

Evil In The Mainstream

Dr Jenny Tonge, a Liberal Democrat Member of Parliament and former spokesperson for international development, has caused widespread consternation (though, shockingly, not within her party) by saying that she would **consider becoming a suicide bomber if she were a Palestinian.**

Please read **Oliver Kamm's characteristically trenchant analysis** of why

Dr Tonge's remarks are incompatible with any reasonable conception of public service in a constitutional democracy [and] why the empirical claims and the political principles underlying her views are inflammatory nonsense.

We'll wait here while you do that.

We want to make a different point, though: Suppose, for the sake of argument, that *you* were a Palestinian. (Or, if you are a Palestinian, please read on.) Suppose also, for the sake of argument, that the conditions under which you live have made you so desperately unhappy that you are contemplating suicide, and also so angry that you wish to take some of your oppressors to oblivion with you.

And suppose, finally, that you do not also happen to be a degenerate, evil, sub-human monster.

Then you might indeed attack your oppressors, the authors of your misfortune, such as Yasser Arafat and the other leaders of the Palestinian Authority. You would not attack children whose only connection with your situation is that their parents are trying to prevent them from being murdered by others among your people.

When Dr Tonge and other exponents of the "understandable reaction to oppression" argument take for granted that the understandable *target* for such a reaction is the nearest Jew and not the actual perpetrator, they are doing more than spouting inflammatory nonsense. They are more than apologists for evil. They are participants.

cause it's so important, and cause it makes u feel kinda dirty to miss it. thanks for posting.

-- Elliot Temple
<http://www.curi.us/>

by **Elliot Temple** on Fri, 01/23/2004 - 17:58 | [reply](#)

Conditions

It would be a fallacious argument that conditions you have been living under have made you so desperately unhappy that you are considering committing suicide. Unhappiness makes you unhappy, not conditions. But nonetheless, for the sake of argument, suicide is a personal act of misguided despair about an internal fugue. Murder is blaming someone else for your own anger. Neither suicide or murder is a viable response to changing conditions in a meaningful way. No one person no matter how vile their opinions are is the essence of the problem. Murder the idea with critical reason. P.S. Dr. Tonge certainly misunderstands human nature and the real reasons why people do or don't do things. Send her to Israel and see what she does, probably nothing better than spout some relativist rhetoric for the drivel media to ham hash.

by a reader on Fri, 01/23/2004 - 18:00 | [reply](#)

If they are to attack their oppressors...

why not the religion or say, if a woman, to attack any (most likely) males who have the most effect upon her life? Isn't religion and culture what is keeping people down?

by a reader on Mon, 01/26/2004 - 02:09 | [reply](#)

Murder/Suicide as Reaction to Treatment

Thing is, suicide is not a rational action. The suicidal are not reasoning beings. It is an emotional act, and while it makes sense to the suicidal, it cannot be considered rational by any rational definition of the term.

Killing yourself and others with you is an act of desperation. An act of vengeance on a world that has treated you so badly. It's a way of striking out against those you have convinced yourself must die. Reason has nothing to do with it.

Suicide in any form remains unfathomable only so long as we assume the suicidal are rational, reasoning beings. When we accept that suicide bombers etc. are acting emotionally and using irrational reasoning is when we'll start making real progress against the practice.

Alan Kellogg

It's usually the obvious that gets you by surprise

by **mythusmage** on Tue, 01/27/2004 - 00:00 | [reply](#)

erm

Do you have an argument that suicide is not right in any situation?

Do you even have an argument that suicide is not right in any situation where life and death aren't already at stake for other reasons?

-- Elliot Temple

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by **Elliot Temple** on Tue, 01/27/2004 - 01:38 | [reply](#)