

Cast Lead

I just read a [particularly silly piece](#) by Shlomo Avineri, the Israeli political theorist who has written some interesting things on Marxism.

For quite a while Avineri has been flakking for the Israeli government. Now he tells us that Israel's big problem is that it chooses the names for its military operations without enough thought. So, he says, the name "Operation Cast Lead" caused many outside of Israel to think of the lead in bullets and other weapons of war, when in fact the name had been carelessly taken from a children's Hannukah song by Bialik about a dreydl made of Cast Lead. (The attack came on the last day of Hannukah.)

Well, the only dreydl song I learned as a kid went: dreydl, dreydl, dreydl, I made it out of clay, and when it's dry and ready, then dreydl I shall play.

I wonder why they didn't choose to call it Operation Wet Clay?

The lyrics to Bialik's song go like this:

Father lit the candles for me
The shamash shone so bright
The shamash shone so bright
Oh, do you know what it is for?
Do you know what it is for?
Do you know what it is for?
It's for Chanukah.
Mother made me latkes
A latke warm and sweet
A latke warm and sweet
Oh, do you know what it is for?
Do you know what it is for?
Do you know what it is for?
It's for Chanukah.

My teacher gave me a dreidl
A dreidl of cast lead
A dreidl of cast lead
Oh, do you know what it is for?
Do you know what it is for?
Do you know what it is for?
It's for Chanukah

Now if the murderous assault on Gaza had been code-named Operation Warm Latkes, then I could believe that it was a thoughtless oversight. But I can't believe that Cast Lead was chosen without awareness of what else lead might be used for.