

## **From Carthage to Gaza - Palestine at the end of the Imperiocene**

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It is difficult to move one's fingers over the keyboard and write about Gaza in Palestine. About how the number of victims of the genocide increases daily, far beyond the "mark" of 35,000 people, murdered, buried under the rubble of their homes. Behind every human loss there is grief and pain for generations. We are witnesses when relatives try with their last reserves of strength to save the lives of their loved ones. The killings are taking place before our eyes in real time, which Israel is trying to prevent by killing journalists. As of today, more than one hundred journalists have been killed in Gaza (Abreu 2024).

Writing about Gaza in Palestine was already difficult a few years ago, when thousands of people stormed against

the wall that surrounds them, cutting them off from survival and from their relatives in occupied Palestine, as part of the “*Great March of Return*” from March 2018 to December 2019. Hundreds of people were injured, dozens killed. They were mostly mowed down by the bullets of Israeli snipers. The snipers had made themselves comfortable on ramparts above what is probably the world’s most perfectly secured fence. And the people continued to run against the insurmountable bulwarks, aware that they could be struck down by a deadly bullet at any second.

The keyboard had already resisted writing in 2009, when tons of bombs and phosphorus rained down on Gaza in Palestine. And it did so in 1987, when I heard the footsteps of the occupiers’ military boots stamping over the hut’s tin roofs in Jabaliya in Gaza. On the eve of the first *Intifada*, I saw the wide corridors that army bulldozers had carved into residential neighbourhoods so that the military could move inside densely populated Gaza. I talked to those tortured in Israeli prisons. During this time, it was popular to put a plastic bag filled with excrements over the heads of Palestinian prisoners and seal it around their necks<sup>1</sup>.

Prisoners’ legs are nowadays amputated because the inflammation caused by shackles is not adequately treated. This is reminiscent of Prime Minister Rabin’s call in 1987 for the bones of youngsters throwing stones at

Israeli soldiers to be broken. Israeli soldiers on the hills near Nablus in Palestine smashed a young boys' hands with rocks. Deliberate crippling functions as a counter-insurgency strategy, be it in 1987, in 2024 and in-between or before those years. Now settlers are burning down Palestinian wheat fields near Nablus. The genocide was accompanied from the beginning on by an ecocide that first and foremost affected Palestinian agriculture, an ecocide motivated by greed for Palestinian land. The permanent genocide in Palestine makes time melt away. When I write about it, memories merge with the present. Only the atrocities of the occupiers become more and more unimaginable.

### **The long-lasting Genocide in Palestine**

The genocide in Palestine has a long history despite the shortening of human memory in the age of the internet. And one of the biggest profiteers of de-memorization recently reminded us of that long history. Cynically, Facebook billionaire Mark Zuckerberg posed for his 40th birthday in a T-shirt with the Latin inscription "*Carthago delenda est*" (the original reads *Carthaginem esse delendam*): "Carthage must be wiped out" (delenda = delete) (*The Economic Times* 2024). We do not know whether Zuckerberg can read Latin.

The slogan praising genocide caused an outcry not only in Tunisia. The slogan is a reminder of the long history of the scorched earth policy that characterizes imperial-

ist foreign rule over the peoples of the world. Carthage was a flourishing trading city on the Tunisian Mediterranean coast before Roman tyranny razed the city to the ground in 146 BC. The Roman senator Cato said that the African city of Carthage must be wiped out. Today, the consul Cato the Elder deserves a place of honour in the Israeli Knesset and Zuckerberg could have written: “*Gaza delenda est*”. But today it is hardly possible to simply bulldoze the mountains of rubble into the ground. Just to defuse the unexploded bombs and warheads and the rubble of the former residential complexes would take about fourteen years. Ecocide is an integral part of the genocide in Palestine. As early as 2009, the sewage purification plants in Gaza were bombed to mix the contaminated water with the drinking water (AK Südnord 2009).

But the situation in Palestinian Gaza today is different from what the new Romans, striving for world domination, want to admit. The destruction of Carthage introduces the long imperialist tyranny over humanity. The genocidal and all-life-destroying epoch of the Imperio-cene comes to an end in Gaza in Palestine.

### **From catastrophe to catastrophe - the enduring Nakba**

Every year, May 15 commemorates the Zionist expulsion of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians in 1948, a day that has become part of the culture of remembrance in

Palestine and the peoples of the world. *Nakba* is the Arabic word for catastrophe. Over five hundred Palestinian villages were razed to the ground.<sup>2</sup> Only the Palestinian ruins of the village of *Lifta* near *al-Quds* (Jerusalem) are reminiscent of the once flourishing Palestinian agriculture with its terraced gardens around *al-Quds*. Cynically, Israel claims *Lifta*(h) as a World Heritage Site (UNESCO 2015). The village is listed as abandoned by the Palestinians. The massacre carried out by a Zionist terrorist group in the village coffee house and the expulsion of the inhabitants is concealed.

Various Zionist terrorist groups, be it the *Haganah*, including the *Irgun* with the infamous prime minister Menachem Begin, *Leumi* or *Stern* (*Lechi*) - from which the Israeli army emerged during the founding process of the colonialist settler state of Israel - competed in the war of conquest of Palestine.

They carried out massacres in *Deir Yassin*, *Tantura* and many other places in which hundreds of Palestinians were murdered in cold blood. The news of the massacres was broadcast over loudspeakers by the Zionists to the neighbouring villages to spread panic so that people flee their homes. Many of the politicians in Israel who have made a name for themselves since the first Nakba in 1948, whether they are called Begin, Shamir or Sharon, came from one of the Zionist terror organizations that have been inflicting death and terror on Palestinians since the 1930s.

Then as well as now, if the dead bodies of Palestinians were not burnt then they were hastily buried in mass graves. Mass graves from the time of the Nakba in 1948 are still being excavated today, sometimes under Israel's beaches where European tourists sunbathe. For them, the imperial Wilhelmine slogan "A place at the sun" (*Ein Platz an der Sonne*) finally seemed to become reality. What lay beneath their bath towels or beyond the apartheid wall was beyond their horizon and interest.

As if all this were not enough, today hospitals are being attacked by the Zionist army and stormed under all kinds of pretexts, such as al-Shifa and many other hospitals in Gaza. Recently, more and more mass graves have been dug out in the courtyards of and next to hospitals in Gaza. Seven hundred and twenty-one bodies have been recovered in these mass graves so far (as of May 22). This has never happened before in the history of "war". Minimum standards of shying away from unimaginable cruelties have been met in genocidal crimes against humanity in the long history of the Imperiocene, if not respected, then not propagandistically justified. The genocide in Gaza in Palestine, which is escalating anew, knows no borders in this respect. In addition to the terms scholasticide, ecocide, etc., a term should also be found for the destruction of medical infrastructure and personal, an important component in the ongoing genocide: Medicide. And, as if this is not already beyond imagination, the dead bodies of Palestinians are also be-

ing kidnapped from the hospitals (*Aljaazeera* 2024). Not for the first time, Palestinian corpses are plundered (*TRT World* 2024; *Euro News* 2024; *Euromedmonitor* 2024). Israel is a hub for trafficking human organs (*The Cradle* 2024).

The day on which I begin to write these lines is dedicated to the memory of the Nakba in Palestine and is at the same time the 221st day of the Israeli and American-European war against Gaza. Not only do the US and Germany, among other imperial powers, supply the weapons and ammunition without which the Zionists could not carry out their never-ending crimes against humanity in Palestine and around the world, mercenaries also come from the US and European countries, e.g., France and Switzerland, who boast of committing atrocities in Palestine. Since quite a few of the soldiers have dual citizenship, including German citizenship, future independent courts will also have a lot of work to do in Europe.

But the support for the Zionist state of Israel, which has always been propagated in Europe as uniform, is beginning to erode more and more, despite an almost synchronised (*gleichgeschaltet*) media. In Ireland, Spain and Belgium, voices are increasingly being raised officially to denounce the genocide against the Palestinians. Spain and Italy are withholding arms deliveries.

The wave of student protests can no longer be suppressed and marginalized in Europe and the USA. Recently, students occupied parts of Berlin's Humboldt

University in solidarity with Palestine. They followed the example of Columbia University in New York, which soon set a precedent in England, France and other cities in the world. The wave of student resistance is reminiscent of the protests which, contrary to popular belief, followed not a 1968 but a 1967 wave of protest.

### **Germany - Israel: “Brother Hood in Arms” (*Waffenbrüderschaft*)**

While it seemingly started with the student protesting the US aggression in Vietnam, the myth of Israel collapsed in the face of the Zionist war of expansion in June 1967, both in the USA and in Germany. German arms exports had made this possible. The situation is no different today. Once again, the large Euro-American arms companies of the military-industrial complex that are enabling Israel to escalate the genocide. Consequently, the students are calling for a stop to any cooperation with university institutions that conduct research for the Zionist killing machine.

From 1956 at the latest, state-of-the-art air weapons were supplied to Israel from Finkenwerder in Hamburg via France. The then German Minister of War, Franz Joseph Strauß, played a leading role in the German Israeli arms fraternity. The photos of war minister Strauß and Uzi Gal, the designer of the handy Israeli submachine gun, flashed in the West German newspapers (VDI 2019). The German army was soon equipped with the



so-called Uzi as standard. US M 48 tanks were delivered to Israel via Germany and France and later produced in Israel. Naturally, Germany paid for the tank production. Until the 1970s, the Federal Republic of Germany transferred around 70 billion German marks to Israel (Khella 1982), in addition to arms deliveries free of charge, most recently including nuclear-powered submarines.

It is particularly tragic that under the pretext and cover of so-called reparations for crimes against humanity under the Nazis, mainly Israel and not the victims of fascism were compensated. At the beginning of the 1950s, the first Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, Konrad Adenauer, was responsible for negotiating the so-called *Luxembourg Agreement* (1952) with Israel. At the end of the 1920s, Adenauer was already active in the German pro-Zionist *Palestine Committee*. The history of German-Zionist relations has continued unbroken beyond the Nazi regime to the present day<sup>3</sup>.

It is therefore not surprising that Franz Joseph Strauss launched Israel's so-called "Blitzkrieg", in 1967 in which Israel occupied the rest of Palestine, the West Bank, Gaza and Sinai - until then under Egyptian administration - the eastern part of Jerusalem and the Syrian Golan Heights, using napalm, among other things. Again, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians and Syrians were displaced. In this second wave of forced displacement in 1967, Palestinians were expelled foremost to Jordan.

While the Palestinians fought mainly under the command of Arabic States and had previously relied primarily on diplomacy, in the battle of *al-Karamah* the Palestinian resistance managed to beat an Israeli tank unit into flight (WAFA 2021).

The Palestinian freedom fighters (*fedayeen*) inspired worldwide solidarity with the *Palestine Liberation Organization* (PLO), a broad alliance of various resistance organizations, over the next 20 years or so. The anti-imperialist solidarity of the peoples of Asia, Africa and the Americas was of course also an anti-Zionist solidarity, which emphasized the importance of settler colonialism in Palestine as a bulwark of imperialism at the crossroads of Asia, Africa and the Americas. The resistance of the Palestinian people was embedded into the solidarity of the Afro-Asian populations and the solidarity of the peoples in the Americas. And it remains so to this day, as is emphasized again and again at the worldwide solidarity demonstrations: "No one will be free until Palestine is free" (echoing South African freedom fighter and later president Nelson Mandela (*Middle East Eye* 2020)).

### **Global Intifada against Global Zionism**

The parallels to the current global intifada are obvious. In Germany, the "*German-Israeli brotherhood in arms*?" opened the eyes of students from the *Socialist German Student Association* (SDS) back in the mid-1960s. The rac-

ist myth of Israel as a democratic island in the “Arabian Sea” had collapsed. The Kibbutz, too, sometimes mystified as an educational model in the West-German left, turned out to be a tool of settler colonialism. Settlers, not least from Eastern Europe and Russia, were won over to the colonialist project at the beginning of the 20th century through the staging of utopian collectives in the “Holy Land”.

Theodor Herzl, one of the most important founding fathers of political Zionism, was aware that Zionism was diverting revolutionary potential from Europe to Palestine. All other emigration routes from Russia and East-Europe were closed to the refugees by notorious anti-Semites, including James Balfour - infamous for his counter-insurgency activities in Ireland - he had led the Conservative Party in the English House of Commons since 1891.

Herzl used anti-socialist Zionism to appeal to European governments. Once settled in Palestine, there was no turning back for the European settlers. At the beginning of the 20th century, Zionist organizations were already recruiting their “Human potential” (*Menschenmaterial*), as Theodor Herzl called his target group (Herzl 1896), out of large refugee camps on the Prussian border.

The poor, of whom Herzl saw pioneers, the first to emigrate to Palestine, came mainly from Russia. In the socialist parties, fierce debates started, confronting Zi-

onism which became a counter ideology to internationalism and universalism. Luxemburg, to name just one example, had clearly positioned herself against Zionism (Luxemburg 1921). For socialists the rejection of Zionism was a matter of survival. Anti-colonialism, anti-Fascism and anti-Zionism are inextricably interwoven.

In an exchange of letters with Lord Rothschild in 1917, Balfour secured a so-called *Jewish Homeland* for the Zionists (a tactical move that obscured the intentions of the Anglo-Zionist enterprise to install a settler colony in Palestine). British colonialism incorporated the doctrine into its so-called *Mandate Rule* over Palestine from 1918 onwards. The Zionist settlements served imperial-colonialist and long-term strategies to subordinate Palestine to European-Zionist rule.

The Palestinians had been resisting the gradual land robbery since 1884 - the year in which the imperialist so-called *Africa Congress* in Berlin concluded, initiating the colonialist invasion of Africa. Already Napoleon planned to settle Jews, especially from Africa and Asia, in Palestine at the beginning of the 19th century. The settler colony was supposed to secure trade routes to the Indian Ocean and Asia. The British occupation of Egypt in 1882, of Sudan in 1884 and other Afro-Arabic countries cannot be understood independently of the goal to subdue Palestine to colonialist rule, which begun in 1917.

There were major popular uprisings against the colonial-

ist-zionist domination in the early 1920s. The large and long-lasting popular uprising between 1936 and 1939 was brutally suppressed by the imperialist powers. While Britain bombed from the air, the Zionist gangs operating on the ground terrorised the Palestinians. The notorious colonial butcher Churchill agreed - as the only one in his own party - with fascist Germany to promote settler colonialism in Palestine at the end of the 1930s.

This is an agreement that continues to the present day among the neo-nationalist and fascist parties in Europe and the USA. They see the 'bulwark of civilisation against barbarism' (Theodor Herzl) threatened not only by the resistance in Palestine, but also by the worldwide solidarity of the global intifada. This is the reason why gangs of Nazi hooligans (Na-Zi = nationalist-Zionists) are attacking solidarity camps and demonstrations in Paris or Los Angeles. The supremacy of the (old) white man over Palestine and the world is being called into question. They fear the decline of the Imperiocene, whose bulwark is the Zionist state of Israel.

### **Palestine - a long history of domination and resistance**

Since the Roman occupation of Egypt and Palestine in 33 BC at the latest, the rise of the Imperiocene has taken its course. Rule over Palestine was always the focus of imperial world domination. Although Alexander the

Great was already injured in his attempt to take Gaza in 312 BC, and eventually succeeded in capturing the city, it was only Roman rule that was able to establish itself in Palestine, Egypt, Syria and Asia Minor for a longer period. Just think of the deportation of the Syrian-Palmyran queen Zenobia to Rome in 272 AC. According to some sources, she was beaten to death, others write that she had already died during her abduction to Rome because of a hunger strike.

*The Imperium Romanum*, which had endeavoured to rule over large regions of the Arabo-African area, was heading for its decline. The emergence of Christianity as a rebellious form of civil disobedience contributed significantly to this. Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Palestine and spoke Palestinian Aramaic. St Paul later brought Christianity to the Arabian Peninsula, where many gospels survive, which are also preserved as apocrypha in the Koran. Gaza was an important centre of early Christian monasticism and Neoplatonic philosophy in the third and fourth centuries. The current destruction of the churches and early Christian artefacts is erasing all traces of the significant Christian history in Gaza. Some of the oldest depictions of the crucifixion of Jesus come from Gaza (Gaza 2010: 109).

The spreading of Christianity in the 3rd and 4th century finally caused the Roman Constantine to see a vision, according to legend a cross; he then defeated the rival Ro-

man troops in the Battle of the Tiber in 312 AC before moving the centre of the former Roman Empire to the city of Constantinople, which was later named after him.

After the decline of the Western Roman Imperium and its rise in the East in the first quarter of the 4th century, Gaza became one of the most important harbours for the empire under Emperor Constantine. Gaza had long before been the final port for the Incense Route, starting from Yemen and Southern Arabia and the Silk Road, starting from Xi'an and Beijing, from where goods were traded via Gaza to Alexandria, Africa or southern Europe.

The father-in-law and important counsellor of the Prophet Muhammad Ummar Ibn al-Khattab (592-644 AC), among others, was already trading along these long-distance trade routes in pre-Islamic times. The mosque named after him in Gaza is one of the many hundreds of mosques that were destroyed during the genocide. It was already laid in ruins by the British during the bombings in 1918 before being rebuilt again and again.

Gaza in Palestine was the first, which was liberated from imperial Byzantine rule in the 630s. Palestine experienced from then on a universalist era in which different communities lived together in harmony.<sup>4</sup> The culture of tolerance is broken only by successive waves of the so-called Crusades - they have as little to do with Chris-

tianity as Judaism has to do with Zionism - but could not establish any permanent rule over Palestine.

It was the Anglo-Zionist occupation since 1918 that created the conditions for the Zionist settler state in the sense of Theodor Herzl as a Jewish State. The racist construct is moulded into the Israeli constitution in 2018. Because the Zionists had driven their former ally England out of the country at the end of the 1940s, also with German support, England abstained during the UN vote on the partition of Palestine (Resolution 181) in 1947. In true colonialist manner, the Palestinians were not consulted anyway. A Yugoslavian alternative plan was not voted on. If we consider that it was primarily European states and their (settler) colonial offshoots that voted in favour of the partition of Palestine, it is not surprising that in the dawning era of post-colonialism, the peoples of the world today stand in solidarity with Palestine. The overwhelming majority of the world's peoples and states recognise Palestine. Some European states, recognizing the signs of the dawning post-imperial and post-zionist times e.g. Ireland, Spain and Norway, also recognise Palestine today.

### **No post-colonialism without a free Palestine**

However, we cannot speak of an era of post-colonialism as long as Zionist settler colonialism reigns over Palestine. Postcolonial studies are currently being reorientated. Resistant students around the world are realising that



decolonisation only unfolds its humanist and universalist potential when the likes of Frantz Fanon, Ghassan Kanafani and Edward Said are studied together.

The Palestinian writer, poet and journalist Ghassan Kanafani - we will focus primarily on his historical works - is one of the most important anti-colonial thinkers and writers of the 20th century. Without a study of his works, there can be no talk of postcolonial studies. However, one of the tricky elements of postcolonial studies, not least the marginalised postcolonial studies in German-speaking countries, is to thematise about everything but Palestine.

### **Ghassan Kanafani**

The podcast series on history of philosophy at Ludwig-Maximilian University in Munich encompasses voices of anti-colonialist resistance from Africa, the Caribbeans and other parts in Asia, Africa and the Americas, be it Amílcar Cabral, Kwame Nkrumah or Frantz Fanon. I followed the podcast on Claudia Jones, an Afro-Caribbean socialist activist who was expelled from the US in 1955 due to her anti-racist, anti-militaristic and anti-imperialist engagement. But I searched in the long list for the name Ghassan Kanafani in vain. This also holds true for the biographical entrances of *The Palgrave Encyclopaedia of Imperialism and Anti-Imperialism* (Ness, Cope: 2016). Colonialism in Palestine has been a blind spot in post-co-

lonial studies from the very beginning of its entry into academia. Moreover, as Patrick Williams has shown in “Gaps, Silences and Absences: Palestine and Postcolonial Studies” (2018): silencing Palestine in the academia, went hand in hand with denuding of memories from archives. The looting of the Palestinian material culture of memories goes back to the 1930s and found its peak, so far, in the plundering of the Palestine Research Centre (PCR), the Palestinian Cinema Institution (PCI) and the Cultural Arts Centre (CAS) in Beirut in 1982. Palestinian memories are buried in the cellars of the Israeli military complex or looted and burned as it happens currently in Gaza.

In Palestine, colonialism cannot be silenced into a post-colonial past. On the contrary, Zionist settler colonialism is, under the protective umbrella of successive imperialist powers, expanding continuously since around 150 years, and so striving for the fulfilment of Theodor Herzl’s racist vision of a “Jewish State” between the river and the sea as the program of the Zionist Likud Party emphasises.

Although the Palestinian scholar Edward Said is often understood as a founder of post-colonial studies (Conrad, Shalini: 2002), his late study *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), beside many studies on the Palestinian Question, was often not included in the emerging academic field of postcolonial studies. Said analysed the Palestinian popu-

lar resistance, the Intifada since 1987 - the Arabic word stands for rising-up (more precisely for a sleepy camel getting-up) - in the context of the coming-up of "various social, ecological and women movements" (Said: 1993, 311) throughout the Americas, where the long resistance wave yielded its fruits only recently. Re-reading *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) makes one aware of the entanglement of anti-imperialist resistance and opposition in Asia, Africa and the Americas. Said was far-sighted, seeing a global Intifada on the horizon.

Selective readings of anti-colonial resistances, although it might not be consciously reflected, seem to correspond with an unspoken longing for white supremacy - a role Zionism plays as representative in Palestine. Strangely enough, the consensual imperiousness is ascertainable for Euro-American racists and illusive antiracists alike.

During his first visit to Israel, US-President Joe Biden confirmed that he is, even without being Jewish, a Zionist: "You need not be a Jew to be a Zionist." (Jewish Chronicle 2022). And, he is right. Any religious affinities to the believed so-called "Holy Land" are, to keep the imperial bulwark alive, exploited shamelessly.

Postcolonial studies referred to Said's study on *Orientalism* (2019) - where he applied at the end of the 1970s mainly the Foucauldian discourse analysis to Franco-English literature - while silencing at the meantime voices

of Palestinian resistance, thus even inside the oeuvre of Edward Said. After Edward Said had passed away in September 2003, Frantz Fanon's *Les Damnés de La Terre* (1961) begun to enjoy a postcolonial renaissance, holding on up to this day. Homi Bhabha wrote a forward for the new translation of Fanon's anti-colonialist manifesto in 2004 which was published anew with an introduction by Cornel West in 2021. West had left Harvard University the same year before returning in solidarity with Palestine, joining the students' protest activities at Harvard campus (The Harvard Crimson 2024).

Josie Fanon, the widow of Frantz Fanon, removed Sartre's preface from new editions after the Israeli 1967 expansionist war, the year Zionist settler colonialism expanded brutally in Palestine, occupied Gaza and the Sinai in Egypt, Palestinian territories under Jordanian administration and the Golan Heights in Syria. In an interview in 1978 Josie Fanon shattered the myth of Jean-Paul Sartre - he sided with Israel in 1967 - as a French anti-imperialist and humanist: "Whatever Sartre's contribution may have been in the past, the fact that he did not understand the Palestinian problem reversed his past political positions."<sup>5</sup>

Edward Said was disappointed bitterly when visiting Jean-Paul Sartre, Simon de Beauvoir and Michel Foucault in Paris. As a French critic of settler colonialism in Algeria, Said had held Sartre in great respect. Following

the great disappointment of broken solidarity - Sartre had lauded the Sadat and the Camp David spectacle (Peace treaty between Egypt and Israel of 1978) - he praised Jean Genet as a French counterexample, expressing "passion for Palestinians" in an extended sojourn with them and by writing the extraordinary *Quatre Heures à Sabra et Chatila*.<sup>6</sup> Rereading Genet's *Prisoner of Love* (2003) will hopefully be reserved for future Palestine studies.

While in Algeria the anti-colonial resistance was victorious against the long and brutal occupation of French settler colonialism in 1962, the years after the defeat of the Arab States in June 1967 introduced a new wave of Palestinian resistance which from now on relied preliminary on its own strength, abilities and creativity, establishing new movements of popular resistance.<sup>7</sup>

For inspiring Palestinian confidence, Ghassan Kanafani raised his voice mainly through literature and criticism. Understanding the 19th and 20th century up to our present, requires intellectual and emotional access to the history and presence of anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist resistance in Asia, Africa and the Americas. The Palestinian resistance is of particular importance in this context. And Ghassan Kanafani one of its utmost important voices, which also was the reason for his treacherous assassination together with his niece Lamees by Israeli Agents in Beirut on July the 8th in 1972 (Wild: 1975, 23). The life of Ghassan Kanafani, is woven into the history

of the Palestinian people and its resistance (Interactive Encyclopedia). His life is insightfully told by his widow Anni, the daughter of a Danish Antifascist fighting the Nazi occupation (Kanafani 1973). Stefan Wild portrayed the rich literary work in *Ghassan Kanafani. The Life of a Palestinian* (Wild 1975). In German speaking lands Kanafani is mostly known for his translated novels and short stories, for which he ranks among the most well-known and appreciated writers in the Arabic World, but he is only very little known as a literary critic, e.g., his study “On Zionist Literature” (Kanafani 2023),<sup>8</sup> as a painter, a graphic designer and not least a political analyst and historian. Kanafani’s political analyses are sometimes lost, others published anonymously.

Anti-colonialism in Palestine which cannot be other than Anti-Zionism has no place in the German academia and cultural landscapes as the stereotyping campaign against the anti-colonial philosopher Achille Mbembe in 2020 in Germany already has shown. Not long ago the sparks of inquisitorial suspicion flew into the fields of arts, censuring the international Art Festival *Documenta* in German’s Kassel. Whenever there might be indices of solidarity with the Palestinian culture of resistance the inquisition intervened.

In Germany the Palestinian people’s culture is erased to its widest extent, be it from academic curricula and publishing, arts and culture or the public sphere and thinking in general. At the best, the history of the Palestinian

people is traumatized, becoming an object of therapeutic projections which tend to victimize the Palestinians. I agree with Mohammed Madiou when writing that critics "cannot write on colonial matters, reflect on them, and try to 'intellectually' study / criticize them without speaking of Palestine; their anticolonialism would otherwise be a lot of hot air." (Madiou 2021)

Ghassan Kanafani was born in Accra in Palestine the 9th of April in 1936, the year the Palestinian uprising against expanding settler colonialism under the protection of British Imperialism begun with a general strike. Following a more Marxist-Leninist theoretical explanation, social and economic layers were in the foreground of Kanafani's historic-materialist and dialectical analysis. The social and economic reasons, mainly the increasing marginalisation and proletarianisation of the Palestinian small farmers, caused by the seizure of land by Zionist settlers, and the zionisation of labour, the exclusion of Arab labour from colonialist production, are historicised and analysed by Kanafani with great attention to details, figures and statistics (Kanafani 2020).

There were also other factors, that have led to the popular uprising in Palestine. In October 1935 the Haganah, the main Zionist terror organisation, smuggled a huge number of machine-guns, rifles, and ammunition into the port of Jaffa, preparing for an extension of the armed land-robbery in Palestine. This raised the awareness of

the leadership of the Palestinian resistance, among them *Izz al-Din al-Qassam*, who plays - Kanafani compares him with Che Guevara and his martyrdom (Kanafani 2020) - an important role in Kanafani's political analysis of the uprising . But where did the weapons for the terrorist zionist gangs come from? Historians should research these, and other questions related to the long Palestinian Uprising in depth.

During the uprising the British occupational army used all its resources available, its air, navy and ground forces to crack down on the resistance brutally. Torture, extra-legal killings of resistance fighters, deporting political leaders far away from Palestine to the Seychelles, installing detention camps, razing down to the ground villages and entire blocks in Palestinian cities, and blowing up houses were on the daily agenda of the ruthless counter-insurgency war.

At the same time several Zionist terror organizations operated in the shadow of the imperialist warfare against the popular resistance. Detonating, among other war crimes, bombs on busy Palestine markets in Jaffa and Accra, which killed dozens of civilians, were included in the repertoire of Zionist terror organizations like Haganah, Irgun, Stern or Lechi. The terrorist organizations worked with different imperialist powers, sometimes with imperialist England and Nazi-Germany at the same time. After the German Nazi Regime signed an agreement



with the World Zionist Organization in Berlin in 1933, the *Ha'avara Agreement*, tens of thousands of settlers were transferred from Germany to Palestine. The agreement provided for the settlers to deposit funds in a bank in Berlin and re-use the German Reichsmark on the condition of buying exclusively German products, e.g. agricultural machines, in Palestine.

Most of the tens of thousands of settlers in the years from 1933 to 1936 came from Germany. After the uprising in 1939, when England tried to limit immigration to Palestine (Peel Commission), Nazi Germany forced - according to the English colonial law as the Palestinians never had been asked - the illegal settlement of Palestine. The settlers were trained in over one hundred camps in Nazi Germany. Probably not only in agriculture.

Zionist organizations had welcomed the so-called “race laws” of the Nazis in 1936. Their newspapers were never banned in Nazi-Germany, unlike the anti-fascist and anti-Zionist ones. Postcolonial research from a Palestinian, wider global south and anticolonial perspective opens wide fields of research. The uprising in Palestine from 1936 to 1939 from a universal-historical and comparative perspective requires a new approach, building on the groundbreaking study by Ghassan Kanafani (Kanafani 2020).

The final defeat of the long and intense anti-zionist and

anti-colonialist resistance in Palestine, lasting for three years from 1936 - 1939, led to the formation of what will seven years later become the Israeli Army. After the formation of the Zionist State on the ruins of Palestine in May 1948, 12-year-old Ghassan was forced to flee with his family from Haifa.

## **Resisting Genocide**

One of the most densely populated areas in the world is currently under constant bombardment. In Gaza, over two million and three hundred thousand people are concentrated in an area of 360 square kilometres, which is roughly the size of the smallest federal state of Bremen in Germany. Famine is now on the rise there, accompanied by the threat of epidemics. The infrastructure has been destroyed in all areas of society in Gaza, be it health, education or science (Worldbank 2024).

Most of the refugees in Gaza, from where they were expelled in successive waves in 1948 and 1967, are now on the run again. Israel has currently driven them inside Gaza to the south on the Egyptian border in Rafah, where they hoped to survive. These days, shelling from land and sea and aerial bombardment in Gaza are escalating, not least at Rafah, the border crossing with Egypt. Israel has now taken control of this crossing so as not to interrupt the starvation of the population. Many aid supplies entered Gaza via the Egyptian side

of Rafah. In the long history of the Palestinian people, Israeli bombs have always followed the people who have fled from their places to where they hoped to find shelter. This was already the case in 1947/48, 1967 and at the beginning of the 1970s in Jordan and soon afterwards in Lebanon, at the latest since the beginning of the 1980s.

The Palestinians in Gaza are once again living in make-shift tents, with virtually no food or clean drinking water, and they are once again forced to flee. Just like in 1948 during the first *Nakba*, which never came to an end. Unlike in 1948, however, there are no more escape routes. In front of them lies the wall to Egypt's Sinai Desert and the sea.

Some families have fled up to nine times in seven months within the Gaza Strip alone. Among those fleeing the 500-, 1000-, and 2000-pound bombings are people who fled the Zionist terror from the towns and villages in Palestine as early as 1948. But where to flee to in these times under constant bombardment? All supposed escape routes and corridors turn out to be traps. They are also under fire from the Zionist army. Though the Zionists have always cynically accused the Palestinians of propagandistically wanting to drive the Jews into the sea, they are executing exactly that before the eyes of the world: they are literally driving the Palestinians, surviving the genocide, into the sea.

If they had not previously been torn to pieces by the hail

of bombs or buried under the rubble of their homes, they were gunned down by Israeli soldiers at aid distribution points or shot in a desperate attempt to return to the ruins of their homes. Even aid deliveries, which, because Israel blocks all access to Gaza, were dropped from the air, became deadly cargo.

The lines by Theodor Herzl in his pamphlet 'The Jewish State', published in German in 1896, which stimulated the Zionist settler movement towards the end of the 19th century, already point to its genocidal intentions: '... we would organise a large and active hunting party, drive the animals together, and throw a melinite bomb into their midst.' (Herzl 1988, 94) 'The Terrible Melinite. An Explosive with ten Times the Power of Nitroglycerin', was the title of an article in the *New York Times* in 1887 (New York Times, 1887). How much higher is the explosive power of today's bombs, which are now also being dropped over the last place of refuge in Rafah in Gaza?

It is this racist intention to round up the 'animals' and bomb them away that must be considered against the background of South Africa's genocide claim before the International Court of Justice (ICC), as the current wave of genocide has emerged from a long history of settler colonialism in Palestine. How could the Zionist legend of Palestine as a 'land without a people, for a people without a land' (Theodor Herzl) be imposed on the reality of life in Palestine if not through the systematic

and targeted expulsion of the indigenous population? "There will be no electricity, no food, no water, no fuel, everything will be closed. We are fighting against human animals and will act accordingly.", said Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant in the second week of October 2023 (*The Palestine Chronicle* 2024).

Now even the memory of the Palestinians is to be erased. To this end, the universities in Gaza are being razed to the ground and scholars and academics who teach there are being murdered, which is sometimes referred to as scholasticide. The intention follows the systematic nature of genocide. Aid organisations whose coordinates were known to Israel during their journeys in Gaza were attacked and their occupants murdered, including two vehicles belonging to the *World Kitchen Organisation*. Not a word of the Israeli side's assurances can therefore be believed. In this way, vital aid is being "prevented". Zionist settlers are attacking parallel aid convoys and destroying the supplies.

Following the example of Carthage, Gaza is not only to be razed to the ground and ploughed into the earth - the memory of the life and history of the formerly flourishing harbour town is also to be erased from memory. Only survivors can report. Scholars, university members, writers and poets are killed. And to prevent this from becoming public knowledge, journalists are murdered at the same time.

In the long genocide in Palestine since Theodor Herzl, only the killing machinery has developed, which is generously provided to the Zionist state not least by the USA and other imperialist powers. The talk of ‘human animals’ already had its instructions for action at the end of the 19th century. The Palestinians are the target and testing ground for vacuum, bunker-busting and phosphorus bombs, which were already used against Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon in 1982. The internationally outlawed weapons are now being used again and again in the south of Lebanon. In November 2023, on a massive scale, phosphorus bombs were dropped in Gaza (*Euromed Montior* 2024). They were already used in 2008 / 2009 extensively during the cynically named “Operation Cast Lead”.

In the current wave of genocide, artificial intelligence is being used for the first time. It ‘locates’ target coordinates for the deadly cargo via WhatsApp locations and contacts. Entire families have fallen victim to it. Is this what Mark Zuckerberg means when his T-shirt reads “*Carthage must be destroyed?*”

Israel has been imposing a blockade on Gaza since 2006, not only separating the fertile coastal strip from the sea, but also further dividing the historically integrated Palestine into small Bantustans. The inhabitants of Gaza not only had no access to the Mediterranean, but the import of goods was also subject to Israeli arbitrariness. For years, the electricity supply has been repeatedly restricted or cut off completely, so that hospitals have only

been able to operate under the most difficult conditions. The victims of the constant bombardments and drone attacks have often only been able to undergo emergency surgery without anaesthesia. The Palestinian doctor, surgeon and director of the University of Glasgow, Ghasan Abu Sitta, was not allowed to report on this in Europe, among other things, at Germany's initiative.

In the meantime, an administrative court in Germany has declared the revocation of Ghasan Abu Sitta's Schengen visa unlawful and cancelled it.

The Palestinians are also cut off from their relatives and friends in wider Palestine. The West Bank today resembles isolated and incoherent Bantustans, which have cemented and walled in the apartheid structures since the Oslo Accords of 1993. Only the Zionist settlers, who are currently carrying out pogroms in Palestinian villages, can move freely in the network of zones, most of which are under Israeli military administration.

Supported by the Israeli military, the Zionist land robbery continues, while life for the Palestinians becomes more and more impossible. Creeping and open expulsions are escalating, attacks by settlers on villages and neighbourhoods, raids and air raids by the army are also on the agenda in the West Bank. This also applies to Jerusalem, where the Zionist attempts at expulsion are accompanied by reprisals against other communities in

Palestine, including the Armenian community. Recently, Jenin in the West Bank was raided by Zionist army units. South African colleagues describe apartheid in Palestine as even more inhumane than that in South Africa. The racist apartheid system in southern Africa had close ties with Israel, including nuclear weapons production and testing.

The news and images from Gaza are almost unbearable. The catastrophe (*Nakba*) continues with a new wave of genocidal displacement. The word 'war' loses its meaning against the backdrop of the genocide lawsuit brought by South Africa against Israel in full detail before the International Court of Justice in The Hague at the end of 2023. While the imperialist wars in Iraq and Libya, to name just two examples from the short 21st century, were already wars against the people, in Gaza in Palestine they are reaching an unprecedented peak. The genocidal massacres wiped out entire families. According to figures from the health authorities, 37925 people fell victim to the genocide on July 3, 2024, 87 141 human beings are injured and c. 11.000 are missing (Palestine Chronicle, July 3, 2024).

### **From Salvation to Liberation**

It seems that it has taken more than 2000 years for humanity - as Christians see in the figure of the Palestinian Jesus the saviour (*Soter*) - to be saved. If we understand



salvation in the sense of liberation, then that salvation becomes applicable universally in the clear distinction between justice and injustice, between genocidal occupation and indigenous resistance.

If 2000 years ago it was the martyrdom of Jesus on the cross, today it is the Palestinians who sacrifice themselves to resist the Germano-American and Zionist executed genocide as far as possible and show the whole world that Zionist foreign and tyrannical rule is doomed to failure. Whereas in the time of Jesus it was an *Intifada* of civil disobedience with which the Palestinians resisted the Roman occupation in the form of Christianity, the Palestinian people's willingness to resist today is not least inspired by Islam and a theology of liberation.

Gaza has always been an overlap of worldviews, cosmologies and philosophies. At the crossroads of Asia, Africa and Europe, the inspirations that motivate the steadfastness to resist (*sumud*) are borne by different visions, be they Islamic, socialist or patriotic. What unites them is the humanism that has emerged from the Palestinians' long history of resistance and their refusal to bow to imperial-Zionist foreign rule. Palestinians resisting the Euro-American and Zionist genocide today, open horizons for a future, more just world beyond the long Imperiocene.

## Notes:

1. During the revision of this article, news from the prison camps under Israeli occupation came to light. Here, too, it is revealed that, comparable to the settler colonialist terror in the final phase of the French occupation in Algeria, brutality and cruelty exceed the imaginable. Experience, for example in Iraq under US occupation, has shown that it sometimes takes years for information on the horror of the occupation to reach the public sphere unless courageous investigative journalism (e.g. Julian Assange) succeeds in counteracting the disappearance of traces and memories.

2. Salman Abu Sitta and his team published after 40 years of intense study the Atlas of Palestine, giving a multi-disciplinary and deeply documented insight of the Zionist erasing of more than 500 Palestinian villages (Abu Sitta 2024). <https://www.plands.org/en/villages-database>

3. When Adolf Hitler delivered a speech in the Bürgerbräukeller in Munich on July 6, 1920, he emphasised: "Jews should seek their human rights in their own state in Palestine, where they belong ("Menschenrechte soll er sich da suchen, wo er hingehört, in seinem eigenen Staat Palästina"). (Phelps: 1963, 305)

4. I follow the theory and method of Karam Khella's Universalist Theory of History (1994/2008). History can only be understood in the interplay of long-term and

universal history. In contrast to the historical approaches in vogue today - think of 'entangled, global, transregional', etc. - Karam Khella focuses on the long-term and universal history. For Karam Khella, the unwritten, resistant history of the peoples takes centre stage.

5. <https://frantzfanonspeaks.wordpress.com/2011/04/26/frantz-fanons-widow-speaks/>

6. <https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v22/n11/edward-said/diary>

7. <https://www.palquest.org/en/highlight/165/battle-al-karama>

8. The Interactive Encyclopedia of the Palestine Question includes a relatively actual bibliography of the works of Ghassan Kanafani. <https://www.palquest.org/en/biography/6566/ghassan-kanafani>

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