

Palestine/Israel – a reality check on pessimism/optimism

Dc Tue 4 Mar 2014 at The Blue Mugge pub 7.15pm

Notes based on Lazy Trout session in 2010, up-dated for 2104...

1. What do we know of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict?
Milestones in the timeline to the conflict.
 - i). The Jewish Diaspora. Started 8-6th century BCE;
 - ii) The Great Jewish Revolt. 66-70CE then 135CE;
 - iii) Persecution of Jews in Europe for centuries.
 - iv) Immigration to Palestine – 1880's onwards;
 - v) Zionism - officially 1897
 - vi) Balfour declaration – 1917;
 - vii) British Mandate of Palestine – 1922
 - viii) The Holocaust;
 - ix) Partition – 1947;
 - x) The State of Israel, 1948;
 - xi) Six Day War, 1967;
 - xii) Oslo Accords, 1993 & 1995.

Brief comments on, and any additions, to this timeline...
2. Recent issues: the Israeli 'settlements', 'the Wall' and responses to these developments.
3. In 2005 *Palestinian Civil Society* issued a call for a campaign of boycotts, divestment and sanctions (BDS) against Israel until it complies with international law and Palestinian rights. The BDS movement has grown significantly especially in the last few years, supported by, for instance, the *Jewish Voice for Peace* in the USA and, in February this year by Israelis in Tel Aviv boycotting products with ties to the controversial settlements.
4. At the same time the *British – Palestine Twinning and Friendship Association* has developed local groups including the recently formed *Leek-Palestine Link* ...
5. So what is the solution to the Israel/Palestine conflict? Wars and violence have caused death and destruction on a major scale, leading nowhere, but with suffering and humanitarian crises on the way... The UN has been relatively powerless. The *American Israel Public Affairs Committee* in the USA (AIPAC) has been hugely influential gaining US financial and military support for Israel. The founder of AIPAC originally ran (in the 1950s) the *American Zionist Committee for Public Affairs*. Now opponents of AIPAC in the States make a clear distinction between anti-semitism and anti-Zionism – a crucial distinction.
6. A recent book by two American academics* analyses over 300 examples of resistance and rebellion worldwide from 1900 to 2006 and concludes that non-violent campaigns have been twice as successful as violent campaigns in achieving their objects. Developments as in 3 and 4 above are essentially non-violent. Is this the best way forward for conflict resolution in this deeply contentious and troubled area of our planet?

* *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict* (Columbia University Press, 2011)

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