

Lynn White

Where Equivalence Goes To Die

We soon found out that Native Americans
were the bad guys.

We watched the Hollywood portrayals
of the cowardly braves
deserving of death
and the brave, honest settlers
who rightly prevailed.

If propaganda is successful
it won't even be recognised.
And successful it was for a long time.

That is not to say
that all 'indians' were good people,
that they never committed atrocities
or preached hatred and abuse.

But the power was so disproportionate
that they could be no equivalence.

The scales were already tipping over.
To pretend balance was possible
would be a distortion.

Then there were the Nazi's.

No one now thinks that
their arguments
of superiority,
of paranoia and racism
should find an open ear.

But ears were open then.
Wide open.

And eyes were closed to
enslavement,
starvation
and death.

That is not to say
that all Jews, Slavs and gypsies were good people,
that they never committed atrocities

or preached hatred and abuse.
But the power was so disproportionate
that they could be no equivalence.
The scales were already tipping over.
To pretend balance was possible
would be a distortion.

And in South Africa, a new ideology,
separate development
for the benefit of each culture.
So it was justified
in the propaganda,
the dominant discourse.
And it found the open ears
of the powerful.
So segregated townships were created
and Bantustan homelands
far away.
Separation, control,
humiliation, harassment,
impoverishment, exploitation.
That is not to say
that all the black people were good,
that they never committed atrocities
or preached hatred and abuse.
But the power was so disproportionate
that they could be no equivalence.
The scales were already tipping over.
To pretend balance was possible
would be a distortion.

And now in Israel
the same game is being played,
separation, control,
humiliation, harassment,
impoverishment,
destruction, death
with the same justifications,
the same ears open
to the powerful,
closed to the oppressed
That is not to say
that all Palestinians are good people,
that they never commit atrocities

or preach hatred and abuse.
But the power is so disproportionate
that they can be no equivalence.
The scales are already tipping over.
To pretend balance is possible
would be a distortion.

So now we must wait
for some ears to be closed
and others to be opened
as history moves on
relentlessly.

About the Poet

Lynn White lives in north Wales. Her work is influenced by issues of social justice and events, places and people she has known or imagined. She is especially interested in exploring the boundaries of dream, fantasy and reality. Her poem 'A Rose For Gaza' was shortlisted for the Theatre Cloud 'War Poetry for Today' competition. This and many other poems, have been widely published in anthologies and journals such as Vagabond Press, Apogee, Firewords, Indie Soleil, Light Journal and Snapdragon. Find Lynn <https://lynnwhitepoetry.blogspot.com>.