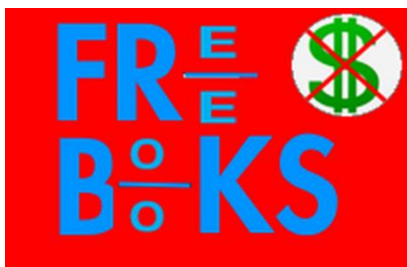


A FREE BOOK FROM THE GLOBAL WORKSHOP

RENÁN VEGA CANTOR

Education after Gaza



Education after Gaza



RENÁN VEGA CANTOR

February 2024

*English translation by Milena Rampoldi, revised by
Supriyo Chatterjee for **The Glocal
Workshop / L'Atelier Glocal / El Taller Glocal.***

*In memory of the thousands of teachers, students,
poets, artists and scientists murdered by the
genocidal State of Israel*

Contents

INTRODUCTION.....4

THE EDUCATIONAL GENOCIDE IN GAZA.....7

THE EDUCATIONAL IMPACT OF THE GENOCIDE OF THE
PALESTINIAN PEOPLE15

THE EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT OF
GENOCIDE.....20

TECHNOLOGY TRANSFORMED INTO AN INSTRUMENT OF
GENOCIDE.....30

PALESTINIAN RIGHT TO RESISTANCE..... 38

AS EDUCATORS WE MUST EXPRESS OUR MORAL
OUTRAGE..... 43

WHAT WE CAN AND MUST DO AS CRITICAL EDUCATORS.....45

"The stories reaching us from Gaza are worthy of nightmares. If we don't act now, history will judge us all. [...] Children are being killed at a frantic pace, entire families are being wiped off the map. The numbers are staggering and, with the violence not only continuing but spreading, many more children remain at great risk. These are serious violations of epic proportions."

Jason Lee, Save the Children Country Director in the occupied Palestinian territory, December 12, 2023

"We are all Palestinians now, and we must all act immediately against the real criminals and scream in the face of this monster and his barbaric acts. [...] Talk of freedom – political, academic, or social – falls on deaf ears unless or until the true criminals are called such and dealt with as such.. We in occupied Palestine — and all Palestinians — have no illusions in the poetic dreams of the triumph of the pen over the sword because the sword has cut too deeply into our flesh at the hands of an enemy who has been granted by the hypocritical international community and the destiny of imperial history to claim a monopoly on both the sword (that which acts to kill) and the pen (that which narrates the acts of killing). As intellectuals and academics working in occupied Palestine, we have to use our words, however futile they may feel in such critical times. We also have faith in the bold souls of our people, our resistance and the triumph of freedom, and in our inalienable rights. We recognize and proclaim that at this critical and urgent historical juncture, we shall overcome – justice shall overcome. We are not your passive victims; we have been murdered, maimed, and displaced by a setter state driven by an ideology of insane hatred and bloody violence, but we will not be silenced. Our resistance shows us the path forward, and we remain steadfast, and we shall triumph."

Birzeit University Union of Professors and Employees, Occupied Palestine, 'We are all Palestinians' in the face of colonial fascism, October 11, 2023

INTRODUCTION

The title of this text paraphrases *Education After Auschwitz*, the title of a radio lecture given by the German philosopher Theodor Adorno in 1966 and later published in printed form, the first lines of which read as follows: "Demanding that Auschwitz never happen again is the first requirement of all education. It precedes all others so much that I don't think I should or can justify it. I can't understand why we didn't care so much about it until today. Justifying it would be somewhat monstrous in the face of the monstrosity of what happened. [...] Discussing ideals in the field of education leads to nothing in the face of this demand: never again Auschwitz. This was the type of barbarism against which all education stands. »¹.

Unfortunately, today we face a repetition of Israel's genocidal barbarism against the Palestinian people. Of course, this is not the first time Auschwitz has repeated itself. This was already the case at the time Adorno wrote the quoted text, which, it must be stressed, presents two fundamental problems: it is extremely Eurocentric and ahistorical. We do not refer to the entire work of the German author with regard to his considerations on Nazism and genocide in Germany during the Second World War, but to what he says in the article in question, considered here as an analytical unit. Adorno is Eurocentric because his text does not

¹ Theodor W. Adorno, "Education After Auschwitz," in *Critical Models, Interventions, and Catchwords* (pp. 191-204). Columbia University Press 2005.

once mention capitalist and imperialist barbarism outside Europe, which, at the time he was writing, was already obvious and about which information was already available. We refer to events such as the Korean War (1950-1953), the Vietnam War, which was intensifying due to the US incursion during the 1960s, the Indonesian massacre (1965-1966), the ethnocide in Guatemala (which began in June 1954), all events of which Adorno was a contemporary. But its vision is also Eurocentric because it ignores the previous genocides perpetrated by the colonialist powers in America, Africa, Asia and Oceania, including that of the population of the Congo by Belgium and its King Leopold II (between the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century), that of the Armenians by the Turks between 1915 and 1918, not to mention the genocide of the indigenous peoples of the Americas after 1492. Adorno apparently considered valid the hypothesis that the genocide of the Jews - because it does not mention the genocide of gypsies, communists, homosexuals, the handicapped - is a particular event, endowed with a unique and exceptional significance.

Adorno's text presents another limitation, his ahistoricism, which consists in not explaining why specific interests came into play and why specific social, economic and political forces intervened in the case of the genocide in Germany. It is also ahistorical not to consider the same event in a broad perspective, before and after, which involves colonialism, a concept that is not mentioned once in the referenced document, as being directly responsible for various genocides over the past centuries. Thus, the genocide of the

Herero and Nama peoples in present-day Namibia, perpetrated by German colonialists in the early twentieth century, is not even mentioned.

In sum, for Adorno, the call for the non-repetition of Auschwitz seems to be limited to Western Europe, as there are no signs of concern for the rest of the world. These criticisms do not imply ignoring the contributions of the aforementioned writing, some of which serve as support for this essay, including its critique of the instrumental and mechanical rationality that led to the industrial murder of millions of human beings and the fact that it emphasizes that barbarism is a derivative of modern civilization, its productive-destructive forces, its technological products and its rational and bureaucratic order. Of course, today, in the face of the ongoing tragedy, we can say that our struggle as human beings and educators must be to stop the genocide in Gaza and ensure that it never happens again.



THE EDUCATIONAL GENOCIDE IN GAZA

Israel's crimes cover all aspects of the lives of the inhabitants of Gaza and the West Bank and, of course, education, science, culture, poetry, literature and the arts are not spared by this genocidal vocation, which should move all the inhabitants of this planet, starting with us, the educators.

In this regard, the figures of educational genocide are terrifying, as indicated by the quantitative and qualitative data which, of course, cannot account for the human, physical and psychological drama faced by teachers and students in the region of historic Palestine. In the context of the Israeli genocide of the Palestinians, it should be pointed out that it is at the same time a memocide, an

infanticide, a juvenile and a femicide, one of its main objectives being, in addition to killing human beings, to destroy their cultural values and their educational system, all with the aim of making life in Gaza impossible.

To begin with, it should be recalled that, despite the blockades, systematic assassinations and continuous bombardments that Gaza has endured for several decades, the level of education of its population is astonishing, with a low illiteracy rate (0 or 2% depending on the sources). Gaza has one of the highest enrolment rates in the world, with 95% of children attending basic education.

In the midst of periodic closures, due to the Israeli bombing cycle, schools, universities and cultural centers have resumed their activities quickly, with more vigor and energy, in order to recover what they lose with each new incursion by the Israeli army, which often ravages cultural and educational property. This will now be more difficult and delayed, almost impossible, due to the destruction of educational, health and residential infrastructure in Gaza.

The results of Israel's new criminal wave left 625,000 students out of school in Gaza overnight; 90,000 university students out of school; 60% of schools and 90% of universities destroyed; bookstores and libraries razed to the ground; between 7 October and 15 January 2024, the Israeli army killed 94 university professors; more than fifty scientists, poets, and researchers were also premeditatedly murdered.

Since the beginning of the direct aggression, some 95 schools and university buildings in Gaza have been totally destroyed and another 295 partially **destroyed**; 4,300 students and 231 teachers and basic education workers were killed in the first three months of Israel's criminal attack. In addition, 7,259 students and 619 teachers were injured. A total of 390 educational institutions, including schools and universities, were destroyed in the first 100 days of Israel's brutal aggression. The destruction of schools is a priority goal for Israel, which is why Israel has refused to sign (with the US) the [Safe Schools Declaration](#), endorsed by 120 countries.

In times of bombing, schools become shelters and educational activities cease. This is what happened in Gaza, with the aggravating circumstance that schools are also bombed with people taking refuge there, thinking that these schools are safe places.

While in June 2022 the NGO *Save the Children* reported that 80% of Gaza's children lived in a permanent state of sadness, depression and suffering due to violence and poverty, this percentage has now reached the level of 100%.

The one million children who survive in the Gaza Strip have been exposed to bombardment during five wars of aggression waged by Israel: 2008, 2012, 2014, 2021 and 2023-2024. Let's imagine for a moment the brutal impact of the bombings on children's lives. Only one testimony helps us understand, that of Dana Shamiya, 11, who wrote a [moving letter](#) to her mother at the beginning of the bombing: "Everything is scary and frightening. It was my birthday and I didn't blow out the candles. I didn't get any gifts or anything.

I miss my father and my siblings. I feel like I'm in the throes of the flames. I almost went crazy, my God." »

This is just one of the thousands of children who suffer psychological trauma as a direct result of the war they carry and live with in their fragile bodies and tender minds: depression, anxiety, fear, psychological disorders, loneliness, helplessness and, in the future, a fervent desire for revenge.

This last point is not surprising, because the destruction of educational infrastructure was an important part of the effects of the war campaign, but also the destruction of the educational, cultural and scientific fabric. All this has clear objectives and is not just the result of “collateral damage”: the objective is to eliminate anything that could represent a glimmer of thought and resistance, plunging the people of Gaza into absolute ignorance and thus denying them any chance of building up a decent future.

On 17 January 2024, the Israeli armed forces blasted down the main building of Al-Israa University in Gaza City in one of the most horrific scenes in education, which must be enshrined in the universal history of cultural genocide. This atrocious destruction was recorded on video and photo, as a snapshot of the triumph of barbarism and the apotheosis of the fascist cry “Death to intelligence! ». Israel also blew up the building housing Gaza's only teaching hospital.



To get out of the cold and lifeless statistics, let's say that among the murdered students is [Al-Shaima Akram Saidam](#), the student who scored the highest on the high school exams in Palestine in 2023, who was crushed, along with his family, by an Israeli invading army “smart bomb” dropped on a refugee camp on 16 October 2023. In July, when she learned that she had scored high, a party was held, during which her loved ones celebrated their joy at having succeeded in her studies by singing and drumming. On that occasion, she herself had declared: "even during the [Israeli] attacks, I never stopped studying", while caressing the flowers that had been offered to her. In particular, she was planning to become an English

translator and study at the Islamic University of Gaza, whose building was destroyed by the Israeli troops.



Al-Shaima Akram Saidam, killed by Israel

Israel's cultural genocide is expressed by a young graduate, Eman Alhaj, 22, who has never left Gaza and has always lived in this great prison. She [tells her story](#): “I finished my degree a few months ago, I wanted to do a postgraduate degree, but my university was bombed. Israel has reduced my plans to ashes. Everything has disappeared [...] My university, my campus, my memories. I think Israel is doing all this consciously: it wants to attack our right to go to school, which is ultimately our right to believe in the future. I despair while I am experiencing all this. And I’m terrified. Tanks

surround us, from north to south, and no place is safe. I may die the moment we are talking.”

Israel intends to destroy, once and for all, two things vital for any society and any human group: its history and its memory [and there, it carries out a memoricide, with the destruction of museums, libraries, universities, cultural centers, historical archives; and the future, because by destroying all the material and spiritual framework that makes possible the functioning of any educational system, it tries to leave Palestinians without a present and without a future.

For many Palestinians in Gaza, study was the only window open to the world and that window has now been destroyed. It remains for them, if they can, to leave their territory, what Israel wants, or to join the resistance against the occupiers, which most of them will do, after the destruction of what little remains in the prison where they live on a daily basis. And what else can they do, if during previous Israeli offensives, students and teachers could resume classes a few weeks later, today this is impossible due to the destruction of educational and civilian infrastructure in general.

Under these conditions, “it is very problematic to evoke the possibility of building peace in the region through the destruction of schools and cultural centers, and the killing of students, teachers and their families. It is very difficult to think that a harmonious society can be forged from the daily lives of Palestinian children,

victims of countless injustices as part of a *hidden agenda* they live daily outside of schools².”



² Mauro Jarquín Ramírez, "[Gaza: con escuelas en ruinas, jamás habrá paz](#)", *La Jornada*, 19 January 2024

THE EDUCATIONAL IMPACT OF THE GENOCIDE OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

We, the educators of the world, must update Theodor Adorno's concern, by affirming that the genocide of the Second World War - which is not synonymous with the Holocaust, because it was broader than the persecution of Jews - symbolized by Auschwitz or the Warsaw Ghetto, was repeated several times after 1945 and is repeated in front of our eyes today. Yes, we are witnessing a new genocide live, transmitted by the human beings who undergo it and endure it. In this respect, there is a difference from what happened 80 years ago: the German Nazis never wanted to show genocide, they did not talk about it, on the contrary, they hid it and denied it. The scale of the crimes committed could only be established when the war ended and concentration camps and thousands of starving survivors were found. It could become a pretext or justification to make people at the time, in the United States and elsewhere in the world, say that they knew nothing about what was happening.

Today, things are completely different, as the images of the extermination of the Palestinian people have been seen in every corner of the world. And the criminal ideologues of the Nazi-Zionist state of Israel no longer hide it; on the contrary, they rejoice in the death and suffering of the Palestinians. They flaunt, with impunity, their racist and contemptuous conceptions of Palestinians and Arabs in an attempt to justify their crimes. The genocide is not over, it is not recent, it has been going on for decades, but it has intensified over the last three months. Even

Hitler's hordes did not dare bomb the Warsaw Ghetto, unlike Israel's Nazi-Zionists who today mercilessly bomb the inhabitants of the Gaza Ghetto, the largest open-air prison on the planet. And unlike Auschwitz, this is an ongoing event that can and must be stopped.

The educators of the world cannot remain indifferent or silent in the face of the ongoing genocide, because what is happening in Palestine directly challenges us about our role in society, especially if we say speak as critical, thoughtful teachers and active political subjects who face the great problems of our time, and the main one right now, because of its scale and urgency, is the genocide in Palestine. From this perspective, we support this suggestion: “Pedagogy can be approached as a political and moral discourse that allows students to link learning to social change, acquisition of knowledge and engagement in public life with the knowledge gained in the classroom. This task requires educators not to be silent about the truth in the face of power, to show their moral courage and to take the risks related to their role as intellectuals speaking out in public³.”

³ Henry Giroux, *La guerra del neoliberalismo contra la educación superior*, Herder, Madrid, 2019, p. 93. Read in French [The Language of Neoliberal Education](#)

For this reason, we must integrate into our daily activities and educational practices crucial themes concerning the past, present and possible futures, such as what is happening in Palestine, a clear expression of the injustices and inequalities of actually existing capitalism. In this direction, some questions become urgent for educational and pedagogical reflection.

How and for what reasons do we refuse to face up to and confront the genocide of the Palestinians? Why is Israel's systematic killing of children and youth legitimized in the name of its alleged right to self-defense? Why is Palestinian life worthless and can it be massacred on a daily basis? What do we think and feel when we contemplate the images of Palestinian children and women crushed by “smart bombs” *Made in USA* or Germany? How can we remain indifferent to the extreme dehumanization that Israel has achieved, by displacing two million people from their own territories and bombing them as they are expelled, without them having the slightest chance to defend themselves? What has become of Europe's alleged sensitivity to the Nazi genocide, reproduced today by Israel's new Nazis, which it supports militarily, financially, culturally and diplomatically? How can it be explained that the State of Israel and a large part of its society, which claims to be the heir to the Jewish holocaust of the Second World War, is carrying out the holocaust of the Palestinian people with staggering impunity? What interests lie behind the unconditional support of the imperialist West for the massacre of thousands of human beings in Gaza and the West Bank? Why can a small imperialist enclave in West Asia, the Zionist state of Israel, with only nine million

inhabitants, kill, destroy, crush the Palestinians whenever it wants to do so? How could this artificial country called Israel arm itself with atomic bombs and endanger all humanity? What do the current events in Palestine tell us about the history of colonialism and imperialism in Europe and the USA? How is it possible that in several European countries (including England, France and Germany), support for Palestinians and denunciation of the genocide of the State of Israel has been sanctioned as a crime and the use of flags or symbols referring to Palestine has been criminalized? What gives Israel the right to take barbarism to levels that bring humanity back to the worst moments of Nazi crime? Why the double talk of the imperialist West towards Russia and Israel, the former being blocked and sanctioned, while the latter enjoys unconditional support? What is the point of continuing human rights education if criminal impunity prevails in Palestine, with the direct participation of countries that claim to be "democratic" and beacons of freedom in the world, such as the United States or those of the European Union? How can we explain to today's children and young people that the values of inhumanity displayed by Israel (state terrorism, ethnic cleansing, massacre of defenseless people, destruction of hospitals and schools, torture, crushing of children, starvation, pollution of water for daily use...) which are exalted as great achievements of the "only democracy in the Middle East", should not be normalized or forgotten? How can we not see in what is happening in Palestine, with its unprecedented levels of death and destruction, a foretaste of what awaits most people on the planet, if we do nothing to stop

it? Why this cult of technology in the service of death and pain with the praise of artificial intelligence, supersonic planes that drop hundreds of one-ton “smart bombs” on urban areas every day? Why is the Palestinian people's right to resistance denied and their fighters struggling for their national liberation branded as terrorists? What is the purpose of the existence of the U.N. or the International Court of Justice (ICJ), if not to be the vehicles of genocide and crime of the US, Israel and the European Union?

These and many other questions should fuel our educational activities if we continue to believe that education has a role to play in solving the problems of our time and our world, and if we believe that teachers, as political subjects, should become the critical consciousness of our time, especially at a time when, as Angela Davis said, “the Palestinian issue has become a moral test for the world.”

Suffice it to say that it is clear that the existence of double standards lays bare the criminal hypocrisy of Israel and the imperialist West, for which some genocides are important and others are not, and for which some deaths are worth more than others. There is a masterful answer, that of the Martinican poet Aimé Césaire, who, alluding to the racism inherent in colonialism, said: *"Yes, it would be worthwhile to study, clinically, in detail, the marches of Hitler and Hitlerism and to reveal to the very distinguished, very humanist, very Christian bourgeois of the twentieth century that without his being aware of it, he has a Hitler inside him, that Hitler inhabits him, that Hitler is his demon, that if he rails against him, he is being inconsistent and that, at bottom, what he cannot forgive Hitler*

for is not crime in itself, the crime against man, it is not the humiliation of man as such, it is the crime against the white man, the humiliation of the white man, and the fact that he applied to Europe colonialist procedures which until then had been reserved exclusively for the Arabs of Algeria, the coolies of India, and the blacks of Africa.’ ([Speech on Colonialism](#), 1950/1955)



THE EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT OF GENOCIDE

When speaking about education after Auschwitz, Adorno includes two main aspects: “on the one hand, education in childhood, especially early childhood; on the other hand, general education that creates a spiritual, cultural and social climate that does not

allow for repetition, a climate in which the motives that led to the horror become somewhat conscious.”

Starting from these assumptions, we can examine the educational impact of the genocide in Palestine, which is an almost word-for-word replica of Auschwitz, taking into account, of course, the different historical contexts in which each of the two genocides occurs.

With regard to early childhood, it must be noted that the education given to the Israeli children aims to prepare them mentally, ideologically, culturally, psychologically and politically for the genocide of the Palestinians. And, without going into the details of the characteristics of this education, some facts broadcast from Israel, with approval when they should be shameful, are very revealing. Let's name just two.

On the one hand, we can see and hear with dismay children under the age of ten singing a war anthem glorifying the IDF (Israel Defense Forces) and calling for the extermination of the Palestinians, the expulsion of their lands, colonization and appropriation by the Zionist invaders. ~~His~~ Its words, which testify to the terrible sense of inhumanity achieved by the assassins of the State of Israel, say, among other “gratifying things”, the following:

*We are the children
of the victory generation Autumn
night falls on Gaza
beach
Destruction of bombing*

planes
Here, the IDF
crosses the border [...]
Within a year,
We will complete them all
and we will go back
to plowing our fields and
we will take care
of them all.
[...] Love is sanctified
in blood [...]
Today our soul
is also a warrior
One people
One people
Forever [...]
We will show the
world
how we destroy
our enemies today [...]
Love is sanctified
in blood⁴.

The lyrics of this warlike and macabre anthem are sufficiently illustrative, and even more shocking if one takes into account the

⁴ <https://piensachile.com/2023/12/08/ninos-israelies-cantan-la-aniquilacion-de-gaza-cancion-genocida-en-israel/>

fact that it is massively broadcast at the very moment when the “heroic” Israeli troops are mercilessly bombing Palestinians, including their newborns. Such genocidal education explains why children trained in Israel, and then grown up, become murderers of Palestinians, starting with the children of Gaza.



The second example is that of Israeli children who “lovingly” sign the bombs that the army is about to drop on unarmed people. This image dates back to 2006, during the Israeli aggression against Lebanon. And recently, in a television program in Israel, exclusively aimed at children to indoctrinate them on the war of aggression against Gaza, their support is exalted and a tank is displayed with drawings of children, in order to show how children support the Zionist army. It is clear that with this murderous logic prevalent among children, there is little hope that the citizens of Israel can be expected to be peaceful and benevolent towards the Palestinians.



And we don't speculate on what might happen, but we have concrete and terrible evidence of violence committed by Israeli children against Palestinians, children and adults. In 2003, in Hebron, this is what happened, as told by an Israeli soldier: “A charming little boy who regularly went to our post decided that he did not like Palestinians passing under his windows, so he *picked up a brick and threw it at the girl's head. Children do what they want. But no one does anything. No one cares. Later on, the parents of the boy simply celebrated the event. Parents encourage their children to behave in this way.* There have been many cases like this. Jewish children of eleven or twelve years

old who beat Palestinians and whose parents come to help them, excite the dogs so that they attack them⁵."

And, on the other hand, in the case of Palestinian children, who directly suffer the severity of Israeli bombing, who endure the destruction of their homes, who listen day and night to the thunder of planes and bombs that shatter everything they find and kill their parents, siblings, friends and often infants, and many of those who survive are crippled because these devices take away part of their bodies: What future awaits the children who remain alive, sometimes orphans and without families to accompany them, because Israel eliminates entire families of several generations (often 40 people from the same family are killed in the bombings)? It is obvious that a large part of them will join the armed resistance that courageously confronts the occupiers. What future can Gaza's children have, after suffering physical and mental violence that leaves lifelong scars, if not to direct their pain against Israel's colonialists.

⁵ Breaking the Silence, [*Israeli soldier testimonies 2000-2010*](#)



Excerpt from the documentary *[Born in Gaza](#)*

And to children in the rest of the world, especially those in the South, educators should show the impact of the genocidal war, with the harsh images of the massacred children, but also their images of resistance and hope, which they sometimes capture in their drawings. These children, born on the threshold of hell, are featured in the documentary film entitled "[Born in Gaza](#)" and produced by journalist Hernán Zin. This film should be screened right now in every school in the world, including those in Israel - even if the Zionist regime does not allow it. This film is the testimony of the children who suffer and the heroes of Gaza who endure and survive the bombings, starting with Israel's attacks in 2014, in which 2,300 Palestinians, including 500 children, were killed.

Mexican journalist Hermann Bellinghausen of the newspaper “*La Jornada*” comments as follows: “In Gaza, where the sea, desert and tunnels lead nowhere, the population is trapped in the largest concentration camp in the world, and perhaps in history. The children who turn to Zin's camera, wounded in body and mind, scarred by devastating feelings, have lost friends, brothers, uncles or are orphans, and tell their story itinerantly, because in Gaza there seems to be nowhere to sit or lie, except in ruins. [Here we played. Here, we were sleeping. Here, we have eaten. Here, we studied. Here, we were treated. Here, we were making bread. The journey of Hernán Zin, director and photographer, passes through concrete blocks, broken bricks, columns, collapsed roofs, large holes in the walls, craters in the ground, incessant wasteland, twisted rods, broken streets, dust. Ruins that betray the end of a world⁶”.

⁶ Hermann Bellinghausen, " [*Nacidos en la antesala del infierno*](#)", *La Jornada*, 20 October 2023



Regarding the second aspect mentioned by Adorno, namely a general climate of awareness so that Auschwitz does not repeat itself, we can say that in Israel, the USA and the European Union, the conditions for such a repetition are actually created, and this is what we see today when we look at the genocide in Gaza, which can be explained if we take into account the fact that it is based on aspects that are repeated *ad nauseam*. Among these aspects, it is worth mentioning some of the most important ones: Israel embodies civilization, light, progress, while the Arabs and Palestinians are barbarism, darkness, savagery, which makes the former superior and gives them the prerogative to eliminate the others; these others, in the colonial logic that comes from Europe and the United States, are animals, beasts, who must be eliminated from the face of the earth in order to not spoil the beautiful garden of order and prosperity that Israel represents on Palestinian lands;

instead of bringing education, health, culture to the peoples of the South of the world, Israel and the imperialist powers bring arms, war, death to maintain planetary injustice and inequality; the American-style world order exalts war and the destruction of “rogue countries” (some USAmerican political scientists call them “shithole countries”) that refuse to bow to the imperialist order, as we have seen during the last decades in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Syria and Palestine.

Two cases are enough to illustrate why Auschwitz is reproduced daily in Israel and forms the ideological basis of the genocide in Gaza. The first example is that of an Israeli government minister, Bezalel Smotrich, who described Palestinians as mosquitoes, saying that this meant the following, in terms of the genocidal logic of yesterday's Auschwitz and today's Auschwitz in Gaza: “This is the mosquito problem. If you crush mosquitoes and maybe touch 99, it's the number 100, which you didn't crush, that will kill you. The real solution is to drain the swamp,” and “when asked if it could mean the eradication of entire families with women and children, Smotrich replied, ‘War is war.’”

⁷ Quoted in Henry Giroux, [*“War in Gaza: killing children and the burden of conscience”*](#), *Znet*, 10 December 2023.



The second is that of Israeli journalist Shimon Riklin, who bluntly stated that he was “in favor of war crimes” in the Gaza Strip and cynically stated [on a TV show](#): **“Without witnessing destruction of homes in Gaza, I am unable to find rest.”** He added that he wanted the Israeli army to destroy all houses and buildings in Gaza so that residents could not return.

With this type of apology for genocide and ethnic cleansing by the spokesmen and ideologues of the State of Israel, it is obvious that the genocidal spirit of Auschwitz, which was of such concern to Theodor Adorno, has once again sprouted in Israel, where the industrial extermination of human beings, the Palestinians, is justified, just as it was in Hitler's Germany.

TECHNOLOGY TRANSFORMED INTO AN INSTRUMENT OF GENOCIDE

A central aspect of the analysis of genocide is to consider the role played by technology, based on instrumental reason and bureaucratic coldness, for which killing human beings ends up being a profitable job that must be carried out with the utmost precision and without batting an eye. And this question is crucial, to reflect on the impact of new technologies on education, where we suffer, in an accentuated way after the pandemic, the dictatorship of digital and artificial intelligence, to remember how these technologies are an instrument of war and death, which is often forgotten.

Adorno helps highlight the role of technology in instrumentalizing genocide. In this context, he affirms: "In the current relationship with technology, there is something excessive, irrational, pathogenic. This something is related to the technological veil. We tend to take technology for the thing itself, to consider it as an autonomous end, a force with its own being, and therefore we tend to forget that it is an extension of the human arm. The means - and technology is a set of means for the self-preservation of the human species - are fetishized because the ends - a dignified human life - have been veiled and expelled from human consciousness. [...] We do not know precisely how the fetishism of technology takes hold of the psychology of individuals, where the threshold lies between a rational relationship to technology and this overvaluation that ultimately leads to *“those who plan a system of trains to take victims to*

Auschwitz smoothly and as quickly as possible, forget the fate that awaits them there”.

The author mentions, by way of example, only the system of trains that quickly led prisoners to the slaughterhouse, but of course other technical aspects were involved, such as those that refer to the very administrative organization of the concentration camps, the internal division of labor, biological experiments on prisoners, the use of instruments of torture and death (such as gas chambers), the organization of teams led by the best scientists and technicians in research aimed at destroying the human being..... Today, we have all this, multiplied exponentially by the remarkable technological developments that have taken place over the last sixty years, when Adorno wrote the text we are commenting on.

Consequently, Nazi Germany was technologically ahead of its time - and this is also the reason why genocide cannot be separated from technical modernity - and today Israel prides itself on being a bastion of technological developments not only in the Arab world but at an international level. Its propagandists strive to convince us of its important technological contributions. Thus, for example, a Zionist State [propaganda course](#) for its students traveling abroad states the following:

“Without Israel, you would never be able to get up in the morning, because the chip on your mobile phone that serves as an alarm is produced in Israel. You could not find the way to work, because the WAZE app is an Israeli product, and you would get lost on your way. And if you did (at work), you wouldn't have a computer because Intel produces its chips in Israel, and your account

would be hacked because cybersecurity is made in Israel. You couldn't even eat cucumbers, because Israel invented the irrigation systems that grow them.”



Israel's 'soft' killers bomb and kill the children in Gaza

Paraphrasing this propagandistic verbiage that devotes a fetishistic cult to technology, we can mention other things, which Zionist propaganda is careful not to mention, and which highlight the use of modern technology in the service of death and destruction: without Israel and the United States, the F-15 and F-16 planes would not fly over Gaza to drop bombs weighing up to two thousand kilos that destroy everything in their path; without Israel, the inhabitants of Gaza and of the West Bank would not have had an infernal wall on their territory, equipped with sophisticated systems of control, surveillance and repression; without Israel, with its "smart" bombs, equipped with sensors and chips, 26,000 people would not have been killed to date in this latest genocidal offensive;

without Israel and the military deployment of artificial intelligence, 90% of Gaza's homes would not have been bombed and destroyed, attacked on the basis of “military objectives” dictated by algorithms, which “order” bomb every place where there is a “ Hamas inhabitant”; without Israel and its killer drones, remotely controlled from neat and high-tech laboratories, there would be no daily assassinations of those whom Israel considers its enemies and on whom it launches missiles that annihilate homes and their inhabitants; without Israel and its technological applications, water would not be stolen from the Palestinians to irrigate the agriculture of the occupying settlers; without Israel and its use of white phosphorus in its guided projectiles “intelligently”, Palestinian children, women and men would not be burned to death, and their land, water and crops would not be destroyed; without Israel, its state-of-the-art backhoes would not demolish Palestinian homes so that Zionist settlers could steal their land; without Israel, the hundred or so journalists present in Gaza over the past four months would not have been murdered with extreme precision, killed either by bombs or by snipers using sophisticated and ultramodern weapons.....



What Theodor Adorno says about the drivers of the death trains, we can also say about the members of the Israeli Defense Forces (Hebrew acronym: Tzahal). The leaders of the State of Israel and its army boast of the professionalism and training of the members of this army, with university studies and even masters and doctorates. These men and women - since Israel prides itself on having the most feminist army in the world - with university degrees, studies abroad, who speak several languages, who know nothing about Palestinians (whom they have learned to consider animals, cockroaches, mosquitoes, vermin and other highly human-qualifiers) are the ones who fly the planes from which 1,000-kilogram bombs are dropped with impunity, killing Palestinians by the thousands. It is these same killer-soldiers who drive the tanks with which Gaza's homes and crops are razed to the ground and

Palestinians, including children, are mercilessly crushed. It is these same soldier-killers who plant the explosives that blow up schools, hospitals and universities. In Israel, the industry of death and bureaucratic rationalization has become more sophisticated than ever before in Nazi Germany.

We must also put the fact into brackets according to which these killers are supported by the Israeli academic world. Thus, a social scientist and university professor, geographer to be precise, named Arnon Soffer, openly praised the murder of Palestinians, stressing the importance of ensuring the succession of Zionist assassins: "[...] when 2.5 million people live in an isolated Gaza, it will be a human catastrophe. These people will become even more ferocious animals, and this with the help of a senseless Islam. The tension at the border will be appalling. It's going to be a terrible war. So if we want to stay alive, we're going to have to kill and kill and kill. All day, every day. [...] If we don't, we will cease to exist. The only thing that worries me is how to ensure that the men, young and old, who will be responsible for these murders can return home to their families and behave like normal human beings. ” »⁸

Well, these boys and girls who normally return to their families, and live a “normal and comfortable” life in their homes, are the same ones who murder and slaughter Palestinians and many of them even brag about their crimes and show the deadly technologies they use, to confirm that the aforementioned genocidal geographer's

⁸ [ONE on ONE: It's the Demography, Stupid](#) , Interview with the *Jerusalem Post*, 20 May 2004

announcement has been confirmed. Of course, these assassins - like the designers of the rail system mentioned by Adorno - have no level of consciousness, with a few honorable exceptions. Of course, it must be clarified that these are the "manual" killers, the executioners, but the real criminals and genocidaires are the "intellectuals" who program the assassinations from their comfortable chairs and offices of civil and military bureaucrats of the Zionist State of Israel.

On the other hand, Adorno fails to mention an element that cannot go unnoticed because of its topicality in Israel, namely the limits of technology. Despite its sophisticated technological warfare apparatus, Israel was unable to prevent Hamas attacks on 7 October 2023, when the Palestinian movement used basic technologies to ridicule the IDF. For months, the fighters prepared for the operation, never using a mobile phone, computer or any other digital means likely to leave a virtual footprint traceable by the Israeli communication system. Patiently, by word of mouth, messages and orders were given and until the day of the assault, on a Saturday, bicycles and paragliders were used to enter Israeli territory (or rather, stolen by Israel) and attack an Israeli military stronghold, in which hundreds of soldiers and settlers (who are paramilitaries) were killed and others were taken hostage. This shows that the technology of war, with its cult of death and destruction, is far from omnipotent and cannot stop the Palestinians' desire for struggle, independence and national liberation.



Cause and Effect, by Mikail Çiftçi

PALESTINIAN RIGHT TO RESISTANCE

The right to resistance exists for Palestinians and for all human beings confronted with capitalism and imperialism. For Palestinians, the main reason is that they are a people under colonial rule and even the fundamental norms of international law establish as legitimate the right of resistance against the colonial occupiers, in this case against Israel. This is a fundamental premise for understanding the heart of the problem of the Palestinian struggle, because it is they who are attacked and **are** not the aggressors. This is the image that Israel has always sold, based on biblical fictions,

and which it ratified after 7 October, when it claims to have been attacked by terrorists and that its territorial sovereignty has been violated by Hamas commandos. It is as if the story began that day and the Zionist aggression against the Palestinians, which has lasted for more than a century, does not continue.

However, things are clear. Israel is a colonial occupier that oppresses, persecutes, massacres, discriminates, bestializes Palestinians and Palestinians have the right to resist the Zionist occupiers, and to resist by any means possible, including armed struggle. This is a right that no one can take away from them and this is what Hamas did in its extraordinary action on 7 October. The strategic importance of what happened that day lies in the fact that it put the existence of Palestine and the Palestinians back in the spotlight, to remind us that what is happening there is a colonial problem, like the one that the peoples of Africa, Asia and America have endured and which has given rise to important national liberation struggles.

With the complicity of the United States and the European Union, bastions of white colonialism-of occupation in recent centuries, Israel has established itself as the last bastion of Western colonialist domination, with the same racist methods of alleged moral and civilizational superiority.

In the same vein, it is Israeli colonialists and their sponsors in Europe and the US who label Palestinians and their supporters as terrorists and who, in the name of so-called democracy, freedom and human rights, support Israel's state terrorism and its genocidal

practices. Ultimately, this is aimed at legitimizing the Zionist occupiers and ignoring the Palestinians' historical and political right to self-determination. Finally, the proclaimed war on terrorism is the justification for imperialist domination, of which Israel is one of the main supporters.

This indicates that we educators must understand the importance of language and history so as not to fall into the traps and fallacies of the propaganda of the lying Western media, which are nothing else than the mouthpiece of Israel and its crimes. The legitimate struggle of the Palestinians for their national liberation is not terrorism, just as what Israel, the US and the European Union are doing by attacking, for example, the Houthis in Yemen, the only ones to carry out concrete actions to hit Israel and the Western world where it hurts the most, in their trade and flow of goods, is terrorism.

In this context, it is not a war between Israel and Hamas, as is uncritically repeated, but a brutal genocidal aggression on the part of Israel, which is not the product of a conflict between the State of Israel and the Arab world in general, but a typical colonial action in which the occupiers often massacre the colonized peoples, as the Europeans have done in the four corners of the globe over the last five centuries.

Under these conditions, the fact that Israel has the right to exist and defend itself is a fallacy that serves to present it as a poor victim who suffers aggression from its enemies in the Arab world in general and the Palestinians in particular. No, what Israel is doing

is not self-defense, it is brutal genocidal aggression, and it is the Palestinians who have the right to defend themselves. As Norman Finkelstein rightly points out, “Israel cannot claim a right to self-defense if the exercise of this right can be attributed to an unjust or illegal occupation or the denial of a right to self-determination⁹.”

The ethereal idea of a nebulous peace sought by Israel, the US and the European Union, which implies the unconditional capitulation of the Palestinians, as they are today shamefully represented by the Palestinian National Authority in the West Bank, must also be questioned, for such a peace is nothing but an abject submission to Israel's colonial power, quite in the style of the lackeys that Europe has always had in the colonized territories. It is important to emphasize this point in the field of education, as it highlights the relationship between peace and justice, a fundamental relationship in any emancipatory educational project. In this sense, Paulo Freire's words take on great value:

“From the anonymous, the suffering, the exploited, I have learned that peace is fundamental, indispensable. But peace requires fighting for it. Peace grows and strengthens in and through the overcoming of perverse social realities. Peace is built in the relentless construction of social justice. That is why I do not believe in any effort, even if it is called 'peace education', which, instead of

⁹ Norman Finkelstein, [*Gaza. Una investigación sobre su martirio*](#), Siglo XXI Editores, Madrid, 2019, p. 304.

revealing the injustices of the world, makes them opaque and tries to make their victims myopic”¹⁰.

Palestinian resistance is welcome and should be viewed by critical and thoughtful educators around the world as an antidote to the conformity, passivity and resignation being so prevalent in our epoch. If the people of Gaza face Israel heroically and lonely, it is “to proclaim, first to themselves and then to the whole world, that whatever the price to pay, whatever the infinite sacrifice, the people of Palestine still live. *We existed, we exist, and we shall exist!*”¹¹.

This reminds us of the importance of dignity, the fundamental value of all critical and emancipatory education. The dignity of the Palestinians must be exalted, for “in a cruel world, full of atrocities and selfish acts, it is possible to find men and women who think and act honorably, and people who believe in the human capacity to build a better and more just world. These men and women set out to dismantle established concepts, destroying the criminal and elitist prejudices of white supremacy [...]”¹².

¹⁰ Quoted by Cécile Barbeito and Georgina Casas in “[Abordar el conflicto Israel-Palestina en las aulas](#)”, *El Diario de la Educación*, 7 January 2024.

¹¹ N. Finkelstein, *op. cit.* p. 303.

¹² Alipio Casali and Ana María Araujo Freyre, “Peter McLaren, el disenso creativo”, in Luis Huerta-Charles and Marc Pruyn, [De la pedagogía crítica a la pedagogía de la Revolución. Ensayos para Comprender a Peter McLaren](#), Siglo XXI Editores, Mexico City, 2007, p. 73.

AS EDUCATORS WE MUST EXPRESS OUR MORAL OUTRAGE

In the classroom and wherever we are, we teachers must express our moral outrage at the genocide perpetrated by Israel, in the face of which we cannot remain silent, and at the disinformation and lies propagated by the lying media around the world, in the service of the Zionists. We must raise our voices, bringing elements of philosophical, ethical, historical and political reflection that will allow children and young people to understand the extent of the crimes committed in Palestine, so that they can train as free and conscious subjects and not be indifferent to the pain and suffering of millions of human beings, who are crushed by a powerful war machine manufactured in the West and used to maintain the domination of imperialism in a region rich in hydrocarbons and strategic for world trade.

In this regard, it is necessary to present to our students, families and friends the conceptual overview that allows us to understand what is happening in Gaza, as a way to approach the understanding of Israel's criminality. For this reason, we must clarify the meaning and scope of the terms genocide, ethnic cleansing, Zionism, state terrorism, colonialism, imperialism, among the most important. It is not a matter of deploying sophisticated theoretical analysis, but of providing basic tools for understanding the historical process that can contribute to discerning the interests at stake in the massacre of the Palestinians and the reasons behind the unlimited

support of the imperial West for Israel, represented by the US and the European Union.

Critical pedagogy must be committed to uncovering the multiple mechanisms that maintain and reproduce injustice, oppression, racism and inequality in the world, of which Gaza is a micro-laboratory. A critical pedagogy must oppose the pedagogy of fear and death embodied by the State of Israel and a large part of its citizens and expressed loud and clear by its ideologues, inside and outside Israel. Indeed, if Israel's armed forces and its settlers are shooting at civilians, murdering and torturing Hamas or Hezbollah fighters, destroying the homes of ordinary people, killing the domestic animals of Gazans, polluting the soil and water of the region, it is because they have an “educational” mission: to terrorize the population into submission and accepting Israel's colonial domination. This is justified by the *New York Times* columnist, the pro-Zionist Tomas Friedman, who says that Israel acts on the basis of a solid educational criterion: “Trying to ‘educate’ Hamas, causing a large number of deaths among its militants and great pain among the population of Gaza”¹³.

¹³ Quoted in Noam Chomsky and Ilan Pappé, *Gaza in Crisis*, Editorial Taurus, Madrid, 2011, p. 116.



WHAT WE CAN AND MUST DO AS CRITICAL EDUCATORS

Faced with the terrible picture described above, one can think that we can do nothing and that we must let the Palestinians continue to be massacred and expelled from the few territories that remain to them. We have a lot to do, in the midst of all the constraints we face on a daily basis.

First of all, there is the work of denouncing and raising awareness of the genocide in Gaza and its direct leaders: Israel, the United States, the European Union, as well as the accomplices of the suffering of the Palestinian people, embodied by all the monarchies

and corrupt governments of the Arab world (including Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, Qatar...). In the face of genocide, we cannot remain silent, and our cry of denunciation must not be stifled, because a critical pedagogy is not afraid to call a cat a cat, to speak of genocide and to point the finger at genocidaires. As part of the denunciation, we must expose the disinformation media that openly operate in Israel's service, to wash its genocidal face and justify its crimes. In Colombia, traditional media have this feature, more accentuated and more blatant in a medium like "*Semana*" magazine, owned by Jewish and Zionist banker Jaime Gilinski Bacal, Colombia's second richest [valued at \$5.5 billion by Forbes in 2024].

An important element of our educational work is to position what is happening in Palestine as a *historical crime*, a central concept to emphasize that what Israel is doing is not just another war crime, but is of a different nature, it is a crime against humanity, which must remain in the memory of human beings, this generation and future generations as an incomparable, inadmissible event, and which must be placed on the same level as the Nazi genocide or what happened in Rwanda in 1994. Viewing it as a historical crime is essential to end, once and for all, the false image of Israel as a victim, which lies behind the Zionist narrative about the Holocaust. In this sense, to consider the genocide of Israel as a historical crime means to visualize the Zionist regime as a social aberration that reached the worst levels of Nazi Germany and to condemn and denounce it forever, so that its existence is recorded as a mark of opprobrium and an emblem of the genocidal action of European

colonialism. There will be a day when the dark history of the martyrdom of Gaza and the crimes of Gaza will seem incredible to us and, as teachers, we must help to make this moment happen as soon as possible.

Second, we must remember the recent historical example of how apartheid in South Africa, a regime similar to, and supported by, Israel, was defeated. This defeat was made possible by an international campaign of boycott and sabotage of everything related to this opprobrious apartheid system. The same can and should be done against Israel, a sabotage of its products and brands, as well as those of the US and the European Union that support the genocide of the Palestinian people. As part of Israel's isolation, pressure must be put on governments to end military, technological, educational and cultural agreements with Israel and to sever diplomatic and other relations with the Zionist regime, as Bolivia has already done in an exemplary and dignified manner. In the case of Colombia, the government of Gustavo Petro must be required to break all the military agreements that have made our country the Israel of South America. As for universities, they must suspend the academic agreements and contracts they have with Israeli universities and prohibit the entry of academics from the Zionist state. The same must be done with the artists and sportsmen of Israel, who are propagandists of the genocide.

Third, as critical educators, we need to look at the history of the Palestinian people, their centuries-long struggle to preserve their existence, and encourage them to learn about it, in order to promote and defend their just struggle. It is appropriate to place

this story in the broader context of colonialism, one of the last representatives of which is Israel, in order to recall the anti-colonial liberation struggles that destroyed the great European empires. All the more so at a time in history when European domination of the world, begun on 12 October 1492, is in the process of irrevocably declining.

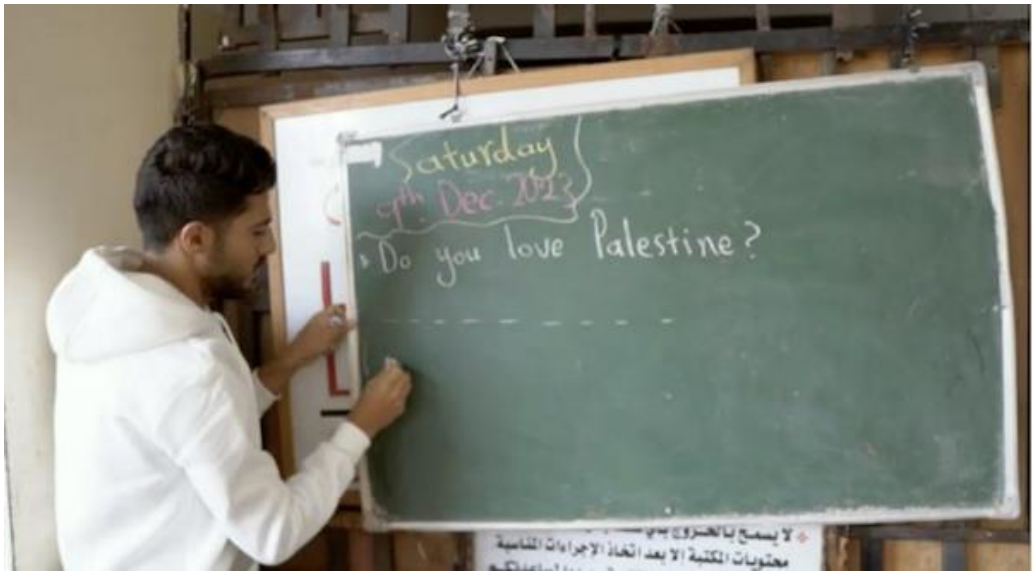
Third, it must be emphasized that condemning Israel is not a diplomatic, legal or even political issue, but a moral issue, which emphasizes the urgency of defending humanity as a whole. Today, opposing, denouncing and condemning the State of Israel is a matter of moral responsibility for not being an accomplice or co-participant in the genocide of the Palestinians. It is not possible that as teachers, we fall into submissive resignation to Israel, and that we are eaten away by what the recently deceased Australian journalist and filmmaker John Pilger denounced: “The people of Gaza are sinking into genocide and those who sit and watch are sinking into silence”¹⁴.

Finally, we must, despite everything, cherish the hope transmitted to us by the Palestinians who resist and fight heroically. This hope is rooted in the historical righteousness of their struggle, and it also encourages our existence as critical teachers who feel with pain and anguish the slaughter of thousands of human beings, including the children of Gaza, many of whom are killed on the very day of their birth by Israel's genocidaires.

¹⁴ Quoted in N. Chomsky and I. Pappe, *op. cit.* p. 262.

Against this murderous logic, we claim the pedagogy of life and struggle, as the Palestinian poet Yasser Jamil Fayad says, in brief but eloquent words:

**“Running/ Dancing/ Crying/
Kissing/Loving/Suffering/Helping/Shouting/ In life, there
are many, many verbs/ I'm just Palestinian/ My verb is
fighting!”**



Palestinian teacher Tareq al-Enabi says his school was destroyed by shelling and some of his students were killed.



Renán Vega Cantor (Bogotá, 1958) is a Colombian historian and teacher. He is a professor at the Universidad Pedagógica Nacional de Bogotá. [Bibliography](#)

[Articles](#)

See also:

[Frankenstein y Drácula en Palestina](#)

25/1/2024

[Gaza más hermosa que nunca](#)

14/11/2023

This essay was translated by Milena Rampoldi and revised by Supriyo Chatterjee for [The Glocal Workshop/L'Atelier Glocal/El Taller Glocal](#). All support welcome (wglocal@gmail.com on paypal)



copyleft