*What’s at stake*: Ironically, today is the UN International DAY of Victims of Enforced Disappearance. What Israel is doing is destroying the Palestinian state to make it disappear, just as it has been trying to do ever since 1948.

*Contents of Gaza Newsletter #6*

*Expressions of Outrage Against the Brutal Invasion to Wipe Out Gaza*

Michael Albert, Get Out of Gaza, End the Occupation of Palestine

Chomsky, “Outrage”

Amy Goodman, *Democracy Now*: *Chomsky and Other Indignant Voices

Chris Hedges’ Essays on Gaza

Coalition for Grassroots Progress, US Complicit, Culpable for Atrocities, Contact Your Congressional Reps

A.N.S.W.E.R. March on DC

Jewish Voice for Peace: Invasion Worsening, Where Are the Jewish Peace Voices?

Gaza’s Ark Reports
I am Jewish but that identity doesn’t define me. I was Bar Mitzvah-ed, but that day ended my religious connection. I parroted some memorized Hebrew, but I certainly couldn’t understand it. I celebrated but only because I had too. Family and all.

More, once, and only once, before or since, have I directly, personally, encountered outright anti-Semitism. A parent of someone I was dating flippantly said something about Jews controlling the world and I nearly assaulted him. I do not have a lot of patience for racism in any context, but I was surprised that his idiotic verbiage set me off as much as it did. It wasn’t blood ties, and it certainly wasn’t religious beliefs that spurred my reaction. So I guess saying the Four Questions a few times as a kid may have had some modest cultural impact.

Does some residue of my childhood tangential Jewish involvement, perhaps having liked Rabbi Schankman of Temple Israel up to my becoming thirteen, cause me, now, to feel just a bit more aggressively outraged and nauseated by the current events in Gaza then if I hadn’t been to Temple a few times?
I have no idea, but I don’t think it matters. What does matter is the absolute, unmitigated horror that is now occurring in Gaza. Yet, there are so many horrors. Can words situate this one in the evil hall of fame?

Corpses? Yes. Plenty of corpses are piling up. Broken buildings? Yes. Rubble is waste high and climbing.

When I was becoming adult, violence was Vietnam. In the midst of that, I wondered how humans who had enjoyed even modest personal freedom and development, rather than, say, being beat up and caged as kids and denied education and culture, could be even a fraction as cynical and delusional as my own government was.

But while “destroying the City to Save it” set an incredibly high standard for vile rationalization – I can’t help but notice the “to save it” part of the phrase. In those days, and even more so since the movements of those days had their effects, if nothing else, to perpetrate vile actions in pursuit of reasons of state or reasons of profit required aggressive claims of high motives. Yet, for the Israelis, this no longer seems true.

Yes, for international consumption they fabricate idiotic justifications – mainly they say this is our defense against them defending themselves. And, just to be clear, to those who say that Israel has a right to defend itself, there is only one correct answer. Yes. It does.

And what that means is to escape being attacked by the occupied, Israel can leave Gaza, cease the occupation, cease the racism. That is the only legitimate way for an occupying force – anywhere, anytime – to defend itself against the colonized. Stop perpetrating the crime. There is no warrant for an occupier to get violent. That is just more crime. The solution is to get out.

If you don’t understand that, think of it this way. Imagine the British who were in the U.S. fighting the colonists saying, hey – we have a right to defend ourselves. The reply ought to have been: yes, you do, and your right to do so sanctifies your leaving, but not your shooting us.

Or how about the Nazi in France, or perhaps a better analogy is the Nazi in Poland – in Warsaw. Imagine they said, hey, we have a right to defend ourselves. Again, the reply ought to have been, yes, you do, and that right sanctifies your leaving, but not your obliterating our lives, culture, and constructions.

Ditto for the U.S. in Indochina and a long list of other places. And ditto for Israel in Gaza. Defend yourselves, by all means, sure, and to do so, get out.

But that isn’t my real point in this little rant. Rather, I want to note something new about the events, perhaps worth a few words. It is that the Israelis seem quite content, certainly for domestic consumption and to a degree even internationally, to make no bones about what they are doing.

Knock knock – goes the small missile rap on the roof. Boom goes the hospital underneath shortly later. No worry, just “dead snake” patients and their dead snake doctors.

Ring ring goes the phone. Rubble goes the home. No worry. Just dead snake kids and their dead snake mothers. Another snake habitat reduced to ash. Hooray.

Okay, this is obviously barbaric. If you can’t see that, I don’t know how to better communicate with you about it. But the thing is that these “warnings” also may seem to you insane. It isn’t just the vile cynicism of telling people to get out when the only place they can go is a place that is likely next on the target list. The warnings also make totally evident, and utterly undeniable, what most countries try to hide, or to not be guilty of in better cases.

That is, the knocking to announce what is coming makes totally evident that
the Israelis are not hitting houses and hospitals and the rest of Gaza’s life and achievement by accident, but intentionally. The knocking first says, we can hit whatever we want, down to small homes, whenever we want, down to the minute. They are literally saying, here, look at what we did. See the kids shattered and shredded? See the hospital made into ash? See the power plant shooting only flames into the surroundings? See the school, the mosque, the park, the beach, the water sources all covered in rubble and torn flesh? What you see is precisely what we intended to do. There is no collateral damage. There is just intended damage. We Israelis actually want to kill whatever moves. And we want to tell those still moving when we are done that we did it, willfully. We know how to communicate!

When I was in High School I used to stay up nights, sometimes, trying to understand how someone could become a good German. How could people go about daily life while their country engaged in hellish infernal injustice – in that case, the ovens. But I understood in time. The pressure of wanting to get by, of wanting to fit and of not thinking there was any alternative, and, for even more people, the bliss of ignorance (well guarded by asking few if any questions), and, for even more people, literally ignorant fear and intentionally stirred up desire for revenge, did the trick. And I saw it all in the U.S., during the Indochina campaigns, and regarding the history of racism, and now too, as we destroy the environment. So I get that.

But then there are the storm troopers. The Brownshirts. This is harder to explain. I used to think maybe it was something about the German language – I knew they didn’t have different DNA but they did, after all, talk different. And then I learned that the training that produces soldiers, and to only a slightly lesser extent the education that produces adults, is precisely about obliterating human judgment and sentiment. And that many succumb. And so now we have Israelis. And the capacity for self delusion and ugly denial and even aggressive and fascistic purpose, in the broad population – even if they didn’t constantly claim to have deep and special understanding of the ills of racism – is truly remarkable. Truly sad. Truly enraged.

Even as I cry for Palestine’s pain and hope they prevail, part of me also wonders, when the dust clears, what the hell are the Israelis who are urging incinerating Palestine and Palestinians going to tell themselves so they can live with themselves? The corpses that look so human were really snakes? Or that I was, at least for a time, a monster? And what will they tell their kids? In order to live with their kids. And for their kids not to become monsters – one hopes.

And arguably even more so, what are the Americans with a disgusting past of supporting this horror going to tell themselves? And to tell their kids? And I fear the answer may be nothing at all. Because the ash can of history – which is CNN and the *New York Times* – may lug away culpability and truth by way of the sewage that is their reporting.

*Gaza... Chomsky from ZCommunications August 3, 2014*

*ZCommunications <no-reply@zcomm.org <no-reply@zcomm.org>>*

*to James*

[Chomsky is discussing the US shooting down of an Iranian passenger plane]: “…no search for victims, no passionate denunciations of those responsible, no eloquent laments by the US Ambassador to the UN about the “immense and heart-wrenching loss” when the airliner was downed. Iranian condemnations were occasionally noted, but dismissed as “boilerplate attacks on the United States” (Philip Shenon, *New York Times*).
Small wonder, then, that this insignificant earlier event merited only a few scattered words in the US media during the vast furor over a real crime, in which the demonic enemy might have been indirectly involved.

One exception was in the London Daily Mail, where Dominick Lawson wrote that although “Putin’s apologists” might bring up the Iran Air attack, the comparison actually demonstrates our high moral values as contrasted with the miserable Russians, who try to evade their* responsibility for MH 17 with lies while Washington at once announced that the US warship had shot down the Iranian aircraft — rightly so. What more powerful evidence could there be of our nobility and their depravity?*

*We know why Ukrainians and Russians are in their own countries, but one might ask what exactly the Vincennes was doing in Iranian waters. The answer is simple. It was defending Washington’s great friend Saddam Hussein in his murderous aggression against Iran. For the victims, the shoot-down was no small matter. It was a major factor in Iran’s recognition that it could not fight on any longer, according to historian Dilip Hiro.*

*It is worth remembering the extent of Washington’s devotion to its friend Saddam. Reagan removed him from the terrorist list so that aid could be sent to expedite his assault on Iran, and later denied his terrible crimes against the Kurds, including the use of chemical weapons, blocking congressional condemnations. He also accorded Saddam a privilege otherwise granted only to Israel: there was no serious reaction when Iraq attacked the USS Stark with missiles, killing 37 crewmen, much like the case of the USS Liberty, attacked repeatedly by Israeli jets and torpedo ships in 1967, killing 34 crewmen.*

*Reagan’s successor, Bush I, went on to provide further aid to Saddam, badly needed after the war with Iran that he launched. Bush also invited Iraqi nuclear engineers to come to the US for advanced training in weapons production. In April 1990, Bush dispatched a high-level Senate delegation, led by future Republican presidential candidate Bob Dole, to convey his warm regards to his friend Saddam and to assure him that he should disregard irresponsible criticism from the “haughty and pampered press,” and that such miscreants had been removed from Voice of America. The fawning before Saddam continued until he turned into a new Hitler a few months later by disobeying orders, or perhaps misunderstanding them, and invading Kuwait, with illuminating consequences that are worth reviewing once again, though I will leave this interesting matter aside here.*

*Other precedents had long since been dismissed to the memory hole as without significance. One example is the Libyan civilian airliner that was lost in a sandstorm in 1973 when it was shot down by US-supplied Israeli jets, two minutes flight time from Cairo, towards which it was heading. The death toll was only 110 that time. Israel blamed the French pilot, with the endorsement of the New York Times, which added that the Israeli act was “at worst…an act of callousness that not even the savagery of previous Arab actions can excuse.” The incident was passed over quickly in the United States, with little criticism. When Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir arrived in the US four days later, she faced few embarrassing questions and returned home with new gifts of military aircraft.*

*The reaction was much the same when Washington’s favored Angolan terrorist organization UNITA claimed to have shot down two civilian airliners at the same time, among other cases.*

*Returning to the sole authentic and truly horrific crime, the New York Times reported that American UN ambassador Samantha Power “choked up as she spoke of infants who perished in the Malaysia Airlines crash in Ukraine [and] The Dutch foreign minister, Frans Timmermans, could barely contain his anger as he recalled seeing pictures of ‘thugs’ snatching wedding bands off the fingers of the victims.”*

*At the same session, the report continues, there was also “a long recitation of names and ages — all belonging to children killed in the latest Israeli offensive in Gaza.” The only reported reaction was by Palestinian envoy Riyad Mansour, who “grew quiet in the middle of” the
The Israeli attack on Gaza in July did, however, elicit outrage in Washington. President Obama “reiterated his ‘strong condemnation’ of rocket and tunnel attacks against Israel by the militant group Hamas,” The Hill reported. He “also expressed ‘growing concern’ about the rising number of Palestinian civilian deaths in Gaza,” but without condemnation. The Senate filled that gap, voting unanimously to support Israeli actions in Gaza while condemning “the unprovoked rocket fire at Israel” by Hamas and calling on “Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas to dissolve the unity governing arrangement with Hamas and condemn the attacks on Israel.”

As for Congress, perhaps it’s enough to join the 80% of the public who disapprove of their performance, though the word “disapprove” is rather too mild in this case. But in Obama’s defense, it may be that he has no idea what Israel is doing in Gaza with the weapons that he is kind enough to supply to them. After all, he relies on US intelligence, which may be too busy collecting phone calls and email messages of citizens to pay much attention to such marginalia. It may be useful, then, to review what we all should know.

Israel’s goal had long been a simple one: quiet-for-quiet, a return to the norm (though now it may demand even more). What then is the norm?

For the West Bank, the norm has been that Israel carries forward its illegal construction of settlements and infrastructure so that it can integrate into Israel whatever might be of value to it, meanwhile consigning Palestinians to unviable cantons and subjecting them to intense repression and violence.

For the past 14 years, the norm has been that Israel kills more than two Palestinian children a week. The latest Israeli rampage was set off by the brutal murder of three Israeli boys from a settler community in the occupied West Bank. A month before, two Palestinian boys were shot dead in the West Bank city of Ramallah. That elicited no attention, which is understandable, since it is routine. “The institutionalised disregard for Palestinian life in the West helps explain not only why Palestinians resort to violence,” the respected Middle East analyst Mouin Rabbani reports, “but also Israel’s latest assault on the Gaza Strip.”

Quiet-for-quiet has also enabled Israel to carry forward its program of separating Gaza from the West Bank. That program has been pursued vigorously, always with US support, ever since the US and Israel accepted the Oslo accords, which declare the two regions to be an inseparable territorial unity. A look at the map explains the rationale. Gaza provides Palestine’s only access to the outside world, so once the two are separated, any autonomy that Israel might grant to Palestinians in the West Bank would leave them effectively imprisoned between hostile states, Israel and Jordan. The imprisonment will become even more severe as Israel continues its systematic program of expelling Palestinians from the Jordan Valley and constructing Israeli settlements there, enjoying quiet-for-quiet.

The norm in Gaza was described in detail by the heroic Norwegian trauma surgeon Mads Gilbert, who has worked in Gaza’s main hospital through Israel’s most grotesque crimes and returned again for the current onslaught. In June 2014, immediately before the latest Israeli onslaught, he submitted a report on the Gaza health sector to UNRWA, the UN Agency that tries desperately, on a shoestring, to care for refugees.

“At least 57% of Gaza households are food insecure and about 80% are now aid recipients,” Gilbert reports. “Food insecurity and rising poverty also mean that most residents cannot meet their daily caloric requirements, while over 90% of the water in Gaza has been deemed unfit for human consumption,” a situation that is becoming even worse as Israel again attacks water and sewage systems, leaving over a million people with even more severe disruption of the barest necessity of life.

Gilbert reports that “Palestinian children in Gaza are suffering...
immensely. A large proportion are affected by the man-made malnourishment regime caused by the Israeli imposed blockage. Prevalence of anaemia in children <2yrs in Gaza is at 72.8%, while prevalence of wasting, stunting, underweight have been documented at 34.3%, 31.4%, 31.45% respectively.” And it gets worse as the report proceeds.*

*The distinguished human rights lawyer Raji Sourani, who has remained in Gaza through years of Israeli brutality and terror, reports that “The most common sentence I heard when people began to talk about ceasefire: everybody says it’s better for all of us to die and not go back to the situation we used to have before this war. We don’t want that again. We