**Headline:** We Will Not Move One Solitary Inch Towards Your Armageddon

By Roger Waters

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**Source:** Globetrotter

**Tags:** History, Politics, Opinion, United Nations, North America/United States of America, Europe/Ukraine, Europe/Russia, Trump, Europe, Identity Politics, Indigenous Resistance, Human Rights, Middle East/Palestine, Middle East/Israel

**[Article Body:]**

Thank you for inviting me to speak here today on this historic anniversary. Last month, I addressed the Security Council of the United Nations on the tenth anniversary of the signing of the Minsk II agreements. Anyone who’s interested can check it out at [UNTV](https://media.un.org/unifeed/en/asset/d333/d3339592). I stuck that day to the agenda, Ukraine and Crimea and the Donbass and the war in Ukraine, but I included mention of the Right Sector and Stepan Bandera and the place of white supremacism in Ukrainian politics, but I did not digress. Today, I am not restricted by protocol, and so, with your permission, I will digress as I see fit.

Every morning, when I awake, my chest tightens, and tears well up, I get a grip and gird my loins for the fray: *What can I do today? Why do I prepare for battle every day?* Because every day we are fighting the existential battle for the soul of the human race.

If we live in the West, our government is aiding and abetting the genocide of the indigenous people of Palestine by the rogue state of Israel in real time, in front of our very eyes. It feels like a nightmare, but it’s not a nightmare; it’s real.

We pinch ourselves in disbelief. This can’t be real. If we have children, they tug at us, ‘*Mamma, Pappa make them stop! Hey Mum, Dad why doesn’t someone make them stop? Pappa! Pappa! What about the United Nations, Pappa? What about international law? Pappa! What about the Geneva Conventions? Pappa, Pappa, they’re killing the children Pappa! Pappa, they’re burying them under the rubble. Make them stop.*’

And then I take a breath. Why do you think I’m here in Yalta? It’s a good question, though, isn’t it? What about international law, what about the United Nations?

We are here today to mark the eightieth anniversary of a meeting between three men: Joseph Stalin, Winston Churchill, and Franklin D. Roosevelt. They met here in March 1945 to sort of divide up what was left of Europe after the Second World War. They did that without too much fuss, but they also discussed trying to replace the League of Nations, which had failed to prevent the Second World War, by creating a new international forum that might succeed where the League of Nations had failed. Good idea, tighten up the rules a bit, call it the United Nations; that has a nice ring to it.

So, they did. The United Nations Charter was drafted and signed in San Francisco that very summer, and low and behold, surprise, surprise our three chums from the Yalta summit, joined by France and China the other two perceived victors in World War II, were all appointed permanent members in the most important council of the new United Nations, the Security Council.

And what is the Security Council? Why is it important? The Security Council was and is important because its primary responsibility is and I [quote](https://www.un.org/en/our-work/maintain-international-peace-and-security#:~:text=Under%20Chapter%20VII%20of%20the,Operations%20and%20Special%20Political%20Missions.), ‘Maintaining international peace and security, including determining threats to peace, taking measures to restore it, and establishing peacekeeping operations’.

Good God. That sounds great; did it work? Well, there was just one little wrinkle.

Ah ha! Go on.

Well, Stalin, Churchill, and Roosevelt had agreed at Yalta that not only should they be permanently represented in the Security Council but that they should also each individually have the power to VETO any Security Council resolution. Of course, France and China chimed in, ‘Me too, me too!’ The big five made it very clear to the smaller nations. Either have a UN Charter with the veto, or no UN Charter at all.

*I say that wasn’t very democratic, was it?*

Well, no, but the United Nations founding principles sounded pretty good, so all the little guys agreed. These are the founding [principles](https://www.un.org/en/model-united-nations/4-pillars-united-nations).

1. Maintain International Peace and Security.
2. Protect Human Rights.
3. Deliver Humanitarian Aid.
4. Uphold International Law.

And did they? Well, they did Number 3, a bit, but the other stuff was too difficult, hamstrung as they were and still are by the big five’s power of veto in the Security Council.

I have no doubt they did the best they could, anyway after the war Germany was duly carved up into four zones occupied by the military of the US, the UK, France, and the USSR, but there’s more to the story, three and a half years later on the 10th of December 1948, the fledgling United Nations re-convened in Paris and among other things signed the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights). That declaration, partially written, I’m told, by Eleanor Roosevelt, FDR’s Missus, one for the ladies. Thank you, ladies. The thirty articles were then enshrined in international law, or so we were led to believe. It was a very big deal at the time, the dream of equal human rights for all our brothers and sisters all over the world irrespective of their religion or ethnicity or nationality was a very big deal. Think about it. If adopted, it would probably have signaled the end of all war and absolutely, definitely would have removed the threat of another genocide forever. What a fitting way to remember and also universally condemn the very recent attempted genocide of European Jews by the Nazis. Our leaders, with hand on heart made it a solemn promise, ‘Never again’. But, as they made that promise, and I hate to have to be the one to tell you this, some of them had their fingers crossed behind their backs, some of them were lying. Some of them swore to support and uphold Universal Human Rights, but they didn’t really mean it. Some of them were actually ethno/supremacists, like the Nazis had been, people who believe some people should have more human rights than others. They believe in Human Rights but only for a chosen few. The few they choose.

Let me give you a fleeting glimpse, come back with me to Palestine in 2007. I was in a UNWRA jeep with a lovely woman called Allegra Pacheco who worked for the UN, we were heading North through the occupied territory towards Jenin on a brand new highway when I remarked, ‘Well at least they have nice roads’ ‘Yes’ said Allegra, ‘They’re for Jews only’.… ‘Don’t be silly, that’s ridiculous.’ ‘Yes, it is, but it's true if you live here, you have to be Jewish to be allowed to use the road’.

The point I’m making is that the Israelis don’t see this as a contradiction. For them, genocide was wrong in the Second World War in Europe, in Germany or in, say, Warsaw in Poland, but it’s ok now in the Middle East in Gaza because the jackboot is on the other foot.

So, the declaration of Universal Human Rights was a bit of a charade really, part of a sort of masked ball to celebrate the divying up of the spoils of war. Sorry to be the bearer of bad news, sorry to spoil the party.

Most of you are too young to remember, I’m almost too young to remember myself, but I can read, and I have read the history.

Anyway, we all dutifully wore our masks to the ball. We declared our attachment to all the right sacred cows. We all declared, hand on heart, that we cared about human rights, freedom, democracy, and the rule of international law and yet? Now the jackboot is on the other foot, and so?

Thirty-five years ago, in 1990, I wrote a song called ‘Too Much Rope’ for an album I made called [*Amused to Death*](https://open.spotify.com/album/5RqQH15mFgHI984n25pFg3). These are a couple of lines from it:

You don’t have to be a Jew

To disapprove of murder

Tears burn our eyes

Moslem or Christian Mullah or Pope

Preacher or poet who was it wrote

Give any one species too much rope

And they'll fuck it up.

I’m going to fast-forward seventy-nine years from March 1945 to April the 18th last year. On that day the UN Security Council convened to vote on a draft resolution submitted by Algeria, **recommending the State of Palestine be admitted to full UN membership**. The draft resolution was [not adopted](https://press.un.org/en/2024/sc15670.doc.htm) due to a VETO by the United States. So there were twelve votes for the resolution, two abstentions, the UK and Switzerland, and, the killer blow the US VETO.

Why did the USA use its veto to block that resolution? Good question, they’d been bleating on about peace in the Holy Land for years, The famous two-state solution. And yet, the USA has used its power of veto 45 times since 1972 to support the state of Israel in everything it does. Including, critically, Israel’s ongoing occupation of Palestinian land and genocide of its people.

Why? Good question.

Maybe that is why I am here today to attempt to shed some light on the ‘why’ of it.

I think it may have something to do with an unholy attachment to the ethno/supremacist tendencies I mentioned earlier, manifest destiny, and sacred texts.

I’ll come back to all that, but it might also be about good old-fashioned Greed?

It’s interesting that Donald Trump, the current President of the United States of America, has recently declared an interest in ethnically cleansing Gaza and developing it as an upmarket tourist attraction, a seaside resort with golf courses and, as I recall, a giant golden statue of himself. A nice little earner for Jared Kushner, his son-in-law, no doubt. Not to mention the trillions of cubic meters of natural gas just offshore that rightfully belongs to the indigenous people.

In 1964, in his famous Ballot or the Bullet [speech](https://www-personal.umd.umich.edu/~ppennock/doc-Ballot%20or%20the%20Bullet.htm), Brother Malcolm X had this to say:

I’m not here tonight to discuss my religion. I’m not here to try and change your religion. I'm not here to argue or discuss anything that we differ about, because it's time for us to submerge our differences and [realise] that it is best for us to first see that we have the same problem, a common problem, a problem that will make you catch hell whether you're a Baptist, or a Methodist, or a Muslim, or a nationalist.

Brother Malcolm didn’t say ‘or a Jew’ that night so I’m adding it for him, ‘Or a Jew’. The point being that in terms of human rights, our religion should be irrelevant, or as Malcolm put it, left at home in the closet.

Back to Brother Malcolm:

Whether you're educated or illiterate, whether you live on the boulevard or in the alley, you're going to catch hell just like I am. We're all in the same boat and we all are going to catch the same hell from the same man. He just happens to be a white man. All of us have suffered here, in this country, political oppression at the hands of the white man, economic exploitation at the hands of the white man, and social degradation at the hands of the white man.

Now in speaking like this, it doesn't mean that we're anti-white, but it does mean we're anti-exploitation, we're anti-degradation, we're anti-oppression. And if the white man doesn't want us to be anti-him, let him stop oppressing and exploiting and degrading us. Whether we are Christians or Muslims or nationalists or agnostics or atheists, we must first learn to forget our differences. If we have differences, let us differ in the closet; when we come out in front, let us not have anything to argue about until we get finished arguing with the man.

*Let us leave our religion in the closet.*

Thank you, Brother Malcolm.

By the way, for ‘White man’, please read ‘European man’.

Back in the day, before the Israel Lobby gave me up as a lost cause, they used to try and quiet me down by saying things like, you’ll catch more bees with honey than with vinegar, and wouldn’t you rather be seen as like Martin Luther King than like Malcolm X, Roger?

Yes, I can smile now.

Maybe the US representative always uses the power of veto to support Israel because the USA is still an essentially European Colony at heart. When the Pilgrim fathers landed at Plymouth Rock, when Mr. Christopher Columbus sailed the sea without a compass, when the Portuguese landed in Brazil, they all did so driven by manifest destiny, they all had divine providence and the blessing of the church on their side. The abundant land in the West, the New World across the ocean, was their Zion. They said so. So, with God on their side, they conquered all, they lied to the local people, signed treaties they never meant to keep, plundered, raped, all that good old proud boy bullshit. The genocide of the indigenous people in the Holy Land is just a rerun of the genocide of the indigenous people in the New World. Brother Malcolm’s white man is still that same good old European boy.

So, thank you, Brother Malcolm and thank you, Brother Martin Luther King; you both hold a place very close to my heart, and Brother King, I share the dream. It is a good dream, and we are here today to hold on to it. We’re holding on to it as best we can here in Yalta, and all over the world, including in Europe, millions of our brothers and sisters daily take to the streets to protest the genocide of our brothers and sisters in Palestine. Students risk being battered by militarised police while exercising their first amendment rights to protest on college campuses in the US; yes, thank you, Mahmoud Khalil, you are one of those millions, we are all part of the same choir. We sing with one voice. The fundamental question is, ‘Can we raise the volume of the voices in the crowd, to a level where we effect the way our governments behave, because at the moment our governments are behaving very badly, rooted as they are to their white supremacist racist European roots, and they are standing in the way, between us and progress toward our goal, progress towards the holy grail, The Implementation of The Declaration of Universal Human Rights from all those years ago?’

So, I think we’ve established we can’t leave anything up to our leaders. And speaking of leaders, much of our attention is focused on the new administration in Washington, DC. Which way will Donald Trump jump? His actions speak louder than words, his actions tell us he couldn’t care less about anyone’s rights but his own. He is at least open and honest about that. His actions speak louder than words, his plan is obvious; it is to enrich himself and his immediate family and then Elon Musk, and Jeff Bezos, and Mark Zuckerberg and the rest of the oligarchs, all 0.0001% of us. And that is what he will do. And the rest of us? (mimes cleansing hands) Welcome to the 99.9999%.

We stand at the crossroads.

We are all engaged in the existential battle for the soul of the human race.

Which path should we take?

Can we hold on to the dream?

How can we explain that the unspeakable crime of genocide is unspeakable whoever’s foot wears the jackboot.

Is there a reason the crime of genocide is unspeakable?

What if the unspeakable crime of Genocide turns out to be the Achilles’ heel of Zionism because it invites us to stare, like Narcissus, at our own reflection in the pool? What if through the surface of the pool we see our own unspeakable reflection? What if we European colonisers have to confront our own history of genocide in both North and South America and Africa and Australasia? The colonies of empire, be they English or Spanish or Dutch or Portuguese or French, were never home to anything to be proud of. For hundreds of years, we Europeans committed the unspeakable in God’s name. The rest was theater. Is any of this ringing any bells? All the fine words spoken in declarations of independence; all the constitutions writ large in flowing script on fine parchment. The pretense of liberty, freedom, democracy – it was all just theater. Look into the pool, Narcissus; all the artefact of Hollywood cannot conceal the depths of the depravity that is our common history. What is that thing that Americans, in particular, but really all white men, fear so much? We all fear being exposed for who we really are. We fear, in other words, the blinding light of truth. The truth is that what Western governments are doing when they support Israel’s psychotic bloodbath is not simply justifying Israel’s horrific crimes, they are also defending themselves, standing, as they do, perched precariously, on very shaky, very unstable ground, shame-ridden, in defense of indefensible imperial pasts.

OK, I might as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb. The Old Testament of the Bible. Without the Old Testament and its stories of a victimised people mercifully rescued by a vengeful, bloodthirsty God, we Europeans would have had nothing to give a fake, higher meaning to our own barbaric colonial past. So, if enough of us look into the pool and see through the Achilles’ heel, we will see the truth. It is not God who is giving Israel permission to continue its murderous rampage, it is us. How many of us need to look into each other’s eyes and recognise there our shared humanity, before we can stand shoulder to shoulder, arm in arm, face to face with Trump and Netanyahu and Starmer, and, armed with love and truth, we, the choir, will find the strength to say, enough.

*This is the ending of your road,*

*We are not lemmings*

*We are human beings*

*We will not move one solitary inch towards*

*Your Armageddon.*

*Today, at the crossroads*

*We came across a child alone*

*We will not stand aside*

*And let your bulldozers pass us by?*

*No, we will not stand aside,*

*Here we stand*

*With Rachel Corrie*

*And Shireen Abu Akleh*

*And Marielle Franco*

*And the rest*

*And embrace this child*

*And together, we will bring this child home?*