

לשם שמים

Community Discourse on International Relations

"Every dispute that is for the sake of heaven
will be constructive."

Pirkei Avot 5:17

In This Issue

Highlighting Illiberal Democracies

לשם שמים is a periodic opinion journal featuring the writing of Barrack students, alumni and faculty. Our goal is to provide interested individuals with a diverse forum in which to express their views, while fostering greater understanding in the community of the critical issues that face us as Americans, as Jews, and as supporters of Israel.



Spring 2020

Dedicated to the victims of all injustices and racism.
As Jews, we must fulfill the moral obligation to repair
the world and denounce all forms of hate.

"Justice, justice shall you pursue"
Deuteronomy 16:20



Highlighting Illiberal Governments

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In This Issue

The Growing Normalization of Anti-Semitism within the Progressive Left 5-9

Maya Posner

China's Mistreatment of Uighur Muslims.....10-12

Daniel Bernstein

Coronavirus: Crisis Under Wraps 13-15

Ben Beal

Makeup as Liberation: The Impact of the Beauty Industry on the Fabric of North Korean Society.....16-18

Sarah Bartos

The Forgotten Geopolitical Impact of Climate Change.....18-21

Luke Finkelstein

David vs Goliath: Inside Hong Kong's Fight for Democracy
.....22-24

Micah Israel

The Plight of the Kurds 24-28

Sarah Miller

The Growing Normalization of Anti-Semitism within the Progressive Left

By Maya Posner

The influence of anti-Semitism in the government and society has threatened Jews for centuries. With the establishment of the State of Israel, anti-Semitism has taken on a new face, anti-Zionism. The New York Times simply defines anti-Semitism as “hostility towards Jews” and anti-Zionism as “hostility towards Israel as a Jewish state.”¹ By denying the Jewish people self-determination or the existence of Israel as a Jewish homeland, anti-Zionist actions become anti-Semitic. In 2018, anti-Jewish hate crimes comprised 58.8% of all religion-related hate crimes.² Clearly, the Jewish people are a target, and aspects of the progressive left perpetuates this feeling of insecurity by continuing to spread anti-Semitic messages. Both the government and the public, such as advocacy groups on and off of college campuses, feed off of each other, simultaneously continuing the spread of anti-Semitism seen in the progressive left. Parts of the progressive sector of the Democratic Party normalizes anti-Semitism by interspersing propaganda and anti-Zionist rhetoric, which then alters the essence of progressivism and leaves progressive Jews without a political voice.

Natan Sharansky, former Israeli Minister for Diaspora Affairs, created the “3D test for anti-Semitism.”³ The three Ds stand for demonization, delegitimization, and double standard. The 3D test differentiates genuine criticism of an Israeli policy or government administration from pure anti-Semitism.

The 2018 midterm election shifted the political climate of the Democratic party,

pushing the party further to the left. Congresswomen Ilhan Omar, the representative from Minnesota's 5th Congressional District, has a long history of covering stated propaganda and hateful words with insincere apologies. Beginning in 2012, Omar expressed her view on the 2012 conflict between Israel and Gaza. She tweeted “Israel has hypnotized the world, may Allah awaken the people and help them see the evil doings of Israel.”⁴ When asked about her tweet on CNN, Omar defended her tweet saying, “I don't know how my comments would be offensive to Jewish Americans. My comments precisely are addressing what was happening during the Gaza war, and I am clearly speaking about the way the Israeli regime was conducting itself in that war.”⁵

Omar's words are incredibly offensive because of their intense anti-Semitic history. The 1940 film *Jud Süß*, directed by Joseph Goebbels, tells the story of an 18th-century Jewish man who escapes a ghetto only to become a government official and cause destruction. After watching the film, Goebbels recalled, “An anti-Semitic film of the kind we could only wish for. I am happy about it.”⁶ Clearly, Omar's word choices of “hypnotized” and “evil doings” root back to one of the highest periods of anti-Semitism; the Holocaust. The notion that Jews possess the wicked ability to control and manipulate power fails the 3D Test by demonizing Israel, showing how Omar's tweet constitutes anti-Semitism.

Years later while in office, Omar

continued to spread anti-Semitic messages on Twitter. Responding to journalist Glenn Greenwald's post about House GOP Leader Kevin McCarthy's threat of punishments against criticism of Israel, Omar tweeted, "It's all about the Benjamins baby."⁷ This short response dangerously accuses Israel supporters of paying out lawmakers and repeats the anti-Semitic trope of characterizing Jews as stingy or money hungry. Once again, Omar apologized for her statement, saying that anti-Semitism exists, other people have taught her about Jewish history, and her intent was not to offend Jewish Americans. Within the same statement, she "reaffirm[s] the problematic role of lobbyists" in politics.⁸ Again, unwillingness to take full responsibility and ignorance fault Omar's apology. As a public leader, Omar must learn about all cultures. That is not to say Omar needs to memorize every fact that relates to every type of peoples, but she needs to know what not to say, such as anti-Semitic tropes, and learn from her past. Seven years before her Benjamins tweet, Omar admitted to her ignorance of Jewish history. Ignorance only reflects a poor character if a person does not expand their knowledge, and Omar failed at doing so. Ilan Omar's history of spreading anti-Semitism displays how young players in Congress create harmful change within the Democratic Party.

In addition to Ilhan Omar, another member of the "Squad of 4" participates in spreading anti-Semitism. Rashida Tlaib proudly supports Linda Sarsour, a political activist with an anti-Semitic history of her own.⁹ When promoting Sarsour's book, Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib, the representative from Michigan's 13th Congressional District, wore a shirt depicting the 1979 Israel-Egypt Peace Treaty borders of

Israel covered with the word Palestine written in Arabic.¹⁰ This shirt raises heavy concerns because it erases, or delegitimizes the Jewish connection and history to the land of Israel, failing the 3D Test of anti-Semitism. Unarguably Palestinians also feel a deep connection to the land, but Tlaib's shirt sheds light on her completely one-sided, anti-Jewish view. Wearing this T-shirt works against finding peace and justice for all people and tells progressive Democrats, who also support Israel, that Tlaib will not represent their opinion. Undoubtedly, the aforementioned progressive leaders within the Democratic Party have pushed the left in an anti-Semitic fashion.

Yousef Manayyer, Executive director of the United States Campaign for Palestinian Rights, stated that "Palestine is increasingly becoming part of the progressive politics of justice for all."¹¹ While his statement holds a level of truth, it also excludes Israel supporters, such as Jews, to an extent. If someone identifies as a Zionist, some progressive groups ostracize them, and "progressive politics" no longer support "justice for all." It supports justice for all who totally agree. Dr. Timothy J. Legg agrees that alienation "occurs when a person withdraws or becomes isolated from their environment or from other people," so a byproduct of the exclusion and unwelcomeness of certain progressive groups is Jewish alienation from their former progressive environments and peers.¹²

College campuses, as a hub of progressivism, epitomize this trend. New York University's (NYU) graduation speaker Steven William Thrasher shared his pride in NYU student organizations for "supporting the Boycott Divestment and Sanctions movement

against the apartheid state government in Israel.”¹³ This graduation speech’s issue does not lie in whom Thrasher praises, but when calling Israel an apartheid state, he continues to spread false information that demonizes the Jewish state. A public assertion from an established and respected institution possesses the incredibly dangerous power to persuade public opinion.

At the University of Virginia (UVA), the Minority Rights Coalition denied the Jewish Leadership Council membership because of its association with Hoos for Israel, the university’s pro-Israel student organization. Only 5% of UVA undergraduate students are Jewish, and 13.7%, 6.6%, and 6.6% of undergraduate students identify as Asian, African American/Black, and Hispanic/Latino, respectively.^{14 15} These statistics do not reflect if students identify as Jews of color and strive not to erase that narrative. Objectively, the Jewish population at UVA represents a minority. Still, unlike the Asian Leaders Council, the Black Student Alliance, and the Latinx Student Alliance, among other constituent organizations, the Jewish Leadership Council may not join the Minority Rights Coalition.¹⁶ Within the large progressive settings of universities, like UVA, supporting Israel omits Jews from joining other groups. Additionally, similar situations have taken place at George Washington University. Sophomore student Blake Flayton identifies as a left-wing progressive Jew and Zionist, who supports gay rights, abortion, and environmental changes.¹⁷ Until the BDS movement gained traction, progressive groups welcomed Flayton, though because of his support for Israel, some progressive groups view Flayton as an “apartheid-enabler, a baby killer, and a colonial apologist.”¹⁸ His love for Israel includes favoring a two-state solution

while disagreeing with aspects of the Netanyahu administration. Prejudice in society alienates some Jewish students in their environments and leaves them without a political home on campuses.

When President Donald Trump took office, political activists created the Women’s March not only to aspire to empower women, but also to reassure Americans that the Democratic Party recognizes their worries and will create change.¹⁹ In turn, the leadership of the Women’s March established the new essence of progressivism, one that entails anti-Semitism. 68% of Jewish voters identify as Democrats, 64% of Jewish voters identify as liberal, and 59% of those Jews identify as pro-Israel but are critical of at least some government policies, showing how the majority of Jews and Women’s March leadership agree on several other Democratic opinions and how the majority of Jews do not blindly support decisions of the Israeli government. This fact should ease the Women’s March’s leaders, but the anti-Semitic leadership forged-on.²⁰ New York activist Vanessa Wruble presented her excitement to become involved with the organization because of Judaism’s core belief in Tikkun Olam or Repair the World in English. To her surprise, Tamika Mallory, an African American gun control activist, and Carmen Perez, a Latina criminal justice reform activist, who are two leaders of the Women March, answered that Jews must address their own racism before Wruble could participate in their organization.²¹ They also told Wruble that since “[her] people hold all the wealth,” Jews do not represent marginalized people.²² In total, all Women’s Marches drew a 5 million person crowd, filled with people holding signs in support of feminism, disabled people, the environment, survivors of sexual assault,

homosexual and transgender rights, and gun control.²³ Jews do not have immunity to such topics, so the intentional choice to leave out Wruble reflects a growing harsh reality of progressivism. Simply, aspects of the greater progressive movement devalues Jews and Jewish causes.

In addition to Wruble's story, the leaders have deeper anti-Semitic histories. Mallory has called Louis Farrakhan "the GOAT," a slang word meaning the greatest of all time.²⁴ Farrakhan leads the Nation of Islam and wrote the book *The Secret Relationship Between Blacks and the Jews*, which Harvard professor Henry Louis Gates Jr. calls the "bible of the new anti-Semitism."²⁵ Another former leader of the Women's March, Linda Sarsour, asserts that Zionist women are not genuine feminists, and a video on the Women's March's Facebook page highlights a clip of Sarsour leading a group that holds a "This is Jewish Resistance" sign.²⁶ Finally, Bob Bland, another former leader of the Women's March, reposted a Facebook post blaming the American Jewish Establishment for the New Zealand Mosque Massacre, which demonizes Jews.^{27 28} The Women's March's leadership's apparent displays of anti-Semitism further exhibit how the nature of progressivism changed and, in turn, at times calls for anti-Semitism.

The progressive left's sprinkling of blatant anti-Semitism or masked anti-Semitism behind anti-Zionist rhetoric dangerously leaves progressive Jews without a sense of belonging within today's political climate. Unfortunately, this feeling extends beyond the government into society. Some progressive groups on college campuses and established organizations across America blur the lines of Jewish identity and right-wing

ideology, like authoritarianism and racism, and isolate Jews based on generalizations, stereotypes, and lies. The progressive left believes in seeking justice for all downtrodden people, yet simultaneously some progressives have become the oppressor against the Jews by normalizing anti-Semitism.

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China's Mistreatment of Uighur Muslims

By Daniel Bernstein

The Uighur minority in Xinjiang, China, lives in what seems like a science-fiction dystopia. Uighurs migrated from Turkey hundreds of years ago and remain distinct from the majority of Chinese people to this day. They speak their own Turkic language, identify as Sunni Muslims, and live mostly separate lives. Their culture contrasts considerably with the Hans, the predominant ethnic group in China, who have a long history there.¹ Large numbers of Hans immigrated to Xinjiang in the 1800s, and the differences between the two ethnic groups grew and caused dangerous tensions. After violent outbreaks in the early 2000s, Chinese authorities responded by suppressing Uighurs' rights and freedoms, thinking it would make them submissive. They use mass-surveillance, racist decrees, and even unjust detainment of Uighurs to ensure docility.² The United States Congress is currently passing the Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act of 2019, a bill aimed to track the Chinese government and sanction specific individuals responsible for initiating these offenses.³ The bill is an important start to the United States government's opposition, but it is not enough to respond to China's extreme human rights violations. The United States needs to increase action to help the Uighurs because of China's discriminatory laws, internment camps, and continuous worsening of the situation.

In 2014, the Chinese government set up expansive data collection systems to identify and punish its citizens, especially the Uighurs. Officials document everyone's misbehaviors,

from petty crime to rude encounters with a police officer. These records, along with surveillance imaging and personal data obtained from private companies, are collected to make a profile of every person.⁴ On top of violating privacy, the Chinese government uses this information to restrict rights against those the officials deem dishonorable. People blacklisted may not leave the country or even buy property.⁵ Xinjiang has intensified the system to further suppress the Uighurs living there. The Uighurs have historically rebelled against the oppressive government, so officials use the system to target them and prevent uprisings. It helps them identify Muslims and restrict their lives like those who are blacklisted. The Chinese government has the power to monitor individuals' private affairs and can take away their fundamental rights in the name of counter-terrorism.⁶ It makes the Uighurs live in constant fear while also making them more vulnerable to further persecution. On top of their actions regarding the Uighurs, China is known to imprison political activists, limiting citizens' freedoms of expression and more.⁷ The United States would not allow abuse of power like this if it were happening in a well-respected allied country, so they should respond in a similar manner as if it were. They need to publicly denounce the dangerous amount of power that the Chinese government holds over its citizens. The United States is hesitant to take a stand against China's injustices because they are afraid to ruin their ties with China. While it would

undoubtedly hurt the relationship, there has to be a point where they draw the line when tolerating China's atrocities.

In order to further its agenda, the Chinese authority then instituted Uighur internment camps called Re-educational Schools. The government secretly built massive complexes in Xinjiang to house Muslims against their will. Journalists estimate that so far, the Chinese government has captured up to one million Uighurs simply because of their religion. Now, Muslims must hide their identities, so officials do not discover who they are and take them from their homes to one of the centers.⁸ The Chinese tell their citizens that people in the camps have been "infected by an ideological illness" and need re-education.⁹ However, first-hand accounts tell of officers forcing Uighurs to renounce Islam and apologize for their unacceptable thinking. They even go as far as to torture the prisoners when they do not comply.¹⁰ The fact that the Uighurs have very few advocates only worsen these incredible injustices. The Chinese government stops journalists from approaching the camps to investigate, so it is challenging to obtain proof of the specifics of the operation.¹¹ The government also censors the media in their own country, making it difficult for news organizations to adequately publicize the camps to the world.¹² The United States knows about the existence of the internment camps but will not confront the Chinese since American officials do not explicitly know what happens in them. Because of the lack of knowledge in the United States, the Chinese can continue to unfairly hold their citizens as prisoners without having to face repercussions. Although the United States does not know the full narrative, they still need to respond to the situation by imposing

sanctions on China. The United States may not want to ruin their economic relationship with them because they are one of the United States' biggest exporters and investors. China is responsible for around 15% of all United States imports and holds over \$1 trillion of the national debt.¹³ Nevertheless, continuing to trade and do so much business with China amidst what happens in Xinjiang only goes against American principles of human rights. Economic sanctions would send the message that the United States does not excuse this abuse.

While the situation is already dangerous, it only seems to be the beginning for the Uighurs. The government does not show any sign of stopping as they continue to build additional camps. Approximately ten million Uighurs live in Xinjiang, and what has happened so far suggests that China intends to continue their efforts until all of them are detained.¹⁴ The government does not just intend to disadvantage them; they look to oppress the Uighurs until they, as a people, are no longer in existence to oppose authority. The government in Xinjiang has progressed from simple discrimination to mass incarceration in only a few years. It is reasonable to be concerned that they might continue to intensify their actions and turn to outright genocide. This continuous development is possible because the world turns a blind eye at each stage. The Chinese can keep escalating the situation because they are not being held responsible. The United States should intervene not just because of what is happening now, but because of what it could become. Taking actions against China would help the Uighurs more than hurt the United States, therefore, the United States should fight against the atrocities.

The Uighur situation in Xinxiang, China, has grown to deserve international action because of the institutionalized racism, unlawful incarceration, and its potential to develop into something even worse. The people are in a powerless position and need someone to step in and save them. Despite depending on China, the United States cannot let this dynamic completely stop them from holding China accountable. To make an impact on the situation, the United States needs to publicly call out China's actions and impose sanctions. When injustices as massive as the mistreatment of the Uighur minority occur, there needs to be consequences and intervention.

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Coronavirus: Crisis Under Wraps

By Ben Beal

The most pressing of the world's current events at this moment is the outbreak of the novel Coronavirus, COVID-19. The way that countries deal with such a hardship has become a unique viewpoint into the crisis management mechanisms of all types of nations' governments around the world. World superpower China, the source of the virus and a nation where illiberal policies riddle the government, has been a focal point in the COVID-19 response as the spread has slowed within its borders. Although the alteration and concealing of facts and figures raise legitimate concerns, illiberal regimes are better suited to handle outbreaks domestically, such as the novel COVID-19 pandemic, due to their ability to use swift force and action against anything hindering chances at eradication and return to normality in an ever-changing world.

As the rest of the world desperately attempts to keep up with the ever-increasing cases of COVID-19, China, the origin of the outbreak, has miraculously slowed new cases to a halt and continues to. Illiberal regimes are adamant on acquiring and maintaining a positive global perception at all costs, and China is no exception. It seems rather miraculous that China, the source of the outbreak and the most populated country in the world, would have a relatively miniscule number of reported total and new cases compared to smaller countries like Spain or Italy. Nevertheless, there has been very little news coming out of the country regarding treatment research and quarantine. China ended the month of April with 82,877 cases

and 4,633 deaths, gaining only two new cases per day, with a population of over 1.4 billion people.^{1 2} On the other hand, Italy, a country of only 60 million people, ended the month with over 210,000 total cases, and over 28,000 deaths.^{3 4} These numbers grinding to a halt is not the work of a miracle, but rather the suppression of the actual situation inside China's borders. China recently admitted in April that they had reduced the factual number of deaths in Wuhan by over 50%, raising the death total in the city by 1,920 deaths.⁵ Negligent record-keeping and selective reporting is vital to maintaining a strong public image because nations with free press (i.e. The United States) will outwardly provide accurate statistics and will assume a greater blame internationally as a result.

According to the United States Intelligence Community in a memo to the White House, China concealed the true extent of the outbreak and number of cases from public knowledge. Similar reports have surfaced from the end of March to the middle of April, including those that place blame on the Chinese for silencing several medical whistleblowers who alerted the authoritarian government on the severity of the disease and the world's lack of preparedness for a pandemic. Instead of heeding this warning with an immediate response, the Chinese government secreted this information in order to prevent the injury to the country's global image and to avoid domestic panic. Several of these whistleblowers later died of the virus while on the front lines attempting to protect

unprepared citizens. The Province of Tibet, an area with some of the worst ongoing human rights violations in the world, including the mistreatment of local Buddhists, has, unbelievably, only one reported case and zero reported deaths.⁶ These numbers are unfathomable, especially considering that ten Tibetan residents attempted to provide an inside viewpoint of the gruesome coronavirus situation inside the territory, a drastically different image than China provided.⁷ The Chinese government responded by arresting these 10 whistleblowers, and others who try to come forward to protect their fellow citizens.⁸ The United States and other liberal nations' laws protect whistleblowers' rights to come forward in order to maintain the welfare of the country. Although the moral responsibility to come forward promotes the spread of accuracy in public knowledge, it can make the response to a crisis less efficient and could even lead to mass hysteria.

While whistleblowers are silenced inside China borders, government officials hide the extent of pandemics and share fallacious statistics in order to keep a positive global image. As the virus' spread begins to halt, with only 16 reported cases on April 18, China's unreported case numbers and death toll slowly climbs, as demonstrated by the 50% addition to Wuhan's deaths.⁹ The Chinese press solely reports numbers approved by the government, whose goal remains keeping their image in the best light possible.¹⁰ Unlike the restriction that China has on its public information, the United States Constitution's First Amendment calls for the free press, providing the pathway for journalists to report accurate figures regardless of the fact that it sometimes portrays the government in a negative light. China has no such law regarding the freedom of the press, and are

thus able to provide information selectively whenever they choose to do so.

In addition to silencing whistleblowers and concealing accurate figures, illiberal governments have the ability to hide the extent of pandemics and utilize forceful means by which to eradicate them inconsequentially. According to Bloomberg News, Chinese officials have forcibly quarantined residents, with some of whom it was not necessary.¹¹ Chinese officials also locked citizens into their own homes, threatening violence if anyone were to breach the lockdown.¹² Although morally unjust, the lockdown and threatening of violence did play a role in slowing the spread of cases outside of the Hubei Province.¹³ Countries like the United States have no legal precedent to forcibly contain citizens in their own homes, and face legal consequences as citizens can claim certain practices unconstitutional. Similarly to the lack of a law regarding free speech, China does not have a specific restriction to their ability to forcibly contain their citizens within their houses.

Some experts even expect China to emerge from this crisis better than ever, considering that the world relies on Chinese factories for more than half of the global medical supply chain.¹⁴ "[China] has basically contained the virus through technology-powered, authoritarian surveillance, and they've leveraged this success by providing aid to Europe and emerging markets in the fight against COVID-19," explained founder and president of the Eurasia Group, Ian Bremmer. Bremmer continued, "The pandemic is going to reinforce that the United States is simply not the highly functional, advanced role model it used to be."¹⁵ Bremmer's comments further solidify

that liberal democracies face tougher challenges during crisis management. Illiberal regimes like China are able to efficiently and effectively halt widespread concern and prepare to reopen for business prior to the rest of the world, with a head start on rebuilding their nation.

Clearly, China, as an illiberal and authoritarian nation, is better suited to handle a crisis like this pandemic because of their ability to take unapologetic action against transgressors, and to silence those who voice a negative opinion of their initiatives. China can act solely with the best interest of the country's international perception in mind, all the while emerging from the crisis in a better position than when it started.

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Makeup As Liberation: The Impact of the Beauty Industry on the Fabric of North Korean Society

By Sarah Bartos

To many women, swiping on red lipstick is an essential step to their daily routine. However, for millennial North Korean women, it is an act of rebellion. Sick of rules, regulations, and an overall lack of freedom, millennial North Koreans are utilizing smuggled beauty products and fashion pieces to show their discontent for the totalitarian government and embrace their individuality. This millennial North Korean generation is utilizing beauty, something sometimes seen as vain and self-centered, as a weapon in the fight against totalitarian communism. In order to maintain stability in the generations to come, the North Korean government must adapt and allow more freedom of expression.

Many may believe that the fashion, cosmetics, and wellness industries are anti-feminist, that they train women to think that their value comes from how the way they look or how men perceive them. In Western countries, makeup and fashion companies are often criticized for perpetuating body image issues and playing to heteronormative stereotypes. The western wellness industry is criticized for the same reasons and more. Of course, there are flaws in these industries, but in North Korea, the idea of women reclaiming their bodies and physically expressing themselves is unheard of. There, beauty and fashion represent feminism at its finest: women allowing themselves to express themselves in an illiberal regime, one liquid eyeliner at a time.

North Korea has a long history of suppressing

individuality and self-expression. The Korean War, which officially split the Korean Peninsula into communist North Korea and democratic South Korea, was a battle between eastern, Soviet Culture, and western capitalism. After the armistice in 1953, North Korean society operated under a strict totalitarian communist government where all types of freedoms and expressions were banned. Anything remotely western, including fashion and makeup, is not allowed in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.¹

Today, totalitarian North Korean society does not allow for individual expression of any kind, especially physical expression. Men and women can choose one of 15 government approved haircuts. The menu of hairstyles are displayed in North Korean salons, and there are minimal differences between the modest haircuts.² Women cannot wear short skirts, shorts, jeans, sunhats, or capri pants, and under no circumstances can sport anything that looks remotely foreign.³ The Daehaksaeng Gyuchaldae, the state fashion police, enforce these laws. Any breach of this fashion code could result in fines, public humiliation, and could lead to imprisonment.⁴ The Daehaksaeng Gyuchaldae, are not communist officials, but young university students who are tasked with patrolling women's fashion and freedom.⁵ The limitations put on North Koreans' appearance, self-expression, and livelihoods are stirring up a movement led by North Korean millennials aiming to tackle totalitarianism through beauty and fashion. This cultural shift is

challenging totalitarian culture and ideals, potentially leading to a weakening of the North Korean government.

Because of their interactions with capitalism, including beauty products, millennial North Koreans have the tools to help North Korean society for the better. In the 1990s, a great famine swept North Korea, and citizens starved. In order to save its people, the North Korean government introduced bits of capitalism, and let some capitalist black market activity slide to stabilize the economy.⁶ One major symbol of this newfound 1990s North Korean capitalism were the Jangmadang, which were black markets that provided citizens with basic food and supplies. These markets also sold smuggled supplies that were not technically approved by the totalitarian government. As a result, kids who grew up during the famine saw capitalism as a life saving and essential force. These kids are now millennials, in their 20s and 30s, who want to see change in their country. This millennial generation is nicknamed the Jangmadang generation, named after the capitalist force that inspires them to rebel against the North Korean totalitarian regime.

Today, these markets still exist, but they take illegal and legal forms.⁷ The illegal jangmadang markets contain smuggled goods, including beauty products and fashionable items. Millennial North Koreans gain access to other cultures by using these illegal goods. For example, after seeing a smuggled South Korean K-Drama, a popular South Korean movie genre, a North Korean woman may want to recreate the lead actress's hairstyle, outfit, or eye makeup look. The black markets can help her achieve that.⁸ The North Korean government sees this as treason. To follow

South Korean culture, and mimic it, a North Korean citizen is showing their fellow citizens and the government that he or she is dissatisfied with the North Korean regime and North Korean culture. Essentially, they are choosing capitalism over communism. Thus, wearing smuggled beauty products and fashion from capitalist countries is a noble act of rebellion.

Unlike smuggled snacks, which can be eaten in private, or smuggled K-Dramas, fashion and makeup are a public visualization of the younger generation's discontent with the North Korean totalitarian regime.

Because of the younger generation's infatuation and experiences with capitalist culture, the North Korean government must adapt to the changing demographic in order to maintain power and stability. Practically speaking, approving more makeup products and clothing items and allowing North Koreans to express themselves will save the North Korean government from a potential collapse. Because to many North Koreans, beauty truly is freedom.

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The Forgotten Geopolitical Impact of Climate Change

By Luke Finkelstein

The intention of the following argument is not to prove climate change, global warming, or whatever term one may prefer, nor stress the numerous moral, environmental, and existential necessities of addressing it. Rather, this article pertains to a stunningly relevant, yet overlooked, repercussion caused by a changing climate: the heating of the polar regions and its inevitable geopolitical impacts. As climate change continues to advance at its rapid pace, the polar regions of Earth, and the vast resources accompanied with them, will only become more accessible. The lure of accessibility to this previously untapped wealth will not only create a new realm of global conflict but may also undermine the climate and sustainability progress that has been made by many governments. Indeed,

due to the emerging accessibility of the Arctic and Antarctic, interested parties may feel that their own short-term political and economic interests in these regions outweigh the long-term consequences of climate inaction, which will only delay the necessary resolution to human-induced climate disruption.

Out of all of the regions that are discarded as mundane, irrelevant, and inconsequential, the Arctic may just meet the quintessential definition best. Over the recent years, however, climate change has started to bring the Arctic into the realm of global politics because it is now, for the first time in modern history, becoming feasible to access. According to the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), a non-governmental organization that has been an advocate for conservation since

1961, "the arctic is warming at a rate of almost twice the global average."¹ Among the many drastic ripple effects of retreating sea ice, the warming Arctic opens up a path for Russia to become a formidable superpower yet again.

If the U.S. and its allies fear that the power dynamic of the world could change, then they should look no further than this retreating sea ice. The continued exponential melting of the Arctic waters is freeing up treasure troves of resources that were previously inaccessible, and Russia will be their main beneficiary due to its convenient proximity.² Many estimates predict that the Arctic ice holds about one-third of all natural gas reserves in the world, more than one-tenth of all petroleum reserves, and many more precious minerals and fish.³ More economically shattering, though, is the potential for new trade routes. Trade routes cleared by the melting of Arctic ice could shorten the distance between Europe and Asia by one-third and that between Asia and the United States by one-fifth.⁴ Mike Pompeo, Secretary of State for the United States of America, explains that "Arctic sea lanes could become the 21st century Suez and Panama Canals."⁵ Consequently, current trade routes would become obsolete.

The Arctic has not been a particularly influential region in the past, for it was simply not feasible to access its resources and potential trade advantages. However, as these waters have been heating at such rapid rates, Russia, a country that comprises a significant portion of the Arctic coastline, has taken initiative to establish militaristic dominance and legitimacy in the region. Russia has constructed more than 40 icebreakers over the past five years; the U.S. has a meager two.⁶ Moreover, Vladimir Putin, the President

of Russia, has redirected military efforts towards the Arctic, constructing 475 military bases in northern Russia since 2012.⁷ The fact that deployment of a new high-tech missile system on the Arctic coastline is in the works should only heighten western democracies' fears of an indomitable Russia.⁸

Looking to monopolize their hold on the Arctic, Russia imagines itself being a sort of toll road between Asia, Europe, and the Americas.⁹ Putin has even provided tax breaks to investors in the Arctic, explicitly acknowledging that this is "the most important region that will provide for the future of Russia."^{10 11} Indeed, Russia may just as well be setting the stage for the new Navigation Acts, requiring notice from other countries to use its trade routes and demanding Russian employment on passing ships.¹²

To complicate matters, with the geographic and militaristic legitimacy to exploit the region, China is also salivating at these new Arctic prospects.¹³ While Russia may be classified as a soon-to-be economic powerhouse, its powerful ally, China, is already an economic powerhouse. With investments into Russian infrastructure in the Arctic, China seeks to establish a far north silk road of its own, sharing in Russia's spoils.¹⁴ The Chinese have placed ships here in the hopes of claiming resources and trade routes and, with their Russian alliance, may hold legitimate claims.¹⁵ With access to and dominance over Arctic resources and trade routes, Russia may not be the only rising superpower of the mid-21st century.

The global response to the Russia-China economic threat has been startlingly limited, and that of the U.S. even more so. Clearly, Russia and China have mutual interests to

strengthen their militaries and investments in the Arctic, and the world is scrambling to play catch-up. NATO, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, has begun running military drills in the Arctic region.¹⁶ At the same time, the U.S. is rushing to gain a greater hold in the Arctic region, too. President Donald Trump, someone who has denied climate change as a hoax, recently attempted to buy Greenland, a massive island situated in the Arctic Ocean.¹⁷ Ironically, the attempted purchase could be an acknowledgment of the U.S. being mightily behind Russia in the race for Arctic dominance--not to mention an acknowledgement of climate change as well. The fact that the Trump Administration would rather buy Greenland than address the issue of carbon emissions speaks volumes and is also reflective of Russia's apparent strategy: embrace the advantages brought upon by a warming Arctic.

At a certain point, taking proactive measures simply blurs into the utilization of climate change for economic and political purposes. Russia will be one of the few countries to have an increase in agricultural yield; Russia and China have the potential to dominate trade, gas, and oil; the U.S. scampers to establish its own grasp in the Arctic.¹⁸ Other countries are not oblivious to the evolving situation in the Arctic region either. Canada, for example, is another conveniently placed country to the resources of the Arctic. This northern country has usually been left out of global politics due to its isolated location, but the Arctic may propel it to the front lines of international affairs very soon. Over the past few years, the Canadian House of Commons has been increasingly aware of the political ramifications of climate change in the Arctic. In one testimony, scientist Abbie Tingstad explained that, by the

2030s, Canada may have to contemplate scenarios like significant Arctic populations, deepwater ports, offshore drilling, illegal fishing, and terrorism.¹⁹ Superpowers could trample over the region in disorder and chaotic frenzy, or they could recognize that mutual stability in the region leads to mutual prosperity.²⁰ In either scenario, however, the continuation of climate change correlates with the utilization of the Arctic for economic purposes.

In addition to Canada's upcoming relevance, many other previously sidelined countries and groups may also emerge as more engaged members in the realm of international affairs. Arctic forums, for example, are gradually becoming not just a throw-away toast to cooperation but, instead, a potential centerpiece of future politics. The Arctic Council, an organization of eight countries founded in 1996, includes lesser-known members like Denmark, Finland, and Iceland. Moreover, according to its website's homepage, indigenous communities play--or are supposed to play--a major factor in the council's mission of sustainability.²¹ The upcoming decades will gauge whether or not the world is ready for a cooperative Arctic and which countries, in the (quite literally) changing climate, will assume leadership roles.

Climate change carries heavy moral, environmental, and existential implications for the human race and the planet; this should be enough to convince anyone of the obligation to curtail its worst effects. Nonetheless, intangible motives are ever difficult to grasp, whereas tangible political motivations are often more comprehensible. The heating of the polar regions will completely alter the power dynamic of the world, launching

western democracies' adversaries into positions of economic and militaristic superiority. Although this paper has primarily focused on the Arctic, one can reasonably assume that the Antarctic awaits not too dissimilar conflict. These disputes could lead to global catastrophe, global cooperation, or anywhere in between. Nevertheless, it is shameful and shortsighted to gamble with the future of the world for a few extra decades of oil and gas. The world is already a complex place as it is and, not to negate positives of globalization, brings with it much discord and tension. Accessibility to entirely new regions of Earth would only compound upon issues of today and reignite issues of yesterday. Thus, if not for the moral reasons, and if not for the environmental implications, and if not for the future of humanity, then the world must take initiative now to avoid the inevitable consequences of climate change on the planet's polar regions. And the world, more pressingly, does not have much time.

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David vs Goliath: Inside Hong Kong's Fight for Democracy

By Micah Israel

China's influence on the world stage has been increasing rapidly as the government of President Xi Jinping has used their economic leverage to help push their agenda. Domestically the Chinese censor the state media heavily and have used a complex surveillance system to monitor their citizens. On the international stage China uses its economic advantage to attract developing countries into allying with them.¹ The Chinese employed this strategy in their dealing with Hong Kong. Originally given to the British by the Chinese in 1842, Hong Kong remained under British control until 1997, when the lease expired. The British returned Hong Kong, and the Chinese declared they would govern with a "one country, two systems" policy, meaning they would preserve aspects of British democracy in Hong Kong. Since that time China has incrementally rolled back many democratic characteristics of this system, relying on the fact that the people of Hong Kong enjoy the economic benefits of being allied with China.² These tensions boiled over last April when the leader of Hong Kong, Carrie Lam, proposed the Fugitive Offenders law, which would allow China to send criminals to mainland China for trial. The law has since been repealed, but the protests continued until they were forced to stop due to Covid-19.³ Although China has increased its influence throughout the world, the Hong Kong protests successfully threatened that power by continuing to persist, inspiring other countries in the region, and gaining support

from the international community.

The refusal to give up separates the Hong Kong protests from other anti-Chinese movements in the past. The pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong started in April of 2019, when it was just a protest about the Fugitive Offenders bill. Massive gatherings of more than 500,000 people forced the Chinese to repeal this law on June 15, but the people of Hong Kong did not stop there. Throughout the summer pro-democracy riots in Hong Kong surrounded government buildings, disrupted airports, and clashed with police.⁴ On August 18 the police attempted to ban their demonstrations. Despite this ban, an estimated 1.7 million people, almost a quarter of Hong Kong, gathered to show the strength of the movement. Amy Bau, a woman who attended this protest, said "I have come out to march many times, and I will keep coming out if the government continues to not answer us."⁵ China may be one of the most powerful countries, but the people of Hong Kong's resolve shows that China's power only goes so far. The protests continued until New Years Day, and have only subsided due to concerns about mass gatherings amidst the coronavirus outbreak. Even though protesters are not able to hold demonstrations at the moment, the movement remains a threat to China. A poll conducted in January showed that support for complete democracy actually grew during the coronavirus crisis.⁶ Although the movement for democracy in Hong Kong is not active at

the moment, the strength behind it remains a threat to China.

The Hong Kong protests also threatened China's power because they inspired additional anti-Chinese sentiments throughout the region. The Taiwanese elections in January epitomize the influence of the Hong Kong protest. The incumbent President, Tsai Ing-wen, who is very outspoken against Beijing, centered her campaign around choosing between democracy or dictatorship. She was politically left for dead before the Hong Kong protests, when many expected the pro-China candidate to win. Instead the Taiwanese, inspired by Hong Kong, elected Tsai with a resounding 57% of the vote amid a record turnout.⁷ This is a significant blow to China's hopes of uniting with Taiwan as "One China" as well as its influence in the region. The pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong is largely responsible for this blowback against China.

Furthermore, the Hong Kong protests also threatened China by winning the war for international support, something China previously did best. China usually uses its economic power to coerce other countries to ignore China's human rights violations, but the leaders of the movement in Hong Kong, Denise Ho and Joshua Wong, quickly garnered support of their own. Ho testified at the United Nations in July, and Wong joined her in testifying before the United States Congress.⁸ These efforts paid off when the protests gained large scale support internationally, and the US passed the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act, an extensive bill supporting the protests. The bill sanctions China for its actions and requires an annual assessment of Hong Kong's special trade status. If Hong Kong loses that status, it would

be a blow to China's economy.⁹ The protests have gained international support by using social media as well. Graphic images and videos of officials tear gassing or beating protesters have gone viral, increasing awareness and sympathy for the demonstrators.¹⁰ The international support for the pro-democracy demonstrations exhibits how the movement has put pressure on China.

The movement in Hong Kong put pressure on China by persisting, inspiring more pro-democracy ideas in Southeast Asia, and receiving the support of countries from all around the world. It is more than optimistic to believe that this pressure will amount to reform in China, but the movement forces Beijing to consider how much liberty they can take away without causing pushback. Throughout the pro-democracy protest, the people of Hong Kong stepped up to show that they will not accept tyranny.

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The Plight of the Kurds

By Sarah Miller

The Kurds are currently the largest nation in the world that does not have a state. They inhabit the mountainous region of the Middle East, an area which includes portions of Iran, Iraq, Turkey, and Syria. They have been living in the same place for hundreds of years, and yet their dreams of establishing their own independent state, known as Kurdistan, have never been realized. Instead, they have seen their lands given away to other political groups, become second-class citizens in countries to which they have no cultural connection, and acted as puppets in the hopes of perhaps gaining the favor of more powerful countries, all of whom are only interested in using the Kurds as pawns. The betrayals from many members of the international community in the past century, including the United States, have prevented the Kurds from establishing an independent state.

Since World War I, the Kurds have had to live as a minority within other nations, which has only led to oppression and death for them. After World War I in 1916, France and Britain signed the Sykes-Picot Agreement, a document that divided the Middle East and created the foundations for the borders of the countries that exist today. The European powers allotted Kurdistan into parts of modern-day Iran, Turkey, Syria. In the original agreement, a portion of land was designated for the Kurds, but that land was taken away from them. A large group of Turkish nationals were moved into what had previously been Kurdish-majority areas by Turks who did not

want an autonomous Kurdish nation in the area, preventing the establishment of a state there. Additionally, the Lusanne Treaty, signed in 1923, made the borders of modern-day Iraq and Syria right through what the Kurds hoped would have been the site of their future country.¹ Since then, the Kurds have been living in Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria and have had to exist as minorities under governments that have treated them extremely harshly. In Turkey, the Kurds have had to fight to even be recognized as citizens, a basic right which was only granted to them in the last 30 years.² They have been continually oppressed by the Turkish government, and have been fighting a civil war against the Turkish government for the past 35 years. The Iraqi Kurds have also faced governmental oppression, as they were victims of genocide under Saddam Hussein, when upwards of 50,000 Kurdish civilians were murdered through military operations.³ In Syria the Kurds are similarly oppressed, having only received voting rights in 2011 and are still lacking basic cultural rights.⁴ In each of the different countries they inhabit, the Kurds make up a significant minority: they make up 20% of the Turkish population, are the largest minority group in both Syria and Turkey, constitute 10% of the Iranian population, and 15% of the Iraqi population.⁵ However, without a country of their own, they are forced instead to exist as oppressed minorities in each of these countries.

The plight of the Kurds has not gone ignored by other countries, and many nations,

the United States included, have even promised to help the Kurds establish their own nation and claim to support the Kurdish cause. However, these promises have nearly always been false. These nations have only been supporting the Kurds in order to achieve some other goal, rather than genuinely looking to help the Kurds. For example, until 1975, the Kurds in Iraq were given military aid by both Iran and Israel.⁶ This was done because it was in the interest of both of these countries to keep the Iraqi government occupied by having to put down a Kurdish uprising, not because Iran and Israel believed so strongly in the cause of Kurdish independence. This plan worked to the Kurds' advantage until the Algiers Agreement, signed in 1975 by Iran and Iraq, put a stop to all this. In exchange for a settlement in their ongoing border dispute, Iran agreed to cease giving aid to the Kurds.⁷ This also led to a halt in aid coming in from Israel, since all Israeli aid to the Kurds had to be sent through Iran. As a result, the Kurds were left helpless against Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi government.

The United States also gave the Kurds military aid as a way of destabilizing a government during the Cold War. Since Iraq allied with the Soviet Union, the United States government decided in 1972 that it was in its best interest to aid the Kurds in their war against the Iraqi government. Henry Kissinger, the Secretary of State at the time, outlined America's intentions towards the Kurds in a classified memo written to the Iranian ambassador.⁸ It stated that the US intended to help the Kurds, but only as much as would allow the Kurds to keep up their fight against the Iraqi government. The memo expressly stated that the US did not support the establishment of a Kurdish state because of their desire to maintain their pre-existing

relationships with other Arab nations.⁹ Even this American aid dried up after the Algiers agreement, since the only way the aid had been reaching the Kurds was through Iran. The US continued this pattern of promising aid to the Kurds and then not following through on it for decades, most notably in 1990, when they encouraged a Kurdish rebellion against the Iraqi government but then the US forces in the area refused to provide military support for them, resulting in over a million displaced Kurds since they were without adequate military backing.¹⁰

More recently, the Kurds have been deeply involved in the fight against ISIS, and have been a crucial ally for Western powers, including the US, who needed forces on the ground. The Kurds first became involved in the war against the Islamic State in 2013, when a Syrian Kurdish military group defended themselves against targeted attacks by ISIS.¹¹ During this time, the Kurds were given a great deal of support from other nations, and even gained some measures of autonomy and territory from the countries that they inhabited.¹² The US showed their support for the Kurds by providing air support and training for Kurdish soldiers. This paid off in the Kurds' military successes, such as their recapturing ISIS's capital city of Raqqa. All of these measures seemed to indicate that the Kurds were gaining support in the international community and that their hopes of establishing an independent state would soon be realized. The Kurds sacrificed a great deal to help defeat ISIS, and suffered more than 11,000 casualties defending Arab towns.¹³

At the time, it seemed to the Kurds as though these sacrifices would be acknowledged in some way by the United

States. In fact, the Iraqi Kurds even held an independence referendum in September 2017, illustrating their renewed hope for an autonomous nation. However, due to pressure from the Iraqi government, the results were nullified.¹⁴ Not long after the fight against ISIS was declared over, countries began backing away from the Kurds, deserting a group which they had, until recently, allied with in the fight against ISIS. Tensions were still high between the Kurds and Turkey, and previously the US had acted on behalf of the Kurds and protected them through their military presence. This ended in October 2019, when President Donald Trump made the decision to pull US troops out of Syria much sooner than expected, opening the door for Turkey to take much harsher actions against the Kurds in the area. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey wants to begin implementing a plan, known as Operation Peace Spring, to destroy the Syrian Kurdish military forces.¹⁵ The Kurds, having been betrayed yet again by the United States, are now once more in a desperate situation with no escape.

Over the last century, the Kurds' desire for the establishment of an autonomous Kurdistan has never been fulfilled, largely due to the countless betrayals they have faced from countries who had once claimed to support them. The United States, among others, has used the Kurds' geopolitical aspirations against them and played them like pawns to achieve their own goals which has kept the Kurds from achieving their goal of an independent state. This is especially despicable coming from the United States, the leader of the free world and the only remaining global superpower. The USA is founded on ideals of freedom and fair government, and historically has supported the creation of democratic governments

overseas, as evident in the US' efforts to rebuild the Europeans governments after WWII, the leadership role they have taken on incountless human rights initiatives in Haiti, Sudan and many other countries, and their staunch support for the State of Israel, which provides for Jews a safe place to protect them from global anti-Semitism. This support contributed heavily to Israel's success as a nation and helped Israel gain the international support it needed to survive. Yet the US has refrained from granting the Kurds, another oppressed minority, the same kind of support. The United States' lack of support in the case of the Kurds is a great moral failing on their part, not only because of the crucial Kurdish involvement in the fight against ISIS but also because it falls on the US to set a moral example for the rest of the world, without which the rate of moral decline within the international community will only increase.

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"כל מחלוקת שהיא לשם שמים, סופה להתקים"

"Every dispute that is for the sake of heaven will be constructive"

Pirkei Avot 5:17

פרקי אבות ה:י"ז