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Rehearsing Abolition: Cross-Border Insurgent Solidarities and Infrastructures of Care

Mahdis Azarmandi¹ | Tjaša Kancler² | Piro Rexhepi³

¹School of Social and Cultural Studies in Education, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand | ²Serra Hunter Professor, Section for Art and Visual Culture, Department of Visual Arts and Design, Faculty of Arts, University of Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain | ³LSE Fellow in Human Rights, London School of Economics and Political Science, London, UK

Correspondence: Mahdis Azarmandi (mahdis.azarmandi@canterbury.ac.nz)

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ABSTRACT

This article examines rehearsing abolition and creating spaces of life, refusal, and mutual aid within and against the violence of the EUropean “peace,” entangled in racial capitalism. Interrogating imaginaries of Europe as a peace project, we show how “peace” is produced through exclusion, bordering, and the management of populations across frontiers. Rather than redefining peace, we ask how this violence is confronted through relationality as praxis and cross-border insurgent solidarity. Focusing on mutual aid collectives, t.i.c.t.a.c. in Barcelona and the Europe Other Collective in Tirana, we trace how fugitive rehearsals of abolition take shape through care, legal support, political education, and transnational organizing. Emerging within interconnected border geographies, these practices transform sites of containment into anticolonial interstices: fragile, ongoing processes that refuse anti-relational logics and make life possible. Centering abolition as “life in rehearsal,” we foreground collective practices that forge alternative relations across difference, opening possibilities beyond racial capitalism.

Motivated to learn how to interpret the world in order to change it, I found in Geography ways to contemplate and document the vibrant dialectics of objective and subjective conditions that, if properly paid attention to, help reveal both opportunities for and impediments to human liberation. Space always matters, and what we make of it in thought and practice determines, and is determined by, how we mix our creativity with the external world to change it and ourselves in the process. In other words, one need not be a nationalist, nor imagine self-determination to be fixed in modern definitions of states and sovereignty, to conclude that, at the end of the day, freedom is a place.

(Gilmore 2022, 92–93)

In today's European Union (EU) regime, defined by intertwined dynamics of racial capitalism, expanding militarization, and

deepening ties between security, surveillance, and carceral infrastructures, there is not only silent complicity but also forms of active entanglement and involvement in ongoing colonial and imperial violence, most visibly in Palestine (Pervez 2025; Shoman et al. 2025), Lebanon and Iran. This is accompanied by the escalating criminalization of activist movements, from Free Palestine and broader anticolonial movements to environmental action and anti-war mobilizations, alongside the deployment of advanced surveillance technologies and its automatization, aiding the US–Israel war on Iran and the tightening of borders under the new European Pact on Migration and Asylum, and the growing normalization of fascist, racist, and cisheteropatriarchal politics across the continent. And yet this same regime insists on understanding itself as fundamentally peaceful. The Union's official statement of aims pledges to “promote peace, its values and the well-being of its citizens” and, in the wider world, to “contribute to peace and security and the sustainable development of the Earth” (European Union, n.d.), while its own

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diplomatic service describes the EU as “a peace project at the service of life” (EEAS 2017). It is this mobilization of a discourse of peace—sustained despite the conditions named above—and its entanglement with racial capitalist violence that we interrogate throughout this article.

We come to this writing as a collective of people whose lives and trajectories are marked by war, displacement, and resistance. Our histories are shaped by contexts of war and violence in which US and EU imperial interventions have played decisive roles, from the Balkans to West Asia. These shared yet divergent experiences, the Iranian revolution and the Iran–Iraq war, the war in Yugoslavia and the genocidal wars on Bosnia and Kosovo, and the everyday violences of “peaceful,” liberal Western democracies (Azarmandi 2024; Sunca 2024), have brought us together: to think, work, and imagine a different world. Our work emerges not from a place of scholarly distance, but from deeply embodied, entangled positions formed through anticolonial queer and trans* struggles and long-standing collaboration as researchers, educators, and activists.

We explore two mutual aid collectives, t.i.c.t.a.c. (Taller de Intervenciones Críticas Transfeministas Antirracistas Combativas) in Barcelona and the Europe Other Collective in Tirana. This paper emerges from our direct participation in and collaboration with both of them. Two of the authors are co-founders and active members of t.i.c.t.a.c., and the material from this collective draws on years of shared organizing, writing, and collective reflection. The Europe Other Collective material draws on a semi-structured interview with activist Kristina Millona (May–June 2025), ongoing conversations, and the authors’ involvement in the transnational solidarity networks connecting both sites. Our goal is not to “study or report about social movements, actors, and thinkers” but “to think with, and, at the same time, to theorize from the ‘political moments’ in which ... [we are] also engaged” (Walsh 2018, 85) (Figure 1).

In times shaped by economic, ecological, and political ruin, the question is not only “what I can do”—a question that often centers an individualized, liberal subject—but rather what is already being done collectively, what forms of collective refusal, care, and survival are already in motion. Living in violent

times, where genocide and war are not exceptional but structuring forces of racial capitalism, we look for practices that make resistance possible amid the wreckage. As Maynard and Simpson (2022) point out, the world’s endings and beginnings are never separate events but simultaneous processes; abolition and decolonization are not grand ruptures alone, but also quiet architectures of becoming, built in community kitchens, mutual care, and sex workers’ collectives, prisons, and poems.

This article examines what it means to rehearse abolition and create spaces of life, refusal, and mutual aid from within—and against—the violence of the European regime’s “peace” entangled in racial capitalism. Here, we extend a central concern raised by Dijkema et al. (2024, 1512), who argue that “studying violence and peacebuilding in non-war contexts unsettle spatial ideas common in Western representations of spaces of peace and conflict on a global scale.” They theorize “non-war” as a conceptual lens to grasp violence in settings that are neither peace nor formal war. We take up their invitation to theorize peace in such contexts, but we also interrogate what the term “non-war violence” risks obfuscating when the European regime profits from arms trades, is complicit and an active agent in genocide, and polices its borders through racialized violence. This questioning of dominant imaginaries reveals that the racial capitalist violence structuring the EU’s internal and external borders is not the absence of peace but a distinct and actively masked form of violence that shapes everyday life.

The concealed violence of European regime of “peace” is, at its core, a technology of anti-relationality (Gilmore 2011): severing connections, diminishing life, and foreclosing futures. We explore how t.i.c.t.a.c. (Taller de Intervenciones Críticas Transfeministas Antirracistas Combativas) in Barcelona and the Europe Other Collective in Tirana mobilize against these forces by building relation precisely where racial capitalism works to sever it. This praxis emerges against the interconnected South-East European racist border geographies where EU migration and security regimes materialize most violently. Attending to our collective efforts to create anticolonial interstices (Anzaldúa 1987; Lugones 2016, 2024), we trace how fugitive rehearsals (Harney and Moten 2013) shape geographies of abolition, as tentative, collective work of refusing death and making life possible amid the wreckage.

1 | Confronting the Racial Capitalist Violence of European “Peace”

The Spanish and Portuguese conquest and colonization laid the ground for the modern/colonial capitalist system we still live in today. Simultaneous to the colonization of Abya Yala (Latin America) from 1492 onward, the expulsion of Muslims and Jews from the Iberian Peninsula, transatlantic slave trade, Black Codes, and genocide of the African and Indigenous peoples followed by the Great Round-Up in 1749, a planned genocide against the Romani people during the Spanish Inquisition, exemplify early instances of racism and fascism continued by the French and British empires, Nazi Germany, and the US empire until today. After World War II, the European regime called itself a peace project. In her von der Leyen (2025) State of the Union Address, EU President von der Leyen opened with “a fight for a



FIGURE 1 | t.i.c.t.a.c.—Banner, “Not One Minute More! Smash Racial Capitalism!”, at the Transfeminist March, 7M Barcelona 2025. Source: Authors.

continent that is whole and at peace” because “our Union is fundamentally a peace project.” This self-understanding is widely propagandized: the EU was awarded the 2012 Nobel Peace Prize, and its foundational treaties proclaim commitments to human rights, justice, and sustainable development. Yet the same EU is second only to the US regime as an arms supplier to Israel and has made no attempt at an arms embargo even after the International Court of Justice’s interim ruling on Israel’s genocide in Palestine in January 2024. While UN General Assembly adopted a new resolution on 25 March 2026, declaring the transatlantic slave trade the gravest crime against humanity, all EU countries abstained and the US voted against, stating it “does not recognise a legal right to reparations for historical wrongs that were not illegal under international law at the time they occurred” (UN News 2026). As Piro Rexhepi (2022) argues, what the Euro-American geopolitical regime produces is not peace but *enclosure*—the post-Cold War recalibration of colonial and capitalist race-making through the territorial bordering of whiteness, in which border security, demographic panic, and racial capitalism converge into a single logic. This enclosure is accordingly articulated as a white European demographic existential crisis from the “onslaught” of migrants at its borders, Russia and China to the East, and Iran in the “Middle East,” where the Revolutionary Guard was recently declared a terrorist organization (Liboreiro and de la Baume 2026) and is playing a crucial role in aiding the US–Israel war of aggression on Iran. Much of the discourse on peace is framed around “besieged” Europe fighting for its “defense.” Unsurprisingly, the project of war to secure peace is sponsored by a €150 billion EU fund called SAFE, offering low-interest credit to European countries to purchase advanced weapons, with the potential “to mobilise up to €650 billion for a total of €800 billion over the next five years” (European Commission 2025).

NATO’s eastward expansion after the Cold War went hand in hand with the expansion of the EU regime and involved multiple interventions in what Europe came to define as its “natural” borders extending what Rexhepi (2022, 5–9) terms the “globally gated white enclosure” through the borderization of post-socialist East European states as guards at its edges. Despite narratives of post-war European unity, the EU was shaped from its origins as the European Coal and Steel Community by American geopolitical and economic interests, part of a broader US strategy that included NATO and the Bretton Woods system, designed in Washington rather than emerging organically from European ideals of peace. As Volodymyr Ishchenko (2025) points out, the refusal of peace in Ukraine means that “some people might believe they are buying time for Europe to rearm—buying that time with Ukrainian lives.” The peace that Europe claims to embody is produced precisely through these exclusions: the arms shipped to Israel, aiding and abetting in genocide to active support in the US–Israel war of aggression on Iran, the borders fortified against racialized migrants, the rearmament financed under the sign of defense.

To understand this paradox, we need to examine not just the gap between the EU’s regime self-image and its actions, but the very categories through which it understands itself. This self-understanding rests on a particular historical narrative: the construction of post-WWII and post-Cold War Europe that supposedly transcended its violent past through anti-fascist consensus and supranational integration. As Fatima El-Tayeb (2011)

argues, this narrative positions the “old Europe” of colonialism as external to the “new Europe” of the EU. (Anti-)colonial histories are rendered outside of the continent’s history because to address them would suggest not a break but a continuation of colonial and capitalist exploitation by new means. The EU’s self-imagined depends on a willful forgetting of the violence that built European regime’s wealth, continuities in its institutions, the borders that secure its prosperity through exclusion of those whose dispossession made it possible as the narrative around the refugee crisis vividly demonstrates. The EU as an enclosure of civility and stability surrounded by chaotic regions; West Asia succumbing to “radical Islam,” a permanently underdeveloped and war-torn Africa, an aggressive Russia threatening the continent’s East. What made the narrative so convincing was its foundation in a larger hegemonic story of Europe (and its North/West) as the origin and natural home of human rights and enlightenment. This history has never been reflected in the continent’s migration or refugee policies, which remain fundamentally restrictive treating migration as a crisis and threat rather than a consequence of the European regime’s own entanglements.

Tarak Barkawi (2016) shows that the very distinction between war and peace as a narrative relies on itself as a colonial construct, a way of ordering the world that makes certain forms of violence illegible. In Eurocentric thought, he writes, “war” means “large-scale, organised, reciprocal violence compressed in time and space” and often occurs between nation states (Barkawi 2016, 201). Peace is defined simply as the absence of such violence, thus producing a binary upheld by “a multifaceted knowledge infrastructure,” public education, memorialization, international law, academia, that makes the “war/peace binary seem self-evident to us” (Barkawi 2016, 201). What liberal frameworks call “peace” has been sustained by what Barkawi (2016, 201) terms “Small Wars”: colonial campaigns, counterinsurgencies, proxy interventions that “enabled world-order projects like capitalist modernity”. The EU regime’s self-understanding as a peace project rests on this infrastructure that makes the binary self-evident and allows it to think itself peaceful because it is supposedly not engaged in major interstate war.

Yet even in European thought, the war/peace binary has never been stable. “Peacetime and wartime are not necessarily distinguishable” (Barkawi 2016, 203), threat, preparation, force held in reserve mean war has no straightforward endpoint and thus violence, as he argues, is not exceptional but ordinary. Here, Black feminist scholarship in geography has worked to “de-exceptionalise and de-fetishize war.” Jones (2025) draws on Griffiths and Rubaii’s (2024) concept of “beforemaths” to name how the violence of war begins long before any visible event, in “toxic mining of war minerals and materials, and the broader regimes of military production and distribution networks” (Jones 2025, 198). These “beforemaths bring different geographies and different bodies into view and cast them as part of the war’s violence” (Jones 2025, 198). The EU’s peace is sustained by such beforemaths: the arms trades, the surveillance tech tested on migrants, the legal architecture of the new Pact on Migration and Asylum itself are not preparations for violence but violence already underway.

This is precisely what Maurizio Albahari (2015) captures with his concept of “crimes of peace,” violence that is not an

exceptional atrocity but embedded in the ordinary, “institutional and structural injustice” of a system that declares itself peaceful. He explains crimes of peace are “enabled by situations of institutional and structural injustice that might escape neat legal categorizations ... They demonstrate willful ignorance of the inescapable corporeality of being human” (Albahari 2015, 22). Such violence persists where “armistices are never envisioned,” spaces governed by what Albahari (2015, 22), drawing on Franco Basaglia and Franca Basaglia Ongaro’s work, calls the “war of peace,” where harm is normalized through the bureaucratic enforcement of the “order of things.” The Mediterranean border, with its surveillance technologies, pushbacks, and outsourced detention in Libya and Turkey, materializes this dynamic: it is not a site where humanitarianism has failed, but where a deliberate system of violent peace is embedded across civil and state structures.

Where Albahari documents this violence at Europe’s maritime borders, Murad Idris’ (2019) intellectual history in *War for Peace* excavates the philosophical genealogy that makes such a contradiction possible, showing how “peace has always been constituted through hostility,” a concept forged in opposition that reflects and reproduces Western dominance. Often universalized under liberal frames, it produces and legitimizes some societies and geographies as peaceful while rendering others inherently warlike (Azarmandi 2025; Courtheyn 2018; Loyd 2012; Namberger et al. 2021), thereby justifying military and humanitarian interventions (Atanasoski 2013; Chimni 2021). This dynamic is not confined to relations between states but operates internally as well. Devin Atallah (2023) makes a parallel claim from settler-colonial contexts: “when colonizers talk about ‘security,’ they are in fact talking about ‘violence.’”

This insight is borne out in the very architecture of the EU regime’s border governance. As Kara E. Dempsey (2020, 1) demonstrates in her typology of “spaces of violence” against migrants seeking asylum in the EU, violence is not exceptional but structural, embedded in the legal and spatial mechanisms that produce migrant illegality and disposability (see also Myadar and Dempsey 2022). The regime’s new Pact on Migration and Asylum institutionalizes “zonification” (Kancler 2018), the production of carceral zones where migrants are held in legal and spatial suspension. “When a migrant or refugee, sex gender dissident, or an undocumented person crosses the border, the struggle doesn’t end once they have entered within the nation state because the border follows them everywhere” (Walia 2023). These are the material infrastructures of Europe’s violent peace. In such contexts, the militarization of policing has become essential to maintaining a regime that is, in reality, the violent regulation of racialized populations via processes of bordering (Jiménez and Douhaibi 2023; Walia 2023) that extend this racial regime into everyday life. What connects these different accounts is that peace is never the absence of war (Flint and Dempsey 2023; Koopman 2017; Loyd 2012). It is, rather, a field of power: a discourse that organizes visibility and invisibility, materializes certain forms of violence and denies others, and casts some deaths as tragedies and others as justified. Peace is not something that becomes weaponized but is always already a weapon available to be deployed by the powerful against those racialized and classed as threats to order. Our concern in tracing

these dynamics is not to counter the EU’s regime language with yet another definition of peace, but to ask how the violence of European peace is confronted by relationality as praxis and cross-border insurgent solidarity.

It is here that scholarship on peace geographies offers conceptual resources for naming what we have been tracing, though it cannot fully name what we find. Dijkema et al. (2024, 1511–1512) propose the concept of “non-war violence” to describe precisely this terrain, contexts like migration and border enforcement that “can be described as neither peace nor war.” Studying violence and peacemaking in such contexts, they write, “unsettles spatial ideas, common in Western representations of spaces and conflict on a global scale” (Dijkema et al. 2024, 1512), where peace is located in the Global North and conflict in the South (Azarmandi 2021; Krause and Segadlo 2021). The EU regime and its borders, its arms trade, the legal architecture of the migration Pact itself, are all sites of non-war violence. And yet, as Dijkema et al. (2024) insist, it is also in such spaces that we must attend to how peace is made through “in-betweenness” and infrastructures of care. It is precisely such infrastructures that we trace in Barcelona and Tirana, where mutual aid networks confront the regime’s violent peace. To name what is built here, we need conceptual resources that move beyond diagnosing violence toward understanding what is made in its fragments and what remains unfinished, incomplete, and necessarily fugitive about that making. The two activist collectives, t.i.c.t.a.c. and Europe Other, are precisely what we can name anticolonial interstices within the fractures of European “peace” and racial capitalist violence since the praxis here is principally based on the refusal of the anti-relational logics that sever re/connections and foreclose the future.

In a broader local and international context shaped by movements such as those for Black Lives and Free Palestine, responses to the intersecting violences of racial capitalism and imperialism—exploitation, racism, cisheteropatriarchy and EU regime’s border necropolitics—have taken concrete forms through anticolonial collectives operating across Europe. t.i.c.t.a.c. (Taller de Intervenciones Críticas Transfeministas Antirracistas Combativas), founded in Barcelona in 2017, brings together sexual and gender dissident activists from the Global South, Eastern Europe, and critical diasporas in the West. Organizing the confluence of local and international anticolonial struggles, summits, political actions, care networks, and the Antiracist Legal Network, t.i.c.t.a.c. provides a space for political engagement and embodied resistance, material, affective and legal support to migrants, racialized communities, sex workers, and trans* people. Along the Balkan Route, the Europe Other Collective, established in Tirana in late 2023, mobilizes local Albanians and returning diaspora activists in response to Albania’s role in EU migration control under the Italy–Albania deal. The collective organizes assemblies near the Shëngjin and Gjadër camps, documents detention conditions, locates missing migrants, and fosters transnational networks connecting Albania with Italy and other European sites. By operating across urban centers, border zones, and transnational circuits, both collectives organize insurgent cross-border solidarity from the interstices that interconnect beyond the fixed locations of Barcelona and Tirana. At the core of our collectives’ work are analyses and practices grounded in Black Marxist, Indigenous,



FIGURE 2 | Activists organizing a protest calling for a suspension of the Italy–Albania deal after the suicide of Hamid Badoui, a Moroccan migrant who took his own life due to fear of being sent back to Italian centers in Gjader, Albania, May 2025. *Source:* Anonymous; used here with permission.

and decolonial transfeminist thought, which situate racialization as the structuring logic of capitalist continuities, expropriation and the extraction of life under EU regime and Western global imperial projects. Ruth Wilson Gilmore's abolition geography is consistent with these threads in that she reminds us that “freedom is a place,” that liberation is both momentous and intimately, collectively quotidian—not the privileged monopoly of singular events, heroic figures, and spectacular manifestations, but rather how people make freedom provisionally and imperatively as they imagine home against the disintegrating grind of racial capitalism (Gilmore 2017, 228). By embedding such abolitionist practices in concrete acts of care and resistance that refuse the EU's foundational amnesia, both collectives work toward a fugitive abolitionist future no longer based on colonial extraction that secures Western prosperity through exclusion and dispossession.

2 | Letting Go of Peace: Fugitive Rehearsals for Abolition

If the EU regime's peace is violent, produced through exclusion and secured through the “beforemaths” (Griffiths and Rubaii 2024) of arms trades and border architectures, then any peace worthy of the name must be sought elsewhere. But seeking it requires first understanding why the current regime forecloses it so systematically. The answer lies in the spatial logics of racial capitalism. Daigle and Ramírez (2019), drawing on McKittrick and Woods (2007), argue that the plantation economy of the Americas was a central node of racial capitalism, a system in which capitalist accumulation has always been

constituted through racialized violence and dispossession. Crucially, this is not just an economic system but a spatial one. As McKittrick (2011, 949) argues, “the violence of displacement and bondage, produced within a plantation economy, extends and is given a geographic future” (quoted in Daigle and Ramírez 2019, 80). That geographic future is visible wherever racialized life is spatially organized as expendable so that accumulation and peace can be maintained elsewhere. The Mediterranean today is one such space, where genocide is normalized as the cost of the spatial enclosure of the European regime's “peace.”

At the South EU borders, from the 1990s the Mediterranean Sea has become a mass grave due to the genocidal EU migration necropolitics and its systematic brutal violence and violation of fundamental rights of migrants and refugees. There is still the lack of accountability and recognition, while impunity and structural racism are central in all cases of injustice and atrocities, among many others, the Tarajal massacre which took place on 6 February 2014, when sub-Saharan migrants and refugees were killed while attempting to swim across the border between Morocco and Ceuta, as the Spanish Civil Guard fired rubber bullets and tear gas into the water. The Melilla massacre occurred on 24 June 2022, when during the attempt to cross the border, the Spanish Civil Guard responded with extreme violence killing more than 23 people and did not provide assistance to the injured, prioritizing border control and the outsourcing of security over human rights. On 12 October 2013, 350 refugees from African countries drowned in Lampedusa, abandoned, excluded and deprived of rights in life they were recognized as citizens after their death, to be buried on Italian soil (Kancler 2026) (Figure 2).

Enacted in October 2024, the Italy–Albania deal turns Albania into a carceral frontier for Italy's migration control. Migrants intercepted in international waters or Italian detention centers are transferred to camps at Shëngjin port for screening and Gjadër for detention (Millona and Rexhepi 2026). Confined in small container cells under harsh conditions, they are managed by Italian officials and subcontracted firms. This arrangement establishes Italian sovereignty over Albanian territory, suspending judicial oversight and asylum processes through zonification, integrating post-socialist spaces into global circuits of racial capitalism. Local protests in Lezhë and Shëngjin highlight the deal's role in profiting from incarceration while positioning Albania as an EU migration buffer. This is where EU necropolitical spatial logic regulates who lives and who dies but also who gains access to citizenship and at what moment. Through spatial arrangements of enclosures like the one in Albania, countries of the EU regime capture and detain surplus populations to be released as cheap labor or deported and dispossessed depending on market demands.

It is here that scholarship in peace geographies becomes indispensable, for it offers a fundamental reorientation: peace is not a stable endpoint but an ongoing, contested, and spatially produced process (Koopman 2011, 2017; Williams and McConnell 2011). As Macaspac and Moore (2023) outline, these peace geographies are not bounded by the local; instead, they emerge where place-specific dynamics encounter global forces, such as military supply chains, migration regimes, transnational capital, and these encounters are themselves sites of power struggle. As such, “peace and conflict are intertwined, and we cannot understand one without the other” (Koopman 2011, 193). The “spatial turn” in peace research has fundamentally reshaped how we understand where and how peace is made. Björkdahl (2023, 56) argues that space is not a backdrop against which peace unfolds but is itself “both the product of and the context through which peace is built and negotiated across scale.” This spatial turn has also generated a rich vocabulary for understanding peace as multiple, situated, and made through practice rather than delivered as a singular state-endpoint. At the most intimate register, “corporeal peace” (Väyrynen 2018) insists that peace is not merely thought and legislated but experienced in and through bodies, in how they carry trauma and how they heal. These embodied experiences unfold in spaces where people actually live, where “everyday peace” (Mac Ginty 2022; Williams 2013, 2015) explores the mundane interactions through which coexistence is reproduced. Such interactions are always emplaced, as explored in the idea of “urban peace” (Bollens 1999), where cities are central sites to how the terms of living together are operationalized via zoning, housing, and infrastructure. Where urban peace is rarely unified, as Gusic (2022, 620–621) points out, attuning instead to “the plurality, subjectivity, and contestation of peace” and showing how coexistence emerges through distinct processes such as “creativity, accommodation, and fragmentation” that generate different forms of living together between “peace(s)” of varying degree, where communities must build peace from below, often against militarized violence. Nerve Macaspac (2019, 841) captures this as “insurgent peace”—a “dynamic processes rooted upon a refusal and disruption of the spatial logics of violence imposed by the competing structures of power of state and non-state

armed actors upon civilian communities.” Across these contributions, peace emerges as always incomplete, temporal, and made in specific places and through specific practices and never fully secured, always in the making and perpetually at risk of coming undone.

Yet this spatial vocabulary has been deployed with a conspicuous geographical selectivity. Peace geographies have concentrated overwhelmingly on post-conflict zones and the Global South, on sites already legible as war-affected, already marked as requiring peace. Europe, in this literature, tends to appear less as a subject of analysis than as a structuring presence. Where violence within the EU is examined, particularly in the work on borders and migration research, attention is often directed toward how policies and spatial arrangements produce harm across populations (Dempsey 2020), showing, for example, the relational and spatially distributed violence of asylum regimes, the hierarchies of mobility enforced at borders (Jones 2016), and the ways securitization intertwines with humanitarian rationalities (Vaughan-Williams 2015). While these works effectively engage with the questions of systematic violence, they rarely interrogate Europe as a site where peace is materially constituted through violence. Europe is not just a theoretical frame from where to study violence but one of its primary architects. The EU regime's borders, the camps at Shëngjin and Gjadër, the CIEs in Spain, the externalization deals, the mass drownings rendered administratively invisible, are not distant conflict zones but products of European violence of peace. Mainstream peace scholarship outside geography largely looks past this, toward the zones of conflict that European security arrangements help produce, does not simply have a gap in its empirical coverage. It reproduces, at the level of knowledge production, the same logic as the peace it fails to interrogate; casting the European regime as peaceful by definition and locating violence always somewhere else.

Here as well the city space is one of interconnected political battlegrounds, where the struggle for survival, justice, and revolutionary transformation confronts the relentless forces of commodification, control, violence, and exclusion. In recent decades, state institutions and markets have operated as machines for producing dominant political narratives, branding cities for global competition, imposing racist organization of neighborhoods, enforcing control, security measures, and social cleansing for the new white middle class and tourism. These politics and internal border mechanisms entrench systemic racism, subjugating marginalized communities to assimilative paternalism, extreme exploitation, and (social) death while displacing them in favor of sanitized, commodified white urban environments. It is in these infrastructures, not in spaces of abstraction but in the material terrain of cities, that fugitive rehearsals take root.

This critique matters because it reshapes where the analytical tools of peace geographies need to be applied. Through what Myadar and Dempsey (2022, 367) term the “geopolitics of social ordering”—the processes by which states classify, contain, and govern displaced populations, the architecture of the EU regime's migration policies is itself a peace-space, produced through precisely the processes Björkdahl theorizes. “Place-making,” she writes, is “the materialization of the idea of peace(s)” (Björkdahl 2023, 63); “space-making” is “the ability

to turn a physical place into an ideational, discursive political space giving it new meaning” (Björkdahl 2023, 64). The detention camp, the externalized processing center, the maritime surveillance corridor, these are not failures of the peace project but its materializations: spaces where European peace is actively made through organized exclusion and the production of disposable populations. The EU regime’s peace is not simply interrupted by violence at its borders; violence is constitutive of it.

To seek peace elsewhere, then, is not to look for a space beyond conflict but to attend to the practices that emerge within and against it, connecting and relating to people and places that the European violence of peace prevents from emerging and renders impossible. These practices have been named in various ways. Koopman’s (2023, 171) “alter-geopolitics” theorizes people coming together “not just for security, to stay alive—but to live well.” Drawing on years of accompaniment work in Colombia, she shows how internationals with privileged passports walk alongside local activists under threat, creating conditions for a form of life not organized around the constant threat of disappearance and death. She distinguishes between “obstructive nonviolent action” (stopping what we do not want) and “constructive nonviolent action” (building what we do want), arguing that both are necessary for peacemaking (Koopman 2023, 167). Daigle and Ramírez (2019, 79) extend this insistence on life within violence, emphasizing that such practices are not just organizational connections, but sites where differently situated knowledges meet: “the embodied knowledge of Indigenous peoples coming into dialogue and relationship with those of Black and other dispossessed peoples.” The decolonial, for them, is “an affirmative refusal of white supremacy, anti-blackness, the settler colonial state, and a racialised political economy of containment, displacement and violence”—a refusal that is also an affirmation, “a resounding affirmation and embodiment of alternative relationalities” (Daigle and Ramírez 2019, 80). Yet as Björkdahl (2023, 57) insists, such counter-space-making is “never complete,” always “reaching toward a peace that cannot be secured within the existing order.” The space of accompaniment is also a space of precariousness; what is built in the cracks of state violence is characterized by a fundamental temporariness. Which is why we abandon the search for an alternative definition of peace for a different question: what forms of infrastructures, praxis, and what temporalities of endurance and interruption become possible when we cease to measure collective life against the normative horizon of peace? To let go of peace is not to abandon the pursuit of less violence but to refuse the conceptual foreclosure that peace as concept imposes.

Abolition geographies offer a vocabulary for precisely this refusal, one that does not seek to replace peace with some other settled endpoint but instead offers a framework organized around what Ruth Wilson Gilmore calls “life in rehearsal” (Estes et al. 2021, 262). Gilmore (2022, 491) positions geography not merely as a diagnostic tool but as a practical means of “doing political organizing” and “being in the world” that connects social spaces through political solidarity. She writes that “freedom is a place” (Gilmore 2022, 474), an insight that helps us understand mutual aid networks as sites where liberation becomes a practice of place-making, turning bodies and lives into inhabitants of abolition geographies that challenge carceral dynamics. Gilmore for instance insists that abolition “is life in

rehearsal, not just the dismantling of prisons and the police but the active creation of new forms of social life” (Estes et al. 2021, 262). Rehearsal, she explains, is distinct from recitation: it “allows and requires us, in a Brechtian sense, to make a model of doing things,” to try something “analytically, practically” that makes clear, “at least provisionally, that interventions on the social ground of struggle both change it and show it can be changed” (Estes et al. 2021, 265). In such spaces, Gilmore (2022, 489) argues, new “infrastructures of feeling” materialize, and caring communities emerge to forge the political hope and unboundedness needed to transition from our carceral present to abolitionist futures. These infrastructures of feeling are not abstract; they are built through specific practices of mutual aid, and in Barcelona take shape through networks that exemplify what Dylan Rodríguez (2019, 1575) theorizes as the imaginative heart of abolition, which he defines as “a dream toward futurity vested in insurgent, counter-Civilizational histories—genealogies of collective genius that perform liberation under conditions of duress.” For him, this raises the question of what forms of shared creativity emerge from conditions under duress and how insurgencies practice transformation of power and community, which he states is animated by “collective, galvanized genius reflected in the shared knowledge, creative organizing practices, and critical activist labors of vulnerable and targeted communities” (Rodríguez 2019, 1602) that networks of mutual aid embody.

t.i.c.t.a.c. is where organizing against and out of forgotten spaces occurs. By disrupting technologies of anti-relationality that continuously fragment and tend to divide anticolonial movements, t.i.c.t.a.c. became one of the interstices that still persists and sustains the space through shared labor and transnational solidarities: locally and internationally comrades contribute through writing, organizing, workshops, and direct action weaving the multiplicity of struggles into the collective’s everyday practice of refusal and fugitive rehearsals of abolition (t.i.c.t.a.c. 2018, 2019, 2025). This shared praxis articulates in relation to t.i.c.t.a.c.’s anticolonial library collection and Biblioteca Cimarrona (La Casita Ediciones 2025) that gathers books on racial capitalism, Black Marxism, Black feminisms, decolonial feminisms (Lugones 2024), prison abolition, trans* politics, Indigenous sovereignty, and migrant justice in multiple languages. More than a collection, it functions as a performative archive of anticolonial thought and struggle to activate the processes of (un)learning by tracing how Western political fictions were constructed as regimes of racial capitalist accumulation and persist through its constantly changing logics until today. Since the sensual and visual are also structurally embedded within this system, especially in the age of algorithmic control, t.i.c.t.a.c. as well organizes experimental film forums, workshops, and debates to activate anticolonial imaginaries (Figure 3).

At the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Antiracist Care Network emerged to respond to escalating systemic inequalities and abandonment. Organized through assemblies of antiracist collectives in Barcelona, t.i.c.t.a.c. became one of the anticolonial interstices for meeting, distributing aid, and mobilizing action for migrant, racialized, sex workers, and trans* communities facing extreme vulnerability and violence by state and mainstream aid systems (Fredes Ortiz 2021). Confronting institutional neglect with grassroots solidarity and community care,



FIGURE 3 | The Antiracist Care Network banner by Bea Cantero for t.i.c.t.a.c. space, Barcelona, 2020. *Source:* Authors.

the network provided material and affective support, especially in the most precarious situations. Since 2020, the Antiracist Legal Network, coordinated within t.i.c.t.a.c., elaborates analysis, organizes direct action against borders and carceral infrastructures, securing the release of most of the detained trans*/women from the women's unit of the Immigration Detention Center (CIE) in Barcelona, providing accompaniment and legal support by and for migrants and refugees confronting the Spanish Aliens Act, CIEs and EU migration necropolitics and fighting for its abolition (Desde el Margen 2021a, 2021b; Red Jurídica Antirracista, n.d.). The 2024–2025 cycle of lectures and encounters against the Fortress Europe migration necropolitics and the new EU Pact on Migration and Asylum (t.i.c.t.a.c. 2023, n.d.-a, n.d.-b) proceeded from the premise that the Pact is not a policy response to a migration crisis but a legal architecture of racial militarized capitalism—part of the same knowledge infrastructure that makes European peace appear self-evident while its violence is dispersed across maritime surveillance corridors, outsourced detention, and arms exports. Through the sessions we examined European Union's migration necropolitics, historical and current devastation caused by racial militarized-genocidal capitalism, the ways in which the new Fortress Europe pact reinforces violent, racist, transphobic, securitized carceral structures across internal/external borders, as well as the history of migration policies in Catalonia and Spain in recent decades. In the current context that is driving us toward even more violent security, military, algorithmic and racist structures, our work extended into the next cycle on the Abolition of Racial Capitalism. Anticarceral politics and practices (t.i.c.t.a.c. n.d.-b) as an urgent call to come together to share knowledge, experiences, tactics, and continue organizing anti-colonial political struggles. Against the rising fascism globally, and in Europe in particular, we share abolitionist knowledge for action against genocide in Palestine and the EU's active implication, tactics to confront the legal foundations, laws, regulations and apartheid policies implemented by the EU regime that constantly produce violations of fundamental rights of racialized people, migrants, refugees, sex/gender-dissidents and sex workers, and death along migratory routes, militarized borders and the Mediterranean Sea.

In Tirana, the Europe Other Collective embodies this collective capacity, drawing on diaspora memory and localized knowledge. In a June 2025 interview, Kristina Millona, an activist

with the Collective, described how it formed in late 2023 in direct response to Albania's conscription into the EU regime's carceral border infrastructure. The Collective emerged through conversations between Albanian diaspora communities and locals who recognized the need for a new political formation, one that would allow Albanians to address migration and racialization on their own terms, without Western mediation (Kristina Millona, interview with author, 14 May 2025). Central to this was a desire to confront the Albanian state's role in containing migrants on behalf of Italy through a bottom-up initiative grounded in local experience. The Collective's membership reflects this dual orientation. Its core comprises local Albanian activists alongside second-generation Albanians who have returned after years abroad, many of whom plan to resettle. The returning diaspora, having faced racialization in countries like the UK, Greece and Italy, brings a transnational lens that connects personal histories of displacement with broader struggles for migrant justice (Kristina Millona, interview with author, 14 May 2025).

The name “Europe Other” itself is an act of re-appropriation. Millona traced its origins to Fatima El-Tayeb's work on processes of racialization facing migrant communities living under the EUropean regime, but also to a more concrete discovery: while researching deportation data on undocumented Albanians in Britain, she encountered the bureaucratic classification “Europe Other,” a category that rendered Albanian migrants legible to the state only through their exclusion from “Europe proper.” The Collective seized on this label, inverting its logic to argue that Europe has always been a fortress project and that those it others are not peripheral to but constitutive of its order (Kristina Millona, interview with author, 14 May 2025). Yet the Collective's work unfolds under conditions that distinguish it sharply from activist formations in Western Europe. Albania's socioeconomic reality, marked by economic hardship and continued emigration, runs through everything the Collective does. Millona described a constant contradiction at the heart of the work: wanting to build community and advance migrant justice locally while some members themselves face the necessity of leaving the country for economic reasons (Kristina Millona, interview with author, 14 May 2025). Theorizing this contradiction—and the broader relation between racial capitalism, the geographies of peace, and migrant justice that it crystallizes—is not a task that theory can complete on its own; it demands the profound empirical and activist labor of those who live it, not only for analytical rigor but as a matter of political strategy. It is lived rather than resolved in the abstract, and it gives the Collective's praxis a particular urgency and embeddedness that resists the detachment of externally funded advocacy projects by the EU regime that are pervasive in post-socialist spaces in promoting neoliberal civil society geared toward further integration into its regime.

The Collective engages deeply with Albania's migration history, particularly the mass exodus of the 1990s following the collapse of state socialism. Millona noted that almost every Albanian family has someone who crossed to Italy during that period, many of whom experienced detention or deportation, a collective memory that explains why locals are willing to support migrants despite potential repercussions (Kristina Millona, interview with author, 14 May 2025). These historical experiences

of displacement translate directly into present-day solidarities. Before Europe Other came into public visibility, Millona and others were already in contact with Zanë Collective and Palestina e Lirë, facilitating knowledge-sharing and coordinated actions such as joint assemblies on migrant rights. This transversal solidarity across struggles preceded any formal organizational infrastructure; it grew out of personal ties and shared political horizons. The Collective's approach to building these networks has been deliberately patient and spatially situated. Rather than rushing to consolidate internally, they prioritized reaching out to groups in Italy and elsewhere, building solidarities in advance of the detention deal's full materialization (Kristina Millona, interview with author, 14 May 2025). These connections enabled their first direct action in Gjadër in December 2024, where activists and locals protested outside the detention camp, demanding transparency and an end to detentions.

This refusal to be complicit in racial violence, and the insistence on distinguishing state-brokered accommodation from genuine solidarity, animated the cross-border mobilizations that Europe Other helped coordinate through the Network Against Migrant Detention (NAMD). In December 2024, NAMD organized a joint two-day action that brought Italian left groups including YaBasta Bologna, Contro Confine, Laboratorio D'Assalto, and Spin Time Labs alongside Albanian activists to protest directly at the Shëngjin and Gjadër detention sites, and then to march through Tirana to the Albanian Prime Minister's office, the EU Delegation, and the Italian Embassy. Europe Other co-founder Oriola Isaku, speaking at the Italian Embassy, drew on shared Albanian migratory experience to refuse the logic of the Rama-Meloni agreement: "We are being exploited again by Italy and its colonialist policies, through false promises" (Qema 2024). The action crystallized what these activist networks understand as the difference between the intergovernmental deal, which activists named outright neocolonialism, and the horizontal solidarity being built across borders. As Detjon Begaj put it at the march: "Friendship is equality. Friendship is not submission. Friendship is not neocolonialism" (Qema 2024). The chant that emerged from the joint Italian–Albanian organizing, *Pa kufi! Pa qeli!* (No borders! No cells!), captures in miniature what we mean by insurgent solidarities: not a politics imported from outside, but one forged in the act of showing up together at the material sites where the EU's violent enclosure is being constructed (Figure 4).

The risks of such solidarity are not abstract. A local worker at Gjadër shared information about detained migrants, helping the Collective locate missing individuals, until he faced dismissal for doing so. His story reveals the material cost of breaking the informational blockade that carceral border regimes rely on. The camps function not only through physical containment but through the enforced invisibility of those held within. To build community trust beyond such fragile individual acts, the Collective organizes assemblies in Tirana and Lezhë, near the Shëngjin and Gjadër camps. These gatherings bring together locals, diaspora members, and migrants to discuss shared experiences of displacement and resistance, creating what Millona described as spaces for collective reflection on what it means to inhabit a space where people want to build lives but feel structurally pressured to leave (Kristina Millona, interview with author, 14 May 2025). Such platforms did not previously exist in Albania's political landscape.



FIGURE 4 | Europe other collective in collaboration with the Network Against Migrant Detention (NAMD) protest in Albania, December 2024. Source: <https://nyje.al/>; used here with permission.

This work also requires constant strategic judgment and re-alignment. Millona recounted being approached by an Italian anarchist group proposing direct infiltration and sabotage of the Gjadër construction site. While respecting such militancy, she emphasized the risks in Albania's depoliticized context, noting that the question of who has the privilege to adopt abolitionist tactics is not rhetorical. As a new formation without an established solidarity network, Europe Other faced real repercussions that more established groups might absorb (Kristina Millona, interview with author, 14 May 2025). They chose instead what Millona characterized as a lateral and longitudinal approach to community building and migrant justice, prioritizing sustainable networks over short-term confrontation. As Nick Estes points out, "the goal isn't to create a coalition and maintain it. The aspiration is to change society and material conditions" (Estes et al. 2021, 263–264). For Europe Other, this means knowing when a coalition has served its purpose or, as Millona's reflection suggests, where there is no horizon for joint action (Figure 5).

Transversal solidarity for both groups extends beyond migration justice alone: in April 2025, their partnership with Palestina e Lirë and the Balkan Palestine Solidarity Network framed migrant justice as inseparable from Palestinian liberation, drawing parallels between Albania's role in EU borderization and Palestine's occupation. The Collective's efforts to locate missing migrants at Gjadër highlight this commitment. Families from countries like Egypt and Bangladesh contact the Collective, seeking information about loved ones detained in isolation conditions. This work involves navigating restricted access, relying on informal networks of local workers and residents to gather information, and providing emotional and practical support to families, challenging the dehumanizing effects of the detention system. Although we speak from different locations, positions, and embodied politics, in t.i.c.t.a.c., focusing on recognition that difference/otherness is constructed through systemic racial capitalist expropriation and exploitation that needs hierarchic categorizations of bodies in terms of race, class, gender, sexuality, religion, ability, etc., for accumulation and profit, makes possible the disruption of anti-relationality. This entails working toward abolishing racial capitalism, white privilege and



FIGURE 5 | “Emancipation in Rehearsal: Racial Capitalism, Premature Death, and the Urgency of Abolition”, a lecture by Ruth W. Gilmore with-in the cycle on the Abolition of Racial Capitalism. Anticarceral Politics and Practices in t.i.c.t.a.c., 11 July 2025, Barcelona. *Source:* Authors.

private property, but also recuperating all that was/is systematically erased, to reconfigure interrelationships, living conditions and the world based on radical reciprocity, care, and planetary justice.

By documenting detention conditions and locating missing migrants at Gjadër, the Collective exposes the human cost of the Italy–Albania deal in ways that resonate with Albahari’s argument that violence is embedded within the bureaucratic and ideological enforcement of order (Albahari 2015). Their work provides dignity and connection to families seeking answers about loved ones held in isolation, embodying accompaniment rather than charity. Millona underscored this commitment: “The core tenet is migrant justice, but also this frustration of seeing radical politics gatekept by Westerners. It’s Albanians with all their different profiles and struggles that are setting up this group” (Interview with author, 14 May 2025). Their protests, their documentation, their mutual aid, and their efforts to locate the missing all embody a fugitive rehearsal for abolition: a lived practice of refusal and interdependence that emerges from within, rather than being projected upon, the conditions of Europe’s violent peace.

The work of locating the missing, or refusing disappearance, is exactly the kind of embodied experimentation that happens in what Gilmore (2022, 420) calls “forgotten places”: communities marginalized, segregated, and abandoned by the state, where activists “look for and create a guide to action through embodied political experimentation.” People in such places

exhausted by the daily violence of environmental degradation, racism, underemployment, overwork, shrinking social wages, and the disappearance of whole ways of life and those who lived them, nevertheless refuse to give up hope. What capacities might such people animate, and at what scales, to make the future better than the present? ... How

do people make broadly contested sensibilities—indeed feelings—the basis for political struggle, especially when their social identities are not fixed by characteristics that point toward certain proven patterns (or theories) for action.

(Gilmore 2022, 412)

The EU border regime produces precisely such locale: migrant camps and detention architectures abandoned by the state’s care infrastructure while remaining targeted by its carceral apparatus.

In Tirana, the Europe Other Collective operates from within this same structural condition. Albania, conscripted as the EU regime’s externalized carceral frontier through the Italy–Albania deal, is a forgotten place in the precise sense Gilmore theorizes, targeted by carceral power yet abandoned by care infrastructure, its population subjected to decades of economic degradation and the compulsion to emigrate, yet refusing to cede the ground. The Collective’s assemblies in Lezhë, steps from the Gjadër detention camp, are acts of embodied political experimentation that refuse the enforced invisibility on which the camps depend. When a local worker risks his livelihood to share information about those held inside, when families from Egypt and Bangladesh reach out to an Albanian-led collective to find loved ones disappeared into the detention apparatus, the anti-relational logic of the border regime is momentarily ruptured. Millona describes this as “undercommons reflection” (Interview with author, 14 May 2025), a place to address the lack of platforms in Albania “to reflect on what it means to be in a transitory space where people want to live but feel pressured to leave.” Their assemblies in Tirana and Lezhë bring together locals, diaspora members, and migrants to discuss shared experiences of displacement and resistance. Both collectives transform spaces of surveillance and exclusion into interstices of resistance and community-defined justice. These are not spectacular acts of resistance but the patient, fragile labor of re-connection across

the lines that racial capitalism draws between populations designated for containment and those designated for expendability. It is the kind of work that, as Gilmore insists, makes the future better than the present precisely because it refuses to accept the present as given.

Extending abolition geographies to these sites is not a matter of filling an empirical gap; it is a matter of applying the field's own spatial logic to the entity whose peace the field has too often taken for granted. These enactments of rehearsal are not simply responses to crisis but living inheritances, struggles rehearsed and repeated across generations. As Gilmore explains, this form of memory is "not like somebody lies in bed and thinks of their grandmother's grandmother, but how people are" (Estes et al. 2021, 267). It is through these insistent practices, and alive continuity that peace becomes possible in the present, not as resolution but as a form of refusal and collective becoming.

t.i.c.t.a.c.'s journal *Desde el Margen*, an activist publication for spreading subaltern voices/doings/experiences—organized conceptually around six intertwined revolutionary pathways: epistemic disobedience, territories in struggle, liminal bodies, sex work is work, confronting institutions, and decolonial genealogies—focused the second issue on "Alliances, Coalitions, Solidarity: Limits and Challenges." As Azarmandi and Rexhepi (2021) ask,

How can we think about abolition and reparations from different geographies, keeping in mind that racialized, gendered, and class relations of power are not always direct nor are solidarities self-evident? This would primarily require an awareness that capitalism continually deploys what Gilmore (2011) calls "technologies of anti-relationality" as a way to prevent peripheral political projects of solidarity ... What kinds of solidarities can be enacted through the political project of reparations, not as reparative within racial capitalism but simultaneously in the pursuit of its abolition?

Their question does not close a debate, it opens one. It reminds us that abolitionist work is not linear nor guaranteed. Instead, it emerges from contradictions, frictions, and contingent solidarities, forged through collective struggle and deep listening across differences. It is "how and to what end people make freedom provisionally, imperatively, as they imagine *home* against the disintegrating grind of partition and repartition through which racial capitalism perpetuates the means of its own valorization" (Gilmore 2022, 491). It is in these spaces, the library, the journal, the gatherings, direct actions, where we rehearse solidarity not as metaphor but as method, a living, insurgent force against racial capitalism. The orientation toward world-making (rather than world preserving) demands also that we reconsider the political affects that sustain our struggles.

We therefore cannot simply mourn the impending collapse of the white world-order and resign to living in the ruins, nor can we be indifferent to the violence it inflicts as it burns, sometimes literally, colonized bodies along with itself.

Yet if, as Mahdis Azarmandi (2016, 163) argues, "the concept of peace in colonial conditions, past and present, therefore is an ontological impossibility for the colonized subject, as peace and order are always/already based on violence committed against the colonized", then the work of abolition and world-making is not oriented toward a peace that is merely deferred. It is not that peace lies elsewhere (or is otherwise), just out of reach, but rather that peace as a coherent political horizon simply does not obtain under these circumstances. This is not a call of despair but an accurate account of the terrain—and, with it, an opening for the concepts that a decolonial abolition praxis requires.

3 | Concluding Thoughts: On Anticolonial Interstices

While the category of non-war violence widens the empirical scope of peace and conflict studies, naming violence by negation is to let war be the unmarked referent and obscuring how European peace functions not as war's opposite but as its continuation. The Heron drones that Israel Aerospace Industries battle-tested in Palestine, killing civilians in Operation Cast Lead, are the same drones now leased to Frontex in trial flights of the Mediterranean. Israeli military technologies financed through European research grants and developed to track and target Palestinians are the same ones that surveil and facilitate the return of Black migrants to Libya, where they are subjected to crimes against humanity. The legal suspension that has enabled live-streamed genocide in Gaza is also reproduced as legal suspension in zonification of Albania, where migrants are held in Italian-controlled camps outside both Albanian jurisdiction and outside Italian asylum processes. To grapple with the violence of peace whether in the recurring mass drownings of migrants or in the relentless siege of Gaza, is to confront how the maintenance of peace for some routinely requires the annihilation of others (Albahari 2015; Atallah 2023; Idris 2019).

Because EU peace is secured through violence then its collapse is not something to be mourned but something to be organized for. The collapse of "their" world is not the end of the world but rather it is the end of a world built on capitalist colonial domination. Or as Maynard and Simpson (2022, 26) write, "that world-ending and world-making can occur, are occurring, have always occurred, simultaneously." The task is to question the regimes of alienation and extraction it has built, and to seek forms of abolition and life that might exceed them. Crucially, such rehearsal is not confined to zones conventionally labelled "conflict." Transversal solidarity networks, blocking arms factories in Sardinia, staging campus encampments against investments in occupation, sabotaging surveillance infrastructures on the Poland-Belarus border, are simultaneously advocating, organizing, and enacting the peace still to come (Esu 2020; Tazzioli 2020). Cynical observers might ask, "What have they achieved?", but the more pertinent question is what futures are being made thinkable, legible, and materially possible through these actions.

Rather than offering a definitive conclusion, we situate this research within a longer red line of flight of abolitionist and

decolonial praxis that demands we act now, so that those who follow inherit not the ashes of defeat but the embers of possibility (Kancler 2025; Rodríguez 2019). What distinguishes these anticolonial interstices is not only their opposition to the violence of European peace but the specificity of their spatial positions. t.i.c.t.a.c. acts from within the belly of Fortress Europe, in Barcelona, shaped by tourism-driven displacement, the racist organization of neighborhoods, forced evictions, racial profiling, police brutality and the CIE detention apparatus. Europe Other operates from what the EU regime has designated as its externalized carceral periphery, where Albania is simultaneously conscripted as aspirational European subject and racialized migration buffer. Together, they trace a geography of refusal that stretches from the Mediterranean's southern shore to the Balkan Route, connected not by institutional mandate but "praxis of relation," the insistence on building connections precisely where racial capitalism works to sever it.

Rodríguez (2019, 1577) powerfully describes "abolition as both a long accumulation and future planning of acts, performed by and in the name of peoples and communities relentlessly laboring for their own physiological and cultural integrity as such." What t.i.c.t.a.c. and Europe Other Collective's interrelated anticolonial practices, organized in the interstices articulate, is not mutual aid "as methodology for crisis" but "a praxis of relation" (Burden-Stelly 2026), and as such a resistance to the anti-relationality that racial capitalism relies on. These anticolonial interstices work against the violence of EU peace through fugitive rehearsals of abolition—abolition of the value form itself and racial capitalism, for as the wretched (Fanon 1963), we are always reaching, always incomplete, always rehearsing a peace that cannot arrive under this necrosystem, only against it. In the moment when there is no outside of racial capitalism, the mutual aid collectives and insurgent networks we trace operate precisely in these interstices as generative sites of reconnection against colonial and imperialist violence. Daigle and Ramírez's (2019, 79) insistence that decolonial geographies are "in formation" captures the temporality of these interstices: they open when the EU's contradictions become visible, for example when a migrant dies at the border and activists respond not with mourning alone but with protest, solidarity and legal accompaniment, when a queer refugee is detained and a network forms to demand their release, when the Pact's violence is met not with despair but with organized refusal. But cracks can also close through co-optation, burnout, repression. Theorizing from these places may allow us "to see differently, to forge imaginaries and representations that have the potential for collective appropriation and use" (Bhandar and Toscano 2022, 2).

The anticolonial interstices in Barcelona and Tirana are not permanent achievements; they are ongoing, fragile processes. Their power lies not in their durability but in what they rehearse: the possibility of life otherwise. For struggle to persist without the guarantee of hope it must be sustained through something else: the patient, tedious, and cross-sectional labor of building and "collective effort to remake social life, politics, ecology, and human being itself, across time and space, and always in opposition to systems of violence and including colonialism, slavery, incarceration, and borders" (Rodríguez 2019, 1577). This dispersed, multi-sited labor of abolition necessitates the critical analysis of racial capitalism

and organizing across difference that holds the tensions and multiple struggles without collapsing them into sameness, recognizing that "understanding how different realities intersect is in itself a strength because it gives us a plurality of visions to attack the common problem from different fronts at the same time" (Basha Changue, cited in Gržinić and Kancler 2023, 101).

The cross-border insurgency that both collectives in Barcelona and Tirana organize is precisely places and anticolonial networks of struggles for Palestine, Black, Indigenous, migrant, sex worker, trans* justice, and abolitionist futures that converge as a denunciation of peace understood as security for the racialized few; we insist instead on rehearsing abolition of racial capitalism that is collective, decolonial, and yet-to-be. These anticolonial interstices of disturbance, protests, disruptions, refusals, mutual aid are grounded in accountability and collective survival. They do not wait for institutional permission or recognition; they are fugitive rehearsals in the now, through interdependence, against disposability waged by the Western colonial capitalist empire soon in ruins. If this article advances a single theoretical claim, it is that the geographies of European "peace" and the geographies of racial capitalism are not two orders to be correlated but one and the same spatial logic of anti-relationality—which is precisely why migrant justice, Palestinian liberation, and abolition cannot be theorized apart from one another. To theorize peace under these conditions is to theorize the violence that secures it; to rehearse abolition is to build, in the interstices, the very relations that this logic forecloses. The anticolonial interstice is the place where that theoretical relation becomes a practical one.

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The authors declare no conflicts of interest. Tjaša Kancler is a founding member of t.i.c.t.a.c., and all authors are involved in the network; this affiliation had no bearing on the research or its conclusions.

Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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