



The Regular COLUMN

Julian Nangle

At time of writing we are two days away from the Trident vote in Parliament. I have been sufficiently moved by the folly of the direction this government (and the Conservatives) are taking on this issue that I have emailed a letter to my MP. I have little faith it will do an ounce of good but at least I feel better for having written and stated my view - something one's MP is meant to represent I think - namely that the billions proposed for Trident could so much more usefully be spent on creating and sustaining things like special needs teachers, half way houses for youth offenders, more, much more, mental health support and infrastructure, genuine shelters for the homeless, new hospitals, and so the list goes on. We are talking billions here and we are talking about spending them on Trident because of fear.

Fear is a state of being we can overcome, with courage, by facing it or as Claire Weekes, the distinguished New Zealand psychologist and psychotherapist, points out, by 'floating' through it as if there were large beach balls under each arm.

We would not need a 'deterrent' if we were not a nation in fear. We would not be a nation in fear if we had not and did not instil fear in others. The simplest, most obvious deterrent to being attacked is love, something that can only exist if fear is absent.

If we demanded our politicians to respect, love and honour others' views and to desist from exhorting those of different cultures to embrace ours, and our values, we might begin to develop a world with a semblance of tolerance for its fellow man, irrespective of his colour, creed, class or caste.

Yes, there are some unfathomable monsters in the world - Mugabe comes to mind - but if we could seek to understand why he is behaving in the manner he is we might develop a better strategy for defeating him in his aims of self destruction. Indeed, if we look at what he is doing in Zimbabwe in the same way as we might look at and consider a person who seriously self harms, might we not get a glimpse behind the mask? He appears to be killing one half of 'himself' to enable the other half to flourish.

Of course we cannot condone the horrendous things Mugabe's regime is doing in Zimbabwe, but we can learn from them. We can learn that today, in dealing with a people less westernised than ourselves, it might be an idea to respect them rather than to patronise or plunder them. It might be an idea to accept them for who and how they are. If our politicians could do this they would be laying foundation stones for a world of unconditional love. I'll even throw them a sound bite - they could call it: 'Person centred politics'.

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