



PIERCING THE PAPER TIGER

The contents of this publication reflect the opinions of individual authors. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect the positions of National Students for Justice in Palestine or its affiliates; our publication of these views does not constitute an organizational endorsement.

Letter from the Editors

"On the one hand, [the reactionary, backward, and decaying classes] were real tigers; they devoured people, devoured people by the millions and tens of millions... in the end, they changed into paper tigers, dead tigers, and bean-curd tigers."

— Mao Tse Tung, 1958

Dear Readers,

We write this letter amidst the ongoing atrocities committed by Zionist forces against our people across historic Palestine. From the horrific attack on Al-Shifa Hospital, the destruction and desecration of Palestinian homes, and the senseless bombing of displaced families in Rafah's tents, we mourn and honor our martyrs. We also honor Walid Daqqah, the prolific scholar and revolutionary killed inside colonial prison walls through slow and deliberate neglect. In his martyrdom, he paves the way for life through his daughter Milad, "the most beautiful smuggling of [his] memory." True to her namesake, it is during this time of grief that Milad heralds the birth of freedom and embodies the promise of a new future.

How can we maintain our revolutionary commitment without divorcing ourselves from the immense and unavoidable grief of our current reality? The Popular Cradle is our example. We know that the cost of capitulating to the Zionist entity far outweighs the cost of resisting. We

understand that each massacre and each airstrike is, in fact, a punishment for our people's agency—for daring to fight back. Our grief is not simply an experience but a compass, a reminder that the cause is righteous and the fight must continue.

Our people remain firm and resolute in pursuing the liberation of our homeland. The people of Jordan chant for the people of Egypt, who chant for the people of Morocco. To honor them from within the Empire, we must meet this moment with strength, courage, and revolutionary commitment; the struggle for liberation against Zionism and US imperialism requires it. The empire's propaganda is designed to create an illusion of insurmountable power, to break the will of the masses, and to choke our people's revolution. Yet, the Palestinian people and the united resistance have shown that our liberation is inevitable.

The resistance has backed the greatest empire in world history into a corner they cannot escape. Each massacre the Zionist Project commits is a desperate—and futile—attempt to perform a victory. This "victory" has been easily and repeatedly disproven by the defiance and resilience of the Palestinian resistance, their refusal to concede the core demands of the Palestinian people, and the continued support of the masses.

We, National Students for Justice in Palestine, are honored to be your comrades in this struggle. We thank you all for your work, and to our readers, thank you for supporting the Student Movement for Palestinian liberation. We know that the Palestinian people have already won, and together, we will continue to dismantle the Zionist Project and the US Empire from within. Glory to the martyrs.

Until liberation,

Editorial Board - المقاومة المكتوبة
National Students for Justice in Palestine

We Will Die For Comfort

Satya Emerick - University of Vermont

Every American has become an expert at self-soothing as a regulatory mechanism for the cognitive dissonance inherent in engaging in our everyday lives. We need comfort in surplus as our reality becomes more and more jarring; it gives us the grounds to separate ourselves from reality as we indulge in the state of security we perceive as inevitable. Whatever happens abroad must not affect our capacity to seek consumable comfort. The United States, as a colonial empire, has politicized and monopolized comfort to make significant protests undesirable and counterintuitive to the masses. Why would we work towards the liberation of those who have been subordinated to provide us this comfort when it serves us so well?

Discomfort has the potential to turn revolutionary ambition into sacrifice. It upholds our vision of a just world and reminds us what we must give up to achieve it. This is not because achieving justice is an inherently uncomfortable process but rather because providing comfort through consumer goods and increased quality of life provides the oppressive forces with two leverage points to continue its exploitation unchallenged. The consistency of the inflow of our comforts renders us dependent on the systems that provide them. The conditionality of comfort and its ability to be stripped from us renders us supposedly helpless in undermining the imperialist, capitalist structures that destroy entire peoples on our behalf.

The consistent inflow of comfort and our expectation of it continuing is nothing short of miraculous. We see stacks of ripe bananas in the produce aisles of our stocked stores, somehow shielded from the snowy Vermont winters. We have become so accustomed to this perennality

that it fails to cross our minds that the fruits of exploitation may surround us. To reject exploitation worldwide is to willingly give up the consistent inflow of the commodities we depend on to maintain our lifestyles. When consistent inflow occurs in conjunction with alienation from the goods produced and the lands we extract them from, we are put in a position where there are no apparent alternative comforts to the ones provided by our colonial benefactor. We may resent the actions of our empire, but we thank the industries that uphold it for giving us the means to cope.

Comfort’s conditionality means that at any given moment, with any step over the line of Western values, comfort can be stripped from us. We could go to prison or lose our jobs, which we “need” to fund our individual security, even if the world would not be noticeably different with that particular job being left undone.

There would be no incentive to uphold the dominating state entity if there was no expectation of comfort; in this way, comfort is the mechanism through which these systems justify and sustain themselves.

We must recognize that comfort in surplus is not inevitable—we already know this because we see it daily. We come face to face with our homeless neighbors regularly, we see videos of a genocidal onslaught

enacted using our tax dollars on every device, and we endure the continued mass-disablement and mass slaughter of our family and friends due to the unmitigated spread of COVID-19. Seeking comfort fuels the cognitive dissonance required to return to our homes, pay our taxes, dismiss COVID protocols, and ignore the actions of our government. If shipping is disrupted, we bomb the Middle East so our comforts arrive faster and in greater numbers than before. We know well which comforts we must give up to dismantle the systems we oppose, but tangibly rejecting comfort is a more significant hurdle. Becoming familiar with the discomforts resulting from disruptive actions that truly destabilize the oppressor may build the confidence and competence needed for us to escalate our resistance.

The Movement’s Shield: How the Master’s Tools Can Help Our Struggle

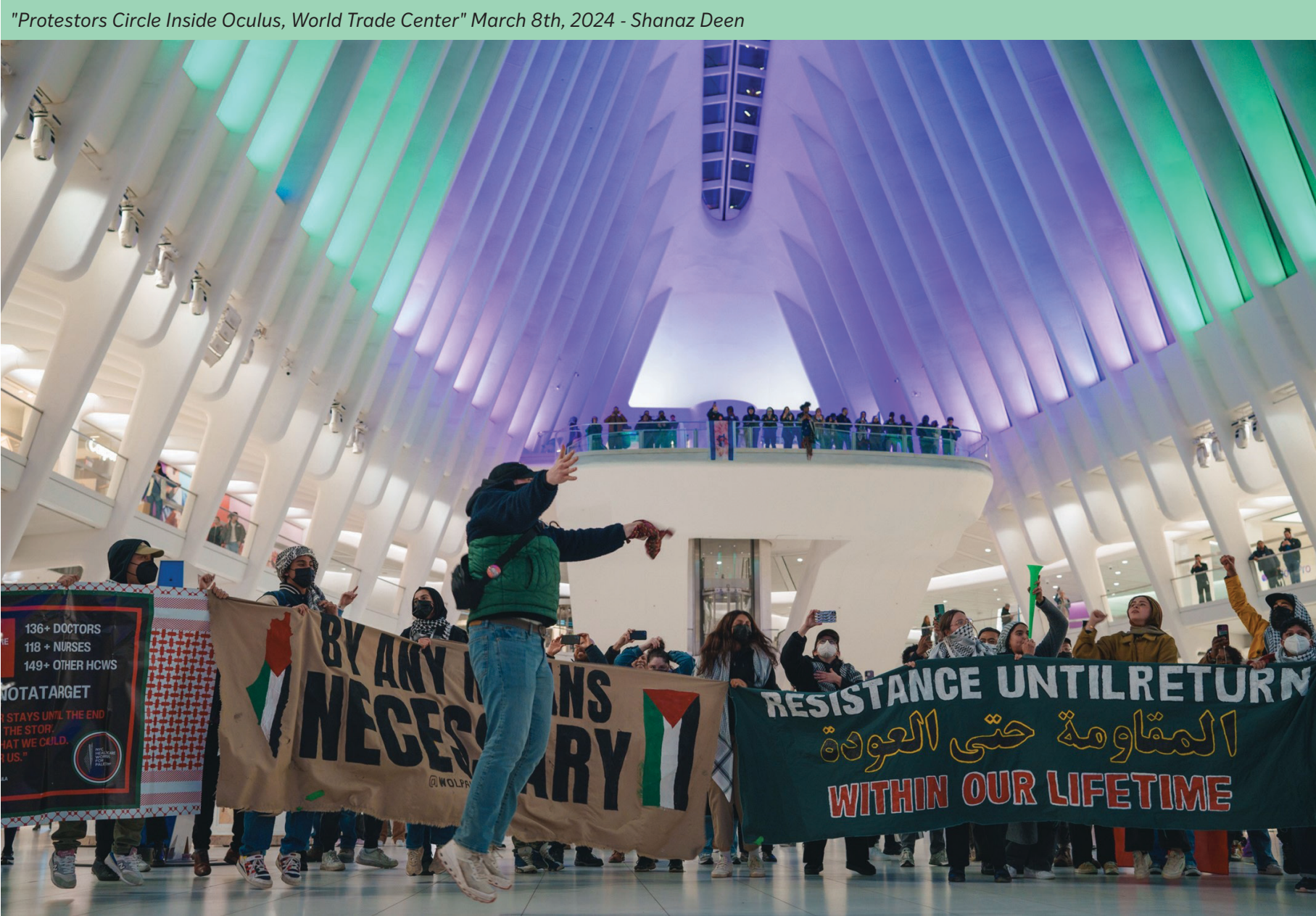
R.I.- National Law Students for a Free Palestine

The relentless genocide in Gaza has mobilized students across the world to hold their universities accountable for both funding and profiting off of Palestinian bloodshed. Even as they grieve, students have faced repression from universities and employers because of their commitment

to Palestinian liberation. The coordinated repression the student movement is facing is immense. Still, something has shifted: the destructive tools that the Zionist project has previously leveraged against students—including suspensions, doxxing, arrests, smear campaigns, and blacklisting—no longer compel capitulation. These institutional tactics have only angered students more, motivating them to challenge and expose the fragility of the US Empire directly.

From organizing jail support around the clock to engaging in full-fledged lawsuits, students have refused to succumb to Zionist pressure. Witnessing the supposed moral standing and legitimacy of the US Empire crumble further as it funds, supports, and even applauds genocide, students understand that American liberalism is a threat to global justice and will go to great lengths to tear the empire apart by any means. This newfound agency and willingness to engage with the state’s tools—primarily the legal system—coupled with an abolitionist approach to campus organizing is necessary for the Student Movement to achieve its goals in pursuing Palestinian liberation.

As the demonization of student organizers and, more specifically, Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim youth has escalated, it has become clear that what once chilled the



movement and successfully disrupted its progress is now adding fuel to an anti-imperialist fire. Being less risk-averse than my parent’s generation, I have felt a similar drive to dismantle the US Empire at any cost. Yet, as an aspiring lawyer, I have also felt conflicted because willingly entering the US legal system feels like reformism. At the same time, I understand that the Student Movement’s power and zealous self-advocacy over the last six months has not been solely done by working outside the system but in conjunction with proactive legal campaigns. It is important to note that Audre Lorde’s famous quote, “for the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house,” continues to say: “They may allow us to temporarily beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change.” While working outside the system is needed to achieve real change, it is essential to encourage students to continue their efforts utilizing the tools of the state as well.

Using the law as a shield for the movement is essential to achieve our immediate goals. Over the past months, in collaboration with Palestine Legal and other politically oriented defensive legal organizations such as the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR), young organizers have sued their universities for discrimination, campaigned around doxxing, submitted Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests to obtain information on investments, and passed BDS resolutions. These critical efforts have worked within the State’s framework to further the student movement’s goals. Some efforts, such as lawsuits against discriminatory practices, are reactive and respond to the coordinated oppressive efforts of academic institutions. Other proactive efforts exist to collect information and reinforce the Student Movement’s offensive campaigns or serve as deterrents to governmental overreach. Whether through reactive or proactive efforts, the youth have shown they are willing to challenge the empire head-on through existing systems to shield and deflect State attention while simultaneously working towards their larger goals of dismantling imperialism from within. To dismiss the importance of these tools would be to reject the movement’s strongest shield altogether, leaving us more exposed and vulnerable. Abolition does not call for vulnerability; we must take stock of all the tools in our toolbox and use them appropriately to dismantle various systems of oppression.

To further the movement, I believe that students and youth organizers must study the roots of anti-terrorism laws and read the history of their weaponization. Two particular reports are essential to fighting back: Anti-Palestinian at the Core by Darryl

PALESTINE SOLIDARITY WORKING GROUP

Wouldn't it be lovely to shop in a store free from occupation and colonialism?

Take action today and join the NO APPETITE FOR APARTHEID campaign!

No Appetite for Apartheid is a national boycott campaign targeting the economic base of companies complicit in Zionist settler-colonialism. We canvass local stores in our communities and ask them to pledge to become Apartheid Free Stores by dropping food products and companies complicit in the occupation of Palestine from their shelves. This campaign has already established **75+ Apartheid Free Stores** across Turtle Island, and we offer trainings, resources and mentorship so you can make your community Apartheid Free too!

Check out the toolkit & get involved: www.pswg.link/NA4AToolkit

It's time to take settler colonialism off our plates:
We declare we have **#NoAppetiteForApartheid!**



Li, who works with Palestine Legal and the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR), and Blocking Faith, Freezing Charity, released by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). The former dissects the origins of Zionist lobbying to create and mold the laws around material support for terrorism (MST) into what they are today. The latter provides a detailed account of the series of events that led to the historic chilling effect within Muslim communities, culminating in the widely publicized imprisonment of several community leaders throughout the early 2000s. These two reports highlight the government’s weaponization of the Palestinian/Arab/Muslim experience; many are becoming more aware of these realities and are rejecting liberal efforts to gloss over the racism and xenophobia deeply embedded in the legal system.

Strategic approaches to countering state repression rely on this knowledge. Younger generations within Arab and Muslim communities, particularly Palestinians, are generally familiar with MST laws; many have observed the destructive effects of these laws when weaponized against elders in their communities, such as the Holy Land Foundation 5 or the Midwest 23. Traumas of court cases, wrongful imprisonments, and lifelong sentences here in the US and within the Zionist entity run deep in our communities. While I firmly believe that we can use our knowledge and trauma to inform and direct our organizing for Palestinian liberation, I also recognize that more momentum and commitment are needed on this front, not simply to shred the paper tiger but to burn it to a crisp.

Youth organizers know well that working within the system in a particular way is unable to achieve much; students and

community members have rejected “Islamophobia task forces” or “interfaith dialogues” this past Ramadan, for example. However, this shift in consciousness is more reactive than proactive; years of depoliticization and normalization preceded it. Learning how to agitate to achieve goals in a principled, strategic, and intentional way is essential. Whether this means finding new ways to share fundraisers for the people of Gaza enduring genocide or politically activating bases by educating them on the nuances of resistance, we are forced to think inside the box and use the law as our primary tools. We must ensure that we don’t limit our capabilities by allowing our capacity and attention to be diverted solely towards countering Islamophobia, reducing the struggle on religious grounds, or centering the repression rather than fighting it—diversions often led by liberal forces. This is where using the State’s tools becomes dangerous. It takes conscious effort to resist diverting our attention or losing sight of our goals when working within oppositional systems; we must be careful not to let the maintenance of our shield compromise our fight.

Like many other law students, I commend undergraduate students and SJP chapters that have continuously exercised legal agency, not just in the last six months but long before. It is bittersweet to see a jail support post for our students or to read a new case filed against a university for blatant anti-Palestinian discrimination. I do not want our movement to experience these hardships, yet I am glad to see the power we have built to turn US laws against the empire. We must use these tools to snip away at the paper tiger, distracting it from the anti-imperialist fire blazing underneath.

What the Paper Tiger Theory Misses

Rohan Shenoy

In 1946, the Chinese Communist Party emerged victorious from the Chinese Civil War with Mao Tse-Tung as chairman, temporarily aligning the People's Republic of China with the Soviet Union and strengthening the Eastern Bloc in the Cold War conflict with the US Empire. Throughout this period of struggle, Mao repeatedly described the US as a "paper tiger," perhaps the most memorable rhetorical propaganda of the period. Yet, in 1972, Mao shook hands with Richard Nixon, signaling a series of major geopolitical shifts and re-aligning China with the United States. The Soviet Union and most of the Eastern Bloc quickly collapsed as the 90s approached. Yugoslavia disintegrated, India opened up to the free market, and the world agreed: the Americans had won the Cold War. In retrospect, calling the US a paper tiger was wishful thinking.

Within the same century, we observed another world-historical process: the Zionist colonization of Palestine and the unflinching support of the Israeli occupation by the United States. At present, the Zionist entity is intent on completing its genocide of Gaza, stamping out all life within the strip. The long-heralded ground invasion of Rafah seems imminent, yet the United States finds itself standing alone in its blind support of Israel's actions. The US empire seems weaker than ever, facing multiple geopolitical conflicts, economic crises, and domestic disputes simultaneously. To accurately describe our current situation, I claim that the United States is not a paper tiger. The US is the most powerful empire of our time that has been pushed into a corner, while its Zionist vassal cares little about maintaining the stability of the US-ruled world order.

My rejection of the paper tiger paradigm is not meant to glorify the US Empire; I simply wish to provide an honest account of our current situation. In the current century alone, the US has inflicted unimaginable violence on the Arab world, exemplified by

the US invasion of Iraq and its support for the Saudi-engineered famine in Yemen. In the context of Palestine, the United States has leveraged its economic control of Europe to defund UNRWA, pushing Gaza further into famine and aiding Israel in its mission of erasing Palestinian refugees' right of return. However, the recent defeats the US has suffered, particularly in Afghanistan, serve as a deterrent to directly entering a broader regional conflict in support of Israel.

The Ansarallah movement in Yemen has also demonstrated the weakness of supposed US hegemony by blockading the flow of global capital. US support for their NATO proxy Ukraine over the past two years has caused a shortage of ammunition to provide to its allies. In the United Nations Security Council, the US stands alone in vetoing resolution after resolution, rejecting calls for international actors to bring an end to the genocide in Gaza. Sitting President Joe Biden has put his reelection in jeopardy with his blind support for the genocide in Gaza. But by and large, the imperial system has withstood these shocks.

Biden can be understood as a primary shock absorber, successfully channeling mass rage at his administration rather than the empire itself, just as his election helped extinguish the rage from the Black Lives Matter (BLM) uprising. We must recognize the current moment for what it is: a crisis of the ruling class. Biden is stuck between his personal and administrative support for Israel and his interest in maintaining global US hegemony.

At home, Biden faces the largest protests America has ever seen. The US-based student movement has made tremendous progress in creating and amplifying dissent within American educational institutions. There are many parallels between our current movement and the opposition to the war on Vietnam, which also saw student anti-imperialist organizing carried out in conjunction with nationwide anti-racist movements. However, a proper analysis of that period also shows that while the spontaneous movement peaked with the Student Strike of 1970, the US did not withdraw from Vietnam until 1973.

The paper tiger paradigm misses the fact that the US Empire can absorb many shocks to its vast system and has survived multiple domestic and international crises over the past few decades alone. The student movement's progress over the past months has been tremendous, demonstrating the resistive potential of broad segments of society as more of the world is becoming politicized by the Palestinian cause. My assessment of the current crisis of the American system is meant to motivate readers to understand the magnitude of the world-historical task in front of us; our work is not complete, and there is a long way to go.





A Message to the Uncivilized

Daaniyah Patel - Action for Palestine

I have always worn discomfort like a second skin. Growing up in the West as a Muslim woman and the daughter of immigrants, I felt out of place in spaces where I should feel at home, where democratic laws and freedom of speech supposedly upheld my sanctity. I was told that my family had come here for a better life, one with freedom and opportunities that were absent where they had come from. I felt indebted to the West for this, yet on top of my discomfort, there was also guilt—that something was wrong with me for not feeling like I belonged here.

Now, the horrors that we are witnessing unfold are a complete contradiction to what I thought was true. Images of people bleeding out in demolished buildings, starved to death, burned alive...all met with complete silence from our political leaders. More and more people are asking the right questions: why does our government care more about claims of antisemitism than the loss of 30,000 lives? Why is it illegal to deny the Holocaust, but no laws prevent the denial of al-Nakba? Why are universities that publicly advocate for inclusivity and

decolonization now suppressing Palestinians and their allies? Why is there no outrage from women in the West while Palestinians are forced to give birth in the worst of conditions?

More and more people are opening their eyes to the truth: what is determined to be “right” and “wrong” in the West is a matter of interest rather than an objective reality. These beliefs are drawn up in boardrooms and taught to us rather than felt. Most importantly, these so-called morals directly hinge on Western imperial interests. This process is why we are seeing thousands being massacred on our screens, and the public still perceives this as a “complex” issue. The very power of the West derives from indoctrination, convincing us that anything it opposes threatens inalienable liberal values; values obtained through and insured by imperialism and colonialism.

A defining characteristic of liberalism is the juxtaposition of the West, a place of limitless economic development, with the rest of the world, a resource-rich free market viable to plunder. Consequently, the West upholds itself as the pinnacle of civilization, entitled to rule over the inferior “uncivilized” nations. Liberalism appeals to the people by proposing freedom as something to be consumed; as individuals, we are given freedom of speech, access to

the free market, the freedom to exercise property rights, and much more in exchange for our loyalty to the liberal system. To support this exchange, a culture of danger is crafted and maintained, both by the government itself and the range of non-governmental institutions that form our society. These bodies propagandize the population about an imaginary threat to the West, whether that be “Islamic terrorists,” foreign diseases, or conspiratorial framing of opposing ideologies. The dehumanization of Black and brown bodies is instrumental to this; by othering groups of people, liberalism convinces its followers that any measures taken against those who are the so-called threat are not only acceptable but necessary.

This justifies the Western powers' use of control, restrictions, and intervention when something challenges their hegemony. It justifies the policing of the global masses to “protect” the West and tame the rebellious tendencies present throughout the rest of the world. We have seen this pattern domestically in people who voice support for Palestine losing their careers, censorship of narratives sympathetic to the Palestinian cause in the media, and the complete silence of the political class amid a genocide. We are by no means living in a liberated, free world. Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness were inscribed on the Declaration



"Nerdeen Kiswani Outside of NYC Mayor Adams' Iftar" March 19, 2024 - Shanaz Deen

of Independence during the enslavement of millions of people. The North American suffragette movement advocated for the right for women to vote unless they were Black. The War on Terror sustained itself with the blood of millions of Arabs and Muslims. The very land that we stand on today contains mass graves of Indigenous men, women, and children who were murdered to clear the way for the establishment of this nation. Every fight for “freedom and liberty” that the West wages only propagates their imperial interests. This is clearer than ever as we watch our government unwaveringly support the genocide of our brothers and sisters in order to protect its imperial outpost in the Arab world.

Every empire contains structures vital to its survival. However, the contradictions we are witnessing in real-time are eating them from the inside, exposing their wretched skeletons to the world, and forcing us to interrogate what purposes they truly serve.

We cannot be free until we purge Western liberalism from our minds, until we begin to love our own and embrace our role in the collective struggle. If valuing human life makes me a terrorist, that is who I am. If it makes me uncivilized, I wear this title as an honor. My discomfort, and yours, is a prize. Every tear that we shed for Gaza means that our hearts are alive, that they have not taken away from us our care for each other, and that, indeed, we do not belong here. As James Baldwin wrote: “The civilized have created the wretched, quite coldly and deliberately, and do not intend to change the status quo; are responsible for their slaughter and enslavement; rain down bombs on defenseless children whenever and wherever they decide that their ‘vital interests’ are menaced, and think nothing of torturing a man to death: these people are not to be taken seriously when they speak of the ‘sanctity’ of human life or the ‘conscience’ of the civilized world.”

Tiny White

Timothy Watts

Tiny white parcels.
Bound with twine.
Drenched with tears.
The horribly bitter fruit of false narratives.
Finger pointers.
Shouting down the truth seekers.
Silencing the truth tellers.
Shouts of antisemite.

You!
The evening news.
You!
The morning paper.
You!
In the board rooms of higher education.
You!
At the altar.
You!
In the halls of congress and great white house of lies.

Bound for heaven I could write.
No!
Such would serve as salve for the souls of those responsible.
Killers of babies for a higher cause.
Blind cause.

Heaven for them was an embrace by Mom.
A smile from Dad.
A sweet treat from Grandmother.
A walk through the garden with Grandfather.
Their heaven was here among us.
Their heaven was love!

You stole that love!
You stole these most precious gifts from them.
From us.
You took their lives.
For a cause greater than them?

Them!
Them!
All of them!
So many of them!
Tiny white parcels.
Bound with twine.
Drenched with tears.

"Kites for Refaat Alareer" January 26, 2024 - Sabrina Shaffer





"Pomona College Calls Riot Police to Arrest 19 Students at Divestment Sit-In." April 5, 2024 - Momoka Schmidt, Claremont Undercurrents

All Hands to the Front: the Anti-Imperialist Response to Imperialist Wars

Elijah Brawner - Emory University

This Article is Dedicated to the Sacrifice and Memory of Aaron Bushnell.

“Or else the terrorists will win...” Growing up during the Bush era, born just before 9/11, my early consciousness was saturated with patriotic phrases like this. The ultimate message was clear: above all else, we must support our troops against their evil insurgency for the sake of our liberty and democracy. Of course, this propaganda quickly crumbles under the weight of a few simple questions. Democracy for whom? Liberty for whom? There was certainly no liberty or democracy for the American working class during the financial crisis of the late 2000s under the Obama administration. Yet the defense of this “liberty and democracy” continued through imperialist incursions across the globe, toppling challengers to US hegemony through both hidden and overt operations, including the brutal murder of Pan-Africanist leader Muammar Gaddafi in Libya. There truly is a war against liberation and democracy being waged on a global scale,

but our enemies are the ruling classes of the imperialist nations. The battle lines are made sharper by every bomb dropped and bullet released against the Global South; our only allies in this historic battle are the working classes of the world. We require frameworks to determine the correct course of action for the anti-imperialist movement in the West to take in support of our comrades across the globe. Ultimately, I aim to clarify our mission as insurgents against systematic oppression, acting within the belly of the beast.

In 1916, V. I. Lenin wrote to the working people of Switzerland, encouraging them to reject the use of a common slogan touted among so-called “Leftists” summarized by the phrase: “Either we recognize our duty to defend the Fatherland, or we leave our country defenseless.” Lenin exposed the true subtext that lurked within this phrase, however, rewriting the slogan as: “Either we allow ourselves to be killed in the interests of the imperialist bourgeoisie, or we systematically prepare the majority of the exploited, and ourselves, for seizure—at the price of less sacrifice—of the banks and expropriation of the bourgeoisie in order to put an end to the high cost of living and war.”¹ Lenin’s suggestion is not merely opposition to war or advocating adherence to a pacifist outlook towards the great imperialist powers. Instead, Lenin reinforces

a simple axiom outlined in an earlier publication: “During a reactionary war, a revolutionary class cannot but desire the defeat of its government.”²

Many protested against Lenin’s stance then, just as many do today, being indoctrinated by the nationalist rhetoric that we should support our people over their people. But this rhetoric intentionally conceals the nature of inter-imperialist war. The struggle is not between our people and their people but rather between the interests of one nation’s ruling class against the other. In such a conflict, the working masses have no material stake in the continuation of bloodshed; the interests of the oppressed classes align with liberation and international solidarity between all people on Earth.

The distinctly liberatory outlook of the communist left on past inter-imperialist wars can help inform our approach to the inter-imperialist conflicts of today. Whether regarding the imperial assault on Yemen, the Philippines, or Palestine, we must rally around the principle of revolutionary defeatism. In other words, we do not seek the victory of our nation’s ruling class over the other but rather the destruction of our own nation’s ruling class through military defeat. We must challenge US military interests abroad by advocating for the

NEW EDITIONS FROM VERSO BOOKS

Mural
Mahmoud Darwish
Translated by John Berger and Rema Hammami

IN SEARCH OF FATIMA
A Palestinian Story
GHADA KARMI

TEN MYTHS ABOUT ISRAEL
ILAN PAPPE

THE HOLOCAUST INDUSTRY
REFLECTIONS ON THE EXPLOITATION OF JEWISH SUFFERING
NORMAN G. FINKELSTEIN

@versobooks.com

VERSO

USA
PALESTINE
MENTAL
HEALTH
NETWORK

USPMHN

CAMPAIGNS AGAINST THE GENOCIDE OF PALESTINIAN WOMEN

Scan to follow our campaign
#StandwithPalestinianWomen

closing of bases, demanding the limitation of troop movements, and vocally siding against our military in armed confrontation. In the context of Palestine, it means recognizing the Israeli “Defense” Forces (IDF) as an imperialist arm and celebrating their defeats at every turn.

As members of the student movement, revolutionary defeatism also requires us to resist the normalization of the Zionist settler-colonial entity on every front. There must be no reference to an “Israel-Hamas War” or the “Israeli-Palestinian Conflict,” as these frameworks serve the interests of the imperial ruling class. Instead, “Israel” must be labeled accurately to reflect its nature: the Zionist settler-colonial entity. The “war” is, in fact, an escalation of the ongoing Nakba. The land between the river and the sea is not “Israeli territory;” it is occupied Palestine. Our chants and phrases must also show our militant solidarity with those confronting imperialism directly: rather than: “From the belly of the beast, Hands off the Middle East,” we must shout: “Yemen, Yemen, make us proud! Turn another ship around!”

Of course, verbal warfare is not enough; our dollars must show our solidarity, too. We must actively boycott companies

and organizations known to contribute directly to imperialist interests and force our institutions to do so on a mass scale. Our social actions must align with our anti-imperialist commitment, challenging and, if need be, ostracising members of our communities who willingly lend their support to imperialist projects abroad. Perhaps most controversially, we must meet every material or military defeat of global US imperialism with joy, as every minor defeat brings us one step closer to the vision of liberation that we strive for both at home and abroad.

Every action we take in solidarity with the global movement against imperialism puts on us a grave condemnation, but we should accept this burden gladly. We accept this burden out of love for our families and comrades in Palestine, the Philippines, Yemen, and every nation exploited in our names. We accept this burden out of our commitment to the unity and liberation of the global masses. To the oppressed peoples of the world, you are condemned to win.

¹ Lenin, V. I. “On the Defense of the Fatherland Issue”. Aug 1, 1929. *Pravda* # 174.

² Lenin, V. I. “The Defeat of One’s Own Government in the Imperialist War”. July 26, 1915. *Sotsial-Demokrat* #43.

System-Loyal Counterinsurgency

Sean Eren - Columbia University

For six months, the Palestinian people have suffered the most catastrophic attack on the nation and the land since the original sin that birthed the Zionist state, the Nakba. For six months, the Palestinian resistance has militarily humiliated the Zionist entity and continued to upset the perceived invincibility of its handler, the US Empire. After three decades of neoliberal defeatism, political platitudes, and lazy polemics post-Oslo, it is once again clear that liberation rests in the hands of the armed struggle alone.

Yet, watching from across the sea, the contributions of the Palestine Solidarity Movement to the ongoing struggle have been...inadequate. While plagued by the infighting, opportunism, liberalism, and chauvinism that are endemic within the American left, the complacency and inefficacy of the Palestine Solidarity Movement are due to a vested interest in the current systems that form the US state apparatus and, therefore, hostility to a revolutionary or “radical” orientation. Three

Where I Came From

Hamza Abuharb - South Texas College of Law

Today was the first day I saw those troops in my city
And I wondered what my people did
They just wanted to live
And now we raise their bodies up to your eyes
As if we have more value dead than we do alive
I keep asking myself, how many more?
I want to ask people, how many more bodies must I show you?

Today was the first day I saw those troops in my city
So I asked, Where are we from?
Azdood, my dad said, the Port City
And it echoed for days on end
Because all I had heard was Gaza
But I guess that’s easier to explain
Than what an ethnic cleansing meant
Easier than explaining why bulldozers are destroying the beach

Gaza has a beach and
I was told when I’m at the beach,
It’s like I’m a different person
That made sense
I thought it was because the sound of the waves crashing
Sounded like home to me
I didn’t feel different just at home

Today was the day I saw those troops in my city
I didn’t want to see it
I thought of my mom telling me about her village, Zarnouqa
And how it’s famous for its oranges
And her face beaming and hopeful that one day she’ll get to taste it
Reminded me why people are fighting for the cause
Cause was when she told me how when soldiers were arresting children
The women of Gaza, scared of no gun, no bullet, and no tank
Would scream and yell and cry at the soldiers
In hopes of distracting the soldier
Or rather shame the soldier into freeing the child
Distracting the soldier with the shame of imprisoning children
Reminded me of what my grandpa said,
That women are like nets
That Palestinian women are like a safety net
For the children
And for the men taking the road of most resistance
To protect the land of the olive leaves

Because when your friends have blue and yellow refugee cards
And yours is green
You start to understand why people are dripped out in black and green
or black and yellow
And why a red triangle ignites you
Because too many of your loved ones were wrapped in white

particular events have illustrated these shortcomings and their root causes; this is not to say that these events or instances have defined the movement’s progress over the past months, but rather that the unique circumstances surrounding them have revealed internal contradictions and power relations that we must analyze to move forward.

On November 4th, 2023, the largest coalition of Palestinian and allied organizations in history converged on the National Mall in Washington, DC. Heralded as the single most important action taken by the movement, the march on Washington aimed to end US support of the genocide through a display of mass power in front of Congress itself. This initiative was, therefore, worthy of the maximum expenditures and resource allocations from every sector of the movement. Yet the largest display of mass dissent since the Iraq war—impossible to ignore and with the power to shake the state itself—was in reality strictly regulated, deradicalized, and depoliticized; it was an act of submission to the state.

The words of Malcolm X ring through history: “What originally was planned to be an angry riptide, one English newspaper aptly described now as ‘the gentle flood.’”¹ We know that mass mobilization does not, in and of itself, carry power. We also know, thanks to our predecessors, that the “democratic” channels that undergird bourgeois democracy do not respond to the will of the masses. After all, “bourgeois democracy [...] co-existed effortlessly with the chattel slavery of tens of millions, genocidal wars and colonial exploitation of indigenous peoples, the subordinate status of all women as an intimate species of patriarchal livestock, feudalistic dictatorial rule over the working class, and a government voted upon by a small minority of white male property-owners. That was the pure bourgeois democracy...”²

The ideological basis of the march on Washington may have rested on a faulty analysis of who controls whom. Is it the proverbial tentacles of the Zionist entity that wrap around the president, congress, and our institutions, or is the Zionist entity nothing more than a sword, well-wielded in the iron grip of the US imperial machine? We’ve long established that it is the latter, so who were we marching to convince of our cause? Certainly not Congress, which lines its pockets with the profits of the war machine. Certainly not Biden, whose personal brand of Zionism is in complete alignment with the genocidal aims of the Knesset. And certainly not the various cabinet officials and politicians, who know that strengthening the Zionist entity is critical to maintaining American regional dominance. Once again, the movement returned home with empty hands.



"Return" Anonymous - Queens College

On November 20th, not long after the march, three young women were arrested after carrying out a direct action campaign against an Elbit Systems production facility in Merrimack, New Hampshire.³ These courageous activists held an affinity to Palestine Action US, the first significant organization explicitly dedicated to materially damaging the global military-industrial complex. Facing decades in prison for their actions, the heaviest charges levied against a US protestor since October 7th, it was clear the Merrimack 4 were being made an example out of. Yet, the response from the movement? Silence. Condemnation. Accusations of adventurism, ultraleftism, cultism, and grooming circulated amongst

the major organizations leading the above-ground antiwar campaign.

This response was unacceptable. As legal, above-ground organizations, we must close ranks in the face of state repression. Comrades must not leave comrades stranded, especially as state actors seek to implement a divide-and-conquer approach to disrupt a movement already prone to fragmentation. Over two months later, several organizations—including National SJP—initiated a “drop the charges” campaign to bring positive media attention to the Merrimack 4 as their first court date approached. Even this should be called out for what it was: a half-hearted effort to

rectify an unforgivable betrayal. No action is too radical when Palestinians are being slaughtered by the thousands before our eyes.

No action is too radical—this sentiment was carried to its limits just two months before the publication of this newsletter. Aaron Bushnell’s self-immolation shocked the world, not in the least because Aaron was 25 years old, white, and an active service member of the US Air Force. Immediately, all sectors of the movement broadcasted their unique narratives and framing of his sacrifice, each with its individual intention and spin. Aaron Bushnell committed a ritual act of resistance, an “ideological offensive against biosovereign power whose legitimacy [depends] on the ‘sanctity’ of human life.”⁴ Within the liberal rules-based world order, violations of the sanctity of life, specifically white life, are egregious transgressions. Aaron knew this. His self-effacing actions have presented the state with a conundrum: a self-destructive act committed with the strength of a purely secular conviction is extremely difficult to smear.

Aaron’s sacrifice has shaken the establishment through the sheer force of his commitment. And yet, sectors of the movement seem content to force Aaron’s actions into a liberal framework through narrative manipulation and cooptation, like shoving a square peg through a round hole. The emotion and outrage surrounding Aaron’s martyrdom should never have been harnessed to pursue demands outside of his own; a conscientious objector campaign, for example. Aaron did not self-immolate solely to shake the foundation of the empire; his sacrifice was also meant to galvanize a rapidly stagnating movement. Aaron’s demands are for us.

While the Palestinian resistance has once again revealed the weaknesses of U.S. hegemony through their heroic armed confrontation with Zionist forces, the Palestine Solidarity Movement has pursued a mass mobilization campaign centered on intentionally heightening the contradictions within the US empire in the service of building popular consciousness and manufacturing dissent for the genocide of Gaza. However, we must acknowledge that the ruling class has not been in crisis. There are many cards left on the table, not the least of which is fascism, the “substitution of one state form of class domination of the bourgeoisie—bourgeois democracy—by another form—open terrorist dictatorship.”⁵ A popular revolution will certainly not occur without disrupting the liberal democratic apparatus; in fact, the lack of a bourgeoisie democratic crisis in the middle of a genocide is a testament to our need for a strategic overhaul.

These three pivotal events have revealed a truth: a significant sector of the

spontaneous movement is not only content with bourgeois democracy but ideologically and materially aligned with its maintenance. Amidst the fears of COINTELPRO, state surveillance, and repression, we often forget to appraise our tactics and strategies and look honestly at the direction our movement has taken. The Palestinian liberation struggle is in direct opposition to US state power, yet when opportunities have presented themselves to challenge state sovereignty and its various systems directly, we shy away. This brings me to an unfortunate conclusion: the state has had no reason to leverage its covert wings and unsavory capabilities; we’ve run a counterinsurgency ourselves.

¹ Little, M., Haley, A., Shabazz, A., Handler, M. S., & Davis, O. (1999). *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*. Ballantine Books. 278-281.
² Sakai, J. (2002). The Shock of Recognition: Looking at Hamerquist’s Fascism & Anti-Fascism. In *Confronting Fascism: Discussion Documents for a Militant Movement*. essay, Kersplebedeb.
³ Another activist was later arrested, bringing the total to 4.
⁴ Bargu, B. (2016). *Starve and immolate: The Politics of Human Weapons*. Columbia University Press. 274.
⁵ George Dimitrov, *Against Fascism and War*, New York: International Publishers, 1986.

Ultra-Leftism and Opportunism Amidst the Anti-Imperialist Struggle

Rosa Mezerich - Marxist Anti-Imperialist Torah Study Organization (MATSO)

We in the West are watching an ongoing genocide in Gaza, a bombing campaign in Southern Lebanon, and regular raids and attacks on the West Bank. Simultaneously, we see heroic acts of international solidarity by Yemeni comrades stopping commerce in the Red Sea, incredible feats of resistance by Palestinian fighters, and essential politico-military unity between the Palestinian factions. In the belly of the beast, massive protests and direct actions have been taken against the enablers of the Zionist garrison. The purpose of this article, however, is to address the ideological shortcomings of currents within the Amerikan Left and anti-imperialist movement, not for criticism for criticism’s sake, but to steel these movements to carry out further struggle.

The first of these ideological shortcomings is a tendency towards “anti-national anti-imperialism,” rooted in ultra-left currents. These currents include Left Communism, Anarchism, and other trends best summarized as “radically liberal.” This anti-national anti-imperialism manifests itself through various lines, but the core position is roughly summarized by either the slogan: “Workers have no nation, Palestinian and Israeli workers rise against your capitalists!” or the more anarchistic: “Neither Israel

nor Palestine, no state solution!”. Both of these slogans are ultra-left because they deny the centrality of the national question to the current stage of class struggle in Palestine. Adherents of this position operate under the delusion that Palestinians and Israeli workers have a common interest in abolishing capitalism—focusing solely on a secondary contradiction while deliberately ignoring settler colonialism and resulting Palestinian national oppression, the primary contradiction.

On the one hand, this line is an extension of the national chauvinism held by European and Euro-Amerikan settler leftists who themselves benefit from settler colonialism and thus have a material interest in denying the progressive nature of anti-colonial movements. On the other hand, the anarchistic slogan of a “no state solution” extends from an ideologically immature belief that the reactionary characteristics of Amerikan nationalism apply to all nationalisms. Rosa Luxemburg made the same error a century ago when advocating against Poland’s national liberation, insisting their national struggle would only aid the bourgeoisie, not the workers. Lenin critiqued this error by comrade Rosa: “In her anxiety not to ‘assist’ the nationalist bourgeoisie of Poland, Rosa Luxemburg rejects the right to secession [...] She is in fact assisting opportunist tolerance of the privileges (and worse than privileges) of the Great Russians.”¹

By avoiding giving rhetorical support to Palestinian nationalism, an action that would supposedly assist only the Palestinian bourgeoisie, ultra-leftists wrongly equate the national aspirations of the Palestinian people with the genocidal and fascist Israeli nationalism—rhetorically aiding the Zionist project while implicitly denying the Palestinian right of national self-determination. It is also a condemnation of armed resistance, demanding that Palestinians ally with the Zionist labor aristocrats instead of resisting the colonization of their lands, ignoring the century-long class collaboration of the Israeli lower classes with the Israeli bourgeoisie to expropriate Palestinian land, declass the Palestinian proletariat, and exclude Palestinian laborers from unionism and representation. This class collaboration was carried out on a nationalist basis, creating a National Socialism with Hebraic Characteristics. If the Israeli “working class” wants to ally with the Palestinian working class, a first step might be to desegregate their trade unions.

As mentioned previously, verbal ultra-leftists deny the progressive nature of the revolutionary nationalist struggle; one reason for this mistake may be ignorance of the role of democratic struggle in a socialist revolution. To assert that a nation with a weakened proletariat, lacking democratic

rights under sustained oppression by colonialism and apartheid, can go straight into the development of socialism is ahistorical. Preceding struggles have shown that the socialist revolution must emerge from a democratic revolution, as was the case for the People's Republic of China and the Soviet Union. Historically, the resolution of the primary contradiction—in these two cases, feudalism—has enabled the proletariat to work through the newly established bourgeois democracy to carry forward a socialist revolution.

Lenin says of this: "The socialist revolution is not a single act, it is not one battle on one front, but a whole epoch of acute class conflicts, a long series of battles on all fronts, i.e., on all questions of economics and politics, battles that can only end in the expropriation of the bourgeoisie. It would be a radical mistake to think that the struggle for democracy was capable of diverting the proletariat from the socialist revolution."² How can the Palestinian proletariat and peasantry seize power and develop socialism when their land, factories, homes, and farms are destroyed and stolen by the Zionist settler state? The Palestinian Communists understand the only path forward requires the destruction of the settler state and the disenfranchisement of its compradors in a national democratic revolution, empowering all working and patriotic forces to continue into socialist transformation.

For all its imperfections, Hamas is a progressive organization pursuing a program of national emancipation and democratic reconstruction. They collaborate with other nationalist forces committed to armed struggle, including the Communist Left, with whom they coordinate militarily and politically in their shared struggle for national liberation. Hamas' program proclaims ethnic and religious civic equality and seeks to create a unified democratic Palestine that respects the rights of its citizens. This vision is both liberal and nationalist and, if achieved, would lay a favorable foundation for a subsequent socialist revolution. To ignore this material reality and insist that the Palestinian masses commit to "working class unity" with the Israeli labor aristocracy is ridiculous. In fact, it is a right-wing line, no matter how much left-wing language one uses to justify it.

In addition to the opportunist press and sections of social media parroting misguided and ill-informed ideas about the Palestinian struggle, many well-intentioned individuals in the US have embraced a political line that flies in the face of the demands of the Palestinian people. This sometimes stems from a lack of experience or limited theoretical and historical knowledge, but more often is a reaction to gross opportunism present in the movement. They have taken their opposition to the liberal co-optation of the demand for a "ceasefire"



Like what you've read so far? Feel inspired? Submit your work to *The Written Resistance* today!

in the direction of ultra-leftism by ignoring its origin in the strategic demands of the Palestinian resistance, positioning the demand itself as an opportunist line. Refusal to engage with the demands of the Palestinian popular resistance—a unilateral ceasefire in Gaza and the implementation of Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) campaigns against the Zionist state—is a severe misstep. The ultra-leftist line adopts BDS as a personal creed rather than a political objective, ignoring the necessity of applying pressure on various levels of government and private institutions to abandon their financial and political commitments to the Zionist project.

However, I will not describe the heroic, individual acts of sabotage against the firms and centers of power aiding the Zionist occupation as ultra-leftism. While these actions must be connected to a mass movement of support and carefully planned and considered, they raise the question of direct action to the movement regardless of their tangible effectiveness. Disagreement with direct action based on the fear of legal consequences is ridiculous, for revolutionaries understand that the revolution will also be illegal; all disagreements with those pursuing direct action are purely tactical. As Lenin said in "Left-Wing" Communism: An Infantile Disorder: "Tactics must be based on a sober and strictly objective appraisal of all the class forces in a particular state (and of the states that surround it, and of all states the world over) as well as of the experience of revolutionary movements. It is easy to show one's 'revolutionary' temper merely by hurling abuse at parliamentary opportunism or merely by repudiating participation in parliaments; its very ease, however, cannot turn this into a solution to a very difficult problem."³

Just because we oppose bourgeois democracy and choose to fight for its replacement does not mean we can disregard the terrain of legal struggle or engagement with the current bourgeois democratic bodies. While individual action calling for a ceasefire and boycotting select corporations is essential, to isolate Israel politically, militarily, and economically effectively, our governments must boycott, divest, and sanction Israel and implement a unilateral ceasefire—the masses must seek to control the financial and political capital held by the state. We are not revolutionary because of our chosen slogans or rhetoric but because of our ability to advance the struggle and achieve specific revolutionary

goals. To embrace ultra-leftism is to abandon the reality of revolution, to take a dogmatic and individualist view of struggle that centers personal feelings and attitudes at the expense of creating tangible change. This moment requires a commitment to the tactics that are not only recommended by the Palestinian resistance but have also been proven successful in the case of South African Apartheid.

The revolutionary anti-imperialist left must actively avoid opportunism of both the left and right variety and work to pursue a principled, revolutionary, and scientific struggle for liberation. Victory to the Palestinian resistance; long live the global revolution and proletarian internationalism!

¹ Lenin, V. I. "Practicality" in the National Question. In *The Right of Nations to Self-Determination*. University Press of the Pacific. 2004.

² Lenin, V. I. (1916, October). The socialist revolution and the right of nations to self-determination. *Sbornik Sotsial-Demokrata*, (No. 1).

³ Lenin, V. I. (1964). "Left-Wing" Communism: an Infantile Disorder. In *Lenin: Collected Works* (Vol. 31). essay, Progress Publishers.



IN LOVING MEMORY OF WALID DAQQA

We honor the revolutionary writer and educator Walid Daqqa, who was killed on April 7th, 2024 during his 38th year in prison as a result of severe medical neglect. Daqqa lives on through his wife and daughter, Milad, who was famously conceived through the revolutionary act of sperm smuggling. After being diagnosed with myelofibrosis in 2021, Daqqa was refused medical care for years, a common tactic used against all Palestinians within the Zionist prison system. His life and legacy exemplifies our *sumud*; Walid Daqqa will live on through all of us.

A Balcony Not Facing War

Anees Ghanima

After a while, the sun rises
over a gentle city
Something will pass slowly
Perhaps it is the glow of those who have just departed
to distant cities
And as I gaze
from my window overlooking paths and pebbles
clutching my teeth
which gnash like sand from a wounded hand
the edge of
a final poem,
I will see, with my eyes
through broken glass, the procession of things
as they
merge together
until they slip from my mouth, bound by barricades
under the sun
the last of words.

*

The daisies' flowers have withered
in their bathtub
they've gathered their petals of sadness and ended.
But as for me, there will come a day
when the petals of my sadness will gather me
I'll spill a little of yesterday's blood
in this void's basin
Tomorrow, I'll relax on a balcony not facing war
I'll smoke a cigarette I've always dreamt of
And from the comfort of my hands
a sad melody
will forever fall.

*

When I die,
A small rose will grow in the wall of my room
It will be black
And scentless
And when a lonely woman reaches out
Her wounded hand
And plucks the rose
To write poems on her dead lover's tombstone
The scent
Of her pain
Will awaken me.

شرفة لا تطل على حرب

أنيس غنيمه

بعد قليل تشرق الشمس
على مدينة طيبة
شيء ما سيمضي ببطء
ربما هو وهج الذين رحلوا للتو
الى مدن بعيدة
وفيما أنظر
من نافذتي المطلة على دروب وحصى
ممسكاً بأسناني
التي تتهايل كرمل من يد مجروحة، طرف
قصيدة أخيرة
سوف أرى، بعيني اللتين
من زجاج مكسور، مواكب الأشياء
وهي
تذهب الى التماهي
حتى
تفلت من فمي المكبل بالمتاريس
تحت الشمس
آخر الكلمات.

*

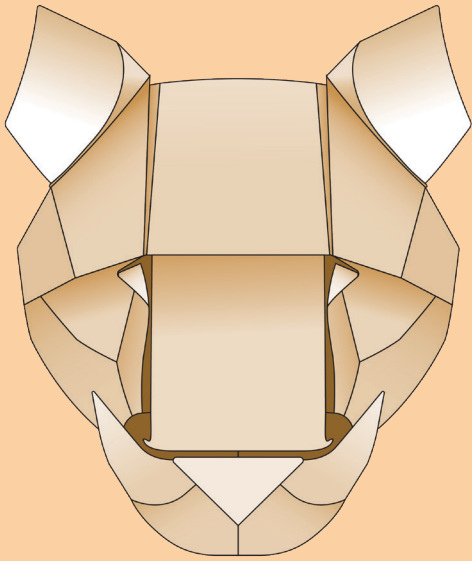
أزهار الأقحوان ذُبلت
في حوض استجمامها
حزمت بتلات حزنها وانتهت.
أما أنا فسوف يحدث يوماً
أن تحزمني بتلات حزني
سأسكب القليل من دم الأمس
في حوض هذا الخواء
غداً سارتاح في شرفة لا تطل على حرب
أدخن سيجارة لطالما حلمت بها
ومن راحة يدي
ستسقط
موسيقى حزينة
للأبد.

*

عندما سأموت
وردة صغيرة ستنبت في جدار غرفتي
ستكون سوداء
وبلا رائحة
وحين تمد امرأة وحيدة
يدها المفجوعة
وتقطف الوردة
لتكتب قصائد على شاهد حبيبها الميت
رائحة
المها
ستوقظني.

About Anees Ghanima

We're honored to publish an original poem by Anees Ghanima, translated into English beside the original Arabic. Anees is an accomplished Palestinian poet and web programmer who was born in Gaza City in 1992 and is currently displaced from his home due to the Zionist invasion and bombardment of Gaza. He received first place in the Young Writer of the Year Award in the Field of Poetry from the A. M. Qattan Foundation in 2017, and continues to publish poetry and prose in various Palestinian literary magazines. Most recently, Anees published a collection of prose, "Hell Is Empty and All the Devils Are in Gaza and Other Reflections," with Mizna, a critical platform for contemporary Arab film, literature, and art.



MAKE YOUR OWN PAPER TIGER!

Cut Out This Page, And Follow the Instructions Below:



*THIS PAGE FACES UP

