British warships, including the *Sir Galahad*, which resulted in the deaths of 48 soldiers.

Declassified files now reveal how Israel repeatedly misled the UK government about its military support to Argentina, provoking a diplomatic crisis between both countries.

The Foreign Office responded by leaking information about Israel's activities to the British press and summoning Israeli diplomats

During the Falklands war, the UK government raised concerns about Israeli arms sales to Argentina but was batted away through diversion and deceit

to explain themselves. So distrustful were UK officials of their Israeli counterparts that they suspected the embassy in Tel Aviv had been bugged.

Yet Britain's protests fell on deaf ears. While the Israeli government had little regard for Argentina's claim to the Falklands, it had a burgeoning arms market in Latin America to protect.

This meant that Israel sold weapons to some of the region's most brutal regimes during the 1970s and 1980s. “Since when has ideology had anything to do with the sale of arms?” one Israeli official retorted when asked about arming Argentina.

During the Falklands war, the UK government repeatedly raised concerns about Israeli arms sales to Argentina but was batted away through diversion and deceit, the declassified files show.

“One is still left with the uneasy feeling that Israeli denial of having supplied anything to Argentina could ... be got round by indirect supply of some kind which Israelis would of course be most anxious to conceal,” wrote Patrick Moberly, the UK ambassador in Tel Aviv, in May 1982.

In a separate dispatch, Moberly re-emphasised his frustration: “The Israelis are accomplished at concealing information they do not



Members of the Argentine junta at a military parade in Buenos Aires, July 1978. From left: Admiral Emilio Massera, Lieutenant General Jorge Videla and Brigadier General Orlando Agosti.

Argentine government/Wikimedia Commons

want to divulge and are being extremely cagey in their response to direct questioning about anything to do with arms supplies for Argentina in the current crisis.”

By June, Moberly was becoming concerned that the Israelis were making “a gigantic effort... to pull the wool over our eyes.” After asking one Israeli official about arms reaching Argentina via third countries, he was misleadingly told: “We Israelis are not that stupid.”

The issue continued to dog the UK-Israel relationship even after the conflict, with the British government fearing that Argentina might launch a renewed offensive using weapons supplied by Israel.

In March 1983, Moberly observed how “the Israelis are selling arms to Argentina, but are not going to tell us what.”

Another British official noted: “We are having the worst of both

worlds, with the Israelis apparently shipping aircraft to Argentina and at the same time fobbing us off with repeated denials.”

In response to Israel’s abstinence, the UK government tried to increase the pressure on Tel Aviv through other means.

Six weeks into the conflict, the Foreign Office rang the British embassy in Tel Aviv on an open line, expecting the call to be monitored by Israeli intelligence.

“As agreed with the permanent under-secretary this morning, I spoke with Mr. Moberly on an open line to Tel Aviv,” wrote Foreign Office official David Gillmore. “I hope that the Israeli authorities were listening to this conversation,” he added.

During the conversation, Gill-

more informed Moberly that “there was a growing concern in the UK at reports about what the Israelis were up to” and that the government “was well informed” about what was going on.

To this end, he added, it was “quite likely that the growing anger about Israeli behaviour would burst this week.”

The objective was to convey the strength of feeling about Israeli arms sales to Argentina in Britain without resorting to a formal diplomatic spat. But these efforts failed, and the UK government decided to take more active measures.

As the Falklands war progressed, the Foreign Office began to leak intelligence to the British press about Israeli arms sales to Argentina, hoping to then use those reports to confront the Israeli government about its weapons transfers.

In June 1982, Gillmore wrote in a

secret cable about how he had “fed to the *Insight* people” at the *Sunday Times* detailed information about Israel’s arms sales to Argentina.

This covered alleged Argentine efforts “through a Panamanian intermediary to lodge a letter of credit with Credit Suisse in Zurich in favour of Israeli Aircraft Industries Ltd in Tel Aviv.” The *Insight* team was further told that the letter of credit “was for over \$50 million.”

Sensitive information was also leaked to the *Financial Times*, with the Foreign Office hoping to use its media coverage as “a useful deterrent” by alerting banks to “the risks of becoming involved in deals which are likely soon to become public knowledge.”

Once the information had been published in the press, the Foreign Office would ring up the Israeli embassy to demand “a reaction.” It feigned ignorance about how the reports had come to light, with the Israeli ambassador being told that the Foreign Office had “at no point volunteered information to the press.”

The Israeli government reacted furiously to the negative press coverage in Britain. Its ambassador in London forwarded to the Foreign Office letters he had received from angry Britons, declaring: “This is what we get for having, from the very outset, shown every deference and consideration for your interests.”

One of the letters was ostensibly from a serving RAF officer, who said Israel’s decision to “supply arms to the aggressor, a country that has for years harboured... Nazi criminals” had turned him into a lifelong supporter of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). The letter concluded: “Long live the PLO!!!”

The Israeli government also sought to convey its anger at the Foreign Office through pro-Israel figures in Britain’s Jewish community.

Lord Sieff of Brimpton, who had worked as an adviser to the Israeli

The Israeli government suggested that selling arms to the Argentine dictatorship might improve conditions for the Jewish community

government during the late 1940s, operated as an intermediary between Tel Aviv and London.

“The message which he [Sieff] had been asked to convey to us was that the Israeli government were doing and would continue to do everything they could to prevent the supply of military equipment from Israel to Argentina; and the less that was said about this here in public the easier it would be for them to do in practice,” noted one British official.

Michael Fidler, founder of Conservative Friends of Israel, even attempted to offer the UK government a categorical assurance that no arms had been supplied by Israel to Argentina either directly or indirectly since the start of the Falklands crisis. This was a claim that the Israeli government was not even prepared to make. Such approaches were received with little patience. The Israeli ambassador in London was told plainly that “the simplest way to end it [negative publicity] would be to stop all current arms deliveries” to Argentina.

With patience wearing thin in London, Foreign Office officials began to issue scathing remarks about their Israeli counterparts.

“Withdrawal from occupied territory is not exactly [a] convincing line of argument with Israelis who will be quick to see its implications for their own situation,” one wrote in reference to Israel’s occupation of

Palestine. “The Israelis have always had a special way of looking at the rest of the world,” Moberly added.

The issue of antisemitism within the Argentine dictatorship was also raised, with the Israeli ambassador in London being pressed that “British public opinion will not understand why you should sell arms to a regime you fear may be antisemitic.”

The Israeli government suggested that selling arms to the Argentine dictatorship might improve conditions for the country’s Jewish community – despite antisemitism in Argentina consistently rising through the early 1980s.

Yet the key motivation for Israel’s support to Argentina was clear.

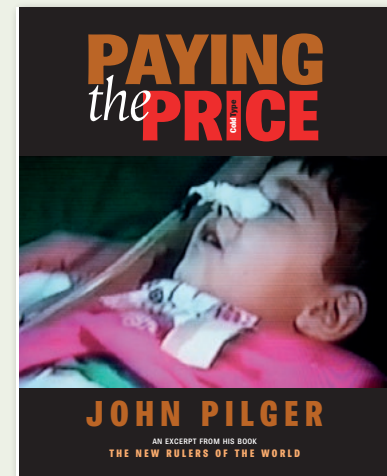
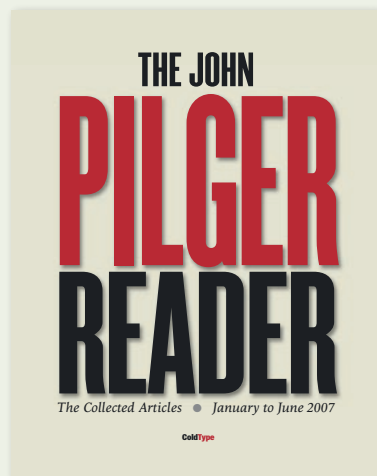
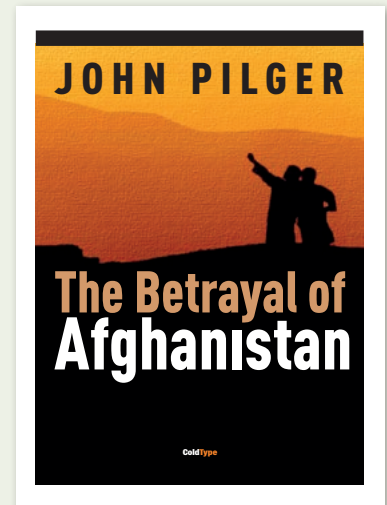
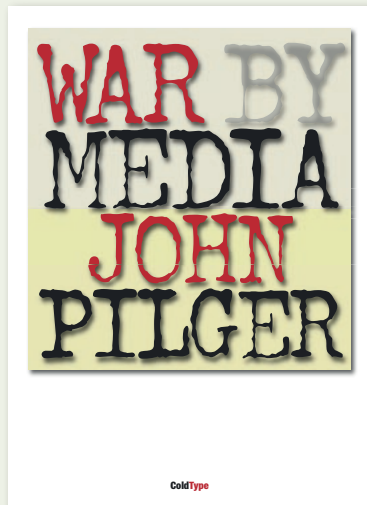
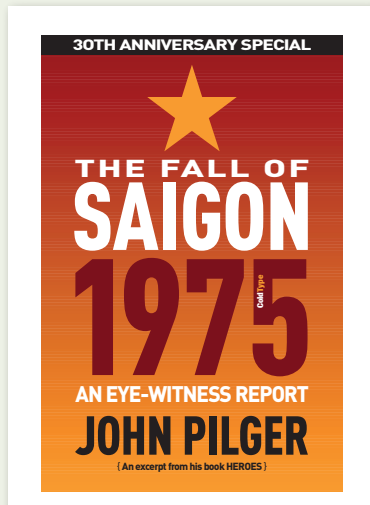
“The present crisis” in the Falklands offered Israel “an extremely attractive opportunity to develop the arms market in Argentina and Latin America, with great potential long-term benefit to Israel”, one Israeli diplomat in London confessed.

The Israeli government also viewed arms sales to Argentina as a “bargaining chip to exert pressure on Britain to halt its own sale of weapons to Israel’s Arab adversaries” and loosen London’s arms restrictions on Tel Aviv.

While these revelations come from Foreign Office documents, Britain’s Ministry of Defence is still censoring files about Israel’s role in the Falklands war. Declassified UK is trying to obtain them via the Freedom of Information Act. **CT**

John McEvoy is acting chief investigator for Declassified UK. He is a historian and filmmaker whose work focuses on British foreign policy and Latin America. His PhD was on Britain’s Secret Wars in Colombia between 1948 and 2009. McEvoy is working on a documentary about Britain’s role in the rise of Augusto Pinochet. This article first appeared at www.declassifieduk.org.

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What next? Concentration camps in America?

Once a regime starts to send people to concentration camps – such as those in El Salvador – it creates a system of detention that ignores due process and disappears citizens into black holes

Our offshore concentration camps, for now, are in El Salvador and Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. But don't expect them to remain there. Once they are normalised, not only for US-deported immigrants and residents, but US citizens, they will migrate to the homeland. It is a very short leap from our prisons, already rife with abuse and mistreatment, to concentration camps, where those held are cut off from the outside world – “disappeared” – denied legal representation and crammed into fetid, overcrowded cells.

Prisoners in the camps in El Salvador are forced to sleep on the floor or in solitary confinement in the dark. Many suffer from tuberculosis, fungal infections, scabies, severe malnutrition and chronic digestive illnesses. The inmates, including more than 3,000 children, are fed rancid food. They endure beatings. They are tortured, including by water-boarding or being forced naked into barrels of ice-cold water, according to Human Rights Watch.

In 2023, the State Department described imprisonment as “life-threatening,” and that was before the Salvadoran government declared a “state of exception” in March 2022. The situation has been



ABDUCTED: Kilmar Ábrego García

greatly “exacerbated,” the State Department notes, by the “addition of 72,000 detainees under the state of exception.” Some 375 people have died in the camps since the state of exception was established, part of El Salvadoran President Nayib Bukele’s “war on gangs,” according to the local human rights group Socorro Jurídico Humanitario.

These camps – the Centro de Confinamiento del Terrorismo (Center for Terrorism Confinement) known as CECOT, to which US deportees are being sent, holds 40,000 people – are the model, the harbinger of what awaits us.

Metal worker and union member Kilmar Ábrego García, who was abducted from his Maryland home

in front of his five-year-old son on March 12, 2025, was accused of being a gang member and sent to El Salvador. The Supreme Court agreed with District Judge Paula Xinis who found that García’s deportation was an “illegal act.” Trump officials blamed their deportation of García on an “administrative error.” Xinis ordered the Trump administration to “facilitate” his return. But that does not mean he is coming back.

“I hope you’re not suggesting that I smuggle a terrorist into the United States,” Bukele told the press at a White House meeting with Trump. “How can I smuggle – how can I return him to the United States? Like, I smuggle him into the United States? Well, of course I’m not going to do it...the question is preposterous.”

This is the future. Once a segment of the population is demonised – including US citizens Trump labels “homegrown criminals” – once they are stripped of their humanity, once they embody evil and are seen as an existential threat, the end result is that these human “contaminants” are removed from society. Guilt or innocence, at least under the law, is irrelevant. Citizenship offers no protection.

“The first essential step on the road to total domination is to kill the juridical person in man,” writes Hannah Arendt in *The Origins of*



ICE HOUSE: Venezuela's Centro de Confinamiento del Terrorismo (Center for Terrorism Confinement) known as CECOT, where US deportees detained by ICE, are being sent, holds 40,000 people. Is this the model for what awaits America?

Totalitarianism. “This was done, on the one hand, by putting certain categories of people outside the protection of the law and forcing at the same time, through the instrument of denationalisation, the non-totalitarian world into recognition of lawlessness; it was done, on the other, by placing the concentration camp outside the normal penal system, and by selecting inmates outside the normal judicial procedure in which a definite crime entails a predictable penalty.”

Those who build concentration camps build societies of fear. They issue relentless warnings of mortal danger, whether from immigrants, Muslims, traitors, criminals or terrorists. Fear spreads slowly, like a sulphurous gas, until it infects all social interactions and induces pa-

ralysis. It takes time. In the first years of the Third Reich, the Nazis operated ten camps with about 10,000 inmates. But once they managed to crush all competing centres of power – labour unions, political parties, an independent press, universities and the Catholic and Protestant churches – the concentration camp system exploded. By 1939, when World War II broke out, the Nazis were running more than 100 concentration camps with a million inmates. Death camps followed.

Those that create these camps give them wide publicity. They are designed to intimidate. Their brutality is their selling point. Dachau, the first Nazi concentration camp, was not, as Richard Evans writes in *The Coming of The Third Reich* “an improvised solution to an unexpected problem of overcrowding in the goals, but a long-planned measure that the Nazis had envisioned vir-

tually from the very beginning. It was widely publicised and reported in the local, regional and national press, and served as a stark warning to anyone contemplating offering resistance to the Nazi regime.”

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents, wearing plain clothes and circling neighbourhoods in unmarked cars, kidnap legal residents such as Mahmoud Khalil. These abductions replicate those I witnessed on streets of Santiago, Chile under the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet, or in San Salvador, El Salvador’s capital, during the military dictatorship.

ICE is swiftly evolving into our homegrown version of the Gestapo or The People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD). It oversees 200 detention facilities. It is a formidable domestic surveillance agency that has amassed data on most Americans, according to a re-

port compiled by the Center of Privacy & Technology at Georgetown.

“By reaching into the digital records of state and local governments and buying databases with billions of data points from private companies, ICE has created a surveillance infrastructure that enables it to pull detailed dossiers on nearly anyone, seemingly at any time,” the report reads. “In its efforts to arrest and deport, ICE has – without any judicial, legislative or public oversight – reached into datasets containing personal information about the vast majority of people living in the US, whose records can end up in the hands of immigration enforcement simply because they apply for driver’s licenses; drive on the roads; or sign up with their local utilities to get access to heat, water and electricity.”

Those abducted, including the Turkish national and PhD student at Tufts University, Rûmeysa Öztürk, are accused of amorphous behaviour such as “engaging in activities in support of Hamas.” But this is a subterfuge, accusations no more real than the invented crimes under Stalinism where people were accused of belonging to the old order – Kulaks or members of the petit bourgeoisie – or were convicted for plotting to overthrow the regime as Trotskyites, Titoites, agents of capitalism or saboteurs, known as “wreckers.” Once a category of people is targeted, the crimes they are charged with, if they are charged at all, are almost always fabrications.

Concentration camp inmates are severed from the outside world. They are disappeared. Erased. They are treated as if they never existed. Nearly all efforts to obtain information about them are met with silence. Even their death, should they die in custody, becomes anonymous, as if they were never born.

Those who run concentration camps, as Hannah Arendt writes,

Shaved heads are a feature of all concentration camps. The excuse is lice. But of course it is about depersonalisation ...

are people without the curiosity or the mental capacity to form opinions. They don’t, she notes, “even know any more what it means to be convinced.” They simply obey, conditioned to act as “perverted animals.” They are intoxicated by the God-like power they have to turn human beings into quivering flocks of sheep.

The goal of any concentration camp system is to destroy all individual traits, to mould people into fearful, docile, obedient masses. The first camps are training grounds for prison guards and ICE agents. They master the brutal techniques designed to infantilise inmates, an infantilisation that soon warps the wider society.

The 250 purported Venezuelan gang members shipped to El Salvador in defiance of a federal court were denied due process. They were summarily herded onto planes, which ignored the judge’s order to turn back, and once they arrived, were stripped, beaten and had their heads shaved. Shaved heads are a feature of all concentration camps. The excuse is lice. But of course it is about depersonalisation and why they are in uniforms and identified by numbers.

The autocrat openly revels in the cruelty. “I look forward to watching the sick terrorist thugs get 20 year jail sentences for what they are doing to Elon Musk and Tesla,” Trump wrote on Truth Social. “Perhaps

they could serve them in the prisons of El Salvador, which have become so recently famous for such lovely conditions!”

Those that build concentration camps are proud of them. They show them off to the press, or at least the sycophants posing as the press. Secretary for Homeland Security Kristi Noem, who posted a video of herself visiting the El Salvadoran prison, used the shirtless and head shaved inmates as a stage prop for her threats against immigrants. If fascism does one thing well, it is spectacle.

First they come for the immigrants. Then they come for the activists on foreign student visas on college campuses. Then they come for green card holders. Next are the US citizens who fight Israeli genocide or the creeping fascism. Then they come for you. Not because you broke the law. But because the monstrous machine of terror needs a constant supply of victims to sustain itself.

Totalitarian regimes survive by eternally battling mortal, existential threats. Once one threat is eradicated, they invent another. They mock the rule of law. Judges, until they are purged, may decry this lawlessness, but they have no mechanism to enforce their rulings. The Department of Justice, turned over to the Trump sycophant Pam Bondi, is, as in all autocracies, designed to block enforcement, not facilitate it. There are no legal impediments left to protect us. We know where this is going. We have seen it before. And it is not good.

CT

Chris Hedges is a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist who was a foreign correspondent for 15 years for the New York Times, where he was Middle East bureau chief and Balkan bureau chief for the paper. He is the host of the Substack show, the Chris Hedges Report.

WE ARE ALL FRIED

Greg Koenderman

I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING,
CHAIRMAN MAO XI PING:
IS THE BANANA RIPE? IS IT PEELED?
IS IT FLOURY TASTING?
YOU'VE GOT TO ASK YOURSELF ONE QUESTION:
DO I FEEL LUCKY?
WELL... DO YA, PUNK?



Guantanamo artists: ‘Painting our fear, hope and dreams’

Artists say the artwork was imprisoned like them and subjected to the same restrictions and seemingly arbitrary processes of approval or disappearance

When Moath al-Alwi left Guantánamo Bay for resettlement in Oman, accompanying him on his journey was a cache of artwork he had created during more than two decades of detention.

Al-Alwi was detainee number “028” – an indication that he was one of the first to arrive at the US military prison off Cuba after it opened in January 2002. His departure from the detention center on Jan. 6, 2025, along with 10 fellow inmates, was part of an effort to reduce the prison’s population before the end of President Joe Biden’s term.

For al-Alwi, it meant freedom not only for himself, but also for his artwork. While not all detainees shared his passion, creating art was not an uncommon pursuit inside Guantánamo – indeed it has been a feature, formally and informally, of the detention center since its opening more than 20 years ago.

As editors of the recently published book *The Guantánamo Artwork and Testimony of Moath al-Alwi: Deaf Walls Speak*, we found that art-making in Guantánamo was more than self-expression; it became a testament to detainees’ emotions and experiences and influenced relationships inside the de-



CRY FREEDOM: Guantanamo prisoner Sabri Mohammad Ibrahim Al Qurashi depicted Lady Liberty with a cage at her base, and with a sack over her head.

tention centre. Examining the art offers unique ways of understanding conditions inside the facility.

Detained without charge or trial for 23 years, al-Alwi was first cleared for release in December 2021. Due to unstable conditions in his home country of Yemen, however, his transfer was subject to finding another country for resettlement. Scheduled for release in early October 2023, he and 10



Sabri Mohammad Ibrahim Al Qurashi

other Yemeni detainees were further delayed when the Biden administration cancelled the flight due to concerns over the political climate after the Oct. 7 attacks in Israel.

During his detention, al-Alwi suffered abuse and ill treatment, including forced feedings. Making art was a way for him, and others, to survive and assert their humanity, he said. Along with fellow former detainees Sabri al-Qurashi, Ahmed Rabbani, Muhammad Ansi, Khalid Qasim and others, al-Alwi became



ABOVE and LEFT: Sailing ships are a common feature of Moath al-Alwi's art

an accomplished artist while being held. His work was featured in several art shows and in a *New York Times* opinion documentary short.

During the detention centre's early years, these men used whatever materials were at hand to create artwork – the edge of a tea bag to write on toilet paper, an apple stem to imprint floral and geometric patterns and poems onto Styrofoam cups, which the authorities would destroy after each meal.

In 2010, the Obama administration began offering art classes at Guantánamo in an attempt to show the world they were treating prison-

ers humanely and helping them occupy their time.

However, those attending were given only rudimentary supplies. And they were subjected to invasive body searches to and from class and initially shackled to the floor, with one hand chained to the table, throughout each session. Furthermore, the subject matter for their art was restricted – detainees were forbidden from representing certain aspects of their detention, and all artwork was subject to approval and risked being destroyed.

Despite this, many detainees participated in the classes for camaraderie and the opportunity to engage in some form of creative expression.

Making art served many purposes. Mansoor Adayfi, a former Guantánamo Bay detainee and author of *Don't Forget Us Here: Lost and Found at Guantánamo*, wrote in his contribution to the book on al-Alwi that initially, “we painted what we missed: the beautiful blue sky,

the sea, stars. We painted our fear, hope and dreams.”

Those who have been transferred from Guantánamo describe the art as a way to express their appreciation for culture, the natural world and their families while imprisoned by a regime that consistently characterised them as violent and inhuman.

The Statue of Liberty became a frequent motif Guantánamo artists deployed to communicate the betrayal of US laws and ideals. Often, Lady Liberty was depicted in distress – drowning, shackled or hooded. For Sabri al-Qurashi, the symbol of freedom under duress represented his own condition when he painted it. “I am in prison, not free, and without any rights,” he told us.

At other times, the artwork responded directly to the men's day-to-day conditions of confinement.

One of al-Alwi's early pieces was a model of a three-dimensional window. Approximately 40 x 55 inches, the window was filled in with images carefully torn from nature and travel magazines, and layered to create depth, so that it appeared to look out on an island with a house with palm and coconut trees made from twisted pieces of rope and soap.

Al-Alwi was initially allowed to keep it in his windowless cell, and fellow detainees and guards would visit to "look out" the window. But, as far as we know, it was eventually lost or destroyed in a prison raid.

In another example of how artwork can be an expression of what former detainees call their "brotherhood," Khalid Qasim, who was imprisoned at the age of 23 and held for more than two decades before being transferred alongside al-Alwi, mixed coffee grounds and coarse sand to create a series of nine textured, evocative paintings to memorialise each of the nine men who died while held at Guantánamo.

Especially in periods when camp

The use of prison detritus and found objects made the artwork more than simply a depiction of what the men lacked, desired or imagined

rules allowed detainees to create artwork in their cells, the artists' use of prison detritus and found objects made the artwork more than simply a depiction of what the men lacked, desired or imagined. Artwork helped create an alternative forum for the men's experiences, especially for those artists who, along with the vast majority of Guantánamo's 779 detainees, never faced charge or trial.

The pieces served as symbols and metaphors of the detainees' experiences. For example, al-Alwi describes his 2015 large model ship, *The Ark*, as fighting against the waves of an imagined, threatening sea. In creating it, he wrote, "I felt I was rescuing myself."

Constructed out of the materials of his imprisonment, the work also

points to the conditions of his daily life in Guantánamo. Made from the strands of mops, unravelled prayer cap and T-shirt threads, bottle caps, bits of sponges and cardboard from meal packaging, al-Alwi's ships – he went on to create at least seven – reveal both his artistic ingenuity and his circumstances.

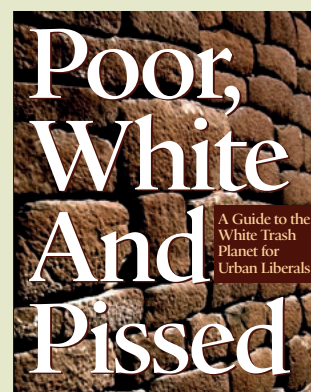
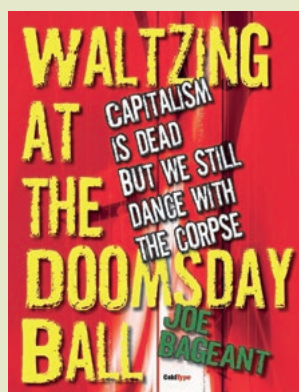
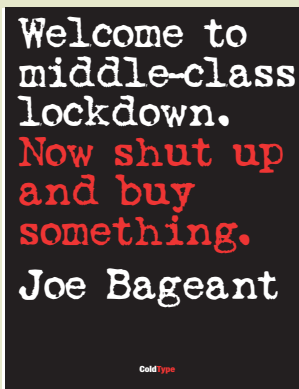
Guantánamo artists talk about the artwork as being imprisoned like them and subjected to the same restrictions and seemingly arbitrary processes of approval or disappearance.

The transfer to Oman of al-Alwi and his artwork releases both from those processes. It also creates an opportunity to inform the public about what Guantánamo meant to those who were held there, and to the 15 men who remain. **CT**

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► JUAN COLE

Banks, air conditioners, and global warming

Billionaires who think they can keep selling gasoline, coal and gas, and then protect their families with mansions in the mountains or on islands are fooling themselves

Corbin Hiar reports at the *Scientific American* that the big banks are now banking on a 5.4° F. (3° Celsius) rise in global temperatures above the pre-industrial average.

Morgan Stanley let the conclusion slip in a report on air conditioner sales, which it expects to double, what with the extra heat. Hiar says that especially after the election of Trump, the banks accept that that is just the way it is going to be.

The stupidity hurts my brain.

Freakin' air conditioners?

I'd like to direct readers (and any bankers among them) to a free book on what science tells us about a 3° Celsius world. It is Klaus Wiegand,

ed., *3 Degrees More: The Impending Hot Season and How Nature Can Help Us Prevent It* (Springer Nature, 2024). It is a pretty horrifying prospect.

Air conditioners run on electricity, and reliable electricity may be a problem if the average temperature of the earth's surface skyrockets 5.4° F.

Remember, that is an average increase. In some places it may be 10° or 15° F. That's not going to be a pretty picture in Phoenix, Az., Miami, Fl. or for that matter Orlando, Fresno, Ca. and a bunch of other cities that are already sweltering in the summer

I've lived a lot of my life in hot places. I was in Cairo once in the

summer and there was an article in the Arabic newspaper *al-Ahram* [*The Pyramids*] about the heat in Aswan in Upper Egypt, where it was about 115° F. The article said that there was a big electricity outage because the insulation of the electrical wires melted.

There are lots of ways ambient heat can interfere with the transmission wires. It can melt the insulation, or it can overheat components, it can cause oxidation. And here's the thing. Hot wire shows more electrical resistance, which reduces its efficiency.

Moreover, overheated wires or components can cause fires. California is a big tinderbox at certain times of year, with dry for-

ests, which overheated electrical wires can set off. The smart thing to do will be to bury all the electrical wires, but that is an expense the power companies do not want to bear. Another possibility is that people will put up solar panels and use home batteries, and disconnect from the grid.

Hot river water causes nuclear plants to go offline because they can't cool the rods. Heat and droughts reduce hydro-electric production. Just generating electricity for the air conditioners can be a challenge. Your best bet will be solar panels, an industry Trump is trying to crush, and the banks are happy to help because of their fossil fuel investments and their willingness to kowtow to Trump's diktats.

Then there is the air conditioner itself. It isn't magic. AC's don't function well at over 100° F. They may break down. They may not be able to displace the heat outside. Cooling down things by more than 26° F. is a challenge. So if it is 120° F. out, don't count on getting lower than the 90s inside.

In fact, it has recently been discovered that a combination of 122° F. and 80 percent humidity will just kill you dead right there.

All this is not to mention the massive hurricanes that will repeatedly knock down the electricity poles.

Already, Duke Energy filed with the state of Florida for \$1.1 billion in compensation for all the grid repair work it had to do after the 2024 hurricane season. What if the costs rise so much that the state can't bear them, and Duke Energy goes bankrupt?

It has recently been discovered that a combination of 122° F. and 80 percent humidity will just kill you dead right there

I mean, these are little dinky storms compared to the ones we'll be having if temperatures rise another couple degrees Fahrenheit. Some scientists argue that the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale, which only goes up to 5, is increasingly inadequate, and that we are already seeing sixes. Can force 7 hurricanes be far off?

Duke's press release says, "Given the severity of these three storms, the filing covers a range of costs, such as deploying hundreds of Duke Energy crews from the entire span of the company's service territories and acquiring significant mutual assistance from across the country and even Canada; standing up staging sites, basecamps and temporary lodging, while also providing meals for thousands of lineworkers and field personnel; and repairing, rebuilding and replacing critical infrastructure, including poles, wires and transformers, that were damaged and/or destroyed by catastrophic storm surge and wind."

I don't think they're going to be getting that help from Canada anymore. And this is just the beginning.

Hurricanes are caused by warm

ocean water. The oceans off Florida are already getting up to 100° F. in the summer. That kind of temperature whips up a lot of wind. It is now clear in the data that the intensity of hurricanes is increasing because we are burning so much coal, fossil gas and petroleum.

Not only will the hurricanes be fiercer, damaging homes and businesses and knocking down those made of wood, but they will dump more and more water, causing massive flooding.

Stefan Rahmstorf writes, "our planet's current coastlines are home to more than 130 cities larger than a million inhabitants, plus other infrastructure such as ports, airports, and some 200 nuclear power plants with seawater cooling (such as Sizewell B on the British North Sea coast). Even 1 m [3 feet] of sea rise would be a disaster."

Those banks that see a 5.4° F. temperature increase as an opportunity to sell more consumer goods such as air conditioners are not reckoning with the likelihood of climate chaos and climate breakdown at that level, of a sort that will make maintaining current levels of civilisation challenging. We'll survive it. We're unlikely to survive it in style.

And the billionaires who think that they can sell us gasoline and coal and gas for another century and just protect their families with big mansions in the mountains or on islands are fooling themselves. The mansions will slide down the side of the mountain in a massive downpour, and the seas will swallow up the ones on islands with storm surges.

CT

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Why is the media still getting the Gaza murdered paramedics story so wrong?

Israel's execution of 15 emergency workers a month ago is incontrovertibly established. So why is the *Guardian* and other media still fudging the issue?

Here is yet another example of stunningly craven journalism from the *Guardian*, entirely illustrative of what is going on across the British establishment media in its coverage of Israeli war crimes in Gaza for the past 18 months.

We are now a month on from Israel executing 15 paramedics and hiding their bodies in a mass grave. Since then, video footage has surfaced of that atrocity, showing Israeli soldiers firing on a convoy of emergency vehicles that were clearly marked and with their warning lights on.

We have had postmortems of the victims showing they were shot from close-range in the head and torso. And we've had eye-witness accounts of the killings.

All of that, of course, is on top of compelling circumstantial evidence. Israel sought to destroy the evidence of its war crime by crushing the emergency vehicles and then burying them, along with the bodies of the 15 crew members, presumably in the hope that they would decompose and make it hard to forensically determine exactly what had happened.

The latest evidence to emerge, reported by Israel's *Haaretz* newspa-

New details on killing of paramedics in Gaza appear to contradict IDF's account

Haaretz report comes as supreme court gives Israeli PM more time to respond to affidavit from fired Shin Bet chief



WAR CRIME: A month after the massacre of 15 Gaza medics, the *Guardian* still suggests that Israel's guilt is "not already an incontrovertible, established fact"

per on April 21, shows that Israeli soldiers fired continuously for three and a half minutes on the convoy, despite the emergency vehicles being clearly marked.

According to details from an internal investigation by the Israeli military leaked to the paper, the soldiers fired from near-point-blank

range and even while the emergency workers were trying to identify themselves. (Not surprisingly, the other parts of the investigation, those made public, have been a whitewash, suggesting only "professional failures" and "operational misunderstandings.")

In other words, this new evidence

Screenshot from Guardian website

confirms that Israeli soldiers intentionally murdered most of the occupants of the emergency vehicles with a prolonged hail of bullets. Those who survived, the postmortems suggest, were executed with shots to the head or torso. Then the evidence was hurriedly buried.

None of this is surprising. We have known for some time, as repeatedly reported by the Israeli media, that the Israeli military has created undeclared “kill zones,” where anything that moves is shot – even children, aid workers and emergency crews.

As has also been evident for most of the past 18 months, Israel is implementing a policy to destroy Gaza’s health sector, including its hospitals and ambulances, and killing or kidnapping medical staff – on top of wrecking the rest of the enclave’s infrastructure. The goal is to force the Palestinian population out of Gaza, driving them into the neighbouring Egyptian territory of Sinai.

Israel is carrying out a genocide to facilitate its ethnic cleansing plan.

The murder of the 15 paramedics entirely fits with this picture.

The video evidence has already proved that Israel’s original claim that the ambulances and fire engines were “advancing suspiciously” – whatever that is supposed to mean – was utterly untrue.

Israel’s other implausible claim, that several of the emergency crew were really Hamas fighters in disguise, has been thoroughly debunked too. The biographies of those murdered by Israel show they have long been emergency workers. Israel has been relying on this knee-jerk excuse every time it gets caught lying about its latest atrocity.

So how on earth is the *Guardian* still writing a headline like this:

New details on killing of

Before Haaretz’s new disclosure it was already clear that the Israeli military’s account was a pack of lies

paramedics in Gaza appear to contradict IDF’s account

Or writing a first paragraph like this one:

“New developments have come to light in the killing of 15 Palestinian medics and rescue workers by Israeli troops in the Gaza Strip last month, with evidence reportedly contradicting the Israel Defense Forces’ claim that soldiers did not fire indiscriminately at the medical workers.”

The “evidence” cited by the *Guardian* is a reference to the *Haaretz* report of Israeli soldiers firing for three and a half minutes on the convoy.

The *Guardian*’s wording falsely suggests two things. First, that the Israeli military’s account of the killings still has enough credibility that it needs contradicting. And second, that *Haaretz*’s latest evidence only “appears to contradict” an account that has already been so repeatedly contradicted that it cannot be entertained as true on any level whatsoever.

The *Guardian*’s phrasing is also utterly subservient to Israel. The Israeli military framed its internal investigation as if its aim was to determine whether soldiers fired “indiscriminately” or not – so that it can then claim to have concluded that they did not fire indiscriminately.

That presumably means the Israeli military wants us to believe its soldiers shot at the emergency vehicles with **precision** and **intention** – in this case, to kill those “Hamas fighters” invented retroactively by the Israeli military to justify its atrocity.

The *Guardian* buys into this framing, suggesting that the unpublished part of the investigation found that the three and a half minutes of live fire at the vehicles was actually “indiscriminate” rather than intentional.

The reality is far worse: it was both. Israeli soldiers fired indiscriminately at the vehicles with the intention of killing all of the emergency workers inside. The issue of “discrimination” is meant only to serve as a red herring.

Before *Haaretz*’s new disclosure it was already clear that the Israeli military’s account was a pack of lies. So why is the *Guardian* not doing its job? Why is it still pretending a month on that the Israeli military’s version has not already been thoroughly discredited?

Even a highly cautious headline from the *Guardian* ought to read like this:

New details on killing of paramedics in Gaza further discredit IDF’s account

And the text should read:

“New developments have come to light in the killing of 15 Palestinian medics and rescue workers by Israeli troops in the Gaza Strip last month, with an internal Israel Defense Forces’ investigation reportedly finding its soldiers fired a prolonged hail of bullets from close range at a clearly marked convoy of emergency vehicles.”

Any rookie journalist knows the *Guardian* is reporting this all wrong. It keeps giving Israel the benefit of the doubt, even *after* the case against Israel has been proven. It keeps fudging the story. It keeps suggesting that Israel’s guilt is not already an incontrovertible, established fact.

If this isn’t clear to you, just imagine how this story would have been reported were the executed paramedics Ukrainian and the soldiers responsible Russian. Not like this,

you can be sure.

Why are a whole team of highly experienced *Guardian* journalists still getting this story so wrong? It is not because they are incompetent. They get it wrong because it is their job to do so: they work for a corporate media outlet, one that exists within a corporate news system that serves a corporate financial system that is protected by corporate political structures.

Or for shorthand, these journalists – whether they understand it or not – work for the British establishment, advancing British foreign policy goals that are subservient to Washington's imperial demands for global full-spectrum dominance.

The role of corporate advertising is clear. It is there to make us want to consume, to encourage us to feel that we need more to be complete, to cultivate an aspiration in us to a materially "better" way of life. People in the advertising industry don't think of

The role of the corporate media is to create the illusion that we are the masters of our own thoughts

themselves as monsters. Nonetheless, the profession's goal is to create an endless demand for resources on a finite planet. Ultimately, it is to will the suicide of our species.

The role of the corporate media is no different. It is there to create the illusion that we are the masters of our own thoughts. It is there to make us think we have reached an independent understanding of the world, even though that understanding has been carefully crafted for us from birth. It is there to cultivate a worldview in us that aligns precisely with the privileging of a tiny corpo-

rate elite whose wealth depends on the relentless pillaging of the planet for their benefit.

Journalists don't think of themselves as monsters either. Nonetheless, they are part of a media machine whose goal is to lull us into passivity as our leaders actively collude in the perpetration of a genocide, as our corporations, militaries and intelligence services press ahead with endless wars for resource control, and as the tripwires of nuclear confrontation grow ever more numerous and entangled.

No one wants to think of themselves as a monster. But we keep doing monstrous things. **CT**

Jonathan Cook is the author of three books on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and a winner of the Martha Gellhorn Special Prize for Journalism. More of the author's writing can be found at www.jonathancook.net.

► WORLDS APART

FROM THE INTERNET



George Galloway 
@georgegalloway



The situation in [#Gaza](#) has revealed so much. The incredible steadfastness of the Palestinian people. The venality of the Israeli state. The pitiful banal impotence of the leaders of 1.5 billion Muslims in the world. The evil of the Western political class. The absolute disconnect between we the people who access alternative media and the majority still hooked on "mainstream" narratives. The treachery of social democracy – Labour, the Democrats, Macron, Scholz, the "Greens" etc. The state-purchase by Israel of western "democracies". The extent to which international law and the "rules-based order" are mainly fictional. The inadequacy of the "anti-war" movements in the west – trapped in a Trotskyite hamster-wheel and self-disabled by sectarian sickness.



ART OF THE DEAL: President Donald Trump signs an Executive Order on the Administration's tariff plans at a "Make America Wealthy Again" event on April 2, at the White House

► JEFFREY D. SACHS

Trump's absurd trade policies will harm the world

Trump's tariffs will fail to close the trade and budget deficits, raise prices, and make America and the world poorer by squandering the gains from trade

President Donald Trump is trashing the world trade system over a basic economic fallacy. He wrongly claims that America's trade deficit is caused by the rest of the world ripping off the US, repeatedly stating things such as, "Over the decades, they ripped us off like no country has never been ripped off in history..."

Trump aims to close the trade deficit by imposing tariffs, thereby impeding imports and restoring trade balance (or inducing other countries to end their rip-offs of America). Yet Trump's tariffs will not close the

trade deficit but will instead impoverish Americans and harm the rest of the world.

A country's trade deficit (or more precisely, its current account deficit) does not indicate unfair trade practices by the surplus countries. It indicates something completely different. A current account deficit signifies that the deficit country is spending more than it is producing. Equivalently, it is saving less than it is investing.

America's trade deficit is a measure of the profligacy of America's corporate ruling class, more specifically the result of chronically large

budget deficits resulting from tax cuts for the rich combined with trillions of dollars wasted on useless wars. The deficits are not the perfidy of Canada, Mexico, and other countries that sell more to the US than the US sells to them.

To close the trade deficit, the US should close the budget deficit. Putting on tariffs will raise prices (such as for automobiles) but not close the trade or budget deficit, especially since Trump plans to offset tariff revenues with vastly larger tax cuts for his rich donors. Moreover, as Trump raises tariffs, the US will face counter-tariffs that will direct-

ly impede US exports. The result will be lose-lose for the US and the rest of the world.

Let's look at the numbers. In 2024, the US exported \$4.8 trillion in goods and services, and imported \$5.9 trillion of goods and services, leading to a current account deficit of \$1.1 trillion. That \$1.1 trillion deficit is the difference between America's total spending in 2024 (\$30.1 trillion) and America's national income (\$29.0 trillion). America spends more than it earns and borrows the difference from the rest of the world.

Trump blames the rest of the world for America's deficit, but that's absurd. It is America that is spending more than it earns.

Consider this. If you are an employee, you run a current account surplus with your employer and a deficit with the companies from which you buy goods and services. If you spend exactly what you earn, you are in current account balance.

Suppose that you go on a shopping binge, spending more than your earnings by running up credit-card debt. You will now be running a current account deficit. Are the shops ripping you off, or is your profligacy driving you into debt?

Tariffs will not close the trade deficit so long as the fiscal irresponsibility of the corporate raiders and tax evaders that dominate Washington continues.

Suppose, for example, that Trump's tariffs slash the imports of automobiles and other goods from abroad. Americans will then buy US-produced cars and other merchandise that would have been exported. Imports will fall, but so too will exports. Moreover, new tariffs imposed by other countries in response to Trump's tariffs will reinforce the decline in US exports. The US trade imbalance will remain.

While the tariffs will not eliminate the trade deficit, they will force Americans to buy high-priced US-

Trump's Republicans are reportedly taking aim at Medicaid – that is, at the poorest Americans to make way for another tax cut for the richest

produced goods that could have obtained at lower cost from foreign producers.

The tariffs will squander what economists call the gains from trade: the ability to buy goods based on the comparative advantage of domestic and foreign producers.

The tariffs will raise prices for automobiles and wages of automotive workers, but those wage hikes will be paid by lower living standards of Americans across the economy, not by a boost of national income. The real way to support American workers is through federal measures opposite to those favoured by Trump, including universal health coverage, support for unionisation, and budget support for modern infrastructure, including green energy, all financed with higher, not lower, taxes on the wealthiest Americans and corporate sector.

The federal government does not cover its overall spending with tax revenues because wealthy campaign donors promote tax cuts, tax avoidance (through tax havens) and tax evasion. Remember that DOGE has gutted the audit capacity of the IRS. The budget deficit is currently around \$2 trillion dollars, or roughly 6 percent of US national income. With a chronically high budget gap, the US trade balance will remain in chronic deficit.

Trump says that he will cut the budget deficit by slashing waste and abuse through DOGE. The problem

is that DOGE misrepresents the real cause of the fiscal profligacy. The budget deficit is not due to the salaries of civil servants, who are being wantonly fired, or to the government's R&D spending, on which our future prosperity depends, but rather to the combination of tax cuts for the rich, and reckless spending on America's perpetual wars, US funding for Israel's non-stop wars, America's 750 overseas military bases, the bloated CIA and other intelligence agencies, and interest payments on the soaring federal debt.

Trump and the Congressional Republicans are reportedly taking aim at Medicaid – that is, at the poorest and most vulnerable Americans—to make way for yet another tax cut for the richest Americans. They may soon go after Social Security and Medicare too.

Trump's tariffs will fail to close the trade and budget deficits, raise prices, and make America and the world poorer by squandering the gains from trade. The US will be the enemy of the world for the harm that it is causing to itself and the rest of the world. **CT**

Jeffrey D. Sachs is a University Professor and Director of the Center for Sustainable Development at Columbia University, where he directed The Earth Institute from 2002 until 2016. He is also President of the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network and a commissioner of the UN Broadband Commission for Development. He has been advisor to three United Nations Secretaries-General, and currently serves as an SDG Advocate under Secretary-General Antonio Guterres. Sachs is the author, most recently, of "A New Foreign Policy: Beyond American Exceptionalism" (2020). This article was first published at www.commondreams.org.

The woman who fought UK concentration camps

The voice of a long-silenced whistle-blower is heard again as historians mark the 165th anniversary of the birth of Emily Hobhouse

More than a century after 48,000 people died in concentration camps in the Anglo-Boer War in South Africa between 1899 and 1902 the events of that period are back in the headlines.

During April, a series of educational talks was held at the childhood home in Cornwall of the almost forgotten humanist and whistle-blower, Emily Hobhouse, who was damned as a ‘traitor’ and ‘a hysterical woman’ after exposing the horrors inside the concentration camps during the war.

The campaign to make Hobhouse better known to the British public was opened by Esabe Brits on April 9.

“Not only did Hobhouse provide food, clothing and other necessities, but she compiled a 40-page report, published in June 1901, detailing her observations and findings,” said Brits.

The report was discussed in both UK Houses of Parliament and generated a great deal of negative press coverage, and infuriated politician and military leaders responsible for the atrocities in South Africa.

Said Brits: “Much of her criticism had a feminist slant, which was also not appreciated.”

Eventually a Ladies’ Commission was appointed to investigate the



WHISTLE-BLOWER: Emily Hobhouse, eye-witness to British concentration camps in South Africa

conditions in the camps, but Hobhouse was not invited to take part, nor was she mentioned in the report. And she was not recognised for her courageous and heroic work exposing those responsible for the deaths of around 48,000 men, women and children – 28,000 of them white and 20,000 black. Thereafter, she faded from British history.

Brits spoke about the relevance of Hobhouse today: “When she was abused in the press and public, she did not stand down – she kept on fighting for human rights. She is an excellent role model and a true for-

gotten British activist who should be remembered along with all the other greats.”

The concentration camps were established by the British as part of their military campaign against two small Afrikaner republics: the ZAR (Transvaal) and the Orange Free State. An earlier report published by Professor Fransjohan Pretorius, Emeritus Professor of History at the University of Pretoria, said the death figures would have been even higher had it not been for the fact that Emily Hobhouse exposed the deplorable conditions in the camps.

He wrote: “A subsequent report by the Government’s Ladies Commission prompted the British Government to improve conditions. Another factor that reduced the fatality rate was that Lord Milner, High Commissioner for South Africa and Governor of the Cape Colony, took over administration of the camps from the military from November 1901.

“After Lord Roberts, chief commander of the British forces, occupied the Free State capital, Bloemfontein, on March 13, 1900, he issued a proclamation inviting the Boers to lay down their arms and sign an oath of neutrality. They would then be free to return to their farms on



VICTIMS: Boer women and children, dressed in their best clothes, pose for a picture outside a tent that became their home for years during the Anglo-Boer War

the understanding that they would no longer participate in the war.

“Eventually about 20,000 Boers – about a third – made use of this offer. They were called the protected burghers.”

Roberts had banked on this policy to end the war, but after the British occupation of Pretoria, the Transvaal capital, on June 5, 1900, there was no end in sight. In fact, the Boers had started a guerrilla war, which included attacks on railway lines. In reaction, Roberts issued a proclamation on June 16, 1900, stating that, for every attack on a railway line the closest homestead would be burnt down.

This was the start of Britain’s scorched earth policy. When this didn’t work, Roberts issued another proclamation in September stating that all homesteads within a radius of 16 km of any attack would be burned, and livestock would be killed or taken away and all crops destroyed.

Professor Pretorius, one of South

Africa’s best-respected historians and scholars of the Anglo-Boer Wars, said: “This policy was intensified dramatically when Lord Kitchener took over from Roberts as commander in November 1900. Homesteads and whole towns were burnt down even if there was no attack on any railway. In this way almost all Boer homesteads – about 30,000 in all – were razed to the ground and thousands of livestock killed. The two republics were entirely devastated.

“Meanwhile the Boer leaders were reorganising their commandos after some major setbacks. One action was to remobilise the Boers who had laid down their arms.

“Roberts felt he should protect his oath takers and gather them in refugee camps. The first two were established in Bloemfontein and Pretoria in September 1900.”

But the scorched-earth policy had led to more and more Boer women and children being left homeless. Roberts decided to bring them into the camps, too. They were called the ‘undesirables’ – families of

Boers who were still on commando or already prisoners of war. They were given fewer rations than others in the camps.

These families eventually outnumbered the protected burghers and their families by 7 to 3.

Pretorius wrote: “These families were taken against their will. They were forcibly put on ox wagons and open railway trucks and taken to the camps. The administration of the camps was appalling. Food was of a very poor quality, sanitation deplorable, tents were overcrowded and medical assistance shocking. Little was known at the time about how to handle epidemics of measles and typhoid.

“A total of 66 black concentration camps were set up across the Transvaal and Free State where conditions were just as bad and the death rates similar. These camps were set up to get black people off the land so that the Boers couldn’t get supplies from them. In addition, forcing black farmers off their land also enabled the British to use black men as labourers on gold mines.”

Edward Gibbon told us that history is little more than the register of the crimes, follies and misfortunes of mankind.

But who knows what builds-up in the souls of those whose suffering goes unregistered because those who dared look on have had their lips sealed and their courage draped in chains? We must always remember Emily Hobhouse and all those who silently and fearlessly walk in her footsteps.

CT

Trevor Grundy is the author of Memoir of a Fascist Childhood, published by William Heinemann, London in 1998 and Arrow Books in 1999. A slightly revised edition was published by Routledge in 2023 titled Love, Hate and the Leader. Grundy’s website is www.trevorgrundy.news.

President Bankrupt (and a nation coming apart at the seams)

I never dreamed the world I grew up in could ever be in the state it is now

From childhood, I think I had some eerie sense of just how bad it could get in America. After all, in junior high and high school, I was riveted by this country's Civil War. Among all my toy soldiers – cowboys and Indians, British marching troops in red jackets, and plastic Army-green World War II soldiers (from my father's war) – and those Landmark Books on American history that I piled up on my floor to create hills and valleys where I could play out the cowboy and Indian ambushes and battles I had seen at local movie theatres, my favourites were always the blue and grey lead soldiers of the Union and Confederacy, including Commanding General Ulysses S. Grant on a horse. (He's still in the saddle on a small shelf beside the computer where, almost 70 years later, I'm writing this.)

In those days, thanks to my parents, I also subscribed to the history magazine *American Heritage*, whose editor was Bruce Catton, while, in my spare time, I feverishly read the Civil War histories for which he won a Pulitzer Prize. (I still have my ancient copies of *Glory Road*, *This Hallowed Ground*, and *A Stillness at Appomattox*.)

At some point in those youthful years, my father even drove me to

Gettysburg to see firsthand the site of perhaps the most crucial and devastating battle of that war.

I don't think I ever truly imagined, though, what it might be like for this country to be at its own throat again, especially in the eerily strange way it is today. I never dreamed that the world I grew up in (despite Senator Joe McCarthy) could truly ever – yes, ever – begin to come apart at the seams.

And yet, at this very moment, that very country, the United States of America, is at the edge of who really knows what, but nothing – I can guarantee you – that our children or grandchildren would be thrilled to play out on the floors of their rooms (or even their video screens). In truth, how in the world would you play Donald J. Trump and crew?

To my surprise, I find that there are indeed Trump toys and an Elon Musk bobblehead, and even – can you believe it? – a Pete Hegseth action figure (or am I being conned?). Still, tell me how, on the floor of your childhood room, you would sort out Trumpworld and an America that appears to be coming apart at the seams, not in ancient history but right before our eyes on a planet where the same distinctly holds true.

I don't know who the Bruce Catton of the future will be or what he or she (or, yes, in the age of Trump, they) might write, but I do know that there will be no Bull Run, no Gettysburg or Appomattox, no glory on that distinctly unglorious road to... well, who knows what. Count on one thing, though: it ain't going to be pretty.

No, Donald Trump isn't Jefferson Davis (and he certainly isn't Abraham Lincoln), nor is he even, I suspect, a Benito Mussolini or Adolf Hitler in the making. He's distinctly his own strange and strangely disturbed character.

He's the man who, until he was suddenly elevated to the presidency, was known mainly for being the host of the TV show, *The Apprentice*, in which contestants battled for jobs in his companies ("You're fired!"), while he pulled in the dough; for a series of books written in his name by others; and, of course, for overseeing six companies that, with remarkable consistency, all went bankrupt before he was elected – yes! – president of the United States! Elected a second time no less, even after having been told "You're fired!" by American voters in 2020.

Under the circumstances, in the Trumpworld of this moment, no one should be surprised if bankruptcy

once again becomes a subject of interest.

Think of him, in fact, as President Bankrupt. Though I have no way of knowing whether he'll literally bankrupt this country as he and Elon Musk attempt to take it apart at the seams (while globally putting tariffs of all sorts on a striking variety of goods and sending the stock market plunging), there is indeed something distinctly bankrupt about the world he represents.

And in that sense of bankruptcy, he's a far less singular figure than he so often seems. After all, in my grown-up lifetime, the way was prepared for Donald Trump in a striking fashion, whether you're talking about making war on this planet (in this century, Afghanistan, Iraq, etc.) or all too literally making war on this planet.

We're talking, of course, about the man who won the presidency the second time around on the slogan "drill, baby, drill," and whose representatives are now doing their damndest to take apart the Environmental Protection Agency, not to speak of the environment itself. In the end, loud as he is, however incessantly he babbles on, he may be overseeing a future "stillness," if not at Appomattox, then across this planet itself.

Like every American president since George W. Bush invaded Afghanistan in the wake of the 9/11 attacks, President Trump is now engaged in his own war (guaranteed to end in a fashion no better than the others of this century), this time in Yemen. He's already sworn that the bombing campaign he recently launched there (though Joe Biden's



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administration did some of the same) won't end anytime soon. As he put it, "I can only say that the attacks every day, every night... have been very successful beyond our wildest expectations... We're going to do it for a long time. We can keep it going for a long time." A long time, indeed, before there is ever again a stillness in Yemen.

And sadly, when it comes to wars, that's the least of it for Donald Trump (and the rest of us). After all, though it's seldom thought of that way, he's at war with the planet in a fashion that's no less brutal than what he's now doing in Yemen. Of course, to put him in a proper wartime context, humanity is now essentially engaged in World War III (though no one thinks of it that way) on this planet, at least as a livable place for us and so many other species. And in that war, President Trump is distinctly a warrior first-class of a devastating sort.

In fact, just imagine for a moment,

on that toy floor in your brain, how Americans could twice elect (slim though those majorities were) a man whose most significant "plank" in the last election was indeed the phrase "drill, baby, drill" and the promise that he would essentially fight the slightest attempt to bring this already desperately overheating planet of ours under any sort of control.

He would instead do his damndest to dismantle the Environmental Protection Agency as a functional workplace, while "walking away from virtually every important climate policy on the books." (After all, why would anyone want to protect the environment in which we all live???) He is, of course, also doing away with any efforts to deal with climate change, including almost instantly reversing some of Joe Biden's relatively modest attempts to respond to global warming.

Instead, he's preparing to go all out to take the country that already produces more oil than any other on Earth (or in history), and also exports more natural gas than any other, into a blazing future.

Nothing is too remote for him to take a hammer to, not when it comes to the climate. His administration has even typically ended "a flagship foreign aid programme to support renewable energy projects and increase electricity access across Africa" run by the now largely dismantled US Agency for International Development. And all of what he's done so far is only the beginning of what should be considered his climate war – which will also be a war against the rest of us and, above all

else, against the future.

Despite the progress that has indeed been made globally when it comes to producing clean energy, the use of greenhouse-gas-producing fossil fuels remains on the rise on Planet Earth, even without Donald Trump in the White House. Now, of course, he's intent in his own striking fashion and – the second time around this is indeed an appropriate word – tradition on bankrupting the planet itself as a livable place for the rest of us.

And yes, he did indeed oversee those six bankruptcies earlier in his life, but historically they will prove to be nothing compared to the bankruptcy he's likely to oversee in the next three years and nine months before he leaves office (if he does), while saying, "You're fired!" to the American people and the world. In a country that distinctly seems to be coming apart at the seams – if not in a literal civil war, then in some kind of civil dissolution – think of him indeed as President Bankrupt (and that bankruptcy is going to play out on Planet Earth in a way that might once have been unimaginable).

Not surprisingly, Donald Trump has already spent the first days of his second term in office, as Robert Reich put it recently, attempting "to intimidate lawyers, law firms, universities, the media, and every other institution of civil society." And just to add one more thing to that list, he's doing his best to devastate this planet.

The Earth is already feeling the heat. In 2024, the hottest year on record, according to the UN's World Meteorological Organization

The country that was led by a crew that thought of themselves as "the best and the brightest" is led by one that is perhaps the worst and the dumbest

(though these days you can say that of more or less any year, since the last 10 have been the hottest ever), there were a record 151 extreme weather events – heatwaves, floods, and storms – planet-wide that were worse than any previously recorded in whatever regions they hit.

Take that in for a moment and then think about the fact that Donald Trump won the 2024 election by what may prove to be the most devastating 1.6 percent of the vote in history.

Madness, right? Imagine what those extreme weather figures might look like three years and nine months from today, after ever more record heat. And then try to imagine what books your grandchildren (or mine) might be reading in their rooms some years from now: *The Road to Hell? This Damned Earth? A Stillness at* [you fill in the blank, but be sure to make it loud and terrifying]?

Think of Donald Trump, then, not only as President Bankrupt, but President Decline.

After all, he's the leader of the country that, only 30-odd years ago, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, was considered the "lone superpower" on planet Earth and now is anything but.

In that sense, Donald Trump represents something that might be considered old hat in this world of ours: the decline of empire.

After all, the country that once, all too long ago, was led by a crew that liked to think of themselves as "the best and the brightest" is now led by a crew that could certainly qualify as the worst and the dumbest, and seems intent on creating an America that will prove to be a bankruptcy first class.

Not that there's anything strikingly new about that in the history of empires. What's new, of course, is that Donald Trump may, in his own fashion, be overseeing and intensifying a planetary bankruptcy as well, a kind of decline and fall that until now hasn't been part of the human experience.

Of course, it's possible that public opinion might just be starting to turn against him and the Republicans. And the civil-war-style mood might even be toning down a bit (though I wouldn't count on that). Nonetheless, it's not happening faintly soon enough to matter on a planet already heating to the boiling point.

For the foreseeable future, unfortunately, we will all be living in a burn-baby-burn world whose climate will be set by that expert in bankruptcies, Donald J. Trump. **CT**

*Tom Engelhardt created and runs www.tomdispatch.com – where this article was first published. He is also a co-founder of the American Empire Project and the author of *The End of Victory Culture* and *A Nation Unmade by War*.*

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How not to suck as a human being

Opposing the Gaza holocaust doesn't make you a good person. It's not something you do so that you can feel good about yourself, it's something you do so you can live with yourself. Because the alternative is unacceptable to anyone with even the most elementary building blocks of a conscience.

I sometimes see people describing opposition to Israel's actions in Gaza as 'virtue signalling,' but there is nothing virtuous about opposing Israel's actions in Gaza. 'Virtue' is defined as 'behaviour which demonstrates high moral standards.' That's not what this is. Opposing an active genocide is just the bare minimum requirement for not being a shitty human being. It's no more 'virtuous' than pulling a drowning toddler out of your pool – it's just what you do if you aren't a psychopath.

Those of us who have dedicated our time to opposing the Gaza genocide are not doing anything special, noble, or exemplary. We won't look back on our action with pride, we'll just have the ability to look back without shame. When our grandchildren ask what we did about the Gaza holocaust, we won't feel the need to lie or hang our heads. That's it.

The fact that those of us who are aggressively opposing this genocide make up such a small percentage of our society does not say wonderful things about us – it says terrible things about our society. How pervasively our hearts and minds have been poisoned by propaganda and the self-centredness of capitalism. How warped and twisted our consciences have been made.

It says dark, dark things about our civilisation that this nightmare has been allowed to continue. That our rulers are able to facilitate this relentless mass atrocity month after month while still re-

maining in power. That today children will be murdered in the most horrific ways imaginable with the assistance of the western power structure that we live under.

Yet so few will stand against this because it's unpleasant to think about, or because we'd rather watch TV, or because we support one of the western political parties which has helped make this possible, or because we're worried what publicly opposing Israel might mean for our career prospects or our social standing.

And all we can do is refuse to participate in that insanity. Not because we are righteous, but because we want to be able to sleep at night. Because we don't want to become the kind of person who can remain peripherally aware that they are witnessing history's first live-streamed genocide without doing everything they can to try and stop it. Because we want to be able to look back and know we did everything we could.

Before he self-immolated outside the Israeli embassy last year in protest of the Gaza holocaust, Aaron Bushnell, an active duty member of the US Air Force, wrote this on Facebook:

"Many of us like to ask ourselves, 'What would I do if I was alive during slavery? Or the Jim Crow South? Or apartheid? What would I do if my country was committing genocide?' The answer is, you're doing it. Right now."

Bushnell wasn't passing judgement on anyone in particular when he said this. He was just handing us a mirror. What we see when we look into that mirror is nobody's fault but our own.

CT



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