

“Far too many” – by how many?



by Lev Tsitrin

The question is, of course, rhetorical. Of some things there cannot be too much (think “money”); of others, there cannot be too few. Children’s deaths fall into that latter category. Even one is too many, so Biden’s “far too many Palestinians have been killed” in Israel’s war against Hamas is so tautologically obvious as to be meaningless. Sure, Biden had to address the subject – so he did. The death of innocents is unfortunate, but what needs to be done, needs to be done: Hamas must be destroyed.

This is not the Western attitude Hamas wants to see. Its operatives surround themselves with the human shields precisely to elicit the world’s sympathy. Having caused their deaths, Hamas points to children’s dead bodies, begging the people of conscience the world over, to help end this horror. And instead of saying to Hamas, “you end this horror, you

release the hostages, *you* surrender” – the good people of the world obligingly shudder in horror and replay Hamas’ demand in Israel’s ear – from the Western papers, from the Western TV screens. Crude, cynical and brutal, Hamas’ tactic works.

An excellent example is the *New York Times*’ Raja Abdulrahim’s recent [“*The War Turns Gaza Into a ‘Graveyard’ for Children*”](#) that is replete with understandably heartbreaking interviews with relatives of the dead children painting a touching picture of human misery – and is a textbook example of propaganda masquerading for journalism.

How so? Well, consider *who* Ms. Abdulrahim interviews – and who is being left out; consider who is being lamented, and who stays unmentioned. One bright young boy wanted to be a doctor, his bright future now sadly extinguished. Another diligent student wanted to be an engineer. But do those represent the entirety of the Gazan society? If Gaza was filled just with the aspiring doctors and engineers, then who went on a brutal murderous spree on October 7? Aren’t there, apart from the doctors and engineers who inspire their children to follow their paths, people with very different aspirations, who also inspire their offspring? Aren’t among the dead Gaza children the would-be jihadis and suicide bombers? Statistically, their number should be proportionate to the number of supporters of Hamas – at least a half of Gaza’s population. So why didn’t Ms. Abdulrahim interview their relatives, telling us how they teared up at recalling how diligently their boys attended religious studies, how they dreamed of blowing themselves up and killing the Jews when they grew up, becoming martyrs – thus giving joy and pride to their families?

Would *that* interview make us sad? Sad, yes – sad that there are too many grown-ups in Gaza who pump such garbage into children’s heads. But sorry? No – it is hard to be sorry that this particular child’s dream did not come to fruition.

So here is the rub – Ms. Abdulrahim wants the reader to feel

sad, to be sorry; so this interview wouldn't do the trick. Interviews that reveal the full truth about Gaza are out of place in a piece that has a clear goal of eliciting sympathy for Palestinians and urges the reader to beg Israel to stop. Full truth about Gazans is sickening and revolting, so why give a reader the full truth? Ms. Abdulrahim won't do it – nor, sad to say, would the *New York Times'* Middle East editor.

Not only is there careful selectivity in who is being interviewed, but also in what questions are being asked. The really relevant question is, obviously – “who do you blame for the death of your child?” If bombs started falling on Gaza on October 6, we would have rightly expected the answer of “Israel” – and agreed to it. But it happened not on October 6, but on October 8. Do Gazans know the difference? Do they realize that Hamas brought it upon them on October 7? A “yes” – and for that matter, a “no” answer from the parents of the would-be doctors and engineers would be highly revealing; but it did not occur to Ms. Abdulrahim to ask this, natural and key question – clearly, so as not to ruin her narrative that is deliberately choreographed to built up sympathy for the Palestinians. To ask that question would be to defeat the purpose of the article, to turn it from a piece of propaganda into a piece of journalism. And who cares about journalism, right?

Which gets us right to the heart of the problem. The *New York Times* claims to practice journalism – and the purpose of journalism is to tell all relevant facts. Yet this is not what Ms. Abdulrahim does. By not talking to representative Gazans, and by not asking the relevant questions of those she does talk to, she massages her reporting to skew the picture of Gaza and of Gazans. Her “journalism” merely masks a Hamas-urged lie,

Ms. Abdulrahim's “reporting” in the *New York Times* is, to put it politely, journalistic malpractice. Why the *New York Times* engages in it, is a mystery. Why be a Hamas' mouthpiece, the

New York Times? Why abandon journalism, becoming a mere Hamas' propaganda sheet?