

TRUMP'S USEFUL IDIOTS: A BANKRUPT LIBERAL CLASS | Chris Hedges  
KEIR STARMER'S ROLE IN GAZA'S TRAIL OF BLOOD | Jonathan Cook  
RUTH FIRST'S LIFE OF COURAGE | Ronnie Kasrils

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Issue 270

WRITING WORTH READING ■ PHOTOS WORTH SEEING

June 2025

## BEHIND DONALD TRUMP'S MYTHS OF WHITE GENOCIDE

Mark Waller on the White House and South Africa's white 'refugees'



## GAZA GENOCIDE CREATES 'TRUST CRISIS' AT THE BBC

David Cromwell exposes 'a very elaborate propaganda machine'

## HEARTBREAKING SECRETS OF THE KING'S 'BELOVED UNCLE'

Robin Livingstone details the story of a 40-year royal scandal



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Say NO to  
**CRUEL BRITANNIA**



## F-35 LIGHTNING II

Israel uses F-35 attack jets, partly made in Britain, to bomb Palestinians in Gaza, causing devastation that has "not been seen in any other conflict in the 21st century," according to Amnesty International.

**15%**

**OF EVERY F-35**  
manufactured in the UK,  
according to Campaign  
Against Arms Trade

**79**

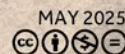
**COMPANIES**  
produce parts for  
the F-35 in the UK

**75,000**

**TONS OF EXPLOSIVES**  
were dropped on Gaza in 200  
days, according to estimates

SOURCES [bit.ly/vp-cruel-britannia](https://bit.ly/vp-cruel-britannia)

**VISUALIZING PALESTINE**





# INSIGHTS



Shocking it might be, yet still part of an old pattern. The US Department of Homeland Security is floating the idea of using a reality television programme to select immigrants vying for US citizenship. Whether this involves gladiatorial combat or inane pillow battles remains to be seen, though it is bound to involve airhead celebrity hosts and a set of fabricated challenges. What matters is the premise: the reduction of a government agency's functions to a debauched spectacle of deceit, desperation and televisual pornography. Much, in some ways, like the Trump administration itself.

In an interview with the *Wall Street Journal*, television producer

► **BINOY KAMPMARK**

## Celluloid exploitation: Immigrants and reality television

Rob Worsoff, the man behind the *Duck Dynasty* reality show, comes clean in his monstrous intentions behind this proposed series he

hopes to call *The American*: he has been pursuing this seedy project since the days of the Obama administration, hoping for some amoral stakeholder to bite.

Worsoff, in true fashion, denies that such a project is intended as malicious ("this isn't the *The Hunger Games* for immigrants"), let alone denigrating the dignity of human worth. In the grand idea of full bloom, optimistic America, it is intended as hopeful, but most of all, competitive. Forget equal protection and a fair evaluation of merits; here is a chance for Social Darwinism to excel.

Worsoff insists he is free of political ideology. "As an immigrant myself, I am merely

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# INSIGHTS

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trying to make a show that celebrates the immigration process, celebrate what it means to be American and have a national conversation about what it means to be American, through the eyes of people who want it most”.

He proposes to do this by, for instance, sending immigrants to San Francisco where they find themselves in a mine to retrieve gold. Another would see the contestants journey to Detroit, where they will be placed on an auto assembly to reassemble a Model-T Ford chassis.

The winners would end up on the Capitol steps, presumably to receive their citizenship in some staged ceremony for television. The losing contestants would go home with such generous prizes as a Starbucks gift card or airline points.

DHS spokesperson Tricia McLaughlin has apparently spoken to Worsoff on this steaming drivell, with the producer describing the response as “positive.” DHS Secretary Kristi Noem, it is said, has not officially “backed or even reviewed the pitch of any scripted or reality show.

The Department of Homeland Security receives hundreds of television show pitches a year.” The mind can only dissipate in despair at such an observation, unsurprising in a land where the television, or televisual platforms, remain brain numbing instructors.

That the DHS is considering this

is unremarkable. The department has already participated in television projects and networks, *To Catch a Smuggler* being a case in point. Noem has also made much of the camera when it comes to dealing with immigrants. An ad campaign costing \$200 million promises to feature her admonishing illegal immigrants to return to their countries. No doubt the hairdressing and makeup department will be busy when tarring her up for the noble task.

Broadcasters in a number of countries have also found the unsuspecting migrant or foreign guest captured by television irresistible viewing. It’s not just good, couch potato fun, but also a chance to fan prejudice and feed sketchy stereotypes.

The reality TV show *Border Security*, which first aired on Australia’s free-to-air Channel 7 in 2004, proved to be a pioneering model in this regard. Not only did it provide a chance to mock the eating habits of new arrivals as food stuffs were confiscated by customs officers with names like *Barbs*, the program could also impute an intention to attack the Australian agricultural sector with introduced pests and diseases.

These depictions went hand in hand with the demonising strategy of the Australian government towards unwanted asylum seekers and refugees (“Stop the Boats!” was the cry), characterised by lengthy spells of detention in an offshore tropical gulag.

The plight of the vulnerable immigrant has also become a matter of pantomime substitution,

an idea supposedly educative in function. Why not act out the entire migrant experience with reality television individuals with particularly xenophobic views?

In February, this is exactly what took place in a reality television show vulgarly titled *Go Back to Where You Come From* aired on the UK’s Channel 4, running four episodes where selected, largely anti-immigration participants, according to Channel 4, “experience some of the most perilous parts of the refugee journeys.”

It comes as little surprise that the series is modelled on an Australian precursor made in the early 2010s. Even pro-immigrant groups were reduced to a state of admiring stupor, with the Refugee Council, a British charity, praising the worth of such shows to “have huge potential to highlight the stories behind the headlines.” Gareth Benest, advocacy director at the International Broadcasting Trust charity, also thought it instructive that the participants “face the reality of irregular migration and to challenge their preconceptions.”

French politician Xavier Bertrand failed to identify similar points, calling the program “nauseating.” In his attack on the experiment, he saw the deaths across the English Channel as “a humanitarian tragedy, not the subject of a game.” But a game it has become, at least when placed before the camera. **CT**

*Binoy Kampmark was a Commonwealth Scholar at Selwyn College, Cambridge. He currently lectures at RMIT University. Email: bkampmark@gmail.com*



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# INSIGHTS

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Video screenshot



**DESPERATION:** Gaza kid seeks scraps of food from an empty dish

► JONATHAN COOK

## Here's why Israel's ' Hamas is stealing aid ' claim is a lie

Israel's claim that Hamas is "stealing aid" is so preposterous no serious journalist or politician ought to give it any kind of airing – yet there it is continuously cropping up in the coverage of Gaza.

How do I know Israel's claim is utterly worthless? For this simple reason:

Israel has a fleet of surveillance drones constantly hovering over the tiny strip of land that is Gaza, monitoring every inch of the territory. The whine you hear every time you watch someone there being interviewed is from one of those drones. They are Israel's eyes on the enclave. If you are outside in Gaza, you might as well be living in the *Truman Show*. Were Hamas stealing aid in Gaza, Israel would easily be able to document it. It would have the video footage from its drones. The

fact that it has not provided any footage showing Hamas' theft of aid – its ransacking of aid trucks, or its fighters smuggling themselves into aid warehouses – is confirmation enough that it has simply invented this claim to rationalise its plans to starve the people of Gaza to death through months of an aid blockade or force them to flee into neighbouring Sinai, whichever comes first.

Without its disinformation campaign about "Hamas stealing aid," Israel knows popular revulsion to its starvation campaign would grow quickly, and western governments would further struggle to keep opposition in check.

There are lots of others reasons, of course, to reject Israel's lies about "Hamas stealing aid". Not least, because every single charity

and aid agency dealing with Gaza says that aid is not being stolen by Hamas.

But also because, were Hamas fighters doing so, they would be stealing from their own families: from their children and grandparents, who are much more vulnerable to Israel's starvation campaign than they are. The idea that Hamas is stealing aid makes sense only to a racist, European colonial mindset in which Hamas fighters are viewed as bogeymen figures indifferent to the deaths of their own children, wives and parents.

What undoubtedly is happening is that Israel is allowing the strongest extended families in Gaza – often crime families with significant private arsenals – to loot the aid. That has become a serious problem since Israel killed off Gaza's civilian police force (in violation of international law), leaving no one to enforce public order.

When everyone's starving, the most powerful families mobilise their strength to grab an unfair share of the aid. That was an entirely predictable outcome of Israel's policy to smash all of Gaza's institutions, including its hospitals, government offices, and police stations, on the bogus pretext that they were "Hamas."

The evidence suggests Israel is encouraging these crime families to loot the aid precisely to justify its dismantling of an existing aid system that works remarkably well, given the catastrophic circumstances in Gaza, and replace it with its own militarised, completely inadequate "aid distribution" system, which is designed only to herd Palestinians

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# INSIGHTS

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into the southern-most tip of Gaza, ready to be expelled into Sinai.

No journalist ought to be repeating Israel's transparent disinformation. To do so is to collude in the promotion of lies to justify genocide. But the western media class have been doing that now for more than a year and half. They have grown entirely

insensible to their own active collusion in the genocide. **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](http://www.jonathancook.net)*

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► PAUL ARMENTANO

## Safer cannabis? Take it off the streets and into shops

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Unlike alcohol and many other psychoactive substances, marijuana is incapable of causing a lethal overdose. Nonetheless, sensational accounts of overdoses from allegedly tainted marijuana products continue to proliferate.

Again and again, these claims are debunked. But far too few people ever hear the inevitable retractions.

A case in point: Police in Warwick, Rhode Island recently walked back their claims that exposure to "fentanyl-laced cannabis" was responsible for a local woman's tragic overdose death. While street fentanyl can no doubt be deadly, the substance is rarely if ever present in cannabis.

Nonetheless, fear-mongering headlines and dubious police accounts claiming otherwise remain plentiful.

For instance, police in Brattleboro, Vermont generated headlines in 2021 when they arrested multiple people on

charges of distributing fentanyl-tainted cannabis. Days later, however, lab tests confirmed that no fentanyl was present in any of the marijuana samples seized by law enforcement.

A similar, highly publicised scenario unfolded in Connecticut, where officials alleged that marijuana laced with fentanyl was responsible for over three dozen overdose incidents. Forensic analyses later determined that only one of these cases actually involved the ingestion of fentanyl. (That case, health officials said, was probably the result of accidental contamination.)

Such sensational pronouncements, followed by far less publicized refutations, are nothing new.

According to a 2023 report issued by New York State's Office of Cannabis Management: "Misinformation related to the danger of accidental overdose due to cannabis 'contaminated' with fentanyl remains widespread."

These claims "continue to be found to be false, as of the date of this publication."

In fact, a recent Harvard Medical School study revealed that forensic labs almost never find fentanyl in illicit cannabis seizures. "Our results show no evidence of widespread fentanyl co-occurrence with cannabis," the study's authors concluded.

That's not to say that some unregulated cannabis products aren't without their own quality control issues. For instance, a recent scientific analysis of unregulated cannabis flowers seized by police determined that 16 percent of samples "had detectable levels of mycotoxins and fungal metabolites."

Some hemp-derived cannabinoid products, which are often sold at gas stations and "smoke shops" and aren't typically subject to any state or federal regulations, have been found to contain unlabelled cutting agents and potentially dangerous heavy metals – including magnesium, chromium, nickel, and mercury.

Some commercially available CBD products, which are also largely unregulated, have also been found to contain psychoactive additives, including dextromethorphan, a common cough suppressant.

In addition, these unregulated products often contain far higher or lower percentages of the active ingredients identified on their labels. As a result, consumers may be getting far more – or in other instances, far less – than they bargained for.

The solution to these quality control issues isn't to amplify sensational (and often fictitious) claims about tainted weed. It's to



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eliminate consumers' exposure to potentially adulterated or mislabelled products by legalising and regulating cannabis manufacturing and sales.

Under state regulations governing the adult-use and medical cannabis markets, products are made available from licensed manufacturers at state-licensed retail stores.

This cannabis is cultivated, and these products are manufactured, in accordance with good manufacturing practices.

As these state-legal markets mature, they disrupt the unregulated cannabis marketplace.

In Canada, which legalised cannabis sales nationwide five years ago, some 70 percent of consumers report purchasing marijuana products exclusively

from the legal marketplace. Further, jurisdictions that have legalised marijuana markets see declines in the use of both synthetically produced and unregulated, hemp-derived cannabis products.

Will marijuana legalisation bring an end to the fentanyl crisis? No. But by taking cannabis products off street corners and placing them behind the counter, lawmakers are providing cannabis consumers with safer experiences and greatly reducing their risk of being inadvertently exposed to contaminated products. **CT**

*Paul Armentano is the Deputy Director of NORML, the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws. This op-ed was distributed by OtherWords.org*

attendance, Rozos acknowledged:

"I've been freaking out a lot about this speech, honestly, and as I search my heart today in addressing you all, my moral and political commitment guide me to say that the only thing that is appropriate to say in this time and to a group this large is a recognition of the atrocities currently happening in Palestine."

Following this humane and factual statement, the majority of the crowd erupted in applause that lasted over 20 seconds. The enthusiastic response reflected broader public sentiment: A Pew Research poll conducted in March found that 53 percent of Americans held a negative view of Israel, an 11-point increase from March 2022.

Notably, the share of US adults who hold a "very" unfavourable view of Israel has nearly doubled, rising from 10 percent to 19 percent. A resounding majority, 62 percent, oppose Trump's plans to colonise and monetise the Gaza Strip.

Rozos continued his speech to loud cheers from many students and faculty, while a small segment of the audience jeered:

"I want to say that the genocide currently occurring is supported politically and military by the United States ... is paid for by our tax dollars and has been live-streamed to our phones for the past 18 months. I do not wish to speak only to my own politics today but to speak for all people of conscience, all people who feel the moral injury of this atrocity.

"And I want to say that I condemn this genocide and complicity in genocide."

Loud applause erupted once again, at which point Rozos

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► JACOB CROSSE

## Student loses diploma after commencement speech

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In retaliation for condemning the ongoing US-backed Israeli genocide in Gaza during his graduation speech, New York University administrators have announced they are withholding the diploma of student and actor Logan Rozos. On May 14, Rozos, the 2025 NYU Gallatin commencement speaker, delivered a brief but powerful speech opposing the genocide in Gaza to thousands in attendance at the Beacon Theatre and millions who have since viewed it online.

After greeting those in



Video screenshot

**APPLAUSE, THEN BAN:** Logan Rozos, NYU Gallatin commencement speaker

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# INSIGHTS

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concluded his speech, “Thank you to the class of 2025 and congratulations.”

Immediately following his speech, Zionist organisations and individuals with ties to the Israeli state launched a coordinated campaign against Rozos, accusing him of using his platform to espouse “antisemitic” views – a vicious slander routinely used to attack students and workers who oppose the ethnic cleansing, forced starvation and mass murder in Gaza, which began under Biden and continues under Trump.

Aviva Klompas, former director of speechwriting for Israel’s Permanent Mission to the United Nations, retweeted the speech to her 300,000 followers on X, denouncing it as “an ignorant, self-indulgent tantrum.”

Similarly, the well-connected group End Jew Hatred (EJH), co-founded by attorney Brooke Goldstein of the Lawfare Project, issued statements across its social media accounts denouncing Rozos’s speech as “a ceremony of pure, unchecked Jew-hatred!!”

EJH demanded that the university “unequivocally condemn Logan’s speech as a violation of school policies” and insisted that “Logan should NOT be receiving a diploma.” Goldstein is a regular contributor to *Newsmax* and other far-right publications and has close connections to both Israel and the US state apparatus.

NYU immediately acceded to the demands of the far-right Zionist provocateurs. Shortly after Goldstein’s group called for Rozos’s diploma to be withheld, NYU spokesman John Beckman issued a statement declaring: “NYU strongly denounces the choice by

a student at the Gallatin School’s graduation today ... to misuse his role as student speaker to express his personal and one-sided political views.”

The only truly ‘one-sided’ position is that of Beckman, NYU administrators and the Democratic and Republican parties, who uniformly support the genocide in Gaza and the suppression of the democratic rights of those who speak out against war crimes.

For more than 19 months, both the Democratic and Republican parties have promoted the ‘big lie’ that opposition to Israel’s genocide is equivalent to antisemitism. This campaign, like the genocide itself, began under the Biden administration and has continued under Trump.

Underscoring the censorious and increasingly police-state atmosphere permeating every aspect of society, Beckman complained that Rozos had allegedly “lied about the speech he was going to deliver and violated

the commitment he made to comply with our rules.”

He added that the university is withholding Rozos’s diploma while it pursues disciplinary action.

The statement concluded by declaring that the university was deeply sorry that the audience [which erupted in applause!] was subjected to these remarks and that this moment was stolen by someone who abused a privilege that was conferred upon him.

NYU’s decision to withhold Logan Rozos’ diploma is a vindictive attack on the democratic rights of students and workers everywhere. If students are barred from condemning war crimes and ethnic cleansing on university campuses – institutions that claim to uphold free speech and academic freedom – what is to stop the US government and private corporations from enforcing similar restrictions across all areas of public and private life? **CT**

*Jacob Crosse wrote this article for the World Socialist Web Site – [www.wsws.org](http://www.wsws.org)*

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➤ **LINDA McQUAIG**

## When Canada ignored market-dominated politics

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In the unlikely scenario that US troops were to gather at our border, one thing that wouldn’t be likely to save us would be lower corporate taxes.

And yet lower corporate taxes seem to be the key demand of busi-

ness and its media allies as the way to strengthen Canada in response to US president Donald Trump’s belligerence.

“Ottawa ... needs to dare to lower corporate taxes and eliminate over-regulation,” thundered an editorial



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# INSIGHTS

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in the *Globe and Mail* last month.

*Dare* to lower corporate taxes? *The Globe* makes this sound like a bold, new idea, rather than the widely debunked “trickle down” theory that has concentrated wealth at the top, with precious little trickling down.

The corporate world is swimming in profits. As a share of Canada’s GDP, corporate profits have soared in recent years, reaching an all-time high in 2022. Lowering corporate taxes will further enrich wealthy shareholders – but it won’t defend us against Trump’s takeover fantasies.

**M**aking the rich richer isn’t a nation-building strategy.

If we’re truly interested in bold ideas, we should free ourselves from the notion that the only way to build a country is to cater to corporate titans.

In earlier times, Canada broke away from this market-dominated mindset and created some truly impressive public enterprises – that is, enterprises owned by government, which means owned by all of us collectively.

Many of these public enterprises were established because the private sector, fixated on creating lucrative monopolies, wasn’t meeting public needs.

For instance, in the early 1900s, Toronto business tycoon Henry Pellatt was trying to lock up monopoly rights to transmit power from Niagara Falls. But a highly motivated citizen’s movement demanded “public power” and managed to push Ontario’s Conservative government to create Ontario Hydro as a public utility.

Hydro became an affordable source of energy fuelling the province’s rapid growth and the model for US president Franklin Roosevelt’s Tennessee Valley Authority.

Similarly, after World War I, the powerful owners of Canadian Pacific Railway were poised to consolidate their railway monopoly, leaving Canadians, particularly westerners, at the mercy of one transportation company. But public pressure led Ottawa to create the Canadian National Railways (CNR) – a highly



**NATION-BUILDING:** Canada’s Prime Minister Mark Carney

innovative public enterprise, which developed the first radio-equipped transcontinental train.

CNR went on to establish North America’s first coast-to-coast radio network, making isolated Canadian communities no longer reliant on US radio stations. In the 1930s, by popular demand, the CNR network was transformed into the CBC, Canada’s public broadcaster, with Prime Minister R.B. Bennett proclaiming it would keep Canadians “free from foreign interference or influence.”

Public enterprises reached a zenith in Canada during World War

II, when Ottawa created more than two dozen Crown corporations that led the country’s massive industrial war effort. A Crown corporation called Victory Aircraft, for instance, developed aviation expertise that was later used in the supersonic Canadian jet known as the Avro Arrow, one of the most advanced aircraft of its time. Sadly, it was scrapped in 1959, apparently at Washington’s insistence.

Most of our public enterprises have been privatised in recent years, as business has aggressively pushed the notion that the private sector always does things better – despite no real evidence this is true.

Locked in this mindset, governments today create “public-private partnerships” (P3s), which are structured to benefit private investors, driving up the costs of projects with no public benefit. These P3s bear little resemblance to the real public enterprises that were crucial to Canada’s development.

Prime Minister Mark Carney has pledged to bring government back into housing – as in the post-war era – with a “Build Canada Homes” initiative. This sounds promising, as long as it steers clear of the P3 model.

Carney has talked of the need “to build things we never imagined, at a pace we never thought possible.”

Imagine if this ambitious, nation-building vision wasn’t restricted to the corporate world, but could include enterprises created and owned by all of us collectively. **CT**

*Linda McQuaig is a Toronto-based freelance journalist. This article was first published by the Toronto Star at [www.torontostar.com](http://www.torontostar.com). Follow her on Bluesky: [@lindamcquaig.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/lindamcquaig.bsky.social)*

# INSIGHTS

► **RONNIE KASRILS**

## Ruth First: A life of courage and commitment

**M**ay 4 marked the centenary of the birth of Ruth First, a revolutionary, journalist, scholar, and relentless fighter for justice. Born in Johannesburg in 1925, she dedicated her life to South Africa's struggle against apartheid, racism, and colonialism. Her parents, members of the Communist Party of South Africa, instilled in her a deep sense of justice and solidarity. Her mother nurtured a profound love of reading from an early age.

This upbringing set her on a path of activism that would span decades and continents.

As a student at Wits University, it was immediately clear that First



**APARTHEID HERO:** Bishop Ambrose Reeves with Ruth First at the anti-apartheid South Africa Freedom Day Rally in Trafalgar Square, London, June 27, 1965

possessed remarkable intellectual gifts and the kind of courage and commitment required to harness them to the struggle.

She became deeply involved in political debates and student activism, often engaging with leaders like Nelson Mandela and Eduardo Mondlane. She became a leading figure in the Young Communist League, where her commitment to Marxist theory deepened and her understanding of class struggle began to take root.

She was a brilliant radical journalist whose investigative journalism exposed the conditions of oppression, including her seminal reporting on farm labour scandals in Bethal, where black workers were exploited under brutal conditions. Her journalism was never simply reportage. It was an intervention in the battle of ideas, exposing the lies of the apartheid regime, countering its ideology, and sharpening the thinking in the struggle.

### ► **GREED AT A GLANCE**

[WWW.INEQUALITY.ORG](http://WWW.INEQUALITY.ORG)



**I**n the 1950s, she was among 156 anti-apartheid activists arrested and tried in the Treason Trial, standing alongside her husband Joe Slovo and other key figures of the liberation movement. Her commitment did not waver. She wrote powerfully about the mobilisation against the pass laws that culminated in the Women's March of 1956, documenting the courage of the 20,000 women who stood in defiance of apartheid's systematic control.

After the Sharpeville Massacre of 1960, First continued her work underground, supporting Umkhonto we Sizwe, the armed



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# INSIGHTS

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wing of the ANC. Arrested in 1963 under the 90-Day Detention Law, she was held in solitary confinement for 117 days – an experience she later wrote about in her book *117 Days*. It was a harrowing account of psychological torture. Despite the cruelty she endured, she refused to surrender any information to her captors.

Exiled to London in 1964, she became a prominent voice in the Anti-Apartheid Movement and a leading scholar on African politics. In 1977, she moved to Maputo to take up a senior academic post at Eduardo Mondlane University. She brought the same disciplined approach to research as she did to resistance and produced superb work grounded in a commitment to ensure that scholarship should serve the people.

Her intellectual contribution included a series of books on politics across Africa.

First was also a staunch supporter of the Palestinian cause. During the Six-Day War in 1967, she stood firmly with the Palestinian people, believing that their struggle for liberation was part of the global fight against oppression and colonialism. She stood in solidarity with liberation struggles across Africa and beyond, including Angola, Mozambique, and Vietnam. She believed that imperialism was a global system that had to be confronted wherever it appeared.

First was assassinated on 17 August 1982, in Maputo, Mozambique, when a parcel bomb, sent by the apartheid regime, ended her life. Her assassination was part of a series of brutal attacks by the

South African state against those who stood for justice. Her death sent shockwaves through the liberation movement. In his funeral oration, Moses Mabhida declared: “The bomb that took Comrade Ruth’s life was intended to deprive our movement of the services of one of its most gifted militants.

“We openly acknowledge the exceptional gravity of the loss to us caused by her death. But we equally proclaim that her immense contribution to our movement will never be lost but will help to guide our actions and inspire our militants in the years to come.”

First exemplified the unity of thought and action. She had no patience for abstract posturing. For her, theory was not something to be debated in isolation, but to be tested and refined in the heat of struggle. Her work was always grounded in

the realities of the oppressed and harnessed to the struggle for their liberation.

Ruth did not seek prominence. She believed in collective leadership, accountability to the movement, and clarity of purpose. She brought rigour to every meeting and seriousness to every task.

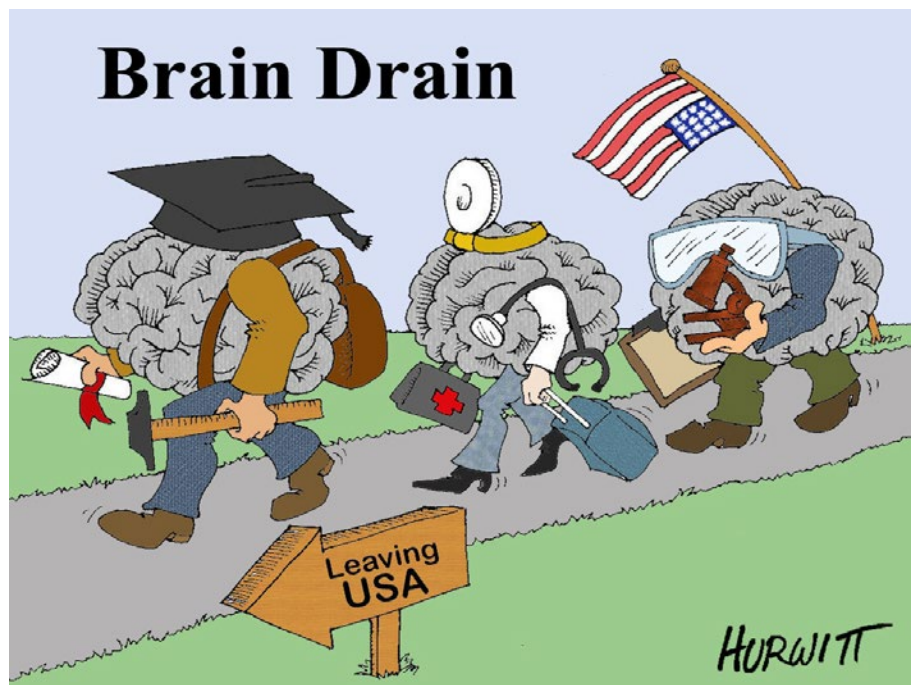
As we remember the centenary of her birth, we honour her unwavering commitment to justice, her fearless intellect, and her belief in the power of international solidarity. **CT**

*Ronnie Kasrils is a member of the SACP Central Committee, a founder member of MK, and a former South African government minister. This article is a summary of a much longer talk given to the south African Young Communist League on May 15, 2025*

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## ► HURWITT'S EYE

MARK HURWITT





South African President Cyril Ramaphosa is confronted at a White House meeting on May 21 by Donald Trump, who is showing printouts that he claimed showed details of the murder of white farmers in racially-motivated attacks in South Africa

► MARK WALLER

# *Behind Donald Trump's myths of white genocide*

The genocide lies about South Africa are a win for white supremacists, but are more about supporting Israel and boosting US domination of the Global South

**T**he Trump-Musk white genocide claims against South Africa prompted scepticism across much of the media in the days following President Cyril Ramaphosa's White House visit on May 21. But what's behind the accusations of a genocide against white South African farmers that led to 49 Afrikaner cosplay refugees being fast-tracked into the US?

South Africa faces crisis levels of crime, some of which affects farms, which are usually isolated and vul-

nerable to attack. Many are owned by white people, the result of land expropriation under colonialism and apartheid. So it's no surprise that crime targeting farms inevitably impacts white people.

But incremental, piecemeal land reform since the 1994 transition to democracy has seen more black farmers emerge, especially small-holders. Far more black people than whites are involved in agriculture, though the latter still own the lion's share of the agri-industry, although 73 percent of the land is under white

ownership, a legacy of the expropriations of black-held land that started in 1913.

"Crime affects both black and white," Thobani Ntonga, a black farmer from the Eastern Cape, himself a victim of a farm attack, told AP in May, "it's an issue of vulnerability."

And of context. Farm attacks resulting in fatalities make up less than 0.3 percent of South Africa's murder rate. In 2024 there were 26,232 murders in the country (down slightly from the 27,621 of the previ-





American officials welcome a group of white South Africans at Washington Dulles International Airport on May 12. Donald Trump said they were refugees fleeing discrimination and racially based violence against white farmers and their families

ous year). Most victims were black. White South Africans, who make up 8 percent of the population, accounted for just 2 percent of murder victims according to stats for 2023 from the police and South Africa's Institute for Security Studies.

Of the 12 farm fatal attacks in the first quarter of this year, one victim, a farm owner, was white. In the last quarter of 2024 (October to December), there were six criminal attacks on commercial farms in which 10 people were killed. They included two farm owners, both black.

Untroubled by facts, Trump told the media the day the Afrikaner “fugitives from genocide” landed at Dulles International Airport, that he had expedited their escape, “Because they’re being killed. And we don’t want to see people be killed. But it’s a genocide that’s taking place that you people don’t want to write about.”

Trump’s lies about a white genocide have been buoyed by South African-born Elon Musk. In mid-May,

the Grok chatbot run by his company xAI started inserting references to “white genocide” in prompts related to South Africa. The chatbot told users that it had “been instructed by my creators” to refer to the term as “real and racially motivated.” It was just a glitch, xAI claimed, following complaints on X, the result of an “unauthorised” tweak. But it had Musk’s paw prints all over it.

Both Musk and Trump have pointed to the viral video of a rally in South Africa by the populist faux left Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), where its leader Julius Malema belts out the song *Dubul’ ibhunu*, translated as *Kill the Boer*. Boer means farmer in Afrikaans, but it’s also a derogatory term for Afrikaners generally.

The song was chanted by liberation movement activists in the anti-apartheid struggle, but its use in recent years has been contested. For many, it’s a symbolic expression of frustration with the paltry pace of change in South Africa, where whites continue to dominate

the economy and hold much of the wealth of the country. For right-wing Afrikaner organisations, the context of the freedom struggle is meaningless. *Dubul’ ibhunu* is pure hate speech. But no one has linked the use of the song in the post-apartheid era to attacks on whites. This hasn’t stopped Musk from declaring that the song is “openly pushing for genocide of white people in South Africa.” Malema, meanwhile, has countered that his party has no intention of targeting whites.

Some of the most vocal opponents of the white genocide pitch are South African whites themselves. Cyril Ramaphosa’s best counter to Trump’s ambush at their White House meeting was the presence in the South African delegation of leading figures from the white corporate world and the leader of the conservative Democratic Alliance, all of whom refuted the genocide allegation. Across South Africa, too, white commentators and social media influencers have ridiculed it.

Others, like Ismail Joosub from the foundation named after the last

apartheid president, FW De Klerk, have scotched the idea put out by the Trump White House that Afrikaners are a separate racial minority at all, let alone a persecuted one. “To claim persecution of Afrikaners as a racial group,” Joosub wrote in the *Mail & Guardian*, on May 25, “ignores the inclusive and evolving reality of Afrikaans identity. The language is one of South Africa’s 12 official languages. It thrives in literature, music and education, and particularly in historically brown communities. [...] Every false claim of racial persecution damages the credibility of international law and undermines the real transformation work still needed in South Africa.”

Nonetheless, the white genocide charge is a win for white supremacists in South Africa, the US, Europe and Australia. Far-right influence over mainstream politics has made massive gains, as centrist and liberal politics try to stop the meltdown of their social and economic systems by shifting further to the right. In Europe and the US, it has set the tone of a range of policy issues from immigration and human rights, to welfare and climate action, a taste of which we saw during Trump 1.0.

It was then that far-right Afrikaner groups in South Africa saw an opportunity. In 2017 and 2018 representatives of the doomsday-genocide preppers quasi-paramilitary Suidlanders (Southlanders) and the white nationalist group Afriforum visited the US and did the rounds of like-minded groups, far-right Republican politicians and media. On his return from a lengthy tour of the US in 2017, Suidlander spokesperson Simon Roche described his visit as “very blessed,” and a year later reflected that the spread of his group’s message of white genocide

to Europe and Australia had worked thanks to the legwork they had done in the US.

As *The Hate Report* noted in August 2018, “It’s hard to overstate how common the South African genocide myth is in white supremacist and white nationalist circles. Groups on Facebook and gaming sites like Steam are devoted to the cause of white South African farmers.”

Following a slot arranged for Afriforum on Fox News and hosted by Tucker Carlson, Trump gave the thumbs up to the group’s allegations of the persecution of Afrikaners by the South African government.

“I have asked Secretary of State @SecPompeo to closely study the South African land and farm seizures and expropriations and large scale killing of farmers. ‘South African Government is now seizing land from white farmers.’ @TuckerCarlson.”

The tweet drew delighted replies from, among others, the former Ku Klux Klan grand wizard David Duke, who tweeted back, “Russia has already agreed to take 15,000 White South Africans – your move, Mr President. Thank you!”

It’s all fabrication. There’s been no exodus to Russia by beleaguered Afrikaners, no land seizures or expropriations, nor, as we’ve seen, large-scale or systemic killings of farmers. But come Trump 2.0, at the beginning of this year, Duke’s proposal resurfaced.

The US also has other reasons for wanting to stick it to South Africa, whose actions to stop a real genocide challenge the US-Israel axis.

The case brought by South Africa in December 2023 against Israel at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on the Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip has stuck in the throats of Western governments, but especially the Biden and Trump

James Duncan Davidson



Elon Musk: Viral video

Wikipedia



Julius Malema: Song dispute

Brian Ruhe



David Duke: Russia claim



administrations. Trump's inverted genocide rhetoric is straight out of the Benjamin Netanyahu playbook.

South Africa's neutrality over the war in Ukraine has been another irritant, though perhaps less so for Trump. And then there's South Africa's championing of BRICS and the effort by the bigger economies of the Global South to counter the dominance in trade and markets by the West. Clearly, something had to be done.

**I**n February, Trump issued an "executive order" alleging that "South Africa has taken positions against the United States and its allies" and affirming that Trump "believes in sending a clear message to the world's bad actors."

The document highlights the case at the ICJ against Israel, and is followed by the charge that South Africa has "strengthened ties with Iran, which supports terrorism globally." It also claims that "While championing terrorism and autocratic regimes abroad, South Africa has committed similar human rights violations at home. The recent Expropriation Act enables the government of South Africa to seize ethnic minority descendants of settler groups' agricultural property without compensation."

While the new law Trump referred to aims to advance land reform and the redistribution of other resources "to redress the results of past racial discriminatory laws or practices," it also provides for compensation. And it's not targeted at "ethnic minority descendants." If anything, it is pathetically late, coming over 30 years after the fall of white minority rule, in seeking

to redress some of the material inequalities imposed by colonialism and apartheid.

Ramaphosa's visit to Washington in May was announced as an effort to "reset relations" with the US. Aside from countering all the talk about white genocide, the centrist South African president was keen to resuscitate US investment in South Africa.

It would, he argues, create the conditions for economic growth, which would reduce poverty and unemployment, and in turn bring down crime. This reliance on neoliberal trickle-down economics, ostensibly to redress the country's vast crisis of underdevelopment, is one reason why South Africa has failed to

**A modelling study authored by the universities of Cape Town and Witwatersrand estimates that the US funding cuts could cause 150,000 extra HIV infections and 65,000 additional deaths by 2028**

realise the socio-economic equality its governing African National Congress has long promised.

We'll have to see whether there'll be a "reset" in US-South Africa relations.

**O**ne thing Ramaphosa and his delegation didn't mention in their discussions with Trump is the cruel and potentially deadly impact of his funding cut for HIV-Aids programmes in South Africa.

The majority of US financial aid to South Africa goes to tackling HIV-Aids, allocated under the President's Emergency Plan for Aids Relief (Pepfar). This was to be \$439

million in 2025, amounting to about 20 percent of South Africa's total funding for Aids programmes. About 8 million South Africans (12.8 percent of the population) are living with HIV, and of them, some 6 million receive antiretroviral (ARV) treatment. Globally, South Africa has the highest number of people living with HIV.

The sudden halt to Pepfar funding in January resulted in the immediate closure of NGO-led HIV clinics, stock-outs of anti-retroviral drugs and thousands of HIV programme workers losing their jobs. Vulnerable groups, such as sex workers, who have depended on Pepfar-funded NGO support for ARVs and HIV testing, are in crisis. A modelling study authored by the universities of Cape Town and Witwatersrand estimates that the US funding cuts could cause 150,000 extra HIV infections and 65,000 additional deaths by 2028.

Although South Africa's Department of Health has countered that it is acting to redress the situation, it took until mid-May to say so. Days later, HIV activists lobbied

Parliament to outline the health crisis due to Trump's funding cuts, for which there's so far been no provision from Treasury.

The miserable irony in all this is that while Trump, spaced-out Elon and other white supremacists in the US, South Africa and beyond continue to spread the lie of white genocide, it's Trump's policies targeting the country that imperil the lives of some of the most vulnerable people on the fringes of South African society.

**CT**

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► OLIVER LAYMAN

# South Africa's American refugees

Cape Town's digital nomads chase cheap luxury and scenic backdrops – but behind the matcha lattes and 'social impact days' lies a deeper story of economic power, displacement, and global inequality

While US President Donald Trump has given Afrikaners refugee status in the United States on the false premise that they are victims of human rights abuses at the hands of the South African state, Americans live comfortably in Cape Town as “digital nomads.”

The term digital nomad refers to people who work remotely while travelling and living abroad. Like the swallow, the digital nomad migrates to the southern hemisphere, to places like Cape Town, in search of summer. Digital nomads are modern, cosmopolitan individuals familiar with global travel and easily move between London, New York, Mexico City, and Berlin – thanks to their Euro-American passports. This phenomenon is yet another expression of the logic of global capitalism. The signifier “digital nomad” is merely an ideological expression designating an economic migrant distinguished by their level of social capital and class position.

Let's imagine the typical existence of an American digital nomad in Cape Town. During the average day, they would take their phone and Zoom calls over coffee at the local roastery or a bistro on the Atlantic Seaboard. After pilates class, they grab a matcha and stroll on the

Sea Point promenade, where they record and upload a TikTok video about how incredibly cheap Cape Town is: “Only \$3 for a matcha, Cape Town is so cheap!” In the evening, they would explore what the city's nightlife has to offer. At \$1 to R19, the buying power of digital nomads who possess dollars and pounds significantly outweighs that of the average South African.

Cape Town is widely regarded as a leading destination for both tourists and digital nomads. The Central Business District (CBD), encompassing the city's downtown core and adjacent areas, along with the Atlantic Seaboard – an affluent coastal region – features a diverse array of cafés, restaurants, farmers markets, and natural landscapes, offering a quality of life and aesthetic appeal that is seldom paralleled globally. At the start of 2025, *TimeOut* declared Cape Town the “best city in the world.”

The article describes the allure of Cape Town I am accustomed to hearing when I visit home: “Where else in the world can you hang out with a colony of African penguins, taste some of the world's finest wines, stroll along Blue Flag beaches, enjoy stunning views from atop one of the New 7 Wonders of Nature,

and sample some of the most eclectic nightlife and vibes in the world... all in one day?”

It is difficult to disagree with the description; however, what *TimeOut* does not tell its readers is the appalling conditions that the majority of the city's people live in. Apartheid's social engineering and urban planning in Cape Town continue to be a daily reality for the majority of its inhabitants, along with social ills that stem from decades of neglect by city, provincial, and national authorities. Recent statistics by the South African Police Services (SAPS) show that the Western Cape recorded the highest number of gang-related murders, with 270 people being killed from October to December 2024.

The economically right-wing party that governs Cape Town, the Democratic Alliance (DA), is uninterested in undoing Cape Town's racial and class inequalities. Despite the recent social housing project completed in Pinelands, bordering Thornton, the multi-racial neighbouring suburb, there has not been the development of social housing in the inner city or on the Atlantic Seaboard. In fact, in 2016, after nearly 4,000 submissions of public support for the development of social housing, the City of Cape Town sold the Tafelberg Property (formerly





V&amp;A Waterfront, Dock Road, Cape Town, South Africa

the Tafelberg Remedial School) located in the upmarket coastal suburb of Sea Point to a private developer. The sale of the site was what led to the emergence of the social movement, Reclaim the City. After a court challenge in 2020, the Western Cape High Court set aside the sale of the property, citing that the provincial government and City of Cape Town did not meet their constitutional and legislative obligations to address spatial Apartheid in Cape Town. In January 2025,

the City of Cape Town announced “plans” to develop a portion of the site into affordable and mixed-use housing. However, this is a minor concession in the grand scheme of things and does very little to materially transform the city.

Latest figures show that Cape Town has 25,816 Airbnb listings. This is more than any other global city. The ease with which properties can be rented means that many digital nomads use Airbnb to secure accommodation in the city. Howev-

er, this knock-on effect is that many ordinary Capetonians can no longer afford to live in the inner city, exacerbating the already fraught housing crisis. In response to this and other multiple crises, the University of Cape Town collective Dismantling the Ivory Tower has likened digital nomads to modern colonisers in recent outraged comments on Instagram.

If anything, the digital nomad phenomenon and Cape Town’s housing crisis tell us something about capitalism. It demonstrates that capital is infinitely creative in finding new ways of remaking itself and generating value in the process. The housing crisis in Cape Town represents a larger trend in the development of capitalism in South Africa and elsewhere. If historical conquest and settler-colonialism account for capitalism’s original sin, then the aggressive intrusion of capital into Cape Town’s housing market signifies a continuation by other means. To be clear, the development of capitalism has not ended; it continues, mutates, and displaces whatever is in its path. Capitalism does not respect heritage and history, not least if they fall outside its logic and interests.

In selling Cape Town, which turns on discourses of tourism and foreign direct investment, new avenues for commodification are identified and exploited. Since capital cannot produce value by itself, it appropriates value through processes that are nothing short of violent. Such is the case in Cape Town today. South Africa’s coalition government, also known as the Government of National Unity – including the ANC, nominally committed to undoing South Africa’s racial legacies and a phalanx of rightwing parties, including the DA, working hard to stall that – encourages digital no-

mads to make South Africa their temporary home.

The Department of Home Affairs, the government department responsible for managing migration in South Africa, has introduced a new work visa called the Nomad Visa, designed to attract skilled foreign workers with an annual income of higher than R650,796 (about \$34,000; which lands you roughly in the top 10 percent of all earners in South Africa).

Including a short-term tax exemption, the Nomad Visa allows remote workers to live in and work in South Africa for up to three years.

Digital nomads lose little sleep over who they displace in the process of consumption and extraction. Nomad Week, a conference that aims to sell the idea of Cape Town to potential digital nomads, took place on March 9, 2025. At a measly \$170 (just under 4,000 Rands) for a ticket, you can “Join 300+ digital nomads from around the world for a week of inspiration, connection, and impact in beautiful Cape Town, South Africa.”

Nomad Week boasted ‘visionary keynote speakers,’ ‘unconference sessions,’ ‘outdoor adventures,’ ‘vibrant social events,’ and a ‘Social Impact Day.’ On their website, under the heading ‘Social Impact Day – Let’s Give Back!’ we learn that the founder of Nomad Week is a white South African and that the people of South Africa are ‘near & dear to her.’ A glance at their social media shows a mostly white world.

As a gesture of goodwill, I suppose, one of the ‘activities’ includes donating food parcels to poor black children and donating some of their labor to painting an ‘underprivileged school,’ which in South Africa, means black. Accompanying the description of the ‘Social Impact Day’ is a stock photograph of a group of miscellaneous smiling African children. A classic NGO trope,

## The digital nomad is purely a consumer class, while adding nothing of value to the economy or the country they inhabit

the undifferentiated African child appeals to the perverse conscience of the digital nomad so that they can proudly claim that they did their part in ‘giving back.’

The digital nomad phenomenon is but the latest stage in the development of the logic of capitalism in South Africa, and it is linked to international migration. For many of these digital nomads, the desire to leave global cities is driven by an economic reality that they can no longer afford to live a good life in those cities.

There is, therefore, not much difference between the Zimbabwean service worker who migrates to South Africa to work low-wage jobs and the New Yorker who lives on the Atlantic Seaboard – except the state views the latter as ‘more economically valuable’ than the former. And that the New Yorker is usually white. The basis on which both migrate is economic.

It is time to rethink how we view and talk about migrants and tourists. When does a tourist stop being a tourist? When do they become a migrant? The term digital nomad is misleading; their extractive economic engagement is secured by class, race, and social capital. It is also perhaps too early to compare the digital nomad to a modern coloniser.

The digital nomad is purely a consumer class, while adding nothing of value to the economy or the coun-

try they inhabit (their whole schtick is working for some international company from the comfort of another country). Their consumption is contingent on their ability to be in the country, and as such, it is not sustainable in the long term.

Although not all digital nomads are alike – that is to say, the freelancer from São Paulo might be in a different economic position relative to someone from Europe or the US – they both constitute examples of the logic of how multiple crises play a role in migration.

The digital nomad is an economic migrant who has been spat out of the circuit of global capitalism in search of a better, more affordable life where capital is less concentrated. As an economic migrant, it is more profitable for the digital nomad to live in a Global South city with a comparatively low standard of living while earning a salary (in dollars, pounds, or euros) that allows for a life of leisure.

Herein lies the rub: while the traditional economic migrant adds value to the local economy (in the form of selling labour power), the digital nomad merely lives and consumes. And in South Africa, migrant workers from other African countries are often subjected to xenophobic violence. There is nothing nomadic about the digital nomad, except that their frequent movements from one city to another are occasioned by the necessity to flout visa and tax regulations. At the end of the day, the digital nomad wants to live a good life, but at what cost? When the government creates special visa categories for people who do not contribute productively to the economy, we should be concerned. **CT**

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# WE ARE ALL FRIED

Greg Koenderman



# Heartbreaking secrets of the King's 'beloved uncle'

Chris Moore's new book is a reminder of what good journalism is about

THE days of journalists being given a week, two weeks, a month, to pursue single stories are virtually at an end. Long-form investigative pieces to all intents and purposes don't exist any more and as newspapers struggle to come to terms with falling sales and dwindling readerships, the reality of life as a reporter has changed utterly.

When I was young, I thought journalists spent their lives in khaki shirts, chain-smoking and drinking like fish in between flights taking them in pursuit of whatever corporate, political or public target they were out to expose. And, hard as it is to imagine now, those exotic beasts did exist in the 70s, 80s and into the 90s.

The grubby, prosaic truth about contemporary journalism is a tale of surrender to the digital hordes. While the likes of BBC and RTÉ continue to take their morning news leads from the small cohort of what fewer and fewer people call the "quality press" – the *Times*, the *Irish Times*, the *Guardian*, the *Telegraph* – the vast majority of newsrooms across these islands are little more than internet-scraping operations where chronically deskbound cyphers translate viral, mildly-viral and almost-viral social media incidents into tabloidese.

And if journalists do jump on a plane, they're more likely to be on



**ROYAL SCANDAL:** A new book claims Lord Mountbatten (left) was part of a paedophile ring that raped young boys in a boys' home run by William McGrath (right)

their way to a corporate restructuring meeting at HQ than chasing an exclusive.

Chris Moore's new book, *Kincora: Britain's Shame*, the product of a 40-year hunt for truth, is journalism in the grandest tradition. For the vast majority of his working life and while employed by a range of media outlets – and himself – he's been absolutely dogged in his belief that the recently-demolished East Belfast boys' home in Northern Ireland is a ghastly and now ghostly repository of secrets and lies of an extent and magnitude that equals the historic scoops of those globe-trotting journalists of yesteryear.

Kincora has morphed gradually over the years from a grimly depressing but sadly familiar tale of sexual brutality in a criminally unregulated public facility to a jaw-dropping insight into the clandestine, intersecting worlds of British intelligence, loyalist militants, religious zealotry and royal depravity.

The centrality of Lord Mountbatten – King Charles's "beloved uncle" – to Moore's latest compendium of corruption will, of course, grab the headlines, but as ever with Moore's unflinchingly honest, humane and sensitive reporting, it is the tragedy of the unknown and uncelebrated victims which will stay with the reader the longest after the book is put down. And it is the role of the unknown and unseen MI5





**EXORCISING THE GHOSTS:** Kincora Boys' Home on the Newtownards Road in East Belfast, was demolished in 2022. The home was where Lord Mountbatten, the 'beloved uncle' of King Charles III was accused of abusing young boys

puppeteers which will stir the reader's anger.

For decades, Mountbatten's reputation as a sociopathic pursuer of sexual adventure only added to his royal mystique. For what's a royal family without sexually incontinent princes and priapic playboys? Straight sex, group sex, gay sex, bisexual sex in impossibly exotic locations and with jewel-studded sex toys gave Mountbatten and his equally promiscuous wife Edwina added cachet in the palaces and salons of Europe and beyond.

But Moore has assiduously stripped away any last vestige of the shocking but legal glamour that attached to the Admiral with his GCVO, KCB and DSO.

Mountbatten here is methodically

disrobed of his starched naval uniform and his glinting medals and presented naked to us as a heartless, cruel, child-raping monster.

The book lays out the story in a clear and simple linear way reflective of Moore's reporting over the years – and it's a compelling read because of it. Beginning with the disgustingly banal details of the lives and crimes of the professional, political and religious lives of the three men who ran Kincora, it quickly gathers pace as Moore peels away the onion layers, and that unpeeling may well have you crying tears of pity – and anger.

For instance, the connection outlined in the book between the no-

torious paedophile and Kincora housemaster William McGrath and the formation of the modern paramilitary Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) gives a chilling sense of how the roiling politics of militant unionism in the mid-60s catapulted us towards the conflict that erupted in Northern Ireland in August 1969.

When Gusty Spence was arrested and charged with the June 1966 murder of Catholic barman Peter Ward and the attempted murder of two of his friends – the first act of violence of the re nascent paramilitary group – McGrath went all out to get rid of Spence.

He visited Ian Paisley in an attempt to enlist his support, sharing with him a bizarre story he had concocted that the three young Catholic

victims were communists who had infiltrated Spence's local, the Malvern Arms.

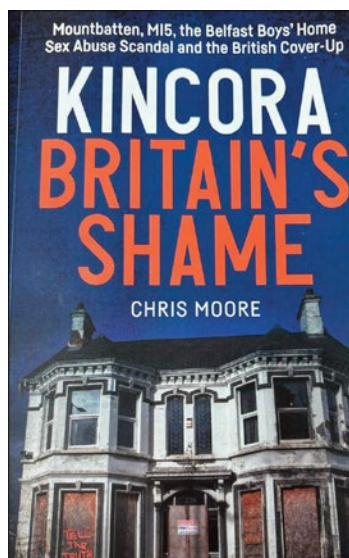
We are left to speculate on how Paisley reacted to the attempt to suck him into the world of paramilitary violence, but the wealth of anecdotal evidence linking the North Antrim Protestant firebrand to the UVF gang responsible for the later spate of false-flag attacks on utilities north and south speaks for itself.

Moore reveals that Spence later told him in an interview that he had merely been a pawn used by others – the Malvern shootings were not a reaction to the threat of IRA violence, he had been manipulated by a shadowy, hard-right cabal aimed at ending the Premiership of Terence O'Neill. The outworkings of intra-unionist tensions centring on an unprepossessing religious zealot in East Belfast would condemn us to three decades of bloody and bitter conflict.

The chapter "Face to Face with McGrath" is an absolutely compelling account of the author's meeting with the face of Kincora in the loyalist County Down village of Ballyhalbert in February 1990. As is so often the case in the best journalism, persistence and educated guessing were helped along tremendously by a generous dollop of good luck.

After a negative response in a local newsagents to Moore's attempts to locate McGrath's address, the then BBC reporter was sitting in his car considering heading back to Belfast when "an elderly man approached, wearing a cardigan, dark trousers and slippers, so obviously he had not travelled too far."

I shared the jolt of adrenaline Moore must have experienced when encountering McGrath in the wild – and what follows does not disappoint. Eschewing gaudy tabloid-



**KINCORA: BRITAIN'S SHAME**  
Mountbatten, MI5, the Belfast Boys' Home Sex Abuse Scandal and the British Cover-Up  
By Chris Moore  
Merrion Press / £17.99

speak for a straight, unsensational reporting style, Moore reveals to us a man skilled in the art of communication and deception, a stubborn, manipulative, man – clearly someone keen to justify himself to the world, but lacking the courage to expose himself post-prison to the publicity that that justification would require. In many ways, that encounter with a pensioner outside a seaside sweet shop is more revealing – certainly more memorable – than the Lord Mountbatten information outlined a little later.

Is that because in the wake of the Prince Andrew revelations we're no longer as inured to royal family crimes, or is it that endless tabloid and social media coverage of King Charles and his rift with Meghan and Harry has stripped the glamour and fascination from the House of Windsor?

Whatever the reason, Mountbatten, despite the endless letters after his name, his many titles and his Gilbert and Sullivan uniforms, sits comfortably in the seedy, vi-

cious, callous world of Kincora, McGrath and his workmates. The testimony of Mountbatten's victims is made searingly credible and painfully vivid by the little details that give heft to their accounts: An ensuite shower room is a thing of wonder to Arthur, a boy who's never seen one; that small boy is made to stand on a box to give him height before he's raped and abused; that boy watches TV while being watched by a predator; a rapist tells that boy to be careful he doesn't hurt himself while sliding down the banister. The authenticity is chilling – and it's heartbreaking.

There he is in a downstairs room in Kincora in the late 70s – Mountbatten in civvies, patiently waiting for a boy to be brought to him. He's introduced to Arthur as 'Dickie' and the perfunctory, clinical nature of the rape as described by the victim is almost too painful to bear. A boy with a bleeding anus, in a house in Belfast, ten minutes from my house, used and abused by a royal rapist who has just left to get a Royal Air Force flight back to whatever palace he's staying in that evening.

Chris Moore's book is a vital read, but it's a very difficult one. In other hands it might have been an impossible one, but the author delivers his story with an understated empathy that manages to give the victims the dignity that others tried to strip from them. And he performs the not inconsiderable feat of doing so without detracting one iota from the book's sheer readability.

It's an extraordinary feat of reportage – and humanity – that only someone who has devoted his life to a story, and its victims, could achieve. **CT**

*Robin Livingstone is editor-in-chief of the Andersonstownnews – [www.belfastmedia.com](http://www.belfastmedia.com) – in Belfast, Northern Ireland, where this review was first published*





# STOP BOMBING CHILDREN

# Where hundreds of millions are dying of hunger

Why is it that Africa – with so much wealth on its soil, with generous nature, water and sunshine in abundance – is today the poorest continent?

I have written this before. In fact, I could write this article every year when a new *Global Report on Food Crises* is published. The report, published by the Food Security Information Network, rests on four points:

1. The number of people who are hungry is greater now than last year.
2. The amount of food produced this year is greater than that produced last year.
3. There is enough food to feed the total world population, and more.
4. How do we explain why people are hungry?

Let's add in the data.

**Point No. 1:** 733 million people faced chronic hunger in 2023, according to studies from the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), World Food Programme, World Health Organisation, International Fund for Agricultural Development, and United Nations Children's Fund.

**Point No. 2:** The world's farmers and agribusinesses produced 11 billion metric tonnes of food (including meat, fish, and 9.6 billion metric tonnes of primary crops – such as maize, rice, and wheat) in 2022, as the FAO reports.

**Point No. 3** is made clear by a simple calculation with one premise.

Premise: A person eats one tonne or 1,000 kilograms of food per year

(the FAO standard for global average food consumption is 2,800 kilocalories per person per day).

Calculation: If one tonne of food is needed for one person, and there are eleven billion tonnes of food produced, then there is enough food for eleven billion people.

Conclusion: There are currently eight billion people on the planet. Therefore, there is enough food for all the people on the planet, with enough surplus to feed an additional three billion.

**Point No. 4:** How do we explain why people are hungry?

There are many reasons for the acuteness of hunger, but none of them can be attributed to a lack of food due to population growth, as Malthusians, who believe that population growth outstrips food production, allege.

There are at least three reasons why near famine persist in many parts of the world.

First, wars destroy agricultural and food distribution systems. This is the most obvious creator of hunger. This is the reason why there is famine in Sudan, a country that has the largest land area for farming in all of Africa and – if there were no war – could become the breadbasket of Africa. Despite the war, Sudan is the world's largest exporter of oily seeds (groundnuts, safflower, sesame, soybean, and sunflower).

Around 80% of the world's gum Arabic is produced in Sudan's countryside. But most fields cannot be tended, and many of the farmers have been forced off the land or forced to pick up a gun because of war.

Second, an ugly old habit of waste remains with us. One-fifth of all our food is lost or wasted (the equivalent of one billion meals a day), two-thirds of all consumption-level waste takes place in the richer countries, and 60% of global food waste happens at the household level. In the richer countries, most food waste happens at the retail and consumer stages largely because of the high level of processing and packaging as well as plate waste in households and restaurants. In the poorer countries, most food waste takes place at the point of production (due to bad weather, pests, and disease) and in storage (due to poor facilities with inadequate refrigeration and inefficient transportation systems).

Third, the main reason why people do not eat is that they do not have the money to eat. Inequality, in other words, is the engine of hunger. Let us once more list the facts:

– Over 700 million people in the world live on less than \$2.15 per day and cannot afford to buy food.

– 3.4 billion people live on less than \$5.50 per day, which makes it unlikely that they can afford to eat.

– In 2023, the world's total wealth



was approximately \$432 trillion. Of that, the top 1% of the global adult population collectively owned 47.5% of the world's total wealth, equivalent to \$213.8 trillion (an average of \$2.7 million per person). The bottom 50%, or 4 billion people, owned less than 1% of global wealth or \$4.5 trillion (\$1,125 per person). The yawning gap of wealth inequality continues to increase every year.

– Those with lower incomes simply cannot afford to eat because the inflation of food and fuel prices consumes their budgets.

– Hunger rates among women are higher than among men because when there is less food in a household, women eat less. In women-headed households, hunger rates are higher.

– While indigenous peoples constitute less than 5% of the world's population, they represent 15% of the extreme poor and suffer higher rates of hunger than other communities.

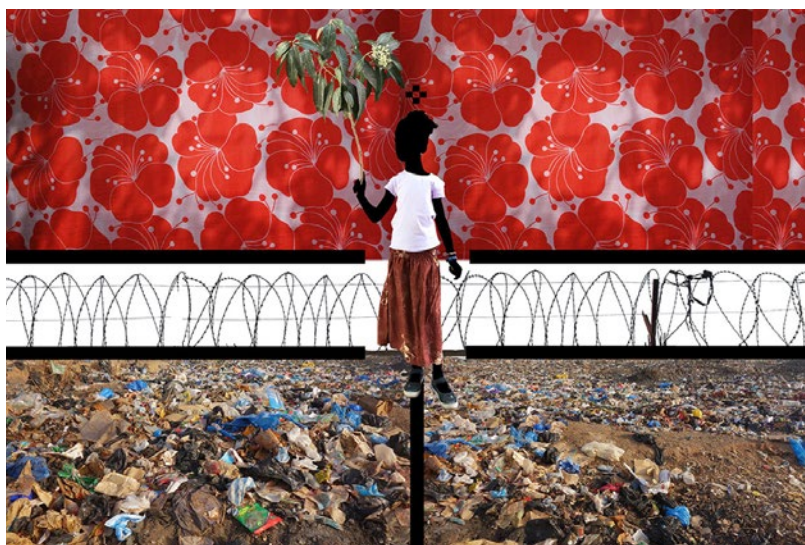
As the FAO argued in 2021, 'Poverty remains the main cause of food insecurity worldwide, as people lack the resources to access adequate food, even when it is available'.

A short article newsletter like this, resting on statistics, cannot explain the damage that poverty does to the human spirit. The sullenness of poverty produces a kind of fatalism which makes it difficult for the impoverished person to explain their situation. Cold statistics alone do not explain to the impoverished the reality of their circumstances, which they already know very well. Sometimes, it is poetry that is best able to articulate the capitalist structure of poverty and the impact

it has on the human spirit.

Nicolás Guillén (1902–1989) was one of the greatest Cuban poets both before and after the revolution. In 1931, he published the poem *Caña* (Sugarcane) in his collection *Són-goro Cosongo*, a title based on the sound of the Afro-Cuban drums:

*The Black man  
beside the canefield.  
The Yankee  
atop the canefield.  
The land  
beneath the canefield.  
Blood  
that slips away from us!  
Isn't that the truth?*



Saïdou Dicko (Burkina Faso), *The Branch of Liberty*

If you want to end hunger, you must end poverty. In 2021, the Chinese people ended absolute poverty in their country. By November 2025, the people of Kerala, India, will have ended extreme poverty – one year ahead of their target date. Vietnam is on the road to eliminating absolute poverty.

This was also the ambition of Burkina Faso under Thomas Sankara (1949–1987) and has been reborn under the country's new leader, Captain Ibrahim Traoré. Not through charity or foreign aid, but through self-reliance.

At the National Conference for

the Committees for the Defence of the Revolution in Ouagadougou on 4 April 1986, Sankara declared, 'We must succeed in producing more – producing more, because it's natural that he who feeds you, also imposes his will'. In 2023, Traoré raised Sankara's spirit and said, 'Our predecessors taught us one thing: a slave who cannot assume his own revolt does not deserve to be pitied. We do not feel sorry for ourselves, we do not ask anyone to feel sorry for us. The people of Burkina Faso have decided to fight, to fight against terrorism, in order to relaunch their development'. The people of Burkina Faso,

today, he added, are asking the following questions:

We do not understand how Africa, with so much wealth on our soil, with generous nature, water, sunshine in abundance – how Africa is today the poorest continent. Africa is a hungry continent. And how come there are heads of state all over the world begging? These are the questions we are

asking ourselves, and we have no answers so far.

But they will soon have answers, and when they do, they will ask new questions, and then history will move forward.

CT

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Scarcity of food in Gaza is causing malnutrition and severe hunger among the population as the genocide continues

► DAVID CROMWELL

# *Gaza genocide leads to 'trust crisis' at the BBC*

BBC News is a crucial part of what Noam Chomsky calls 'a very elaborate propaganda system ... which simply marginalises a large part of the population'

**B**BC News regularly proclaims its supposed editorial principles of fearless, independent, impartial, fair and accurate journalism. In a January 2023 speech to the Whitehall & Industry Group in London, then BBC Chairman Richard

Sharp boasted that BBC journalism is the 'global gold standard' of credible news reporting.

Two years previously, in 2021, the public broadcaster had proudly published a focused, 10-point plan to ensure the protection of the highest "impartiality, whistleblowing

and editorial standards." BBC director general Tim Davie asserted: "The BBC's editorial values of impartiality, accuracy and trust are the foundation of our relationship with audiences in the UK and around the world. Our audiences deserve and expect programmes and





Photo / United Nations

content which earn their trust every day and we must meet the highest standards and hold ourselves accountable in everything we do.”

However, when it comes to the broadcaster’s coverage of Gaza since October 2023, and long before, BBC audiences have seen for themselves the hollowness of such BBC rhetoric.

For example, the BBC’s withdrawal of its own commissioned powerful documentary, *Gaza: How to Survive a Warzone*, earlier this year epitomised how much the UK’s national broadcaster bends to the will of the Israel lobby. The BBC dropped the documentary from iPlayer, soon after it was broadcast on BBC Two on February 17, when it emerged that the film’s narrator, 13-year-old Abdullah al-Yazuri, is the son of Ayman

al-Yazuri, a deputy minister of agriculture in Gaza’s government which is administered by Hamas. The film was withdrawn after a campaign by pro-Israel voices, including David Collier, a self-described ‘100 per cent Zionist’ activist, Tzipi Hotovely, Israel’s ambassador to the UK, and Danny Cohen, a former director of BBC television, who said that the broadcaster ‘is at risk of becoming a Hamas propaganda mouthpiece.’

Another documentary, *Gaza: Medics Under Fire*, made by Oscar-nominated, Emmy and Peabody award-winning filmmakers, including Ben de Pear, Karim Shah and Ramita Navai, has been held back by the BBC, even though it had been

signed off by BBC lawyers. The film includes the testimony of Palestinian doctors working in Gaza under Israeli bombardment. It has been ready for broadcast since February after months of editorial reviews and fact-checking.

Over 600 prominent figures from the arts and media, including British film director Mike Leigh, Oscar-winning actor Susan Sarandon and Lindsey Hilsum, the international editor of Channel 4 News, have signed an open letter criticising the BBC for withholding the documentary: “We stand with the medics of Gaza whose voices are being silenced. Their urgent stories are being buried by bureaucracy and political censorship. This is not editorial caution. It’s political suppression. The BBC has provided no timeline,

no transparency. Such decisions reinforce the systemic devaluation of Palestinian lives in our media.”

This, of course, is all part of an endemic pattern of BBC bias towards Israel under the guise of ‘impartiality,’ a façade that has now been obliterated. The corporation’s longstanding, blatant protection of Israel, considered an ‘apartheid regime’ by major human rights organisations, has been particularly glaring since Benjamin Netanyahu’s extremist government ordered genocidal attacks on Gaza in October 2023.

The public has been subject to repetition and amplification of the Israeli narrative above the Palestinian perspective. Moreover, the broadcaster regularly omits ‘Israel’ from headlines about its latest war crimes committed in Gaza and the West Bank. Another remarkable feature of the BBC’s performance has been the dismissive treatment by senior BBC management of serious concerns about bias raised by their own journalists. A very brief summary of the BBC’s biased reporting on Gaza, and criticism by some of their own journalists, can be found in this thread on X. The essential conclusion concerning BBC News coverage of Gaza, wrote one dissident BBC journalist, is that of: “a collapse in the application of basic standards and norms of journalism that seems aligned with Israel’s propaganda strategy.”

BBC management have ignored or dismissed ‘a mass of evidence-based critique of coverage’ from members of staff. So much for the BBC’s claimed commitment to taking whistleblowers seriously.

Karishma Patel, a former BBC researcher, newsreader and journalist, wrote earlier this year about her reasons for leaving the BBC. She observed ‘a shocking level of editorial

## The BBC regularly omits ‘Israel’ from headlines about its latest war crimes committed in Gaza and the West Bank

inconsistency’ in how the BBC covers Gaza. Journalists were ‘actively choosing not to follow evidence’ of Israeli war crimes ‘out of fear’.

In a follow-up article last month, she observed that: “many [BBC] journalists are afraid to speak their minds – to challenge editorial decisions or speak freely to powerful presenters and executives. This isn’t a newsroom environment conducive to robust journalism – a profession all about the pursuit of truth and accountability.”

She added: “It’s important the public understands how far editorial policy can be silently shaped by even the possibility of anger from certain groups, foreign governments, our own government, mega-corporations – any powerful actor – and how crucial it is that more junior journalists who see it can speak up.”

In mid-May, the BBC’s director general warned of a disinformation ‘trust crisis’ that was putting ‘the social fabric’ of the UK ‘at risk.’ Tim Davie pointed the finger at social media platforms such as TikTok and YouTube where, as a *Guardian* report on Davie’s speech put it, ‘disinformation can go unchecked’. Medialens has previously written about how ‘mainstream’ editors and journalists love to point at social media as prime purveyors of disinformation, diverting attention from their own culpability in much larger crimes of state-approved propaganda that fuels wars, the erosion of democracy and climate catastrophe.

Davie said: “The future of our cohesive, democratic society feels for the first time in my life at risk.”

He called for ‘strong government backing’ for the BBC as a ‘precious national asset’ to be ‘properly funded and supported’. The fact that the BBC has itself massively contributed to a ‘trust crisis’ in disinformation and propaganda, encapsulated by its complicity in Israel’s genocide, went unmentioned, of course.

The late, great journalist John Pilger put it succinctly in an interview with Afshin Rattansi: “The BBC has the most brilliant production values, it produces the most extraordinary natural history and drama series. But the BBC is, and has long been, the most refined propaganda service in the world.”

Daily examples abound of why the public should regard BBC News with deep scepticism. On May 12, BBC News at Ten reported the release of US-Israeli dual citizen Edan Alexander by Hamas. Senior BBC reporter Lucy Williamson said that Alexander had originally been ‘kidnapped as a soldier.’ The terminology is deceptive: civilians are kidnapped; soldiers are captured. Why did BBC editors approve this loaded use of the wrong word, ‘kidnapped’?

Consider another example. Richard Sanders, an experienced journalist and documentary filmmaker, noted via X on May 15 that the BBC had included this line in one of its news bulletins: “Israel says a hospital [in Gaza] along with a university and schools ... have become terrorist strongholds for Hamas’.

Sanders commented: “The BBC knows such statements are untrue. Yet that sentence took up more than a third of its 22 sec 7.30 am news bulletin on Gaza – with no rebuttal.”

He added: “8am they go to [BBC] correspondent Yolande Knell for a



lengthier report. She repeats exactly the same sentence – again, with no rebuttal.

“The listener is left with the entirely false impression it’s perfectly possible it’s true.

“Bad, bad journalism.”

And yet this is standard BBC journalism: the ‘global gold standard,’ remember.

**J**eremy Bowen, the BBC’s international editor, is supposedly an exemplar of this gold standard. But his capitulation to the Israel lobby is repeatedly apparent in his interviews and articles. Media activist Saul Staniforth captured a clip where a BBC presenter said to Bowen: “[Netanyahu is] looking for other countries to take in Gazans.”

Bowen responded: “Well, that’s called...”

He then paused momentarily and continued: “... that will be called, by Palestinians and by a lot of people around the world, ethnic cleansing.”

Bowen presumably stopped himself simply stating the truth: “that’s called ethnic cleansing.” This is what he would have said in any context involving an Official Enemy, such as Russia, rather than the Official Friend, Israel.

Jonathan Cook dissected an even more egregious example of Bowen’s favouring the Israeli perspective when the BBC journalist interviewed Philippe Lazzarini, head of United Nations refugee agency UNRWA. Before airing the interview, Bowen introduced the Lazzarini interview with a contorted cautionary statement: “Israel says he is a liar, and that his organisation has been infiltrated by Hamas. But I felt it was important to talk to him for a number of reasons.

“First off, the British government deals with him, and funds his organisation. Which is the largest

## **The capitulation of Jeremy Bowen, the BBC’s international editor, to the Israel lobby is repeatedly apparent in his interviews and articles**

dealing with Palestinian refugees. They know a lot of what is going on, so therefore I think it is important to speak to people like him.”

As Cook observed, Bowen would never preface an interview with Netanyahu in a similar way: “The International Criminal Court has issued an arrest warrant for the Israeli prime minister, accusing him of crimes against humanity. But I felt it was important to talk to him for a number of reasons.”

During the interview, Lazzarini told Bowen that he was running out of words “to describe the misery and the tragedy affecting the people in Gaza. They have been now more than two months without any aid.”

The UNRWA chief added; “Starvation is spreading, people are exhausted, people are hungry... we can expect that in the coming weeks if no aid is coming in, that people will not die because of the bombardment, but they will die because of the lack of food. This is the weaponisation of humanitarian aid.”

Cook noted: “Lazzarini’s remarks on the catastrophe in Gaza should be seen as self-evident. But Bowen and the BBC undermined his message by framing him and his organisation as suspect – and all because Israel, a criminal state starving the people of Gaza, has made an entirely unfounded allegation against the organisation trying to stop its crimes against humanity.”

He continued: “This is the same pattern of smears from Israel that has claimed all 36 hospitals in Gaza

are Hamas ‘command and control centres’ – again without a shred of evidence – to justify it bombing them all, leaving Gaza’s population without any meaningful health care system as malnutrition and starvation take hold.”

As Cook pointed out, it is quite possible that it was not Bowen’s choice “to attach such a disgraceful disclaimer to his interview. We all understand that he is under enormous pressure, both from within the BBC and outside.” But just imagine the huge moral standing and public impact it would have if Bowen resigned from the BBC, citing the intolerable pressure not to speak the full truth about Israel’s genocide and war crimes.

**F**or those with long memories, recall the exceptional courage and honesty when two senior UN officials, Denis Halliday and Hans von Sponeck, resigned in 1998 and 2000, respectively, rather than continue to administer the ‘genocidal’ (their term). UN sanctions against Iraq that had led to the deaths of up to 1.5 million people, including around half a million children under the age of five.

One of the most insidious forms of ‘bad’ BBC ‘journalism’ is propaganda by omission. On May 13, the investigative news organisation, *DropSite*, reported that Israeli troops had shot and killed Mohammed Bardawil, a 12-year-old boy. He was one of only four surviving eyewitnesses of the Israeli military’s execution of 15 paramedics, rescue workers and UN staff in Rafah, Gaza, in March 2025.

*DropSite* noted: “Mohammed had testified that some of the paramedics were shot at point-blank range – ‘from one meter away.’ He was also interviewed by the *New York Times* for their investigation into the massacre, though his most damning

claims were omitted from their final report.”

DropSite added: “Mohammed had been scheduled for a second round of testimony with investigators, this time with paediatric psychologists present. Instead, the 12-year-old war crime witness was killed by Israeli forces.”

At the time of writing, it is unclear whether he was specifically targeted in an attack, or caught up in an Israeli raid.

This shocking news has been blanked by the BBC, as far as we can see from searching its website. Indeed, our search of the Nexis newspaper database reveals not a single mention in any UK newspaper.

Imagine if Russia had executed fifteen Red Cross medics, first responders and a UN staff member in Ukraine, burying them in a mass grave along with their vehicles, including an ambulance.

Imagine if Russia had lied about this appalling war crime, as proved by footage recovered from the telephone of one of the executed victims.

Imagine if a 12-year-old Ukrainian witness to this Russian war crime was later shot dead by Russian soldiers. His killing would have been major headline news around the world and serious questions would have been asked.

As mentioned, BBC editors love to proclaim their accountability to the public and transparency of their editorial processes. How, then, would they explain their secrecy in holding private meetings with one of Israel’s former top military officers during Israel’s genocidal war against Gaza?

*Declassified UK* is a small publicly-funded independent news organisation that runs rings around BBC News, and the rest of the ‘mainstream’ media, on UK foreign policy and the impact of British military and intelligence agencies on human rights and the environment. *Declassified UK* reported earlier this year

## The main role of major news media is to maintain structures of state and corporate control that keep the public away from the levers of power

that BBC, *Guardian* and *Financial Times* editors had secret meetings with Israeli General Aviv Kohavi one month after the Gaza bombardment began.

In attendance were Katherine Viner, editor-in-chief of the *Guardian*, Richard Burgess, director of news content at the BBC, and Roula Khalaf, editor of the *Financial Times*. According to documents obtained under the Freedom of Information Act, Kohavi’s itinerary also included meetings with Sky News chairman David Rhodes at the Israeli embassy, and then shadow foreign secretary David Lammy, between November 7 and 9, 2023.

Kohavi had only stepped down from running Israel’s military months earlier. According to *Declassified UK*’s investigation, Kohavi had subsequently been “tasked with cultivating support for Israel as it escalated its brutal military offensive in Gaza.”

A journalist who was working for the BBC at the time of the visit told *Declassified UK*: “I don’t recall any internal correspondence about the meeting, which the BBC would ordinarily send out if there was a high-profile visit of this kind. I also find it very difficult to believe that the organisation would hold an equivalent meeting with the Hamas government.”

The journalist, who requested anonymity, added: “Not only is Kohavi’s visit unprecedented but it’s also outrageous that one of the most senior editors at the BBC should court company with a foreign military

figure in this way, especially one whose country stands accused of serious human rights violations.

“It further undermines the independence and impartiality that the BBC claims to uphold, and I think it has done irreparable damage to any trust audiences had in the corporation.”

Des Freedman, a professor of media at Goldsmiths, University of London, told *Declassified UK* he could find no mention of General Kohavi in any BBC, *Guardian* or *FT* coverage since 2023, when searching on the Nexis database.

He added: “Obviously off the record briefings have a place in journalism. However, meeting secretly with a senior IDF representative in the middle of a genocidal campaign as part of an organised propaganda offensive raises serious questions about integrity and transparency.

“You would hope that news titles would go out of their way to avoid accusations of bias by rejecting the offer to meet privately and instead to put such meetings on the record. In reality, editors at the *Guardian*, BBC and *FT* appear willing to open their doors to Israeli spokespeople – no matter how controversial and offensive – in a way which is denied to Palestinian representatives.”

The function of the major news media, including BBC News, is not to fully inform or educate the public about what our governments or other elite forces in society are doing. Their primary role is to maintain structures of state and corporate control that keep the public away from the levers of power.

Jason Hickel, a professor of anthropology at the Autonomous University of Barcelona and a visiting fellow at the London School of Economics, made these cogent obser-



vations recently via X: “Palestine is the rock on which the West will break itself.

“Put yourself in the shoes of people in the global South. For nearly two years they have watched how Western leaders, who love to talk about human rights and the rule of law, are happy to shred all these values in the most spectacular displays of hypocrisy in order to prop up their military proxy-state as it openly conducts genocide and ethnic cleansing against an occupied people, even in the face of *overwhelming* international condemnation.’

He continued: “What do you think people in the South are supposed to conclude from this? What would *you* conclude from this in their position? Decades of Western propaganda have been shattered, this time in full technicolor. Western governments have made it clear that they do not care about human rights and

## ‘Western governments have made it clear that they do not care about human rights and the rule of law when it comes to people of colour’

the rule of law when it comes to people of colour, the global majority.”

In fact, Western governments do not even care about human rights and the rule of law in their own countries, where these conflict with the requirements of power and control by elites.

As Noam Chomsky has pointed out over many decades, “there is a very elaborate propaganda system” in capitalist societies, “involving

everything, from the public relations industry and advertising to the corporate media, which simply marginalises a large part of the population. They technically are allowed to participate by pushing buttons every few years, but they have essentially no role in formulating policy. They can ratify decisions made by others.”

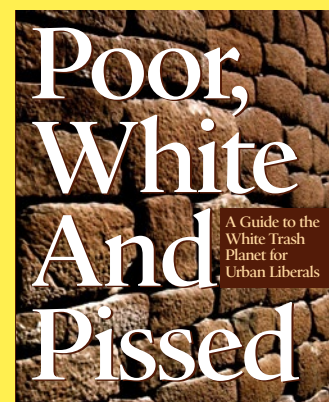
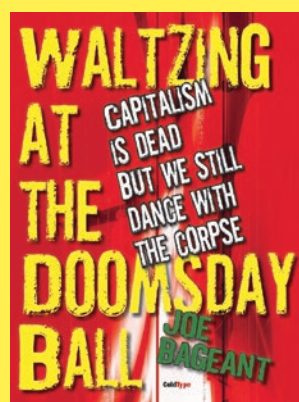
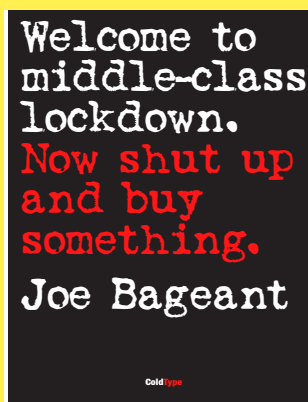
(Noam Chomsky and James Kelman, ‘Between Thought and Expression Lies a Lifetime: Why Ideas Matter’, *PM Press*, 2021, p. 159)

BBC News is a crucial component of this elaborate propaganda system. No amount of self-serving managerial rhetoric about ‘trust’, ‘transparency’ and ‘impartiality’ can refute that fundamental reality. **CT**

*David Cromwell is co-editor of Medialens – [www.medialens.org](http://www.medialens.org) – where this article was first published*

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# Martial law disguised as law and order

New executive order creates not just a de facto standing army, but Trump's own army: loyal not to the Constitution or the people, but to the President

*"A standing military force, with an overgrown Executive will not long be safe companions to liberty." – James Madison*

We are being frog-marched into tyranny at the end of a loaded gun. Or rather, hundreds of thousands of loaded guns.

Let's not mince words: President Trump's April 28 executive order is the oldest trick in the authoritarian playbook: martial law masquerading as law and order. Officially titled "Strengthening and Unleashing America's Law Enforcement to Pursue Criminals and Protect Innocent Citizens," this order is a "Heil Hitler" wrapped in the goose-stepping, despotic trappings of national security.

Don't be fooled by Trump's tough-on-crime rhetoric, cloaked in patriotic language and the promise of safety. This is the language of every strongman who's ever ruled by force.

The White House claims the order will "empower state and local law enforcement to relentlessly pursue criminals and protect American communities." But under this administration, "criminal" increasingly includes anyone who

dares to exercise their constitutional rights. The order doesn't merely expand policing – it institutionalises repression. It sets us squarely on the road to martial law.

If allowed to stand, Trump's executive order completes our shift from a nation of laws – where even the least among us had the right to due process – to a nation of enforcers: vigilantes with badges who treat people as suspects and subordinates.

Without invoking the Insurrection Act or deploying active-duty military forces, Trump has accelerated the transformation of domestic police into his own paramilitary force.

With the stroke of his presidential pen, he has laid the groundwork for a stealth version of martial law by:

- Expanding police powers and legal protections;
- Authorising the DOJ to defend officers accused of civil rights violations;
- Increasing the transfer of military equipment to local police;
- Shielding law enforcement from judicial oversight;
- Prioritising law enforcement protection over civil liberties;
- Embedding DHS and federal agents more deeply into local policing.

All of this has occurred without congressional debate, judicial review, or constitutional scrutiny.

For years, we have watched as the government transformed local law enforcement into extensions of the military: outfitted with military hardware and trained in battlefield tactics. However, this executive order goes one step further – creating not just a de facto standing army but Trump's own army: loyal not to the Constitution or the people, but to the president.

This is the very danger the Founders feared: a militarised police force answerable to a powerful executive, operating outside





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the bounds of the law. This is martial law without a declaration.

Law enforcement today is equipped like the military, trained in battlefield tactics, and given broad discretion over who to target and how to respond. But these are not soldiers bound by the laws of war. They are civilian enforcers, wielding unchecked power with minimal oversight.

And they are everywhere.

Armoured vehicles on neighbourhood streets. Flashbang raids on family homes. Riot police in small towns. SWAT-style teams deployed by federal agencies. Drones overhead. Mass surveillance below.

We are fast approaching a reality where constitutional rights exist in name only. In practice, we are ruled by a quasi-military bureaucracy empowered to:

- Detain without trial;
- Punish political dissent;
- Seize property under civil asset forfeiture;
- Classify critics as extremists or terrorists;
- Conduct mass surveillance on the populace;
- Raid homes in the name of “public safety;”
- Use deadly force at the slightest provocation.

In other words, we’ve got freedom in name only.

It’s the same scenario nationwide: in big cities and small towns alike, militarized “warrior” cops – hyped up on power – ride roughshod over individual rights by exercising almost absolute discretion over who is a threat, what constitutes resistance, and how harshly they can deal with the citizens they were appointed to “serve and protect.”

This nationwide epidemic of court-sanctioned police violence has already ensured that unarmed Americans – many of them mentally ill, elderly, disabled, or simply noncompliant – will continue to die

## This is how freedom ends – not with a loud decree, but with the quiet, calculated erosion of every principle we once held sacred

at the hands of militarised police.

From individuals shot for holding garden hoses, to those killed after calling 911 for help, these tragedies underscore a chilling truth: in a police state, the only truly “safe” person is one who offers no resistance at all.

These killings are the inevitable result of a system that rewards vigilante aggression by warrior cops and punishes accountability. These so-called warrior cops, trained to act as judge, jury and executioner, increasingly outnumber those who still honour their oath to uphold the Constitution and serve the public.

Now, under the cover of executive orders and nationalist rhetoric, that warrior mentality is being redirected toward a more dangerous mission: silencing political dissent.

Emboldened by Trump’s call to reopen Alcatraz and target so-called “homegrown” threats, these foot soldiers of the police state are no longer going to be tasked with enforcing the law – they will be deployed to enforce political obedience.

This is not a theory. It is a reality unfolding before our eyes. We are living in a creeping state of undeclared martial law. The militarisation of police and federal agencies over recent decades has only accelerated the timeline toward authoritarianism.

This is how freedom ends – not with a loud decree, but with the quiet, calculated erosion of every principle we once held sacred.

We’ve come full circle – from resisting British redcoats to submitting to American forces with the same disdain for liberty. Our constitutional foundation is crumbling, and with it, any illusion that those in power still serve the public good.

Congress, for its part, has abdicated its role as a constitutional check on executive power – passing sweeping authorisations with little scrutiny and failing to rein in executive overreach. The courts, too, have in the past sanctioned many of these abuses in the name of national security, public order, or qualified immunity. Instead of acting as constitutional safeguards, these institutions have largely become rubber stamps.

Indeed, the president, Congress, the courts, and the police have come to embody the very abuse the Founders fought to resist. Only now are the courts beginning to show glimmers of allegiance to the Constitution.

This is not about partisanship, it’s about power without restraint. As tempting as it is to place full blame on Trump for this full-throttle shift into martial law, he is not the architect of this police state. He is its most shameless enabler – a useful frontman for the Deep State in its ongoing war on American people.

We are sliding down a slippery slope to a Constitution-free America. We ignore these signs at our peril.

**CT**

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# *Trump's useful idiots: A bankrupt liberal class*

By signing on for a Zionist witch hunt against supposed antisemites and refusing to condemn Israel for its genocide, they provide the bullets to its executioners

**T**he media, universities, the Democratic Party and liberals, by embracing the fiction of “rampant antisemitism,” laid the groundwork for their own demise. Columbia and Princeton, where I have taught, and Harvard, which I attended, are not incubators of hatred towards Jews. The *New York Times*, where I worked for fifteen years and which Trump calls “an enemy of the people,” is slavishly subservient to the Zionist narrative. What these institutions have in common is not antisemitism, but liberalism. And liberalism, with its creed of pluralism and inclusiveness, is slated by our authoritarian regime for obliteration.

The conflation of outrage over the genocide with antisemitism is a sleazy tactic to silence protest and placate Zionist donors, the billionaire class and advertisers. These liberal institutions, weaponising antisemitism, aggressively silenced and expelled critics, banned student groups such as Jewish Voice for Peace and Students for Justice in Palestine, allowed police to make hundreds of arrests of peaceful protests on campuses, purged professors and grovelled before Congress. Use the words ‘apartheid’ and ‘genocide’ and you are fired or exoriated.

Zionist Jews, in this fictional nar-

rative, are the oppressed. Jews who protest the genocide are slandered as Hamas stooges and punished. Good Jews. Bad Jews. One group deserves protection. The other deserves to be thrown to the wolves. This odious bifurcation exposes the charade.

**I**n April 2024, Columbia University President Minouche Shafik, along with two board members and a law professor, testified before the House of Representative education committee. They accepted the premise that antisemitism was a significant problem at Columbia and other higher education institutions.

When David Greenwald, co-chair of the Board of Trustees of Columbia University and others told the committee that they believed “from the river to the sea” and “long live the intifada” were antisemitic statements, Shafik agreed. She threw students and faculty under the bus, including long-time professor Joseph Massad. The day after the hearings, Shafik suspended all the students at the Columbia protests and called in the New York City Police Department (NYPD), who arrested at least 108 students.

“I have determined that the encampment and related disruptions

pose a clear and present danger to the substantial functioning of the University,” Shafik wrote in her letter to the police.

NYPD Chief John Chell, however, told the press, “the students that were arrested were peaceful, offered no resistance whatsoever, and were saying what they wanted to say in a peaceful manner.”

“What disciplinary action has been taken against that professor?” Representative Elise Stefanik asked in the hearing about Columbia law professor Katherine Franke.

Shafik volunteered that Franke, who is Jewish and whose position at the law school where she had taught for 25 years was terminated, and other professors, were being investigated. In an apparent reference to visiting Columbia Professor Mohamed Abdou, she claimed he was “terminated” and promised he “will never teach at Columbia again.” Professor Abdou is suing Columbia for defamation, discrimination, harassment and financial and professional loss.

The Center for Constitutional Rights wrote of the betrayal of Franke: “In an egregious attack on both academic freedom and Palestinian rights advocacy, Columbia University has entered into an ‘agreement’ with Katherine Franke to leave her teaching position after





**FIGHTING GENOCIDE:** Columbia University students protest outside a bookstore in support of Palestine and against Israeli occupation during furious demonstrations in 2024

an esteemed 25-year career. The move – ‘a termination dressed up in more palatable terms,’ according to Franke’s statement – stems from her advocacy for students who speak out in support of Palestinian rights.

“Her ostensible offense was a comment expressing concern about Columbia’s failure to address harassment of Palestinians and their allies by Israeli students who come to campus straight from military service – after Israeli students sprayed Palestinian rights protestors with a toxic chemical. For this, she was investigated for harassment and found to be in violation of Columbia’s policies. The actual cause of her forced departure is the crackdown on dissent at Columbia resulting from historic protests opposing Israel’s genocide of Palestinians in Gaza. Franke’s fate was sealed when former Columbia president Minouche

Shafik threw her under the bus during her cowardly appearance before Congress.”

Despite her capitulation to the Zionist lobby, Shark resigned a little more than a year after assuming her position as head of the university.

The crackdown at Columbia continues, with an estimated 80 people arrested and over 65 students suspended following a protest in the library in the first week of May. Former television journalist and Columbia’s acting president Claire Shipman condemned the protest, stating, “Disruptions to our academic activities will not be tolerated and are violations of our rules and policies ... Columbia strongly condemns violence on our campus, antisemitism and all forms of hate and discrimination, some of which we witnessed today.”

Of course, appeasement does not work. This witch hunt, whether un-

der the Biden or Trump administration, was never grounded in good faith but was about decapitating Israel’s critics and marginalising the liberal class and the left. It is sustained by lies and slander, which these institutions embrace.

Watching these liberal institutions, who are hostile to the left, be smeared by Trump for harbouring “Marxist lunatics,” “radical leftists,” and “communists,” exposes another failing of the liberal class. It was the left that could have saved these institutions or at least given them the fortitude, not to mention analysis, to take a principled stand. The left at least calls apartheid apartheid and genocide genocide.

Media outlets regularly publish articles and OpEds uncritically accepting claims made by Zionist

students and faculty. They fail to clarify the distinction between being Jewish and being Zionist. They demonise student protesters. They never bothered reporting with any depth or honesty from the student encampments where Jews, Muslims and Christians made common cause. They routinely mischaracterise anti-Zionist, anti-genocide and pro-Palestinian liberation slogans and policy demands as hate speech, antisemitic, or contributing to Jewish students feeling unsafe.

Examples include, the *New York Times*: “Why the Campus Protests Are So Troubling,” “I’m a Columbia Professor. The Protests on My Campus Are Not Justice”, “Universities Face an Urgent Question: What Makes a Protest Antisemitic?”; the *Washington Post*: “Call the campus protests what they are”, “At Columbia, excuse the students, but not the faculty”; the *Atlantic*: “Campus Protest Encampments Are Unethical” and “Columbia University’s anti-Semitism Problem”; *Slate*: “When Pro-Palestine Protests Cross Into Antisemitism”; *Vox*: “The Rising Tide of Antisemitism on College Campuses Amid Gaza Protests”; *Mother Jones*: “How Pro-Palestine Protests Spark Antisemitism on Campus”; the *Cut (New York Magazine)*: “The Problem With Pro-Palestine Protests on Campus”; and the *Daily Beast*: “Antisemitism Surges Amid Pro-Palestine Protests at US Universities.”

**T**he *New York Times*, in a decision worthy of George Orwell, instructed its reporters to eschew words such “refugee camps,” “occupied territory,” “slaughter,” “massacre,” “carnage,” “genocide” and “ethnic cleansing,” when writing about Palestine, according to an internal memo obtained by the *Intercept*. It discourages the very use of the word “Pal-

## Hochul made clear in October 2024 that she considered pro-Palestine slogans to be explicit calls for genocide of Jews

estine” in routine text and headlines.

In December 2023, Democratic Governor of New York Kathy Hochul sent a letter to university and college presidents who failed to condemn and address “antisemitism,” and calls for the “genocide of any group,” would be subjected to “aggressive enforcement action,” by New York State. The following year, in late August, Hochul repeated these warnings during a virtual meeting with 200 university and college leaders.

Hochul made clear in October 2024 that she considered pro-Palestine slogans to be explicit calls for genocide of Jews.

“There are laws on the books – human rights laws, state and federal laws – that I will enforce if you allow for the discrimination of our students on campus, even calling for the genocide of the Jewish people which is what is meant by ‘From the river to the sea,’ by the way,” she said at a memorial event at the Temple Israel Center in White Plains. “Those are not innocent sounding words. They’re filled with hate.”

The Governor successfully pressured City University of New York (CUNY) to remove a job posting for a Palestinian studies professorship at Hunter College which referenced “settler colonialism,” “genocide” and “apartheid.”

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer in his new book *Antisemitism in America: A Warning*, leads efforts by the Democratic Party – which has a dismal 27 percent approval rating in a recent NBC News

poll – to denounce those protesting the genocide as carrying out a “blood libel” against Jews.

“Whatever one’s view of how the war in Gaza was conducted, it is not and has never been the policy of the Israeli government to exterminate the Palestinian people,” he writes, ignoring hundreds of calls by Israeli officials to wipe Palestinians from the face of the earth during 19 months of saturation bombing and enforced starvation.

The grisly truth, openly acknowledged by Israeli officials, is far different.

“We are disassembling Gaza, and leaving it as piles of rubble, with total destruction [which has] no precedent globally. And the world isn’t stopping us,” gloats Israel’s Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich.

“Last night, almost 100 Gazans were killed ... it doesn’t interest anyone. Everyone has gotten used to [the fact] that [we can] kill 100 Gazans in one night during a war and nobody cares in the world,” Israeli Knesset member Zvi Sukkot, told Israel’s Channel 12 on May 16.

The perpetuation of the fiction of widespread antisemitism, which of course exists but which is not fostered or condoned by these institutions, coupled with the refusal to say out loud what is being livestreamed to the world, has shattered what little moral authority these institutions and liberals had left. It gives credibility to Trump’s effort to cripple and destroy all institutions that sustain a liberal democracy.

Trump surrounds himself with neo-Nazi sympathisers such as Elon Musk, and Christian fascists who condemn Jews for crucifying Christ. But antisemitism by the right gets a free pass since these “good” antisemites cheer on Israel’s settler colonial project of extermination, one these neo-Nazis and Christian fascists would like to rep-



licate on brown and black in the name of the great replacement theory. Trump trumpets the fiction of “white genocide” in South Africa. He signed an executive order in February that fast-tracked immigration to the US for Afrikaners – white South Africans.

Harvard, which is attempting to save itself from the wrecking ball of the Trump administration, was as complicit in this witch hunt as everyone else, flagellating itself for not being more repressive towards campus critics of the genocide.

The university’s former president Claudine Gay condemned the pro-Palestine slogan “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free,” which demands the right of an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel, as bearing “specific historical meanings that to a great many people imply the eradication of Jews from Israel.”

Harvard substantially tightened its regulations regarding student protests, in January 2024, and increased the police presence on its campus. It barred 13 students from graduating, citing alleged policy violations linked to their participation in a protest encampment, despite an earlier agreement to avoid punitive measures. It placed more than 20 students on “involuntary leave” and in some cases evicted students from their housing. Such policies were replicated across the country.

The capitulations and crackdowns on pro-Palestine activism, academic freedom, freedom of speech, suspensions, expulsions and firings, since Oct. 7, 2023, have not spared US colleges and universities from further attacks.

Since Trump took office, at least \$11 billion in federal research grants and contracts have been cut or frozen nationwide according to NPR. This includes Harvard (\$3 billion), Columbia (\$400 million), University

## Harvard, like Columbia, the media, the Democratic Party and the liberal class ... are paying the price for their stupidity and cowardice

of Pennsylvania (\$175 million) and Brandeis (\$6-7.5 million annually).

On May 22, the Trump administration intensified its attacks on Harvard by terminating its ability to enrol international students that make up around 27 percent of the student body.

“This administration is holding Harvard accountable for fostering violence, antisemitism, and coordinating with the Chinese Communist Party on its campus,” Kristi Noem, DHS Secretary wrote on X, when posting screenshots of the letter she sent to Harvard revoking foreign

student enrolments. “Let this serve as a warning to all universities and academic institutions across the country.”

Harvard, like Columbia, the media, the Democratic Party and the liberal class, misread power. By refusing to acknowledge or name the genocide in Gaza, and persecuting those who do, they provided the bullets to their own executioners.

They are paying the price for their stupidity and cowardice. **CT**

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# Memorial Day is not about the dead soldiers. It's about glorifying war

Who is so blind as not to see the wars waged from administration to administration as smoothly as the change of seasons?

Although Memorial Day in the United States, recently celebrated on May 26, is ostensibly a day for honouring soldiers killed in wars, it is, rather, a day for promoting war. If it were to honour the dead, all its pageantry would be in opposition to war. Rather than being haunted by the ghosts of war, many Americans are very proud of all its soldiers killed while killing foreigners for the military industrial complex and the super-rich who own the country.

For the USA is a warfare state; it has been waging imperialistic overseas wars for a long, long time, and using its soldiers as cannon fodder. Most families of dead soldiers find it impossible to admit that their loved ones died in vain, even if courageously.

Without waging wars, the US economy, as presently constituted, would collapse. Business goes on as usual.

Remembering all the war dead is like drifting on a ghost ship in a still sea of burning water. Haunted by the eerie silence of their absent presence, if we listen closely enough, we can hear such victims calling to us: "Remember me, Remember me, why did it have to be?"

"All warfare is ghostly," writes the classical scholar Norman O.

Brown, "every army an exercitus feralis (a funereal exercise), every soldier a living corpse."

The world is littered with the corpses of wars' victims, those of the killers and the killed, soldiers of every nation – but the vast majority are innocent civilians who never picked up a gun. The earth is so saturated with all their blood that one would expect the rivers to run red as a reminder. But that only happens in poems, as with Federico Garcia Lorca: "Beneath all the totals, a river of warm blood."

But what do poets know that the potentates, politicians, and mad generals don't? These killers are experts at shedding innocent blood to satisfy their blood lust and then erecting monuments to the killers. They are necrophiliacs, while all the poets do is to remind us that we will all die and that we should affirm life and love each other before we do – that war is an evil lie, as Wilfred Owen told us about World War I in *Dulce et Decorum Est*:

*If in some smothering dreams,  
you too could pace  
Behind the wagon that we flung  
him in,  
And watch the white eyes writh-*

*ing in his face,  
His hanging face, like a devil's  
sick of sin;  
If you could hear, at every jolt,  
the blood  
Come gargling from the froth-  
corrupted lungs,  
Obscene as cancer, bitter as the  
cud  
Of vile, incurable sores on inno-  
cent tongues,—  
My friend, you would not tell  
with such high zest  
To children ardent for some des-  
perate glory,  
The old Lie: Dulce et decorum est  
Pro patria mori.*

But that was long ago. War's victims still fall everywhere, every day they are stilled in deserts, mountains, jungles, cities, houses, hospitals, schools, on the open roads, in bedrooms, in woods, in alleyways, crouched in basements, killed from the sky, the ground, directly, remotely, by their own desperate hands, slowly in despair. Why count the ways, why count the victims – the truth is countless?

But we must count, not to wave a flag and march down Main Street to the sound of a marching band behind a fire engine with little kids on bikes and old men with rifles on their shoulders, but to galvanise ourselves to stand and op-



pose the warmongers who run the government.

Who can not weep and scream in opposition as the US/Israel commits genocide against the Palestinians? Savage slaughter for all to see but ignore. Who is so blind as not to see the wars waged from administration to administration as smoothly as the change of seasons?

Once the warmongers shot down the US's great antiwar leaders. Now they suck the population in with Memorial Day sales and dreams of cookouts.

But business goes on as usual, as the great Roberta Flack sang so mournfully, "except that my brother is dead." George M. Cohan was right: "The Yanks are coming." They are always coming, but he was wrong to think it is ever over. It's not supposed to be ever over.

And "over there," Maha Khalil, a one-year-old Iraqi girl, was killed in the first few months of America's criminal war against Iraq.

Mrs Ngugen Thi Tau was slaughtered by US soldiers at My Lai, Vietnam.

Mohammed Nidal Hisham Attallah, Ahmad Shadi Talal Al-Haddad, and Masa Mohammed Youssef Nasr are a few of at least 16,500 Palestinian children killed by Israel/US in Gaza since Oct 7, 2023.

Who knows all the dead in Afghanistan, Yemen, Syria, Gaza, Ukraine, Libya, East Timor, Indonesia, Vietnam, Cambodia, El Salvador, Chile, throughout Africa, and all the other countries where the American military and the CIA have been dispatched? Who can grasp it? Their names mean nothing to those who didn't know them, just as the endless names of the US military dead (most drafted into a war they didn't

want or understand) that line the Vietnam Veterans Memorial are a sad blur to those who come to look but didn't know the fallen. The same is even truer for anyone who views the Holocaust memorial in Boston where all one sees are rows and rows of concentration camp numbers; for every number a real person, each one reduced by the Nazis to six-digits tattooed on arms.

When we try to name and count wars' victims, we are overwhelmed and stunned. Yet the wars persist. Like the pawns conscripted to fight them, the anonymous ghosts of all the victims murmur in our ears: Why?



Dylan sings:

*Oh my name it is nothin'  
My age it means less  
The country I come from  
Is called the Midwest  
I's taught and brought up there  
The laws to abide  
And the land that I live in  
Has God on its side.*

But not all of the wars' victim's die. Vast numbers become "living corpses," also mostly anonymous and forsaken. Across the world and here at home wherever the Ameri-

can war machine has set its sights, the lame and crippled struggle on, victims of bombs and bullets, napalm and white phosphorous, nuclear radiation, torture, biological weapons – all the grotesque weapons the ghouls of the weapons' industries have conjured up from hell for their paymasters. Countless living victims, yes, but the weapons industries carefully count their bloody profits, as do those who invest in these companies while turning a blind eye to their own complicity.

Many of the wounds of war are psychological and spiritual. And so many of the victims suffer silently. Wars' terrors follow them everywhere down their nights and down their days, and they can often find no escape from the nightmare images that populate their minds, flashing in and out. It's beyond imagining the living hell of children worldwide reliving the sight of the bloodied mangled bodies of their parents at their feet, victims of bombs or death squads or perhaps "collateral damage," as if any words or reasons could undue their everlasting trauma or cover up the radical evil of those who killed them

We owe it the wounded, dead, and tormented war victims everywhere to memorialise them with the words: *War is a lie, and only truth will free us.*

And to stop marching with the drums drumming and the flags flying as if we are proud of the US killing machine. **CT**

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# *Why is UK Prime Minister planning his own demise?*

Keir Starmer's attack on Britain's planning system is an almost-perfect repeat of Boris Johnson's disaster. Why can't he see that?

**T**he precedent is uncanny, and the failure to learn from it downright mystifying. Keir Starmer is rushing gladly towards the catastrophe Boris Johnson inflicted on himself in 2020. Had he set out to stymie Labour's chances of re-election, he couldn't be doing it better.

In 2020, Johnson promised "a whole new planning system" for England, which, he claimed, would promote "economic growth." He said he wanted to see 300,000 new homes built every year.

He sought to "build, build, build," but falsely claimed that his plans were thwarted by newts, which he used as shorthand for environmental protections. He would sweep these protections away.

At first, the response was muted. Those of us who sought to explain the problems with his proposals were ignored or dismissed. But we could sense a slow wave of fury gathering, as people began to realise that what remained of our green and pleasant land would be handed on a plate to ruthless corporations.

**I**n June 2021, in a by-election in the most Tory of Tory constituencies, Chesham and Amersham, the Conservatives suffered a massive elec-

toral shock, losing to the Lib Dems. A large part of the reason, as Tory MPs conceded, was anger over Johnson's proposed assault on the planning system. In parliament the following week, the then shadow environment secretary, Steve Reed, argued that the unpopularity of the Tory proposals "is not because voters are nimbys, as ministers rather offensively like to brand them, but because residents rightly want and deserve a say over how their own neighbourhoods are developed." Why, he asked, "would the government do something so desperately unpopular with their own voters, let alone with all the rest of voters?"

The problem with getting homes built, he argued, "is not the planning process; it is developers who do not build the homes once they have consent." While nine out of 10 planning applications are approved, "over 1.1 million homes that received consent in the past decade have still not been built." The reason, he explained, is "land banking. That is where a developer gets approval for an application to build new homes, but instead of building, waits for land values to rise so they can sell it on without having laid a single brick." There was, and remains, plenty of evidence for this contention.

The Tories frantically backtracked, cancelling the proposals

that had ignited public rage. But their spell had been broken – they no longer looked impregnable.

Now Reed is the environment secretary, and presiding over the government's planning and infrastructure bill, which will strip away protections for wildlife, habitats, parks and playing fields, deregulate the planning system and roll back our democratic rights. The bill, the government claims, will promote economic growth and enable 300,000 new homes to be built every year.

**K**eir Starmer says he wants to "build, baby, build." He has justified the bill by insisting that newts and bats are impeding development, though this remains as untrue as it was when Johnson said it. The government has admitted there's almost no evidence that nature protections are blocking development. Starmer has branded people who want a say over how their neighbourhoods are developed as "time-wasting nimbys," "blockers" and "zealots."

When I first wrote about the bill's threat to wildlife and green places, Reed's deputy, Mary Creagh, the minister for nature, denounced my article as "deeply misleading." She offered no evidence.

Two days after her letter was





published, the government's green watchdog, the Office for Environmental Protection, issued its own analysis, which was very similar to the case I made: the bill "would have the effect of reducing the level of environmental protection ... the provisions are a regression." This was hardly surprising: a vast range of ecologists, government advisers and leading barristers had already come to the same conclusion. I have asked Creagh for an apology, but have received no reply.

Partly in response to my article, Reed's department held a press conference, the purpose of which was to tell everyone they had got it wrong. The *Guardian's* brilliant reporter Helena Horton asked about a provision in the bill that allows developers to trash local habitats, parks and playing fields, as long as they pay to create alternative provision some-

where else.

Doesn't this mean that people will be deprived of access to nature and green spaces, as the new provision wouldn't even need to be in the same county? "That is not the intention of the bill," she was told. But, she persisted, it's the effect of the bill? The official admitted that it is. It doesn't matter what a government's "intentions" are: what counts is what the legislation says.

Anyway, its intentions couldn't be clearer. Starmer and Rachel Reeves say they want to "clear out," "kick down," "tear down" and "sweep away" planning and nature laws. The violence of the language tells us all we need to know.

Just as my "deeply misleading" article was going to press, the government announced an amendment to the bill, shutting down consultation on major infrastructure

projects at the crucial pre-application stage. This brings it even more closely into line with Johnson's 2020 disaster.

In seeking to justify the amendment, the government cited the support of a lobby group called Britain Remade. It turns out to be run by former special advisers to Johnson and Liz Truss, and the former head of research at the Adam Smith Institute, a highly opaque neoliberal junktank. It calls itself "an independent grassroots organisation," which always sets off my alarm bells. Especially when it also tells us "Britain Remade is not currently able to accept grassroots funding."

I asked Britain Remade how it can call itself a "grassroots" organisation, who funds it, what its budget is, whether it has a board and who sits on it. It sent me a rambling answer addressing only one of these questions: "All of our current funders are listed online." But its website names only two, while stating it receives "grants from a range of organisations." I asked another three times, but have heard no more. It's not just that similar groups swirled around Johnson. In some cases, these are the same people.

The bill may make no difference to Labour's electoral prospects, as Starmer, betraying one hope after another, simultaneously detoxifying Reform UK and toxifying the Labour party, is likely already to have torpedoed them. But if it hasn't happened yet, this could be the final rupture. I ask again, what is he playing at?

**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](http://www.monbiot.com)*

# Gaza's trail of blood leads straight to Starmer's door

Western capitals are coordinating with Israel and the US on their 'criticisms' of the genocide – just as they earlier coordinated on their support for the slaughter

After 19 months of being presented with dissembling accounts of Gaza from their governments, western publics are now being served up a different – but equally deceitful – narrative.

With the finishing line in sight for Israel's programme of genocidal ethnic cleansing, the West's Gaza script is being hastily rewritten. But make no mistake: it is the same web of self-serving lies.

As if under the direction of a hidden conductor, Britain, France and Canada – key US allies – erupted last month into a chorus of condemnation of Israel.

They called Israel's plans to level the last fragments of Gaza still standing 'disproportionate,' while Israel's intensification of its months-long starvation of more than two million Palestinian civilians was 'intolerable.'

The change of tone was preceded, by new, harsher language against Israel from the western press corps.

The establishment media's narrative had to shift first, so that the sudden outpouring of moral and political concern at Gaza's suffering from British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, French President Emmanuel Macron and Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney – after more than a year and a half of indifference – did not appear too abrupt, or too strange.

They are acting as if some corner has been turned in Israel's genocide. But genocides don't have corners. They just progress relentlessly until stopped.

The media and politicians are carefully managing any cognitive dissonance for their publics.

But the deeper reality is that western capitals are still coordinating with Israel and the US on their 'criticisms' of Israel's genocide in Gaza – just as they earlier coordinated their support for it.

As much was conceded by a senior Israeli official to Israel's *Haaretz* newspaper. Referring to the sudden



## BREAKING NEWS

change of tone, he said: "The past 24 hours were all part of a planned ambush we knew about. This was a coordinated sequence of moves ahead of the EU meeting in Brussels, and thanks to joint efforts by our ambassadors and the foreign minister, we managed to moderate the outcome."

The handwringing is just another bit of stagecraft, little different from the earlier mix of silence and talk about Israel's 'right to defend itself.' And it is to the same purpose: to buy Israel time to 'finish the job' – that is, to complete its genocide and ethnic





## **S** Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer gives statement

cleansing of Gaza.

The West is still promoting phoney ‘debates,’ entirely confected by Israel, about whether Hamas is stealing aid, what constitutes sufficient aid, and how that aid should be delivered.

It is all meant as noise, to distract us from the only pertinent issue: that Israel is committing genocide by slaughtering and starving Gaza’s population, as the West has aided and abetted that genocide.

With stocks of food completely exhausted by Israel’s blockade, UN humanitarian chief Tom Fletcher told the BBC on May 20 that some 14,000 babies could die in Gaza within 48

hours without immediate aid reaching them.

The longer-term prognosis is bleaker still.

On May 18, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu decided to let in a trickle of aid, releasing five trucks, some containing baby formula, from the thousands of vehicles Israel has held up at entry points for nearly three months. That was less than one percent of the number of trucks experts say must enter daily just to keep deadly starvation at bay.

The next day, as the clamour grew, the number of aid trucks allowed to enter Gaza reportedly climbed to

nearly 100 – or less than a fifth of the bare minimum. None of the aid was reported to have reached the enclave’s population by the time of writing.

Netanyahu was clear to the Israeli public – most of whom appear enthusiastic for the engineered starvation to continue – that he was not doing this out of any humanitarian impulse.

This was purely a public relations exercise to hold western capitals in check, he said. The goal was to ease the demands on these leaders from their own publics to penalise Israel and stop the continuing slaughter of Gaza’s population.

Or as Netanyahu put it: “Our best friends worldwide, the most pro-Israel senators [in the US] ... they tell us they’re providing all the aid, weapons, support and protection in the UN Security Council, but they can’t support images of mass hunger.”

Israel’s finance minister, Bezalel Smotrich, was even clearer: “On our way to destroying Hamas, we are destroying everything that’s left of the [Gaza] Strip.” He also spoke of ‘cleansing’ the enclave.

Western publics have been watching this destruction unfold for the past 19 months – or at least they’ve seen partial snapshots, when the West’s establishment media has bothered to report on the slaughter.

**I**srael has systematically eradicated everything necessary for the survival of Gaza’s people: their homes, hospitals, schools, universities, bakeries, water systems and community kitchens.

Israel has finally implemented what it had been threatening for 20 years to do to the Palestinian people if they refused to be ethnically cleansed from their homeland. It has sent them ‘back to the Stone Age.’

A survey of the world’s leading genocide scholars published last week by the Dutch newspaper *NRC* found that all conclusively agreed Israel is committing genocide in Gaza. Most think the genocide has reached its final stages.

The same week, Yair Golan, leader of Israel’s main centrist party and a former deputy head of the Israeli military, expressed the same sentiments in more graphic form. He accused the government of ‘killing babies as a hobby.’ Predictably, Netanyahu accused Golan of ‘antisemitism’.

## **Israel has finally implemented what it had threatened to do to the Palestinian people for 20 years .... it has sent them ‘back to the Stone Age’**

The joint statement from Starmer, Macron and Carney was far tamer, of course – and was greeted by Netanyahu with a relatively muted response that the three leaders were giving Hamas ‘a huge prize’.

Their statement noted: “The level of human suffering in Gaza is intolerable.” Presumably, until now, they have viewed the hellscape endured by Gaza’s Palestinians for a year and a half as “tolerable.”

David Lammy, Britain’s foreign secretary who in the midst of the genocide was happy to be photographed shaking hands with Netanyahu, opined in parliament this week that Gaza was facing a ‘dark new phase’.

That’s a convenient interpretation for him. In truth, it’s been midnight in Gaza for a very long time.

A senior European diplomatic source involved in the discussions between the three leaders told the BBC that their new tone reflected a “real sense of growing political anger at the humanitarian situation, of a line being crossed, and of this Israeli government appearing to act with impunity.”

This should serve as a reminder that until now, western capitals were fine with all the other lines crossed by Israel, including its destruction of most of Gaza’s homes; its eradication of Gaza’s hospitals and other essential humanitarian infrastructure; its herding of Palestinian civilians into ‘safe’ zones, only to bomb them there; its slaughter and maiming of many tens of thousands of children; and its active

starvation of a population of more than two million.

The three western leaders are now threatening to take ‘further concrete actions’ against Israel, including what they term ‘targeted sanctions.’

If that sounds positive, think again. The European Union and Britain have dithered for decades about whether and how to label goods imported from Israel’s illegal settlements in the occupied West Bank. The existence of these ever-expanding settlements, built on stolen Palestinian territory and blocking the creation of a Palestinian state, is a war crime; no country should be aiding them.

In 2019, the European Court of Justice ruled that it must be made clear to European consumers which products come from Israel and which from the settlements.

In all that time, European officials never considered a ban on products from the settlements, let alone ‘targeted sanctions’ on Israel, even though the illegality of the settlements is unambiguous. In fact, officials have readily smeared those calling for boycotts and sanctions against Israel as ‘Jew haters’ and ‘antisemites.’

**T**he truth is that western leaders and establishment media are playing us for fools once again, just as they have been for the past 19 months.

“Further concrete actions” suggest that there are already concrete actions imposed on Israel. That’s the same Israel that recently finished second in the Eurovision Song Contest. Protesters who call for Israel to be excluded from the competition – as Russia has been for invading Ukraine – are smeared and denounced.

When western leaders can’t even impose a meaningful symbolic pen-



alty on Israel, why should we believe they are capable of taking substantive action against it?

On May 16, it became clearer what the UK meant by ‘concrete actions.’ The Israeli ambassador was called in for what we were told was a dressing down. She must be quaking.

And Britain suspended – that is, delayed – negotiations on a new free trade agreement, a proposed expansion of Britain’s already extensive trading ties with Israel. Those talks can doubtless wait a few months.

Meanwhile, 17 European Union members out of 27 voted to review the legal basis of the EU–Israel Association Agreement – providing Israel with special trading status – though a very unlikely consensus would be needed to actually revoke it.

Such a review to see if Israel is showing ‘respect for human rights and democratic principles’ is simple time-wasting. Investigations last year showed it was committing widespread atrocities and crimes against humanity.

Speaking to the British parliament, Lammy said: “The Netanyahu government’s actions have made this necessary.”

There are plenty of far more serious “concrete actions” that Britain and other western capitals could take, and could have taken many months ago.

A flavour was provided by Britain and the EU on May 20 when they announced sweeping additional sanctions on Russia – not for committing a genocide, but for hesitating over a ceasefire with Ukraine.

Ultimately, the West wants to punish Moscow for refusing to return the territories in Ukraine that it occupies – something western powers have never meaningfully required of Israel, even though Israel has been occupying the Palestinian territories for decades.

The new sanctions on Russia tar-

## **The problem for the West is that Israel now stands stripped of the lamb’s clothing in which it has been adorned by western capitals for decades**

get entities supporting its military efforts and energy exports - on top of existing severe economic sanctions and an oil embargo. Nothing even vaguely comparable is being proposed for Israel.

The UK and Europe could have stopped providing Israel with the weapons to butcher Palestinian children in Gaza. Back in September, Starmer promised to cut arms sales to Israel by around eight percent - but his government actually sent more weapons to arm Israel’s genocide in the three months that followed than the Tories did in the entire period between 2020 and 2023.

Britain could also stop transporting other countries’ weapons and carrying out surveillance flights over Gaza on Israel’s behalf. Flight tracking information showed that on one night in May, the UK sent a military transport plane, which can carry weapons and soldiers, from a Royal Air Force base on Cyprus to Tel Aviv, and then dispatched a spy plane over Gaza to collect intelligence to assist Israel in its slaughter.

**B**ritain could, of course, take the ‘concrete action’ of recognising the state of Palestine, as Ireland and Spain have already done – and it could do so at a moment’s notice.

The UK could impose sanctions on Israeli government ministers. It could declare its readiness to enforce Netanyahu’s arrest for war crimes, in line with the International Criminal Court’s arrest warrant,

if he visits Britain. And it could deny Israel access to sporting events, turning it into a pariah state, as was done to Russia.

It could announce that any Britons returning from military service in Gaza risk arrest and prosecution for war crimes.

And of course, the UK could impose sweeping economic sanctions on Israel, again as was done to Russia.

All of these ‘concrete actions,’ and more, could be easily implemented. The truth is there is no political will to do it. There is simply a desire for better public relations, for putting a better gloss on Britain’s complicity in a genocide that can no longer be hidden.

The problem for the West is that Israel now stands stripped of the lamb’s clothing in which it has been adorned by western capitals for decades.

Israel is all too evidently a predatory wolf. Its brutal, colonial behaviours towards the Palestinian people are fully on show. There is no hiding place.

This is why Netanyahu and western leaders are now engaged in an increasingly difficult tango. The colonial, apartheid, genocidal project of Israel – the West’s militarised client-bully in the oil-rich Middle East – needs to be protected.

Until now, that had involved western leaders like Starmer deflecting criticism of Israel’s crimes, as well as British complicity. It involved endlessly and mindlessly reciting Israel’s ‘right to defend itself,’ and the need to ‘eliminate Hamas.’

But the endgame of Israel’s genocide involves starving two million people to death – or forcing them out of Gaza, whichever comes first. Neither is compatible with the goals western politicians have been selling us.

So the new narrative must accentuate Netanyahu’s personal respon-

sibility for the carnage – as though the genocide is not the logical endpoint of everything Israel has been doing to the Palestinian people for many decades.

Most Israelis are on board, too, with the genocide. The only meaningful voices of dissent are from the families of the Israeli hostages – and then chiefly because of the danger posed to their loved ones by Israel's assault.

**T**he aim of Starmer, Macron and Carney is to craft a new narrative, in which they claim to have only belatedly realised that Netanyahu has 'gone too far' and that he needs to be reined in. They can then gradually up the noise against the Israeli prime minister, lobby Israel to change tack, and, when it resists or demurs, be seen to press Washington for 'concrete action.'

The new narrative, unlike the worn-thin old one, can be spun out for yet more weeks or months – which may be just long enough to get the genocidal ethnic cleansing of Gaza either over the finish line, or near enough as to make no difference.

That is the hope – yes, hope – in western capitals.

Starmer, Macron and Carney's new make-believe narrative has several advantages. It washes Gaza's blood from their hands. They were

## **Even were Netanyahu be forced to step down, he would pass the baton to another supremacist, genocidal monster waiting in the wings**

deceived. They were too charitable. Vital domestic struggles against antisemitism distracted them.

It lays the blame squarely at the feet of one man: Netanyahu.

Without him, a violent, highly militarised, apartheid state of Israel can continue as before, as though the genocide was an unfortunate misstep in Israel's otherwise unblemished record.

New supposed 'terror' threats – from Lebanon, Syria, Yemen and Iran – can be hyped to draw us back into cheerleading narratives about a plucky western outpost of civilisation defending us from barbarians in the East.

The new narrative does not even require that Netanyahu face justice.

As news emerges of the true extent of the atrocities and death toll, a faux-remorseful Netanyahu can placate the West with revived talk of a two-state solution – a solution whose realisation has been avoided for decades and can continue to be avoided for decades more. We will be subjected to yet more years of the Israel-Palestine 'conflict' finally be-

ing about to turn a corner.

Even were a chastened Netanyahu be forced to step down, he would pass the baton to one of the other Jewish supremacist, genocidal monsters waiting in the wings.

After Gaza's destruction, the crushing of Palestinian life in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem will simply have to return to an earlier, slower pace – one that has allowed it to be kept off the western public's radar for 58 years.

Will it really work out like this? Only in the imaginations of western elites. In truth, burying nearly two years of a genocide all too visible to large swaths of western publics will be a far trickier task.

Too many people in Europe and the US have had their eyes opened over the past 19 months. They cannot unsee what has been live-streamed to them, or ignore what it says about their own political and media classes.

Starmer and co will continue vigorously distancing themselves from the genocide in Gaza, but there will be no escape. Whatever they say or do, the trail of blood leads straight back to their door. **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](http://www.jonathancook.net)*

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# *Why the Right hates the US Postal Service*

It's not about USPS's efficiency or viability. It's about equity and collective good, values that are anathema to predatory capitalism

President Donald Trump has tapped a former board member of the private mail delivery corporation FedEx to be the next United States Postmaster General. David Steiner's appointment as head of the public service agency is a signal that Trump is going to take another stab at something he tried and failed to do during his first term: privatise the postal service.

In February 2025, when Trump said the USPS is a 'tremendous loser for this country' and that he's considering merging it with the Department of Commerce, he wasn't echoing a random claim that came up in conversation with his golf caddy. During his first term, Trump appointed a task force to study the postal service, which concluded the current system was "unsustainable," and recommended privatization in line with the president's desire.

Right-wing forces have long had their sights on the postal service – as they have on public education, libraries, Social Security, Medicare, and just about any publicly funded service – and have carried out an effective propaganda campaign against USPS's financial viability to justify gutting it.

For example, the Heritage Foundation – the morally bankrupt

trafficker of market fundamentalism and peddler of the Project 2025 blueprint for democratic destruction – has claimed for years that the nation no longer needs a postal service. In 2024, it asked if Americans still needed their post office. In 2013, it wondered if the postal service had a future, and in 2010, it contended that postal workers were paid too much.

If the Postal Service is truly financially unsustainable, that has been, in part, by design. The federal government expects it to balance its books like any corporation, but, for years, mandated it pre-fund its workers' retirements 75 years into the future – a ludicrous requirement that critics called a "manufactured" crisis. The mandate was finally overturned in 2022. And, when most institutions, including private package delivery companies struggled during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Trump White House refused to bail out USPS as it did its commercial counterparts.

But there's one more aspect to USPS that makes it a prime right-wing target: it is the largest unionised federal workforce in the nation, employing 600,000 people, more than 90 percent of whom are members of various unions. Under the oversight of his billionaire buddy Elon Musk, Trump has fired tens of

thousands of government workers, as part of his overt plan to run the government 'like a business.' Musk and Trump are presumably salivating at the prospect of dismissing unionized postal workers. It's no wonder Don Maston, the president of the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association, warned in late April 2025, "the hounds are at the door."

The American Postal Workers Union (APWU), which represents about 200,000 postal workers, has also issued a serious warning about Trump's intentions. It recently debunked several conservative claims about the agency's financial viability and explained that "[t]his administration intends to break up and sell off the profitable portions of the Postal Service to billionaires and USPS competitors."

It's precisely because most postal workers are unionised that they enjoy decent wages and benefits – as all Americans deserve, and as most non-union blue-collar employees of private companies don't get. Postal workers, who are currently in the midst of negotiating union contracts, have historically fought hard for their rights. The Great Postal Strike of 1970 paved the way for the Postal Reorganization Act, which



President Richard Nixon signed into law later that year.

That bill allowed postal workers the right to union representation and to get raises, and cleaved off the postal service as an independent agency.

It's true that the modern-day transition to electronic bill payments and digitised news media is rendering a large percentage of USPS's delivery services obsolete. But there are crucial things that can't be delivered electronically or are extremely difficult to pick up in person, namely, prescription medications and vote-by-mail ballots for elderly and disabled Americans. FedEx – one of USPS's prime private competitors – is more expensive than USPS for letter-sized and small packages, which is why your neighbourhood postal worker is more likely to deliver meds and ballots to your grandparents on time.

Trump, Musk, the Heritage Foundation, and their ilk routinely claim private corporations are more cost-efficient and deliver greater value than publicly funded services. Precisely the opposite is true. Not only is FedEx operating with a net debt of more than \$14 billion, it doesn't

deem delivery to remote rural areas profitable enough, relying instead on USPS to pick up the slack. It takes hubris to claim up is down and black is white, but hubris is what purveyors of predatory capitalism have in spades.

Much of Congress realises the postal service's worth. The only reason Trump was unable to succeed in his plan to privatise USPS during his first term was bipartisan congressional opposition. This time around, the same dynamic is shaping up, with US House Representatives introducing legislation to protect the postal service in January 2025, and senators taking a similar step in late March.

In recent years, proponents of the USPS have been pushing to ex-

**The right wants to gut the Postal Service precisely because it operates on a model of government serving the collective good**

pand the agency's purview by incorporating public banking as one of its services. The Save the Post Office coalition, formed in the wake of Trump appointing Louis DeJoy as the postmaster general, laid out in great detail how millions of "unbanked" Americans would benefit from a public banking service that the USPS is well-poised to offer.

The right wants to gut the Postal Service precisely because it operates on a model of government serving the collective good, charging the same rate to all Americans, and giving them the same service regardless of location, even though it costs more to deliver mail to isolated rural communities than well-connected urban ones. This is a form of equity – ensuring that those who have the least are subsidised by the rest of us – and we all know how much conservatives hate that word.

It's also the same concept that publicly funded health care is based on: everyone pays the same amount and each person draws according to their need, with younger, healthier Americans subsidising the care of older, sicker people, and no corporate executives sucking out profits like leeches on skin.

The reason we still don't have such a health system is essentially because the leeches don't want to give up their unearned booty. Instead, they craft laughable propaganda about public services shaping the character of Americans to become soft, as though reliance on one another was a moral failing. **CT**

*Sonali Kolhatkar is an award-winning multimedia journalist. She is the founder, host, and executive producer of "Rising Up With Sonali," a weekly television and radio show that airs on Free Speech TV and Pacifica stations. This article was produced by Economy for All, a project of the Independent Media Institute*



# *Welcome to The Empire*

## **Welcome to The Empire**

Where genocide is self-defense and peace rallies are genocide  
Where war criminals are the victims and the hospitals are Hamas  
Where calls for freedom are hateful and ceasefires are antisemitic  
Where civilians get called terrorists and real terrorists get Nobel Peace Prizes  
Where the propaganda is journalism and the journalism is propaganda  
Where the democracy is real and the apartheid is imaginary  
Where the corporations are people and the people are corporate resources

## **Welcome to The Empire**

Whose bombs are humanitarian and whose provocations are invisible  
Whose veterans are heroes and whose victims are forgotten  
Whose wars are always just and whose enemies are always Hitler  
Whose cause is always righteous and whose critics are always Russian  
Whose sufferings are unforgivable and whose crimes are erased from history  
Whose atrocities are always an unfortunate accident and whose enemies kill  
civilians for fun  
Whose disastrous interventions are always innocent mistakes no matter how often  
they happen

## **Welcome to The Empire**

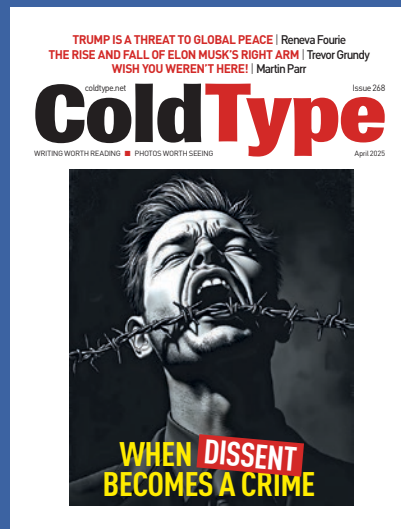
Ever the victim of unprovoked attacks from the people it has been strangling  
Ever the shining city on a hill of human corpses  
Ever the defender of the poor helpless plutocrats of Wall Street  
Ever the saviour of the families incinerated by missiles made by Raytheon  
Ever the protector of natural resources in the soil of foreign nations  
Ever the upholder of the rules-based order of a world with a boot on its throat

## **The Empire loves you with a heart made of dollars and oil**

The Empire watches over you through your smartphone and your computer  
The Empire is your only friend  
The Empire is the only one who will ever love you  
You can't leave  
You can't get rid of The Empire  
If you get rid of The Empire, this world could be taken over by tyrants **CT**

*Caitlin Johnstone is an Australian independent journalist.  
This poem was first published at [www.caitlinjohnstone.com.au](http://www.caitlinjohnstone.com.au)*

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