

# Biden Infrastructure Plan Is A Step Toward Equity And Countering Climate Crisis



*Robert Pollin*

President Joe Biden's economic plan, which is aimed at overhauling U.S. infrastructure, helping workers and their families, and raising taxes for the ultrarich, surely represents a big step in the right direction for equality and sustainability. It's also not the end-all, be-all for economic and environmental policy. Much more will be needed to work toward real equity and avert the worst impacts of the climate crisis.

In this exclusive interview for *Truthout*, one of the world's leading progressive economists, Robert Pollin, distinguished professor of economics and co-director of the Political Economy Research Institute at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, explains what Biden's economic plan means for the majority of American people and how it will help create a somewhat fairer tax system.

*C.J. Polychroniou: Biden's tax plan is to raise taxes for high-income individuals and corporations in order to create a fairer taxation system. Yet, lots of people seem to be worried about it, including investors and small business. Can you explain Biden's tax plan and whether the targets he has set for it will indeed produce a fairer tax system?*

*Robert Pollin:* The Biden administration has proposed a series of tax measures that would raise rates on U.S. corporations and the wealthy. [These proposals](#)

include the following:

- An increase in the corporate income tax rate from the current 21 percent rate to 28 percent;
- Establish a minimum tax rate of 21 percent on the foreign income of U.S. multinational corporations;
- Increase the top individual income tax rate for the richest 1 percent from 37 percent to 39.6 percent; and
- Increase the taxes that top 1 percent pay on their capital gains — i.e., the money they obtain from selling assets, like stocks, bonds and real estate — from the current 20 percent to 39.6 percent.

There are two interrelated purposes of these tax proposals. The first is to have big corporations and the rich contribute a larger share to the federal government's overall tax revenues. The second is to generate significantly more tax revenue, in order to pay for Biden's major investment proposals, the "American Jobs Plan" and "American Families Plan." These Biden proposals include investments to: 1.) upgrade the country's traditional infrastructure, such as roads, bridges and water management systems; 2.) make broadband access universal; 3.) dramatically improve the quality and accessibility of child care and elder care; and 4.) build a clean energy infrastructure capable of staving off the deepening global climate crisis. These programs are in addition to Biden's "American Rescue Plan," which became law in March. The American Rescue Plan is a short-term stimulus program to move the U.S. economy out of the COVID-induced recession onto a sustainable and equitable growth path. The [Rescue Plan](#) is financed mostly through government borrowing, while (in their current proposed versions at least) the Jobs and [Families](#) plans are financed through raising taxes.

It is not the least bit surprising that lots of people, including investors and businesses of all sizes, as well as high-end individual taxpayers, would be worried about Biden's proposed tax increases to finance the Jobs and Families plans.... They are worried because they don't want to pay higher taxes. But it will be useful to consider these worries in a broader context. Here are a few key points:

Even with Biden's proposal is enacted in full (which is unlikely), the increase in the corporate income tax would still leave the corporations paying a lower tax rate than they paid between 1994 and 2017. The Biden proposal would simply bring rate back to the level it was before Trump and the congressional Republicans gifted corporations with a big tax cut. In addition, even with the 2017

official corporate tax rate at 21 percent, about 18 percent of the largest U.S. corporations managed to legally pay *zero income taxes* in 2018. They accomplished this, in part, through moving parts of their activities offshore, at least on paper. The Biden proposal would make the corporations pay taxes even when they move their activities offshore.

As is well-known, the United States has experienced an unprecedented rise in income inequality since the onset of the neoliberal era, starting roughly with the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980. Since 1980, the richest 1 percent of family share of the total family income for the whole country has gone from about 9 percent to over 20 percent — i.e. the share of overall income going to the richest 1 percent of families has more than doubled under neoliberalism. Even more striking has been the rewards for being in the richest 0.01 percent of families — among the richest 12,000 households in the U.S. in a society with about 120 million households today. The share of total family household income that the ultrarich has received has gone from less than 1 percent of the total just prior to the neoliberal era to [over 5 percent](#) today. Roughly speaking, in today's dollars, that would mean that ultrarich household income would be about \$10 million if they received 1 percent of the total versus getting \$50 million today through their 5 percent share. Neoliberalism, in other words, has delivered a fivefold income increase for the society's richest 12,000 families.

In short, the rich are going remain ridiculously rich and big corporations will continue receiving outsized profits in the U.S. even if Biden's proposals were enacted in full and the tax system were consequently to become somewhat fairer. Moreover, the Biden tax increases would have limited to no impact on the take-home pay of either small business owners or the merely moderately affluent.

That said, there are still good reasons to fund at least a significant share of Biden's American Jobs and American Families programs through the federal government borrowing money, as is being done with the Rescue Plan, as opposed to raising all the funds through taxing corporations and the wealthy. The first reason is that, as of this writing, the federal government can borrow money for 10 years while locking in the historically low interest rate of 1.6 percent. That means that, if the government were to borrow, say, \$500 billion right now to support the Biden programs, it would have to pay \$8 billion per year in interest to the people who bought the 10-year government bonds. Those interest payments would amount to less than three one-hundredths of 1 percent of 1 percent (0.03 percent)

of annual U.S. GDP over that 10-year period.

But even such minimal government interest payments could be reduced further through the Federal Reserve buying the government bonds and then retiring them — i.e. through the Fed effectively “printing money” to cover this new debt. This is a perfectly legitimate (and indeed, commonly used) tool in the government’s policy arsenal (the technical term among policy wonks is “debt monetization”). Indeed, during the COVID-induced recession of the past year, the Fed poured an astronomical [\\$4 trillion](#) into bailing out Wall Street, equal to nearly 20 percent of U.S. GDP. There should be no question that the Fed could use this same policy tool to, for example, finance a U.S. and global Green New Deal with \$500 billion a year in Green Bond purchases.

Overall, these government borrowing policies could be implemented in conjunction with tax increases on corporations and the wealthy to both reverse the massive rise in inequality that has characterized the neoliberal era in the U.S., and to fund critical investments in a clean energy system and the care economy.

*The “American Families Plan,” President Biden’s economic recovery package, puts the emphasis on working- and middle- class American families. How will this investment support families?*

Biden’s “American Families Plan” is the complement to his “American Jobs” plan. The “Jobs” plan covers investments in infrastructure, broadband and clean energy, while the “Families” plan is about the care economy. The Families plan would provide 3- and 4-year-olds with free, universal pre-K; create a national paid family and medical leave program that eventually provides 12 weeks of up to 80 percent wage replacement to families who are caring for a new child or sick relative, healing from an illness, or grieving the death of a loved one; offer all students two years of free community college; extend tax cuts geared toward low- and middle-income families; and invest in a sliding-scale system that ensures most families don’t pay more than 7 percent of their income on child care for kids under 5. The White House estimates that the child care plan alone would save families roughly \$15,000 per year in expenses.

Relative to policies in place now in the U.S. to support families, Biden’s Families Plan is a major breakthrough. It is worth emphasizing that this breakthrough would not have happened without decades of committed effort by progressive

researchers and organizers to insist that these care issues were absolutely central for helping people to live decent lives. Indeed, a recent *New York Times* [article](#) described the decades of work that went into finally bringing care economy concerns into the forefront of policy priorities, first among progressives and then more generally. I am proud that my UMass and [Political Economy Research Institute] co-worker Nancy Folbre was featured in this article as a true pioneer around these issues. As Nancy says in the article, when she first starting her work on these issues, she was dismissed for spending her time on “girly” economics.

At the same time, the measures included in Biden’s Families Plan would not seem the least bit extraordinary in virtually all other industrial countries today. For example, right now about 17 percent of workers in the U.S. receive family leave benefits through their employers and nine states provide support for paid family leave. By contrast, every other high-income country in the world has a national paid family leave policy on the books. Other countries also have much more [extensive and affordable day care support](#).

Taken as a whole, the policies included in Biden’s Families Plan will indeed establish a much stronger level of baseline well-being for low- as well as middle-income people in the U.S. But the impact of the program will depend on a range of details — one of the most important is how the law defines a “family member” in the paid family leave program. Less than [20 percent](#) of Americans live in traditional nuclear-family households. It is critical, therefore, that people who need support be able to choose who would be eligible to provide them with paid support — whether it be a domestic partner, extended family member or friend. The Biden proposal didn’t flesh out this and similar details. These will be issues around which progressives will need to maintain strong organizing efforts.

*Biden’s infrastructure plan hopes to overhaul the nation’s highways, bridges, airports, electrical grid, etc., and it will be partly paid by cutting down on subsidies for the fossil fuel industry. First, why does the U.S. give handouts to Big Oil, and, second, why can’t Biden end all direct subsidies to the fossil fuel industry?*

The answer here is straightforward. The U.S. has given handouts to Big Oil because Big Oil has the political power to buy politicians’ votes. A rough estimate of the subsidies provided to U.S. fossil fuel companies, mostly through various forms of tax incentives, is around [\\$20 billion per year](#). That is, of course, an

obscene amount of money to pay companies whose business model entails destroying life on Earth as we know it. At the same time, it is a miniscule sum relative to the roughly \$4 trillion that the Biden programs have proposed for his Jobs and Families Plans. Moreover, the amount of funding in Biden's Jobs plan allocated to advance a viable climate stabilization program is itself inadequate.

Rather than asking whether Biden can end all subsidies to the fossil fuel industry, I think we should be posing a much bigger question: How do we phase out burning oil, natural gas and coal to produce energy altogether? Ending fossil fuel subsidies will only get us a tiny amount of the way. The fundamental project, therefore, remains the Green New Deal, centered around dramatically increasing investments to both raise energy efficiency standards and expand the supply of clean renewable energy sources while also strictly limiting the allowable consumption of fossil fuels, so that we achieve zero fossil fuel consumption and zero CO2 emissions by 2050.

Source: <https://truthout.org/>

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# De Autobandieten

Op 21 december 1911 vond in Parijs de eerste bankoverval in de geschiedenis plaats waarbij gebruik gemaakt werd van een auto. De daders waren vier mannen die deel uitmaakten van een groep anarchisten die door middel van overvallen de bourgeoisie in haar hart wilde treffen. In 1911 en 1912 zaaide de bende paniek in Parijs en omstreken met een serie spectaculaire en gewelddadige overvallen waarbij ze gebruik maakte van auto's. In een tijd dat de ongewapende Franse politie zich nog per fiets verplaatste, was dat op z'n minst baanbrekend te noemen. De geschiedenis van deze Autobandieten, oftewel de Bende van Bonnot zoals de groep genoemd werd, is meerdere malen beschreven.[1] Hierin wordt echter weinig aandacht geschonken aan de autotypes die door deze Autobandieten voor hun acties werden gebruikt. Maar voor de leden van de groep was juist het weloverwogen uitzoeken van een bepaald automerk en type een essentieel onderdeel van hun wijze van opereren.



*Rue Ordener, Parijs ca. 1911. Bonnot draaide van de Rue Ordener (links), rechts de Rue du Cloys in*

## *Overval*

De Rue Ordener in Parijs is een brede, nogal saaie middenstandsstraat in het 18e

Arrondissement, in het noorden van Montmartre. Op nummer 148, op de hoek van het zijstraatje Cité Nollez, is nu de kapsalon Air Coiffure gevestigd. In 1911 bevond zich hier een filiaal van de bank Société Générale. Op 21 december 1911 om 08.45 uur merkt een slager vanaf de overkant op dat een luxe auto met vier inzittenden, al geruime tijd met draaiende motor geparkeerd staat ter hoogte van nummer 142. Op het moment dat bij de bank geldloper Ernest Caby arriveert met zijn geldtas, zet de auto zich langzaam in beweging langs de stoepwand. Uit de auto springen twee mannen die de geldloper van dichtbij koelbloedig in de borst schieten, zijn tas grijpen en weer in de auto duiken. De chauffeur geeft gas, maakt met de auto een korte halve cirkel naar links en draait met piepende remmen de scherpe bocht met de Rue des Cloys in.[2] In volle vaart neemt hij vervolgens de eerste bocht naar rechts, de Rue Montcalm in, weet een bus en een taxi te ontwijken, en draait dan weer scherp naar rechts, de Rue Vauvenargues in. Vanuit de auto schieten de overvallers op enkele moedige omstanders die te voet de achtervolging hebben ingezet. Vijf minuten later snelt de auto Parijs uit door de Porte de Clichy.

Zelfs voor iemand zonder ervaring als automobilist, zoals schrijver dezes, is duidelijk dat voor het nemen van de bocht naar de Rue des Cloys, de nodige stuurmanskunst vereist moet zijn geweest. In ruim honderd jaar is aan de situatie ter plekke nauwelijks iets veranderd. Ook nu nog zou een automobilist bij het nemen van deze bocht beticht worden van onverantwoordelijk rijgedrag.



*Het filiaal van de Société General in de Rue Ordener*



## *Illegalisme*

De chauffeur van de auto was Jules Bonnot, een uit Lyon afkomstige mecanicien en chauffeur, naar wie de groep daders later door pers en publiek werd vernoemd. Eigenlijk ten onrechte want Bonnot had zich pas kort voor de overval bij de groep aangesloten.[3] De groep had geen leider, hoewel de jonge activist Octave Garnier duidelijk overwicht had op de anderen. Garnier en de uit Brussel afkomstige Raymond Callemin losten de schoten op de geldloper. Wie de vierde man in de auto was, is altijd onduidelijk gebleven.

Garnier en Callemin, en ook medestander en latere medeovervaller André Soudy waren afkomstig uit kringen rond het tijdschrift *l'anarchie* en woonden in een anarchistische, veganistische leefgemeenschap in Romainville, een landelijk gelegen dorpje ten noordoosten van Parijs.[4] De uit zo'n zes kernleden en een twintigtal helpers bestaande groep meende dat de strijd tegen het kapitalistische systeem en tegen de uitbuiting van arbeiders, het beste gevoerd kon worden door het plegen van individuele en gemeenschappelijke, indien nodig gewelddadige, verzetsdaden tegen de heersende maatschappelijke orde. Dit illegalisme, waarbij inbraken en overvallen gepleegd werden met als doel het ondermijnen van de maatschappelijke orde, zorgde ook voor financiële armslag voor de anarchistische beweging.

Directe, onverbloemde aanvallen op banken en vermogende burgers maakten deel uit van de werkwijze. In brede anarchistische kring werd dit anarchisme van de daad destijds veelal veroordeeld. De Autobandieten was een geïsoleerde groep outlaws die zichzelf bewust buiten de wet had geplaatst. Vanwege het feit dat hun acties niet alleen de bourgeoisie troffen, maar er ook onschuldige slachtoffers bij vielen, had de groep al gauw veel sympathie verloren.

Voor zowel de sensatiepers als de serieuze kranten was de groep maandenlang voorpaginanieuws.

Het gebruik van een auto moet de daders niet alleen de verzekering hebben gegeven dat zij na een actie snel konden vluchten, maar vooral moeilijk op te sporen waren. De mannen lieten de auto die avond achter op het strand in de buurt van Dieppe en namen de trein terug naar Parijs. Dat zij de allereerste bankoverval in de geschiedenis pleegden waarbij gebruik gemaakt werd van een auto, zal hen echter niet bezig hebben gehouden.[5]



*In de Rue Ordener werd een Delaunay-Belleville HB4 uit 1911 gebruikt*

### *Chique auto*

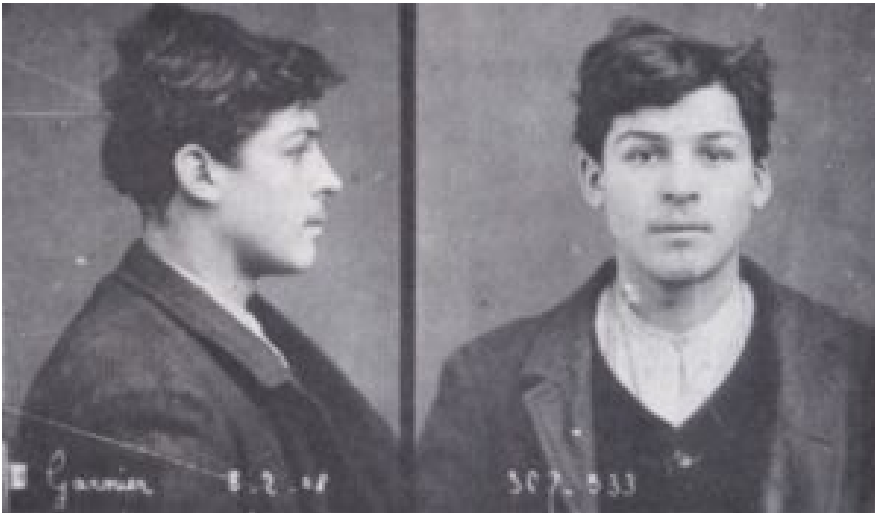
Voor de overval was de keuze van Garnier en chauffeur/mecanicien Bonnot gevallen op een Delaunay-Belleville HB4, bouwjaar 1911. Garnier wilde de beste auto van dat moment hebben, het zou de aanval van de groep op het systeem immers nog meer onderstrepen, betoogde hij. Enig speurwerk leidde hen naar een exemplaar in Boulogne-sur-Seine - kenteken 783-X-3, motornummer 2679V, eigendom van M. Normand, 12 Rue de Chalet, Boulogne. Op 14 december 1911 werd de wagen door Bonnot, Garnier en Callemin uit de garage van de eigenaar ontvreemd.

Delaunay-Belleville was een kleine autofabriek in St. Denis bij Parijs en maakte auto's met een chique, aristocratische uitstraling, die als exclusief voor de rijkere klasse te boek stonden.

Tsaar Nicolaas II, de Griekse koning George en koning Alphonso XIII van Spanje waren bezitters van een model uit 1906. Van het model HB4 werden in 1911 en 1912 slechts honderd vervaardigd. De carrosserie was uitgevoerd in zogenaamde Roi des Belges-stijl met een overdekte achterbank. De bestuurdersplaats was niet overdekt. Met de krachtige vier cilinder, 23 PK motor kon een topsnelheid van 70 km/u behaald worden. Voor de bestuurder was de auto soepel hanteerbaar. Kenners vergeleken de sierlijke beweegbaarheid en solide wegligging van de HB4 met die van een Rolls Royce Silver Ghost.



*Jules Bonnot*



*Octave Garnier*



*Raymond Callemin*

*Dollemansrit*

Twee maanden later, op 27 februari 1912, stalen Garnier, Bonnot en Callemin opnieuw een wagen van hetzelfde merk, nu een Labourdette Delaunay-Belleville Double Phaeton, bouwjaar 1908. Daarmee op weg naar een inbraak verloren ze echter veel tijd. Besloten werd halverwege om te keren en de auto door Parijs naar een voorlopige schuilplaats te loodsen. In de haast en wellicht enigszins overmoedig joeg Bonnot de auto op topsnelheid dwars door het centrum van Parijs. En passant reed hij een marktkraampje omver in de Rue de Rivoli, maar hij matigde zijn snelheid niet.

Voor het Gare St. Lazare kon hij net de bus van St. Germain naar Montmartre ontwijken.

Voetgangers zochten een goed heenkomen toen de auto het trottoir opschoot en tot stilstand kwam. Een verkeersagent die de onbesuisde automobilist wilde bekeuren sprong op de treeplank, juist toen Bonnot weer gas gaf. Voor het station, op de Place du Havre, werd de agent door Garnier met drie schoten uit een Browning van de treeplank afgeschoten. Hij overleed later in het ziekenhuis. Via de Rue Royale en de Place de la Concorde werd de dollemansrit vervolgd waarna de auto via de Porte Maillot de stad verliet. Twee dagen later werd de auto gebruikt bij een nachtelijke inbraak bij een gefortuneerde advocaat in Pontoise. Na gedane arbeid werd de wagen vervolgens in een achterafstraatje in St. Ouen door Garnier in brand gestoken.

## LES CRIMES DE LA BANDE



A MONTGERON  
Le guet-apens dans la forêt de Sénart

### Bois Sénart

#### *Brute overval*

De meest gewelddadige actie van de groep vond plaats op 25 maart 1912 in Chantilly, een rustige provincieplaats ten noorden van Parijs. Voorafgaande daaraan overvielen Bonnot, Garnier, Callemin, André Soudy, René Valet en Elie Monier in het ten zuidoosten van Parijs gelegen bosgebied Bois Sénart, een passerende auto - een De Dion Bouton - met chauffeur en een passagier. Toen de chauffeur zich tegen de aanvallers wilde verdedigen, werd hij doodgeschoten. De passagier raakte gewond. Na een rit door de oostelijke voorsteden van Parijs bereikte men Chantilly, waar opnieuw een filiaal van de Société Générale het doelwit was. Zonder pardon werden in de bank drie klerken doodgeschoten. De koelbloedige, brute overval leverde de daders 50.000 franc op.

# DES VOLEURS D'AUTOMOBILES



## A CHANTILLY

L'attaque de la succursale de la Société Générale

*De bankoverval in Chantilly*

De gekaapte auto was een blauwe, vier cilinder De Dion Bouton Limousine, kenteken 179-W-1, bouwjaar 1912, met overdekte voor- en achterbank. De 9 PK motor kon een topsnelheid halen van 50 km/u. De auto's van dit merk stonden bekend als betrouwbaar en duurzaam. Dit exemplaar was eigendom van ene kolonel De Rouge, die de nieuwe auto bij de fabriek had besteld en deze wilde laten afleveren op zijn vakantieadres in Cap Ferrat.

Na de bankroof werd de wagen achtergelaten in de Parijse voorstad Asnières, waarna de mannen naar de westelijke wijk Levallois-Perret in Parijs wandelden. Zonder problemen passeerden ze daar een grote groep agenten, die in de wijk stond te posten in verband met een taxistaking.



*De bij de overval in Chantilly gebruikte De Dion Bouton  
in een loods van de politie*

### *Tragische bandieten*

Op geen enkel moment hebben de Autobandieten geprobeerd hun identiteit te verbergen, hun sporen uit te wissen of zich te onttrekken aan de verantwoordelijkheid voor hun acties. Zij stonden volledig achter hun daden maar realiseerden zich tegelijkertijd dat hun strijd gedoemd was te mislukken, zo bleek later tijdens het proces tegen de overlevende groepsleden. In Frankrijk bestempelde men de groep daarom als de 'tragische bandieten'. Octave Garnier had zelfs toen hij nog gezocht werd, een ondertekende brief naar justitie gestuurd waarin hij de verantwoording op zich nam en details over de overvallen verstreekte.





*Belegering van de garage waar Bonnot zich schuilhoudt*



*Gewapende mannen bij de belegering*

### *Belegeringen*

In het voorjaar van 1912 worden bendeleden André Soudy, Raymond Callemin, Édouard Carouy en Étienne Monier gearresteerd. De politie weet Bonnot te traceren naar een huis in Ivry-sur-Seine. Wanneer de hoogste politiechef Jouin en zijn assistent behoedzaam het vertrek waar Bonnot zich schuilhoudt betreden, ontstaat een vuurgevecht. Daarbij wordt de politiechef gedood. Via een raam en het dak van een tuinhuisje weet Bonnot vervolgens te ontsnappen.

Dankzij een anonieme tip weet de politie enkele dagen later de nieuwe schuilplaats van Bonnot te ontdekken. Hij heeft zich verschanst op de

bovendieping van een garage in Choisy-le-Roi. Wat volgt is een belegering van ongekende proporties. Ruim vijfhonderd bewapende mannen - republikeinse garde, gendarmes en bewapende burgers - omsingelen het gebouw. Na een langdurig vuurgevecht sterft Bonnot.[6]



*De dood van Bonnot*



*Het huisje waar Valet en Garnier zich hadden verschanst*

Twee weken later volgt een soortgelijke belegering in Nogent-sur-Marne, een voorstadje van Parijs. Garnier en Valet hebben zich daar verschanst in een vakantiewoning, omsingeld door honderden gendarmes en legertroepen. De woning wordt gedeeltelijk aan puin geschoten.

Beide mannen overleven dit niet.

Bij het proces tegen de overlevende Autobandieten worden Callemin, Soudy en helper Monier veroordeeld tot de guillotine.

## Ondergang

De Autobandieten wilden het kapitalistische systeem in het hart treffen door symbolen van dat systeem aan te vallen. Ze schroomden niet om daarbij gebruik te maken van één van de statussymbolen van dat systeem, de auto. Deze exponent van de vooruitgang kon immers prima ten eigen bate, en die van de beweging, worden benut. Dat de geselecteerde snelle, degelijke auto's ook nog eens zeer kostbare modellen waren, voorbehouden aan een bourgeois koperspubliek, was een reden te meer om juist daarvoor te kiezen. Het paste logisch in hun denkwijze alleen genoeg te nemen met de betere automerken. Hun koelbloedigheid moet echter gepaard zijn gegaan met een flinke dosis overmoed, die wellicht hun onvoorzichtigheid bevorderde en uiteindelijk tot hun ondergang zou leiden.

## Noten

[1] Voor een geschiedenis van de Autobandieten zie: Dick Gevers, *De Bende van Bonnot*, in Anton Constandse, *De Autobandieten*, Kelderuitgeverij/De Vooruitgang 2010; Richard Parry, *The Bonnot Gang*, London 1987 en John Merriman, *Ballad of the Anarchist Bandits. The Crime Spree that Gripped Belle Époque Paris*, New York 2017. Alle Franse perspublicaties uit 1911-1913 over de Autobandieten zijn te vinden in: Frédéric Lavignette, *La Bande à Bonnot à travers la presse de l'époque*, Lyon 2008.

[2] Op nummer 5 in de Rue des Cloys was rond 1886 het schooltje gevestigd waar Commune-legende Louise Michel arme kinderen les gaf.

[3] Volgens enkele bronnen had Jules Bonnot in 1910 als chauffeur in Engeland gewerkt, in dienst van Arthur Conan Doyle, de auteur van de Sherlock Holmes verhalen, maar dit lijkt niet waarschijnlijk. Een vriend van Conan Doyle, de schrijver Ashton Wolfe, bezocht in 1925 het Musée du Crime in Lyon. Bij het zien van een foto van Bonnot meende hij Doyle's vroegere chauffeur te herkennen. In een tweetal biografieën van Doyle wordt Bonnot echter niet genoemd.

[4] Voor een beschrijving van de leefgemeenschap in Romainville: Martin Smit, [De bananeneter van Romainville](#), in de AS 196, 2016 en op *Rozenberg Quarterly*.

[5] Een soortgelijke overval vond pas negen maanden later plaats in de Verenigde Staten op 23 september 1912.

[6] Originele beelden van de belegering zijn te zien op Youtube:

*Afbeeldingen: collectie Martin Smit*

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# Chomsky: Without US Aid, Israel Wouldn't Be Killing Palestinians En Masse



Successive Israeli governments have been trying for years to push Palestinians out of the Holy City of Jerusalem, and the latest round of Israeli attacks fall in line with that goal. But to understand the roots of the current escalation — and the possible threat of all-out war — one must examine the U.S.-

backed, foundational Israeli government policy of using strategies of “terror and expulsion” in an effort to expand its territory by killing and displacing Palestinians, says Noam Chomsky, in this exclusive interview for *Truthout*.

Chomsky — a Laureate Professor of Linguistics at the University of Arizona and Institute Professor Emeritus at MIT — is internationally recognized as one of the most astute analysts of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and Middle East politics in general, and is a leading voice in the struggle to liberate Palestine. Among his many writings on the topic are *The Fateful Alliance: The United States, Israel and Palestinians*; *Gaza in Crisis: Reflections on Israel's War Against the Palestinians*; and *On Palestine*.

*C.J. Polychroniou: Noam, I want to start by asking you to put into context the Israeli attack against Palestinians at the al-Aqsa Mosque amid eviction protests, and then the latest air raid attacks in Gaza. What's new, what's old, and to what extent is this latest round of neo-colonial Israeli violence related to Trump's move of the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem?*

*Noam Chomsky:* There are always new twists, but in essentials it is an old story, tracing back a century, taking new forms after Israel's 1967 conquests and the decision 50 years ago, by both major political groupings, to choose expansion over

security and diplomatic settlement— anticipating (and receiving) crucial U.S. material and diplomatic support all the way.

For what became the dominant tendency in the Zionist movement, there has been a fixed long-term goal. Put crudely, the goal is to rid the country of Palestinians and replace them with Jewish settlers cast as the “rightful owners of the land” returning home after millennia of exile.

At the outset, the British, then in charge, generally regarded this project as just. Lord Balfour, author of the Declaration granting Jews a “national home” in Palestine, captured Western elite ethical judgment fairly well by declaring that “Zionism, be it right or wrong, good or bad, is rooted in age-long tradition, in present needs, in future hopes, of far profounder import than the desires and prejudices of the 700,000 Arabs who now inhabit that ancient land.”

The sentiments are not unfamiliar.

Zionist policies since have been opportunistic. When possible, the Israeli government — and indeed the entire Zionist movement — adopts strategies of terror and expulsion. When circumstances don’t allow that, it uses softer means. A century ago, the device was to quietly set up a watchtower and a fence, and soon it will turn into a settlement, facts on the ground. The counterpart today is the Israeli state expelling even more Palestinian families from the homes where they have been living for generations — with a gesture toward legality to salve the conscience of those derided in Israel as “beautiful souls.” Of course, the mostly absurd legalistic pretenses for expelling Palestinians (Ottoman land laws and the like) are 100 percent racist. There is no thought of granting Palestinians rights to return to homes from which they’ve been expelled, even rights to build on what’s left to them.

Israel’s 1967 conquests made it possible to extend similar measures to the conquered territories, in this case in gross violation of international law, as Israeli leaders were informed right away by their highest legal authorities. The new projects were facilitated by the radical change in U.S.-Israeli relations. Pre-1967 relations had been generally warm but ambiguous. After the war they reached unprecedented heights of support for a client state.

The Israeli victory was a great gift to the U.S. government. A proxy war had been underway between radical Islam (based in Saudi Arabia) and secular nationalism

(Nasser's Egypt). Like Britain before it, the U.S. tended to prefer radical Islam, which it considered less threatening to U.S. imperial domination. Israel smashed Arab secular nationalism.

Israel's military prowess had already impressed the U.S. military command in 1948, and the '67 victory made it very clear that a militarized Israeli state could be a solid base for U.S. power in the region— also providing important secondary services in support of U.S. imperial goals beyond. U.S. regional dominance came to rest on three pillars: Israel, Saudi Arabia, Iran (then under the Shah). Technically, they were all at war, but in reality the alliance was very close, particularly between Israel and the murderous Iranian tyranny.

Within that international framework, Israel was free to pursue the policies that persist today, always with massive U.S. support despite occasional clucks of discontent. The Israeli government's immediate policy goal is to construct a "Greater Israel," including a vastly expanded "Jerusalem" encompassing surrounding Arab villages; the Jordan valley, a large part of the West Bank with much of its arable land; and major towns deep inside the West Bank, along with Jews-only infrastructure projects integrating them into Israel. The project bypasses Palestinian population concentrations, like Nablus, so as to fend off what Israeli leaders describe as the dread "demographic problem": too many non-Jews in the projected "democratic Jewish state" of "Greater Israel" — an oxymoron more difficult to mouth with each passing year. Palestinians within "Greater Israel" are confined to 165 enclaves, separated from their lands and olive groves by a hostile military, subjected to constant attack by violent Jewish gangs ("hilltop youths") protected by the Israeli army.

Meanwhile Israel settled and annexed the Golan Heights in violation of UN Security Council orders (as it did in Jerusalem). The Gaza horror story is too complex to recount here. It is one of the worst of contemporary crimes, shrouded in a dense network of deceit and apologetics for atrocities.

Trump went beyond his predecessors in providing free rein for Israeli crimes. One major contribution was orchestrating the Abraham Accords, which formalized long-standing tacit agreements between Israel and several Arab dictatorships. That relieved limited Arab restraints on Israeli violence and expansion.

The Accords were a key component of the Trump geostrategic vision: to construct

a reactionary alliance of brutal and repressive states, run from Washington, including [Jair] Bolsonaro's Brazil, [Narendra] Modi's India, [Viktor] Orbán's Hungary, and eventually others like them. The Middle East-North Africa component is based on al-Sisi's hideous Egyptian tyranny, and now under the Accords, also family dictatorships from Morocco to the UAE and Bahrain. Israel provides the military muscle, with the U.S. in the immediate background.

The Abraham Accords fulfill another Trump objective: bringing under Washington's umbrella the major resource areas needed to accelerate the race toward environmental cataclysm, the cause to which Trump and associates dedicated themselves with impressive fervor. That includes Morocco, which has a near monopoly of the phosphates needed for the industrialized agriculture that is destroying soils and poisoning the atmosphere. To enhance the Moroccan near-monopoly, Trump officially recognized and affirmed Morocco's brutal and illegal occupation of Western Sahara, which also has phosphate deposits.

It is of some interest that the formalization of the alliance of some of the world's most violent, repressive and reactionary states has been greatly applauded across a broad spectrum of opinion.

So far, Biden has taken over these programs. He has rescinded the gratuitous brutality of Trumpism, such as withdrawing the fragile lifeline for Gaza because, as Trump explained, Palestinians had not been grateful enough for his demolition of their just aspirations. Otherwise the Trump-Kushner criminal edifice remains intact, though some specialists on the region think it might totter with repeated Israeli attacks on Palestinian worshippers in the al-Aqsa mosque and other exercises of Israel's effective monopoly of violence.

*Israel's settlements have no legal validity, so why is the U.S. continuing to provide aid to Israel in violation of U.S. law, and why isn't the progressive community focusing on this illegality?*

Israel has been a highly valued client since the demonstration of its mastery of violence in 1967. Law is no impediment. U.S. governments have always had a cavalier attitude to U.S. law, adhering to standard imperial practice. Take what is arguably the major example: The U.S. Constitution declares that treaties entered into by the U.S. government are the "supreme law of the land." The major postwar treaty is the UN Charter, which bars "the threat or use of force" in



international affairs (with exceptions that are not relevant in real cases). Can you think of a president who hasn't violated this provision of the supreme law of the land with abandon? For example, by proclaiming that all options are open if Iran disobeys U.S. orders — let alone such textbook examples of the “supreme international crime” (the Nuremberg judgment) as the invasion of Iraq.

The substantial Israeli nuclear arsenal should, under U.S. law, raise serious questions about the legality of military and economic aid to Israel. That difficulty is overcome by not recognizing its existence, an unconcealed farce, and a highly consequential one, as we've discussed elsewhere. U.S. military aid to Israel also violates the Leahy Law, which bans military aid to units engaged in systematic human rights violations. The Israeli armed forces provide many candidates.

Congresswoman Betty McCollum has [taken the lead in pursuing this initiative](#). Carrying it further should be a prime commitment for those concerned with U.S. support for the terrible Israeli crimes against Palestinians. Even a threat to the huge flow of aid could have a dramatic impact.

Source: <https://truthout.org/chomsky-without-us-aid>

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# Remaking The World Starts With The Green New Deal



CJ

*Polychroniou*

*While the Green New Deal will decarbonize the economy, it will also be egalitarian.*

In an entry to his *Prison Notebooks*, in Notebook 3 of the year 1930, the Italian revolutionary Antonio Gramsci observed of the existing political conditions in his society that, “The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear.”

Today, it is the entire world that finds itself in the midst of such a tension. Capitalism’s addiction to the burning of fossil fuels is heating up the planet, subsequently creating conditions that pose a direct threat to humans and ecosystems. Actually, there are serious [indications](#) that we are on the edge of a complete climate breakdown. Even the [Brazilian Amazon](#) has turned now into a net emitter. Yet the future ways of powering the world economy are gestating—and it is still far from clear that global warming will be tamed.

However, this is not to suggest that there are no solutions to the climate emergency facing the planet Earth. In fact, we seem to have the [ultimate solution](#) to climate breakdown, but powerful interests do stand on the way and too many people appear to be rather scared of the proposed solution due to misconceptions fostered by those who wish to maintain the status quo for as long as possible, and “damn the consequences.”

Welcome to the Green New Deal!

The Green New Deal is a plan for tackling the climate emergency by doing away with fossil fuels and relying instead on clean, renewable and zero-carbon energy sources to power economies in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The term itself emerged sometime during the 2007-08 financial crisis, and the first full proposal for a Green New Deal was put together by a [UK-based Green New Deal group](#) which drew its inspiration from the history of Roosevelt's New Deal.

Still, while a range of studies on "green economy" were produced shortly thereafter and all throughout the 2010s, it is safe to say that the Green New Deal framework did not fire the public imagination until just a couple of years ago when Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.) and Senator Ed Markey (D-Mass) introduced [a 14-page nonbinding resolution](#) calling on the federal government to create a Green New Deal as a means of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and reshaping the US economy. Now the Green New Deal is a topic that's on everyone's lips. The idea has become the Left's rallying cry and the Right's worse nightmare.

But let's get something straight. While there are various versions, the Green New Deal is first and foremost a rapid decarbonization program, with the government leading the way. The rationale for this is very simple: combatting the climate crisis requires a comprehensive social transformation that only the public sector can undertake, albeit the decarbonization of the economy, in the same vein as the goal of achieving and sustaining an approximation of full employment in capitalist economies spelled out by John Maynard Keynes in his classic work *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*, "does not exclude all manner of compromises and of devices by which public authority will co-operate with private initiative."

The co-operation between public and private sectors is necessary for numerous reasons, not least of which is the fact that decarbonization will require both public and private investments. In fact, decarbonization will require highly sophisticated public-private partnerships since it will be the government involved in guiding the process and funding most of the projects associated with the transition to a "green economy" but mainly private firms manufacturing and installing renewable energy technologies.

This is necessary because the task of saving the planet from climate breakdown

needs to take place under capitalism. Why? Because time is fast running out. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report released in late 2018 warned us that we have 12 years to limit devastating global warming by revealing that carbon dioxide emissions must be cut by 45 percent by 2030 and then to net zero by 2050. Thus, we don't have the time to wait for capitalism to come to an end. The objective conditions for an alternative socio-economic system may be absolutely ripe, but the transformative human activities to bring about this realization are still too fragile and scattered. And, lest we forget, a Green New Deal, as Noam Chomsky and Robert Pollin have argued in *Climate Crisis and the Global Green New Deal: The Political Economy of Saving the Planet*, needs to be global if we can hope to keep global warming at bay, although it will start at the national and local level.

Even so, the decarbonization of the economy through a Green New Deal faces massive opposition not only from the fossil fuel industry and the Republican party but from much of the corporate world and a disturbingly sizeable segment of the citizenry tuned into "free-market" ideology and conspiracies.

Decarbonizing the economy means altering the sources of energy we use. The transition to a clean and renewable-resource economy extends obviously to all material goods, but energy is the starting point as [emissions](#) from fossil fuel combustion and industrial processes are overwhelmingly responsible for greenhouse gas emissions. Agriculture and deforestation are the second largest contributors.

Achieving net-zero emissions by 2050 is technologically and economically feasible. We already have the technologies in place to make the transition to a carbon-free economy, although some need to be scaled up and new ones will surely need to be introduced in the near future. In fact, in an attempt to help the European Union meet its goal of net-zero emissions by 2050, the French consultancy firm [Capgemini has identified](#) no less than 55 high-climate technology projects that can form a road map to climate neutrality. And nuclear power and "blue hydrogen" produced through the integration of carbon capture with steam methane reformers are not included on the list.

Equally important, the costs of renewable energy have plummeted all while creating energy through the burning of fossil fuels remains a much costlier and a highly inefficient process. Air pollution from fossil fuels is also responsible for

nearly one in every five deaths worldwide, according to a new study published in Environmental Research.

So why is there political mobilization against decarbonization and the Green New Deal, especially when the fundamentals of economics and public health alike favor clean and renewable sources of energy?

The reasons are manifold.

Big Oil and Dirty Coal have been from the beginning the biggest opponents of climate legislation, spending billions of dollars lobbying lawmakers to win concessions for their products and block in turn measures geared towards global warming pollution reductions. Their business activities and profit-making prospects depend on polluting the environment, and damn the implications and consequences of environmental breakdown. Naturally, they are now at the forefront of the opposition to the Green New Deal.

The supporting cast includes the Republican party, one of the most stalwart allies of the fossil fuel industry and by far the most reactionary party all around in today's political universe, moderate Democrats, establishment economists, and all those opposed to the idea of the government being the primary driver of an economic transformation or to government intervention in economic affairs in general.

But the Green New Deal is also opposed because of what we may call it's "green intersectionality"—that is, the idea that environmental devastation and global warming are deeply intertwined with other issues such as economic inequality and racial injustice. Thus, the Ocasio-Cortez Green New Deal includes, besides achieving carbon neutrality, policies for stronger worker rights, universal health care, spending on public housing, and more.

The reintroduction of the Green New Deal by Senator Ed Markey and Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez on April 20, 2021, which calls for bold action to transform the economy while eliminating US greenhouse gas emissions within a decade, was immediately slammed by Republicans as a plan to advance socialism.

Reactionary elements and the Republican party leveled the same charge of "socialism" against FDR and the New Deal too. For the Republicans, even the

universal health care system, found in virtually all European countries, is socialism. So is taxing the super-rich. But red scare tactics have been the hall mark of the party of the rich, white, Anglo-Saxon, right-wing, and racist people. So no surprise in trying to scare the hell out of American people by equating the Green New Deal with socialism and with outrageous claims that it will take away their hamburgers and “outlaw” cars and plane travel.

What is true, however, is that while the Green New Deal will decarbonize the economy, it will also be egalitarian (Green New Deal jobs will be available to individuals and groups who have been denied access to good jobs; Green New Deal projects will address the concentration of pollution in low-income communities; and the Green New Deal will ensure a fair and just transition for workers and communities most severely impacted by the climate crisis) and will surely transform capitalism just as the original New Deal did in the 1930s.

Climate breakdown is the defining crisis of our time. And time is running out. But we can still avoid falling off the climate precipice. The Green New Deal is our way out, the opportunity to save people and our planet as well as to remake the world in more egalitarian and just ways.

What’s so scary or unappealing about that?

[C.J. Polychroniou](#) is a political economist/political scientist who has taught and worked in numerous universities and research centers in Europe and the United States. He has published scores of books and his articles have appeared in a variety of journals, magazines, newspapers, and popular news websites. His latest books are [Optimism Over Despair: Noam Chomsky On Capitalism, Empire, and Social Change](#), an anthology of interviews with Chomsky originally published at *Truthout* and collected by Haymarket Books; *Climate Crisis and the Global Green New Deal: The Political Economy of Saving the Planet* (with Noam Chomsky and Robert Pollin as primary authors); and *The Precipice: Neoliberalism, the Pandemic, and the Urgent Need for Radical Change*, an anthology of interviews with Chomsky originally published at *Truthout* and collected by Haymarket Books (scheduled for publication in June 2021).

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# Why The Future Belongs To The Left



CJ

*Polychroniou*

*As long as the barbarism of neoliberal capitalism defines the present, the future can only belong to the left.*

Over the course of the past few decades, the political pendulum has shifted dramatically to the right virtually throughout the entire world.

Indeed, since the onset of neoliberal era, virtually all political parties in representative democracies moved to the right: conservative parties embraced free-market capitalist policies in spite of their disintegrating impact on social order and traditional values, social democratic parties abandoned any pretense of commitment to the class struggle and came to depend totally on capitalism, and communist parties became historically obsolete.

Worse still, political parties and movements of the far-right gained ground in most countries around the world, and populist authoritarianism has emerged as a serious contender for the mess—poverty, declining wages, huge economic inequalities, massive unemployment, and social decomposition—created by the policies of neoliberal capitalism. In this context, extreme nationalist rhetoric and xenophobic sentiments, which apparently never go out of fashion, but do thrive under deteriorating economic and social conditions, have also emerged as key elements in today's political universe.

In the light of the above realities, one may be tempted to conclude that the Right has won in the historic clash of ideologies. But this would be a mistake, an overestimation on the one hand of the ability of the system in place to overcome its inherent contradictions and underestimation of the other of the role of the

historical forces of change.

If anything, the future actually belongs to the Left.

Firstly, all of the above-mentioned conditions that are prevalent in today's capitalist societies are nothing sort of social diseases which, if left untreated, will dehumanize the body politic and ultimately destroy civil society. Poverty, insecurity, systemic racism, massive economic inequalities, and social decomposition are not natural phenomena. They are the consequences of particular policies dictated by the needs and whims of a privileged few who have hijacked the state and use it as a vehicle to maintain the status quo and reproduce conditions favoring overwhelmingly capital over labor and nature.

But they are not permanent conditions, nor should one should believe for a moment that they point to the direction of the movement of history. Humanity has always rejected economic exploitation and social injustice, and the conditions today are in fact quite ripe for a massive rejection of neoliberal capitalism. Neoliberalism has proven to be a total disaster and is actually being challenged on several fronts. Only lack of unity among progressive forces on the future order and the weakening of subjective agencies of action on the national and international level, both the result of the economic and political counterrevolutions that took place in the 1980s, stand on the way from dealing a final blow to its rotten socio-economic order.

Secondly, capitalism itself is not a permanent state of affairs. It is a system that arose from specific historical circumstances, with only five hundred years of history so far, and has already undergone spectacular transformations—from merchant capitalism to industrial capitalism, and in our own time to hyper-capitalism. It will eventually be replaced by a different method of production and social organization.

Thirdly, while humans are social animals, capitalism itself is an anti-social system, pitting one individual against another, and the environment against the economy. Capitalism regards wealth and profit-making as the very meaning of life and sees competition as the very essence of human relations. In so doing, it turns a blind eye to human capacity for cooperation, solidarity, altruism, commitment to a vision of a social order based on equality, justice, and peace, and even self-sacrifice.



Fourthly, the very history of capitalism is indeed replete with widespread opposition to its ideology, values, and practices, and the system has been forced on numerous occasions in the course of its history to abandon and/or reform some of its most brutal manners and make concessions to working people.

The rise of authoritarian populism in many parts of the world has its roots in the economic policies of neoliberalism, which are completely insensitive to the social complexities governing human societies.

Finally, we should not overlook the fact that the rise of authoritarian populism in many parts of the world has its roots in the economic policies of neoliberalism, which are completely insensitive to the social complexities governing human societies. People left behind the capitalist rat race, or feeling economically insecure and witnessing a steep drop in their standard of living while the rich get richer, have turned out of fear or desperation to allegedly anti-establishment and far-right politicians who run campaigns based on the politics of fear and hate and make promises of return to a golden era. But such trends are quite transient, as history has shown, and while they are utterly disturbing and unquestionably menacing, they should cause no despair. The political pendulum can easily swing in the opposite direction.

History is on the side of the Left. Capitalism, especially in its neoliberal variant, is capable of only heightening the contradictions that it generates. The progressive forces are anything but defeated. In fact, the politics of progressive social change are spreading rapidly in many parts of the world in the age of the pandemic. In the US, Joe Biden has adopted a far more progressive economic and social policy agenda than anyone had anticipated, thanks to pressure from activists. The winds of change are also blowing in Germany as the Greens are on a sure path to government, and bent on bringing about major economic changes.

Of course, the direction of history is not a given. The realization of the end of neoliberal capitalism requires concrete public awareness of its deadly contradictions, massive political participation through transformative agencies of social change, and a vision of the future political, economic, and social order.

In the past, the Left was able to realize all of the above conditions and not only fight against capitalist onslaught but score some impressive victories. Sometimes through revolution, more often through reform.

It can do so again. The future has yet to be written; but, as long as the barbarism of neoliberal capitalism defines the present, the future can only belong to the Left.

Source: <https://www.commondreams.org//why-future-belongs-left>

[C.J. Polychroniou](#) is a political economist/political scientist who has taught and worked in numerous universities and research centers in Europe and the United States. He has published scores of books and his articles have appeared in a variety of journals, magazines, newspapers, and popular news websites. His latest books are [Optimism Over Despair: Noam Chomsky On Capitalism, Empire, and Social Change](#), an anthology of interviews with Chomsky originally published at *Truthout* and collected by Haymarket Books; *Climate Crisis and the Global Green New Deal: The Political Economy of Saving the Planet* (with Noam Chomsky and Robert Pollin as primary authors); and *The Precipice: Neoliberalism, the Pandemic, and the Urgent Need for Radical Change*, an anthology of interviews with Chomsky originally published at *Truthout* and collected by Haymarket Books (scheduled for publication in June 2021).

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