

At Night I Hear Victims Shouting

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Theme: [Crimes against Humanity](#)

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It sometimes happens in the middle of a dark night, when I don't expect it, when I think that I am sound asleep but am not, or when perhaps I really am but not completely. I don't know. All that I witnessed and overheard, all that I thought I forgot but couldn't, all that I tried so desperately to forget comes back, first in spasms, then in full force.

I often think that the West went mad. Totally, irreversibly! It turned into a monster itself, and it keeps manufacturing new, smaller but equally toxic brutes all over the world. It rolls, smashing all that stands on its way. And I am not sure whether it still could be stopped.

Those horrid US military bases on Kwajalein Atoll, Marshall Islands... those Israeli occupation forces choking the Syrian Golan Heights, those helicopter gunships firing at civilian vehicles in Gaza... bombed and burned villages near Mosul, Iraq... images of people slaughtered by pro-Western terrorists in Iran... men who were tortured savagely, and whose wives and daughters were brutally raped in "India-administered" Kashmir, clinging to each other desperately, whispering their stories in some godforsaken villages near the border with Pakistan.

Here, in this essay, I will not, cannot go through the entire catalogue of horrors that has already penetrated my brain, deciding to stay, most likely, forever. The list is too long - almost endless.

Except that it's not just a list, but a mosaic of true events that occurred to hundreds and thousands of human being in all corners of the world, often in front of my own eyes.

Sometimes, in the middle of the night, I hear people screaming.

I try to work, write books and essays, and make films. I usually don't allow myself a luxury of talking to others about those nights.

But this time I will. Many of you asked what is fueling my writing; what keeps me going. And why do I dare doing what others don't, and going where almost no one goes.

Let me reply once and for all. Let me share at least few personal moments with my readers.

I met a Syrian girl inside a small, informal and unnamed refugee camp, in Bekaa Valley, Lebanon, near the city of Zahlah. She was a refugee, perhaps five or six years old. At first she was scared when I tried to take her photograph, but then she smiled. Eventually, she showed me her tongue, and moved it, cheekily, to one side of her mouth. She was standing there, in the middle of anonymous camp, with her older sister.

Then, a few moments later, she cautiously came closer to me and touched my hand.

Winter was approaching. Some refugees were freezing, and the girl was suffering from malnutrition. Her natural behavior, her innocence and her obvious oblivion of the war touched me tremendously.

A few weeks later, I drove back with sweets and toys. But the girl had already left. I was told that her family took her north to Aarsal, near the Syrian border where Hezbollah is locked in an epic battle with the ISIS. Yes, the same ISIS that were originally trained and armed by NATO in Turkey and Jordan.

I printed her photo and glued it to my refrigerator. I think about her often, almost every day. I don't know why.

In a way, her image, that of a simple girl, of a child standing in the middle of some horrid refugee camp near a war zone, is a symbol of insanity of the world in which we are forced to live.

In a way, she is a symbol of resistance against savagery of the Empire, a symbol of longing for something normal, longing for sanity in the middle of lunacy.

The conflict, the war in her country, Syria, is so "unnecessary", so bizarre, so obviously triggered by the West and its vile allies and interests.

Through her youth and eyes full of curiosity and hope, life was managing to prevail over death and dark destructive nihilism. But for how long could it last? In Zahlah the girl was still winning, with her smile and her determination to live, to stay alive. But she is in Aarsal now, where war is ranging, mercilessly. I worry about her. I worry about her so much. And I curse the Empire.

Of course I saw plenty of things that could not be allowed to appear even on the pages of the publications with "tough", "hardened readership. Some things were so horrible that they would break in half even someone as strong as a bull; things that should not have been seen by anyone, and especially happen to anyone.

Imagine a "refugee camp" near Goma, East Kivu, in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), where an insane, stoned militia armed and supported by two closest allies of the West in the region – Rwanda and Uganda – had already raped almost all female inhabitants, from tiny babies to old grandmothers.

Imagine coltan and uranium and diamonds being smuggled from the DRP, shamelessly, under the direct supervision of the UN soldiers, so called "peacekeepers".

Imagine visiting several villages in Iraq, near Mosul, villages that were first attacked by the ISIL and then bombed, mercilessly, by the USAF. Imagine that you have photographs, as you had photographs of those plundered and raped East Timor villages two decades ago, but frankly, nobody gives a fuck.

And you live with all this, day and night.

Say you saw several Palestinian men after being shot in their balls by Israeli soldiers. You have those images, too, from Shifa Hospital in Gaza. You have plenty of things like that, in your memory drives and in your head.

People without faces, people burned beyond recognition, still alive, still moving, still clinging to life.

It is an “all you can eat” medley of horrors and misery, brought to you by global capitalism, Western imperialism, and Christian fundamentalism!

Then what do you do with it, at night?

When you are very young and see all this shit for the first time, you simply want to puke. And you puke, actually. Later, you stop puking and if you have balls or ovaries, you fight!

As time passes and most battles are becoming “uphill ones”, you desperately want to be able to trust people or at least one person, one that had earlier came to you, offering to “share all this, and to fight by your side, forever”. But your courage, as well as your dedication, outrage, zeal, desperation and longing gain you nothing, really. You are betrayed, again and again, perhaps because the stakes are too high, the burden too heavy, or simply because your life is actually excessively intense and totally different from lives of other people.

The lonelier it gets, the more determined you become. There is no going back. The world is in flames. You know it. Not many others realize it. You understand how things are functioning. You have to fight; it is your duty and obligation. And you fight. But there are those nights...

You may be tough as a stone in the middle of terrible battlefields and other most horrendous situations, but at night, you are totally vulnerable and most likely alone.

When I reached Eritrean port city of Massawa, almost one year ago, I felt thoroughly exhausted and burned out. I could hardly move, after working few days earlier just a few kilometers from Mosul, Iraq, and right after that in Lebanon. I felt confused after being crashed and insulted by someone I trusted and fully relied on.

My Eritrean hosts got me a room in some old and terribly run down hotel.

Then, close to midnight, the electric generator gave up the ghost for the rest of the night. No one else was staying on my floor.

I clearly realized that real hell was ahead of me.

For 2 hours I was using the screen of my Mac Book Pro. After it went blank, my phone lasted a little bit longer. Then it was around 3:30AM and pitch dark.

The “procession” began.

I already described such situations in what will be, one day, my 1,000-page novel. But in my book, the victims are passing, night after night, through the secondary border post covered

by deep snow, high in the mountains, between Argentina and Chile. They are passing on board old trucks, and in the morning, only deep holes in the virgin snow, holes created by warm streams of blood, could remain the main character about the events of the previous night.

In Eritrea, the victims of the Empire were passing only through in my mind, in my memory. They were passing one by one. Peruvian victims, Colombian victims; victims from Indonesia, Kashmir, Sri Lanka, Philippines, the DRC, Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya, Somalia, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, Turkey, Ivory Coast, Ukraine, Serbia, Nicaragua, Honduras... victims from dozens of other countries, mainly women; because women always suffer the most. Unnecessary deaths – people who just perished for no particular reason; only because the Empire could not stop looting, murdering, aiming at absolute control over the world.

At some point I gave up: I opened my eyes, staring into the darkness, fists clenched.

Everything inside the room was static. Only my memory was alive.

This was the price of knowing.

I was willing to pay anything; I was never known to be stingy. No price was too high for me.

Fighting against the Empire, exposing its barbarity, learning about its deeds – it all is tremendously overtaxing. Because the Empire is sick, because the Western culture turned long time ago into a pathology, because too many human beings are dying or are having their lives ruined, just so the excessive needs and appetites of the rulers of the world, of their global regime, are satisfied.

A few months after that dreadful night on the coast of Eritrea, I was invited to speak at the 14th International Symposium on the Contributions of Psychology to Peace, in Johannesburg and Pretoria, South Africa.

Few hours after delivering my presentation on the topic of absolute destruction of the African continent by the Western imperialism, I found myself facing several top psychologists from all corners of the globe:

“How do you manage to survive all that you just described, psychologically and physically?”

I told them that I am not managing at all, but I have no choice. Someone has to do what I am doing. Otherwise no alternative, no real information could flow.

They asked me to take a break, to rest, for at least several months. I nodded. Then we all began to laugh. Psychologists are known to have great sense of humour.

“I am absolutely devastated”, my dear friend Binu Matthew, a legendary editor of the most important Indian left wing news site, Countercurrents, told me couple of months earlier, as we were driving through his state of Kerala. “I am coping with all those horrors that imperialism is spreading all over the world. It all goes through me. I suffer because of each piece of terrible information that is published by my site. It puts me through tremendous psychological strain.”

When things get tough, I imagine a few people; men, women and children, from all corners of the world; people who touched me, who suffered immensely, and who are still most likely in distress.

Their faces, their tears, even their screams, motivate me to keep working.

The Syrian girl from a refugee camp in Bekaa Valley is one of them. I have no right to stop, to back down and to fail her.

It is tremendous shame, disgrace, the hard bottom that our civilization managed to hit: profits over people, superiority dogmas, and above all – the Western fascism.

But the battle is on.

My 1,000-page novel had been, for some time, delayed, but I incorporated many of its stories into my huge 820-page book, *Exposing Lies Of The Empire*.

One day, hopefully soon, humanism will win over dark nihilism; people will live for other people and not for some cold profits, religious dogmas and “Western values”. Imperialism will be defeated once and for all.

One day we will be building enormous monuments to those who vanished, to those who suffered immensely, to “un-people” whose tears most of us do not even see, whose screams of horror and pain are muzzled by horrendous lies, deranged pop music and movie soundtracks, by whoring mass media, and by formal education which is distributed to everyone like a poison, like sedatives, like a tool that makes most of the people on this scarred Earth disappear from our consciousness.

Andre Vltchek is a philosopher, novelist, filmmaker and investigative journalist. He covered wars and conflicts in dozens of countries. His latest books are: “[Exposing Lies Of The Empire](#)” and “[Fighting Against Western Imperialism](#)”. Discussion with Noam Chomsky: [On Western Terrorism](#). [Point of No Return](#) is his critically acclaimed political novel. [Oceania](#) – a book on Western imperialism in the South Pacific. His provocative book about Indonesia: “[Indonesia – The Archipelago of Fear](#)”. Andre is making films for teleSUR and Press TV. After living for many years in Latin America and Oceania, Vltchek presently resides and works in East Asia and the Middle East. He can be reached through his [website](#) or his [Twitter](#).

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Andre Vltchek is a philosopher, novelist, filmmaker and investigative journalist. He covered wars and conflicts in dozens of countries. His latest books are: "Exposing Lies Of The Empire" and "Fighting Against Western Imperialism". Discussion with Noam Chomsky: On Western Terrorism. Point of No Return is his critically acclaimed political novel. Oceania - a book on Western imperialism in the South Pacific. His provocative book about Indonesia: "Indonesia - The Archipelago of Fear". Andre is making films for teleSUR and Press TV. After living for many years in Latin America and Oceania, Vltchek presently resides and works in East Asia and the Middle East. He can be reached through his website or his Twitter.

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