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Palestine

The centrality of the Palestinian question

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At the last international conference of the anti-war movement it was decided that the next meeting would be held at Beirut in Lebanon. It was obvious that no Israeli activist could be present in Beirut for this conference, nonetheless I heartily approve of this decision.

It is of the highest importance that the world anti-war movement roots itself in the Arab world which is the front line of the imperialist offensive which is currently waging two battles, in Iraq and in Palestine.

[<https://internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/36206.jpg>]

Israeli as well as Syrian-Lebanese law makes participation in the Beirut conference impossible for my Israeli colleagues of the "Alternative Information Center" (AIC). It is nonetheless important to establish a clear distinction. The Arab decision concerning the Israelis stems from their legitimate battle against the normalization of relations with Israel, while the Israeli law which forbids its citizens from traveling in Arab countries is based on a deliberate policy seeking to prevent any cooperation among activists; more precisely any type of cooperation whose objective is not "normalization" (i.e. the creation of a false impression of peace and normality) but rather cooperation with the aim of coordinating our struggles against imperialist war, colonialist Zionism and the occupations in our region.

In this letter, I want to stress this global war as well as the anti-war movement and the centrality of the Palestinian question. Why Palestine is so important in the eyes of millions of activists in civil and political society. Why, in every demonstration against neoliberalism or against the war, is the Palestinian flag omnipresent, much more than the Iraqi or any other flag? Is it because the Israeli occupation is the most barbarous or murderous? No, unhappily, there are situations which are worse, like that in Chechnya where the Russian army is carrying out a veritable genocide.

Is it because the Palestinian national movement is a source of inspiration for the peoples of the world? No, there are movements of national liberation which are more efficacious and closer to victory than the Palestinian movement.

Some "friends of Israel" will claim that the centrality of the question of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the confirmation of the anti-Semitism of the anti-war and anti-globalization militants. I cannot subscribe to this quite defamatory accusation, knowing how our movements in Europe, Africa, America or Asia have always been in the vanguard of the struggles against racism including of course anti-Semitism, which is not the case with the "friends of Israel"

In my view, the centrality of the Palestinian question is explained by the fact that more than any other conflict on our planet, it concentrates the stakes of the global war launched by the Bush administration and its allies.

In reality, the Palestinian question was the laboratory of this war. All the methods, arguments and justifications, all the images and techniques were tried in Palestine before being put into practice elsewhere in the world. If we look at the "check points" in Iraq, we have to note that they are carbon copies of the "control points" in Palestine. If we also look at the terrible images of torture in Iraqi prisons, most of these are old Israeli methods. The concept of unilateralism, the declaration that the Geneva conventions and more generally the post world War 2 political order are no longer pertinent. The framework of Bush's new strategy was at the heart of the Israeli policy of the last ten years. Again, since 2000, Israel has waged a preventive, global and permanent war against the Palestinians, who are more than enemies for they are perceived as an "existential threat".

Remind you of anything? Some try to explain the similarity between the strategies of Bush and Sharon as the result

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of a “Jewish conspiracy” behind the US president, manipulating him to implement policies serving Israeli interests.

However, there is a simpler explanation, that over the last 15 years, a group of US, Israeli and European politicians, experts, retired officers and businessmen have together drawn up a new vision of the world, a new global strategy after the fall of the Soviet bloc.

Some of them had relations with the Israeli Likud party. They are known as neoconservatives, and in various research centres and think tanks they have developed the concept of the “Islamist menace”, “the clash of civilizations”, “the global preventive war”.

[<https://internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/36207-2.jpg>]

Their main hypotheses are the global political order established after the victory over fascism is no longer relevant, that the new threat is no longer communism, “the end of history” but Islamist terrorism and that the US has the right to protect the world against this menace, that Israel is at the centre of this new world war and that US unilateralism should replace UN multilateralism. The Israeli neoconservatives came to power with Netanyahu and his gang in 1996, five years before coming to power in Washington: that's why one has the impression that the US administration copies Israeli methods. To some extent Israeli policy against the Palestinians is a kind of local laboratory for the neoconservative strategy on a global scale. This strategy is based on the recolonization of the world, imposing the domination of the US and its allies through local collaborators, thus establishing a system of global apartheid.

That has foundered in Palestine as it is now foundering in Iraq, thanks to the extraordinary resistance of the peoples, even in the face of an unlimited military power.

It is by definition a unilateral strategy using preventive war in the goal of neutralizing the future challenges to their global domination. At the beginning of the 21st century, there are no longer local conflicts but rather local battles of the same neocolonial war between on the one hand US imperialism and its allies and on the other the peoples of the planet who resist global capitalism and colonial domination.

The second reason for the centrality of the Palestinian question is that the front line of this global, permanent and preventive war is situated on the frontline where Israel is building the apartheid wall. To the east of the wall, in Qualquilya and Tulkarm, begins the axis of evil, the “rogue states”; to the west of the wall, in Kfar Saba and Zur Yigal begins Bush's civilization. Israel is in the front line of civilization combating the barbarians, Palestine is in the first line of the gigantic army of peoples of the world who fight against the civilization of MacDonalD, Microsoft, Mitsubishi and Lagardère.

The wall is not only the apartheid wall between Israelis and Palestinians, it is a universal apartheid wall which separates the world into two global social forces, leading a war to life, to death on a planetary scale. The existence of a huge movement for global justice and against the war, even inside the imperialist states, is an enormous challenge to the strategy of apartheid which tries to deliver the world to a “clash of civilizations”. This is also the case in Israel with the existence of an anti-colonialist movement, modest in size but crucial in its capacity to challenge in its daily activities the setting up of an apartheid system on a huge scale and a policy of permanent, preventive and colonial war against the Palestinian people.

As long as we are ready to combat colonialism and occupation, as long there are soldiers refusing to serve in an army of occupation and men and women who will fight for a true cohabitation, “ta ayush” between Jews and Arabs, the chances of avoiding a catastrophe for the peoples of the region will be increased.