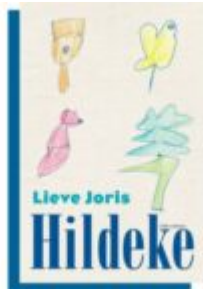


De liefst van heeldeweert



Hildeke stond in de kast met reisverhalen in de boekwinkel waar ik het nieuwe boek van Lieve Joris kocht. Ernaast stond nog een exemplaar van *Terug naar Neerpelt*.

Na al die landen, steden en dorpen die ze in haar schrijversbestaan heeft bezocht en

beschreven, is Lieve Joris thuisgekomen. En thuis lagen een paar verhalen die verteld moesten worden.

Terug naar Neerpelt is het verhaal van de grote broer die alles kon en durfde. Maar ook de broer die door zijn verslaving het gezin Joris meesleepte in een draaikolk van emoties.

Vier jaar later gaan we weer naar Neerpelt. Om naar het verhaal van Hildeke te luisteren. Hildeke, het zusje met Downsyndroom. Hildeke die door het leven scharrelt; dan blij, dan bang, dan stilletjes.

‘Tegen Fonny wapenen we ons; Hildeke zullen we van jongs af aan beschermen’, schrijft Lieve Joris.

Het eerste deel van *Hildeke* is een ontroerende beschrijving van de laatste levensfase van vader Joris. De man die zich niet kon wapenen tegen Fonny. Waardoor de andere kinderen zich door hem wat in de steek gelaten voelden.

Als vader een reproductie van *De val van Icarus* ziet in de gang van het verzorgingshuis, vraagt Lieve Joris zich af of hij dit verhaal uit de Griekse mythologie misschien op Fonny betreft. Waarmee in één beeld verteld wordt hoe de kinderen keken naar het gevangen zijn van hun vader.

In het tweede deel zien we Hildeke.

‘Lachen en huilen liggen bij Hildeke dicht bij elkaar; daartussen bevindt zich een raadselachtig landschap dat wij herhaaldelijk proberen te ontsluiten.’

In dit deel krijgt de lezer ook een mooi portret van al die kinderen Joris. Een kluwen van karakters. Waarbij ieder op eigen wijze voor Hildeke zorgdraagt.

Die kluwen wordt prachtig beschreven als de familie naar Estland gaat:

‘De Jorissen in een chique omgeving, dat leidt onveranderlijk tot typische taferelen: ze zijn geïntimideerd en palmen het terrein tegelijkertijd volledig in. Rennen, lachen en roepen in de gangen, bonken op deuren, elkaars kamers

verkennen tot aan de zeepjes in de badkamer en de chocolaatjes op de hoofdkussens toe.'

De stilte treedt in als Hildeke weerloos in het ziekenhuis ligt.
'Het liefste wat we ooit kregen gaat ons verlaten', schrijft een zus.

De liefst van heeldeweert is niet meer.

Wat blijft is dit boek.

Daar zit je dan. Een uur voor je uit te staren. Met die hele familie in je hart.

Brazil's Runoff Election Will Have Enormous Effects On The Global Climate Crisis



Noam Chomsky

Brazil is now headed toward a rocky presidential runoff vote on October 30, after its October 2 election produced no clear winner between far right populist president Jair Bolsonaro — an outspoken admirer of the brutal military dictatorship that came to power in 1964 by deposing a democratically elected president and lasted until 1985 — and Bolsonaro's leftist challenger, Lula.

This is a tightly contested election, but polls are giving Lula a clear edge as he has received the endorsement of both the third and fourth finishers. Meanwhile

Bolsonaro has indicated on numerous occasions in the past that he will not accept the election result if he loses.

The election will determine the future of Latin America's powerhouse — a country with the [12th largest economy in the world](#) that is rich in a variety of natural resources and home to the world's biggest rainforest, the Amazon. Brazil is also a country of extreme inequality, awash in corruption and violence.

What is at stake in the runoff election, both for Brazil and the world at large, is brilliantly elucidated by Noam Chomsky in the exclusive interview for *Truthout* that follows. Chomsky is presently in Brazil and has been following very closely both the election campaigns as well as overall developments in the country.

Chomsky is internationally recognized as one of the greatest public intellectuals alive, the founder of modern linguistics and one of the most cited scholars in the history of the world. He is institute professor and professor of linguistics emeritus at MIT and laureate professor of linguistics at the University of Arizona. He has published more than 150 books in linguistics, politics and current affair, history and political economy, media studies, U.S. foreign policy and global affairs.

C.J. Polychroniou: Noam, the eyes of the world were focused on Brazil's presidential election a couple of weeks ago, which pitted incumbent Jair Bolsonaro, a divisive far right populist, against former leftist president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, who had served years in prison on charges of money laundering and corruption in a controversial trial. Neither candidate managed to win more than 50 percent of the vote, so there is going to be a runoff election at the end of the month. Why does Brazil's election matter so much to the world?

Noam Chomsky: A century ago, Brazil was declared to be "the Colossus of the South," set to lead the hemisphere along with "the Colossus of the North." Since then, the northern Colossus has replaced Britain as the virtual ruler of the world, extending its power far beyond the dreams of what is now Washington's junior partner. The southern Colossus has stumbled. It is important to understand how.

In the 1950s, decolonization was beginning, and the former colonial societies were not only seeking independence but also advances toward social justice and peaceful settlement of international disputes. The non-aligned movement was formed. Other initiatives were beginning. All of this was anathema to the U.S. and its imperial predecessors.

Brazil was part of the global effort under Kubitschek and in the early '60s, Quadros and Goulart. The Kennedy administration was deeply concerned with these global developments, particularly in the traditional U.S. preserve in Latin America.

In 1962, in a decision of historical importance, JFK shifted the role of the Latin American military from "hemispheric defense" to "internal security," meaning war against the population. The effects were graphically described by Kennedy-Johnson Director of Counterinsurgency Charles Maechling: The decision led to a shift from toleration "of the rapacity and cruelty of the Latin American military" to "direct complicity" in their crimes, to U.S. support for "the methods of Heinrich Himmler's extermination squads."

A primary concern was Brazil, Latin America's powerhouse. The JFK administration helped prepare the ground for a 1964 military coup that overthrew the flourishing Brazilian democracy shortly after Kennedy's assassination.

The destruction of democracy was welcomed by Kennedy-Johnson Ambassador to Brazil Lincoln Gordon as a "democratic rebellion," "a great victory for the free world" that should "create a greatly improved climate for private investments." This democratic rebellion was "the single most decisive victory of freedom in the mid-twentieth century," Gordon continued, "one of the major turning points in world history" in this period.

Gordon was right. The vicious military junta in Brazil was the first of the neo-Nazi terror-and-torture National Security States that then spread over Latin America, a plague that reached Central America under Reagan's murderous regime.

By the 1980s, the plague was declining in South America, less under U.S. control. In Argentina and Uruguay, truth commissions exposed the horrors of the military regimes. Not in Brazil. The democratization process largely evaded the topic, apart from a Church-based inquiry. The result is that many younger Brazilians are unaware of the terrible crimes, or not concerned. That enables a great admirer of the military regime like Bolsonaro to condemn the Brazilian generals for their "weakness": They did not murder 30,000 people as their associates in Argentina did.

Plumbing the depths of depravity — a considerable achievement for this Trump admirer — when voting for the fraudulent impeachment of [Workers' Party] Dilma

Rousseff, Bolsonaro dedicated his vote to her torturer, the chief torturer of the junta.

All of this passes with little comment, something else we are more than familiar with in the U.S.

The crushing of Brazilian democracy was one stage of a much broader process that is one of the most important and least discussed features of modern history: beating back the efforts of the former colonies to find a place in the global system. That idea was utterly intolerable to the U.S., which led the western campaign to cut off this departure from good order, also virtually wiping it out of history.

Brazil resumed the process in the new century. It became one of the most respected and influential world powers during Lula's term in office (2003-2010), a "golden decade" in Brazil's history in the eyes of the World Bank. Together with his Minister of Foreign Affairs Celso Amorim, Lula also led efforts to gain a voice for the Global South more generally. These positive developments went into reverse during the [erratic and authoritarian Bolsonaro years](#).

The potential remains. The country has abundant resources that the world desperately needs. It is culturally and technologically advanced in many areas. It suffers under the Latin American curse of an ultra-privileged elite that has little commitment to the welfare of the country, a major reason for the sharp divergence in development between resource-rich Latin America and resource-poor East Asia in the past years, as economic historians have discussed.

Cooperating under leadership based on progressive popular movements, the two Colossi could be leading the world toward a brighter future. In a Trump-Bolsonaro alliance, they would be dragging the world to an abyss.

The most compelling immediate concern is the fate of the Amazon forests, mostly in Brazil. It has long been understood that if current trends persist, this core component of the "lungs of the earth" will turn to savannah, unable to produce enough moisture to sustain itself. A major carbon sink that has been protecting all of us will turn to a carbon producer, impelling us toward catastrophe.

As in many other cases, the time scale of this tragedy has been severely underestimated. Brazilian researchers have shown that it has already begun to

happen in some regions, which are reaching irreversible tipping points. The threat to survival has been sharply accelerated by Bolsonaro's support for illegal logging, mining, agribusiness expansion, and destruction of native reserves and the many tribes that inhabit them. Formally, they are protected under laws that are being cast aside in the interests of short-term profit and power.

Though not of course confined to Brazil, the crime against humanity is particularly grave there because of the scale. And it is particularly critical right now because the fate of the Amazon, and all that it entails, will be decided on October 30, the runoff for the elections. A Bolsonaro victory would likely doom the Amazon. A Lula victory might be able to save it, averting a disaster for Brazil and a catastrophe for life on earth.

The good news is that in the first round Lula came close to victory, much as polling had predicted. Collaboration with a center-left party rather close to Lula's Workers' Party would have led to victory. This and broader coalitions are now forming and might lead to victory on October 30.

The bad news is dual. Bolsonaro's vote was far beyond what polling predicted, and his candidates swept other offices: governors and parliament particularly, meaning that Lula's hands will be tied even if elected. The far right surge even included such monstrous figures as Ricardo Salles, the point man for Bolsonaro's campaign to enrich the criminals who were destroying the Amazon under his watch.

A week later, an election will take place in the northern Colossus with similar stakes but of even greater import given power relations. The denialist party is poised to add Congress to its conquests. The most reactionary Supreme Court in memory is already firmly in its hands and is likely to grease the way to the campaign to turn the country into an Orbán-style "illiberal democracy" where a minority party of the far right will be able to maintain power and drive the country to an extremist Christian nationalism. None of this is at all concealed.

That grotesque outcome will, in fact, not matter much as environmental destruction goes out of control under the hands of those dedicated to enhancing corporate profits whatever the human consequences.

In answer to the question, there is a fateful week ahead.

Opinion surveys had shown Lula leading Bolsonaro by more than 10 percentage points, but the race turned out to be much tighter than anticipated and, in fact, Bolsonaro swept the state and senate races. What happened?

We have to withhold judgment until the facts are in. One possibility is that what happened is similar to what has been studied in depth in the U.S.

In both countries, the huge evangelical vote is by now fairly solidly in the hands of the far right and its propaganda messages about the fires of hell if the accomplice of the devil triumphs. In the U.S., that traces back to the GOP campaigns of the '70s to shift to "culture wars" to gain political power.

Trump voters regard pollsters as part of the hated elite that is supposedly leading the "Great Replacement" and grooming children for sexual perversion (not an exaggeration of current right-wing discourse) and therefore do not respond to them accurately if at all. That is very likely a factor in Brazil as well. There may well be studies of the matter, but I don't know of them.

Another factor is suggested by the fact that many of the right-wingers elected seem to be little known, meaning that voters may have not even been aware of their programs — a fact familiar in the U.S. as well, as extensively documented. Pre-election, Bolsonaro was lavishly distributing state funds to potential voters, using a mysterious "secret budget" of public funds, possibly supplemented by private funds from wealthy supporters in Brazil and the U.S. What was the impact? We can surmise, but do not know.

What we do know is that the stakes are very high.

The election campaign was marked by a series of violent incidents between supporters of Bolsonaro and Lula, and it's highly unlikely that the climate will be different now that the two candidates are heading to second round. What's the main cause of the extreme polarization that characterizes contemporary Brazilian society?

I should defer here to people who know far more about Brazil than I do.

Some aspects of the polarization are not obscure. One was already mentioned. The polarization goes far back. Inequality is deeply rooted. A very rich mostly white minority lives in luxury not far from miserable slums, where people lack

access even to food and water. Furthermore, the rich have little commitment to the society. They evade taxes, export their capital, import luxury goods and have second homes in Paris — a pattern increasingly familiar in the U.S. after 40 years of the brutal class war misleadingly framed in terms of market worship.

On the surface, Brazil gives the impression of a well-functioning multiracial society, far more so than the U.S. That's on the surface. Behind the veil, the white rulers are deeply racist and have harsh class prejudice. One reason for their contempt for Lula, scarcely concealed, is that he is a mere industrial worker lacking formal education. Not the "right kind of person" to be in the presidential palace. Even a white face doesn't protect him from the contempt, in his case class-based, and deepened by his initiatives at social inclusion of Afro-Brazilians and Indigenous communities as well as social welfare for the undeserving poor. Again, the resonances in the U.S. are too obvious to discuss.

The polarization may be taking sharper forms today, as is happening in much of the world, but it is drawing from social pathology that runs deep.

Bolsonaro has long raised doubts about Brazil's electoral process. Is it likely that he might refuse to go if he loses the runoff vote at the end of the month, especially with his party having the most seats in both chambers of the congress? How far will Brazil's military back him?

We can speculate idly or devote our efforts to restricting the possibilities. Brazil is not the U.S., but the questions are not unfamiliar there. Both countries are awash in guns, a recent phenomenon in Brazil as Bolsonaro has opened to arsenals, overwhelmingly to his supporters. There are heavily armed militias that control areas that are barely accessible to the police. Civilian control of the military, and the major police forces, is less firmly institutionalized than in the U.S. - where questions also arise.

In the U.S., large parts of Republican voters have called for violence if it is necessary to "save the country" from the devils intent on destroying the white race, Christianity, the family.... There are similar elements in Brazil. Both countries are plagued by demagogues with the talent to tap the ugliest currents that rot the society from below. They are visible, prominent, influential, close to power.

If power is allowed to fall into their hands, we will be facing the nightmare of a

Western Hemisphere in the hands of the two Colossi bent on driving to world to destruction.

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Brazil's Lula Remerges – In A Very Different Political World



*Sonali Kolhatkar - Photo:
sonalicolhatkar.com*

Brazil's first round of elections, held on October 2, yielded a major victory for the man who held the presidency from 2003 to 2010, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. Winning [48 percent of the vote](#) in a multicandidate race, Lula now heads to a runoff against incumbent president Jair Bolsonaro, who won 43 percent. It's the first chapter of a dramatic comeback for a leader who was once hailed as the epitome of Latin America's resurgent left, who was then [imprisoned](#) on corruption charges by a politicized judiciary, eventually was [released](#), and has now emerged onto the political scene in a very different nation than the one he once led.

A founding member of Brazil's Workers' Party (PT), Lula ran for president several times before [winning in 2002](#). A year later I recall sitting in a huge stadium in Porto Alegre for the second annual World Social Forum (WSF), getting ready alongside tens of thousands of people to hear the new president speak. The WSF was an organized response to the [World Economic Forum](#) held in Davos, Switzerland, where world leaders annually hobnob with corporate executives to explore capitalist solutions to the problems created by capitalism.

In 2003, the crowds that had gathered in a Porto Alegre stadium to explore alternatives to capitalism greeted Lula with coordinated roars of "olè olè olè Lula!" It seemed at that moment that everything could change for the better, and that, in the words of Indian writer [Arundhati Roy](#), who also addressed the WSF, "another world is not only possible, she is on her way." Indeed, Lula's rewriting of Brazil's economic priorities emphasizing benefits for low-income communities was a welcome change in a world seduced by neoliberalism. He went on to win reelection in 2006.

In subsequent years, Lula moved closer toward the political center. Maria Luisa Mendonça, director of Brazil's Network for Social Justice and Human Rights, says, "I don't think Lula is this radical left-wing person" today. In an [interview](#) she explains, "many social movements had criticisms of the Workers' Party before because they thought [the party] could move to make structural changes in Brazil." Still, she maintains that Lula's changes to Brazil were profound. "The amount of investment that the Workers' Party did, in education for example, [was] unprecedented." She asserts that "they really made concrete improvements in the lives of people."

Fast-forward to 2018 and [Bolsonaro swept into power](#), glorifying the ugliest aspects of bigoted conservatism and making them central to his rule, and decimating Lula's legacy of economic investments in the poor. Business executives in the U.S. [celebrated his win](#), excited at the prospect of a deregulated economy in which they could invest, and from which they could extract wealth.

Today Latin America's largest democracy has been shattered by the COVID-19 pandemic, during which Bolsonaro's fascist and conspiracy-fueled leadership [elevated snake oil cures](#) above commonsense scientific mitigation. The Amazon rainforest has suffered the ravages of [unfettered deforestation](#), and its Indigenous inhabitants have been [exploited](#) beyond measure.

Bizarrely, some corporate media pundits in the United States place equal blame on Bolsonaro and Lula for Brazil's worrisome status quo. Arick Wierson writes on [NBCNews.com](#), "these pressing problems are the result of the policies and actions of Brazilian leadership over the past two decades—inextricably linked to both the Lula and Bolsonaro administrations."

The Economist advises Lula to "[move to the center](#)" in order to win the election, implying that his social and economic agenda is too leftist. A PT spokesperson told the [Financial Times](#) that if Lula wins a third term in the October 30 runoff election, he plans to focus on the "popular economy," meaning that "the Brazilian state will have to fulfill a strong agenda in inducing economic development," which would be achieved with "jobs, social programs, and the presence of the state."

It speaks to the severe conservative skewing of the world political spectrum that a leader like Lula is still considered left of center. [According](#) to Mendonça, "I don't

think that investing in education and health care, in job creation, is a radical idea.” She views Lula as “a moderate politician,” and says that now, “after a very disastrous administration of Bolsonaro, Lula again is the most popular politician in the country.”

Most Brazilians appear to have tired of Bolsonarismo. A [Reuters poll](#) found that Lula now enjoys 51 percent support to Bolsonaro’s 43 percent ahead of the October 30 runoff race. But, just as the 2016 U.S. presidential race yielded a win for Donald Trump over Hillary Clinton, the candidate who had been widely expected to win, there is no guarantee that Lula will prevail.

And Bolsonaro, who has been dubbed the “[Tropical Trump](#),” has worryingly taken a page out of the disgraced American leader’s 2020 election playbook in claiming ahead of the first round of elections that Lula loyalists plan to [steal the election](#). “Bolsonaro has been threatening not to accept the result of the election,” [says](#) Mendonça. “His discourse is very similar to Trump’s discourse.”

Just as Trump—in spite of damning and overwhelming evidence of his unfitness for office—remains [disconcertingly popular](#) among a significant minority of Americans, Bolsonaro enjoys a stubborn level of allegiance within Brazil. He has reshaped the political landscape so deeply that the lines between reality and propaganda remain blurred.

“We had years and years of attacks against the Workers’ Party,” [says](#) Mendonça. She asks us to “imagine if all mainstream media [in Brazil] were like Fox News.” Additionally, Bolsonaro has built what she calls “a huge infrastructure to spread fake news on social media.” And, like Trump, Bolsonaro enjoys support from evangelical churches.

“The challenge is how you resist that type of message,” worries Mendonça. She dismisses claims that Brazil is politically polarized as too simplistic, saying that it “doesn’t really explain that there was this orchestrated effort to attack democracy in Brazil.” Putting Brazil into an international context, she sees Bolsonaro as “part of this global far-right movement that uses those types of mechanisms to manipulate public opinion and to discredit democracy.”

The nation and the world that a resurgent Lula faces are ones that require far more sophisticated opposition and organized resistance than when he last held office more than a decade ago.

Ultimately, the challenges facing Lula, the PT, and Brazilians in general are the same ones that we all face: how do we prioritize people's needs over corporate greed, and how do we elevate the rights of human beings, of women, people of color, Indigenous communities, LGBTQ individuals, and the earth's environment, in the face of a rising fascism that deploys organized disinformation so effectively?

This article was produced by [Economy for All](#), a project of the Independent Media Institute.

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Capitalism And The Generation Of Non-Relational Patchworks



Kerala flood

Felix Guattari's *The Three Ecologies* first came out in 1989 (As *Catographies Schizoanalytiques*). I bought a translation in 2011, when the research I was at, on urban processes in the south western India state of Kerala, was yet to wind up. Perhaps the most significant pointers were towards the complex relationships that have always been there but becomes starker in what he calls 'integrated world capitalism'.

The United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) had started off in 1972. This was preceded by significant environmental movements across the world in their different orientations from conservation of ecology, wildlife, realization of pollution and rural community interventions. Though Joseph Fourier and Svante Arrhenius by the end of 1800s started talking the science of greenhouse effect, this was yet to be accounted for in the complex relationships that have epochal effects like the anthropocene, when Guattari was at work. The work gets more interesting as the trope of 'network' was yet to have internet as a metaphor and globalization as an idea replete with abstractions that went along, was still to be a key word.

The Three Ecologies prompted me, by the completion of my then enquiries, that the complex relationships that manifested in changing phases of urbanisation in ecological contexts could well be stretched further from. Years hence the work comes back at me, now through some unavoidable vignettes that were less noted before. I quote one here:

"Now more than ever, nature cannot be separated from culture; in order to comprehend the interactions between ecosystems, the mechanosphere and the

social and individual Universes of reference, we must learn to think 'transversally'. Just as monstrous and mutant algae invade the lagoon of Venice, so our television screens are populated, saturated, by 'degenerate' images and statements [enonces]. In the field of social ecology, men like Donald Trump are permitted to proliferate freely, like another species of algae, taking over entire districts of New York and Atlantic City; he 'redevelops' by raising rents, thereby driving out tens of thousands of poor families, most of whom are condemned to homelessness becoming the equivalent of the dead fish in environmental ecology." [P. 43, The Three Ecologies, 2000]

Specifics like Donald Trump who along with other right-wing figureheads as paradigms of threats to life, degenerate images and statements that characterize these symbols, driving out of people, metaphors from non-human ecology; all of these are too big to miss. But so are the reminders of recognizing connectivity, and the need to think transversally.

Such needs got pressing during specific events of recent times. The ecological disasters from different places, demonetization, or the pandemics can prompt transversal thoughts on relationships. The top-down imagination of ecologies and economies; with the add-on provisions to provide capital to corporates; have already resulted in the biggest socio-ecological disasters in the sub-continent. Urban spaces in the contemporary times, have demonstrated that it is not the virus itself that kills, but it works in synergy with the uneven terrains and absence of care as was evident in the Indian scenario with only a few exceptions. With the coordinates of daily rhythms overwhelmingly set by the virus and its trajectories, it has become even tougher to separate ourselves from the contingent and contexts we are thrown into every day. Risk societies, urban informalities, everyday precarities, techno-social deployments, or surveillance and pastoral orders have scaled our skins and rewired our bodily rhythms, to such an extent that only a transverse thinking and parliament of things (Latour 1991) can get us anywhere.

The Working Group of the Subcommittee on Quaternary Stratigraphy who deliberate on whether the anthropocene, could be an 'official geological era' has not decided which human impact has been the most comprehensive. Many pin the time period on the Columbian exchanges when European colonial process (from 1600s to 1700s) saw a coming together of industrialization, exchange of labour and raw materials, or rapid transformation of ecosystems like in the Americas.

The massive extraction of fossil fuels post world war two has been another significant point of time, and so are the increasing levels of nuclear tests after the 1960s (traced in the presence of increased radionuclide). All this brings in a major obligation in terms of historical, political and philosophical reconceptualisation of life, non-life, and the networks of relationships in terms of human impacts. The accustomed ways of thinking that kept human culture as separate from nature obviously is problematised. Presently, the pandemic order has only reiterated the inextricable links and relationships between hybrid systems that were earlier spliced up into nature and culture.

The need is pressings to dwell upon relationships between hybrids, that events like pandemics or demonetizations, makes visible the complex networks during ecological catastrophes. In a way, events of specific environmental catastrophes, top-down economic decisions, or the mishandling and thus making of a pandemic order; brings to fore what is otherwise unrecognized.

There needs to be a reconceptualisation of humanities and social sciences, as well as other branches of sciences, not just in terms of the ways and politics of humans produce knowledge of humans; but the ontological effects of non-human that relate from within and outside, through time and space (Saldanha and Stark 2016).

Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987) maps the inhuman systems that subtend the distinct flows, and aggregates of species and relationships. Guattari in *The Three Ecologies* (2001) talks about ecological disequilibrium. He distinguishes the three interwoven ecologies: social, subjective and environmental.

There is the concept of mechanosphere coined by Guattari to understand the intermeshing of mechanical, architectural, and biological processes. This necessitates both the long duree understanding as well as a politically informed understanding of relationships that helps to situate anthropocene not as a passive homogenized context. In addition, this has also facilitated the complex understandings of bigger histories- with history connected to astronomy, geology, or evolutionary history. Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus* is an attempt at such conceptualisations.

There are always divergent tendencies about the experience of what is considered the anthropocene. On one hand is an all-encompassing effect, but there are others like the indigenous experiences of inscribing life through the non-human life,

meanders of rivers and battles between the human and extra-human. Anthropocene throws open a possibility if understood in Deleuzian reading of strata. This goes beyond constituting understanding in the 'either-or(s)' of anthropocene, capitalocene, plantationocene etc. The field could be understood as a coming together of contradictory tendencies, on strata, based on the varying degrees of relationships as well (Colebrook 2016). So, there could be the human moral agent who discovers one to be a geological force, but also there is a possibility 'man' not being such an agent of change in particular, but rather folded into relationships between human and non-human.

Thinking stratigraphically is also helpful in thinking of a world where on the one hand nothing other than exchange could be dominant and where no other value, except, entering the market is important; on the other hand, there is a coexistence of starkly different political orders globally.

The neoliberal reading of environment, in the environmental governance discourse has a 'service' based understanding of non-human world. The three ecologies of Guattari have a relational view with co-implications. Several modes of production have been integrated, totalized into a totalitarian capitalist functioning. Capitalist system is characterised most by neutralizing existential refrains and by a general equivalence, flattens value and subsumes everything in hegemony. One of the responses to climate change has been to support micro economic ventures that are non-standard in small states, which is much easier done than making any alteration in major carbon generations in big economies and powerful states (Bignall et al 2016).

Equivalence is evidently a hegemonic exercise. The arbitrary equivalences created in carbon trade, carbon market as well as similar system sustaining algorithms, and thereby sustainable development, now stands exposed. In fact, CO₂ has now become the fetish or 'thing' around which our environmental aspirations have galvanised (Swyngedouw 2018). The kind of reification has been set in motion ever since the Kyoto protocol, through off setting. There has not been an institutional reflection on finance capital mediated reifications and fetishizations as one moved from Paris to COP 26 UN Climate Conference at Glasgow.

The reification of complex processes to a thing-like object-cause in the form of a socio-chemical compound around which our environmental desires crystallize is,

furthermore, inscribed with a particular social meaning and function through its enrolment as commodity in the processes of capital circulation and market exchange (Bumpus and Liverman, 2008; Liverman, 2009). The commodification of CO₂ - primarily via the Kyoto protocol and various offsetting schemes - in turn, has triggered a rapidly growing financialized market in greenhouse gas commodities.

Further, ecology as 'resource management' seeks to bring into focus stable stock levels, maximum environmental utility and emphasise a certain type of resilience perceived in terms of species imagined to have a discrete existence. The latter does not take a relational point of view.

In addition, in the philosophy of maximum utility, capitalist value, and enforced equivalence; resilience is never a matter of choice. Rather it is an effect of 'there being no alternative'.

Different species, including humans, enter into an affective understanding (knowledge) of ecologies they are constitutive of and gain a perspective in relationship to each other. This is unlike discrete and individualistic imaginations that inform ideas of imposed equivalence.

Perspectives rather 'emerge' in the value laden- political contexts. One of the examples of formal recognition given to such perspectival knowledge is the agreement signed by south Australian government with Ngarrindjeri authorities in order to protect and engage with indigenous knowledge. The Kungun Ngarrindjeri Yunnan Agreements (KNYA) recognises the authority of certain forms of knowledge within a nation- state jurisdiction. This de- facto recognition (p: 468-469, Rigney et al 2008) is not yet de jure in the constitutional order. But this is significant in terms of exclusion of large number of people in the language of exception in the Special Economic Zones and Urban impositions. There is of course the fact that the reference is still to human species and that the recognition given is only de facto.

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Italy Has A Far-Right Government, But The Real Danger Of Fascism Exists In The US



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At the present historical juncture, the danger of European societies becoming fascist is far less than the one facing the United States.

The victory of Giorgia Meloni's far-right coalition in Italy's election is yet the starkest evidence of the dramatic consequences that the neoliberal policies of the European Union (EU) are having on the member states. Indeed, the return of old demons in Italy and the spread of far-right movements and parties across Europe are directly linked to the reactionary economic dogmas and shallow integration strategies pursued by the euro masters in Brussels and Frankfurt.

Let me explain.

Following the end of World War II, certain visionary leaders in France and Germany proceeded with the creation of structures and institutions beyond the nation-state to ensure that Europeans would finally put an end to their favorite pastime: bloody warfare. This was the logic behind the creation of the European Economic Community (EEC), which was founded by the [Treaty of Rome](#) in 1957. It was a rather noble undertaking, and one that managed to build solid alliances among historical enemies that have lasted longer than any other time in European history, although other factors, such as the Cold War, played a significant role in the long period of peace that ensued in Europe since the end of the Second World War.

However, the EEC evolved over time into something beyond a regional trade regime with respect for democracy, national sovereignty and social rights. It was transformed into a corporate entity driven by the relentless desire to subjugate labor to the whims of capital and to impose "economic efficiency" in the management of the welfare state through the gradual transfer of power from the demos to non-elected officials in Brussels. Ultimately, this vision was materialized with the [Maastricht Treaty](#) in 1992, the foundation treaty of the European Union. The Maastricht Treaty also paved the way for the creation of a single currency, but without putting into place a federal system of government.

In this sense, rather than being unique, the EU is in fact an oddity—a Frankenstein-like creation. With the adoption of a single currency, in particular, the space for national economic policymaking was severely constrained and, in the absence of a federal government, austerity became almost by default, an integral component of the new European political economy, providing a perfect match to labor flexibility and other anti-social reform measures—privatization, the commodification of health and education, pension reform—all of which are geared toward the marketization of society. Full employment, which prior to the creation

of the EU political parties of all persuasion took seriously, was ditched in favor of flexible labor markets and equality was left to the “logic” of the market forces themselves.

The so-called “flawed” architecture of the EU was not due to oversight or technical errors. It stemmed from the very premises of the fundamental neoliberal dogmas that guided the mindset of the European economic elites and their corporate and financial allies. European policymakers had become obsessed with the belief that the critical variables for growth were to be found in trade openness and competition, deep financial integration, and the removal of all restrictions on capital movements. They understood very well that these were the conditions that would pave the way to more efficient business operations, lower unit labor costs, and increase profit margins for Europe’s multinational corporations.

Indeed, the Europeanization process that has been unleashed since the signing of the Maastricht Treaty is completely alien to the traditional vision of a social and democratic Europe, creating in the process fertile soil for the growth of authoritarian leaders who promise to take power away from the global elites, re-establish the supremacy of the nation-state, and return to the traditional social order in which national homogeneity and family values reign supreme.

It is due to the unsettling effects of the EU’s neoliberal policies that voters on the continent have shifted dramatically to the right, even in traditionally social democratic nations like Sweden and Finland, especially since the socialist and social-democratic parties have abandoned any pretext of caring about the working class and have in fact been carrying out the mission of a neoliberal EU.

The euro crisis of 2010 brought to surface all the structural weakness of the EU and intensified the realignment of European voters over both social and cultural issues, with conservative and outright reactionary political parties and movements gaining the upper hand virtually throughout the continent, with Greece being a rare exception. But even in the land that founded democracy, the experiment with a “leftist” government was short-lived after [Syriza](#) engaged in a gigantic betrayal of the clear mandate that it had to shred into pieces the bailout agreements and do away with EU’s sadistic austerity measures.

The electoral victory of Brothers of Italy, led by Giorgia Meloni, a longtime admirer of fascist dictator Benito Mussolini, comes therefore as no surprise. It is

the price representative democracies are paying for allowing themselves to be controlled by outside forces with little if any political legitimacy. Indeed, lest we forget, the signing of the Maastricht Treaty was one of the most undemocratic procedures in the history of modern Europe. It was signed by presidents and prime ministers without any popular input, let alone consent.

Make no mistake about it. It is the undemocratic nature and the neoliberal policies of the European Union that are responsible for the revival of European fascism. And it is not just in Italy that the far-right has come to power. In Spain, the far-right also holds a share of power. Moreover, today's conservatives in Europe have no objection working with the far-right in order to come to power. The cabinet of the current conservative government in Greece has scores of ministers who have had close ideological and political ties with the far-right.

Still, at the present historical juncture, the danger of European societies becoming fascist is far less than the one facing the United States. Europe's multiparty systems make it difficult for any given party to gain clear majority support, thus political parties have to work in a coalition. Giorgia Meloni's far-right Brothers of Italy won 26 percent of the vote, but both the anti-immigration League Party of Matteo Salvini and the right-wing Forza Italia party of former prime minister Silvio Berlusconi secured far less votes than they did in 2018. Italy's far-right coalition did secure a clear majority in parliament but with less than 44 percent of the popular vote.

In the light of this and given that Italy will remain a member of the EU and of the eurozone, one should not expect to see radical changes in the way the new government will conduct itself on both the domestic and international fronts. Meloni has already indicated that her government will rule for all Italians. In practical terms, what this means is that her government will seek to ingratiate itself with both the business class and average citizens. According to the joint program of the coalition partners, Meloni's government will reduce taxes for business, families, and the self-employed alike, and use a greater portion of the \$200 billion euros that has been allotted to Italy by the EU's recovery plan in the wake of the Covid pandemic to support social programs. Unlike the far-right in the U.S., Europe's far-right parties favor certain aspects of the social state.

On the foreign policy front, Meloni's government will surely remain an obedient servant to EU rules and regulations, while making occasional noises about EU

reform, will support NATO and its policies towards Ukraine, while backing initiatives for a peaceful solution to the conflict, but will most likely impose stricter border controls as immigration was a big component of Meloni's campaign.

Italy's far-right coalition has also said that it will fight against discrimination, including anti-Semitism, but will take a hard stance on Muslim fundamentalism.

There is nothing in the above policies that distinguishes Meloni's far-right government from the conservative governments in place today in other European countries.

Indeed, it's been rumored that outgoing prime minister Mario Draghi, who had also served as European Central Bank President, personally vouched for Giorgia Meloni to the euro masters. This is quite possible, and, in fact, it is highly unlikely that Italy's new prime minister will rock the boat. If she does, one of the coalition partners (most probably Silvio Berlusconi's Forza Italia) will most likely walk away and her government will collapse.

In this regard, [the celebrations on the part of the Trumpist camp](#) in the U.S. for the election of Giorgia Meloni may prove to be premature. Italy's far-right government does represent a clear setback for social and political progress, but the neo-fascist vision that inspires today's GOP isn't about to take form or shape in Italy. Both domestic (bureaucracy, organized labor, left-wing parties) and external (EU) constraints will ensure that this doesn't happen.

Are we sure that such constraints exist in the "land of the free and the home of the brave" to prevent far-right extremism from destroying what is left of American democracy?

Source:

<https://www.commondreams.org/views/2022/09/30/italy-has-far-right-government-real-danger-fascism-exists-us>

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Chomsky: US Must Join Global Call For Negotiations As Russia Escalates Actions



Noam Chomsky

The war in Ukraine has taken a dramatic turn for the worse. Putting to rest his own ludicrous claim that the invasion of Ukraine constitutes a “special military operation,” Russian President Vladimir Putin has ordered a military call-up and staged “referendums” — votes to join Russia — have been conducted in the occupied territories. Meanwhile, there are calls for more weapons from Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and even demands that Russia be removed from the United Nations Security Council. The political and military ramifications of these developments are profoundly disturbing, says Noam Chomsky in an exclusive interview for *Truthout*. They indicate “a plan for a long-drawn-out war of attrition.” Chomsky urges that the U.S. join the rest of the world in calling for negotiations, not because Putin can be trusted, but because negotiations are our

best hope for averting disaster. There's no certainty as to whether this process would result in peace, but as Chomsky says, "There is one and only one way to find out: Try."

Chomsky is institute professor emeritus in the department of linguistics and philosophy at MIT and laureate professor of linguistics and Agnese Nelms Haury Chair in the Program in Environment and Social Justice at the University of Arizona. One of the world's most-cited scholars and a public intellectual regarded by millions of people as a national and international treasure, Chomsky has published more than 150 books in linguistics, political and social thought, political economy, media studies, U.S. foreign policy and world affairs. His latest books are *The Secrets of Words* (with Andrea Moro; MIT Press, 2022); *The Withdrawal: Iraq, Libya, Afghanistan, and the Fragility of U.S. Power* (with Vijay Prashad; The New Press, 2022); and *The Precipice: Neoliberalism, the Pandemic and the Urgent Need for Social Change* (with C.J. Polychroniou; Haymarket Books, 2021).

C.J. Polychroniou: Seven months after Putin's criminal invasion of Ukraine, the war has reached a turning point. It has come home to Russia with Putin's call for "partial mobilization," and annexation referendums have been staged. What does the bolstering of Russian forces in Ukraine mean for Russia and Ukraine? Are Putin's orders for military call-up an admission that Russia is no longer conducting a "special military operation" in Ukraine?

Noam Chomsky: What has come home to Russia is unclear. There are reports of protests and forced conscription, alongside of appeals to defend Mother Russia from yet another Western invasion, which, like those [going] back to Napoleon, will be crushed. Such appeals might have resonance. Historical memories may be deep. What the outcome will be we can only guess.

From the first day, it was a criminal invasion, never a "special military operation," but the pretense in the Kremlin is still maintained. The mobilization is unlikely to have much effect on the war for some time to come, and what kind of effect is unclear. The failures and incompetence of the Russian military have been a continuing surprise to most well-placed analysts. That may well extend to mobilization, training and supply of equipment. Any meaningful bolstering of Russian forces from these efforts is likely to be well ahead, probably after the winter months. I suppose Russia could move forces from other regions, but whether the leadership has the capability or will to do that, I don't know.

The mobilization and referenda seem to indicate a plan for a long, drawn-out war of attrition. If the mobilization does succeed in shifting the tide of the war, that increases the risks of inducing the West to up the ante with more advanced weapons, perhaps reaching to Russia itself as President Zelenskyy has requested, so far rebuffed. It's not hard to envision scenarios that lead on to catastrophic consequences.

That's just the beginning. The impact of the war goes far beyond: to the millions facing starvation with the curtailing of grain and fertilizer exports, now partially relieved though there is little information about how much; and most important of all and least discussed, the sharp reversal of the limited international efforts to address the looming climate crisis, a colossal crime against humanity.

While huge resources are being wasted in destruction and the fossil fuel industries are gleefully celebrating the opening up of new fields for exploitation to poison the atmosphere even more, scientists are regularly informing us that their dire warnings have been far too conservative. Thus we have recently learned that the Middle East region, not far away from embattled Ukraine, is heating [almost twice as fast as the rest of the world](#), with an estimated 9°F rise by the end of the century, and that [sea levels](#) in the Eastern Mediterranean are expected to rise a meter by mid-century and up to 2.5 meters by 2100. Of course it doesn't stop there. The consequences are almost impossible to envision.

Meanwhile the region continues to be the global center for heating the world to the brink of survivability and soon beyond. And while Israel and Lebanon may soon be sinking into the sea, they are squabbling about which will have the honor of virtually destroying both of them by producing the fossil fuels at their maritime borders, acts of lunacy duplicated around the world. Escalating the war in Ukraine in the face of such realities reaches levels of imbecility that are hard to capture in words.

Russia hopes to annex four occupied regions of Ukraine with staged referendums. Russia used this tactic before, in 2014, with the Crimean status referendum, although the two situations may be quite different. The voting in the Russian-held Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions of Ukraine is clearly illegal under international law, but I suppose this hardly matters to a power that has launched a criminal invasion against an independent country. What does Russia hope to achieve with the "referendums"? And what happens next, especially since

Russia has had a difficult time so far establishing order in the occupied territories?

The referenda in this case lack any credibility. It was different in the case of the Crimea referendum in 2014. For one thing, the Russian takeover of Crimea didn't happen in a vacuum. For another, there's reason to suppose that Crimeans looked to Russia more than to Ukraine. Though the referenda were not internationally accepted, it was recognized by many that the results were not very surprising. That's not the case with the current referenda.

Like the mobilization, the staged referenda indicate Russian plans for long-time occupation and a war of attrition. Though they clearly pose another impediment for negotiations over the fate of the regions where they take place, they may not completely close the window, as Anatol Lieven [discusses](#).

It's true that international law means as little to Russia as to the other great powers that launch criminal invasions against independent countries, the U.S. well in the lead. With impunity, thanks to its power.

What does Russia hope to achieve? As we've discussed, there are two ways to approach this question.

One way is to explore the depths of Putin's mind, as George W. Bush did when he looked into Putin's eyes, saw his "soul," and pronounced it good. And as many amateur psychologists do today, with supreme confidence.

A second way is to look at what Putin and his associates are saying. As in the case of other leaders, this may or may not reflect their hidden intentions. What matters, however, is that what they say can be a basis for negotiations if there is any interest in bringing the horrors to an end before they get even worse. That's how diplomacy works.

The second way suggests that what Russia hopes to achieve is primarily neutralization of Ukraine and "demilitarization and denazification." The former means cancellation of the programs of the past years to integrate Ukraine de facto within NATO. That approaches President Zelenskyy's proposals as recently as last March for neutralization with security guarantees. The latter would be a topic for discussion in serious negotiations. It might be spelled out as an agreement to refrain from placing heavy weapons aimed at Russia in Ukraine, no

further joint military maneuvers, etc. In short, a status rather like Mexico.

Those are topics for negotiations — if, of course, there is a serious interest in ending the conflict.

We might recall that most of the world, including a large majority of Germans and much of the rest of Europe, is calling for negotiations now, while the U.S. insists that priority must be to severely weaken Russia, hence no negotiations.

There are other issues to be settled, primarily Crimea and the Donbass region. An optimal solution would be internationally sponsored referenda on the various options that have been proposed. That is presumably not possible now, but a serious effort on negotiations might improve the prospects. Recall that we have [good evidence](#) that as recently as last April there were serious Ukraine-Russia negotiations under Turkish auspices and that the U.S.-U.K. opposed them.

As to what happens next, that will depend on choices made by those involved, primarily Ukraine and Russia of course, but we can hardly pretend to be merely observers from afar. See again Lieven's commentary, just cited.

Lieven is not the only informed analyst who regards peaceful diplomatic settlement as a diminishing but still live option. Another is [John Quigley](#), who has been deeply involved in these issues since the early '90s, when he was the U.S. State Department representative in the OSCE [Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe] efforts to resolve contested issues in Ukraine after the collapse of the USSR, particularly the status of Crimea and Donbass, his special concern. We have [already discussed](#) some of his current thinking, as of June 2022.

Quigley recognizes that though negotiations are currently stalled, "At some point, however, hopefully sooner than later, there will be a negotiated settlement that will need to deal with the Donbas region in Eastern Ukraine" as well as Crimea. On Crimea, he recommends pursuing Zelenskyy's suggestion that perhaps "the two sides could arrange a process of discussion about Crimea, a process that he said could last 15 years." On Donbass, Quigley writes that "if Ukraine does anything even close to implementing the Minsk agreement [the 2015 Ukraine-Russia agreement under French-German sponsorship which called for a degree of autonomy for Donbass within a federal Ukraine], Russia could say that the aim of its invasion has been accomplished," and a settlement could be reached.

Only a few days ago, French President Emmanuel Macron, who has been more closely involved in current negotiation efforts than any other figure, expressed somewhat similar views [on CNN](#). In his opinion, at the time of Zelenskyy's election in 2019, a settlement favorable to Ukraine could have been reached along the lines of the Minsk agreement. He also feels that options for diplomacy remain open.

Whether such assessments are accurate, we do not know. There is one and only one way to find out: Try. That won't happen, Quigley concludes, if "the U.S. goal is less to force Russia out of Ukraine than to fight Russia to the last Ukrainian" — a "reasonable" assessment he reluctantly comments.

That is the one factor in the mix that we can hope to influence, something that cannot be emphasized too strongly.

President Zelenskyy urged the United Nations (UN) to punish Russia for its invasion of Ukraine by stripping it of its security council veto vote. Just a few days ago, the EU president [made similar calls](#). While, technically speaking, a country can be expelled from the UN for "persistent violation" of the principles of the Charter, isn't this a misguided proposal? Isn't it also true that the argument that Russia may not even be a member of the UN is invalid on account of the fact that the continuation of the USSR's membership by the Russian Federation, which Ukraine itself accepted in 1991, is in line with long established procedures within the UN?

One can easily appreciate President Zelenskyy's sentiments, but whatever the technicalities may be, the very fact that the proposal is being seriously considered is enlightening. Did anyone consider punishing the U.S. in this manner when it invaded Iraq, to take only one example of its "persistent violation" of the core principle of the Charter that bars "the threat or use of force" in international affairs (with exceptions irrelevant here)? These violations that are not just persistent but extremely serious, matters we need not review even though they are virtually unspeakable in the U.S. mainstream.

We should, I think, keep our minds focused on what should be the central issue for us: U.S. policy. Should we accept the official U.S. position of fighting the war to severely weaken Russia, precluding diplomatic settlement? Or should we press the U.S. government to join most of the world, including Germans and other

Europeans, in seeking a way to end the horrors before they bring further tragedy, not only to Ukraine but also far beyond?

This interview has been lightly edited for clarity.

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