
Decalogue on Indecency

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It's indecent that the European Union, after so many months of complicity, the deaths of 55,000 Palestinians, most of them children, women, and the elderly, and the displacement of 90% of the Gaza population, declares that "there are indications" (still unconfirmed) that Israel has violated human rights.

It's indecent that I take refuge in the hardships of my people, blockaded and suffocated, but with their own sovereign, unyielding government—even when these hardships, which are not few, are part of the global war (a euphemism I find to describe this ongoing world war)—just because they affect my daily life, when death is stalking millions of human beings. Indecency, however, has become a virtue: lies, cynicism, contempt for the human life of others. "Defend us, you who know how to write!" an old woman said to Alejo Carpentier in 1937 in the depths of Spain, during that country's civil war. I don't know how to fulfill that poor woman's plea right now. I don't know if I know how to write, if I'm capable, effective, if anyone will read me. Will my words save a woman, a child, from death? Are we all so crazy?

I can't go to Gaza, Tehran, Lebanon, as I would like, because the most decent thing we could do is die there, fighting alongside those under attack. José Martí wrote a lot, but when the time came, he rode on his horse and drew his pistol. The dilemma of intellectuals then is the same today, faced with war and the resurgence of fascism around the world. To serve or to be served, to put one's creative capacity at the service of humanity, or to pursue "personal transcendence." André Malraux told our great novelist a revealing anecdote: a man was walking hurriedly with a large roll of paper under his arm while the bombs were falling over Madrid, and he, intrigued, wanted to know what he was up to. But the man responded imperturbably: "It's paper glued to replace the wallpaper in my room." Then, relying on that metaphor, Carpentier declared: in decisive times for humanity, "there are too many intellectuals who only think about changing the wallpaper in their rooms."

Does anyone believe that what happens in the Middle East or on the Ukrainian front doesn't affect them? That what the criminally blockaded people of Cuba and Venezuela suffer is no one's business? The bells toll for everyone, as the poet said, and Hemingway declared. Human nature degrades, reaching its most basic biological stage when a decadent civilization defends its "territory" with bites and claws, like the alpha male of a pack, because it knows no

other way to live than to serve others by force. Force will bring peace, Trump has said, a peace that entails the death of the rebellious and sometimes, as is being attempted now, the death of an entire people. The victory of Nazi-fascism has been to turn its victims into the executioners of others. From those chosen for death, into those "chosen" to kill. No people are The Chosen One, not the Germanic, the Jewish, or the American.

But enough with words. Force must be countered with intelligence. Trenches of ideas, and trenches of stone. I don't know if we will survive; not me, not you, dear reader, I am speaking of the human race. But death cannot surprise us with our arms down, and the hope of the Hollywood miracle in our eyes. Don't let yourselves be led to the end of your days while waiting for the fairy godmother of the stories to turn you into lucky lottery winners or a millionaire wife or husband.

It's indecent for the Nazi-Zionist Benjamin Netanyahu to say he paid a "price" for his genocide: his son had to postpone his wedding, not because children, women, brides, and newlyweds were dying in Gaza, or in the West Bank, or in the attacked territories of other sovereign states—deaths caused by his father, by Israel—but because Iran responded to the aggression with missiles that hit Tel Aviv, to the surprise of the aggressors. It's indecent for the international corporate press to express its dismay over the destruction of a hospital in Tel Aviv (the result of the shock wave of an Iranian missile) and remain silent about the 36 hospitals destroyed, along with their patients and medical personnel, in Gaza, bombed live. It's indecent that a young pro-Israel woman should declare her outrage at the death of a Jewish teenager (no child or teenager should die, regardless of their national or religious origin), when a few months earlier she had said with cynical nonchalance, "I don't give a damn about the 'innocent children' of Gaza." It's indecent that the European Union, after so many months of complicity with the death of 55,000 Palestinians, mostly children, women and the elderly, that 90 % of the population of Gaza was displaced, declare that "there are indications" (still unconfirmed) that Israel has violated human rights. I endorse the words of Manu Pineda, a Spanish communist leader who lived for months in Gaza alongside the Palestinian people:

Gaza has become the mirror that reflects the worst ignominy of our time. Every day the world remains silent, a piece of our humanity is consumed. There will be a before and after this historical shame; a yesterday when we could have acted, and a tomorrow when we will remember the horror with the weight of our own guilt.

I think of David who defeated Goliath (how many Davids have existed in human history!), of the seven men who, from Sierra Maestra, raised their people against a trained and well-armed army supported by the United States; I think of the invincible Vietnamese, of the Soviets during the siege of Stalingrad, and of the Iranians and Palestinians. I know that victory is possible in the "necessary war" that imperialism and Zionism impose on us, because we love peace, justice, because we do not fight to oppress anyone, nor for material gain. We fight for you, for them, for the attacked and the aggressors, for humanity. I cannot conceive of any other way of understanding decency.

Translated by Amilkal Labañino / CubaSi Translation Staff
