



**CÉSAIRE, COLONIALISM AND THE GENOCIDAL WAR IN PALESTINE:  
CONCERNING ISRAEL, THE US, EUROPE AND HITLERIAN HAVOC**  
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**DR. MAULANA KARENGA**

**A**S WE WITNESS AND WORK AND STRUGGLE to end the Israeli genocidal war against the Palestinian people, the century-old brutal intervention and occupation of Haiti, the US and Europe complicity and culpability in these horrors, and the savage oppressions of various kinds across the globe, a critical look at history is morally, intellectually and politically imperative. Thus, as we commemorate the transition (April 17, 2008) and enduring legacy Nana Aimé Césaire, his classic work, *Discourse on Colonialism*, easily and insistently comes to mind. This treatise also comes to mind in the context of the rise of fantasies and realities of fascism in the US and elsewhere and reflection on Césaire's defining colonialism as a precursor and preparatory practice paving the way for fascism and the Hitlerian havoc we call Nazism.

Nana Césaire offers an incisive critique and condemnation of Europe's savage behavior in the world, masquerading under various claims of civilization, progress, revenge, religion, race, and the caveman right of might. Although he criticizes racism, capitalism and imperialism as both elements and expressions of colonialism, it is colonialism which he uses to define the conceptual and systemic foundation of Europe's self-assertion in the world. And here he speaks of the barbarism of European and American colonial and imperial aspirations and impositions on the world.

Césaire begins his critique with the audacious claim that "Europe is indefensible" and "is unable to justify itself either before the bar of 'reason' or before the bar of 'conscience'." Moreover, he contends that it increasingly "takes refuge in a hypocrisy" which is more and more less likely to deceive

anyone but itself and which represents a definite decadence leading to its undoing. He tells us that "It is important at the outset to realize that in dealing with this subject that the commonest curse is to be a dupe in good faith of a collective hypocrisy that clearly misrepresents problems, the better to legitimize the hateful solution provided for them." He points here to European oppressors, occupiers, aggressors, invaders, plunderers and pillagers, i.e., colonialists, misrepresenting the problem of their oppression, occupation, unfreedom and even genocide as an issue of self-defense, civilization and saving the oppressed people from themselves; and the struggle for liberation is posed as terrorism or some other name to justify suppression and even genocide. Given this misinformation, outright lying as public and state policy, he tells us, "the essential thing here is to see clearly, to think clearly – that is dangerously" and to define colonialism for what it is and *not* what it claims to be. So, let us agree, he urges, that it is "neither evangelization, nor a philanthropic enterprise, nor a desire to push back the frontiers of ignorance, disease and tyranny, nor a project undertaken for the glory of God, nor an attempt to extend the rule of law."

Indeed, it is savagery and barbarism, a sickness inside Europe that expresses itself in systemic and systematic "force, brutality, cruelty, sadism and mass slaughter" and genocide. But there is the language and practice of White supremacy and superiority, religious and racial, cultural and civilizational, and a genocidal barbarism that comes home to haunt and wreak Hitlerian havoc among them as they have imposed on the dark peoples of the world. Thus, "one fine day" the

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ruling class “is awakened by a terrific reverse shock,” the barbarism practiced against peoples of color returns to Europe as Nazism.

For, Césaire argues concerning Europe, that “before they were its victims, they were its accomplices,” that they tolerated Nazism before it was inflicted on them, “that they absolved it, shut their eyes to it, legitimized it.” And this is because this savagery and barbarism “until then, had been applied only to non-European peoples.” It is, he argues, important to note that the humanist, the Christian, bourgeoisie and other Europeans complicit and culpable “has a Hitler inside of him, that Hitler *inhabits him*, that Hitler is his *demon* and that if he rails against him, he is being inconsistent.” For in the colonial, enslaving and imperial project, they summoned up this demon, using the same and similar predatory, savage and barbaric practices, and making similar Hitlerian immoral and “sordidly racist” claims against people of color, justifying the project, excusing and explaining it away and savagely suppressing opposition to it. Thus, “in the end of that blind alley that is Europe” and its false claims and genocidal practices, “there is Hitler.” Moreover, “at the end of capitalism” in its internal and imperial forms, “there is Hitler.” And “at the end of formal humanism” with all its hype and hypocrisy, its sense of racial morality and moral outrage and concern, “there is Hitler.”

Here Césaire contends that it is not then the Hitlerian lies or claims to being superior, chosen, elect, supreme or the right to rule and ruin land, the destroying in mass the lives of others dehumanized, different and vulnerable that shocked, angered and outraged them. For they had committed genocide, killed millions of peoples of color in greater number before in their colonial, enslaving and imperial projects. Thus, he states, “what (they) cannot forgive Hitler for is not crime in itself, *the crime against man*; it is not the humiliation of man as such, it the crime against the white

man, the humiliation of the white man.” That is to say, “the fact that he (Hitler) applied to Europe colonialist practices which until then had been reserved exclusively for the Arabs of Algeria, the coolies of India and the Blacks of Africa”, and the Native Americans and other indigenous peoples.

Furthermore, focusing on the moral scope of guilt and innocence, in the midst of the barbarism of colonialism, he states that “no one colonizes innocently, that no one colonizes with impunity either, that a nation which colonizes, that a civilization that justifies colonization – and therefore force – is already a sick civilization, a civilization that is morally diseased, that is irresistibly progressing from one consequence to another, one repudiation to another, calls for its Hitler. I mean its punishment.” Indeed, he contends the colonizers in their racist and arrogant attempt to “civilize” others may witness emerging from their own midst “at any moment the negation of civilization, pure and simple,” indeed, the negation of their own humanity.

Nana Césaire reminds the colonizers and genocidists that as they seek to dehumanize others, seek to see and treat others as animals, they “tend objectively to transform (themselves) into an animal.” And in that self-transformed animalization, as we can see today, they are able and eager to kill children, women and men without conscience, starve them to death, destroy their homes, health, health workers, hospitals, schools, libraries, universities, their farms and fields, and other food sources, their archives, museums and heritage sites, and pollute their air, water and land, and thus, commit genocide, domicile and ecocide without conscience or constraint. And those complicit and culpable can dismiss the hypocrisy, contradiction and crass humanity in selective moral outrage about six foreign workers being targeted and slaughtered by Israeli Occupation Forces and offer

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no similar outrage for the slaughter of 200 Palestinian aid workers, 300 health workers, 200 journalists, and 33,800 innocent civilians, mostly children and women, as well as the wounding of 75,815.

**C**ÉSAIRE SPEAKS OF THE COMPLICIT ones, not only enabling allied states like America, but also compliant, cooperative and “check-licking politicians,” the hypocritical religious representatives sanctioning the conscience-less, culling and killing of the innocent, the journalists and academics who habitually lie and leave out the history of oppression and suffering of the colonized, and aid in attempts to explain away

occupation and oppression and justify genocide. Our task, he tells us, is to imagine and dare to build new societies and a new world of mutual respect and shared good, and free from claims and behaviors without moral merit and unworthy of what every human counts for and requires. Indeed, he teaches the indivisibility of our freedom and futures as Africans and fellow human beings. And he calls on us Africa people and others similarly situated and concerned to continue the struggle to expand the realm of freedom in the world and contribute definitively to a shared and flourishing future for our peoples, humanity and the world.▲

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