Thoughts

One of the questions I ponder - ‘is evil a result of nature or nurture?’ It is the ongoing question that many philosophers ponder. And when I read ‘The Dream of the Celt’, the book provided one perspective on that age old question.

Sir Roger Casement had it all (so to say). He was honoured by his government with a Knighthood for Foreign Office work. He held prestigious positions as a diplomat, yet when he observed and wrote about the abuses of the native peoples of Amazonia and of Congo, he recognized those abject abuses for what they are: Evil perpetuated by those in power.

Why did so many others ignore or accept such abuse towards other human beings? Why did they inflict such abuse on others?

Why do so few people take a stand against such abuse?

About 60 years later we see the next great humanitarian who was changed by the abuses he saw in Bolivia – the same circumstances played out. Che Lynch Guevara (yes, he has Irish heritage) saw similar abuses of people in Bolivia when he travelled as a young man.

That experience, plus the abuses by the CIA in Guatemala, changed the course of his life.

And today we see the same events occur – with as much cruelty yet more intensively as we, on our mobile phones and TVs – in Sudan, and in Palestine. And it is the same response – most people do nothing a few people speak out.

Look at the relentless harassment that Francesca Albanese, the UN The Special Rapporteur on the Occupied Palestinian Territories. There are many voices speaking out, and yet our governments do nothing.

I recall that Nelson Mandela who finally, after 19 years in Robin Island, obtained his freedom, commented that

> "We know too well that our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians."

What cost did he pay before he got his freedom and that of the South African people?

As Malcolm X said,

> “And until the American Negro lets the white man know that we are really ready and willing to pay the price that is necessary for freedom, our people will always be walking around here, second-class citizens or what you call 20th-century slaves... ***The price of freedom is death***.

https://www.youtube.com/embed/AQjup0DGW_Y?si=gjqHLZ5sAnbBfkLe

People have summarized that powerful statement as ‘Freedom is not Free.’

There is a huge cost that people of conscience pay for their own freedom and their fight for other people's freedom.

Now, many Irish people are speaking out against genocide and the apartheid regime that has killed almost 100,000 people. And yet, the UN and no government have done anything to stop it.

To return to my question. I believe that people are either born with a natural propensity towards compassion and empathy towards others in general and those who are less fortunate, or they are not. Yet, nurture, our environment, can influence that. We have free will and we can choose to be human or inhuman. And we can see, quite clearly in many countries, what their governments and people have chosen.

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