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BY BOB BUZZANCO - SCOTT PARKIN
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Israel's Cruelty by Design, an Interview with Joshua Frank

Israel's genocide on Gaza has led to at least 30,000 dead (including 12,000 children). This past week, we saw the Israelis begin bombing on Rafah and a ground invasion of the last refugee haven in Gaza is expected at any time. But while the Israelis wage their ethnic cleansing campaign with bombs and bullets, they've also weaponized environmental destruction to make sure that no one can return to a land and water poisoned by their war machine.

We talk with Joshua Frank (@joshua_frank) about the weaponization of environmental destruction in Palestinian territories. We also talk about Michael Menesini of the San Francisco's District Attorney office anti-Arab emails to CounterPunch.

Bio// Joshua Frank is an award-winning California-based journalist and co-editor of the political magazine CounterPunch. He is the editor and co-author of several books. Most recently, he is the author of the book *Atomic Days: The Untold Story of the Most Toxic Place in America* (Haymarket Books 2022).

Rushed transcript:

Scott Parkin: Welcome to the silky smooth sounds of the Green and Red Podcast. Today, we're going to be talking about Israel's continued attack and genocide on Gaza.

Joining us is our old friend Joshua Frank, Josh, welcome to the Green and Red Podcast.

Joshua Frank: Thanks for having me back.

Scott Parkin: Josh is a journalist and the managing editor at CounterPunch.org. He's also the author of *Atomic Days* and co-editor of a couple of other books.

And then he just recently published an article. Which made the rounds called. "Making Gaza Unlivable." And that's what we're going to be talking about today. Israel's attack on

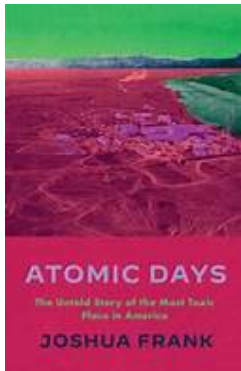
Gaza has left at least 30, 000 dead. This week, we saw the Israelis began bombing in Rafa, which is like one of the last bastions of people who have been displaced by this.

Josh's article is about how Israel has been weaponizing environmental destruction against the Palestinians. And so Josh, just talk to us a little bit about how Israel has been weaponizing environmental destruction against the Palestinians during this attack. And perhaps previously as well.

Joshua Frank: Yeah, my piece really focused on what's happening in Gaza. Obviously, a lot of this is applicable to the West Bank as well, although obviously, it's not under the same kind of bombardment at the moment.

But I think when we talk a lot about the genocide that's taking place in Gaza, which is obviously very well documented. And the impacts on people we. I haven't really addressed those environmental impacts of what's happening and how that's part and parcel for the lives that the dozens are, they're dealing with right now.

And so I really looked at three things. One, obviously, the bombing campaigns and what that's doing and the destruction to the cities and to homes. And then also I looked at the historic decimation of olive groves which are, cultural heritage of Palestinians and also, in Gaza a big part of the economy which we can talk about a little bit and then thirdly, I talked about another aspect of this campaign, which is to flood all of these tunnels primarily in the north and there's precedent for the destruction that this will cause Egypt's flooded tunnels about 10 years ago and there's a lot of documentation about what that flooding of seawater into those tunnels to destroy alleged Hamas, smuggling routes at that point what that did to agricultural lands.



So I looked at it holistically of and putting it in perspective of this is not just the individual campaigns, but a larger strategy on Israel's part to deem Gaza unlivable. And I think it goes along with a lot of the rhetoric that we're hearing out of the Israeli government.

And since the, since October 7th, and even prior that. The plan is ultimately to move Gazans out of the Gaza Strip. Now, whether that happens, there is some pushback now on the international level, obviously the ICJ's case. We'll see what happens. But also, news just came out today that and I don't know if we've been, if you've even heard about this yet, but reports are coming out of Egypt that they're building a buffer zone in the Sinai Peninsula which would allegedly make room for Egypt to receive Gazans.

And move them out of the south and into Egypt into the desert which would be a crime, obviously but if we've, if we're to believe the rhetoric of the Israeli government, this is what they've been talking about the whole time. And we also know they have nowhere else to go back to in the north.

Seventy percent of their homes have been destroyed. Looking at the environmental impacts of this is important to understanding the complexities of it and also the challenges that lie ahead if they are to return. What they are returning to the aquifers are being completely polluted and destroyed.

Even before October 7th. Over 90 percent of the water was contaminated in the drinking water supplies. The sewage systems in the Gaza Strip are completely broken. This is before October 7th. The conditions before the war broke out, if we can call a genocidal assault a war, were horrific.

And now it's just been exponentially made worse.

Bob Buzzanco: Yeah, you start with the, by talking about flooding the tunnels and so on. But it, I was surprised, I had no idea how much bigger it was than that. And I think it began a couple years ago with salination in the tunnels. Can you want to explain how that they did that?

Joshua Frank: Yeah, so right now, the plan is, and apparently, they've already started to do this in the north. When I was writing the article, it was in the test phase, but they set up these module pumps along the coast that's transporting seawater into these underground tunnels to destroy the tunnels.

What that salt concentration does is eventually permeate the groundwater supplies including them, and as well as making the agricultural land, and most of the agricultural land in Gaza is in the north. Making that land will be infertile because it will be too salinized. So that's the big fear among people keeping a close eye on this.

The other fear is that the water itself in the Mediterranean is very polluted in that area because of the sanitation being destroyed and the sewer being destroyed. So, a lot of that stuff has been historically just dumped right into the without being treated into the

Mediterranean. So that's another problem is that they're pumping this water in that's polluted to begin with.

And it has a high salt content. And so, they're really fearful that the little agriculture that they were able to have is going to be destroyed. This is even going to make it harder to live. And then on top of that, when the ground as we've noticed down here in Southern California with all the rain, we had last week.

Hillsides collapsing, and we have those kind of problems. In Gaza, it's going to make it really difficult if the ground is unstable to rebuild, which could be also part of Israel's strategy is to make that ground so unstable that they can't rebuild in those areas that have been destroyed.

Scott Parkin: There was a stat from a UNICEF report in 2019 that 96 percent of water from Gaza's soil aquifer is unfit for human consumption. And so, it seems part of the Israeli strategy here. It's not just incidental to make Gaza make it unlivable.

Although there are a lot of stories about how the Israelis plan to have settlers move into Gaza, the way in which they've been doing in the West Bank and other places. But, I'm wondering if you could talk a little bit about how intentional a strategy is this?

Joshua Frank: I think the evidence is just overwhelming that this has been the game plan from the get-go and October 7th has been used as an excuse to destroy Gaza. I think at the highest levels of the Israeli government, they knew that they're never going to eliminate Hamas because Hamas is an ideology and it's a movement.

They can impact its military capabilities. They can set it back, but they're not going to they're not going to They're not stop Hamas from spreading and the hatred towards Israel is only going to be exponentially worse after this. Of course. So, I think that the intentionality of what they're doing in Gaza and the amount of if you want to call it a retaliation of how disproportionate that's been, it's been intentional. When I wrote that piece, I think the numbers have changed somewhat since then there was 29,000 air-to-surface musicians were fired. 40 percent of those were unguided bombs.

Those are meant to destroy and are are indiscriminate in what they destroy. 70 percent of all homes destroyed. As I said earlier, I've been destroyed. Nearly all the hospitals I have been are not functioning. Most of them are destroyed. Most of the schools are now destroyed.

Now they're going after the United Nations efforts there as well. I think it's a systemic systematic genocide and ethnic cleansing that has been going on for over 75 years and the

attacks of October 7th, the failure of the Israeli government to respond to those and we can get into those details, too.

There's a lot of fishy stuff, of course, but I think they saw it as an opportunity, much like the U. S. saw 9/11 as an opportunity to expand in the Middle East. I think that, we've heard these comparisons that this was Israel's 9/11, but the reality is the reaction to this is bit is more of an apt metaphor for what's going on.

And I think that's only expanding and I think it's important to also know that this is a nuclear conflict as well. Israel is nuclearly armed. We know that this is expanding regionally. Just today, they struck southern Lebanon. Some Hezbollah targets there. We know what's happening with the Houthis.

Things are expanding and getting more and more dangerous as this drags on. And I don't think there's any turning back. And we know this, the Biden administration is totally, completely culpable. And whatever sort of pressure they're allegedly putting on the Netanyahu and the Israelis has, isn't being, isn't very effective.

Which makes you wonder if they're putting any pressure on at all, or if it's just a political play. So, I think that this is systemic and I think that we're, we haven't seen the worst yet.

Bob Buzzanco: Unfortunately, let me follow up, ask you a little bit of the munitions. In Vietnam, with Agent Orange and Cluster Bombs, there are still significant consequences that are visible.

And I know in Gaza, we've seen White Phosphorus and Cluster Bombs already used. Are there other, in addition to the immediate destruction, which we're seeing every day, which is horrific, are there any, kind of other things that may be long term?

Joshua Frank: We don't talk about a lot is, of course, the destruction of the buildings, but what that creates as far as air quality.

Yeah. And I compare it to the World Trade Centers, the towers that went down in 9/11 and the lingering health effects, obviously on the people in that part of Manhattan. And also, the impacts on air quality going forward. It was like about a year, even after 9/11, the air quality in lower Manhattan was horrible.

And now I can't imagine how bad it is in Gaza. We can't measure these things right now, of course, right? Because we know we don't know exactly what's going on. But those impacts have to be far greater. And that's not even taking into account. The leftover debris. We know that these bombs are, Gaza is a testing ground, right?

Gaza is a testing ground for Western arms manufacturers. And so we're not, we don't know exactly what's being used in some cases, but we know the impacts are horrific and

it's going to take decades to really not only rebuild, but to understand the true toll that this is taken on the region, which.

We talk about the impacts of the bombs and these kinds of things. We talk about the plans for Israelis to move into Gaza. That might be a plan for some, but what are they moving into?

It is a destroyed land and it's going to take billions and billions of dollars to rebuild it even back to what it was before, let alone these new sort of Fancy buildings on the coast or something. So, it's just, it's a horrible situation. And I think we haven't seen the worst of it yet.

And I think the estimates of what's coming out of this destruction are lowball estimates. The very conservative estimates, I think it's much horrific and much worse than we can even predict.

Scott Parkin: The olive trees that are ten percent of the Gaza economy. This is an example of also the Israelis trying to, destroy Palestinians to be able to have a viable economy. And so it's in a sense, it's also not only environmental warfare, but it's also economic warfare. Could talk about that?

Joshua Frank: Yeah, it and it's also cultural warfare and, the olive tree and what it represents the Palestinians is.

It has a very deep history. In Palestine, since 1967, Israel has uprooted 800,000 native trees, Palestinian olive trees. And it's not just this, these trees that are like monocrops. These are forests. They have many other trees in these areas like buckhorn and tiny hawthorn and almond trees and pine and fig trees.

They're ecosystems. They are. Home to many different types of birds, the green finch the Eurasian jay and other birds and other migrating birds. So these are, these are forests that have been historically cultivated, but in the West Bank, they've been torn down to build settlements.

In Gaza, they've been destroyed for sometimes no reason at all, other than to destroy, like you said, to destroy part of the economy. And the harvest season for the olives usually takes place in the fall, but that didn't happen this year. Talking about the economy in Gaza right now seems ridiculous, right?

Because there is no economy, it's destroyed. But before October 7th olive harvest made up about 10 percent of the entire economy of the Gaza Strip. There were thousands of farmers that harvested these olive groves. And so it's a big part of their income. And a lot of them

that I have in the article talk about not knowing if they're, first, if they're ever able to go back to these areas.

And secondly, what if they do go back, if those olive groves are even there. And I think it's just, has anybody that's even been a part of any sort of environmental movement in the United States or in the Western world? And the relationship that we have with the forests here and fighting to protect them.

I think it's really a similar feeling that Palestinians have, even on a much, much deeper scale. To the olive groves. And I believe Israel knows that, I think part of them destroying those olive groves is to destroy part of that Palestinian history as well.

Bob Buzzanco: Earlier, you mentioned white phosphorus. In addition to being deadly to humans, doesn't have an afterlife and seep into the environment?

They were using white phosphorus and Cast Lead at what the 2014 went to. So, this is what they used. This is part of their arsenal.

Joshua Frank: Absolutely. Yeah. And it lingers for a long time. It's linked to all kinds of bad stuff. It's also illegal to use white phosphorus. Talking about the war crimes that Israel has committed would take more than a podcast.

Yeah. It will have great impacts. Parsing all these things out is difficult. I think once they get in there and can assess it, and then when they do get in there and assess this stuff, I'm sure it's going to be whitewashed.

Who's going to be in there? It's going to be the Israeli security apparatus. And they're not going to let in independent observers. I'm sure especially with their efforts to get picked out the U. N. Now. I don't know if we'll ever really know the long-term impacts, but we do know that white phosphorus has lingering impacts on groundwater supplies, on soil composition, and other things in where it's been used in the past.

Scott Parkin: There's a new campaign that started here in the Bay Area called "No Fuel for Apartheid", which is targeting Chevron., The company, since 2020, has been building an energy hub connected to gas fields in, off the coast of Gaza And also in northern Gaza.

And I'm curious, what your thoughts are on how Western oil companies are taking advantage of this moment. And I'm wondering what your thoughts are on that.

Joshua Frank: I think for the fossil fuel industry, this is potentially an opening for them to get into the region more so than they already were. I think it's probably more likely that you're going to see oil drilling off the coast and in the Gaza Strip before you're going to see any sort of.

Building for settlements just because. Obviously, it's much easier to get in there and harvest oil than it is to build and clean out aquifers. And of course, we know the oil industry is very good at polluting aquifers too, so it will just make it a dead zone. I don't know a lot about I know some of the, I've seen some of the sort of overarching plans for some of these ventures.

Of course, pipelines and other things through the Gaza Strip. But I don't know now what those look like. And what's going to happen here soon. And I think there's probably a lot of debate about that too, because there's been this effort and this push to, and even Israel said we're going to move some of these Palestinians out of the south and back into the north.

And so I think that complicates the picture a little bit. And I think that the, going back to what I was talking about earlier, I do think that there has been some pushback about these things. So the, I think the talk has been muted. About those long-term plans, but I think it's definitely a part of it.

And that, and as we know, the oil industry doesn't care about human rights or any kind of environmental impacts there, especially companies like Chevron, especially companies like Chevron.

Bob Buzzanco: I didn't read the entire ICJ complaint. Were any of these kinds of environmental issues brought up in the charges against Israel? Because during the Vietnam War, ecocide was not brought up.

Joshua Frank: Yeah, not the ecocide was not brought up. But some of the impacts, I think, of the ecocide that are related, right? 85 percent of the population of Gaza, probably more now, is facing starvation. Those sorts of things are, part of that environmental impact.

And part of destroying agricultural land, right? So if you have Gazans that are facing starvation now. They can't go back to a place that has food because there's no nowhere to grow food. There's no access to food which entices them to leave Gaza, which I think is a big part of the plan.

And as we've seen with some of the prominent voices on social media in Gaza, like Motaz, who had something like 17 million followers on Instagram, more than President Biden. He exited, he got out, and they wanted him out of there, and part of that was obviously a threat to his life and he's not the only journalist, obviously we know the war on journalists there, but I think part of that is because the rest of it's not livable, right?

It's enticing to leave, to save your own life, and I think that, the state that we're in right now, and that they're in, especially in the south, is that there's nowhere to go being forced into the desert and the Sinai. Unfortunately, we'll start looking good for them. The further along they go the more destruction that happens in their own backyard.

Scott Parkin: Are they doing anything like this in the West Bank or any other Palestinian areas?

Joshua Frank: We do know in the West Bank, there's been horrific settler violence. And we know that the sort of the southern part of the West Bank, which is. Okay.

Yeah. There are some, the most vulnerable areas of the West Bank, which are in the southern part of the West Bank. And those are the areas where there are, I don't want to say, nomadic peoples, but people that still live off the lands that herd sheep and other things. So, the prime target for settler violence.

We know obviously as well that all of the roads are continuing to be burned and ripped up and scorched sometimes in the name of, security, other times to build roads walls, to build new settlements, so it is still, very similarly to what's happened in Gaza over the years, it's happening now.

Today in the West Bank as well, and of course they live under a completely different sort of military occupation than Gaza did before October 7th. They're, going through security checkpoints day in and day out living in an a segregated region of apartheid so getting cut off from their agricultural land those sorts of things have happened and are continuing to happen as well.

Bob Buzzanco: About public health, you've already talked about after what, four months now how serious it is. Respiratory illnesses and diarrhea, children are dying. What's, and that's only going to get worse, right?

Joshua Frank: Yeah. I know it's going to get worse as they make it harder and harder for medical teams to get in there and help them.

Part of defunding the efforts of the United Nations there. Is to make those matters even worse, right? Some of the only functioning medical facilities in Gaza right now are run by the U. N. The doctors that are coming in out of the coming out of that and talking about their experiences there and how horrible they are.

That's only going to get worse. Which is another reason for them to leave. I think that's part of the plan. We, they've given some estimates of asthma and what's happening. I think a lot of that had to do with the detonation of buildings. And the dust in the lingering sort of toxins in the air.

It's something like 10 percent of thousands now are dealing with asthma that weren't prior to October 7th. Of course, diarrhea is rampant. Other waterborne illness illnesses are going crazy. It's a total catastrophe. And it is a preventable one, obviously, but we're so far along now and I don't think we even really have a true understanding of how bad the situation is there on a public health level.

And another similar to evaluating sort of the environmental assessment later on, looking at these public health impacts later on is going to be really interesting. And I think the numbers of those that are going to develop. Long-term severe impacts, not even talking about mental health.

Of course, just other health issues is going to be horrific. Yeah, 50, 60

Bob Buzzanco: years later in Vietnam, you still have entire orphanages for Asian orange babies and things like that without arms. It's like it's yeah, same in Iraq and of course, on another, on the human health side as well.

Joshua Frank: There's, we already know the death toll and how high it potentially is, but how many others are amputees or coming out of this with other ailments is.

Unfathomable really. And that body's in the rubble. Yeah. And then all those that are, you can't count because they're buried. Yeah.

Scott Parkin: Are there any agencies or institutions which are talking about the sort of environmental destruction being weaponized by the Israelis at this point? Or is it? The dust will settle, and then we will start talking about the long-term health effects of some of this environmental destruction.

Joshua Frank: Historically, when we look at Kuwait and the burning of oil fields and these sorts of things depleted uranium of soldiers that were cleaning up things, cleaning up tanks in the battlefield in Iraq, those sorts of things, a lot of these, a lot of these studies come out later, when it comes to environmental impacts.

These are epidemiological studies. In some cases, sometimes they're like, they're like long studies because a lot of the impacts linger and don't show up until years later. It takes a lot of time, and it takes a lot of resources. And historically, in this country, at least and in Britain as well, a lot of those studies aren't funded properly, or they lose funding and it's hard to track these people.

They get lost in the system. I'm talking about soldiers in this, in that case. Which is obviously, people who are being impacted in Gaza as well are Israeli soldiers, too, and a lot of them young. Young men. So no, it's hard. It's really impossible to track some of this stuff right now because it's so fluid.

And I don't think that the governments have an incentive. Israel doesn't have an incentive to detract the destruction because it doesn't bode well for them. The United Nations kind of can keep an eye on this and they do monitor things, but they only can do as much as they're allowed to do.

And we know Israel is not going to allow them to do what they need to do in order to get a full picture of what's happening.

Scott Parkin: My other question is what sort of response have you gotten from telling this story? I think Kate Aronoff had a story around climate environment around Chevron last fall in the new Republic. But, I haven't actually seen too much reporting on this. I'm curious about the sort of response you've been getting.

Joshua Frank: It's made the rounds. I've talked to a lot of people about it. And I think it's been in the conversation. It just hasn't been maybe put together in a way where it's all there and tied into the genocide itself.

Because the human toll is just so horrific, that becomes the focus. And so trying to tie that in and looking at it as this more complex thing that's happening and especially going forward. But yeah, anyway, yeah, I think it's been well received, but it's still since we're in the middle of this.

Right now, stopping the bombing of Gaza, not only because we obviously want to save lives first and foremost, but because we need to. Ensure that this destruction stops for environmental impact reasons as well.

Scott Parkin: I'm going to shift topics a little bit. It's still going to be around Gaza, but it's going to be a little bit about some things that have been happening in the U. S. Just last week, it turns out that an assistant district attorney in San Francisco, Michael Menesini, sent off some emails to your publication Counterpunch. He had some choice words for Counterpunch because published quite a quite a few articles around the ethnic cleansing and genocide in Gaza. I'm wondering if you could just maybe just fill us in on that a little bit as well.

Joshua Frank: I think the first email we received from him was in late January. Apparently, he was on our email list and has been receiving our little newsletter updates that we send out. We call it.

Scott Parkin: Is he a donor?

Joshua Frank: [Laughs] I don't believe he's a donor and he won't be anymore. Maybe some kind of settlement will come out of this. Still, no, and I think that first email, he gave

us that regular spiel that we're anti-semitic because we're criticizing Israel. Everything we publish is garbage because we can't be taken seriously, blah, blah, blah.

Didn't really whatever, I think what was startling was that he sent it from his work email address, which is a government email address. We're used to nut jobs sending us stuff, of course, death threats and other things too, especially since. October 7th, even our site was attacked right after October 7th, because we were immediately trying to stop the incursion into Gaza.

So we're, we're used to this stuff, but coming from a assistant district attorney in San Francisco was alarming. And we talked to a lawyer after that one was sent to us. And we just thought we'd sit and wait and see what happened next. Fast forward a couple weeks and he sent off another email to us.

And this time he repeated some pretty horrible anti-Arab rhetoric and so at that point, I thought, how, what's the best way to push back against this guy, and I decided to post his email to make them public. I thought about writing an article about it, but I said, "*let's just let social media do its thing.*"

I don't have the time for this. He's not worth my time, but it did get picked up in the *San Francisco Standard* and did a pretty good piece on him. And in doing so I think put pressure on the DA's office to investigate him. I don't know where that stands now with him.

He is not part of the team that's prosecuting the Bay Bridge 78. Those that shut down the Bay Bridge. But the office is, and so I think it shows that the anti-Arab sentiment within the DA's office in San Francisco is pretty strong. If this guy doesn't have, feel like he can send off an email from his public government account.

Then the guy, he was also the vice mayor of Martinez. He'd been in the public life for a while, you'd think. He would have some scruples or at least send us some hate mail from his personal email account, right?

So, we'll see, yeah, we'll see what happens. I think that he needs to be removed from his post. He certainly shouldn't be on any cases that involve hate crimes or free speech or protests of any sort. I think his job is done there and I think he should retire. So hopefully there'll be some pressure on him to do that.

Bob Buzzanco: It says a lot about the coastal elites to, in San Francisco, you have this guy and Pelosi saying the FBI should start surveilling people, guidance, crowds, and I started thinking about it too. It's not just that he has these sentiments, right?

Joshua Frank: Which I think a lot of people have few to share them publicly. He did in this case, sent it to us. But I think it was also an attempt to silence a media organization getting an email of a media organization, getting an email from a prosecutor's office pulling us out for something that they don't agree with is I think pretty scary precedent.

And one that I think, depending on what happens in November, obviously it could get worse as we go forward the crackdown on free speech. But I think that this is a warning shot in some ways.

Bob Buzzanco: People have been fired for tweeting sympathy for Palestinians, consistently for the last four months.

Joshua Frank: Yeah. But I will say the response once those emails were made public has been nothing but supportive of Counterpunch. And I think he's feeling the pressure for sure. And I don't believe we'll be hearing from him anytime soon.

Scott Parkin: It's interesting how they're allowed to get away with this to have anti-Arab sentiment is one thing, but then being able to go public with it with on your institution server or whatever.

Joshua Frank: I think that anti Arab sentiment is, it's always been there.

Yeah. But it's been heightened ever since 9 /11, right? I think that there's a lot of evidence that this type of anti-Arab sentiment in DA's office and prosecutors and the FBI and others is part of their training from day one and we're seeing that now 20, whatever, 22 years later, that it's still very prevalent there.

And that's frightening. And I think it's I think about a lot of the hate crimes against Palestinian activists and others and how when it happens. It happened, Bob, right? Happened in Houston a couple weeks ago, right? If that were a Jewish activist, a Zionist, I should say.

It would be front page news in New York Times. But what happened in Vermont and, since they're Palestinian, since they're Arab, since they hold sentiments that aren't popular with the elite those kind of fall off the radar. And that's unfortunate, but I think that's part of this bigger problem in our society as well, is dehumanizing Palestinians and dehumanizing those of us who stand up for Palestinian rights.

Joshua Frank: And we're seeing that crack down on campuses, of course, and all over the place.

Bob Buzzanco: Yeah, several universities have banned groups like Jewish Voice for Peace and Students for Justice in Palestine.

Meanwhile, the public has turned against this war. We have cities all across the country passing resolutions, ceasefire resolutions, because the heat is on and the public is out.

Scott Parkin: Including San Francisco, by the way.

Joshua Frank: Yeah, including San Francisco, and then Chicago, down here in Long Beach, all over the place. So meanwhile, the tide has shifted. And as horrible as it is, and not knowing the future what the future holds for Palestinians, never in the existence of the state of Israel has there been this much scrutiny of what they're doing on an international scale day in and day out, documented on social media, documented in the news.

Even the New York Times has to cover this stuff, right? I try to hold on to that. I try to hold on to the fact that. I think that there's a great opportunity for a new anti-war movement. I don't think we're there yet. I'm very inspired by Jewish Voice for Peace and other anti-Zionists in the Jewish community, as well as our rank and file antiwar folks as well.

We have a big opportunity to push back against the U.S. empire, and the apparatus that we support in Israel is part and parcel of that. And so I think there's just a really A great opportunity to move this forward and I'm inspired by that, despite the horror that we're witnessing.

Scott Parkin: Yeah, I completely agree with that. And, speaking of the Bay Bridge action, they did a blockade on the Golden Gate Bridge this morning. I saw that. Yeah. And in response to the Israelis bombing of Rafah.

Joshua Frank: We know the DA's office will be under scrutiny now if they're going to prosecute anybody.

Scott Parkin: Hopefully they'll keep that in mind. I only have one question left, which is actually a little bit unrelated.

Bob Buzzanco: Just a great article. I think I've studied wars my whole life. And this is one element that I think is not really covered there. I call it ecocide, but you see this in Korea, just the consequence of the long-term impact of unexploded bombing, unexploded bombs, and things like that. So, this is important to get out using food and water as a weapon.

Joshua Frank: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, it's the other day. I think in every genocide that been documented; a lot of these elements have been in place.

Bob Buzzanco: Yeah, I was teaching the other day about, the origins of World War One and the British blockade, which in 1914 was a violation of international law, so it's been over 100 years, and the U.S. is just, clearly objectively rejected international norms.

Joshua Frank: Yeah, absolutely.

Scott Parkin: My last question actually is unrelated to a little more of an environment/climate question, and because you're based in Southern California, we've been seeing these "atmospheric rivers" all over the state. But, Southern California, particularly the Los Angeles area where you are, is going to hit particularly hard.

I've actually seen some posts from you with some pretty with the river, Almost looking like it was overflowing if it wasn't, and I'm just wondering if you have any thoughts on that since it's also your beat as well.

Joshua Frank: I think what we're witnessing here is, we're living in a world of extremes. Ever. We know that climate change is impacting so many different things in so many ways, but one of the things that we now know for sure, I think, is that these weather events are going to happen.

Maybe not more often, but when they do happen, they're going to be more ferocious. And that's certainly the case with hurricanes. And I think in the case of the dry spells that we're going to experience droughts, they're going to be more extreme. And then cases like the atmospheric river that just happened down here were more extreme.

And I think this is our new norm. Unfortunately, I think this sets back the idea of rewilding the L.A. River in some ways because now people are afraid of flooding. And rightfully but it did hold.

The flood infrastructure here did hold, but will it in the future? If we get hit back-to-back it could be much greater the impacts of atmospheric rivers or storms down here. We have another one coming. I don't know if it's an atmospheric river, but I think we're expecting a couple more inches this weekend.

And the ground is saturated. There's nowhere to go. Hillsides are collapsing. A lot of the hills in and around L.A. are at great risk. They're having to evacuate some of the canyons because they're afraid of mud, debris, and flow, and just I think this is our new norm. And of course, Southern California, as Mike Davis wrote about so eloquently in documenting the ecological disasters that we face.

He was very prescient, right? He predicted that we're going to be living in a time where these things become more, more exacerbated. And I think we're in the middle of it right now. If we want to understand all of this, I think we go back and read *Ecology of Fear* and elite for Southern California. And see what we're in for.

Scott Parkin: Josh, it's been great talking to you again today.

Bob Buzzanco and Scott Parkin host [The Green and Red Podcast](#).

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