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Racism, Nationalism and Revolt

Julian Langer

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“The idea that an understanding of the genocide, that a memory of the holocausts, can only lead people to want to dismantle the system, is erroneous. The continuing appeal of nationalism suggests that the opposite is truer, namely that an understanding of genocide has led people to mobilize genocidal armies, that the memory of holocausts has led people to perpetrate holocausts.”

- Fredy Perlman, The Continuing Appeal of Nationalism

“Patriotism assumes that our globe is divided into little spots, each one surrounded by an iron gate. Those who have had the fortune of being born on some particular spot, consider themselves better, nobler, grander, more intelligent than the living beings inhabiting any other spot. It is, therefore, the duty of everyone living on that chosen spot to fight, kill, and

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die in the attempt to impose his superiority upon all the others.”

- Emma Goldman, Patriotism: A Menace To Liberty

“As it was impossible to prevent the massacre, and as it is impossible to stem it, much as we would, I believe that we ought to ask if we have not been deceiving ourselves until now about the value of our propaganda, as well as the way we have gone about it.”

- Emile Armand, The Great Debacle

Zionist nationalism and the current efforts in technon-capitalism are undeniably revolting. Feelings of disgust for the news of bombs being used to annihilate the living and the grotesque productivity of war machinery, which profiteers from slaughter, are present and real experiences that are no doubt felt by many. These sensations, like pain from a cut that needs to be cleaned and dressed to avoid infection and preserve the wounded’s life, communicate that this is at odds with our wellbeing and that response is needed. The question that I wonder is that of; how can this be responded to, really?

The daily spectacle of death and killing seemingly succeeds at alienating individuals from considerations of how they may respond through demanding reaction and inspiring reactivity, and succeeds in largely nothing else. Bullshit collectivism of “us” vs “them”, “good” vs “bad” reduce the complexity and interconnectivity of lives, repressions, rebellions and efforts in dialectical annihilation. The racist reactivity of those inspired to engage in anti-Arab and/or anti-semitic abuses, justified under the rhetoric of Cause, perpetuate narratives used to justify these efforts in slaughter. Activist reactivity of social media and protest performances of Cause sublimate and waste energy and effort that could be responsive.

onistic revolt. What may grow, I do not know. If Zion is the ending of empire, I am sure that I will never see Zion. I find great joy in the spaces that are not assimilated into the empire of industrial productivity here, that survive not-separate and connected to empire, but as resurgent space, differentiating and rebelling through refusing to conform to the machinery. Not historicising systematisations and Cause. My desire is that these seeds grow revolts as life, rebelling before the machinery of industrial slaughter and totalitarian annihilation. I do not affirm this to push pacifist politics oriented towards ending conflict, coming to peace and seeking to tolerate the cancerous presences of racism and nationalism. The preservation of ourselves and those we love when resisting racist and nationalist abuses undoubtedly calls for conflict, self-defence and force. Equally the militant fetishisation of the technologies of contemporary warfare, that individuals who align themselves with both the left and right frequently idolise, revolts me intensely. From a desire to quench flames of militarist-fetishisation whose spectacle empowers the ideologies of racism and nationalism; with these seeds of revolt, I want to sow the seed that there is nothing attractive about guns or bombs, and nothing to be believed in their promises.

notice that I feel immediate visceral discomfort when reflecting upon my living upon this archipelago in the North Sea primarily due to diaspora, amidst a largely homogenous white local Human population; many of whom are intensely sympathetic to British nationalism (another head upon the aforementioned hydra) and aesthetically drawn towards its grotesque celebration, through patriotic displays. It is revolting that individuals racially categorised as Jews and Arabs, categories that exist due to the existence of racism, have and are experiencing abuses that are justified under the ridiculous Causal logic of their being accountable for the actions of individuals they are supposedly bound to through biology and/or culture, here and in other locations. I feel revolted and I feel able to respond in ways that surmount to more than this act of writing and sharing thought and experience. How I actively respond to racism is to seek to dialogically wound it as I encounter it, with the awareness that I do not have the power to annihilate racism, and within the wound plant seeds of anti-racist thought and perspective – this might be through sharing experience or story or through simple refusal to engage with racist ideas. With this in mind and with the hope that I might have somewhat wounded the cancer of racist-thought through this piece already; I feel to affirm that the racism of Jews either being obligated to support or decry the Zionist nationalist state of Israel is a revolting racial-expectation and I am thoroughly disgusted by those on the right and the left seeking to position me or any other Jews as beholden to that Leviathan. Likewise, no individual is beholden to applaud or apologise for the actions of Hamas or any other extension of the Islamist political machine, and the expectation that any individual categorised as Arab, Muslim or both, need to is just as vile as the racial expectations placed upon Jews.

To put simply the desires I am seeking to share and affirm here; my want is to not feed and fuel the cancerous presence of nationalism and racism, but to wound and plant seeds of antag-

Any individual's ability to respond to any situation, environment, circumstance; what choices they have the power to engage in and live through; is their freedom and responsibility – including this situation of Leviathanic slaughtering. I am in no way able to actually respond to the matter of bombs flying through any direct activities or actions, without abandoning and renouncing my life here under the justification of Cause, as I am not in the lands named Palestine or Israel. I could seek to sublimate my energies through political systematisations and manipulations, or performative protests, but political-pessimism inclines me to the belief that such efforts are fruitless and are roads leading to nothing more than assimilation within the machinery of mass-annihilation – this reaction to my powerlessness to directly impact the lives of those living amidst this militarist effort would seemingly help no one who I care about, including myself. Affirming how I am powerless brings my attention to what power I do have to affect those I am in relationship with, including the geographically and ecologically distant relationships I have with those living in the areas called Palestine and Israel. I have the power to write this and seek to respond to the conversation regarding this situation. Conversation and writing are activities that I see as direct, in as much as they can directly impact on individual perspectives. The matters that I feel able to respond to here are that of Zionist and Palestinian nationalisms, and spectacle fuelled racism; which are obviously interconnected and non-separate, while being differentiable aspects of this situation.

The hideousness of Zionist nationalism, which seemingly functions to support the machinery of Euro-American industrial-militarist agendas, is apparent. To consider this as more or less hideous because the Human population of Israel is largely that of Jews, who either have a right to behave in such a violent manner or ought to know better due to having experienced historic abuses, strikes me as simply racist expectations that are better served being thrown to the ground

to rot and decay – any individual who has experienced abuse may well develop a desire to not abuse others or develop the cruelest of fetishes(, or any other response that I have neglected to mention), and while I certainly would rather they overcame abuse with an aesthetic preference for kindness, it strikes me as utter bad faith to assume that any individual would be determined by such experiences one way or any other. The question arises within me of “what is a nation?” The word “nation” could be easily replaced for that of “state”, “Leviathan” and many others, though I will mostly stick with “nation” here. To my eyes a nation is not a land or the living beings captured and caged within its totality. Rather it is comprised of architectural constructions, industrial apparatus and roads linking settlements, Earth torn, ripped, scarred and mutilated to utter ruin; which Human individuals living within are largely indoctrinated into believing that their lives are dependent on and determined by, through psycho-engineering efforts that begin in early childhood. Lets not pretend that the Zionist nationalism of the Israeli state and those who worship before it is the same as the Zionism of a diasporic population, scattered from the land where they first came together as tribe, desiring a return and the end of empires who are nought but revolting machines, without life of their own. And if Zion is the collapse and ending of empire, rather than a particular geographic space that one population may form a settlement on with the permission of God, then a return to Zion is certainly something that I desire, whilst I am revolted by the political machine of Zionism. To my eyes, the nationalism of the Israeli state is not above or below any other in some grotesque hierarchy of more or less desirable abuses, in much the same way that, while there are cancers that are more harmful and pose greater existential risk, I do not desire the presence of any cancer within any of those who I love and care for. Rather, much like the disease of civilisation that

cancer is, I desire the end of nationalism and the harms it is responsible for.

My mind now turns to the nationalism that seeks to construct a Palestinian state to re-colonise the area. All too often amidst activist conversations and within the propaganda of those who wish to voice opposition to the nationalist activities of Israel, Palestinian nationalism is fetishised and romanticised as an anti-colonialist effort. This propaganda fails to affirm that the organisation Hamas, which champions Palestinian nationalism and is frequently upheld as freedom fighters, is an extension of the Islamist political machine The Muslim Brotherhood, whose aim is to re-establish the theocracy of caliphates, under the dogmatic rule of sharia law. This entirely strikes me as desires for the ending of the violences of the Zionist political machine being hoodwinked and assimilated into the ideology of Islamist theocracy, without awareness of what is happening, due to being blinded by spectacle. There may well be individuals who read this and retort that Palestinian’s have every right to form a state as they wish, perhaps even suggesting that Israeli’s will deserve the experience of living under such a colonial machine, with some Marxian logic of the dictatorship of the oppressed being teleologically justifiable. To this, I question in what ways is a state desirable and am inclined to thinking that this is merely another road to cruelty, abuse, slaughter and nothing of liberation. Rather than an expanding Islamist empire that seeks to wage war with the empire of Euro-Americanism, like heads on the hydra that is totalitarianism snapping at each other; I desire the ending of empire and the ending of nationalist violence. My pessimism affirms that this is something that I will not live to see, a desire in me that will not be satisfied. Regardless though, I am still choosing to live revolted by and in-revolt before all nationalisms, including both those of Zionist and Palestinian nationalisms.

The matter of racism is less distant than that of the violences of a militarist conflict well over 2,000 miles away and I