

The True Side of Resistance: A Macro View of Matters in the Mideast

Michael Corwin (truncated version – November 2023)

There are a lot of voices out there on the matter of the Mideast right now, but the commentary that will eventually be acknowledged as being on the right side of history is muted, comparatively quieter than the prevailing rhetoric.

There are only about 16 million Jews in the world whose sole nation (which is not quite the size of New Jersey) is Israel. So which side is the true side of resistance?

Land is forever in flux, but Jews are truly an indigenous people of Israel. We have been in present-day Israel for nearly four thousand years, maintaining our presence there despite periodic expulsions – about half of Israel's current population are Mizrahi Jews who never left the region.

Yet, political correctness has overwhelmed reason. Traditionally on the side of the underdog, the Left has forcefully abandoned Jews in this great moment of need. However, driven by the concept of Tikkun Olam ("repairing the world"), Jews are among the first to step up for other marginalized and oppressed people, from the abolitionist and civil rights movements to the fight for equality for workers, women, and the LGBTQ community.

Nevertheless, it sounds like the prevailing opinion is that this is finally the generation the Jews should just roll over and submit to the longstanding notion that they should cease to exist.

My grandmother said the community around her went deafeningly silent when they started rounding up Jews and sending them to the gas chambers. Today's iteration when the Jewish community gets attacked is deafening vitriol against them.

We see white people of privilege – those who could very well be the descendants of actual colonialists – jumping onto the bandwagon by marching with keffiyehs, tearing down the posters of kidnapped Israelis, and screaming coded slogans through bullhorns that call for the elimination of Israel. They're raising flags with Hamas paragliders, which can only mean support for Hamas and its incursion into Israel to intentionally massacre 1,200 people and take 240 civilians hostage – not to mention practices very dissonant to the Left and the liberal like the persecution of gay people. This is obviously not just about supporting the plight of Palestinians but also about supporting the large-scale murder of Jews.

I empathize with the plight of Palestinians and condemn the indecent tactics of the right-wing and settler movements in Israel, but I also shouldn't feel ashamed to say that Israel is a beacon of democracy and decency amidst some pretty scary and draconian regimes and movements.

Perhaps we'll soon see the folly of the knee-jerk reaction against Israel. Perhaps as with the narrative arc of other epic battles in history, these days are like 1933-1941 when the world was largely silent on the evils of Nazism, and tomorrow will be the tipping point when the PC brigade sees that it's ok for there to be a place in the world for Israel.

Every day, I see biased headlines and inflammatory dissection of Israel's actions that I have never seen during any other war effort, and certainly not of one that is a fight for survival predicated on the unprovoked mass murder and mutilation of civilians.

Should Israel not act as any other nation would in its situation because people don't want it or Jews to continue to exist?

It's a challenging time of existential angst for Jewish people – especially the descendants of Holocaust survivors who feel in our DNA that “Never again” happened again and that a latent antisemitism has been revived across the world. At the same time, we experience heartbreak for any loss of innocent life, including Palestinians. I believe, though, that civilian casualties could be avoided if the warnings from the Israel Defense Forces to evacuate the war zone are heeded as the IDF goes about its difficult task of ensuring the safety and security of its citizens. Palestinians must also demand that their leadership, Hamas, not use them as human shields.

We deserve to exist; we deserve the ancestral homeland that we have turned into a first-class arena for the arts, science, and academia; and we should strive to share it in a sustainable manner.

This is a unifying wake-up call for Jews in Israel and across the world to share our voices too, so that Israel will emerge stronger from this horrible moment. For that to happen, though, there must be a more moderate, Netanyahu-less government which makes concessions toward the creation of a two-state solution.

Perhaps we New Yorkers are a decent model for the world of how people of different faiths, races, ethnicities, etc., can live together in relative harmony.