

Whitewashing Terror

Readers of *Newsday* (the Long Island, New York newspaper) were treated on May 11 to a long apology for PLO terrorism by former World Jewish Congress official Mark Bruzonsky. Bruzonsky long ago joined the anti-Israel camp but he still manages to infuse his writing with contrived hurt feelings, as if Israel had finally done something that had pushed another long-time sympathizer to reappraisal of the country and its policies. The fact is that Bruzonsky has been a constant opponent of Israel since the 1970's. In one memorable interview (in *Worldview* in 1979) Bruzonsky—the interviewer—reproached Egyptian Foreign Minister Boutros Ghali for making peace with Israel. He asked Ghali how Egypt could hope to solve the Palestinian problem now that it had “given up the military option.”

In his *Newsday* article, Bruzonsky attacks the American Jewish community for complicity in “Israeli brutality.” Bruzonsky cites the recent case in which PLO terrorists hijacked a bus and held its passengers hostage. The siege ended when Israeli forces attacked the bus and killed its hijackers. However, it now appears that one of the hijackers did not die during the rescue raid. According to a military inquiry, he was killed by one of his Israeli captors after the raid had ended. This is, of course, contrary to Israeli regulations and practice. Defense Minister Moshe Arens says that whoever is found guilty of killing the captured terrorist will be punished according to the law.

That is not good enough for Bruzonsky. Bruzonsky says that the American Jewish community should speak out about the incident rather than allow the Israeli legal system to handle it. He says that the “silence from American Jewry seems to be even more troubling and may even be more tragic than the terrible brutality that is officially practiced by Israel today in all too many instances against Palestinians.”

Kid Terrorists

Bruzonsky does not consider the bus hijacking to have been a clear case of terrorism either. He writes: “The Palestinian ‘kids’ (for they simply lacked either the mindset or the apparatus of real ‘terrorists’) who commandeered the bus—under the severe provocations of the past years—were indeed reckless, yet they acted with restraints. Their weapons were a knife, a grenade, and possibly a homemade briefcase bomb. . . .” (Emphasis ours).

Bruzonsky's use of the term “kids” for the terrorists; his use of “commandeered” for hijacked; and his reference to the hijackers' lack of a terrorist “mindset” (how

does he know?) indicate where Bruzonsky's sympathies lie: with the hijackers rather than with their victims. Not only that. He says that the armed terrorists “acted with restraint” despite the “severe provocations” of recent years.

In short, Bruzonsky seems to believe that hijacking civilian buses is an acceptable response to unnamed Israeli provocations. The fact that the people on the bus—civilian children, women, and men—had nothing to do with the alleged provocations is, for Bruzonsky, a small point. His animus toward the State of Israel and its people is so great that he happily whitewashes random terror, leaving the impression that a bus hijacking is nothing more than a teenage prank.

American Heritage

However, Bruzonsky's tenderness toward terror is not unique. The June-July issue of *American Heritage* (an excellent magazine, by the way) includes an article on the 1970's by author Vance Bourjaily. Bourjaily reviews some of the horrors of the last 20 years: the Kennedy and King assassinations, the murder of civil rights workers in Mississippi, Attica, My Lai, etc. Then there is this sentence: “Terrorism swept the world, most incredibly in the slaughter of Israeli athletes and Arab commandos (emphasis ours) at the Munich Olympics.” No distinction is made between the victims of terror and the terrorists. This is nothing less than obscene. *American Heritage's* subscribers should let its publisher know what they think about Bourjaily's equating of terror's victims with terror's perpetrators. □

—M.J.R.

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