

Civilization, genocide style

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Theme: [Crimes against Humanity](#)

“I think it would be a good idea” - Mahatma Gandhi, when asked what he thought about Western civilization

Ann Clwyd is the Prime Minister Blair’s Human Rights Envoy in Iraq. On November 15th, 2005, interviewed by Jeremy Paxman at BBC 2 Newsnight, she said:

“We have been trying to train the Iraqis in human rights. We’ve set up conferences for the Iraqis on human rights with all the NGOs. We’ve been trying our very best to get human rights into the Iraqi psyche. We want to help them I think” (1)

When I first heard Ann Clwyd’s words, I thought I had missed something. So, I went on line and watched the programme again. No, I had not missed anything. The words were still there, as clear as they could be.

“And what of human rights?” asked novelist Haifa Zangana last April in the Guardian: An estimated 60% of Iraqi families still depend completely on the monthly food ration. A recent UN human rights commission report says that malnutrition among Iraqi children under the age of five nearly doubled last year to 7.7%, and blamed the war for this deterioration. More than a quarter of Iraqi children do not get enough food to eat.

Four million Iraqis are still in exile, and more are joining their ranks. Many academics, scientists and consultants are leaving for the fear of assassination or kidnapping. According to the interior ministry, 5,000 Iraqis were kidnapped in the last 15 months. Roadside bombs, mortar assaults, shootings by US troops and suicide attacks are all part of daily life.

There are 17,000 prisoners, mostly under US control. Two new prisons have been built by US contractors to accommodate 4,000 new prisoners in the south. A recently published Human Rights Watch report documents the torture and ill-treatment of members of political and armed groups, the arbitrary arrest and torture of criminal suspects, and the torture of children held in adult facilities.

There are reports, too, of women being taken as hostages by US soldiers to persuade fugitive male relatives to surrender. Amnesty International has condemned this, reminding governments that “it is against international law to take civilians and use them as bargaining chips”. The blockade of food and destruction of water reservoirs during the siege of Falluja was “used as a weapon of war”, a UN expert said in a report to the organisation’s human rights commission.

Banned weapons have been used in Iraq too, as the US military has been forced to admit,

including the MK-77 incendiary bomb, a modern form of napalm.

Britain is party to an international convention banning such weapons where they may cause harm to civilians and yet, during the assault on Falluja, British soldiers were placed under the command of a US military that has no such qualms. Reports have emerged of melted bodies in the city, a crime that has been met with silence not just by Tony Blair but also by Ann Clwyd, his human rights envoy to Iraq. (2)

Ann Clwyd's words show once again that the racist and colonialist mentality, responsible for some among the most atrocious crimes against humanity, is still in power. "I do not understand the squeamishness about the use of gas. I am strongly in favour of using poisonous gas against uncivilised tribes", said Winston Churchill in 1919.

But these murderous weapons are still being used on civilians in our days. And with them more expensive and sophisticated ones, built with our money and coming from the minds of psychopaths in charge of our lives.

In 1920, Gertrude Bell wrote: "Mesopotamia is not a civilised state".

I read this in the same article that celebrated her on Wednesday, March 12, 2003. This article ends with this paragraph: The Iraq of Gertrude Bell had lasted 37 years. The Ba'ath finally seized power in 1968, built a prosperous despotism in the 1970s but destroyed itself and the country in hopeless military adventures in Iran in the 1980s and Kuwait in 1990. As of yesterday, Ba'athist Iraq had lasted 35 years. (3) Is anything missing here?

Another liberal (sic!) voice wrote the following this past September: In his Times piece, Vincent accused British forces of failing to teach Iraqi police democratic values. Vincent was wrong. There has been an effort to instill Western values in recruits. "We're trying to make these people accountable to the law, firstly," says Arnie Morgan, 51, a British police trainer from Armor Group, a firm that employs civilian policemen as advisers in Iraq. (4) More than five hundred years ago, Christopher Columbus wrote about the new (sic!) world: "[They] are so naïve and so free with their possessions that no one who has not witnessed them would believe it. When you ask for something they have, they never say no. To the contrary, they offer to share with anyone...".

The much-celebrated "hero" continues: "They would make fine servants... With fifty men we could subjugate them all and make them do whatever we want".

In 1937, another hero (so many heroes!), wrote:

"I do not admit... that a great wrong has been done to the Red Indians of America, or the black people of Australia... by the fact that a stronger race, a higher grade race... has come in and taken its place." (Churchill to Palestine Royal Commission, 1937) In 1996, the liberal (sic!) Madeleine Albright - US Ambassador at the United Nations and soon to become Secretary of State under President Clinton - said about the half million children murdered by the UN sanctions against Iraq: "I think this is a very hard choice, but the price - we think the price is worth it." (5)

In 2003, a small man but a big vicious mass murderer, said:

“We come to Iraq with respect for its citizens, for their great civilization and for the religious faiths they practice. We have no ambition in Iraq, except to remove a threat and restore control of that country to its own people.” - US President George Bush, March 19, 2003 British historian and Holocaust denier David Irving “was being held in an Austrian jail last night while state prosecutors there decided whether to bring charges against him for allegedly denying aspects of the Holocaust during a visit to the country 16 years ago.”
(6)

At the same time, those who are NOW perpetrating war crimes and crimes against humanity are celebrated and honoured. We see them every day on TV, talking, lecturing, smiling, laughing, and even making jokes on football, right Mr. Blair?

Their hands are covered in blood and there is no water, there is no river or ocean able to clean them. No matter how powerful they are, the fancy parties they go, the elegant houses and the expensive dresses, no matter their smiles and the lies they hide behind. They are miserable gangsters, bloody war criminals, responsible for unspeakable atrocities. They belong to jail and deserve our deepest contempt.

NOTES

1) Audio of the interview available here

2) Blair made a pledge to the Iraqis once. The suffering of my people must not be conveniently forgotten now by Haifa Zangana, The Guardian, April 22, 2005

3) Miss Bell’s lines in the sand, James Buchan on the extraordinary life of Gertrude Bell, The Guardian, 12 March 2003

4) Powerless. Iraq’s troubled police bow to party and tribe, by David Axe, The Village Voice, 30 September 2005

5) Lesley Stahl on U.S. sanctions against Iraq: “We have heard that a half million children have died. I mean, that’s more children than died in Hiroshima. And, you know, is the price worth it? ” US Ambassador at the United Nations (soon to become Secretary of State) Madeleine Albright: “I think this is a very hard choice, but the price - we think the price is worth it.” CBS - “60 Minutes”, May 12, 1996

6) Austria considers Holocaust denial charge for Irving, by Tony Paterson, The Independent, 18 November 2005

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