



Free Palestine

by Amar Ahmad

Even when Israel is not bombing Gaza, the siege of Gaza continues, as does the occupation of Palestine. Both the occupation of Palestinian territories, and the siege of Gaza, are being done with the complete support of the United States. The U.S. sponsors the Israeli occupation with over \$10 million per day of U.S. taxpayers' money, which is almost \$4 billion per year. When Israel engages in its periodic bombardment of Gaza (which they grossly euphemize as "mowing the lawn"), the U.S. replenishes Israeli armaments.

Israel's most recent bombardment of Gaza sparked significant protests around the world. In May, thousands showed up in Boston to protest the U.S.-Israeli occupation of Palestine. Organizers of the Boston rallies called on us to support Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) of Israel. BDS is a form of nonviolent protest, focused on placing economic pressure on Israel and further stigmatizing Israel from the global community. The call for BDS originated from Palestinian civil society, and it is modeled after the movement targeting South African Apartheid in the 1980s.

On May 25th, the Cambridge City Council discussed a policy order to prevent the city from contracting with Hewlett Packard and other companies who profit from, or are complicit in, the occupation. Hundreds of concerned people gave hours of public testimony urging the city of Cambridge to end its complicity in Israeli apartheid. Ultimately, city councilors passed a watered-down version of the policy order.

In response to the recent violence, Senator Markey released a statement blaming "both sides," and saying that "Israel has the right to defend itself." While Democrats (and Republicans) trip over themselves to make that claim, they never say that Palestinians have a right to self-defense. Markey's statement,

essentially endorsing the Israeli slaughter of Palestinians, is a typical statement of Democratic politicians in the States.

In response, much of Markey's base — including former campaign staff and volunteers, "Markey-verse" members, and endorsing organizations including Mass. Peace Action — released a statement expressing "disappointment and hurt" over Markey's anti-Palestinian position. Being publicly called out by Markey's own former campaign staff and supporters generated significant press

coverage and forced Markey to modify his statement. However, in his response, Markey ignores the four specific calls that activists made. His second statement is somewhat better than his first, but still unacceptable.

Both the Cambridge City Council resolution and the pushback against Markey's statements have not succeeded in shifting policy towards Israeli occupation and apartheid. However, both of these developments, along with massive pro-Palestine protests, demonstrate a significant shift in at least some parts of the U.S. public.

Massachusetts Peace Action, along with protesting and Congressional lobbying, is also engaging in public

education efforts for our members and the broader public. In May, we held a public education event with Palestine expert Rania Khalek and hosted a film screening for the documentary *Gaza Fights for Freedom*. After the film we had a discussion with journalist and filmmaker Abby Martin. In June, we hosted events with Peter Bienart and Palestinian refugee and U.S. political prisoner Sami Al-Arian. We have upcoming events in June with Phil Weiss (co-founder of *Mondoweiss*) and Palestinian citizens of Israel (who live under apartheid). In July, we will be screening the film *Killing Gaza* and hosting filmmakers Max Blumenthal and Dan Cohen for a discussion.



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Poor People's Campaign Pushes for a Third Reconstruction

by Jackie King

The Massachusetts Poor People's Campaign and their allies converged on the offices of US Rep. Stephen Lynch in Boston and Richard Neal in Springfield June 7 for press conferences to demand that they – and *all* the state's representatives – co-sponsor a Congressional Resolution for a Third Reconstruction to end poverty and low wages in this country.

They scored an immediate victory when staff for Rep. Lynch came out of his Seaport office building to say he would sign on. The Campaign also received word that Rep. Ayanna Pressley had endorsed the resolution, joining Rep. Jim McGovern, who was one of its original 30 co-sponsors.

“We are grateful to those representatives who have embraced this vision for pathways out of poverty,” Rev. Dr. Savina Martin, Tri-Chair of the Mass. Poor People's Campaign, told a reporter on the scene in Boston. “But this is just the beginning. We expect them to press their colleagues in Massachusetts and in Congress to embrace it as well, and to support concrete legislation that will make this vision a reality.”

The Massachusetts news conferences were two of 50 similar actions held by the Poor People's Campaign simultaneously in 30 states. Those most directly impacted by poverty led off with their powerful stories, followed by strong statements from faith leaders, housing and healthcare advocates, labor organizers, peace activists, and other community leaders. Massachusetts Peace Action supported and publicized the event.

In Springfield, Judy Schiavone, a member of the Mass. PPC, testified about the hardships she endured as she became homeless and was forced to live on a friend's couch for months. “I didn't know I was homeless at the time, but I realized later that I was,” she said. “I had to deal with anxiety, depression, discouragement.” High rents and outrageous fees by landlord services and property management companies make it very hard to find an affordable apartment in Western Massachusetts, she noted, adding, “Housing should not be a commodity available as a privilege only to those who can afford it!”

At the same time in Boston, Eileen Milien, a Haitian immigrant student who is director of We Got Us which promotes vaccinations in the community, said many Black and brown people have contracted Covid during the pandemic not because of unsafe behavior, but because they were placed in unsafe conditions. “How



A crowd gathers outside Rep. Stephen's Lynch's office in the Boston Seaport in support of a Third Reconstruction. Photo by Jackie King

can people wash their hands when they can't afford water? How can they physically distance when they don't have a place to shelter?” she asked. “So many people were evicted and displaced during these troublesome times, through no fault of their own...This Third Reconstruction is essential for changing the systems that are killing people.”

The Third Reconstruction Resolution was introduced into Congress on May 24th by Rep. Pramila Jayapal, chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, and Rep. Barbara Lee, chair of the House Speaker's Taskforce on Poverty and Opportunity. In the same way that the Green New Deal provides a blueprint for tackling the climate crisis, the Resolution offers a broad outline for addressing the five interlocking injustices targeted by the Poor People's Campaign: poverty, systemic racism, ecological devastation, militarism at home and abroad, and the distorted moral narrative of white nationalism.

It will need to be fleshed out and implemented with practical legislation. Some bills are already in the pipeline, Rep. Lee has said; others will be introduced in the coming months, and some elements can be brought about by Presidential executive order. But none of it will happen without sustained grassroots pressure, which the Poor People's Campaign is determined to provide.

The June 7 press conferences were part of a build-up to June 21, when a National Poor People's and Low-Wage Workers' Assembly will be held on-line and at a socially distanced rally in Raleigh, North Carolina. The Poor People's Campaign then launches a one-year campaign toward an in-person Moral March on Washington and Poor People's and Low-Wage Workers' Assembly on June 18, 2022 in Washington, D.C.

When you lift from the bottom, everybody rises!



Biden's Self-Defeating Confrontation with China



Chinese and U.S. flags flutter near The Bund, before U.S. trade delegation meet their Chinese counterparts for talks in Shanghai, China July 30, 2019. REUTERS/Aly Song

by Joseph Gerson

With its commitment to being “tough” with China and to “shape the contours of China’s rise”, the Biden Administration’s provocative military operations and rhetoric are increasing the danger that an unintended incident, accident or miscalculation could trigger an armed conflict and escalate beyond control. Confrontational approaches to China have defined Biden administration policies and actions.

The Biden Administration has:

- Accelerated the pace of provocative naval and Air Force “freedom of navigation” operations near Chinese islet military bases in contested South China Sea waters.
- Dispatched warships to the Taiwan Strait and broadcast “rock-solid” commitments to Taiwan and Japanese control over the Senkaku Islands also claimed by China.
- Poisoned the rhetorical well in the run-up to the Anchorage quasi-summit meeting and as cover for its massive Innovation and Competition Act.
- Reinforced its regional alliances to surround and contain China with Blinken and Austin making their first trips abroad to Japan and South Korea and hosting the first meeting of the QUAD, the incipient U.S., Japan, Australia, and India NATO-like alliance.
- Invited Taiwan’s functional ambassador to the inauguration, testing the limits of the One China policy, the foundation for U.S.-China relations since 1979.

Biden’s China/Indo-Pacific policies are extensions of the Obama pivot and Trump’s National Security Guidance. In 2011, Hillary Clinton

announced the pivot, writing that the region hosts “many of the key engines of the global economy” and emerging powers, has half the world’s population, is the site of the Pacific and Indian Ocean shipping lanes, and home to “key” U.S. allies.

The Pentagon then committed to deploy 60% of U.S. naval and air power to the region. Obama reinforced U.S. Asia-Pacific alliance systems and deepened engagements with ASEAN and APEC. He also led negotiations for the Transpacific Partnership (TPP) trade agreement to dictate the 21st century’s economic rules of the road.

Trump weakened the U.S. Asia-Pacific alliances but containing China was his administration’s foreign policy priority. The 2018 National Defense Strategy defined China as the United States’ “peer competitor”, necessitating reduction of U.S. foreign military and foreign policy commitments to Europe and the greater Middle East. Trump imposed massive tariffs on Chinese goods and deflected attention from his staggering pandemic failures with racist “Kungflu” rhetoric. In the months before his failed coup d’état, Trump committed to \$3 billion in arms sales and sent high-level officials to Taipei to chip away at the one-China policy, tying the U.S. more deeply to the island nation that Beijing perceives as a renegade province.

On June 8, the Senate passed the U.S. Innovation and Competition Act, which lays out a framework for a new cold war with China. Building bi-partisanship and national unity on the basis of fear and hatred of China, the bill seeks to jumpstart U.S. technology industries which are being rapidly eclipsed by China’s progress. Declaring that Taiwan is “vital” to U.S. security, providing military aid to U.S. allies located near China, and undermining the possibility of step-by-step denuclearization of peace negotiations with North Korea, the bill lays out a program of permanent hostility, at a time when the U.S. and China should be collaborating to create a global green economy. It is now an urgent priority to take out the hawkish language in the House.

The U.S. has a pattern of presidents beginning their terms with excessively confrontational policies toward China, followed by recognizing the dangers and failures of those policies. We, the Chinese, and others face urgent existential threats to survival: nuclear weapons, climate change and pandemics. The new Cold War creates major obstacles to ensuring human survival. As Bertrand Russell and Albert Einstein advised, we should be remembering our humanity and forgetting the rest.

This is an abridged version of the full text. To read the full version go to: masspeaceaction.org/bidens-cold-war-with-china



Ending the War in Yemen Means Overcoming Political Cowardice

by Brian Garvey

The struggle to end US support for the war in Yemen has run into another obstacle. This time it's partisanship. But it isn't Republican opposition blocking Joe Biden's promise to end US participation in the world's worst humanitarian catastrophe. It's the president's own hesitancy to keep his word paired with the unwillingness of Democrats in Congress to cross a president from their own party.

On February 4th, in his first major foreign policy address as president, Biden said, "we are ending all American support for offensive operations in the war in Yemen, including relevant arms sales." In the next breath, however, the president said, "We're going to continue to support and help Saudi Arabia defend its sovereignty and its territorial integrity and its people."

Seeking clarification, a congressional letter led by Representatives Peter DeFazio, Debbie Dingell, and Ro Khanna (and signed by 41 of their colleagues) was sent to the president on February 25th, asking key questions. What's the definition of offensive operations? What is the difference between offensive and defensive weapons? What about the blockade? They requested an answer to their questions by March 25th, the 6th anniversary of the war in Yemen. They received a non-answer, two months late.

Another opportunity for answers came at a hearing on April 21st where Special Envoy to Yemen Tim Lenderking, Biden's diplomatic point man on the crisis, took questions from Congress. Asked by Rep. Ted Lieu whether the United States was still supporting Saudi Arabia's offensive operations in Yemen, Lenderking couldn't — or wouldn't — answer. He said, "I'm not totally in that information loop, congressman, so I can't really speak to that."

Letters led by Elizabeth Warren in the Senate and Ted Deutch in the House have encouraged the Biden's administration to use their leverage to get Saudi Arabia to stop its blockade on Yemen. But US Special Envoy Lenderking has denied the existence of a blockade to CNN investigative reporter Nima Elbagir, a claim she called, "just not true." In fact, the Friends Committee on National Legislation reports that "No U.S. official in the new administration had explicitly publicly acknowledged the six-year-old, Saudi-imposed blockade—much less criticized it."

President Biden was clear on the campaign trail: He said that if he were elected president, he would make Saudi Arabia, "pay the price, and make them in fact the pariah that they are." Despite the promise of his



WFP Provides Food Assistance To A Record 7 Million People In Yemen In August 2017. UN World Food Programme

February 4th announcement, he simply hasn't done it. And Congress has not held him to his word.

During Trump's tenure, bipartisan majorities in the House and Senate voted to end US participation in the Saudi war on Yemen. Every Democratic member of Congress voted for a War Powers Resolution stating that US participation in the war is not authorized and must be ended. President Trump vetoed that legislation.

On January 25th of this year, Representative Ro Khanna spoke at the World Says No to War in Yemen International Day of Action, which Mass Peace Action helped to organize. He said, "Senator Sanders and I will be advocating and introducing again a War Powers Resolution to stop any logistical support, any intelligence support, and military support, to the Saudis in their campaign in Yemen. That has to take place." What is he waiting for?

The US continues to provide logistical support that keeps the Saudi Royal Air Force in the sky, bombing Yemen. The Special Envoy to Yemen can't answer basic questions about whether the US still supports Saudi Arabia in Yemen. He denies the existence of the blockade, a tactic that employs starvation as a weapon.

Members of congress who championed ending the war in Yemen through privileged War Powers Resolutions, like Congressman Ro Khanna, Senators Bernie Sanders, Mike Lee, and Chris Murphy, aren't being consistent now that Biden is President. We must pressure them and all progressives in DC. It's difficult to criticize your allies, but thousands of lives are at stake. The UN World Food Programme says that "around 400,000 children may die in Yemen this year without urgent intervention. That is roughly one child every 75 seconds." They can't wait any longer. Neither can we.



U.S. Occupation and Siege Impose Desperation on Syrians

Massachusetts Peace Action Statement

The US continues to occupy Syrian territory, stealing its oil resources and blockading grain imports. This has had the effect of starving and freezing Syrians as well as impeding initiatives to unite and rebuild the country. We note that US, Turkish, and Israeli bombing of Syria — for whatever alleged purpose — is contrary to international law and constitutes war crimes. We declare that flooding arms and funding to Syrian opposition militias, especially to extremist sectarian groups, by the US, Turkey, Israel, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf monarchies, were and remain unlawful and opposed to the interests of the Syrian people. Such intervention has contributed to prolonging the war and extending the suffering of all Syrians.

In addition, the draconian Caesar sanctions imposed by former President Trump and the U.S. Congress (both Republicans and Democrats) are designed to cut off the country from desperately needed imports and the ability to trade. This crippling siege is intended to bring down the Syrian government by “making the economy scream”. But what it is really doing is leading to hunger and deprivation that is crushing much of the population. It is also, by intention, preventing the rebuilding of Syria after so many years of war.

Massachusetts Peace Action calls on all progressives and peace activists to support the following demands:

- Ending U.S. military intervention and occupation of Syrian territory.
- Ending all U.S. support to the armed opposition.
- Ending the cruel U.S.-imposed sanctions on Syria so the country can re-build after a devastating civil war.

Most Americans would be surprised and even shocked to learn of the major role our governments have played in the destruction of Syria. Far from doing “too little” in Syria as some liberals and pro-interventionists argue, the US bears a major responsibility for the tragedy in Syria. It funneled billions in arms to Syrian rebels and winked at its allies like Turkey and Saudi Arabia who intervened even more massively, including their facilitating the entry of violent religious extremists across the borders of Syria from Turkey and Jordan. And the U.S. is not the only outside country occupying or bombing Syria today. Israel regularly bombs the country and Turkey’s

army brutally occupies a swath of Northern Syria — even though Syria has not threatened Israel, the U.S., or Turkey. Conversely, Iranian and Russian forces are involved at the request of the Syrian government.

Today Syrians are deeply divided in their opinions. Any group outside Syria claiming to speak for “the Syrian People” is dissembling. The Syrian government has the support, whether active or passive, of a significant number of Syrians — including Christians, Druze, Alawites, and liberal Sunni urbanites. The jihadist groups now gathered in Idlib province command the allegiance of a minority of Syrians.

The complexity of the Syrian internationalized civil society is obscured by the massive and effective propaganda campaign that gives voice only to representatives of the opposition and portrays U.S. intervention as “humanitarian”. The reality is that the voices of millions living in Syria are erased to justify continued U.S. intervention, occupation of Syrian territory, and economic strangulation of the country.

Our hope is for the realization of the Syrian people’s aspirations for a more democratic and transparent government that promotes a multi-ethnic and secular social order. But, as we learned in Iraq after 2003 and Libya after 2011, the expectation that “freedom” and “democracy” can be attained through outside military intervention and support for armed rebels is entirely delusional. We demand an end to US military involvement in Syria, recognition of Syria’s territorial sovereignty, respect for international law, and assistance in the country’s reconstruction.

This is an abridged version of the full text. To read the full version go to: masspeaceaction.org/us-occupation-imposes-syrian-desperation



U.S. forces patrol Syrian oil fields. AP Photo/Baderkhan Ahmad



The War at Home

by Rosemary Kean

In the wake of the televised murder trial of Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin, convicted April 20th for the murder of George Floyd on Memorial Day last year, a window of opportunity has opened for many white Americans to learn about policing and trauma in the lives of Black people in the US. We have seen the video of the viciously casual murder of George Floyd by police officer Chauvin more than once.

The news as we approached the verdict in the Chauvin trial was overtaken by reports of additional police murders of young people and children of color, including that of Daunte Wright in Brooklyn Center, just outside of Minneapolis. The media spotlight continues to shine on police violence and on how people of color are treated by the police and the US legal system. Here in Massachusetts, Brock Satter, co-founder of Mass Action Against Police Brutality, is quoted in the April 29 edition of the Bay State Banner saying that “you can pick any day on the calendar and somebody’s anniversary or birthday is being commemorated by a family that lost their loved one to police in this country.”

For those of us in the peace movement, a continuum of violence has come into focus that includes people serving in the military, civilians subjected to the brutality of war, and the experience of Black families in the US facing relentless police brutality. These families know that, at any time, a traffic stop can end in the death of a loved one. The traditional narrative about trauma resulting from the violence of war has centered on our military, including drone operators, with the escalating toll of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and suicide within the military community. But the traumatic effects of racism as enacted by our policing and legal system, the “war at home”, has been for the most part out of the awareness of segregated white communities. White supremacist ideology as expressed in TV “copaganda” dramas has played its role in creating the obliviousness of white communities to the harm caused by policing in communities of color. Violent police behavior rarely occurs in wealthier, largely white towns and neighborhoods. Suburban and wealthier communities have, in effect, been wearing blinders on this issue so that many people living in them are initially mystified or completely opposed to the idea of “defunding the police”, i.e. divesting tax monies



Federal agents disperse a crowd during protests against police violence in Portland, Oregon July 20. Noah Berger / AP.

from police department budgets and investing this money into housing, emergency mental health care, and many other currently underfunded and sorely needed services.

The conviction of Chauvin, the first conviction of a police officer for the murder of a Black person, is at best a tentative first step in a long journey. If this trial outcome is to have lasting significance, it will be because the multiracial, global uprising and movement for racial justice sparked by George Floyd's murder continues to organize. Mass. Peace Action (MAPA) has an important role to play in this work. We work against disastrous wars and weapons manufacturing and sales, we protest and advocate

against the murderous effects of sanctions, and we demand major reductions in Pentagon spending. Now, we also see the brutality and violence of U.S. policing for what it is- the war at home.

We are at a point of opportunity right now. We in MAPA, along with other peace and justice organizations, including the Black Alliance for Peace, are advocating to demilitarize the police and are educating ourselves about the Movement for Black Lives' demand that we divest from police departments and invest in actual safety for all communities. MAPA is allied with the Massachusetts Poor People's Campaign that sees clearly the interlocking nature of war, poverty, racism, and the degradation of the environment and provides inspired leadership in addressing these issues. MAPA is also collaborating with the National Council, a Boston-based organization, working to end the incarceration of women and a leader of a campaign to stop the construction of a new, \$50 million, women's prison in Massachusetts.

In 2021 as we continue to grapple with how to achieve a substantial “racial reckoning” and to move toward the ideal of equal justice under the law, let us resolve that the peace movement will find a deeper solidarity with oppressed people here in the US and around the world. May our unwavering commitment to this solidarity help to fuel a global movement of burgeoning antiracist and antiwar power — power enough to end wars abroad and end the violence of our country's belligerent foreign policy, and also to end the violence of racism and the war at home.

Guilty, Guilty, Guilty

What's Next for Challenging Policing?



Protesters march Thursday, June 4, 2020, in San Diego after the death of George Floyd. AP Photo/ Gregory Bull

by Claire Gosselin

How Did We Get Here?

Derek Chauvin's conviction on April 20th on all 3 counts in the murder of George Perry Floyd in Minneapolis last May is seen by many as a step toward accountability, challenging a doctrine set forth by the US Supreme Court in 1989: "judges and juries should not second-guess officers' split-second decisions, no matter how unnecessary a killing may appear in hindsight" (*New York Times*, 4/26/2021). However, reform advocates were cautioned that Chauvin's case was unusual and not likely to set a precedent for other police murders. The prosecution itself held that it is not policing that was on trial — it was the murder by this police officer.

Roots of Enhanced Police Power

As the Chauvin verdict and other murders recede from the headlines, we cannot let them lapse from our consciousness. The history of police power and significant immunity from oversight is entangled in the deeply racist nature of the capitalist system in the US — a system with roots in early slave patrols and later expansion in tactics that protect the few and reinforce inequality through social control focused on specific populations of color, poverty, and working-class origins.

In an eye-opening *New York Times* piece in December 2020, reporters revealed that in the midst of the Civil Rights struggle of the 1960s, police across the nation organized to increase their power and minimize discipline for their abuses. For example, when Detroit, along with over 150 other American cities, experienced unrest in the summer of 1967, the Detroit Police Officers Association (DPOA) negotiated the first comprehensive police contract in the nation. Appealing to white voters afraid of crime, the union contract promised to restore order — provided that the union members gained protections in return. Further limits to accountability, strengthening of immunity, and procedures for shielding misconduct were added to police contracts over the years.

Re-imagining Public Safety

This moment poses both a challenge and an opportunity for the movements to Defund the Police, invest in community needs, and re-imagine public safety. Key organizations and activists include Black Lives Matter and related BIPOC groups, carceral system abolitionist organizations, and other initiatives seeking radical reform. Legislation at the federal level includes the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act, which passed the House on March 3. Provisions of the bill include bans on chokeholds, carotid holds, and no-knock warrants at the federal level. The bill also seeks to weaken qualified immunity and make it easier to prosecute police. However, the bill stalled in the Senate, and despite urging by President Biden to pass something by the anniversary of George Floyd's murder, Congress has yet to pass anything of the sort.

In Massachusetts, activists are advocating for a range of changes, from Defund the Police/ Invest in Community Needs to specific limits on use of force. On April 28, by a vote of 7 to 5, the Boston City Council placed limits on police behavior during protests, "restricting police in their use of chemical agents such as tear gas and projectiles like sponge rounds to control crowds" (*Boston Globe*, 4/29/2021). The upcoming mayoral race will provide an opening to debate policing and will likely expose the fissures along race and class lines.

Other potentially positive changes are on the horizon. Rachel Rollins, Suffolk County District Attorney has put forth radical proposals to treat misdemeanors in a more constructive manner. However, if chosen to be the next US Attorney from Massachusetts (she is in the running), her replacement will be selected by Governor Baker, a move that could disrupt her initiatives for criminal justice reform in Suffolk County.

Councilor Ricardo Arroyo, another important advocate for changes in policing in Boston, shared his reflections on policing with the *Boston Globe* (4/26/2021): "When I think about reimagining policing, I think about public safety. It's redefining what public safety means, that's the goal. More police doesn't do that... Policing doesn't solve the ills that cause crimes."



A World Parliament for Global Denuclearization

**Opinion by Alec Neilly & Andreas Hemmetter,
Young World Federalists**

What would the global stance on nuclear weapons be if all the people of the world could express their views on the subject directly? What if we had a supranational body that democratically represented all world citizens, rather than the interests of a few powerful governments? That democratic body is a world parliamentary assembly.

A child born today could have worse-than-even odds of experiencing a nuclear war, claims Stanford professor Martin Hellman. According to the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, nuclear weapons continue to pose just as existential a threat to the world as ever, especially to younger generations as we go forward. It is odd then, the apathetic way in which most of the public thinks about nuclear weapons. Such analyses should give us pause to reevaluate our priorities in global politics. In recent years, global issues such as the Covid-19 pandemic and climate crisis have grabbed public concern. However, nuclear weapons have merely become something that we have learned to live with.

One cannot deny that progress has been made in limiting the scope of nuclear arsenals since the height of the Cold War. However, these developments have faltered in recent years and decades. The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) and Open Skies treaties have been terminated, increasing tensions between Russia and the US, non-proliferation has failed to prevent nations such as Israel, India, and North Korea from attaining their own nuclear weapons, and established nuclear nations have invested heavily into the modernization of their nuclear arsenals.

And what does the public think about that? According to a survey by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), 84% of millennials say that the use of nuclear weapons is never acceptable. A similar survey by the Simons Foundation found that across the board, more than 70% of adults think that nuclear weapons make the world a more dangerous place. Even in nuclear states, citizens are predominantly against nukes: 63% of Russians and 73% of Americans favor eliminating all nuclear weapons. Clearly, if people were given a say, nuclear weapons would all but disappear from our world.

We see that the vast majority of the world's population, at home and abroad, opposes nukes. And yet, little tangible effort is made towards ensuring a world free from the danger they pose. National governments act on the paradigm of national security to retain existing nuclear weapons or even to obtain new ones. Our governments have maneuvered themselves into a prisoner's dilemma in which the most rational action is to build more nukes and hold tightly to the ones they have. We cannot continue in this fashion. We need a new approach.

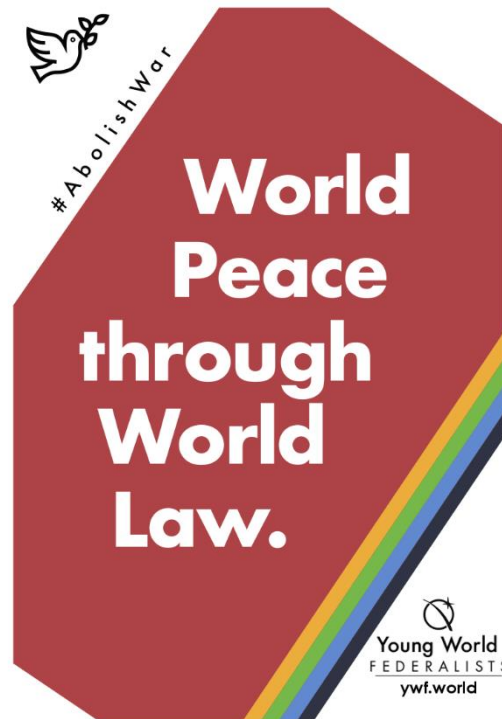
We need to give the people of the world a say in global affairs.

In 1949, the United States House of Representatives passed a house resolution supporting the development of the UN into a World Federation. Among the signers of the resolution was Massachusetts Congressman John F. Kennedy. Peace Action itself was even founded by world federalists, led by Norman Cousins, when the organization began in 1957 as the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy. However, the movement slowly faded as the Cold War intensified, and by the time the US was the world's sole superpower, Americans were in no rush to share that power with a global institution. The Young World Federalists aim to bring back that vision of global unity.

A world parliament would empower everyone in the world to have a say in matters of global importance and a role in solving global problems. The weight of a

binding world parliament resolution, legitimized by 8 billion people, would be a powerful voice against the destructive national interests of any individual government, and for the common interest of every human being. Instead of the will of the most powerful few governments dictating world politics in order to maintain their own power, global issues such as nuclear weapons, climate change, and global pandemics would be addressed by a body representative of the will of all people.

Surely, establishing a world parliament would require great effort and would meet significant resistance from the status quo of national governments insisting on their own selfish interests, but it is a necessary step on the journey towards a more peaceful world. In the words of Robert Schuman, founding father of the European Union, "World peace cannot be safeguarded without the making of creative efforts proportionate to the dangers which threaten it."



Progressive Gatekeeping Harms Peace

Opinion by Amar Ahmad



John Shipton receives the Sacco & Vanzetti award on behalf of his son, Julian Assange. Community Church of Boston

When I was interning for a self-described progressive member of Congress (Katherine Clark), I saw firsthand the tremendous amount of pressure exerted by Democratic leadership (including Clark) on more left-wing members of Congress, such as Ayanna Pressley.

It is only human nature to want to be accepted by peers and colleagues. The degree to which the more progressive members are marginalized by their own party leadership, would be disturbing to most people. While these progressives campaigned in a way that inspired many of us and gave us hope for a better Congress, the new progressive Squad members have been unwilling to challenge Democratic leadership.

If left alone, Squad members will continue to drift rightward until they are ideologically indistinguishable from the Democratic members whom they replaced. That is why it is so important for us to continue to challenge progressive members of Congress to counteract the corrosive, corrupting, establishment culture of D.C.

In the past three years there have been times where progressive members held leverage over party leadership. Rather than use this leverage to push for progressive policies, Squad members capitulated to party leadership time and time again.

Far too often, not only do we not challenge our progressive legislators, we shame others for doing so. We fear that challenging progressive lawmakers will alienate them. We fear that it will help Republicans.

One example is the #ForceTheVote campaign. When there was real, grassroots momentum (perhaps over a million people) encouraging progressive members of Congress to withhold voting for Nancy Pelosi as Speaker of the House, unless she supported a floor vote for Medicare-for-all, it was the single-payer organizers at the forefront of denouncing this strategy. As Healthcare-NOW organizer, Stephanie Nakajima notes, the strategy was not supported by “a single organization or union fighting for Medicare for All.” This fact is not an

indictment of the strategy, rather it is a failure of the organizations and unions. For organizations and people who constantly fetishize “movement-building,” when genuine grassroots movements form, these organizations do a tremendous job of squashing them through their progressive gatekeeping.

Nakajima goes on to write that backers of #ForceTheVote adopted a “faulty analysis – without significant consultation of organizing groups” and “instead of funneling people into the organizations that are base-building locally, #ForceTheVote became a purity test that distracted from the less-glamorous work of organizing and perhaps even undermined it.” The self-aggrandizing piece is basically telling the ignorant masses to fall in line behind the all-knowing “grassroots organizers.” With such a condescending and paternalistic attitude, is it any surprise why so many Americans have disdain for progressives?

With Democrats controlling the White House, and Democratic majorities in the House and Senate, progressive priorities such as Medicare-for-all, ending wars, and more, can never pass -- or even get voted on -- without the support of Democratic Party leadership. Every congressperson knows this, and thus all the co-sponsorships, progressive rhetoric, letters to Biden, tweets, and media appearances are all theater. When Republicans retake the House or Senate or Presidency, Democrats and progressives will pivot to once again blaming the Republicans for why we can't pass progressive legislation, even though Democrats don't pass progressive legislation when they have power.

Progressive members of Congress, when they had leverage, did not extract any meaningful concessions. Progressive organizations, unions, and organizers did not bother asking their allies in Congress to use their leverage when it counted. Instead, they focused their energy wagging their fingers at (the much larger group of) people who supported #ForceTheVote. The so-called grassroots organizers jumped through mental gymnastics in their attempts to explain why progressives should vote for Pelosi -- even without significant policy concessions.

Enacting progressive, legislative change will require the so-called Squad and their allies to utilize their leverage, publicly, against Democratic Party leadership at key moments. Squad members got elected through our votes, donations, door-knocking, phone-banking and more. And we pay taxes. It is our moral obligation to push our elected officials to challenge Democratic leadership when party leadership is enacting policies of militarism and corporatism. In order for that to happen effectively, progressive organizations and organizers must stop their self-righteous gatekeeping.



Biden's Climate Plan: Unprecedented Yet Insufficient



President Joe Biden, with Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken and Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry, kicks off the virtual Leaders Summit on Climate on April 22, 2021. White House photo by Adam Schultz/ Public Domain

by **Maryellen Kurkulos**

This point cannot be overemphasized: The earth's climate is changing irreversibly, while the window of opportunity to keep global heating to less than 1.5°C is closing fast. Droughts, floods, wildfires and storms are ever more frequent and more intense. Atmospheric CO² levels just reached a record-breaking 420 ppm, higher than they've been in 3.6 million years when the sea level was 78 feet higher than it is today. The oceans have swollen to such an extent from melting glaciers that the earth has literally been rocked off its axis. The edict from the IPCC's 2018 special report "Global Warming of 1.5°C" makes it clear: In order to avoid the worst impacts of global heating, humanity must enact wide-ranging, transformative programs at a speed, and on a scale, that has "no documented historic precedent".

President Biden's pledge at the global climate summit and his \$1.9 Trillion American Jobs and Families Plan purport to offer the kind of transformational programs we need. According to this agenda, U.S. greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions would be cut by 50-52% below 2005 levels by 2030 – within less than 10 years. It proposes to overhaul the long neglected civilian infrastructure, achieve 100% carbon pollution-free electricity by 2035, and, according to Biden's executive order issued last January, establish a Civilian Climate Corps offering "well-paying union jobs."

But critics like Kate Aronoff, Eco-Equity director Tom Athanasiou and Sunrise Political Director Evan Weber have rightly pointed out the shortcomings of these plans. As Weber puts it, while these plans are "historic and unprecedented", they are "nowhere near enough." The science indicates that cutting U.S. emissions by 52% will not prevent the earth from overheating as that target still falls short by 5-10%.

Furthermore, methane is scarcely mentioned in the plan despite it being a more potent GHG than carbon dioxide. The UN Global Methane Assessment released last month warns that urgent steps must be taken: unless methane emissions cease – requiring a complete ban on hydraulic fracturing – our efforts to mitigate the effects of the climate crisis will inevitably fail.

In fact, even supporters of President Biden have pointed out that his proposals fall far short both in scope and amount of funding relative to what is needed for overhauling U.S. infrastructure. Others criticize the heavy reliance on private sector participation as well as focusing on 'net-zero' goals that tout often impractical or untested technological solutions like carbon capture that can foster complacency.

Fortunately, where the Biden plans fall short, progressives in Congress are stepping up with initiatives like the ambitious \$10 Trillion Transform, Heal, and Renew by Investing in a Vibrant Economy (THRIVE) agenda sponsored by Sen. Markey and Rep. Dingell, the Sanders/Ocasio-Cortez Green New Deal for Public Housing, and even a Civilian Climate Corps for Jobs and Justice Act from Rep. Ocasio-Cortez and Sen. Markey that centers around Black, Brown, Asian, and Indigenous communities that have disproportionately suffered from environmental injustice and Covid-19.

As we consider these and other innovative ideas for addressing the climate emergency, we should not overlook the simple fact that the most obvious way to swiftly cut GHG emissions is by interrupting them at the point of production: The world should simply leave the fossil fuels in the ground starting immediately. For decades, these wildly profitable fossil fuel companies hid the nefarious truth about their extractive industries while receiving hundreds of billions in subsidies annually (worldwide fossil fuel subsidies are estimated to total over \$5 Trillion).

In calling for a 'new realism' at the April climate summit, President Biden's climate envoy and Former Secretary of State John Kerry recommended that these fossil fuel subsidies end. He also noted that the UN estimates the amount of funding needed for decarbonizing the global economy (aka the annual global climate finance gap) is \$1 Trillion, while even during the pandemic, global military expenditures hit nearly \$2 Trillion a year. According to Brandon Wu, director of policy and campaigns at Action Aid USA, since the United States is the world's wealthiest country and largest historical carbon polluter, its "fair share" contribution to the global climate effort for the entire 2021-2030 decade should be \$800 Billion, approximately the amount of the FY 2021 U.S. military budget.

Food for thought.