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I HEAR THE BABIES CRYING

Two essays on persistent anger from
the belly of the beast.



Big Baby Publishing

boycotts, rage towards the people who make laws in my name, who drop an aid package per every thousand bombs. Rage has intertwined with love, and I feel love within all my burning anger. Love towards those that fight with me, toward those who haven't made me to feel like a fucking freak for feeling what I feel. Love towards those living in tents in the freezing cold of Rafah, love towards those who record the horror of genocide and offer up proof of their suffering for us to bear witness to. I love you, Bisan Owda, Wael Dahdouh, Motasem Mortaja, Motaz Azaiza, Hind Khoudary. Love towards those who, within the belly of the beast, used their bodies as canvases for protest. I love you, Aaron Bushnell, I love you, woman who set herself on fire in front of the Atlanta Israeli Consulate in December whose name I still don't know. Whose story was suppressed. I love you and I rage for you.

For the rest of my life, I will never forget. Still, I will love. And still I will rage. And I will refuse to forgive, refuse to live my life complicit.

This morning I slept through all my alarms. I woke up and it was warm and my apartment smelled

like coffee and my mother was humming in the kitchen. Last night I went to bed knowing I would wake between a red sheet and a quilt made of T-shirts. I knew I would make leftover rice for breakfast, I knew I would miss the 43 and be twenty minutes late to English 1A. I went to bed enraged and I woke up and I sobbed.

Audre Lorde said that we are "citizens of the most powerful country in the world, which stands on the wrong side of every liberation struggle on Earth." In 1985, she wrote of American complicity in South African apartheid, "Every year over 500 million American dollars flow into the white South African death machine. How many of those dollars do you control as you sit reading this?" Now I think, how many of your tax dollars are becoming bombs that will crush an entire family under the rubble of their home? How much of your money is being spent to deliberately starve Palestinian children? Do you see them, those who once had round cheeks and bright eyes? Those who died with sunken eyes and pale skin, who suffered until their last breaths on makeshift hospital beds? Did you see the mother who screamed that her children died with empty bellies? Did you know that you paid for it?

Since October, every emotion I have felt has been a variation of rage. Deep rage from the pit of my own belly, which is full. Broad, sprawling rage that encompasses everything and everyone, rage towards the people I go to school with, towards those who ignore

"I write to you as a child"
May 2024
By Lin

Tonight we hung a banner that said "Free Gaza." Not one hour later, we came back to see it burnt to shreds. Tomorrow is May 15, which is Nakba Day, or more broadly, the day "Israel" declared its independence in 1948. This resulted in the mass displacement of the Palestinian people, destruction of culture, property, and life. Ultimately, it was the beginning of Genocide.

Today, the U.N. says that the death toll in Gaza is 35,000 people, but I have seen the footage. Entire blocks blown up with families in their rooms, sleeping. Babies sleeping with their parents. Dogs at the foot of the bed. All reduced to rubble, with faces melting off their skulls—an expression that I never knew could be used literally. The palm trees that line the blocks of Gaza are covered with layers of gray dust from the decimated buildings that now lie as piles of stone. Fires fueled by white phosphorus burn for days, thanks to the chemical produced in Arkansas with the help of Monsanto, the same company that manufactured Agent Orange in the 60s.

76 years into the Nakba, Joe Biden approves another weapons deal to Israel. 76 years into the Nakba, a banner calling for a ceasefire on children is torched in one of the most "progressive" cities in America. 76 years into the Nakba we are called terrorists for defending the honor of our siblings across the globe. 76 years into the Nakba a man with a lighter and hate in his heart tries to triumph over some kids with a rickety ladder. But he didn't.

Untitled

March 2024
By Anonymous

bic lighter can ever scare me. I know that writing this now, and listening to each other, and that the creation of new realities scares him more than his skull patterned pocket knife can ever scare me. I know that to a man who is full of hate, potential energy is the trigger.

Still, those around me try to convince me that this city is borderline utopic. Still, the Nazis hiding in the olympic peninsula with AR-15s are ignored in favor of pursuing the dream of white comfort. Anything that could result in a sense of white guilt is shunned. The violent zionists with Israeli flags, handguns under white t-shirts, and lighter fluid stashed in a box somewhere are ignored with a glassy eyed stare to continue on to an overpriced latte.

When these creeps crawl out of the woodwork every few months, it is treated with the utmost shock. The struggle is not internalized. When the racist mobs brandish their guns and call for death, I see instagram comments expressing tear-laden eyes over their confusion as to "why we can't all just get along," and it is painfully obvious that the "anti-racist" workshops that they now present at Microsoft Just Aren't Cutting It.

We are 76 years into the Nakba, and 532 years into European colonization of the so called Americas. Genocides on genocides in the name of white profit. The civilization we have today was built on the terrorist system that was Chattel Slavery. The police we have today are merely another iteration on the same officers that enforced the rules of that slavery system. Even to cry for a Free Palestine without internalizing and integrating the struggles of the world is incomplete. We need a total abolitionist framework. And yet, the instinct

for others to center themselves, in the face of a genocide they are complicit in, remains.

So tell me, how do you condemn resistance with a picture of a white dove while knowing a man in a white lowrider torched a spray painted banner calling for mercy?

Tell me, how do you condemn resistance with a picture of an olive branch after seeing pictures of the IOF torching acres upon acres of fertile land with centuries old olive trees rooted deep into the earth?

Tell me, how do you condemn students smashing a window at an Ivy League school when all the schools in Gaza are destroyed? When the bombing of entire neighborhoods has blown all the windows out? Is that property worth as much as Harvard's? Is it worth more than a life?

Tell me, in the 60s, student protesters of the Vietnam war occupied school buildings with rifles in their hands, would you approve then? Would that give us something to bond over? Or would you shoot the kids dead? I already know the answer.

I am writing to you as a child. I do not have a bachelor's degree. I do not have a high school diploma. I have a gmail account and I know how to fold a fitted sheet. I read, and I still don't understand how the world works. You don't read, but you say you understand everything. I see videos on the nightly news and on twitter that my friends send me of kids being beaten with sticks by other kids. My friend tells me he saw forty

cops go one-two-one-two in a lock step so as to arrest nearly 100 undergrad students. We are scared. My mom left the Midwest so we could be safer, and we are. I know that the global population can't keep moving west, and so I am lost. My map sucks.

I am writing to you as a child who is not as naïve as you say I am, and I know that you like to strategically pick and choose when to validate the critical thinking skills that you tried to unteach me in English101. And so when I see kids like me who are scared I recognize them as cousins because I know that we share something deep inside that makes us family. Sometimes I meet adults that were once scared kids too, and they are my aunts and uncles. They remain scared though, and it can be hard to keep in contact with these people. A relationship based in love through fear is not always sustainable.

We know that we cannot let fear deter us from our banner making. We know fear cannot cancel out anger. We know the love we pour into pots of jasmine rice is stronger and more nourishing than any nauseating fear that trickles through our torsos.

As I think of the man who yelled "fuck Palestine" at me while I was atop a borrowed ladder, it occurs to me I should get more paint, and that I should make a cup of tea. I know that joy terrifies him. I know that antifascist art terrifies him. I know that the fun we have in my room cutting up old magazines and trading clothes to fit our new bodies scares him more than his