

National Affairs by Claire Hoy ? No way to reason with terrorists

If anything, the noted U.S. civil war General William Sherman may have understated the case when he told an 1879 graduating class that, 'I tell you, war is Hell.'

The latest manifestation of that, of course, is the video of the black-clad ISIS killers marching a group of 21 captured Coptic Christians to the sea in Libya, where they were forced down on their knees and brutally beheaded, supposedly in response to the U.S. killing of Osama bin Laden.

History surely has proven beyond any reasonable doubt that whatever the cause, whomever the combatants, whatever the period, there is a lot more Hell in war than there is glory.

Unfortunately, despite what the so-called anti-war groups say (as if there's an equivalent pro-war sentiment out there), war, despite its horribleness, can't always be avoided.

Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau and NDP Leader Thomas Mulcair may think Canada's best contribution to the ongoing war against ISIS may be to send blankets to the displaced and use diplomacy instead of rockets, but how in heaven's name can anyone expect to sit down and reason with people who, in the name of their God, twisted as it is, are prepared to make such public spectacles to show that they mean business?

War is never a good route to take, but sometimes, alas, it's the only option open. Just as there was no way to sit down and reason with Adolf Hitler ? although some leaders of the day were conned into thinking they could ? there is no way to reason with the Islamic terrorist groups who are sworn to cleanse the earth of anybody ? man, woman or child ? who does not subscribe to their distorted version of their scriptures.

The sad reality of war, however, also offers the opportunity for particular special interest groups to trot out the old victim card, a popular tactic these days, not only in connection with war but in terms of all social issues of the day.

Take, for example, a column by Elizabeth Renzetti in the Monday Globe and Mail, entitled: 'Rape: a shameful weapon of war,' published on the same day that the paper ran stories of the aforementioned mass beheading of the Christian captives in Libya. Renzetti writes about Hollywood star Angelina Jolie, asking her why it has taken so long to begin to study seriously the issue of sexual violence in conflict.

Jolie replies, 'I have no idea. I find it abhorrent and it makes absolutely no sense to me that we know that girls are being sold into sexual slavery; that when a woman is raped she is forced from her community; that girls as young as 9 are being married off. I cannot fathom why it has taken so long. I cannot fathom why it has ever been all right to treat women this way.'

And there, dear hearts, is the rub.

It is what activists always do to make their case, painting with a broad brush the great unwashed out there who, unlike them, don't give a damn about women being brutally abused in war. They make these wild, generalized assumptions about whole groups of people based on nothing more, really, than their own built-in prejudices.

Who are these people who 'don't care' about women getting raped, for example? Of course it's 'abhorrent' that these things happen. But ask yourself this: do you know anybody ? anybody ? who doesn't agree with that, who would just shrug at the news that untold numbers of women and young girls are forced to suffer this way in war zones? I don't know anybody who thinks that way, and if I did, I wouldn't want to be around them.

Of course rape as a weapon of war is terrible. So is beheading captive men or conscripting them by force to fight your fight. It's all terrible. Or, as Sherman said, it's 'Hell.'

Why do activists tend to portray their particular interest as the 'victims,' all the while ignoring other victims and maligning society at large as the victimizers?

This victim card tactic, of course, is not just confined to war. While it's clearly a lot less serious issue, was anybody surprised when activist Jesse Jackson rushed to the barricades and cried 'racist' when baseball's Little League International disqualified Chicago's Jackie Robinson West little team which won the U.S. Little League championship but cheated to do so?

They weren't disqualified because they're black kids. They were disqualified for cheating. Period. Full stop.

But why is Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel awarding them championship rings when they cheated? What is the lesson he and Jackson are giving these 11- and 12-year-old boys?

Who was really victimized here ? the team that cheated and won, or the team that followed the rules and lost?

We need to give our heads a collective shake from time to time.

