

# Editorial

Perhaps an unlikely enigma, democracy appears to guard in its many centuries a spurious promise: all are free, equal, and safe. Under the umbrella of just laws, founded under the auspices of the common good. Or perhaps some sort of spell, that reinstates cruelties under the shadow of good intentions. Regardless, for centuries democracy, that which we have called democracy with such conviction, resists the innumerable evidence of its failure or, minimally, of its fragility. We have ardently believed in democracy. And today, as with the decline of Greek antiquity, democracy appears urgent. Urgent today, like the first convulsions of European and Western modernity. Urgent in Brazil, a stronghold of authoritarian sociabilities, of explicit microfascisms. From Plato to Nietzsche, from Kant to Marx, from Montesquieu to Proudhon or from Tocqueville to Hannah Arendt, democracy is unresolved, unconvincing, unexplained. Therefore, we seem to be doomed to discomfort, relegated to the plan of some better future, hoping for what never was. We seem to be destined to the fine thread that intersects (and paradoxically communicates) revolt and disillusionment. Much more than a project of common living, democracy in its eternal failure becomes a sign of times, which are once again dark. However, democracy is at a glance both despotism and the freedom we have and, therefore, gives rise to the question of what precautions we must consider, in respect to the dangers and the traps that we must know and avoid in regards to the liberties we can affirm. Regardless of how we think, democracy is a numberless multiplicity: it is both the discourse that undermines violence and projects universal values (which is to say, moral), and the small practices of sociability that cover the spectre of politics, from the apex of authority to the apex of liberty, in ceaseless combinations.

And it is in this way that we present, in this edition of *World Tensions*, an unusual constellation of restlessness, going through democracy in its terrifying present, shifting between theory and history in analyses that are both rigorous and relevant. Martonio

Mont'Alvene Barreto Lima and Vinícius Madureira Maia elaborate a careful historical critical analysis of Marcelo Neves' work, while Rodrigo Santaella Gonçalves presents to the reader the group Comuna, formed by Bolivian intellectuals that will strongly consider democracy under the light of a post-colonial non-unitary perspective (to what refers to the scope of the State). These are two works of analytical originality, that allow for renewed theorisations on the enigma of democracy, opening up, therefore, interest pathways for discussion. Inviting thought towards important events of the modern democratic inquiry, Vitor de Moraes Peixoto and Jéssica Matheus de Souza move the problematisation of adhesion to democracy from a more traditional field of political thought towards the intricate space of contemporary politics, redimensioned by the forcefulness of economic variables. It will also be in the developments of contemporary democracy that José Gilberto Biserra Maia, Raimundo Jovanil Pereira Oliveira and Mônica Dias Martins invites us to ponder on a post-colonial synchronicity, by composing a relevant reading of participatory Bolivarian democracy in Venezuela, displaying the construction of popular power in the country's socialist project, starting with the *misiones* and the *consejos comunales*. The last three articles in this ensemble of vigorous experimentations refer to the current drifts in democracy in Brazil. Vanessa Santana de Jesus Souza augurs the possibility of the emptying of democracy if reduced to symbolism in light of the public consolidation of authoritarian discourse in Brazil. Sharing of a similar concern of the explicit risks of radical dissolution of the Brazilian democratic order, Maisa Martorano Suarez Pardo ponders on a hacked democracy redefining the field of politics, in Brazil, since the 2018 presidential elections. We close this edition of *World Tensions* on the present of democracy by giving consideration to bolsonarian authoritarianism as a presage of terrible, grave danger, with Priscila Cabral Dibai's article. We must yet say of these texts what they most bring to life: their inconformity to authoritarianism of all kinds, in a time of new democratic despotisms... As such, the agony that invigorates and traverses through them – and that repeats itself in the collective work of bringing them together and offering them to the reader – is, in one word, ethics.

The editors.