

Gaza, guns, and capitalism

The genocide in Palestine will persist as long as global arms trade persists



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The Marxian theory of “capital moves a capitalist towards making more capital” explains why US arms trade is ever-increasing and why the country manufactures and sustains conflicts between nations, sects, and religious groups.

The United States has had a history of success in arms production and arms trade even before World War I. Capitalists invest in this sector as it is the most profitable. This success in arms trade has strengthened the basis of US hegemony in the global economy.

James M Cypher, an economist and research scholar at the Institute for Sustainable Prosperity, wrote, “The US has immensely benefited from their policy of inducing intra-country or cross-border conflicts and wars because it helped them form enormous capital while it is the main supplier of arms used in these conflicts and wars.” The fact that the US was able to overcome the Great Depression as soon as it started receiving orders for arms from Europe and Asia is a testimony to this. Following the increasing demand for arms, the US military expenditure jumped to 600 percent from June 1940 onwards, and constituted 42 percent of its GDP around 1943-44. This is why many economists refer to the US economy as a “military economy.”

From 1939 to 1944, the military sector employed 15 million workers, real GDP jumped to 54 percent, and unemployment rate fell to just 1.4 percent—the lowest in US history.

This state of the US economy is described in terms of “guns and butter.” In the field of military technology, the US also achieved incredible innovation. They mastered at least 20 technological innovations during the mentioned period.

After World War II, the US economy stagnated again. To cure the stagnated economy, a debate was raised: should the country adopt a discretionary fiscal policy or “social Keynesianism?” Finally, it was resolved in 1950, by the implementation of the Secret National Security Plan titled NSC-68, referred to as the aforesaid “guns and butter” approach. Leon Keyserling, the chairman of the American Council of Economic Advisers, proposed a massive military

The fact is that gun industry owners are more powerful than the government. After being elected, President Barack Obama admitted that he was able to win because he was able to raise the amount of funds he wanted. Donating to politicians is an investment for the gun makers, as it helps them get laws passed in favour of their interests. The US government cannot go against gun factory owners.



Sales of US military equipment to foreign governments in 2023 rose 16 percent to a record \$238 billion, said the Department of State. FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

spending increase, abandoning the principles of “social Keynesianism.” With the implementation of his proposal, the Pentagon’s arms sales increased from \$14.8 billion in 1950 to \$51.1 billion in 1951, which is 15.1 percent of GDP. This huge jump in GDP was due to the Pentagon’s arms sales.

Until the first half of the 1980s, the US made great strides in state-funded military research and development known as “blue-sky.” Radical changes took place in the production structure. Arms-production became dominant, and the state-sponsored and state-funded military sector became the basis of growth in the US economy. Military spending yields a disproportionately higher rate of return than investment

in other sectors, and investment in arms adds more to GDP than any other investment—this is the foundation of so-called “military Keynesianism.” As a result, the influence of Keynesian theory among US policymakers declined. They turned to neoliberalism, which is more capitalistic and market-reliant. Private owners of capital and the US itself have benefited from their investment in arms production since World War I. Over the course of time, the US became a greedy nation. It is this indomitable desire of the capitalist nation to extract more capital that is stated in the Marxian theory. This theory helps the world understand why the US instigates and sustains wars.

The greed explains why no

government has been able to pass “gun control” laws even if they wanted to. The fact is the owners of the gun industry are more powerful than the government. After being elected, President Barack Obama admitted that he was able to win because he was able to raise the amount of funds he wanted. Donating to politicians is an investment for the gun makers, as it helps them get laws passed in favour of their interests. The US government cannot go against gun factory owners.

As of June 6, 2022, the United States has 750 military bases in 80 countries and a total of 173,000 troops stationed in 159 countries. The large number of weapons of mass destruction used in these bases is supplied by private munitions

manufacturers. The owners of these weapons industries are directly or indirectly the makers of US foreign policy. That is why the US is the only country which voted against the “ceasefire in Gaza” resolution in the UN Security Council. Joe Biden himself is a beneficiary of the arms trade. Even if he wanted to, he could not go against the owners of the arms industry because the capitalists are all too powerful and the “real” powers that be.

Historian Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, former professor at California State University, explains the totalitarian attitude of US-Americans in her book *An Indigenous People’s History of the United States*. This totalitarian attitude of people in the US, she explains, stems from colonialist attitudes. Those who, especially from the United Kingdom, have settled in various countries, including North America, have taken away the lands of the Indigenous people, made them destitute, and in doing so, inflicted endless torture on them.

Professor Keynes’ prescription, which was able to end the Great Depression, proposed government intervention rather than leaving the economy entirely to the market. After World War II, the US abandoned Keynes’ prescription and adopted neoliberalism. Consequently, the country became more capitalistic and market-dependent. Control was removed from financial institutions, and the individual became more powerful than the state.

It is, therefore, the capitalists who persuade the government to sustain war, and to carry out aggression. They are the ones who sell weapons to governments globally. Even if they have to kill a pregnant woman—even a child—in carrying out that war, they will not back down because they are maddened by the greed of profit. After the October 7 Hamas attacks, Gaza has been destroyed by the Israeli army’s indiscriminate onslaught. What the world has witnessed so far, is the naked face of capitalism.

Have we outgrown emotional intimacy?

We’ll let Gen Z lingo take this one



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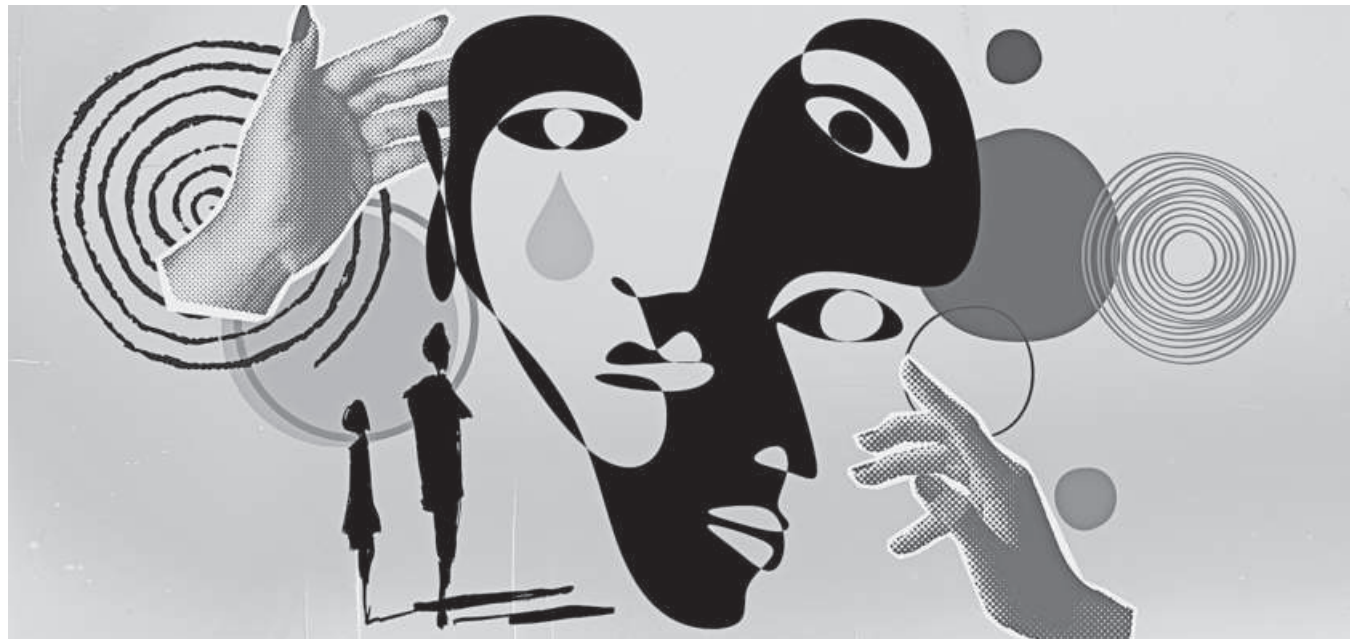
Popular discourse often tends to assert that people are becoming lonelier with time. Young people, especially Generation Z, or Gen Z, seem to be facing the most blame for their emotional unavailability and apparent lack of interest in pursuing long-lasting relationships. A lot of this discourse is backed by the fact that fewer and fewer people are getting married or deciding to have children. This often leads to a widespread belief that people have grown out of the need for emotional intimacy and prefer a hyper-individualistic life. However, I believe otherwise.

This is not to say that those who have chosen to distance themselves from prospects of love and relationships, or those who prefer to look inward to have their emotional needs met, do not exist, or that they are in the wrong for choosing to live that life. However, this does not mean that changes in the patterns of relationships or the dynamics through which people seek love, affection, and partnership are a direct indication of an entire generation’s need for intimacy in their lives.

There are innumerable factors to consider here. The first to consider would be the statistics based on which we draw conclusions about feelings of loneliness. It is true that there are many studies which have concluded that people feel lonelier now than they have before, but there are also numerous studies which have concluded otherwise. An important fact to note is that studies about feelings of loneliness have only been conducted on a large scale after the year 2000. The metrics used to measure these feelings have also varied largely.

So, if loneliness has not increased astronomically, do the trends indicate a reluctance in people to pursue relationships?

An almost unavoidable part of discussing relationships in today’s world would be Gen Z’s relationship terminology. Attachment patterns, “baiting,” “benching,” “bread-crumbling,”



VISUAL: FATIMA JAHAN ENA

red and green flags (more on this later), “situationships”—the vernacular seems endless, and people are quick to conclude that the dating scene is incredibly complicated and requires too much work. Many even go on and say that this is reflective of the younger generation’s unwillingness to commit to long-term partnerships.

However, if looked into closely, one would realise two things. First, none of these terms really introduces new laws or dynamics into the endlessly entangling prospects of love. Second, none of these reflect an unwillingness to pursue emotional intimacy.

Attachment patterns are the sets of behaviours people exhibit when in relationships, in relation to how they conduct themselves and respond to their partners’ behaviours. Baiting essentially refers to leading a person on with the idea that one is emotionally available for a relationship when they are actually not. Benching refers to the idea of continuing a relationship with a person without really committing to them, keeping them

around as an option. Bread-crumbling refers to the act of providing a partner with just enough affection to keep their attention while never progressing the relationship further. Flags, often paired with the colours red and green, refer to categorising one’s behaviour in relationships into those that indicate positive versus negative intentions. Situationships refer to relationships which are not entirely platonic, but

rely on themselves to fulfil their emotional needs. While it may be true that more people find emotional fulfilment after having dealt with their mental barriers and resorting to a support network rather than just one person (a partner), does that automatically mean that they have chosen to forgo their emotional needs? Or that finding peace in friendships or even in a beloved pet does not count when it comes to emotional validation

aren’t exactly in an exclusive romantic relationship either.

None of these are circumstances that are unknown to those who have delved into the world of dating. The prospect of love, relationships, and partnership is incredibly convoluted, and has always been. The use of such terms are more indicative of a generation’s way of making sense of a world that seldom does. It is also often a way for people to come to terms with the complications of relationships and form their own boundaries in relationships, establishing their standards and having their emotional needs met.

This attempt to make sense of a scene that young adults are often plunged into should only be indicative of their efforts to seek emotional intimacy and partnership.

Finally, there is the discourse on mental health and the “growth” mindset that often leads people to falsely believe that younger generations reject the notion of emotional intimacy and only

and fulfilment?

It is cliché for a reason to say that human beings are social animals. While a life geared towards meeting one’s own needs is nothing to sneer at, people continue to pursue connection, attachment, and a stable partnership. With the ever-evolving nature of social dynamics, sticking to any particular metric to judge how people choose to feel or conduct themselves in regards to emotional connection seems archaic. Collectively catastrophising an entire generation’s perception of love, connection, and relationships hardly seems to be the way to understanding the depths of their emotional needs.

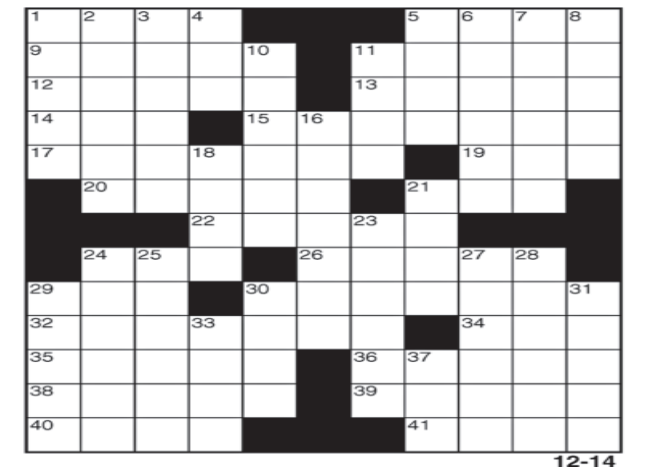
So, have people outgrown emotional intimacy? Seems unlikely. A lot may have changed. People may speak a different language to seek it, but that does not take away from their experiences. People may seek it from other sources, but that does not discredit its existence.

But what do I know? I’m still trying to fathom the concept of beige flags.

CROSSWORD

BY THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
1 Garden sections
5 Feeding time needs
9 Dote on
11 Scoundrel
12 Plains grazers
13 Central
14 Greek vowel
15 Pulling with effort
17 Timber business
19 Sandal sight
20 Get more out of
21 – Moines
22 Drummer Ringo
24 Mob pariah
26 Grayish brown
29 Swindle
30 Gaiter
32 Falling behind
34 Cain’s mother
35 Did nothing
36 Spine-tingling
38 Berth places
39 Baseball’s Jeter
40 Appear
41 Minus
7 – Aires
8 Suit material
10 Sign up
11 Tony winner Diana
16 Left on the plate
18 Strong wind
21 Pharmacy buy
23 In tatters
24 Band aide
25 “Life of Pi” director
27 South Dakota capital
28 Is jealous of
29 Film excerpts
30 Tops
31 Tech whizzes
33 Start of an idea
37 Sushi choice



MONDAY’S ANSWERS

RADIUS COPE
ALONSO AURA
WITCHDOCTOR
HEART
PIER GUAM
FINS MASTER
ILL PAN LAY
BEEPER DANE
STIR LAST
SCION
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