



The Theatre of Good and Evil

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In the struggle of Good against Evil, it's always the people who get killed.

The terrorists killed workers of 50 countries in NYC and DC, in the name of Good against Evil. And in the name of Good against Evil President Bush has promised vengeance: "We will eliminate Evil from the world".

Eliminate Evil? What would Good be without Evil? It's not just religious fanatics who need enemies to justify their insanity. The arms industry and the gigantic war machine of the US also needs enemies to justify its existence. Good and evil, evil and good: the actors change masks, the heroes become monsters and the monsters heroes, in accord with the demands of the theatre's playwrights.

This is nothing new. The German scientist Werner von Braun was evil when he invented the V-2 bombers that Hitler used against London, but became good when he used his talents in the service of the US. Stalin was good during World War Two and evil afterwards, when he became the leader of the Evil Empire. In the cold war years John Steinbeck wrote: "Maybe the whole world needs Russians. I suppose that even in Russia they need Russians. Maybe Russia's Russians are called Americans." Even the Russians became good afterwards. Today, Putin can add his voice to say: "Evil must be punished."

Saddam Hussein was good, and so were the chemical weapons he used against the Iranians and the Kurds. Afterwards, he became evil. They were calling him Satan Hussein when the US finished up their invasion of Panama to invade Iraq because Iraq invaded Kuwait. Father Bush that particular war against Evil upon himself. With the humanitarian and compassionate spirit that characterizes his family, he killed more than 100 000 Iraqis, the vast majority of them civilians.

Satan Hussein stayed where he was, but this number one enemy of humanity had to step aside and accept becoming number two enemy of humanity. The bane of the world is now called Osama bin Laden. The CIA taught him everything he knows about terrorism: bin Laden, loved and armed by the US government, was one of the principal 'freedom fighters' against Communism in Afghanistan. Father Bush occupied the Vice Presidency when President Reagan called these heroes 'the moral equivalents of the Founding Fathers.' Hollywood agreed. They filmed Rambo 3: Afghani Muslims were the good guys. Now, 13 years later, in the time of Son Bush, they are the worst of the bad guys.

Henry Kissinger was one of the first to react to the recent tragedy. "Those who provide support, financing, and inspiration to terrorists are as guilty as the terrorists themselves," he intoned, words that Son Bush would repeat hours later.

If that's how it is, the urgent need right now is to bomb Kissinger. He is guilty of many more crimes than bin Laden or

any terrorist in the world. He provided 'support, financing, and inspiration' to state terror in Indonesia, Cambodia, Iran, South Africa, Bangladesh, and all the South American countries that suffered the dirty war of Plan Condor.

On September 11 1973, exactly 28 years before the fires of last week, the Presidential Palace in Chile was stormed. Kissinger had written the epitaph of Allende and Chilean democracy long before when he commented on the results of the elections: "I don't see why we have to stand by and watch a country go communist because of the irresponsibility of its own people."

A contempt for the people is one of many things shared by state and private terror.

There is much common ground between low- and high- tech terrorism, between the terrorism of religious fanatics and that of market fanatics, that of the hopeless and that of the powerful, that of the psychopath on the loose and that of the cold-blooded uniformed professional. They all share the disrespect for human life: the killers of the 5500 citizens under the Twin Towers that fell like castles of dry sand-- and the killers of 200 000 Guatemalans, the majority of whom were indigenous, exterminated without television or the newspapers of the world paying any attention. Those Guatemalans were not sacrificed by any Muslim fanatic, but by terrorist squads who received 'support, financing, and inspiration' from US governments.

All these worshipers of death are in agreement as well on the need to reduce social, cultural, and national differences to military terms. In the name of Good against Evil, in the name of the One Truth, they resolve everything by killing first and asking questions later. And, they strengthen the enemy they fight.

Although the leader of the Civilized World is pushing a new Crusade, Allah is innocent of the crimes committed in his name. At the end of the day, God did not order the Holocaust against the followers of Jehovah, nor did Jehovah order the massacres of Sabrah and Shatila or the expulsion of Palestinians from their land. Aren't Allah, God and Jehovah are, after all, three names for the same divinity?

A tragedy of errors: nobody knows any more who is who. The smoke of the explosions forms part of the much larger curtain of smoke that prevents all of us from seeing clearly. From revenge to revenge, terrorism obliges us to walk to our graves. I saw a photo, recently published, of graffiti on a wall in NYC: "An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind."

The spiral of violence creates violence and also confusion: pain, fear, intolerance, hatred, insanity. In Porto Alegre, early this year, Ahmed Ben Bella warned: "This system, that has already made mad cows, is making mad people too." And these mad people, mad from hate, act as the power that created them.

A three year old child, named Luca, told me: "The world doesn't know where its house is." He was looking at a map. He could have been looking at a reporter.