

balanced, objective, moderate; your hope is to be asked back, to consult, to be on a board or prestigious committee, and so to remain within the responsible mainstream; someday you hope to get an honorary degree, a big prize, perhaps even an ambassadorship.

For an intellectual these habits of mind are corrupting par excellence. If anything can denature, neutralize, and finally kill a passionate intellectual life it is the internalization of such habits. Personally I have encountered them in one of the toughest of all contemporary issues, Palestine, where fear of speaking out about one of the greatest injustices in modern history has hobbled, blinkered, muzzled many who know the truth & are in a position to serve it. For despite the abuse & vilification that any outspoken supporter of Palestinian rights & self-determination earns for him or herself, **the truth deserves to be spoken, represented by an unafraid & compassionate intellectual.**

And some of the last words of Rachel Corrie to her parents: I'm witnessing this chronic, insidious genocide & I'm really scared & questioning my fundamental belief in the goodness of human nature. This has to stop. I think it is a good idea for us all to drop everything & **devote our lives to making this stop.** I don't think it's an extremist thing to do anymore. Disbelief & horror is what I feel. Disappointment. I am disappointed that this is the base reality of our world and that we, in fact, participate in it. This is not at all what I asked for when I came into this world. This is not at all what the people here asked for when they came into this world. More big explosions somewhere in the distance outside. When I come back from Palestine, I probably will have nightmares & constantly feel guilty for not being here, but I can channel that into more work. **Coming here is one of the better things I've ever done.** So when I sound crazy, or if the Israeli military should break with their racist tendency not to injure white people, please pin the reason squarely on the fact that I am in the midst of **a genocide which I am also indirectly supporting & for which the US government is largely responsible.**

And if this is what it means to be a Christian, and I believe it does, to speak in the voice of Jeremiah Wright, Edward Said or Rachel Corrie, to remember and take upon us the pain and injustice of others, then **name me a Christian,** a follower of Jesus Christ.

And what of the long line of Jewish prophets that run from Jeremiah, Isaiah & Amos to Hannah Arendt, who reminded the world when the state of Israel was founded that the injustice meted out to the Jews could **not** be rectified by an injustice meted out to

the Palestinians, what of our own Noam Chomsky or Norman Finkelstein, outcasts like all prophets, what of Uri Avnery or the Israeli poet Aharon Shabtai, who writes in his poem "Rypin," the Polish town his father escaped from during the Holocaust, these words: These creatures in helmets & khakis, I say to myself, aren't Jews, in the truest sense of the word. **A Jew doesn't dress himself up with weapons like jewelry,** doesn't believe in the barrel of a gun aimed at a target, but in the thumb of the child who was shot at – in the house through which he comes & goes, **not** in the charge that blows it apart.

The coarse soul and iron first He scorns by nature. He lifts his eyes not to the officer, or the soldier, with his finger on the trigger – but to justice, And he cries out for compassion. Therefore, he won't steal land from its people, and will not starve them in camps. The voice calling for expulsion is heard from the hoarse throat of the oppressor – A sure sign that the Jew has entered a foreign country, and, like Umberto Saba, gone into hiding within his own city. Because of voices like these, father at age sixteen, with your family, you fled Rypin; Now here Rypin is your son.

And if to be Jew means this, and I believe it does, **name me a Jew. Name us all Muslims & Christians & Jews.** Name us as human beings who believe **that when one of us suffers all of us suffer, that we never have to ask for whom the bell tolls, it tolls for us all, that the tears of the mother in Gaza are our tears, that the wails of the bloodied children in Al-Shifa Hospital are the wails of our own children.**

So that you never forget. So that it's seared into your memory...it's worth repeating these truthful lines lest they get lost in **journalistic sorcery:** Let me close with one last name. Let me name those who send these tanks & fighter jets to bomb the concrete hovels in Gaza with families crouching, helpless, inside, let me name those who deny children the right to a childhood & the sick a right to care, those who torture, those who carry out assassinations in hotel rooms in Dubai & on the streets of Gaza City, those who deny the hungry food, the oppressed justice & foul the truth with official propaganda & state lies. Let me call them, **not** by their honorific titles & positions of power, but by the name they have earned for themselves by draining the blood of the innocent into the sands of Gaza/Iraq/Afghanistan.

Let me name them for who they are: **Terrorists**

You cry (and want the world to cry) for 911? You have murdered us on every day of the year for years/decades. Who cries for us? Except God & His angels. Close down your trillion dollar weapons making factories; cleanse your hearts of war. Stop killing us. We will then stop our **justifiable** retaliation. The biblical an eye for an eye!!! Deal or no deal?

The US/British/Israelis **must** be brought up on War Crimes charges...its leaders **hung.**

Terrorists

America/Britain/Israel: Their **REAL** Name

Let me name those who send these tanks & fighter jets to **bomb** the concrete hovels in Gaza with families crouching, helpless, inside, let me name those who **deny** children the right to a childhood & the sick a right to care, those who **torture**, those who carry out **assassinations** in hotel rooms in Dubai & on the streets of Gaza City, those who **deny** the hungry food, the oppressed justice & **foul the truth** with official propaganda & state lies. Let me call them, **not** by their honorific titles (presidents & prime ministers) & positions of power (generals & officers), but by the name they have earned for themselves by draining the blood of the innocent into the sands of Gaza, Iraq, Afghanistan. **Let me name them for who they are: Terrorists.** And if you still haven't got the message: The American/British/Israeli gov'ts & the Pentagon are **terrorists.** Ahhh...how good it feels to tell the truth! The majority of Muslims are **not** terrorists...we are **tourists.**

On spaceship earth...our destination...Gardens underneath which beautiful rivers flow. **70 Virgins in Paradise?** Tempting as that sounds our struggle on earth is for the **Pleasure** of God. That's more than sufficient for us.

But you, the **devilish American/British terrorist** getting your sick & depraved pleasure from **raping the Muslim virgins.** **VIRGINS:** an endangered species in your countries so you grab with your filthy hands the innocent ones of Muslim lands. How many does each soldier rape? 70 or more. And how young? 5/10/15 years old?

You were telling us that you are civilized? We want to believe you! Bastards!!! **Terrorists!!!**

Chris Hedges (as brave an American as they come). To speak the truth in the face of American/Israeli tyranny is to be like the magicians in Pharaoh's Congress. When they saw the Clear Signs & recognized the Truth they cried out: "By Him Who has created us, we can never prefer you after we have seen the Clear Signs. Therefore you may do your worst, for at most you can pass judgment concerning this worldly life. We have believed in God so that He may pardon our errors & forgive us the sins of sorcery which you forced us to practice." Quran: 20:65

When I lived in Jerusalem I had a friend who confided in me that as a college student in the United States she attended events like these, wrote up reports & submitted them to the Israel consulate for money. It would be naive to assume this Israeli practice has ended. So, I want first to address that person, or those persons, who may have come to this event for the purpose of reporting on it to the Israeli government.

I would like to remind them that it is they who hide in darkness. It is we who stand in the light. It is they who deceive. It is we who openly proclaim our compassion & demand justice for those who suffer in Gaza. We are **not** afraid to name our names. We are **not** afraid to name our beliefs. And we know something you perhaps sense with a kind of dread. As Martin Luther King said, **the arc of the moral universe is long but it bends toward justice**, and that arc is descending with a righteous fury that is thundering down upon the US/Israeli governments.

You may have the **American** bulldozers, **American** planes & **American** helicopters that smash houses to rubble, the commandos who descend from ropes on ships & kill unarmed civilians on the high seas as well as in Gaza, the vast power of the state behind you. We have only our hands & hearts & voices. But note this. **Note this well**. It is you who are afraid of us. We are **not** afraid of you. We will keep working & praying, keep protesting & denouncing, keep pushing up against your navy & your army, with nothing but our bodies, until we prove that the force of morality & justice is greater than hate & violence. And then, when there is freedom in Gaza, we will forgive... you. We will ask you to break bread with us. We will bless your children even if you did **not** find it in your heart to bless the children of those you occupied. Maybe it is this

forgiveness, maybe it is the final, insurmountable power of love, which **unsettles** you the most.

And so when some seek to name names & others seek to hide names, let me do some naming. Let me call things by their proper names. Let me cut through the jargon, the euphemisms we use to mask human suffering & war crimes. Let me **expose the sins of journalistic sorcery**. "**Closures**" **mean** heavily armed soldiers who ring Palestinian ghettos, deny those trapped inside food or basic amenities – including toys, razors, chocolate, fishing rods & musical instruments – and carry out a brutal policy of collective punishment, which is a crime under international law. "**Disputed land**" **means** land stolen from the Palestinians. "**Clashes**" **mean**, almost always, the killing or wounding of unarmed Palestinians, including children. "**Jewish neighborhoods in the West Bank**" **mean** fortress-like compounds that serve as military outposts in the campaign of ethnic cleansing of Palestinians. "**Targeted assassinations**" **mean** extrajudicial murder. "**Air strikes on militant bomb-making posts**" **mean** the dropping of huge iron fragmentation bombs from fighter jets on densely crowded neighborhoods that always leaves scores of dead and wounded, whose only contact with a bomb was the one manufactured in the United States and given to the Israeli Air Force as part of our complicity in the occupation. "**The peace process**" **means** the cynical, one-way route to the **crushing of the Palestinians as a people**.

These are some names. There are others. Dr. Izzeldin Abuellaish in the late afternoon of Jan. 16, 2009, had a pair of Israeli tank shells rip through a bedroom in his Gaza apartment, killing three of his daughters – Bessan, Mayar and Aya – along with a niece, Noor. *Before reading further just contemplate over what YOU would do if they were your daughters & niece*. "I have the right to feel angry," says Abuellaish. "But I ask, 'Is this the right way?' So many people were expecting me to hate. My answer to them is **I shall not hate**." "Whom to hate?" asks the 55-year-old gynecologist, who was born a Palestinian refugee. "My Israeli friends & colleagues? The Israeli babies I have delivered?"

The Palestinian poet Taha Muhammad Ali wrote this in his poem "Revenge": At times...I wish I could meet in a duel; the man who killed my father; and razed our home, expelling me into a narrow country. And if he killed me, I'd rest at last, and if I were ready – I would take my revenge! But if it came to light, when my rival appeared, that he had a mother waiting for him, or a father who'd put his right hand over the heart's place in his chest whenever his son was late

even by just a quarter-hour for a meeting they'd set – then I would **not** kill him, even if I could. Likewise...I would **not** murder him if it were soon made clear that he had a brother or sisters who loved him & constantly longed to see him. Or if he had a wife to greet him & children who couldn't bear his absence & whom his gifts would thrill.

Or if he had friends or companions, neighbors he knew or allies from prison or a hospital room, or classmates from his school...asking about him & sending him regards. But if he turned out to be on his own – cut off like a branch from a tree – without a mother or father, with neither a brother nor sister, wifeless, without a child, and without kin or neighbors or friends, colleagues or companions, then I'd add not a thing to his pain within that aloneness – not the torment of death, and not the sorrow of passing away. Instead I'd be content to ignore him when I passed him by on the street – as I convinced myself that paying him no attention in itself was a kind of revenge.

And if these words are what it means to be a Muslim, and I believe it does, **name me too a Muslim**, a follower of the Prophet, peace be upon him.

The boat to Gaza will be named "The Audacity of Hope." But these are not Barack Obama's words. These are the words of my friend the Rev. Jeremiah Wright. They are borrowed words. And Jerry Wright is not afraid to speak the truth, not afraid to tell us to **stop confusing God with America**. "America bombed Hiroshima, America bombed Nagasaki, and America nuked far more than the thousands killed in New York & the Pentagon, and we never batted an eye," Rev. Wright said. "We have supported state terrorism against the Palestinians & black South Africans, and now we are indignant because the stuff we have done overseas is now brought right back into our own front yards. America's chickens are coming home to roost." America you're evil to the core.

Or the words of Edward Said: Nothing in my view is more reprehensible than those habits of mind in the intellectual that induce avoidance, that characteristic turning away from a difficult and principled position which you know to be the right one, but which you decide **not** to take. You do **not** want to appear too political; you are afraid of seeming controversial; you want to keep a reputation for being

Be upholders of Justice, bearing witness for God alone

Quran, 4:135