

Fair and balanced?

By Phyllis Chesler

Here's what "fair and balanced" coverage means today.

The cover of the Dec. 22, 2024 *New York Times* magazine features the Pieta-like figure of a Gaza mother holding her son. It's a carefully crafted "Pallywood" version of Michaelangelo's sculpture. The photograph appears in somber black and white and titled: "Escape From Gaza." The subtitle is: "The war is nearly impossible to flee—except for a small number of sick and wounded who are offered a dramatic path to safety."



"The New York Times" building in Midtown Manhattan. Photo by Carin M. Smilk.

photos, also in black and white, documenting the slow and weary flight of "grievously wounded Gazans" on their way to Abu Dhabi. The accompanying texts damn Israel in monstrous ways.

That Gazan civilians were purposefully put in harm's way by Hamas/Iran is

never mentioned. The entire offering is entirely without

This actually goes beyond the pope's keffiyeh-clad baby Jesus because, inside, in addition to the cover photo, are 22 pages (!) of additional

context and is meant to inflame public hatred for Israel ever further.

Here's one example:

In a full-page photo, a hijabbed woman sits in a wheelchair, her hands clasped. There is no mention of what happened on Oct. 7, no reference to Israelis murdered, wounded, traumatized, hospitalized, and/or internally displaced.

Here's what the caption tells us: "Each patient arrives not only not only with injuries but with a chapter of this ugly war's history. On Jan. 24, Reem Elian says, Israeli soldiers shot up her home in Khan Younis, killing her son, a pharmacist, and injuring her, her other sons, and sister-in-law. After the attack, Elian says, soldiers interrogated the survivors for hours, but when she asked for an ambulance, they refused. She made it to a hospital on foot, bleeding and hopping on one leg."

I cannot even begin to quote from the other captions, which concern children who lost their parents and had to have a leg amputated without anesthesia, reference to "new Palestinian diasporas," at least two children without arms, etc. Any normal person is meant to hate the country that chose—chose!—to inflict such suffering on so many women, children and elderly people.

Unbelievably, "The Year in Pictures," a separate *Times* section published on the same date, has a 36-page offering which features 10 additional photos about and for Gaza: shattered Gaza, hungry Gazan children, humanitarian aid being dropped via parachute into northern Gaza. There's a two-page spread containing three photographs of two wounded Gazan children, one without a leg, the other who lost both arms, and a woman in hijab who lost an eye "in a strike." One of the 10 photos is a two-page color spread of a pro-Gaza encampment at the University of California, in Los Angeles. The photograph is

captioned: "Pro-Palestinian activists camped out. Officials ordered them to leave. Protests lasted the entire semester."

Oh yes—there is at least one half-page photo of Beirut, Lebanon, captioned: "The Ras-el-Nabaa neighborhood after Israeli airstrikes killed at least 22 people and injured over 100." Readers can only wonder why Israel did such a thing.

There is one small color photo of an Israeli mother mourning her son, "one of six hostages whose bodies were found in Gaza by the Israeli army, fueling more grief and anger in Israel." The caption does not tell us how any of these bodies came to be there, who took them, when or why, etc. It's all very mysterious. To hedge their bet, this single Israel-based photo is positioned right opposite the Beirut photo.

But in case readers failed to get the point, there's more. On page A7, in what used to be the news section, there are four photos of how Israel has damaged Syria. This is titled "How Israel Has Seized More Syrian Land Since the Fall of al-Assad."

In total, in three sections of the same pre-Christmas *New York Times*, there are 32 pro-Palestine photos and one sympathetic but puzzling photo of an Israeli family in mourning. Is 32 to 1 a "fair and balanced" picture of reality?

In the special section, "The Year In Pictures," there are only three photographs of Ukraine—and nothing from Congo, Sudan, Kenya, Iran, or Afghanistan. Nothing from the "Jew hunt" in Amsterdam.

Trump may have been elected president, but the "deep state" media is digging its heels in rather malevolently, spitefully and with malice aforethought.

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