HISTORY LESSON
OUR EASY-TO-FOLLOW GUIDE FOR UNDERSTANDING THE ISRAEL-PALESTINE CONFLICT
STARTS PAGE 10
Calendrier:

NOVEMBER

SAT NOV 4 • 1PM–4PM • FREE
SCIENCE AGAINST CAPITALISM: EXITING THE CLIMATE CRISIS
Climate scientist Mara Freilich will discuss biogeochemical cycling in aquatic ecosystems, climate modeling, and the role that community science and multi-sector collaboration can play in building climate solutions. Exiting the Climate Crisis aims to connect science education with people and movements resisting capitalism's destructive path.
THE PEOPLE’S FORUM
320 W 37 St., Manhattan

SAT NOV 4 • 9:30AM–12PM • FREE
GREENHOUSE HARVEST FESTIVAL
Just because Halloween may have passed does not mean that the autumnal spirit has gone. The Horticultural Society of New York is providing family fun activities and seasonal sweet treats for all participants in this year’s Greenhouse Harvest Festival. Take the fun home with a hand-picked pumpkin or a screen-printed poster. Prizes await for the winners of a scarecrow-making contest. Bring your creativity and a bag to bring home all the harvest fun.
THE GREENHOUSE EDUCATION CENTER AT RIVERSIDE CENTER PARK
679 Riverside Dr., Manhattan

FRI OCT 27–FRI NOV 10 • FREE–$70
FILM: WORKERS UNITE FILM FESTIVAL
The 12th year of the The Workers Unite Film Festival kicks off on Oct. 27 at Cinema Village Theater until Nov. 2, then continues at other partner venues, such as The People’s Forum and SUNY ESC. See powerful films on the welfare rights movement, the labor movement, gentrification in New York City, female Jazz musicians and so much more. Many of the films offer a Q&A after the program with filmmakers. Stand up for global labor solidarity! Program listings and tickets can be found on the festival’s eventbrite page.
CINEMAVILLAGE THEATER
22 E 12 St., Manhattan

TUE NOV 7 • 9AM–12:30PM • FREE
WORKSHOP: IN DEFENSE OF TEACHING BLACK STUDIES: READING, WRITING & JUSTICE
Professional learning and workshops about Black studies — with guest speakers: Kimberlé Crenshaw and Keeranga-Yamthalii Taylor. Book giveaways, and primary sources for teaching.
SCHOMBURG CENTER
515 Malcolm X Blvd., Manhattan

NOV 9–NOV 26 • THU, FRI, SAT @ 8 PM; SUN @ 1 PM • $20
THEATER: ENOUGH VOICES FOR THE UNIVERSE
Directed by: Melanie Maria Goodreaux
The film's screening will be held following the viewing. Catch the best new films from the African Diaspora at this year’s 31st annual African Diaspora International Film Festival. The films will be screened at five venues: Schomburg Center, Leonard Nimoy Thalia Theater, Teachers College, Cinema Village Theater and AMC Magic Johnson/Harlem 9. For more, see nydaff.org

SAT NOV 20 • 8PM • FREE
HONEY, I QUEERED THE NARRATIVE
THU NOV 30 • 8PM • FREE
FILM: AFRICAN DIASPORA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL
The New Yorker, Dean of Columbia Journalism School and Rob Eschmann (Columbia University, Harvard University) for a discussion of Eschmann’s new book, When the Hood Comes Off: Racism and Resistance in the Digital Age. After the moderated conversation, stay and talk informally with Dr. Eschmann.
CENTER FOR BROOKLYN HISTORY
128 Pierrepont St., Brooklyn

FRI NOV 10 • 7PM–10PM • PAY WHAT YOU WISH ON FRIDAY
HONEY, I QUEERED THE NARRATIVE
THU NOV 30 • 8PM • FREE
FILM: AFRICAN DIASPORA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL
Directed By: Melanie Maria Goodreaux

SAT NOV 4 • 1PM–4PM • FREE
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In a world full of lies, how can we recognize the truth?
TOP MAYORAL ADVISER GOES ON MIGRANT-SHELTER RAMPAGE

Mayor Eric Adams’ top adviser for overseeing immigrant shelters is being investigated for two Oct. 17 incidents in which he tried to bull his way into shelters. Witnesses told The City that when the adviser, retired city police officer Timothy Pearson, was asked for identification by a security guard at a shelter on West 31st Street, he told her to “get the fuck out of my way” and shoved her, setting off a melee. Two guards were arrested. Earlier that afternoon, Pearson had arrived at a Randall’s Island shelter accompanied by over 100 police officers, plus two drones and a helicopter overhead, according to an incident report obtained by The City. Pearson said they were looking for four people who had assaulted an officer, and threatened to have the site manager fired for demanding that he show a warrant. Police sealed off roads to the island.

NO JUSTICE: for Kawaski Trawick.

FEDERAL JUDGE SHOOTS DOWN CITY GUN REGS

A Manhattan federal judge ruled Oct. 24 that parts of New York City’s gun-licensing regulations violated the Second and Fourteenth Amendments. Judge John P. Cronan held that requiring applicants for firearm permits to prove they have “good moral character” was a “broad and unrestrained” standard not “consistent with the Nation’s historical tradition of firearm regulation.” Joseph Srour of Brooklyn had challenged the regulations violated the Second and Fourteenth Amendments. Judge John P. Cronan held that requiring applicants for firearm permits to prove they have “good moral character” was a “broad and unrestrained” standard not “consistent with the Nation’s historical tradition of firearm regulation.” Joseph Srour of Brooklyn had challenged the regulations.

WHEN YOU DON’T TAKE MASS TRANSIT SERIOUSLY

The city Taxi and Limousine Commission announced Oct. 18 that it will end its cap on issuing new licenses for for-hire vehicles as long as the new cars are fully electric. “This is how we also support hard-working entrepreneurs with green jobs,” Mayor Eric Adams said at a press conference. The city had imposed the limits in 2018 after the number of app-based taxis on city streets grew to more than 70,000. Traffic engineer Sam Schwartz told Gothamist the additional cabs might impair the MTA’s impending congestion-pricing program, which is intended to reduce traffic and pollution in Manhattan by limiting entry south of 60th Street to drivers who can afford to pay fees of up to $23. “The city’s about to flood the streets with cars, while the state is looking to rein in the number of cars on the streets,” New York Taxi Workers Alliance head Bhairavi Desai said. “And both are being done at the expense of the drivers.”
IMMIGRANT VOICES

‘NOTHING FEELS PERMANENT’
AFTE TRAVELING THOUSANDS OF MILES, MIGRANTS FIND AN UNCERTAIN EXISTENCE IN NYC

By Moses Jeanfrancois & Amra Guerguerian

It’s been more than a century since waves of mostly European immigrants escaping war and hunger entered America through Ellis Island. The city’s new immigrants are also desperate; they have come fleeing state and gang violence and resource scarcity. Since June 2022 when Texas and Arizona began busing people from refuges on the southern U.S. border to New York City, nearly 130,000 migrants have arrived here. A recent additional influx of West and North African asylum seekers that didn’t arrive as part of the busing program have added to the numbers. According to the City, it has opened 210 emergency shelters (some are converted hotels). Seventeen of these are “large-scale humanitarian relief centers,” a share of which are huge pop-up tents in faraway corners of the city. Asylum seekers are not mixed with homeless New Yorkers. They are often placed in “respite centers,” which provide less food and services and often don’t follow other Calahan right-to-shelter rules, like maintaining a certain amount of space between cots. Mayor Adams has denounced a 1979 ruling that New Yorkers have a “right to shelter” under the state constitution. The mayor is appealing to the state’s supreme court to reverse this right, and has set rules that migrants can’t stay in shelters for more than 60 days. Often being moved around the city from one temporary stay to another, New York’s new immigrants are struggling to stabilize themselves with jobs and housing. Many of them either spend their days near the shelter or out looking for work and legal assistance. While some have been able to find day-to-day, under-the-table gigs, many don’t want to work illegally for fear of being deported back to the country they oftentimes fled.

We spoke to many recently-arrived migrants for this piece, most of them declining to go on the record. The dominant concern voiced in these conversations was the desire to work. While many may qualify for asylum or Temporary Protected Status, the process to get a working permit can take months or in extreme cases, years. “Ask the government, since we are here, why are they giving us food, shelter, but not letting us work? We could support ourselves if we just got working permits!” a Mauritanian refugee said. Maybe you know some newcomers. But if not, you have seen them — spraying your rims at the 24-hour car wash, selling snacks on the subway, waiting for house-cleaning or construction work in groups on the sidewalk. If you might speak their language, try welcoming them. They are New Yorkers, like us, immigrants, after all. Here are some of their stories.

Interviews have been edited for length and clarity.

MARGELIS CARRÉNO • Venezuela
I arrived here in May. They gave me a 28-day hotel and then a permanent hotel, but because my husband got a job in Pennsylvania, our expectation was that we would also go with him. That job did not materialize; so he returned to New York City, and they put us here as a family at the Roosevelt Hotel; they told us that in three days they were going to transfer us, but a month and four days have passed.

We received the notification this morning that they were going to transfer us to a temporary hotel and that we have 28 days to leave there or come back and apply again. Nothing coming our way feels permanent; we go for 28 days and then become uncertain again; you have to move again. Many people see us and may even criticize the number of bags I carry, but I have three children, the cold is coming, and the bags contain things for school — many things that are needed — especially here because it is quite cold.

My children go to school near Central Park, and they were just going to send us to Queens but I asked for something closer. Now they’re sending us to the Bronx, but looking it up on the GPS, I’ll have to spend an hour and 27 minutes traveling to take my children to school.

It is a quite difficult situation, but until we find another solution, we have to keep trusting in God and seeking out shelters, because we are waiting for our work permits which haven’t arrived.

I am looking for a job, but with the current work-permit situation and the not-so-good reputation that Venezuelans have, it becomes quite complicated since they call us all bad, but that is not the case. We didn’t come to stay in a shelter and live off the State.

My husband was working for a week in construction, which is basically what migrant men can do sometimes to get a job. He already did the work, and they have not paid him yet, and we insist on payment, but they still do not give us a response.

DIAYE • Mauritania
I didn’t know anybody. I just had one address in New York, so I came. They gave me the address en route somewhere between Barcelona and Bogota, because I fled my country. The police were harassing me for having a delivery business without the correct permitting. I had to sell it to leave. I also had to sell my dowry, leaving everything behind.

I have two children. The girl is five and the boy is one and a half. I sent them to live with my parents in Senegal. I came to ask for asylum. We don’t have freedom in Mauritania. There’s slavery in Mauritania. There’s nothing there for us. The government is against us, the Black people; it’s very racist there. There’s not a lot of sense there.

EDWIN • Nicaragua
The political situation in my country, well, the government — I had a state job … I worked at the airport. I was in favor of the government, but then things changed when it began to be in power for more than four years and began to take over state jobs. [My coworkers] began circulating rumors that I was not an ally of the government. The City sent me to a shelter in Staten Island, and then they [were forced] to send me here because it didn’t have hot water. But here [at the West 31st Street shelter] the issue is that here they only allow you to shower every other day, as in there is no bathroom to shower in. They send you to bathe at the Stewart hotel nearby.

They opened a process at the Red Cross here on 49th and 10th to do the asylum application. And later I will be able to apply for a work permit.

I don’t like being in this situation, the problem is if you go to a place to look for a place to rent, they want to scam you. They ask you for a lot of money, and they tell you ‘Okay, deposit this money in my account,’ and then you lose it. They scamme.

I don’t want to be sent from one shelter to another, so I found a person in California that is going to offer me an apartment. The bad thing is that now all my processes are going to be delayed because I have to transfer them to California.

ANONYMOUS • Mauritania

When I went to turn myself in at the border for asylum, I spent two months in detention in Arizona. It’s just like prison, but it’s not prison. You’re not allowed to call it that. I like New York better. It’s the city; there’s a lot going on. There’s nothing, just a big cell and you cannot leave. It’s been four months since I crossed the border. I came here to ask for asylum from the government, but I don’t know what they’re gonna do. We don’t have the means to get lawyers. We go traveling all around the city, and sometimes you run into somebody who wants to help you. And they’ll tell you this is where the lawyers are. But we don’t have any money to pay for the lawyers.

In the detention center they gave me and everybody a list of free lawyers [in each state]. So that’s mostly the resource I have currently.
On a quiet side street two blocks from a J train subway station in the heart of Bushwick, around 500 migrants live on Stockton Street in a “respite center,” a low-budget version of a homeless shelter begrudgingly provided by a city government that wishes they weren’t here.

The center’s conditions are bleak: seven stories of unfinished concrete. Four floors are covered in row after row of cots adorned with blankets that only partially cover the body, say the residents, who have never experienced a cold winter before. The men there receive one airplane-style pre-cooked meal per day, plus water and fruit, and have little access to social services. Respite centers and other temporary shelters erected during the migrant crisis don’t have to follow the same rules as shelters run by the Department of Homeless Services.

“It’s not so easy to talk to each other in there; it’s not comfortable,” said Michael, a Mauritanian refugee. “You always have to be quiet because someone is sleeping.”

Some of them regularly make their way across the street to the Brooklyn Community Farm, a communal garden where local residents grow food and host events. The BCF functions as one node in the Mutual Aid Collective, a citywide network of grassroots groups that seeks to fill the void created by the city’s faltering response to the nearly 130,000 migrants that have arrived in New York City since the spring of 2022.

On Wednesday and Saturday afternoons, migrants as well as other low-income neighborhood residents line up around the block in front of BCF to receive basic food staples: beans, rice, chicken, bread, fruits and vegetables. While most of them take the food home, a group of mostly West African migrants from across Stockton street take their food into the garden, prepare a meal together, and enjoy each other’s company in a green space where they feel welcomed.

“We find ourselves here and we speak the same languages, we are able to converse in comfort,” Michael said. “It’s family.”

The origins of the Mutual Aid Collective (MAC) date back to the harrowing early days of the COVID-19 pandemic when various neighborhood groups such as South Bronx Mutual Aid, Washington Square Park Mutual Aid and Bushwick Ayuda Mutua formed to deliver essential supplies to their homebound and homeless neighbors. The George Floyd protests in June of 2020 brought an additional surge of energy and volunteers into these groups which root their work in ideals of mutual aid and decentralized leadership that empowers participants to become more fully involved.

The mutual-aid groups continued to be active in their local communities and stayed in touch with each other after the protests lost momentum. When Republican governors on the southern U.S. border began sending busloads of migrants to large, liberal cities last year, the mutual aid groups’ nimble organizational style proved well-suited to respond to the urgent needs of the migrants.

“The mutual-aid groups were the first ones out there at Port Authority when the migrants started arriving, because we had been in communication with people around the country, and we knew they were coming,” said a MAC member who asked to remain anonymous. “For the first few days, it was mostly mutual aid there, giving out resources and welcoming people, and suggesting people go to those Midtown hotels and claim their right to shelter.”

Now officially more than a year old, the collective has become a little-noticed pillar of the city’s response to the migrant influx. There are more than 20 groups and several faith leaders associated with MAC.
as well as individuals who don’t belong to any organization. It has over 500 participants across several organizations and volunteer chat groups, some of which are specific to language groups.

Kitchens and restaurants, like La Morada in the South Bronx, which donates hundreds of meals per week, are also involved with MAC, as are groups that assist as needed like Bodega, the roving mutual-aid truck that cares for large amounts of cargo.

Some groups are heavily involved, but hold less concrete functions. For example, NYC ICE Watch, which formed in 2020 “in response to the imminent threat of the Trump ICE raids,” serves as the security arm of the collective. If someone is being harassed at their shelter, by the police, or by right-wing “trolls,” NYC ICE Watch steps in as a buffer, or it might provide security at a mutual aid event. The group also hosts know-your-rights trainings and helps to organize childcare for MAC events.

“It’s not a rigid structure where you have to get a certain amount of hours,” says Ariadna Phillips, a leader with South Bronx Mutual Aid.

“The mentality is that we are at our core lay people. We’re neighbors helping neighbors. You step in and step back according to your needs and abilities.”

MAC is circumspect about promoting itself to the broader public. It doesn’t need to raise large sums of money nor does it need to impress philanthropic foundations. It has over 500 participants across several organizations. It has over 500 participants across several organizations.

South Bronx Mutual Aid organizers, some of which are familiar with software design, released a web-based app it developed called AyudaNYC in August. It is accessible in English, Spanish, French, Portuguese and Arabic. It offers users six options: Work & Education, Send Message, Find Medical Access, Find Food, Find Clothing and Find Shelter. Collective members that are plugged into the back end of the app receive incoming requests and then begin a triage process in order to figure out how the service request can be best met.

While MAC receives more requests than it can fulfill, it is able to meet some of the most pressing needs of hundreds of people per week. Under the aegis of the collective, distributions take place at shelters and at other community spaces, like gardens and parks. MAC members collect and disperse tangible resources — primarily food, clothing, blankets and hygiene products, but also items like phones and bicycles.

“We actually need people with more storage space right now. And we need people with cars,” says 2Pac, a member of NYC ICE Watch.

MAC relies on donations from individuals and groups (religious congregations, charities, schools, restaurants, other businesses) that are plugged into its social media or other communication channels. In times of necessity, which occur frequently, collective members will donate out-of-pocket or out-of-pocket.

In addition to the sharing of food, clothing and supplies, MAC events feature cooking, the sharing of music, hair cutting, child care, sports, political education. The collective also responds to requests for resources and referrals for legal, medical, housing and family-reunification assistance.

Resources are primarily distributed to recently arrived migrants who have nowhere else to turn, but to other New Yorkers in need as well. Because the collective is embedded in communities and is able to respond in real time to requests that come in through its app, it can often be more responsive and provide a human touch that larger, more bureaucratic organizations cannot.

“Most of our members either are migrants or come from migrant families,” Phillips told The Independent.

Many of the people who learn about MAC for assistance go on to become a part of it. “The conversation has been had many times, ‘Yes, but we operate differently. We work hand-in-hand, collectively.’ Some people are for it and some people are not.

“For anybody that is living the experience of certain difficulties or oppressions, you’re almost guaranteed to find others in your situation. It becomes a decision if you want to join or not. But if you look out for each other, you have far more strength in numbers.”

“Nobody that is inside of a shelter takes orders from us,” Phillips said. But instead of buying a pair of cleats for each migrant in the rotating group that participates in soccer, Mars found a wholesaler who would sell him discounted cleats, “and the guys said, ‘just get 24 pairs’” for whoever is participating any given week. “So they share the cleats, and now we have around $1,000 to spend on winter coats and warm blankets.”

As newly-arrived migrants are sent to the Stockton Street respite center, longer-tenured residents are sent in droves to a makeshift tent city on Randall’s Island. But, residents told The Indy that center workers tend to acquiesce when someone refuses transfer, which some migrants have done in order to retain community at BCF.

“It should come as no surprise that the migrants are highly adaptable and are able to relate to the improvisational, non-bureaucratic style of activism embodied by the Mutual Aid Collective. They did, after all, traverse half the world in order to make it to safer ground. Many fled politically-dire situations in their home countries, sometimes leaving just after a near one was killed.

“We are a little bit of anything,” says Michael, who is an active member of the BCF mutual aid group and speaks six languages, including Chinese, because he worked for Chinese companies for 10 years in Mauritania. Government oppression back home is severe. “I was part of an opposition political party,” he recalls. “We were persecuted for criticizing the dictatorship, the prisons, the slavery, the lack of freedom. Some of us were killed.”

Like Michael, John, from Senegal, plays an active role at the semi-weekly distributions. He is an unofficial leader of the group of dozens of West African migrants that frequently cross the street to visit BCF. He makes sure each member of the group does their part with cooking and cleaning at the garden. He also helps settle disputes. Even while he was being interviewed by The Indy, two men approached him to help solve an argument about a cell phone. He hears out one man, then the next, and continues to do that until they’ve found common ground.

John’s leadership role occurred naturally. In Senegal, he was part of a family of traveling shepherds that had herded sheep for generations. He has traveled through many West African villages, learning to get comfortable quickly in a variety of settings, and speaks eight languages. But due to increasing robbery and violence on the route, John had to flee. Rebel fighters had killed his grandfather. “It was the moment to leave. I felt that if I don’t, I will lose my life,” he said.

“We prefer to prepare our own food and eat in community,” said John after we and others shared a mound of Senegalese food from the same plate, as is custom.

Hearing the warm chatter in Wolof, Poular, French and Arabic, and eating chicken and rice with my hands, I felt momentarily like we were eating chicken and rice with my hands, I felt momentarily like we were

One-hundred-and-fifty days after a near one was killed.

Mars is originally from Quebec; he speaks French and some Spanish and is able to communicate with most of the migrants that frequent BCF. He found out about a free dentist in the Bronx, the phone number of which he has been passing around to BCF visitors. Each Wednesday, he and a group of migrants travel on the subway to participate in soccer games organized by the Woodbine, an anarchist collective in Ridgewood, Queens.

“The guys were playing in barefoot, so Woodbine did a fundraiser. People gave $1,200 for cleats,” Mars said. But instead of buying a pair of cleats for each migrant in the rotating group that participates in soccer, Mars found a wholesaler who would sell him discounted cleats, “and the guys said, ‘just get 24 pairs’” for whoever is participating any given week. “So they share the cleats, and now we have around $1,000 to spend on winter coats and warm blankets.”

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MEXICO CITY — The general reaction to Mayor Eric Adams’ visit to Mexico, especially from actual migrants in the vicinity of his numerous press events, was “What’s he doing here?”

That’s a good question. Adams traveled in early October to Mexico, Ecuador and Colombia, at least in part paid for with public money, despite the fact that one of his main talking points was that his city can’t afford to receive asylum seekers. Although he avoided saying outright — “Don’t come!” — he wasn’t far off. Adams told the press that migrants were victims of “false hopes,” warned of the “American dream becoming a nightmare” and stressed that his city does not have the resources to receive more people. Ecuadorian media reported that he referred to immigration as a “global threat” and an “aggressive virus.” He was met with protesters in Colombia en route to the dangerous jungle crossing of the Darien Gap, carrying signs reading “Immigrants are not a photo op.”

Compared to Republican hate rhetoric, Adams mixes concern with dissuasion, walking a fine line between recognizing the plight of individual migrants and vilifying their numbers. On his Latin American trip, the mayor carried the same baggage of prejudice, prevarication and political grandstanding. By taking the useless message of “stay home” to thousands of families facing life-threatening violence, hunger or displacement, he reinforced the divisions and misconceptions that the Republican Party uses to mobilize the most racist and xenophobic elements of its base.

As elections heat up, immigration is bringing Republicans and Democrats closer together in the worst possible way — a shared narrative that criminalizes victims of forced migration as the cause of U.S. ills. Texan Republican Gov. Greg Abbott ships thousands of asylum seekers to New York, and Democrat Adams takes up the baton saying they “will destroy New York City.” Politicians in both parties have been mining the Republican-created niche of immigrant-bashing for months. They portray immigrants as the problem and not the symptom of the problem. But immigration to the United States today is not discretionary; it’s predominantly forced migration, in some cases with whole families leaving overnight to save their lives. Migrants don’t need Adams to tell them about the dangers on the trail — they know. Elaborate networks of internal communication inform constantly regarding the safest routes, what to avoid and how, and where one can find succor and support. It’s critical to survival.

The situation in each country of origin differs somewhat, but the causes of immigration include the deep inequality of the global economy and the direct results of many U.S. foreign policies, including the drug war that detonates violence (Mexico as a heart-breaking case in point), economic sanctions, the promotion of unregulated predatory capitalism and “free trade.” Given their role in the problem, U.S. politicians have the power and the tools to prevent forcing people to flee their homes, but it’s much more politically advantageous to blame the immigrants when they do. The U.S. press and politicians point to a rise in border crossings — 8,000 apprehensions a day, according to the latest figures — as a “surge” an “invasion,” amid rampant metaphors of immigrants as a “virus” or “plague.” Not only do they misconstrue the reality of migration flows, they also obscure the reality of migrants’ role in society.

Crossings now are not at a record-high; instead, they mark a return to numbers before the end of Title 42 and measures in May that caused a brief hiatus in migratory flows. Also, U.S. government data shows that more than a quarter of apprehensions are “border recidivism,” the same people making multiple attempts. This is the logical result of increased apprehension efforts, not offering sufficient legal pathways to meet real labor demand, and forcing people to wait in Mexico for delayed asylum processes.

Thanks to press and Republican hype, a growing percentage of the population is “dissatisfied with the level of immigration into the country today,” believing it is too high, according to
a recent Gallup poll. Immigrant-aimed mass killings demonstrate that some are more satisfied.

But let’s say there were a significant increase in migratory flows to the country. The second point that is tragically written about the Adams narrative on immigration is that it poses a threat to Americans. Migrants contribute to every aspect of U.S. society — as taxpayers, neighbors, workers, artists, community members and family.

Studies demonstrate that migrants’ contribution to the U.S. economy has a net positive impact. Republican policies to crack down on undocumented workers are straining state economies, with reports of severe labor shortages coming out of Florida after Gov. Ron DeSantis pushed through measures to force undocumented workers out of the state’s labor market. The Chamber of Commerce reports a labor shortage in every state in the country, with reduced immigration a major factor. At what economists agree is U.S. “full employment”, immigrants are not stealing jobs — in fact they are needed for essential jobs that cannot be filled otherwise.

THE EXTERNALIZATION OF THE BORDER

And yet the push to exclude continues, conveniently (for business) consolidating an underground labor market devoid of labor rights, bargaining power or equality.

The Biden strategy now goes beyond “securing the border” to measures to “externalize the border” — enlisting countries to the south in stopping migrant flows before they reach the U.S. border. Mexico is the number one partner in doing this.

Mexico has gone from an early policy of issuing humanitarian visas that enabled safe travel to an erratic mix of repression and bureaucratic chaos. The capitulation began in 2019 when Trump threatened tariffs on Mexican goods if the nation didn’t adopt the U.S.’ anti-migrant policies, and, if anything, it has intensified under Biden. Although Title 42 and Remain in Mexico policies were lifted, in last month’s agreement with the Biden administration, the government of Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador agreed to crack down once again, upping deportations and repatriation flights (especially from its northern border), prohibiting migrants from boarding trains, and deploying more troops to both its northern and southern borders along with intensified persecution in the interior of the country.

Gabriela Hernandez, director of the Mexico City shelter Casa Tocan, notes, “Now the migration enters on foot and leaves on foot, without any document or protection. And it’s not the migrant’s fault. It’s the government’s fault for not wanting to issue documents that would regulate the process. The government is handing the migrants over to organized crime and traffickers on a silver platter.”

Mexico’s border with the United States is testimony to the failure of joint immigration policies, living proof of Mexico’s lack of national sovereignty, and a cartels’ paradise — for extortion, human trafficking, forced recruiting and sexual abuse. The more crackdowns, the worse it gets.

With a wait of an average of four years for asylum hearings to be resolved and a backlog of 2.6 million cases pending, Biden’s government has opened migrant processing centers in Central American countries and ordered those countries to block migratory flows. Although Mexico has refused to host a U.S. migrant processing center, the use of the faulty “CBP One” app, developed by the Biden administration to request a hearing and track progress, means that thousands are stuck in Mexico.

“Externalization of borders” is a fancy way of saying that across the globe, wealthy nations are seeking to shirk their international obligations to honor asylum and refugee rights by shunting them off to less-powerful countries. Not only does it violate and often outright deny those rights, it also constitutes a form of hegemonic power over sovereign nations.

There is no legal international obligation for Mexico to carry out U.S. border policies. So why does it?

MEXICO IN THE MIDDLE

Trump’s 2019 tariff threat sent shock waves throughout the government and business sector. Under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), “in-tegrated” nations are bound together on the U.S. economy. Mexico also holds elections in 2024. Although immigration is not an issue that moves people and the president’s party seems likely to win again, the Mexican president doesn’t want to provoke the U.S. during the volatile electoral period.

Lopez Obrador has correctly calculated that pressure from the United States on migration will increase in the run-up to U.S. elections. That’s not a hard call to make with Republicans already calling to bomb Mexican fentanyl labs and send U.S. troops in to attack drug cartels and human traffickers. While rejecting these absurd ideas, AMLO recently decided to take the immigration bull by the horns and build his own regional leadership around the issue.

Lopez Obrador hosted an Oct. 22 meeting of regional heads of state to address immigration. It was attended by the presidents of Colombia, Honduras, Guatemala, Cuba, Venezuela, Ecuador, and Haiti and by representatives of El Salvador, Belizem and Costa Rica. But signs point to Mexico’s continued support for the U.S. border deterrence and externalization strategy, while demanding foreign aid and investment.

Although some plans for humanitarian support were discussed, there was no call for a major shift in the U.S.-imposed strategy of detention, deportation and deterrence. The group followed Mexico’s lead by demanding investment in the region, with no criticism of the Biden policy of private investment that exacerbates push factors including extractivist megaprojects that displace local communities, environmentally-destructive development like factory farms that contribute to climate change, and corporate-land and resource grabs.

Lopez Obrador insists that Mexico is a transit country. The reality is that it is also a destination, with an explosion of applications for asylum that also encounter an impossible backlog. Programs to rapidly integrate asylum seekers and allow them to work would benefit the economy and reduce human suffering. Mexico also continues to be a sending country. No one talks about it because it’s an embarrassment to a government that claims to have resolved internal problems, but the large majority of U.S. border apprehensions continue to be Mexicans.

So what could be done? The militarized, supply-side approach to immigration is as doomed in immigration control as it is in drug control. “Deterrence” implies options that people don’t have. In thousands of asylum interviews, migrants state they would stay home if they could.

While immigration is by definition a regional phenomenon, that doesn’t mean that regional approaches defined by who holds the most power (the United States) are the answer. Each country has to take responsibility for what happens within its own borders. In the United States, it’s not just the U.S. immigration system that is broken. It’s a social system that fails to provide minimal wellbeing to everyone. This focus means resisting the temptation to divide communities into us vs. them.

When considering housing needs, place a policy priority on affordable housing for all. When asylum seekers need work permits, include an effort to provide work permits for all immigrants, including those already in the labor force performing vital functions, as became strikingly evident in the pandemic.

As Oscar Chacon, director of the nationwide immigrant organization Alianza Americas, points out, “We could easily imagine a different hemisphere-wide approach, one that starts with the positive contributions migrants make but also recognizes that these migratory flows, far from being undesirable, are highly necessary.”

Chacon in the United States and Hernandez in Mexico both stress the need for governments to get together with migrant organizations, labor leaders and groups that provide humanitarian services to talk about what the real needs are and how to meet them together.

The federal government and U.S. mayors cannot bear a serious effort to find a regional solution to the immigration problem if they can’t or won’t fix their own problems. It’s simply not true that there is no room in the United States — or in Mexico — for people who need a safe place to work and raise their families. It’s false in demographic terms, it’s false in economic terms, it’s illegal and it’s morally reprehensible.

Laura Carlsen, is the director of MIRA: Feminisms and Democracies, A Mexico-City based think tank. For more, see americas.org.
A GUIDE TO HELP YOU BETTER UNDERSTAND THIS CENTURY-OLD CONFLICT

By John Tierney

The Israeli-Gaza War has dominated the news since Hamas won a popular election in Palestinian elections in late October. In the two months since Hamas has been in power, Israeli officials have complained that Hamas has done nothing to resolve the original conflict. As The New York Times went to press, Hamas is likely to get even more.

So how did we get here?

On the one hand, the corporate media has much more on its mind. And when our political leaders catch a bad day on war, the media’s job is to deliver that signal as fast.

What appears below is a brief sketch of a century-old conflict, as told through short vignettes about how events continue to shape this conflict today. At William Pfaff’s request, this piece is not the last word on the Middle East.

The Palestinian conflict is a tragedy for both Palestinians and Israelis who live by the logic of a frontier that one historically opposing and abused group must make to the land of another group of people who have lived there longer.

This newly arrived group has, at times, looked outside of what its own historical and cultural identity are then triggered, which in turn turns them self-righteous to continue using them.

When does all this end?

There are no resolutions in both camps who envision all the land from the river to the sea belonging to their group and see no way of getting control of their way to return to what we can’t envision at this time. If so, peaceful co-existence will be the concern of the whole people,” she writes. “Social experiments would have been the concern of the whole people.”

A PROPHETIC WARNING

The German Jewish political philosopher Hannah Arendt is best known as the author of the Origins of Totalitarianism (1951). Since a committed Zionists, Arendt changed her mind, writing in 1944 that a Jewish state in Palestine supported by her nation would inevitably develop into a modern-day Sparta. “The German Jewish culture would come to the concern of the whole people,” the Jewish Israelis of that time.

In Palestine, the British and Jewish fought for control of the land, which was then the British mandate in Palestine. Britain later decided to give up control of the region, with the establishment of the state of Israel.

The British Mandate

The League of Nations, the United Nations predecessor organization, grants Great Britain to create a Mandate over Palestine while the British Mandate over Syria and the Levant was extended over the region.

The Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) was founded as an umbrella organization for all the popular groups in the Palestinian territories who fought to destroy the Israeli state through armed struggle. In 1974, it began to chart a new course for the PLO. The PLO called its main conference in Tunis in 1975, which was attended by 13 Palestinian organizations. It adopted a new charter for the PLO, which called for a one-state solution to the conflict. The PLO also called for the establishment of a Palestinian state.

Starting in 1987, the PLO declared its intention to establish a Palestinian state. The PLO’s charter was originally adopted in 1969, during the Four Years War. The PLO declared its intention to establish a Palestinian state.

The Nakba

The Nakba, or “catastrophe,” refers to the displacement of more than 700,000 Palestinians from their homes during the 1948 war. The Nakba is remembered as a time of great suffering and loss, and it continues to be a source of deep pain and anger for many Palestinians.

The Second Intifada

The Second Intifada, which began in September 2000, was a Palestinian uprising against Israeli occupation. The uprising lasted for nearly two years and resulted in the death of over 1,000 Palestinians.

Israel invades Lebanon

The invasion of Lebanon in 2006 was a significant event in the history of the Middle East. Israel’s military campaign against Hezbollah, a militant group aligned with Hamas, was widely condemned and resulted in the deaths of hundreds of civilians.

The Oslo Accords

The Oslo Accords were a series of agreements between Israel and the PLO in 1993 and 1995, which were intended to lead to a peaceful resolution of the conflict. However, the agreements were never fully implemented, and the peace process ultimately failed.

The origins of Hezbollah

Hezbollah was founded in 1985 by Hassan Nasrallah, a Shia Muslim cleric. The group has been involved in various conflicts in the Middle East, including the Israeli occupation of South Lebanon.

The Oslo Accords

The Oslo Accords were a series of agreements between Israel and the PLO in 1993 and 1995, which were intended to lead to a peaceful resolution of the conflict. However, the agreements were never fully implemented, and the peace process ultimately failed.
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**VFP members protest at the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv.**

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PathMakers to Peace www.brooklynpeace.org

**PALESTINE/ISRAEL 101**

Continued from previous page

**WITHDRAWAL FROM GAZA**

**AUGUST 2005**

Israeli forces withdraw from Gaza 38 years after capturing it from Egypt, abandoning settlements and leaving it under the control of the Palestinian Authority.

**HAMAS WINS AN ELECTION**

**JANUARY 2006**

With the ineffectual Palestinian Authority mired in corruption, Hamas wins the majority of seats in a Palestinian legislative election.

**ISRAEL-HEZBOLLAH WAR**

**JULY 2006**

This 34-day conflict began with cross-border raid by Hezbollah that killed several Israelis and ended with as many as 1,300 Lebanese killed and billions of dollars in damage to Lebanon’s civic infrastructure. 165 Israelis were killed. Hezbollah would only grow stronger as a military force.

**THE FIRST ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR**

**DECEMBER 2008**

Israel launches a 22-day military offensive in Gaza after rockets were fired at the southern Israeli town of Sderot. About 1,400 Palestinians and 13 Israelis are killed before a ceasefire is agreed upon. Similar conflicts between Israel and Hamas would occur in 2012, 2014 and 2014 with Gazans enduring much higher casualties each time.

**MARCH 2017**

In the centennial year of the Balfour Declaration, the Trump administration moves the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem in a signal of strong support for the Israeli government’s claim that “the eternal city” should be its capital.

**NETANYAHU & HAMAS 2019**

In a 2019 Israeli Cabinet meeting, Prime Minister Netanyahu urges sending more support to Hamas in Gaza as a way to weaken the Palestinian Authority, which governs the West Bank.

**THE ABRAHAM ACCORDS**

**2020**

With interest in the peace process defunct in both Tel Aviv and Washington, the Trump administration, led by his son-in-law Jared Kushner, came up with a novel solution: Ignore the Palestinians and bribe Arab nations to normalize relations with Israel. So far, Bahrain, Morocco, Sudan and the United Arab Emirates have joined the Abraham Accords. Saudi Arabia was moving toward a normalization deal with Israel until the Israel-Gaza War erupted.

**NETANYAHU RETURNS TO POWER**

**JANUARY 2023**

Upon returning to power, Benjamin Netanyahu and his extremist religious allies focused on expanding the settler footprint in the West Bank as rapidly as possible. For them, burying any hopes for a two-state solution remains a work in progress. To deal with the turmoil caused by the government’s policies, most of the Israeli Defense Forces troops stationed in Southern Israel are rotated to the West Bank.

**ANOTHER WAR BEGINS**

**OCTOBER 7, 2023**

Hamas breaks through the high-tech wall that surrounds Gaza and goes on a murderous rampage in about 20 nearby Israeli towns and villages, leaving over 1,400 Israelis dead. Israeli vows revenge, killing more than 7,000 Gazans (including more than 2,000 children) in less than three weeks while cutting off all food, water, fuel and medicines.
WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO CALL ISRAEL AN APARTHEID STATE?

By Ellen Davidson

What does it mean to call Israel an apartheid state? The word, meaning literally “apart-ness,” originally referred to policies introduced in South Africa in 1948. Although presented as a path of equal but separate development of racial groups in that country, like “separate but equal” in this country, it was anything but.

Under apartheid, people were classified as “native,” “colored,” “Asian,” or “white,” and these designations determined access to land, schools, resources, etc. Apartheid laws served to reserve the vast majority of the land for white South Africans, relocating the non-white population to so-called bantustans far from the areas they had lived in for many years. In the white-controlled areas, nonwhites were denied political rights, including the right to vote, since they were considered citizens of the ostensibly independent “homelands” set up by the apartheid government, which consisted of small, unviable enclaves with no resources or opportunities for work or economic development.

The system also included identity cards that nonwhite people had to carry in order to live, work, or even travel in particular parts of the country. These notorious “pass laws” were the main instrument of control and existed until 1996.

This web of restrictive laws was enforced by a brutal police state, and thousands of South Africans, mainly Black and “colored,” were imprisoned, tortured or killed.

After decades of internal resistance both armed and nonviolent, and an international campaign to isolate South Africa economically and politically, the laws were repealed in the early 1990s and a new constitution adopted in 1993.

Apartheid now refers to any system of racial segregation and is deemed a crime against humanity by the U.N. Apartheid Convention.

So why have Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, the Israeli human rights group B’tselem and many others declared Israel to be an apartheid state?

One of the central tenets of the South African system was dispossession from the land and control of resources by white settlers. Israel has replicated this process. In Israel/Palestine, the land that is nominally under Palestinian control constitutes 22% of historic Palestine. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were made permanent exiles in 1947–48, as Zionist militias terrorized and massacred whole villages. Many more were forced out by the invasion in 1967, when the Israeli army took over the West Bank and Gaza in an occupation that continues to this day.

Even the land that is supposed to make up an eventual Palestinian state according to proponents of a two-state solution is not contiguous; it is divided between the Occupied West Bank and Gaza, which, although not technically occupied, is blockaded on both its land and sea borders by Israel. The West Bank itself is split up into enclaves increasingly surrounded by and encroached on by Israeli settlements. It is further atomized by Israel’s “separation barrier” (which Palestinians call the apartheid wall), which at times goes through the center of villages (in one case through the middle of an elementary school playground) and cuts off farmers from their agricultural lands. The territory is riddled with checkpoints and other military installations, and crisscrossed with roads that are reserved for Israeli settlers.

There are numerous laws both inside Israel’s formal borders and in the Occupied Territories that make clear the second-class status of Israel’s non-Jewish citizens and residents of the West Bank and Gaza. Just to mention a few:

- In 2021 the Israeli parliament adopted the Jewish Nation-State Law, which identifies Israel as the Nation-State of the Jewish people, thus formalizing the inferior status of the Palestinian people. The Supreme Court of Israel upheld the law. The current government holds as one of its guiding principles: “The Jewish people have an exclusive and inalienable right over all areas of the Land of Israel.”

- Jews from anywhere in the world are eligible to become citizens of Israel while holding on to their previous citizenship.

- Palestinians in the Occupied Territories are subject to arbitrary “administrative detention” for up to six months, at which point their detention can be renewed, leading to many Palestinians being held in prison for years on end with no charge and no legal recourse.

- Resources in the Occupied West Bank are disproportionately allocated to the Israeli settlements. For example, settlements use up to 10 times as much water per capita as Palestinian communities, and the Palestinians are charged higher prices.

- Palestinians in the West Bank are subject to the control of the Israeli military, whereas residents of illegal Israeli settlements in the region are not. In fact, rules of engagement for Israeli military in the West Bank forbid them from firing on or arresting Israeli settlers, even when they are armed and violent.

- Palestinians in Gaza have no freedom of movement at all. The entire region is blockaded by Israel, which controls travel in and out.

- Palestinian homes both inside Israel and in the West Bank are under constant threat of demolition because Israeli authorities deny building permits to Palestinians (Al-Araqib, a Bedouin village in the Negev, has been demolished more than 200 times since 2010). Israeli settlements on the West Bank, which are illegal under international law, are protected by the Israeli military.

- Because of the presence of Jewish settlers, many streets in the city of Hebron are off-limits to the Palestinian residents. They are called “sterilized” by the IDF. There are three levels of sterilization: Palestinians may not open businesses on the street, Palestinians may not drive vehicles on the street, and Palestinians may not walk on the street, even if their home is on that street. The city is dotted with ladders between rooftops used to access homes whose residents cannot walk in or out on their own front doors.

These are just some examples of the daily repression and humiliation faced by Palestinians inside Israel and under occupation. No wonder South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu said in 2014, “I know first-hand that Is-rael has created an apartheid reality within its borders and through its occupation. The parallels to my own beloved South Africa are painfully stark indeed.”

In a call to replicate the boycott, divestment and sanctions campaign that ultimately helped bring an end to South Africa’s racist regime, he said, “Those who continue to do business with Israel, who contribute to a sense of ‘normalcy’ in Israeli society, are doing the people of Israel and Palestine a disservice. They are contributing to the perpetuation of a profoundly unjust status quo.”
‘HEY EVERYONE, I’M STILL ALIVE’
A YOUNG WOMAN REPORTS FROM AMID THE RUBBLE

By Amal Guerguerian

Before Oct. 7, @wizard_bisan1 was the Instagram profile of a young Gazan journalist who posted videos about the daily oppression Gazans face, about Palestinian culture, about her love for travel and real for life. On Oct. 8, she posted an austere series of videos consisting of slides with white words on black background:

“There are things that happen in the war on Gaza that you cannot know from the news; you need to live them to understand. For example, do they say in the news that we wake up with the dust of bombing on our faces and bodies, in our eyes and on our bed, and smelling of gunpowder and dirt? … A few seconds determine our fate, so we sleep [with our clothes and shoes on] so we don’t waste any time when the bombing [starts].”

On Oct. 13, things got more dire. Bisan writes on top of screenshots of crowded streets and evacuation notices: “I can’t publish any videos! Please help us … There is no internet connection. … Me and my family are in the street and we don’t find any place to go. … the humanitarian aid zone is exactly on the border with Egypt. It’s officially the second NAKBA!”

Accounts like @wizard_bisan1 have become a lifeline for those who care to follow what’s happening in the ground Gaza. With the United States demanding that Al Jazeera reduce it’s coverage and with META deleting pro-Palestinian Instagram accounts, Bisan’s reporting is more indispensable than ever — although internet connection in the bombed-out strip is becoming increasingly sparse.

She often starts her videos with the same opening: “Hi, everyone. This is Bisan from Gaza. I’m still alive.” She is able to charge her phone by using electricity from generators, but is fearful a day will soon come that run out of gas. Here are some excerpts from her recent videos:

**OCT 13**
Bisan posts from a crowded square:

“More updates about the evacuation… Do you remember when I said that they pushed people to evacuate from the north end [of Gaza] to the southern areas via a safe route as they said? Okay, that was a trick. That was a trick. They targeted ambulances, cars and buses on the road. … They are playing with and on us. They told us this is a safe route. Innocent people took anything from their homes and went to the southern areas, and they killed them. They literally killed them. Literally, more than 30 ambulance cars until now reach al-Shifa [hospital] and it’s not ended yet. Many people are killed. Most of them are children. The scenes are really hard. I can’t even imagine that I’m living this. I can’t imagine that this is real. I’m losing my mind. I’m losing my life. [Crying] please, do something!”

**OCT 15**
Bisan reports from in front of al-Shifa hospital, which is crowded with people. She interviews three young boys — Mohammed, who looks around 10, Neher, who is maybe eight, and little Karam who must be four or five — that are sweeping the street:

Bisan: For who are you cleaning? Boys: For al-Shifa Bisan: Are you volunteering? Where are you staying? Boys: Al-Shifa Bisan: So you’re staying there [points to an area nearby], and you are cleaning in front of the tent? Who gave you those brooms? Boys: We collected them from the neighbors. Bisan: Let me see your work! What are your names? Boys: Neber, Karam and Mohammad. Bisan: So Mohammad, Karam and Neher are cleaning al-Shifa Hospital, the place that they took as a shelter. By themselves they are volunteering. So they’re just creating home. These are our heroes; our kids. Bravo, bravo, kids.”

**OCT 16**
Bisan walks around a small shaded square with makeshift shelters in it, the sound of voices in the background.

I and my family are losing our minds. We’re having illusions, wallah, we are having delusions. Tonight I stood up at 2:30 a.m. screaming and trying to cover my nose and my eyes with with a piece of cloth and some water because I — I — I think I saw — I saw white phosphorus bombs and I thought they were real, and then my family tried to calm me down, and I realized that I was — like everything was like a delusion. It was not real. To — today in the morning, my sister, she’s saying “I’m hearing screaming all the day and night inside my head” and my mother is bearing raining. So what is happening? I don’t know, but we’re losing our minds. We are losing our sense. Allah, give us more patience.

**OCT 17**
Bisan reports from her tent city: We see an outdoor kitchen, a pick-up truck-turned closet, makeshift tents, people selling bread and many people milling around.

“So, in this way I can tell you that we are people who deserve to live. We are creating new ways and trying to make it suitable for living, everyday, in every phase that we are going through. Despite that, we don’t know if we’re living until tomorrow or not … we are just trying to make the shelter or the hospital, as safe and as suitable as we used to [be] in our streets and neighborhoods and homes. So here are people selling bread, selling any other goods like snacks, like juices, making drinks, and some people are shaving, are barbers now, but open-air barbers. So, no one could deprive this people, their right to live and the right to live safely in their country, in their homeland. Whatever they do, whoever they are, and whoever’s support they got — it’s just our right to live, as Palestinians in Palestine, eating bread.

**OCT 22**
Bisan reports from under a tarp. There are sounds of air raids heard.

Hey everyone, I’m still alive. And I want to tell you about my biggest fear. So my biggest fear is not to die. Actually, I’d prefer to die than living all of these nightmares, continuous nightmares. My biggest fear is to live, after all this war, to live and face the reality that our cities, our homes, our homeland, and everything is destroyed — our beloved ones, our friends and relatives are killed. And the fact that we don’t have work, and we bare to deal with a lot of humanitarian crises and people are facing winter — winter is coming. People are without homes, without food, without fuel, without electricity. The infrastructure is destroyed. There are no schools, universities or anything — we have to rebuild everything and to rebuild our motivation to live and our mental health. And that will take years and years. I mean, it’s really terrifying. How could we live after this? There are people who are killed, and we still didn’t know. How could we face this? I really still didn’t know. It’s just the 16th day of the war. And we’ve lost around 5,000 souls and tens of thousands of buildings.

**OCT 25 (morning)**
Bisan reports from a bombed-out building with a bullet-proof PRESS vest on. She walks around pulling objects from rubble.

Oh hey everyone. Another home was bombed in the most crowded area in the Gaza Strip and

Continued on page 18
Israel has responded to Hamas’ Oct. 7 massacre of 1,400 of its citizens with an unrelenting aerial bombardment that has killed more than 7,000 Palestinians in Gaza as The Indypendent goes to press. Israel is also poised to launch a ground invasion into Gaza while speculation grows that it will seek to expel Gaza’s 2.3 million residents into neighboring Egypt. The unrelenting violence has spurred anti-war protests with large turnouts around the world and across New York City. Here in the city, many of the protests have been led by Palestinians whose concerns historically have been ignored whenever Israel goes to war.

— Indypendent Staff

Together: A father and son attend an Oct. 21 pro-Palestine protest in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn.

Community Support: Bay Ridge residents come out to show their support for the Oct. 21 protest march as it wound through their neighborhood.

City Hall Protest: (clockwise) An artist shows a painting he made of a Gazan family enduring a bombing. A protester makes their views known. And three women join the protest.
The backlash to these efforts has been swift and sounding. Two days after the Harvard students released their statement, for instance, more than 350 Harvard faculty signed a letter saying that the activists’ stance amounted to “nothing less than condemning the mass murder” of Israelis. Several U.S. lawmakers issued similar denunciations. And the opposition did not stop there. On Oct. 12, the right-wing group Accuracy in Media dispatched a truck to Cambridge, Massachusetts, to publicize images of students who were thought to be part of signatory organizations. The truck was emblazoned with the URL “HarvardHatesJews.com,” which redirected to the Accuracy in Media site. According to a former American Civil Liberties Union president who spoke to The New York Times, such actions aim to suppress students’ speech. They may also be impacting their employment prospects: After the Harvard students’ letter was published, CEOs at multiple companies publicly demanded that the university release the names of students whose groups had signed the statement so that they could be sure not to hire them.

Such job-offer revocations are sometimes accompanied by further harassment, as in the case of New York University Law School’s student body president Ryna Workman. On Oct. 10, Workman sent a newsletter to the law school’s student body expressing solidarity with Palestinians and blaming the “tremendous loss of life” in the region on Israel’s apartheid regime. In a statement sent to journalists, Workman said their message was “inspired [by] what many Jewish peace activists and Israelis, including the editorial board of Israel’s largest newspaper, have voiced over the past week in response to the violence.” However, in response to their newsletter, Workman lost a job offer at the law firm Winston & Strawn. The law school’s Student Bar Association also voted to begin the process of ousting Workman as student body president, and NYU law alumni have since called for their expulsion from the university. “I’ve been getting death threats online,” Workman said in the statement, adding that they have been attacked for being Black, queer, and nonbinary. “The harassment campaign against me has targeted all facets of my identity.” On other campuses, the threats to Palestine activists have been even more severe, such as the Oct. 12 rally at Brooklyn College where Inna Vernikov, a Republican New York City Councilwoman, showed up openly carrying a gun. Vernikov filmed herself calling the student ralliers “pro-Hamas” and “nothing short of terrorists without the bombs.” (The councilwoman was later arrested for openly
DSA IN THE CROSSHAIRS
TOP NEW YORK DEMS TARGET DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISTS FOR CRITICIZING ISRAEL

By Theodore Hamm

On Sunday, Oct. 8, one day after Hamas launched its deadly assault on Israel, pro-Palestinian activists held a rally at Times Square that also brought out counter-protesters in support of Israel. Behind barricades on opposite sides of W 43 Street, the two groups loudly expressed their positions.

At one point a nondescript young male of color on the Palestinian side — who carried no signs and wore nothing that indicated his political position — waved his cellphone so that people on the other side of 43rd Street would see it. On it there was an image of a swastika.

A pro-Israel protester named Stuart Meissner captured the provocateur’s action and soon tweeted two photos, stating that the pro-Palestine activists were “showing their true colors.” The NY Post then ran Meissner’s photo on its cover on Monday, Oct. 9. A video posted at the time by the Daily Mail captured the same incident.

It's tempting to say that the “rest is history” — but the fallout has not ended. For at least the next two weeks, the Post continued highlighting the swastika in order to denounce pro-Palestine protests. So did the mayor and soon tweeted two photos, stating that...
GET YOUR MONEY!

GAZA VOICES
Continued from Page 14

in the world, of course. So the narrative is talking about bombing the terrorists’ homes, but let’s see what the terrorists look like. [Picks up a ladies’ fan] that was given to a mother or a wife. [Picks up round metal object] remains of a rocket; it’s very heavy. [Picks up a purse] that’s a handbag, a beautiful handbag. She maybe went for a wedding or a party. [Bends down and leafs through a small children’s backpack] look at this; look at this! So this beautiful student, little one, was trying to learn some English. [Picks up a dusty, ripped photo] And look I found this … it’s a photograph of someone’s graduation. A toy, some of their mattress, clothes. So if these are someone’s who is a terrorist, let me know how the normal homes look like … [video ends]

WERE YOU ARRESTED DURING A NEW YORK CITY #BLACKLIVESMATTER PROTEST IN THE SUMMER OF 2020? YOU MAY HAVE A CLAIM TO A $9,950 SETTLEMENT, BUT YOU HAVE TO SUBMIT THE CLAIM BY DECEMBER 22 2023

OCT 25 (night)
A video title “No electricity in Shifa’a hospital,” filmed in front of the Al-Shifa hospital. One building is illuminated, but most are just columns of dark windows.

Yesterday, the Ministry of Health talked about the whole system collapsing, and they talked about the [lack of] water and fuel. Today, at the Shifa Hospital, the central and the largest hospital in the Gaza strip in the north and the south, collapsed, or at least started to collapse after the electricity cut off suddenly, while there are operations, intensive care, newborn incubators. [Pans from one lit building to a few dark ones] So the electricity is here, but not here.

OCT 27
Busan reports straight into the camera not long after taking a shower.

Do you know that I’ve been struggling for almost a week to have a shower? And finally I could. … I can’t accept to not find a place to have a shower or to sleep or to have some privacy, or even to cry. [Crying] all my wishes now and all that I want is to stop this war. … I know that we’ve lost a lot of beloved friends and relatives, places and homes and everything, but at least we’re alive now, so just let us get back to — or try to get back — or find a way to get back to our lives. We lost enough, I think; we lost enough, I think; this is satisfying for the occupation; it’s enough; just leave us alone.

BACKLASH
Continued from Page 16

carrying a weapon at a rally, which is prohibited in New York.) One member of Brooklyn College’s Students for Justice in Palestine chapter, who asked to remain anonymous due to safety concerns, said that students were alarmed by Vernikov’s presence. “We felt threatened. A lot of students felt like their lives were in danger,” they said.

While many of these threats have been aimed at student activists, Palestine Legal’s Sainath said the climate of repression has also affected professors and university administrators. “Professors are being questioned, their classes are being canceled, and they are being locked out of their emails over supporting Palestinian rights,” she said. “Some university administrators have reported to us that they feel that they can’t even publicly support their Palestinian students right now.” Pro-Israel donors have also put pressure on institutions themselves. Multiple donors to Harvard said they would cut off their funds because the university had been too slow to condemn the Hamas attack and the student groups’ statement. Some donors to the University of Pennsylvania have also said they will no longer fund the school because of what they described as its “silence” on the Hamas attacks, though the president in fact condemned Hamas’s “abhorrent attacks” three days after the assault.

While campuses are at the center of the clash over pro-Palestinian speech, human rights groups and other non-academic institutions have also been targeted by harassment campaigns.

A co-leader of local solidarity group Rochester Witness Palestine, who requested anonymity due to safety concerns, told Jewish Currents that Ahmad Abuznaid, the executive director of the US Campaign for Palestinian Rights (USCPR), was scheduled to give an in-person keynote speech in Rochester, New York, during an October 13th event. The speech was slated to be held at an Islamic center in Rochester; however, the center had to pull out of hosting the event because of threats it received. (Abuznaid spoke online instead.) Such concerns have also affected other events in Rochester, with a Palestinian film festival organized by Witness Palestine also being moved online after the host theater pulled out for safety reasons.

The Rochester talk featuring Abuznaid was not the only USCPR event that was affected. In Texas, a Hilton hotel canceled the group’s upcoming conference, saying that it posed “potential risks to our Team Members and guests.” But the hotel did not cite “any specific threats or provide any record of the threats received,” Abuznaid said, noting that “without any of that information, it’s hard to believe they didn’t simply cave to anti-Palestinian racists.” Texas Governor Greg Abbott praised the hotel for canceling an event he said was put on by “Hamas supporters,” adding that “no location in Texas should host or sponsor USCPR.” Meanwhile, in Virginia, the Council on American Islamic Relations, the largest Muslim American civil rights group, said it had to move the location of an annual banquet because, after it updated the event programming to focus on Palestinian human rights, the hotel hosting the event received calls from anonymous people threatening “to plant bombs in the hotel’s parking garage, kill specific hotel staff in their homes, and storm the hotel.”

As the Israeli bombing of Gaza continues with no end in sight, Sainath said she is bracing for more such instances. “The repression we’re seeing is different in nature and more intense than anything we have witnessed in recent years,” she said. At the same time, Sainath predicts the crackdown on speech won’t stop dissent. “People of conscience—particularly of the youngest generations—are continuing to speak out despite immense personal risk,” she said.

A longer version of this article originally appeared at jewishcurrents.org.
Dear Rev,

Sometimes when we’re on the streets with all the opposition shouting, I wonder what happened to graciousness or restraint. Is it even possible these days? Can you imagine... courtesy?

HACKETT
Flatbush, Brooklyn

Yes there are standards, even in today’s world.

With conservatives, friendliness is often more powerful than aggression. Try it! Add fearlessness to the friendliness and you can break down MAGA types. With police, my advice is to make them laugh or show any outward emotion at all, and things get better. You know so many of the cops are damaged veterans, and many are very lonely.

Democrats who bank at Chase and want their kids to go to Harvard — now they are the lying scum of the Earth and are beyond the reach of courtesy. Hackett, my best advice is to Will Smith ‘em in the face... Then hose ‘em down with diseased excrement from the pollution of their own factories while screaming “IN 2023 MODERATION IS MURDER!” Of course, the factory part takes research.

Good luck!
REV

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Dear Sir,

I find as the news comes in that NOTHING IS TRUE! Words are not what they used to be. The stupidest ads are as truth-telling as Joe Biden. We’re living inside a swarm of falsehoods. Please address this situation. But then again, will I believe you?

AMEYA
Binghamton, NY

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Dear Rev,

I believe YOU! You are telling the truth. But you know, calling it all a lie is the easy part — of course it’s all a lie. Militarism is based on lies. (Iraq was launched with a comedy sketch. Afghanistan had no explanation at all.) Religions offer God-narratives that are outright nonsense, but like the wars millions of innocents suffer pain and early death as a result. And we carry the psychic weight of saturation advertising throughout our day, scores of simultaneous product claims assaulting us, delivered by 70-foot tall supermodels from the sides of buildings.

We walk around in a conspiracy theory the size of the atmosphere. No wonder that we don’t seem to believe that the monster storms and wildfires actually happen. The fascinating question is, how would we get the truth across to each other? How do we take a truth and carry it to our fellow humans? When the truth comes to us, and it might be the key to Peace, it might be a decisive step toward Justice. Do we hear it in a loving whisper, or in a scream from the Earth?

Yours Truly!
BILLY

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WORKERS UNITE! FILM FESTIVAL

OCT 27 - NOV 12 • WORKERSUNITEFILMFESTIVAL.ORG

WEEK 1 - LIVE AT CINEMA VILLAGE (22 E 12TH ST) • VIRTUAL STARTS 11/3

SPECIAL EVENT: ENTERTAINMENT LABOR UPSURGE 2023 • STRIKE TEACH-IN AT SUNY EMPIRE 11/13

FRIDAY 10/27 (OPENING)
More Perfect Union: Shorts Series
- Frontline films from the SAG-AFTRA, WGA, and UAW Strikes
Stonebreakers - American monuments and myth, reclamation of space

SATURDAY 10/28
Honorable But Broken: EMS In Crisis
- Letter carriers strike against federal government in '70s NALC members
Storming Caesars Palace - Welfare '70s

SUNDAY 10/29
The Kill Floor, The Devil's Avocado + Climate Short
Revolutionary Hearts - Lifelong community activism
Rabble Rousers: Frances Goldin & the Fight for Cooper Sq
- The 50 yr battle against gentrification of the Lower East Side

MONDAY 10/30
Farmer-Labor Party
There Goes the Neighborhood - More NYC housing rights
City of Steel

TUESDAY 10/31
Fight Like Hell: The Testimony of Mother Jones - Based on play
Smile As You Kill - Healthcare ... or else.

WEDNESDAY 11/1
A Thousand Pines - Reforestation
Where Have All the Smiles Gone? Made In Italy (By the Chinese), Men In Blue - Migrant experience

THURSDAY 11/2
SVA SocDoc Shorts
The American Dream and Other Fairy Tales - with Abigail Disney

FULL SCHEDULE + LIVE EVENT TICKETS: bit.ly/TixWUFF12 SELECT FILMS VIRTUAL NOV 3-10