

EDITORIAL - World Tensions: Palestine

Since the attacks that took place on October 7th, 2023, the State of Israel began a series of intense bombardments that have devastated the Gaza Strip, resulting in the death of 30,000 civilians (up to the date of this editorial), the large majority of which were women and children. This military act has forced over one million Palestinians to seek refuge in Rafah, at the Egyptian border, whilst Israeli armed forces continue their march towards the area. The city now hosts a vast tent-site spanning kilometres, evoking tragic imagery of the Nakba in 1948, albeit presenting an even more chaotic and desolate scene. The survivors of the Israeli aerial bombardments now face hunger, which is being used by Netanyahu's government as an instrument of war.

In this special edition of the *World Tensions* publication, titled *Genocide of the Palestinian People*, we focus on a grave historical moment; one which requires immediate global attention. We live in times in which the Palestinian resistance transcends the borders of its territory, becoming an appeal to the defence of life, of self-determination, and the survival of its people. This edition not only answers to this appeal, but also ponders the fundamental role of academia and scientific critical thinking in the articulation of the world's public opinion and in the conflict of ideas.

The global rise of the far-right and the dominant influence of large media conglomerates have played a significant role in the manipulation and distortion of facts related to the Israel-Palestine conflict. Often, these political and media actors employ simplified narratives that omit crucial context, or utilise language that dehumanises the Palestinian people, minimising or omitting the gravity of the massacres and the loss of human life. By doing this, they not only obscure the complexities inherent to the conflict, but furthermore contribute to a distorted public perception, which underestimates or ignores the brutal suffering of the Palestinians and the issues inherent to human rights. It is a strategy of domination, used to reinforce specific political agendas.

The Spanish philosopher Ortega y Gasset spoke of a "fabric of truths" that adapts according to variations in time and in power. In this context, the sum of all truths that form the worldview of an individual is in a constant process of being woven. The conditions held as true within a specific time might be challenged and even refuted within another, insofar as circumstances can evolve and new configurations of power emerge.

In a time marred by conflicts and violence, reported as one of the deadliest times for Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank, it is imperative that scientific investigation contributes to the understanding and critiquing of the reasons that lead to this humanitarian crisis.

For almost two decades, the Observatory of Nationalities has had in its research portfolio the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The system of Nations-State in the Middle East and its consequences for Brazilian foreign policy were discussed during the symposium held in October 2003, with speakers: Sarkis Karmirian, head of Brazil's Near East Department of the Foreign Relations Ministry; Bassam AbuSharif, adviser to the then-president of the Palestinian National Authority, Yasser Araft; Daniel Gazit, ambassador

of the State of Israel to Brazil. The event was not merely limited to the exposition of the facts and reasons for the conflict; it was characterised by a debate on modern polemic topics, such as: multi-laterality, the role of Nation-States, international security, terrorism, self-determination, etc. The lectures were transcribed and published in 2005, in *World Tensions*' inaugural edition (<https://revistas.uece.br/index.php/tensoesmundiais/article/view/803/704>), with an introduction by Jawdat Abu-El-Haj. For the Observatory of Nationalities' professor and researcher, it was a rare opportunity to observe the divergences and convergences of the conflict's protagonists, and the possibilities for an active Brazilian diplomacy in the region to work towards peace. Despite the event having revealed strong contention over the future of the conflict, it also confirmed that peace is a work of political willingness to respect differences, reject hierarchies, and seek equality.

In 2008, we continued with articles that broach the Palestinian resistance and Israel's expansionist policies, with articles by Sued Castro Lima on the poet of the Palestinian nation Mahmoud Darwish (1941-2008), a guerrilla fighter, political leader, journalist, and writer. From his poetry, argues the Observatory's researcher, rises a candid denouncement of the Nakba, an Arabic word used to designate the catastrophe that the Palestinian people suffered from the creation of the State of Israel. (<https://revistas.uece.br/index.php/tensoesmundiais/article/view/814/721>).

More recently, *World Tensions* published an essay by the photographer and international relations student Karine Garcez, titled *Life in refuge, photographic memories* (<https://revistas.uece.br/index.php/tensoesmundiais/article/view/357>). In 2012, she attended lectures by Hosam Saleh, a professor from the University of Gaza, considered one of the best photojournalists in the region, which allowed him to document expressions of refugee children, without reproducing the language of showmanship of pain. With support from the Al Wafaa Campaign, she travelled to Syria, Lebanon, and Turkey, which resulted in the "Refugee Childhood" project, which presents a small portion of the look, smile, expression, and history of children.

The *Genocide of the Palestinian People* edition was born from a meticulous selection process, encompassing contributions from all over Brazil and the world, each subjected to a rigorous evaluation to ensure that the content addressed reflect not only the sensitive reality of the situation, but also commitment to historical facts and their critical analysis. While upholding the publication's scientific rigour, this edition distinguishes itself through being, above all, militant and rebellious. *World Tensions*' mission is to offer a necessary counterpoint to an intellectual resistance; to build a trench against the advance of Zionist, imperialist, neocolonial, and racist narratives that dominate several means of mass communication.

We present, firstly, the perceptions of Ilan Pappé, Trita Parsi, and Stephen Walt on the historical context, the regional and international conjuncture, and the scenarios of the war. The interviews with three renowned researchers in the field of International Relations and the Middle East make up the research project *Disputes among great powers and the new geopolitics of the greater Middle East: redefinitions in the regional alliances*

system”, coordinated by Reginaldo Mattar Nasser, within the scope of the National Institute of Science and Technology for Studies on the United States (INCT-INEU).

Next, we present *Dialogues: Journeys of Geopolitics – Geohistorical Observatory of the National University of Luján (OGH-UNLu)*, with interviews and analyses that approach the ancient origins of this terrible conflict under multiple perspectives: geographic, historic, cultural, economic, and political. The interviewees, which come from several nationalities, including Spanish, Basque, Argentinian, Indian, and others, offer diverse viewpoints, contributing to a deeper understanding of the theme in question. The series of six select interviews, amongst others that make up the rich programme that took place in November 2023, includes the transcription of a debate in which Carmen Parejo, Martín Martinelli, and Nazareth Chanique discuss the situation in Palestine and Israel. They take place within a framework of anticolonial and global struggles. The authors make reference to the history of these conflicts since the British mandate in Palestine and link it to the struggle of the Saaraui people. They highlight the importance of understanding these conflicts within a wider historical and political context, criticising the inaction of international organisations such as the UN. Besides this, they talk about the role of social and international solidarity movements, the role of colonial powers and geopolitical dynamics, including the United States’ influence and imperialistic logic. The text emphasises the necessity of recognising anticolonial struggles and the rights of self-defence of peoples.

Claudio Katz, researcher and professor of economics at the University of Buenos Aires, warning against the ambiguity of several pronouncements, expatiates with clarity on Zionist expansionism and ethnic cleansing in Gaza. This far-right policy was challenged by a spectacular operation that tarnished Israel’s image as an unassailable power and destabilised the American counter-offensive. The Islamic Resistance Movement – Hamas, according to the author, exercised its legitimate right to self-defence when faced with an aggressor state.

Created in the heat of events, the text titled *Gaza Strip, 2023: the Genocide within the Apartheid* explores the complexity of the conflict, focusing on the category of genocide and its inherent link to apartheid and colonialism. Fábio Bacila Sahd details the historical antecedents and the colonial dynamic within the context of Israeli retaliation to Hamas operations and the dramatic humanitarian situation in Gaza. Backed by the theoretical referential of the International Human Rights Law as well as journalistic reports, he concludes the legal typification of genocide to be adequate.

The limitations of international law in resolving conflict are also the theme of Moara Assis Crivelente, researcher for the Brazilian Centre for Solidarity to the Peoples and Fight for Peace (CEBRAPAZ). In her article *Beyond the testimony: the role of international law against the genocide and colonisation of Palestine*, she evokes criticism to the symbolic efficacy of the Oslo Accords, highlights the lack of international protection towards Palestinians and the necessity of concrete political action to guarantee Palestine self-determination.

In *Gaza: from the storm of Al-Aqsa to genocide*, the colonial situation and its developments are analysed with a contemporary context, with a focus on recent events, defined as genocide. Bárbara Caramuru Teles and Helena de Moraes Manfrinato Othman seek, under an anthropological and historiographic perspective, to understand the consolidation of colonialism in Palestine and its consequences for its population. She mentions further the media coverage and the dehumanisation of Palestinians, against the hegemonic narrative that provides an alternative body of information.

In their study of the Israel-Palestine conflict, Marcel Pereira Pordeus, Kátia Paulino dos Santos, and Wilderson de Sousa Caetano propose a decolonising approach that might contribute to the creation of measures to solve the impasse between the two nations. They warn that conservative media adopts the discourse of Israeli “defence”, reducing decades of confrontations to a single occasion, a manoeuvre that aims to incite alienation and justify genocide.

Global War on Terror: “urbicide” at the heart of the US-Israel alliance, an article by Isabela Agostinelli dos Santos, Reginaldo Nasser and Bruno Huberman, explores the bases of support of the special relation established between these States. The authors argue that urban destruction, termed “urbicide”, reflects the Israeli counter-insurgency strategy that has been exported globally, from the U.S.-Israel partnership in the War on Terror. Utilised for the first time during the Bosnian War, the concept of urbicide has been mobilised to describe the Israeli military operation in the Jenin refugee camp, in the West Bank, in 2002.

“Handala”, a character by Palestinian cartoonist Naji al-Ali, gliding over a red-purple sky with a parachute – a method of transportation of many Hamas combatants – is a singularly potent image that motivates the reflexions of young Nina Fernandes Cunha Galvão. Her work highlights the impact of events of October, 2023 in Palestine, analysing the political and social implications of different Nakbas on the collective Palestinian imaginary and anticolonial resistance to Zionism.

Kelvin Araújo da Nóbrega Dias and Filipe Reis Melo draw enlightening parallels between the Palestinian reality and the slums of Rio de Janeiro, emphasising the social militarisation in both contexts, marked by impunity and by governmental violence. The case study is concerned with the period of 2022-2023, with the aim of covering recent events. *Think Palestine, think Brazil: imperialism, colonialism, and militarisation* reveals the naturalisation and the permissiveness in regards to the deaths in these populations, encompassing ethnic-cultural erasure.

The two articles that conclude this edition deal with the Israel-Palestine conflict from a religious perspective, albeit with differing approaches. The essay by Ivan Martins’s goal is to consider the evangelical religious ideology of the defence of the State of Israel, in order to better understand Brazil’s evangelical Zionism and its influence in politics. The starting point are researches of public opinion performed and published in Brazil after yet another chapter of war between the State of Israel and the Palestinians of the Gaza Strip. In turn, Emanuel Freitas da Silva, Emerson José Sena, and Kerolaine de

Castro Oliveira discuss critically the identification between Hamas, terrorism, and the political left carried out by Brazilian evangelical members of parliament. They analyse the concepts of the imaginary and political discourse, dedicating part of the article to the analytical interpretation of postages and selected speeches of representatives of right-wing parties in the National Congress.

The editors would like to thank all authors and, especially, to the researchers of the Clacso “Palestina y América Latina” work group, the Geohistorical Observatory of the National University of Luján, Argentine, and the National Institute of Science and Technology for Studies on the United States, Brazil, our partners in this historical publication.

Fortaleza, April 17th, 2024