

Tuesday, 30 December, 2008

Dear Noora,

I'm writing to you from the emptiness of my shame, the emptiness that is filled with the eloquence of Apache helicopters and F-16s.

I write to you from the emptiness of a dispersed movement that cannot cope with events and tries to reinvent itself every time, from inside a history that makes fun of us while we illude ourselves that we're the ones who are writing it. It just repeats itself. I write to you from inside a keyboard that cannot cope with the deaths.

Noora, do you remember when you wrote to me from the summer of Lebanon, from the Easter of Jenin, from the Christmas of Bethlehem? How many summers, how many easters and christmases have passed since then? We're still here, like a bunch of lost souls, in the emptiness between a Christmas and a new year that hopefully won't come.

I have no faith in the leaders of the people, Noora, and I don't have any faith in people, or in myself. Because after christmas events will take over, and despite the fact that I don't plan the bombing of playing fields, and I don't aim intelligent bombs at hospitals without medicines, and I don't search for militants and their families in apartment blocks with missiles; and despite the fact that I believe in every person's right to fight for their rights; despite all this, school will soon start and I'll have to start marking papers again and correct spelling mistakes, and you can't cope with everything, Noora, can you?

I'm sorry, I know I've disappointed you. After all I'm just another European. And our elections are just round the corner, too, and I'll get all heated over – perhaps I'll even write an article – and then, when the day arrives, I'll vote for a Europe, and a proud Malta, that will continue to screw Palestine.

When at the end, at the very end, the infinite goodness of Europe will throw itself into the emptiness between the two sides to administer its anaesthetic of peace on the severed limbs and corpses of the Palestinians, know that in the emptiness inside me I will be furious too.

So, I ask you not to be consoled by this letter, because I'm afraid that I will fill myself once again with the illusion that these words are important and that this street, Republic Street, can lead us towards a new order, a world that is more just.

Because as I write to you, under a car in front of the house where Natalie Abu Shakra who lived through the summer of Beirut, and was torn inside by the Christmas of Bethlehem and the Easter of Jenin, there's the silhouette in ashes of two girls on their way back home from school before the bomb burst through. And God forbid that instead of their story in that street somewhere in the prison that is Gaza someone may use this empty letter.

Adrian

Translated from the original in Maltese. Parts of this text were read during a solidarity march with the Palestinian people in Republic Street, the main street of Valletta, the capital city of Malta, on Tuesday, 30th December, 2008