

ZIONISM MEANS NEVER HAVING TO SAY YOU'RE SORRY

BY JACK S. COHEN

The Israeli government, a divided group at best, made a major mistake when it tried a compromise approach to the Arab rioting in Gaza, Judea and Samaria. Either they should have decisively put it down, with possible major immediate loss of life, but not a drawn out agony with continuing casualties. Or they should have withdrawn military personnel from those areas and let the rioters take over. Part of the mistake was listening to the voices from outside Israel telling them what to do. .

For 2,000 years Jews were persecuted as a hated minority in the Christian West and for 1,300 years in the Muslim East. Achieving Jewish sovereignty was supposed to, free us from those bonds. But this past month we have seen David Mellor the British Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, prancing around Gaza giving Israeli soldiers lessons in civilized behavior. The utter hypocritical gall of that! How would Britain react if an Israeli representative wandered around Northern Ireland, describing the slums of Belfast as "uncivilized"? Who allowed him to be there during this crisis? And the Israeli response was mealy-mouthed. They should have expelled him from the country. The issue is not the state of the camps, which no one denies, the issue is one of sovereignty and international respect.

Certainly any government, including the U.S. government, is entitled, to criticize Israeli policies or practices. Certainly Israel should expect periodic criticism by the U.S., no matter who is president. The Arabists at the State Department will take their opportunity. They will point out that the U.S. should

not be isolated in supporting Israel, they will demand even-handedness, they will suggest that a vote against Israel will gain points with the so-called Arab "moderates." Israel should have learned to discount that about-face, it is an object lesson in political expediency, one that Israel would do well to learn from. As Machiavelli might have said in relation to statecraft, "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? If not now, when?" But perhaps the Israeli government was given pause by the prospect of international criticism, of the photos of Israeli soldiers shooting poor Palestinian Arab kids on the nightly news, of the front-page pictures of crying parents holding dead babies. But, these will be there anyway. No Israeli change of policy would make any difference to the biased reporting of liberal angst in *The Washington Post* and elsewhere.

Appeals to "world -opinion" against any Israeli policy should be seen for what they are, merely propaganda ploys. In the world forum few countries have democratic institutions, and most use brutal repression on any sign of civil unrest. They will judge Israel's response as a sign of weakness. In any case, America, which is a violent country, and likes to see problems solved quickly, would probably approve of a tough quick reaction. After all, most Americans are anti-Arab, and certainly anti-Iranian. In any case, the revolt just now is more a response to the "Palestine problem" being put on the back burner by the Arabs at the summit in Amman two months ago. The riots have nothing to do with any specific Israeli policy or lack thereof, they derive from frustration and extremism.

The leaderless stone-throwers should have been labelled by Israeli spokesmen as "a fundamentalist mob," and should have been dealt with as such. The question of morality in this process should be inner-directed. We trust our Jewish soldiers to use the appropriate amount of force to ensure their own survival without unnecessary brutality.

We should give them the benefit of the doubt. That is the responsibility of sovereignty, Zionism means never having to say you're sorry.

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