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Conflicts, Wars, and Justice in Conflicts[1]

Abstract

To frame the topic of conflicts, particularly through the historical lens of nation-states, it is essential to consider the historical context of key state formations in the West. From the nineteenth century onward, these formations maintained the power and sovereignty that underpinned Western dominance. Although the traditional Westphalian concept, derived from the Peace of Westphalia (1648), established the notion of nation-states as the primary actors in international law—each with supreme authority over its territory—sovereignty has often been separated from physical territory in practice. Power and authority frequently extend beyond, or fall short of, a state's geographic boundaries, indicating that sovereignty has increasingly been decoupled from territoriality. In colonial contexts, multiple legal systems and authorities coexisted and often conflicted, creating a fluid and contested landscape of governance. This allowed colonial powers to maneuver between different legal frameworks to maintain control. In these colonies, the suspension of normal legal rules—what is often referred to as a "state of exception"—was more commonly the rule rather than the exception.

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Konflikti, vojne in pravičnost v konfliktih

Ključne besede
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Povzetek
Za oblikovanje teme konfliktov, zlasti skozi zgodovinsko prizmo nacionalnih držav, je nujno upoštevati zgodovinski kontekst ključnih državnih tvorb na Zahodu. Od 19. stoletja naprej so te tvorbe ohranjale oblast in suverenost, ki sta podpirali zahodno prevlado. Čeprav je tradicionalni vestfalski koncept, ki izhaja iz Vestfalskega miru (1648), uveljavil pojem nacionalnih držav kot primarnih akterjev mednarodnega prava – vsaka z vrhovno oblastjo nad svojim ozemljem –, je bila suverenost v praksi pogosto ločena od fizičnega ozemlja. Moč in oblast pogosto presegata ali ne dosegata geografskih meja države, kar kaže na to, da je suverenost vedno bolj ločena od teritorialnosti. V kolonialnem kontekstu je soobstajalo več pravnih sistemov in oblasti, ki so si pogosto nasprotovali, kar je ustvarilo fluidno in konfliktno pokrajino upravljanja. To je kolonialnim silam omogočilo manevriranje med različnimi pravnimi okviri za ohranitev nadzora. V teh kolonijah je bil suspenz običajnih pravnih pravil – kar se pogosto imenuje »izjemno stanje« – prej pravilo kot izjema.

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I. Justice in Conflicts No Longer Functions Effectively, Not Even as Rhetoric

The concept of conflict plays an important role in contemporary philosophy, especially in relation to geopolitics and history. Contemporary political philosophy is concerned with conflict in the context of justice, power, governance, and sovereignty. The war in Ukraine was a significant and unresolved conflict in twenty-first century Europe until the Israel/Gaza war exploded, dramatically changing the global political order and neoliberal capitalist rhetoric regarding twentieth century international treaties and United Nations resolutions and declarations after World War Two. It is a complex issue involving geopolitics, territorial disputes, and competing national interests. History is ideological and has affected the distribution of power and capital, especially after World War Two.

Presently, humanitarianism, war, pacifism, and military technologies are part of the thesis that justice in conflicts no longer functions effectively, not even as rhetoric. I examine the conflicts by first analyzing the war in Ukraine, which escalated due to Russian aggression in 2022, followed by Ukraine's counter-offensive on Russian territory in August 2024. The second conflict is the ongoing war in Gaza, triggered by Hamas' incursion (alongside other Islamist militias) into Israel on October 7, 2023, during which an estimated 1,139 Israelis and other nationals were killed. Hostages were also taken to Gaza (251 Israelis and other nationals were taken captive in Gaza to force Israel to release Palestinian prisoners). The violence today has spread also to the West Bank and Lebanon, thus this conflict is no longer localized but part of a broader, structural geopolitical struggle.

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has published and credited third-party estimates of the number of those killed and injured in the war. Those include estimates that more than 34,900 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli forces in Gaza. There are no signs that the killings will end shortly, and certainly not what kind of Europe or Middle East we can expect in the aftermath. As of August 2024, the situation remains dire. Retaliation by Israel has resulted in the deaths of 40,000 Palestinians, with specific incidents such as the shelling of a school and religious center on August 10, 2024, killing 100 people. Not all hostages have been released, and in the West Bank, daily attacks on and killings of Palestinians continue.

In Ukraine, the conflict has intensified, with expanded attacks on Russian soil and retaliatory strikes by Putin, leading to increased destruction. The European Union fully supports the intensification of the war, while the United States plays a crucial role in both war zones. American financial support, weapons, and military personnel, and despite credible claims and warnings of genocidal intent on the part of Israel, have increased in the past year.

In this context, it is important to point out a recent interview with Božo Kovačević, conducted by Zlatko Crnčec for *Novi list* supplement *Pogledi* on the Middle East, with the title "Israel Wants to Drag the US into a War against Iran."[2] Božo Kovačević was from 1977 to 1988 the Director of the Croatian Helsinki Committee;

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[2]   Božo Kovačević, "Izrael želi uvući SAD u rat protiv Irana" [Israel Wants to Drag the US into a War against Iran], interview by Zlatko Crnčec, *Pogledi*, August 17, 2024.

from 2000 to 2003 he was a minister for environmental protection and spatial planning and a member of the Ministerial Cabinet. From 2003 to 2008 he was the Ambassador of Croatia to the Russian Federation. I will summarize the main points of this interview as it brings very interesting point-of-view to the table.[3]

Benjamin Netanyahu, the longest-serving Israeli head of government, is accused of using his position to avoid a trial over his alleged corruption while hoping for Trump's return to power; Crnčec puts these points at the center of the interview and asks Kovačević about the killing of Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran. Kovačević explains that

> Netanyahu has a clear plan. He wants to provoke a military conflict between Iran and the USA. The assassination of the Hamas leader in Tehran and Israel's intransigence in Gaza should be seen in this context. As so often before, Israel does not even listen to the USA, its most important ally and sponsor. Despite the warnings, a deliberate destruction of the civilian population and the entire infrastructure is taking place.

Kovačević explains that Israel is "trying to drag Iran into a direct conflict in order to force the US into this war." He is highly critical of these maneuvers and explains that Netanyahu

> has subordinated the fate of the state he leads to his personal interests. His predecessors in the office of Prime Minister were committed to the realization of Israel's national interests. Netanyahu only remains in power with the help of extremely small political parties in order to avoid prosecution for corruption. And such a politician, who is obviously counting on the re-election of Donald Trump to the position of President of the United States, has managed to create a situation in which important regional players, such as Iran, and important global players, such as the US, are taking the steps Netanyahu wants.

Crnčec asks: "Israel is practically completely dependent on American help—militarily, financially, intelligence-wise and in every other respect. How is it pos-

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[3] This and all the following quotes from the Kovačević–Crnčec interview were translated by me.

sible that the US cannot exert enough pressure to bring it under basic control?" Kovačević highlights three important points.

Summarizing them, the first point Kovačević makes is that the Israeli lobby is very influential in the US elections, especially among Protestant fundamentalists who believe that Israel must be protected at all costs. It is not about recognizing Israel's right to exist, but about eradicating the Gaza Strip. US support for Israel seems to see no solution other than military victory, regardless of the cost in human lives. During the Cold War, US dependence on Middle Eastern oil was central, but today the US is energy independent. Israel, however, remains an important player for US strategic interests, especially with regard to the threat from China. It is even possible to identify three US priorities: The US is primarily focused on China and the Pacific, with Taiwan as a potential flashpoint. The Middle East is secondary, followed by Ukraine, where the US is seeking a strategic victory over Russia but not a war with Russia and is using Ukraine as a means to this end.

Crnčec asks how it is possible that all three factors, which in the worst case threaten Israel's existence, cannot stop Netanyahu's policy, which is strongly opposed by Israelis themselves, and adds that in the last instance this opens up the possibility of a major war in the Middle East. Kovačević clarifies:

> These three factors together form a concept of American security, according to which the abandonment of one of these components would, firstly, jeopardize American credibility and, secondly, American national interests. The United States has deployed its armed forces in various countries in the region. Similarly, the US does not want to allow Iran to gain further strength. There is also the possibility of expanding Russian influence in Arab countries, where Russia influence is weak today but existed in Soviet times. And the USA also wants to use its presence to make it difficult for China to gain a foothold. It is a mixture of these reasons that, when properly framed within a national security narrative, compel American elites to continue to support Israel, regardless of the policies of the current Israeli government. Netanyahu is playing a very dangerous and risky game. Not only does he want the US to go to war against Iran in the hope that this could lead to a change in the Iranian regime, but he also wants to use the backdrop of this major war to solve the Palestinian issue.

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Crnčec also asks:

> How accurate is the argument from Israel that the Palestinians are responsible for everything because the Israeli army withdrew from the Gaza Strip almost two decades ago and let the Palestinians govern themselves? Instead of turning Gaza into a Singapore of the Middle East, they have merely turned it into a platform for attacks on Israel. How much responsibility lies with the Palestinians?

Kovačević is very precise:

> It is undeniable that since Hamas took control of the Gaza Strip, the area has become a kind of training ground for war against Israel. But you have to look at things as a whole to perhaps get a sense of the solution. The key is that in 1948, when the concept of two states was supposed to be implemented, the Arab world did not accept this solution. And several Arab countries attacked Israel. After that, the Arab countries tried several times to attack Israel, and most of these attempts failed. The central issue is that of the refugees, of whom there are around 1.6 million today. These are the descendants of the Palestinians who were expelled from their land by the Israelis in 1948. Several generations of these refugees were born in these refugee camps. This problem has not yet been solved. And the solution to this problem required the joint commitment of the Arab states and Israel. The Arab states, together with other countries, should have ensured that they settled somewhere as normal citizens, and Israel's task would have been to pay financial compensation for the confiscated property. Neither side has shown any willingness to solve this problem. And it is these refugee camps that are the main recruiting pool for terrorists attacking Israel. On the other hand, Israel, together with its Western allies, constantly claims that Israel has the right to defend itself. And this is indisputable. Defense is not only the right but also the duty of every state. But no state has the right to be an occupier. And Israel reserves this right for itself. Unfortunately, it is supported in this by the collective West. And that is one of the reasons for the persistence of the problem in this region.

Although the traditional Westphalian concept of the nation-state, referring to the Peace of Westphalia (1648), established nation-states as the main subjects of international law, each with supreme authority over its territory, in reality, sovereignty has often been separated from physical territory. This means that power and authority can extend beyond or fall short of a state's geographic limits,

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revealing that sovereignty has increasingly been separated from territoriality.[4] In colonial contexts, multiple legal systems and authorities coexisted and often conflicted, which created a fluid and contested landscape of governance. This allowed colonial powers to maneuver between different legal frameworks to maintain control. In colonies, the suspension of normal legal rules (a "state of exception")[5] was often the norm rather than an exception. This enabled colonial powers to continue to govern Indigenous people more effectively, although indirectly.

II. The End of World War Two Marked a Significant Change in Global Geopolitics

The end of World War Two marked a significant change in global geopolitics. The atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki changed power dynamics, and the devastation wrought by Nazi Germany highlighted the impermanence of Western imperial dominance. The Cold War was a period marked by ideological conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union. Understanding the ideological underpinnings of this era is essential to analyzing its impact on Europe. It is important to examine how these historical processes shaped world politics and influenced the orientation of nations during the Cold War and how they reflect on the current state of affairs in Europe. We know that the Cold War cannot be viewed without the concepts of political philosophy and ideology. History is considered ideological and primarily influences the extent of power, the zones of capital, and the critical point of the aftermath of World War Two.

Punctuating this trajectory also requires that we not ignore the war in the Balkans, the genocide in Srebrenica (1995), the changed world after the 2008 economic crisis, the turbo-nationalism that goes hand-in-hand with discriminatory laws against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and transsexual people in some key former Eastern European countries (Poland, Hungary, etc.), and the rhetoric and state violence against refugees from the Middle East and Africa in Europe.

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4 See Kal Raustiala, "The Geography of Justice," *Fordham Law Review* 73, no. 6 (2005): 2501–60.
5 See Giorgio Agamben, *State of Exception*, trans. Kevin Attell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

The year 2004 marked a drastic enlargement of the EU when a significant number of former Eastern European countries were admitted to the EU (Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia and Slovakia besides Malta and Cyprus). The process of NATO enlargement, which includes the former Eastern European states, was also almost complete in 2004 (Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia joined NATO in 2004), except for a few European countries that were not on the radar.

These changes are today in the shadow of the present conflicts and from this comes my first thesis: these shifts towards turbo-fascism did not begin with these conflicts, but were there all along, a continuous preparation for the realization of what we are witnessing: a redefinition and restructuring of the whole social, ideological, and economic structure of politics, sovereignty, governmentality and capitalism itself.

That we are in the "age of populism" was already proclaimed by Ivan Krastev in 2011.[6] Populism has moved from the margins into the mainstream of European and global politics. What determines its success? When I speak of success, I refer to leaders such as Donald Trump (who was, however, ousted by Joe Biden) and parties such as the Alternative for Germany (AfD). I also add Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (Turkey) and Vladimir Putin (Russia) to this list of just a few examples, although they are often considered authoritarian rather than populist.

I base this relationship between populism and nationalism on the research of Patricia Rodi, Lazaros Karavasilis, and Leonardo Puleo, who provide an empirical contribution to the discursive repertoire of seven populist, radical right-wing parties.[7] Within the context of the European Parliamentary elections of 2014 and 2019, they examine and compare how these parties discursively shape the content of social demands by assessing how "the people," "the nation," "the elite," and "others" are constructed, and how different demands are incorporated.

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[6] Ivan Krastev, "The Age of Populism: Reflections on the Self-Enmity of Democracy," *European View* 10, no. 1 (2011): 11–16, https://doi.org/10.1007/s12290-011-0152-8.

[7] Patricia Rodi, Lazaros Karavasilis, and Leonardo Puleo, "When Nationalism Meets Populism: Examining Right-Wing Populist & Nationalist Discourses in the 2014 & 2019 European Parliamentary Elections," *European Politics and Society* 24, no. 2 (2021): 284–302, https://doi.org/10.1080/23745118.2021.1994809.

The authors argue that their research findings "suggest that although parties often combine both populism and nationalism, there is a general disposition to construct the signifier 'the people,' not primarily through staging an antagonism between 'people/elite' (populism), but rather through articulating 'the people' as a national community in need of protection from the EU (nationalism)."[8]

Exemplary in this regard is the protection of the national body as a heterosexual and ethnically pure in Poland (which rejects any LGBTQI+ discourse and demands total control over women's reproductive rights). Such far-right nationalism departs from this idea of protection. Polish right-wing politicians say that the values of the Polish people are different from the values of the EU,[9] that the Polish people do not need to talk about or recognize the LGBTQI+ community, and so on. Such right-wing populism is not moderate, but extreme right-wing populism, which has elements of fascism and completely neglects basic human rights for certain categories of people within the nation, not to mention foreigners, who are considered elements that do not belong to the nation at all. The vicious logic of nationalism resorts to an imaginary category of people, which is then presented as a nation, and right-wing politics begins to support, protect, and "listen" to it. In such a situation, the left loses all elements of its earlier ability to focus on the exploitation of labor, because people are everything and nothing, they are not connected to labor, not even to gender, class, and even less to race. Women are considered common property for "the good of the people" and therefore reproductive rights must be controlled. The right to abortion, which is a fundamental constitutional right for women only, is tightly controlled. This is neoliberal fascism in the name of human freedom.

Although the process of selecting the "right" foreigners from the "wrong," or in other words, the "real" refugees or migrants from the "wrong," is based on racial profiling: skin color decides.[10] We saw this clearly in the Russian-instigated war in Ukraine when (blood and soil) Ukrainians were accepted by Poles,

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8   Rodi, Karavasilis, and Puleo, 284.
9   See, for example, Zofia Kinowska-Mazaraki, "The Polish Paradox: From a Fight for Democracy to the Political Radicalization and Social Exclusion," *Social Sciences* 10, no. 3 (2021): 112, https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci10030112.
10   See Amie Ferris-Rotman, "They Called Ukraine Home. But They Faced Violence and Racism When Fleeing," *Time*, March 1, 2022, https://time.com/6153276/ukraine-refugees-racism/.

Slovenes, etc. as the "true/genuine" refugees who are part of our culture, as it was said.[11] This redefinition of the foreigner is based on strict racial profiling, a distinction between us and them based on skin color. These are again elements that allow us to speak of right-wing populism.

If one might doubt that this connection is so fundamental, the unprecedented attack on the United States Capitol on January 6, 2021, by rioters supporting former President Trump and his attempts to reverse his defeat in the 2020 presidential election made clear what is at the core of far-right rhetoric. After the electoral defeat by the Democrats—who were under constant attack from the far-right Republican Party establishment—the nation as a populist whole of the US people was immediately called upon to protect the authoritarian right-wing politician Trump. He was willing to suspend the US Constitution in order not to lose the election. In this case, a peaceful transfer of power, which is important for democracy, was undermined.

And what about the former Eastern Europe which has been declared the bastion of leftist Marxist thought? We know that the former Eastern Europe was socialist or communist and that it operated, if only on the rhetorical level, with the Marxist vocabulary of class struggles, the proletariat as the basis of the nation-state and not the people or the people as the proletariat. In the Marxist-Leninist interpretation adopted by Eastern European states, the proletariat was considered the foundation of the nation-state. This was in contrast to capitalist societies, where the concept of the nation is more closely tied to the people as a whole, regardless of class.

While the left has, at least rhetorically, called for a different perspective, emphasizing labor rights, higher wages, etc., its proposals have so far been more and more drowned in populist rhetoric, although it is also clear that right-wing populism has succeeded in convincing "the people" that the cause of systemic problems such as (economic) inequality or violence is not the exploitation and expropriation by capital, but the lack of control over borders and sovereignty.[12]

11   Katy Fallon, "Refugee Aid Workers Decry 'Hypocrisy' of European Governments," Al Jazeera, March 16, 2022, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/3/16/ngos-say-ukraine-refugee-crisis-easier-with-govt-support.

12   See Piro Rexhepi, "Carceral Geographies along the Balkan Refugee Route," unpublished English-language manuscript of an article published in Slovenian as "Jetnišnične geo-

An enormous wave of ultra-right populism is seeping into the former communist bloc of Eastern Europe, further marginalizing people who are not seen as equal citizens in these territories. Questions about the status of refugees and their support are disappearing from public discourse, Roma are disappearing from the scene of EU politics, and Muslim citizens are increasingly seen as a race because of their religion and thus subjected to a harsh racialization process. Currently, anti-Muslim racism is a widespread form of racism in the EU. It is important to note that there are at least two mechanisms at work: one mechanism of the right is to suppress, abandon, and make visibly invisible all these issues; the other is to focus on them and misuse them as "key problems" that can be solved by their complete elimination; we see this in deportations of racialized refugees, profiling of migrants, etc. The danger of far-right sentiments and tendencies occupying a former stronghold of leftist discourse has become obvious.

What does all this have to do with the war in Ukraine? This conflict also raises concerns about the future of Ukraine, which risks becoming a devastated, war-torn landscape (referred to as a "necro-landscape"). In such a scenario, soldiers are deployed to combat zones based on their social class or economic status. The war is in full swing, and the Croatian coast in 2024 is populated by rich Ukrainian young men and old *nouveau riche* (their expensive cars indicative) who have easily escaped the war, although it is known that there is a general mobilization of all men fit for war in Ukraine. On the other hand, both sides, Ukraine and Russia, recruit detainees and criminals from prisons, who are offered bonuses for fighting in the armies.

This situation is further complicated by the legacy of Ukraine's post-socialist transformation, often characterized by rapid changes (i.e. turbo changes) and widespread corruption. These factors have contributed to the current state of affairs, where the ideals of equality and justice may be undermined by the harsh realities of war and societal division. Europe, or rather the new EU, is a pot of even more disorienting policies, militarization, hyperinflation, subjugation to US gas and oil, and so on; all of this renders the EU a mere market and overseas

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grafije balkanske begunske poti," in "Rasni kapitalizem: Intersekcije spolnosti, bojev in mejnih teles" [Racial Capitalism: Intersectionality of Sexuality, Struggles, and Bodies as Borders], ed. Tjaša Kancler and Marina Gržinić, special issue, *Časopis za kritiko znanosti* 48, no. 281 (2020): 80–92.

province for the US. We see harsh racialization of migrants and the exclusion or outright neglect of refugees on the streets and in the parks of the EU, because the European states do not have enough resources to fulfill their task of helping those in need, which is a dystopian picture of this grim present.

III. The Ongoing War in Ukraine

I would like to shed further light on the space of the former Eastern Europe and the history of the European Union and the former Eastern European space after 2001. The final point of this development has led us to a concrete conflict, the war in Ukraine, which started in 2022.

On one hand, this involves examining Europe through the lens of right-wing politics, considering how the European Union encompasses both former Eastern European countries and Western European nations, which are often grouped as part of the EU. On the other hand, it is about the return of Cold War rhetoric, which needs to be reflected upon in a historical perspective to understand the conflict and the not-so-distant history that shaped it after or during World War Two.

The ongoing war in Ukraine has led the left and the right in the EU to join militarization, polarization, segregation, and deportation without a second of hesitation. Sweden and Finland, two countries with a long history of neutrality, announced their intention to join NATO after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and the United States deployed additional military assets to Poland and the Baltic states. In June 2022, at the first annual NATO summit since the invasion, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg announced "the biggest overhaul of our collective deterrence and defense since the Cold War."[13] In April 2023, Finland became the 31st member of NATO, but Sweden's accession was held up by objections from Turkey and Hungary. In the summer of 2024, Sweden and Finland are both NATO members; Sweden joined on March 7, and Finland on April 4, 2023. The United States also deployed additional military assets to Poland and the Baltic states.

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[13]   Cited in Christina Lu, "NATO Leaders Plan Defense Overhaul," Foreign Policy, June 28, 2022, https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/06/28/nato-summit-russia-war-ukraine-defense-security-china/.

After Russia invaded Ukraine on February 24, 2022, some states quickly labeled this as an act of aggression. On March 2, 2022, the UN General Assembly passed a resolution titled "Aggression against Ukraine." Among other statements, it deplored "the aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine in violation of Article 2 (4) of the Charter."[14] From the events of 2014 (Crimea's annexation and the war in Donbas) to the Russian Federation's full-scale invasion in 2022, the number of casualties is changing daily, and there is no visible end in sight, only an intensification. The militarization, polarization, segregation, and deportation have no political opposition. Russia and Ukraine have engaged imprisoned criminals for their recruitment as soldiers and there is forced conscription of male reservists.

IV. The Intensification of the Violence and Atrocities in Gaza

The statement from Jan Egeland, Secretary General of the Norwegian Refugee Council is telling:

> The pulverising of Gaza now ranks amongst the worst assaults on any civilian population in our time and age. Each day we see more dead children and new depths of suffering for the innocent people enduring this hell. Across the Gaza Strip, almost the entire population—1.9 million people—have been displaced. Nearly two in three homes are now damaged or destroyed. Amid relentless air, land and sea attacks, thousands of families are forced to relocate from one perilous zone to another. Today, more than 750,000 people are crowded into just 133 shelters. Tens of thousands live on the streets of southern Gaza, where, under bombardment, they are forced to improvise basic shelters from whatever they can get hold of. The winter rains have arrived and so have infectious diseases, just as public health services have been utterly paralysed.[15]

There has been an increase in settler violence in the West Bank, resulting in the expulsion of Palestinian communities. Furthermore, the frequency and severity of violence by Israeli armed forces have escalated. Since the events of October

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[14] "Motion for a Resolution on the Establishment of a Tribunal on the Crime of Aggression Against Ukraine," European Parliament, January 16, 2023, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/B-9-2023-0072_EN.html.

[15] Jan Egeland, "Civilian Deaths in Gaza Are a Stain on Israel and Its Allies," Norwegian Refugee Council, https://www.nrc.no/news/2024/december/gaza-statement-december.

7, 2023, Palestinian prisoners in Israeli prisons have faced harsh and inhumane conditions, with widespread reports of abuse.[16] The collected testimonies reveal systematic abuse, including violence, sexual assault, and denial of basic human rights, indicating a pattern of institutionalized mistreatment. The consistency of these reports suggests widespread and organized practices of abuse within the detention system.

Referring to the article published on August 9, 2024, the summary of the state of things showed that Israeli society was deeply fractured following the arrest of ten soldiers from the Force 100 unit, accused of the brutal gang rape of a Palestinian prisoner, an assault reportedly captured on video. According to Israeli media, the attack was so severe that the victim required hospitalization and was unable to walk afterward. The soldiers, responsible for guarding the Sde Teiman facility, were detained on July 29, 2024, in a case that has sent shockwaves through the country. On August 4, the military prosecution released three of the soldiers, after two others had been freed following a July 30 hearing at a military court in Kfar Yona. Supporters of the soldiers gathered at the court in protest.[17]

The release of the video depicting the assault has ignited widespread outrage across Israeli society, with human rights organizations and two UN agencies voicing deep concern over the treatment of Palestinian detainees. While many condemn the brutal nature of the incident, others, including far-right Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, have shifted their focus to the recording and leaking of the footage rather than addressing the severity of the alleged rape. This divergence in reactions has further polarized public opinion, highlighting tensions within the country regarding accountability and justice.[18]

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[16]   "Israel/OPT: Horrifying Cases of Torture and Degrading Treatment of Palestinian Detainees amid Spike in Arbitrary Arrests," Amnesty International, November 8, 2023, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/11/israel-opt-horrifying-cases-of-torture-and-degrading-treatment-of-palestinian-detainees-amid-spike-in-arbitrary-arrests/.

[17]   Simon Speakman Cordall, "'Everything Is Legitimate': Israeli Leaders Defend Soldiers Accused of Rape," Al Jazeera, August 9, 2024, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/8/9/everything-is-legitimate-israeli-leaders-defend-soldiers-accused-of-rape.

[18]   Cordall.

On August 7, 2024, Smotrich, called on X (formerly Twitter) for "an immediate criminal investigation to locate the leakers of the trending video that was intended to harm the reservists and that caused tremendous damage to Israel in the world"[19] and called for the harshest possible legal consequences for those responsible.[20]

According to Simon Speakman Cordall, a freelance journalist based in Tunisia, hard-right and ultranationalist politicians, including Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, have gone so far as to argue that any action, including gang rape, is justifiable if it is carried out in the name of state security. Following the arrest of the soldiers on July 29, 2024, far-right groups, including some government ministers, stormed the Sde Teiman facility later the same day to free the soldiers.[21]

V. After World War Two and the Shoah, the Genocides in European Colonial Territories That Exported the Deaths of Millions Beyond Europe Began to Be Palpably Recognized Across the Global World

Siba N. Grovogui, a Professor at Cornell University, consistently explains this shift, highlighting how the turning point after 9/11 (2001) marked a profound change in global capitalism. This neoliberal global capitalism has now permeated every level of life, reshaping the regime of capital and power. Moreover, the protection afforded by humanitarian law has been effectively abandoned.[22]

Achille Mbembe's "Necropolitics," a text written in 2003, highlighted a radical shift in the perception of life and death in capitalism post-2001.[23] In 2003, Mbembe emphasized from an African perspective that in the third millennium, characterized by wars, terrorist attacks, and other global crises, biopolitics was no

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19   Bezalel Smotrich (@bezalelsm), X, August 7, 2024, https://x.com/bezalelsm/status/1821273487555637609.
20   Cordall, "Everything Is Legitimate."
21   Cordall.
22   Siba N. Grovogui, "Interview—Siba N'Zatioula Grovogui," interview by Thijs Korsten, E-International Relations, January 31, 2021, https://www.e-ir.info/2021/01/31/interview-siba-nzatioula-grovogui/.
23   Achille Mbembe, "Necropolitics," trans. Libby Meintjes, *Public Culture* 15, no. 1 (2003): 11–40, https://doi.org/10.1215/08992363-15-1-11.

longer sufficient. Necropolitics describes the power and institutions that control and destroy life by violent means. It is not just about war, although that is crucial, nor is it solely about the machinery of war.

We see necropolitics in the marginalization of all those considered "other" in a hetero-patriarchal and hyper-neoliberal society, whether they are (non-)citizens, residents, or asylum seekers. Those who have been most exploited are now paying the highest price for colonialism, plunder, slavery, and neo-colonial exploitation for the benefit of the West and capitalism in Europe and the US.

After World War Two and the Shoah, the genocides on European colonial territories that exported the deaths of millions beyond Europe began to be palpably recognized across the global world. Biopolitics in the 1970s was based on the idea that contrary to necropolitics, which is globally effective today, post-World War Two Europe and the Shoah would lead to a state-organized life that would strive for a "good life" for Europeans. However, it soon became clear that this "good life" was only for the majoritarian white citizens of European nation-states, while others were subjected to various forms of discrimination and racialization, initially subtle and invisible. Mbembe shows that from the 16th to the 19th century, capitalism practiced repopulation through predation, wealth extraction, and the formation of subaltern groups. In "Necropolitics, Racialization, and Global Politics," I wrote, "War allows for the management of life through the capitalization of death (Iraq, Pakistan, and Afghanistan). It allows for a passage from biopolitics to necropolitics, and also a passage from nation-state to war-state."[24]

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The security state strives for a state of insecurity; each term generates or clings to its opposite because neoliberal global capitalism can only be understood through its opposite. Everything that politicians, multinational CEOs, and military generals publicly proclaim is at least the opposite. The invocation of security, for example, serves precisely to produce maximum insecurity. The West, or the Occident, as Mbembe also shows, is the one that defines "being." That is

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[24] Marina Gržinić, "Biopolitics, Necropolitics, Unrestrained Financialization, and Fascisms," in Marina Gržinić and Šefik Tatlić, *Necropolitics, Racialization, and Global Capitalism: Historicization of Biopolitics and Forensics of Politics, Art, and Life* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2014), 38.

why, after historical atrocities and genocidal practices, it can always preach a new beginning—a great new beginning. This is the universality of the West: to always start again from the beginning. The West cannot conceive of any real finality, except perhaps a cleansing that follows the genocidal logic of cleansing everything, even the complete destruction of the "less-humans" if necessary.[25]

The destruction we are witnessing in Ukraine calls for parallels with Mbembe's notion of "deathscapes." Added to this, there has been a notable lack of commitment to the protection of refugees from regions of the global South, including Africa and Asia, underscoring the hypocrisy of the neoliberal discourse on human rights.

These changes, overshadowed by conflicts, did not begin with the conflict in Ukraine, but had been a preparation for the realization that we are witnessing, a redefinition of entire social, ideological and economic structures, a restructuring of politics, sovereignty, governance, and an extremely violent racial necrocapitalism. The conflict in Ukraine has led to human and ecological devastation in the European region, characterized by bombings and environmental toxins causing widespread damage. There has been mass displacement and loss of life, while efforts at sustainable technology have been sidelined.

VI. Ukraine Is Seen as a Turning Point, a Change in the Global Security Order, and It Is Judged Quite Clearly

In the early 20th century, Ukraine was considered a peripheral region within Europe. Although it was not formally colonized like the Americas, Africa or the Pacific, its economy was primarily based on agricultural production and the extraction of natural resources to serve the needs of the more developed European centers. From 1917 to 1921, during a period of significant political upheaval, Ukraine was part of a broader global context that world-systems theorists have analyzed. According to this perspective, a dominant strategy was developed within the anti-systemic movements after the revolutions of 1848. This

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[25] Marina Gržinić, "*Necropolitics* by Achille Mbembe: Extended Essay on the Book," *Filozofski Vestnik* 42, no. 1 (2021): 231–33, https://doi.org/10.3986/fv.42.1.10.

two-step approach involved first seizing state power and then using this power to transform the world.[26]

In another interview from 2022, Grovogui discusses the complex dynamics at play, stating, "Ukraine is seen as a turning point, a change in the global security order, and it is judged quite clearly."[27] He explores how African states, with which he is familiar, perceive the war and the factors influencing their ambivalent positions.

He contends that

> it's complicated. What seems like a simple, clear-cut issue in Europe has multiple layers for us in Africa. There's no question that what Russia is doing in Ukraine is wrong and must be condemned. There's also no doubt about that in most African states. However, there is also significant discomfort with the Western reaction. There is suspicion that the United Nations is being deprived of its purpose, that UN institutions like the Security Council are being bypassed, and that NATO is acting unilaterally. Ultimately, there is concern that Europe and the USA are beginning to replace international conflict resolution mechanisms on various levels, leaving no influence on international politics.

Grovogui says that "we have seen how quickly the West has united and how successfully it has isolated Russia. These decisions were not coordinated with

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[26] On this debate, see Spencer Louis Potiker, Dana Williams, and Jake Alimahomed-Wilson, "Anarchist and Anarchistic Anti-Systemic Movements in World-Systems Perspective: A Qualitative Comparative Analysis of Non-State Spaces," *Journal of World-Systems Research* 28, no. 2 (2022): 188–218, https://doi.org/10.5195/jwsr.2022.1097. See also Giovanni Arrighi, Terence K. Hopkins, and Immanuel Wallerstein, *Anti-Systemic Movements* (London: Verso, 1989); Immanuel Wallerstein, "New Revolts Against the System," *New Left Review* 18 (2002), https://newleftreview.org/issues/ii18/articles/immanuel-wallerstein-new-revolts-against-the-system; Morgan Rodgers Gibson, "The Failure of the State and the Rise of Anarchism in Contemporary Anti-Systemic Praxis," *New Proposals: Journal of Marxism and Interdisciplinary Inquiry* 10, no. 1 (2019): 58–63.

[27] Siba N. Grovogui "Russische Invasion: 'Das Misstrauen stammt nicht aus der Kolonialzeit'" [Russian Invasion: "The Mistrust Does Not Stem from the Colonial Era"], interview by Lukas Haan, *Zeit*, May 6, 2022, https://www.zeit.de/politik/ausland/2022-04/russland--ukraine-krieg-afrikanische-staaten-haltung. This and all the following quotes from the Grovogui–Haan interview were translated by me.

the international community but were made within NATO." The distrust, as Grovogui emphasizes,

> doesn't stem from the colonial era, but from the 21st century. Take, for example, the military intervention in Libya. Many African states were against a no-fly zone at the time because they didn't believe the intervention would end there. And you know what? They were right. The intervention was much more extensive, and Libya still hasn't recovered. The distrust isn't hysteria or paranoia; it's well-founded.

For Grovogui, a very important point is the breakdown of the rhetoric of morality:

> Too little was done to help Ukraine. But there's also, for example, a moral obligation to help the people in Yemen. But the USA doesn't want to hear about that because it supports Saudi Arabia. So, when the West now uses morality as an argument to urge states to act, it comes across as unconvincing and dishonest. This leads to losing support in the Global South. It would be more honest to openly admit that one's actions are inconsistent and that, elsewhere, one has followed one's own power interests. The Ukraine war could be an occasion to question one's own policies while simultaneously advocating for help for Ukraine. These things aren't mutually exclusive.

In 2023, Grovogui argues, as the editors of the special issue of the *Journal of International Relations and Development* summarize, "that in its fight against Russia, Ukraine is in fact racializing itself as white and thus no longer at the edge of modernity so that it can become part of the western European club. Yet, it is this very club which has enabled Russia's long-standing colonial approach towards Ukraine and the rest of the former Soviet states in the first place."[28] They also highlight the thoughts of Gurminder K. Bhambra[29] who "poignantly

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[28] Olga Burlyuk and Vjosa Musliu, editorial introduction to "The Responsibility to Remain Silent? On the Politics of Knowledge Production, Expertise and (Self-)Reflection in Russia's War Against Ukraine," special issue, *Journal of International Relations and Development* 26, no. 4 (2023): 613, https://doi.org/10.1057/s41268-023-00318-x; see also Siba N. Grovogui, "Putin's Ukraine Aggression: How Should an African Respond?," *International Politics* 60 (2023): 214–35, https://doi.org/10.1057/s41311-022-00411-x.

[29] Gurminder K. Bhambra is a professor of historical sociology in the Department of International Relations at the University of Sussex.

observes that the framing of support for Ukraine was often mobilized around 'European values.' Because the latter reveal the histories of colonialism and imperialism that have made the 'world order' today, many countries in the global south found it difficult to be solidary with Ukraine."[30]

VII. Both the Ukraine–Russia Conflict and the Israel–Palestine Conflict Have Deep Roots in Geopolitical Power Struggles

At this point, I will highlight several interconnected and evident issues that have emerged from these conflicts:

First, there is a democratic deficit that reveals a catastrophic mishandling of these situations, leading to more destruction and escalation.

Second, there is a massive failure of responsibility concerning the violent and unchecked killings of thousands of civilians.

Third, geopolitical powers and old imperial structures remain entrenched in a vision of the future dominated by militarism, war, and destruction.

Fourth, there has been a radical failure in international law and the collapse of major global organizations that were supposed to intervene. When did this happen?

No. 1: The Democratic Deficit That Shows a Proportion of Catastrophe in Handling the Situations. More Destructions, More Escalations.

We should consider the concept of a "democratic deficit" as both a consequence of conflicts and a source of them. This term denotes a situation where institutions and their decision-making processes suffer from a lack of democracy and accountability. In the case of the EU, it refers to a perceived gap between the powers of EU institutions and the ability of ordinary citizens to influence their decisions. This perceived lack of accessibility and representation has been ad-

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dressed, to some extent, by changes introduced by the Treaty of Lisbon, which has been in effect since December 1, 2009.[31]

Today's democratic deficit manifests itself in various areas, two of which are of particular interest here: the national and the international levels. The domestic democratic deficit has fueled the street uprisings in North Africa and the Middle East. The global democratic deficit, on the other hand, is to be found in the structures of international organizations, in which states, regional organizations and other entities necessarily occupy different positions based on their power, resources and traditions. However, these structures do not inherently produce a deficit but rather create the conditions for it.

The paradox is that humanitarian concerns once again serve as a pretext to increase the global democratic deficit and, in the case of the Middle East, re-inscribe the terms of past imperial relations under new guises.

No. 2: The Massive Failure of Responsibility Towards the Violent and Unleashed Killings of Thousands of Civilians.
The Responsibility to Protect, an international norm known as R2P, was unanimously adopted in 2005 at the UN World Summit, the largest gathering of Heads of State and Government in history and is articulated in paragraphs 138 and 139 of the World Summit Outcome Document.[32]

To understand the fate of Palestinians under R2P, one must examine how R2P has been muted, actively opposed, or sidelined to deflect historical responsibility and obligation. The responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and ethnic cleansing has become an important global principle since the adoption of the UN World Summit Outcome Document in 2005.

The concept emerged in response to the international community's failure to adequately address mass atrocities in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia dur-

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[31] "Democratic Deficit," EUR-Lex, accessed August 17, 2024, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/glossary/democratic-deficit.html.

[32] See "What is R2P?," Global Centre for The Responsibility To Protect, accessed August 17, 2024, https://www.globalr2p.org/what-is-r2p.

ing the 1990s. The International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty developed the concept of R2P in 2001.[33] Rwanda should have already been on US President Bill Clinton administration's agenda when he took office in January 1993, and existing legislation was sufficient for action. Yet, the Clinton administration did nothing. This non-action reflects one of the many senses of the word "responsibility," which involves the obligation to act and be accountable for preventing what one is expected and capable of preventing.

On July 11, 1995, Serbian troops invaded Srebrenica and murdered 8,372 Bosniaks who had sought refuge in the so-called UN "safe zone." Helmut Kohl, who was German Chancellor at the time, and Klaus Kinkel, who was serving as German Foreign Minister, did nothing.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, on the 16th anniversary of the genocide in July 2011, the Society for Threatened Peoples called for an end to the silence surrounding the complicity of the French and British governments in the genocide in the town of Srebrenica. Human rights organizations criticized François Mitterrand and John Major, who were President of the French Republic and Prime Minister of the UK respectively, for supporting the war of aggression waged by Serbian militias from 1992 to 1995. French, British, and Canadian troops on the ground were accused of aiding the attacking Serbian forces.

The EU Commission, the European Union, the European Council, NATO, the US, and the United Nations failed to take effective action to end the de facto partition of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which was orchestrated in Dayton as a result of aggression, genocide, and mass displacement. Instead of addressing the root causes, the response involved Balkanization and division. A similar outcome is anticipated in Gaza and potentially in Ukraine if conflicts persist without a meaningful resolution, leading to further disaster and suffering.

The confusions surrounding the implementation of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) relate to the meaning of responsibility, which determines the nature of the obligation it entails. These issues have never been exclusively theoretical. In practice, they depend on the international context, including its regimes

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[33] "What is R2P?"

of economies, practices, cultures of interest, morality, and politics, which provide the context for international relations—and therefore for R2P.

As Jeremy Moses[34] argues in his "Gaza and the Political and Moral Failure of the Responsibility to Protect,"

> The absence of a clear, sustained, and powerful invocation of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) in response to Israel's vicious assault on Gaza reveals the fundamental weaknesses of the doctrine and affirms Hobson's arguments about R2P's insularity and detachment from reality. We are now over three months into a military assault that many experts have labelled as a genocide and the R2P has played no significant role in debates over how to respond. It is estimated that over twenty thousand Palestinians, including more than eight thousand children, have been killed since Hamas' unprecedented attack on Israeli communities surrounding Gaza on October 7. Much of Gaza City and many of the refugee camps-turned-neighbourhoods across the Gaza Strip have been reduced to rubble, with the promise that more, and worse, is to come in pursuit of the goal of eliminating Hamas. Israel's campaign is now recognised as having generated civilian deaths at a rate higher than any other war of the twenty-first century.[35]

Moses states that in the immediate aftermath of the October 7 attack, Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant promised to cut off water, food, and electricity to the "human animals" within this small piece of land that is home to two million people.[36] Since then, calls for the total annihilation of the Gaza Strip and its inhabitants have been regularly voiced by Israeli politicians and military figures while Israel's civil society has been increasingly protesting such violence.

> Leaders of the United States, United Kingdom and the European Union, amongst others, continue to provide moral support and military assistance to the Israelis on the grounds that Israel "has the right to defend itself" against terrorism. The hypocrisy and double-dealing of Western powers in their response to Israel's

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[34] Jeremy Moses is an associate professor in political science and international relations at University of Cantenbury, Christchurch, New Zealand.
[35] Jeremy Moses, "Gaza and the Political and Moral Failure of the Responsibility to Protect," *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 18, no. 2 (2024): 211, https://doi.org/10.1080/1750 2977.2024.2304987.
[36] Moses, 211.

atrocities in Gaza has intensified to a point that there is now widespread scepticism about the ongoing value of human rights and international law in general.[37]

For Alex Bellamy,[38] the director of Asia Pacific Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, mass atrocities occur exclusively in authoritarian states, not within liberal democracies like the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, or perhaps even Israel.[39] In response, Moses argues that R2P is controversial not because the states Bellamy lists fear its power, but because liberal democracies are not subject to its rules.[40] Bellamy offers a tepid critique of Western powers' failure to intervene, portraying this as a "both sides" failure of will to prevent atrocities. However, as Moses contends, underlying even this criticism is a binary view of non-Western, authoritarian states as perpetrators of atrocities and Western states as interveners.[41]

The "moral untouchability" of R2P identified by Fassin and drawn upon by Hobson, turns out not to really be about claims to humanitarianism in general, but a much narrower claim that understands humanitarian values to be a possession of liberal democratic states. Yet even this narrow moral untouchability falls apart when liberal democracies become the purveyors of mass atrocity crimes and genocide, as they have done in Gaza.[42]

No. 3: Geopolitical Powers and Imperial Old Structures That See the Only Future as a Regime of Militarism, War, and Destruction.
This analysis aims to rethink the nature of modern warfare as a means of widespread destruction and profit, revealing a shift in Western rhetoric. The methodology of extermination and dispossession, once considered historical, is now being systematically executed.

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[37] Moses, 211.
[38] Alexander Bellamy, "The Discomforts of Politics: What Future for Atrocity Prevention?," Just Security, 31 October 2023, https://www.justsecurity.org/89832/the-discomforts-of-politics-whatfuture-for-atrocity-prevention/.
[39] Moses, "Gaza," 212–13.
[40] Moses, 213.
[41] Moses, 213.
[42] Moses, 213.

In an important 2007 anthology *Exceptional State*, Christian Parenti's chapter "Planet America: The Revolution in Military Affairs as Fantasy and Fetish"[43] exposes a process that has fully manifested itself today. Parenti, an American investigative journalist, academic, and author, wants to "unpack the role of the military technology fetish in shaping the debacle in Iraq, an urban guerrilla warfare in which human intelligence, politics, and cultural knowledge all trump the power of America's mighty military machinery."[44] In reality, he envisions a "Planet America" where US global policing is posited "as a supposedly democratic, moral, neutral, and law-based system for projecting American military violence on a global scale."[45] However, he continues, just as local order maintenance is about containing people of color and the poor, America's global military project is about maintaining a class hierarchy. All three post-Cold War US presidents have shared this agenda in varying forms, often expressing their goals in legalistic codes and a discourse of freedom and democracy. Within this framework, the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) will bring "a perpetual global war waged not by human beings who die, rebel, or come home wounded and crazy, but a war waged by labor that is already dead, crystallized into machinery."[46] Future wars will be fought by "zombie armies of 'swarming' robots, armed aerial drones, super-sophisticated microwave bombs, 'over the horizon' smart artillery, ocean-floated 'lily pad' military bases, and space-orbiting offensive weapon systems using lasers, projectiles, and electromagnetic pulses."[47]

Parenti goes on to formulate a concept of Post-Fordist War that will increasingly rely on dead labor and bring widespread death. Mbembe envisioned this already in 2003 by conceptualizing necropolitics instead of biopolitics. Bio-weapons, too, are only in the service of death. Parenti continues: "After all, the transformation debate began in earnest in the early 1990s and ran parallel to the so-called new economy and financialization hype, both of which maintained that 'everything had changed.'"[48] To put it clearly,

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[43]   Christian Parenti, "Planet America: The Revolution in Military Affairs as Fantasy and Fetish," in *Exceptional State: Contemporary US Culture and the New Imperialism*, ed. Ashley Dawson and Malini Johar Schueller (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 88–104.
[44]   Parenti, 90.
[45]   Parenti, 89.
[46]   Parenti, 89.
[47]   Parenti, 89.
[48]   Parenti, 89.

> The idea of Planet America—a globe definitively and effectively controlled by the American ruling class, the real Thousand Year Reich—though long imagined and desired, only became a feasible project with the fall of the USSR. This removed America's "peer adversary" and the only technomilitary check on US military power. Since then, Pentagon planners have been working out the military components of total global supremacy.[49]

Planet America has produced almost nothing in recent times but has incited wars globally, making it unsurprising that the EU's initial strong critique of the war in Ukraine soon dissipated. As Parenti notes, "a very slaphappy Greenspan-esque discourse of 'irrational exuberance'" emerged—"the RMA would transform everything into frictionless, 'weightless,' casualty-free war."[50] Parenti reveals that "Bill Clinton was the first to officially embrace the mission of the RMA to achieve post-Soviet global dominance. He launched a transformation based on new technologies, most important among them information technology."[51]

And here, a prediction from twenty years ago has become today's reality:

> One general-cum-historian writing in 1998 described the Army's transformation goals as follows: "The Army of 2025 will differ from today's Army in two distinct ways. First, it will achieve unprecedented strategic and operational speed by exploiting information technologies to create a knowledge-based organization. Second, it will exhibit tremendous flexibility and physical agility through streamlined, seamlessly integrated organizations that use new tactics and procedures. The collective result will be a versatile, full-spectrum, capabilities-based force that can decisively respond to any future global contingency."[52]

No. 4: A Radical Change in International Law and the Flop of All Major World Organizations Called to Intervene. When Did It Happen?

Grovogui identifies the source of these changes in the so-called Iraq War, also known as the Second Gulf War, a protracted armed conflict in Iraq from 2003 to 2011.[53] It began with the invasion of Iraq by a United States-led coalition that

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[49]   Parenti, 90.
[50]   Parenti, 91.
[51]   Parenti, 92.
[52]   Parenti, 92.
[53]   Grovogui, "Interview."

overthrew the Ba'athist government of Saddam Hussein. In March 2003, US forces invaded Iraq, vowing to destroy Iraqi weapons of mass destruction and end Saddam Hussein's dictatorial rule.

Grovogui stated,

> Europe, with all its flaws, aspired to a post-Cold War era with a minimum degree of normativity—international law, rule of law, all of that. Europe had managed to convince the rest of the world that America was committed to that. The Iraq War is the only war in human memory, against which a group of people in every capital on this planet stood up and said, "This war should not be fought." Because the UN and the International Atomic Energy Agency provided credible evidence that the alleged weapons of mass destruction did not exist. That evidence was discarded by US officials. We had the war; and there was no consequence when it was found that the evidence for the war itself had been fabricated.[54]

Grovogui states, "The Iraq War, for me, closed that window, [. . .] the idea that we could return to the basis upon which the new world, under the UN Charter, was founded—multilateralism, mutual coexistence, mutual respect, rule of law, everybody abiding by international law, etc."[55]

All of this is based on the major changes brought about by global capitalism, particularly following 9/11 in 2001. At that point, along with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the proliferation of changes at the state level, a new formation of the "war-state" emerged in place of the nation-state. In 2009, I pursued an in-depth analysis of global capitalism.[56] To do this, I made specific reference to Santiago López Petit's book *La movilización global: Breve tratado para atacar la realidad*, published in 2009.[57] López Petit's book is a militant demand for the further politicization of life.

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Democracy articulates two modes of power. As argued by López Petit, one is the war-state (governance and violence with brutal exploitation, expropriation,

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[54]   Grovogui.

[55]   Grovogui.

[56]   Marina Gržinić, "Capital, Repetition," *Reartikulacija* 8 (2009): 3–4.

[57]   Santiago López Petit, *La movilización global: Breve tratado para atacar la realidad* [Global Mobilization: A Brief Treatise for Attacking Reality] (Madrid: Traficantes de Sueños, 2009).

discrimination, and repression), and the other is postmodern fascism.[58] The war-state represents a pure necropolitical mode of life. War-state and postmodern fascism work as a grid of vertical and horizontal forces. To move beyond Frederic Jameson's concept of cognitive mapping,[59] suggests that understanding global capitalism requires including new media technology and the digitalized mode of programming in its logic of functioning in the logic of life and war.

Grovogui exposes:

> The debates about the fallout of the Iraq war were as much about Europe as they were about the US, because people had hoped that Europe would rally around traditions such as the Geneva Conventions, the norms around aggression, and so forth. The impression that Europe would rally to its humanitarian tradition was given by Europe itself in its discussions about the consequences of the fall of the Berlin Wall. But US elites were clear about what that moment meant: not a new start, but the so-called "end of history." To be sure, the rhetoric was that the fall of "Soviet communism" meant a new commitment to democratic principles (rule of law, international coexistence). But these professions belied US actions within international institutions and around the world. With the invasion of Iraq, we moved then from what people thought was going to be a multipolar system to a virtually unipolar system. It taught me that even a country that had the longest democratic tradition (except for the Dutch Provinces), allowed a war like that to happen: unprovoked, unnecessary, and without legal justification.[60]

The outcome was a thirst for blood and revenge:

> I was astounded by discourses around the Iraq War that still oozed anti-Muslim resentment going back to the Crusades. I was amazed at how related sentiments blinded so many people to simple truths, to the evidence that there were no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. As an observer, discussions and narratives around and about the Iraq War, official and not, brought me back in time to memories of the beginning of empire: This is when liberal and progressive forces joined hands

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[58]   López Petit, 84.

[59]   See Frederic Jameson, "Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism," *New Left Review* 146 (July–August 1984): 53–92; Frederic Jameson, *Postmodernism: Or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991).

[60]   Grovogui, "Interview."

> with conservative ones to commit to the colonial enterprise, all of them guided by popular sentiments and the fear of their own electorates: the demos.[61]

What happened in the UK in early August 2024 with far-right anti-immigrant and violent racist riots is just one direct consequence of this unaddressed issue.

Conclusion

Western allies and newer partners, such as turbo-nationalist Eastern European states now part of the EU—characterized by tendencies towards antisemitism, homophobia, and patriarchy, as observed in countries like Hungary, Slovenia, and Poland—are integral to the mechanism of neoliberal social and political psychosis. Additionally, there has been a notable lack of commitment to protect refugees from regions in the Global South, including Africa and Asia, underscoring the hypocrisy of neoliberal discourse on human rights. Ultimately, what we are witnessing is a costly provincialization of Europe by the US, signaling a new and concerning dynamic in global geopolitics.

US financial interests have effectively pushed the EU into a state of total incapacity to address both the horrifying situation in Ukraine and the reluctance to intervene in the ongoing crimes in Gaza, where people are dying of hunger and thirst daily—in the 21st century. This dynamic mirrors similar power dynamics between the metropolis (US) and the periphery (EU), with the UK serving as a derivative instrument of the US interests in Europe after Brexit.

So, as journalist Kristina Božič astutely asked, what is the path to resist the status quo, destruction, conflict, and war in places like Palestine, Gaza, Israel, Ukraine?[62] The answer is not at our hands, as political philosophy often falls short in addressing complex geopolitical, militaristic, and imperial dynamics. However, one insightful perspective can be drawn from the work of Leila Farsakh.[63]

Farsakh explains that Palestinian resistance efforts, aimed at decolonizing Palestine, will inevitably depend on broader regional and international dynam-

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[61] Grovogui.
[62] Kristina Božič, email message to author, September 5, 2024.
[63] Leila Farsakh is a associate professor and chair of the Political Science Department at the University of Massachusetts, Boston.

ics.[64] The Palestinian liberation struggle is inherently connected to the wider Arab and international movements for freedom and independence. According to Farsakh, recent shifts in global relations, starting from the Cold War, when Third World countries had opportunities to promote their anti-colonial efforts and pursue national independence, have significantly impacted this struggle. The fall of the Soviet Union, the end of apartheid in South Africa, and the rise of US dominance in the 1990s shifted global attention from decolonization to nation-building and democratization.[65]

However, these efforts, which some might argue were part of US imperialism in pursuit of oil and resources, have largely failed. This failure is most evident in the aftermath of US interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as in the collapse of the Arab uprisings in 2011.[66]

As Farsakh argues, the normalization of Israel's relations with Bahrain and the UAE through the Abraham Accords in 2020, alongside Russia's war on Ukraine, further highlights the persistence of colonial and authoritarian systems, despite resistance from ordinary citizens.[67] While the nation-state remains a central institution, it is clear that, in today's global capitalist necropolitical era, the sovereignty of the nation-state has been eroded, shifting to new formations such as the "war-state" (imperial states with nuclear power).

Given these realities, the most tangible vision in front of us is the binational approach to decolonization. This vision prioritizes Arab-Jewish relations, enabling Palestinian and Jewish experiences in the Middle East to coexist and be narrated alongside one another, rather than one narrative dominating the other.[68] This approach recognizes that true peace and justice can only emerge when both sides are equally represented.

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[64] Leila Farsakh, "The Question of Palestinian Statehood and the Future of Decolonization," in "Settler Colonialism's Enduring Entanglements," ed. Mona Atia, Graham Cornwell, and Muriam Haleh Davis, with guest editor Shira Robinson, special issue, *Middle East Report*, no. 302 (Spring 2022), https://merip.org/2022/05/the-question-of-palestinian-statehood-and-the-future-of-decolonization/.

[65] Farsakh.

[66] Farsakh.

[67] Farsakh.

[68] Farsakh.

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