

## Letter to Editor Guardian: 2008 Orwell Prize for the Palestinian Narrative of Nakba

Zahir Ebrahim

May 03, 2008.

(this is a slightly expanded version of the original letter May 02, 2008 which can be read [here](#))

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### Letter to Editor - The Narrative is of more significance than what it's narrating!

**Date: May 03, 2008.**

In reference to the 2008 Orwell prize for Mr. Raja Shehadeh's poignant book "**Palestinian Walks**" ([Guardian, April 25, 2008](#), [BBC](#)), it would be an understatement to suggest that the heavens too must surely howl in pain at the Orwellian irony. Those who first sanction the Nakba of an innocent peoples (the Balfour Declaration), and continually aid and abet in its on-going construction of new daily victims of blood and tears now lingering into its 60th abominable year (the premeditated 'Iron Wall' conquest of Eretz Yisrael), are also the greatest 'benefactors' of the victims who humbly endeavor to narrate the life of their Nakba in their own blood and tears.

The narrative is being judged more important than the actual grotesque events being narrated and which are contemporaneously unfolding right before the world's silently bespectating eyes even as the Orwell prize is granted in its true spirit! The elements of Nakba need to be read in a book to be appreciated; and worse, applauded for the sophistication of its depiction; akin to the Russian Tsarina shedding a fancifully dabbed tear in the opera and offering a standing ovation on the performance depicting the plight of the poor coachman, who in real life, is only as far away from her cognition as the outside front of her coach she rides daily to and from the opera!

I hesitate to offer my humble congratulations to Mr. Raja Shehadeh and the long suffering Palestinian peoples – if that's indeed the right sentiment to offer here. Perhaps the prize is more appropriately labeled than first meets the eye – for the situation is even more tortuous

than just Kafkaesque. Some English Lord, Sir, and Dame in the manors born must surely be chuckling nigh at the fatal faits accomplis being handed the natives while its depiction by the beleaguered natives is applauded as “*political art*”. The best Orwellian conquest indeed that the unfortunate victims make an “art” of telling their own misery and celebrate in the prize that is handed them with these words of the chair of the prize, Professor Jean Seaton: “**One way of measuring the quality of your freedom is just to take a walk,**”. Hear Mr. Raja Shehadeh's BBC Radio 4 interview of April 25, 2008, at <http://tinyurl.com/6h4myu!>

To situate the reality of the full context of this Orwellian “*quality of your freedom*” in this 'Alice in Wonderland' where the focus has cleverly been attempted to shift away from the unfolding monumental genocide to the “*political art*” of its depiction, one may read: “**Someone's Holiday, Another's Nakba, Our Shame!**” at <http://tinyurl.com/5432u4>.

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The author, an ordinary researcher and writer on contemporary geopolitics, a minor justice activist, grew up in Pakistan, studied EECS at MIT, engineered for a while in high-tech Silicon Valley (patents [here](#)), and retired early to pursue other responsible interests. His maiden 2003 book was rejected by six publishers and can be read on the web at <http://PrisonersoftheCave.org>. He may be reached at <http://Humanbeingsfirst.org>.

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