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BY MANUEL GARCÍA, JR.
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Thoughts on Ethnic Cleansing in Palestine

For Americans, Stan Goff perfectly summarized the situation in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of East Jerusalem today, and in Palestine generally for the last 54 years:

“Establishment Democrats support ethnic cleansing... There is no Israeli-Palestinian ‘conflict.’ It’s the decades-long military occupation and ethnic cleansing of Palestine. I know I sound like a broken record, but my [social media] feed keeps filling up with this weasel worded bullshit that assigns some utterly bullshit equivalency between occupier and occupied. No reasonable and honest person who is even superficially familiar with this issue can describe Israel as anything but an Apartheid state. An Apartheid state that is sustained and protected in its racist aggressions by the United States government with your taxes. Democrats and Republicans. Heretofore I will unfollow anyone who posts this kind of sly ‘moral equivalency’ trash. And no, it is not fucking ‘complicated’; it’s ignorance or cowardice, and it is objectively lending support to this lawless fascist state. That is all.”

The American “political class” runs a white supremacy state; to them, a threat to white supremacy anywhere is a threat to white supremacy everywhere. Hence the knee-jerk fealty to ethnic cleansing in Palestine by Zionists.

This is as it has always been and remains regarding “others” in the territory of the United States and the Western Hemisphere, with: the Amerindians, Blacks (long held in slavery, and ever discriminated against), Mexicans (the American West north of the Rio Grande is Occupied Mexico), and many other designated apart-from-white people.

With the growth since the 19th century of the fossil-fueled industrial power of American white supremacy came the global reach of its campaign of conquest: the Caribbean (1898,

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and 1959+), Central and South America (from Smedley Butler to Kennedy-Johnson, and Reagan, et al.), Southeast Asia (Vietnam+), South Africa (Kissinger, Reagan, the 1980s for Angola, Namibia, the U.S. support for South African apartheid — I knew a “jackal”: a retired unacknowledged U.S. mercenary-assassin who worked for S.A. in those years).

The World is “the enemy” of American white supremacy, just as Palestine is “the enemy” of Zionism. And Zionists have paid their way into being “honorary white people” — an apt Goffism characterizing our apart-from-white-Christian domestic compradores serving our domestic white supremacy settler colonialism — who are part of that American white supremacy establishment; and have financially metastasized themselves into the careerism of that narcissistic and intrinsically racist political class.

“Indeed I tremble for my country when [I] reflect that God is just: that his justice cannot sleep for ever: that considering numbers, nature and natural means only, a revolution of the wheel of fortune, an exchange of situation, is among possible events: that it may become probable by supernatural interference!” — Thomas Jefferson (Notes on the State of Virginia).

But he still kept his slaves to the bitter end, banking on God’s justice continuing to sleep. And such is the attitude of the anguished self-absolved collectively guiltless perpetrators of today, and which drives their hypocritical equivocations and torturously convoluted hyperbole in defense of continuing with the slow-motion genocide in Palestine (as in Xinjiang, as in...) of the “others” to be dispossessed and discarded as fast as the marketplace of world public moral consciousness will bear.

For me it all begs the question: when do we reach the point where we deserve our own destruction?

The phrase “never again” should have been emblazoned on human memory many times in the past, for example searingly by Guernica in 1937, but tragically it never seems to fully catch hold as a guiding principle for human beings.

To my mind, one significant impetus to the eruption of World War II in Europe in 1939 was the failure of the Democracies including the United States to defend the Spanish Republic and stamp out fascism in Spain during 1936-1939. The retreat into nationalist comfort (as today with vaccine nationalism) and ‘the Democracies’ not-so-covert anti-socialist collaboration with the fascists in Spain, Italy and Germany during the 1930s, doomed them to be sucked into the genocidal maelström of 1939-1945. And we are yet not free of that poison. [1]

While “collective guilt” of the German people for the crimes of the Nazis was officially disavowed by the triumphant United Nations, after 8 May 1945, in the vital interests of pacifying, stabilizing and rebuilding Germany and the rest of devastated Europe without a resurgence of fascism — which itself was first sparked by the draconian punishment of Germany after World War I — it nevertheless was a moral truth. That the German people of the 1930s and 1940s (with the exception of an incredibly brave and noble minority) overwhelmingly supported the Nazi regime, is plain fact. [2]

But such collective guilt cannot be assigned to the children of those times, who have strived so vigorously to create a socially enlightened postwar Germany, a nation that is far more forthright in acting to compensate for the wrongs of its past than the United States has ever been about its Amerindian Genocide or its Black Slavery and Jim Crow (which latter was so instructive to the Nazis fashioning their race laws of 1933).

But such collective guilt *can* be assigned today to the self-styled Jeffersonians who are the adult perpetrators, enablers, and equivalents of 1930s “good Germans” in Israel and America (and China, etc.) acquiescing to the slo-mo genocides of the moment, like the vividly repulsive violent expropriations in Sheikh Jarrah, East Jerusalem, and the aerial bombings in Gaza (84 years after the bombing of Guernica).

Can we be so sure that “God’s justice” will conveniently continue to sleep for us, as the Jeffersonian white supremacists hoped in the 18th and 19th centuries, and our American exceptionalists and Zionists hope today? Can we be so sure that our white supremacist equivocations today will escape retribution as was visited upon the European and American democracies, and on perfidious Russian Communism [3], after their failures to support the obvious moral imperatives of defending designated outcast “others” from persecution: European Jews (1933), Ethiopia (1935), Spain (1936), China (1937), Czechoslovakia (1938), and Poland (1939)?

In fact, “God’s justice” looms before us and without pity on even our children, in the forms of the climate crisis and the crisis of the destruction of Nature and habitability on Planet Earth. Today’s children have no share in the collective guilt of their parents and grandparents for creating and expanding that planetary crisis — by the decades-long fossil-fueled orgy of exclusionary industrialized capitalism in all its forms — yet those children are facing the brunt of these accelerating catastrophes. That bald fact is pointedly stated by Greta Thunberg, voicing the judgment by humanity’s robbed future on its greedy present that is also its future discredited past.

To extract ourselves from the climate crisis would require widespread cooperative altruistic action over the long term. None of those four qualities: “widespread,” “cooperative,” “altruistic,” “long-term,” have been exhibited simultaneously by human civilization in the past. The most accurate guesses about humanity’s future are likely to be arrived at by using the imagination without invoking any of those four qualities.

To salvage optimism in these times it is necessary to realize that there are no physical barriers nor prohibitive scientific “laws” preventing humanity from exhibiting “widespread cooperative altruistic action over the long term,” even starting tomorrow, to effectively and justly stop the slo-mo genocides underway now and the crisis of accelerating bio-inhospitality, and to compensate for the wrongs of the past. Such optimism, though logically limited by “realistic” thinking, is essential for heartening and motivating the people seeking to expand the scope of those collective altruistic actions. Greta and her generation deserve our best efforts — for life.

Even without possessing any political power or impressive wealth, we ‘ordinary, everyday adult people’ can individually add our mite to such good collective action by disavowing collaborationist lies (say it: the Israeli occupation of Palestine is apartheid, and ethnic cleansing), by speaking the truth plainly and without fear (“You say that you love your children above everything else. And yet you are stealing their future”) [4], by being honest witnesses (#SayHerName, Breonna Taylor and at least 103 others) [5], and by not allowing our words to be self-censored nor our attitudes to be submissively polite so as to cloak the repulsive moral nakedness of “our” political leaders, emperors and parasites.

[My thanks to Kathryn Morse, Stan Goff, and Louis Proyect.]

Notes.

[1] “The Silence of Others” is an intense (especially for me) documentary about the efforts of the survivors of torture and persecution by Franco’s fascistic dictatorship in Spain (1939-1975), to gain justice.

The Spanish state, with many Francoists still ensconced in positions of authority and power, and shielded by the Amnesty law of 1977, resist tooth and nail all judicial efforts to provide such justice for the victims of these crimes, via the internationally recognized (and very little adhered to) judicial principle of universal jurisdiction for war crimes and crimes against humanity, and there being no statute of limitations for prosecuting them.

My father (a Spaniard born in Cuba) had an uncle, a violinist in a symphony, jailed by the Franco regime after the Civil War (he had regained his liberty by the late 1960s).

The Spanish Civil War continues to cast a long, long shadow on the character of Spaniards, and on the character of humanity. And there are too many new reflections of that cancerous fascism flickering on today around the world.

The Silence of Others

<https://thesilenceofothers.com/>

[2] The Accountant of Auschwitz

<http://www.accountantofauschwitz.com/>

Prosecuting Evil: The Extraordinary World of Ben Ferencz

<https://www.netflix.com/title/81070008>

Benjamin Ferencz

<https://benferencz.org/>

[3]

The Nazi-Soviet Pact: A Betrayal of Communists by Communists

[An excerpt from Bini Adamczak’s book “Yesterday’s Tomorrow: On the Loneliness of Communist Specters and the Reconstruction of the Future.”]

<https://thereader.mitpress.mit.edu/the-nazi-soviet-pact-a-betrayal-of-communists-by-communists/>

Intense. In the 1980s I read about the prisoner exchanges in 1939 of escaped German communists (antifascists) — and veterans of the Republican (socialist) side in the 1936-1939 Spanish Civil War — pulled out of asylum in Russia and given back to the Gestapo, and escaped Russian anticommunists (czarists and fascists) pulled out of asylum in Germany and given back to the NKVD. According to books by Michael Voslensky (Nomenklatura: The Soviet Ruling Class), Roy Medvedev (Let History Judge) and other similar authors whom I have now forgotten: the NKVD took the Communist Party membership cards away from their communist now-prisoners, and then with a Gestapo officer present verified the identity of each individual to check them off a Gestapo ‘shopping list,’ while similarly verifying the identity of an anticommunist prisoner being given to the NKVD in exchange. Then both the Gestapo and the NKVD led their repatriated prisoners away for executions in private.

The reason that Communist Party membership cards were removed by the NKVD, excommunicating those individuals from the CP, was so that the Gestapo would not be shooting “communists”: those in good standing with the Stalinist party of that time.

Very large gears turn in the machinery of power, indeed, and are lubricated with the blood of many lives whose identities have been erased from memory.

In the 2000s I met a woman who is a Spaniard born in Arkhangelsk (in West Arctic Russia), as her parents were Spanish communists who escaped Franco's fascist Spain on the defeat of the Spanish Republicans in 1939. Her daughter and my youngest were friends in a girls chorus in San Francisco. She said that Stalin wanted the Spanish Communists as far from Europe (western, southern, central) as possible. She is a survivor (and very Russian), and obviously did not believe in any ideology. She made it real for me, without having to say very much.

All of this literature about the largely unnamed and long forgotten victims of betrayed better futures, is also about the historical achievements of the successful practitioners of the Arthashastra, The Prince, The Pentagon Papers, and the more recent derivatives of such manuals of "statecraft."

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