

CHOICE BETWEEN BARABAS AND BARABAS

(November 3, 2002)

CNN reported (4.30 a.m. September 15, 2002) that some living persons heard their names called among the dead at ceremonies held to remember the victims of 9/11. Happily, the list of victims was reduced, one by one.

I replayed in my brain a scenario where victims were not so lucky. In the days of slavery, medicine was not as advanced as it is today. Plagues and contagious diseases took their toll, and it is conceivable that someone in a coma could be pronounced dead, and be buried accordingly.

From the Folklore Archives of Trinidad & Tobago I recall a song that described such a situation. Those who died from the plague were being carted away to be buried. Among the dead one slave opened his eyes and soon realized that he was alive at his own funeral procession, crude and unceremonious.

In anguish, he cried out:

"Massa me ain dead yet!"

"Carry um go long!" replied Massa.

It seemed easier to bury the slave alive than to amend the list of dead slaves. It would be an admittance that a mistake was made.

We make mistakes either because we are human or because we are fraudulent.

Say, 3,025 people perished on 9/11. That was 3,025 too many. It is not known how many Afghans were killed, equally innocently, by American bombs in retaliation for the 9/11 attacks. Those include the forty-something slaughtered at a wedding ceremony and celebration. Why is the world so callously silent on those atrocities? Such thunderous silence is not golden. It may easily amount to fraud.

I do not want you to hijack any plane in which I am traveling. I condemn 9/11 and the death of innocent people. Equally vehemently, I do not want to die in your retaliatory, vengeful effort.

On March 22, 2002 the estimate of those who lost their lives in the terror of 9/11 stood at 3,100. President Jimmy Carter said (on March 22, CNN) that was the figure - 3,100-that die of AIDS every twelve hours, every day, in Africa alone. Since this threatens all the world, what is the rest of us, especially the world's richest nation and sole super power, doing about it? There is a time when it amounts to fraud if we behave recklessly not caring what happens to our neighbour - and our own people by extension.

Remember the tragic incident that occurred at the UNION CARBIDE chemical plant at Bhopal, India, about 18 years ago. For those among us who still believe that the foreign investor - messiah will come and save us, please remember that the messiah sometimes brings little money and lower standards. So that, for instance, it is on record that Union Carbide's plant in

West Virginia, USA, had superior safety standards compared to its plant at Bhopal. That is fraud.

The gas leak at Bhopal killed 3,000 at once. Another 10,000 people died later and others are still dying from associated diseases. In 1999 Union Carbide agreed with the Indian government to pay some US\$470 million by way of compensation. To this day former Chairman Warren Henderson is a fugitive from justice, and lives comfortably at his home in the USA.

US\$2,000 in compensation was paid to the relatives of each Indian who died from the accident. US\$500 was paid to each victim that suffered exposure. This is a fraudulent price to pay for a human life!!

By contrast, some relatives of victims of 9/11 are planning litigation against sundry parties and are claiming damages of a trillion (plus) USA dollars for the lives of their loved ones.

If 3,025 people perished on 9/11, you can work that out to be some, say, three hundred and thirty million USA dollars per person. It seems that there is a shameful and unbridgeable difference between the price of an Indian Soul and the price of a 9/11 Soul.

Secretary Rumsfeld, testifying before a Senate Committee as to why the USA must make war on Iraq at this time was interrupted by three women protesters who said that the Administration's eagerness to make war had nothing to do with security; it had to do with control of Iraqi oil. They urged that the USA should take the option of letting Inspectors go into Iraq.

Mr. Adel al-Jubeir, a leading Saudi adviser told CNN that all the bombs dropped in the Gulf War (1990) destroyed NOT A SINGLE CHEMICAL OR BIOLOGICAL WEAPON. Those destroyed were destroyed by the Inspectors. This would be an unassailable argument were we dealing with rational minds. But Bush and his war-hawks seem as irrational as they accuse Saddam Hussein to be. They give the impression that whatever Iraq offers or does, they have made an irrevocable decision to bomb Iraq.

Mr. Denis HALLIDAY, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General was sent on assignment to Iraq in 1997. He resigned in 1998, calling the UN Security Council action in Iraq "genocide". Thanks to such action, 500,000 Iraqi children died who would not have died before the war. The Assistant Secretary-General who succeeded Mr. Halliday, also resigned in protest, and for the same reason. What does it say about us that there is a thunderous and universal silence on such genocide?

The American government is bullying the rest of the world to nod to American methods and wishes. They have not substantiated their charges against Iraq. When asked for the evidence Bush and his war-hawks plead "national security". Bush quoted the International Atomic Energy Agency to show that Iraq could acquire nuclear weapons, given a certain condition, in six months. The agency denied that there was any such report.

Scott Ritter was a UN Weapons Inspector in Iraq (1991 to 1998). He says (Sept. 9, 2002, CNN) that United States intelligence on Iraq has been "very wrong" and "uniformly incorrect". Some accuse him of being used by the Iraqis; but in my opinion, he sounds more credible than his accusers. Ritter also reminds us that American Presidents have lied before in order to facilitate a declaration of war (Gulf of Tomkin incident, for example).

In September I read this on Newsbar, CNN Headline News:

"NOT NICE...Canadian Prime Minister Says American Arrogance Towards Poor Nations Caused 9/11."

And on September 19, 2002, Ari FLEISCHER, Spokesman for President Bush, told a press conference he could not understand the reason for an "outrageous" statement made by the Justice Minister of Germany. She had remarked that Mr. Bush was behaving like Hitler.

Fleischer did not say that the overwhelming majority of earthlings DO NOT want the USA unilaterally to wage war on Iraq. Some say there is a major correlation between the personal interest in oil of Bush and Cheney, and their determination to bomb Iraq. This would amount to a fraudulent conflict of interest.

The above is my way of saying:

- *President Bush and his colleagues should respect world opinion.*
- *USA should use its vast resources not to make war but to assist in problem resolution at home and abroad.*
- *In many ways the war on terror is itself terror.*

*America paints Saddam as worse than Barabas; but Bush is no Christ. **Choosing between Saddam and Bush seems an unsatisfactory choice between Barabas and Barabas.***

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