

Editorial

During the twentieth century, the era of nation-states as the mainstay of the global order was declared over in a striking manner and, without delay, was negated by the facts. More recently, the pretence of a unipolar world led by the United States gave rise to the last wave of speculation regarding the end of the world organized in nationalities. New communication technologies and the powerful influence of transnational institutions put the porosity of ‘national frontiers’ to the test.

However, the worldwide economic crisis threatens to end all such predictions: each nation-state looks to defend itself and pays little attention to a global solution. On top of this, a differentiation in the performances of national economies allows the adjective, “emerging” to dominate international news and to announce a new global economic order.

Having achieved and maintained high rates of growth, countries such as Brazil and China exhibit self confidence and influence the direction of international relations while demonstrating the limitations of the United Nations. According to Sérgio Luiz Cruz Aguilár’s analysis, despite gaining force from the time of the General Assembly in 2005, the reform of this institution has been sidelined by the US’s unsustainable demands that a new member of the Security Council must occupy a permanent seat.

In the same way, resolution of crucial situations await an effective multilateral accord, among which the redefinition of the international monetary system. As Rabah Benakouche points out in this edition, one of the main pillars of the so-called globalization has been the hegemony of the US dollar. In light of the weakness of the US economy, such hegemony loses its rationale in most peoples’ eyes; it survives mainly because a viable alternative has yet to be agreed.

In the effort to preserve international status, will the industrialized countries be willing to allow access to the instruments that can guarantee their supremacy? Outstanding among these are the “sensitive technologies” employed by the military. Restriction of this specialized knowledge is the concern of Waldimir Pirró e Longo and William de Sousa Moreira. Commercial disputes seem to indicate changes in the practice of those possessing such military technology and in the briefs of countries searching for a way to get around them. Will Brazil adopt a clear strategy for acquiring the assets related to its Defense? This is the worry of these two

researchers affiliated with the Strategic Studies Unit of the Federal Fluminense University.

The system of restrictions has always been reinforced by the idea of “national security.” Supported by three case studies, Frederico Carlos de Sá Costa, demonstrates the doctrinal and ideological nature of this twentieth century concept and the academic attempts to dignify it.

The notion of “national security” has always accompanied the dynamic of commercial interests. Animated by economic growth and by the discovery of petroleum in the pre-salt stratum, Brazil is fixed on enlarging its position in the global system. Paulo Metri shows that oil is not simply a fuel since its supply has been used as a political weapon. Metri sketches a panorama of world economic dependence on this commodity and the overwhelming concentration of reserves in developing countries. The expectation of scarcity and the defense of natural resources prompt US strategists to reject what they call “natural resource nationalism.”

In the lengthy debate on the rise and affirmation of nationhood, few topics have aroused more polemic than so-called “Jewish nationalism.” Already at the beginning of the twentieth century, Otto Bauer was contested in his effort to demonstrate the existence of a “Jewish nation.” Taking off from the idea that the Israelis, not the Jews as such, constitute a nation founded on Zionism, João Quartim de Moraes, reveals the strict, complex and nonlinear relationships of the movement with colonialism, fascism and racism. For Quartim, Zionism was reinforced by the “civilizing mission” of the West used by capitalist expansion to cover its conquests, pillages and genocide. The nature of Zionism is also discussed by Efraim Davidi in his description of how the State of Israel treated South American political exiles during the regimes of dictatorships. The majority of Argentineans, Chileans and Uruguayans who sought refuge in that country did not have any ties with Zionism but were obliged to coexist with the Israeli state policy that maintained cordial relations with the South American military governments which suppressed democratic liberties in the name of patriotism.

Nationalities express themselves in parallel with the struggle for human rights; the essence of nationhood and its force is founded upon the idea that the differences among its people do not prevail over equality of opportunity and the respect due to each and everyone. In this sense, in the second half of the twentieth century, the most noteworthy experience has been the construction of the South African nationality. In the present

edition we pay tribute to Dennis Brutus, poet and academic, for his fight against “apartheid”. We publish one of his stunning essays on rights and neoliberalism written jointly with Patrick Bond.

Pursuing our commitment to discuss the formation of South American nationalities, we present Ângela Gutiérrez’s reading of Vargas Llosa’s “*A Guerra do fim do mundo*” (The War of the end of the World). According to Angela, the Peruvian writer surpasses the usual reverence given to Euclides da Cunha’s account and transforms the drama of *Canudos* into a metonymy of South American history. The construction of Subcontinental nationalities presents its own traces, inherent in Iberian colonization, but complemented by the inescapable tendency in all national experiences: the destruction without pity of communitarian aspirations that go against the designs of those who monopolize the assertion of nation-statehood.

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