

Berkeley Journal of Religion and Theology
CALL FOR PAPERS AND CALL FOR VISUAL ART AND POETRY
Special Issue: *Palestine, Anti-Imperialism, and Liberation Theology*

Deadline for Abstract Submissions: Monday, August 25, 2025

If Selected, Full Manuscripts Due: Monday, October 27, 2025

Deadline for Visual Art and Poetry: September 22, 2025

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Theme Description

The intensification of the Western imperialist bloc's genocide of the Palestinian people and the ever-unyielding anticolonial resistance both in Palestine and across the Third World bring the question of moral responsibility before each member of global society. Since the Palestinian resistance forces' Tufan Al-Aqsa Flood military operation on October 7, 2023, over 625 days of unrestrained genocidal slaughter have passed, Western progressives' hypocrisies have been laid to bear, internationalism has been tested and clarified, and the necessity and selflessness of anticolonial armed-resistance have been revealed anew. The wholesale war of the imperial core against the periphery – the “civilized” against the “native” – the economic, militarist, and ideological means of the colonial world-order continue into new barbaric extremes. The fascist character of Western civilization, the viscousness of empire in decline, as well as the political and ethical centrality of Palestinian prisoners to Palestine and all humanity, all appear in this late-stage/last-stage of the colonial world.

Therefore, both prior to and since October 2023, scholars, activists, and theologians alike are confronted with their intellectual, political, and spiritual responsibilities – that which liberation, solidarity, and morality necessitate of each member of the global citizenry. Towards the aim of contributing to the national and international liberation struggle of the Palestinian people, this Special Issue of the *Berkeley Journal of Religion and Theology* invites critical engagement with the intersecting legacies and contemporary articulations of anti-imperialism and liberation theology in relation to Palestine.

This issue is not “*On Palestine*.” It is for, with, and *indebted* to Palestine and the Palestinian people.

The Palestinian struggle for freedom has long stood as a site of global ethical, political, and theological reckoning. With the Israeli entity as its regional proxy, the Western world's

expansionist and exterminationist colonial domination intensifies through calculated slaughter, occupation, apartheid, and the destruction of the capacity for Palestinian life and futurity. The world is witnessing the true face of imperialism in unprecedented visibility and moral consequence. The spectacle of genocide, live-streamed to a complicit and benefitting Western society, has laid bare the psychopolitical contours of a crumbling global order: the hypocrisies of liberal humanitarianism, the impotence of international law, the violence inherent in Western “civilization,” and the sadistic pathology of settler-colonial power.

In this moment, and until liberation, the ethical and political centrality of Palestine demands renewed theological and intellectual confrontation. This issue understands Palestine not as an isolated exception but as a lens of accuracy onto the colonial capitalist and imperialist world-system itself, where empire’s cruelty is not aberrant but foundational. The *sumud* of the Palestinian people, the spiritual dignity of the imprisoned, the revolutionary imagination of the besieged, and the theoretical and military brilliance of anticolonial forces – all summon traditions of resistance that refuse imperial pacification and theological quietism.

Liberation theology emerged in the Global South as a mode of praxis grounded in the lives and struggles of the oppressed. Similarly, anti-imperialism is not merely a geopolitical framework but the spiritual, epistemic, and material refusal, what Palestinian scholar Abdaljawad posits as the complete “deformation” of the infrastructure that upholds colonial domination on a local and global scale. What does it mean to bring these traditions into renewed conversation in the current historical conjuncture? How do Palestinian liberation theologies confront empire, religious nationalism, and the complicity of Western theologies? What anticolonial resources are being mobilized in the ruins brought by Western hegemony and upon which it re/exists? How is the strategic necessity of deterring Western access to capital flow understood and employed by anticolonial resistance forces? Most imperatively, in the face of Western imperialist might, from where comes the strength to resist – to hold to a horizon and right of liberation – and how is the Land spiritually, epistemically, and politically central here?

This special issue seeks to amplify rigorous, transdisciplinary, and politically engaged scholarship that interrogates these intersections. We welcome work that bridges historical analysis with theological urgency and that recognizes scholarship as a form of solidarity with the oppressed.

Suggested Topics (Non-Exhaustive)

- Intellectual and theological critiques of Zionism from Third World Marxist and anticolonial perspectives
- Islamic liberation theologies and anticolonial ethics
- The primacy of Land in anticolonial possibility

- Palestinian Christian liberation theology: history, texts, praxis
- Interfaith solidarity and theologies of resistance
- The centrality of US-led Western imperialism to the Zionist settler-colonial project and climate collapse
- Empire, martyrdom, and sacrificial logics in anticolonial discourse
- The role of Western Christianity in colonial modernity and the Palestinian question
- The politics of martyrdom, witness, and spiritual resistance in Gaza
- The centrality of anti-imperialist feminism in/as anticolonial socialist revolutions
- The Nakba as a political and/or theological event: memory, eschatology, and ongoing catastrophe
- Rural and urban guerrilla warfare: transnational histories, theory, practice, and material connections between organizations across borders
- Theological readings of Land, indigeneity, and settler colonialism
- Feminist and queer interventions in Palestinian liberation theology
- Landless peasant, *campesina*, and agrarian struggles: Land-based resistance, repatriation, blockade
- The historical weight of national wars of liberation and South-led solidarity for Palestine
- Anti-imperial hermeneutics and readings of sacred texts
- Military strategies and theologies of liberation under siege
- South-South solidarities and comparative theologies of liberation
- Boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) campaigns
- The differentiated responsibilities between the oppressed masses of the Global North versus the Global South and imperial methods of repression
- The role of diasporic Palestinian communities in shaping liberationist discourses
- Black-Palestinian theological solidarities and shared anticolonial genealogies
- Art, ritual, and spiritual imagination as forms of anticolonial resistance

Submission Guidelines

We invite contributions from scholars, activists, and artists engaging from a range of disciplines, including but not limited to anti/postcolonial studies, theology, religious studies, political science, philosophy, anthropology, history, and Middle Eastern studies.

Abstracts of no more than **300 words** should be submitted by **Monday, August 25, 2025**, to bjrt@ses.gtu.edu, along with a **brief biographical note (max 150 words)**.

Selected contributors will be invited to **submit full manuscripts (6,000–10,000 words)** by **Monday, October 27, 2025**. All submissions will undergo a double-blind peer-review process.

Critical Ethos

This special issue affirms a commitment to anticolonial, anti-racist, feminist, and de-imperial scholarship. We especially encourage submissions from Palestinian voices, Indigenous scholars, scholars from the Global South, and those working outside traditional academic institutions.

We explicitly reject the weaponization of antisemitism accusations to silence critique of Zionism, Israeli state violence, or Western imperialism. This issue stands in solidarity with Jewish anti-Zionist traditions and liberationist Jewish theologies that share in the struggle against empire, racism, and dispossession. Given the proclivity in even leftist spaces, however, neither this issue nor the *BJRT* will center or amplify anti-Zionist Jewish voices in the intellectual and material liberation struggle of the Palestinian people. Until liberation and return, Palestine and the analyses and experiences of the Palestinian people are the center.

Inquiries and Contact

For questions regarding the special issue, please contact:

bjrt@ses.gtu.edu

“There's a Palestine that dwells inside all of us, a Palestine that needs to be rescued: a free Palestine where all people regardless of color, religion, or race coexist; a Palestine where the meaning of the word "occupation" is only restricted to what the dictionary says rather than those plenty of meanings and connotations of death, destruction, pain, suffering, deprivation, isolation and restrictions that Israel has injected the word with.”

— *Refaat Alareer, Gaza Writes Back*

CORRESPONDING CALL FOR VISUAL ART AND POETRY

There is true power in artistic expression. In conjunction with our *Berkeley Journal of Religion and Theology* Special Issue dedicated for, with, and to Palestine, Anti-Imperialism, and Liberation Theology, we are seeking liberation-oriented artistic works to be featured in this Special Issue. These works should critique oppressive systems, advocate for uncompromising liberation, center the experiences and voices of marginalized communities, exploring subjects of freedom, justice, death, despair, or hope. The art can encompass either visual or poetic forms.

The primary objective of this call for art is to stimulate reflection and inspire action, prompting viewers to challenge unjust systems and strive for a just world, addressing issues of political, economic, social, and racial oppression, calling for a world rid permanently of all ashes of colonialism and greed.

To be considered, please send your poem or a high quality image of your visual art by no later than **Monday, September 22** to the *Berkeley Journal of Religion and Theology: The Journal of the Graduate Theological Union* at bjrt@ses.gtu.edu:

- **Visual Artists:** A high-quality photo of your visual art as a JPEG, along with a brief description of the art itself. The description should at a minimum include title, medium, size, and the year it was created. You are also encouraged and welcome to include a paragraph that gives the viewer insight into the artwork itself. Some questions to consider as you craft your paragraph: What inspired you to create the piece? What techniques did you use and why? What does the piece mean to you?
- **Poets:** A Word document with your poem, including title and year it was written.

In either scenario, **please also include a brief bio of yourself as the poet/artist.**

For **poets**, e-mail your submission and author information together as a .doc or .docx. For **visual artists**, email a separate JPEG for the photo of the visual art and a separate .doc or .docx for the other required information.

We look forward to reading your poems, whether they be free verse, haiku, sonnet, etc., and viewing your visual art, including but not limited to paintings, drawings, collages, mosaics, and sculptures. Please have your submissions in by no later than **Monday, September 22.**