

# **“Conflict Issues” In Israel and Palestine: Debate in Committee Room G, British Houses of Parliament**

By [Clive Hambidge](#)

Global Research, October 29, 2015

[Facilitate Global](#) 28 October 2015

Theme: [Crimes against Humanity](#)

In-depth Report: [PALESTINE](#)

*Sitting in Committee room G in the Houses of Parliament on 23<sup>rd</sup> October from 6 to 7.30 pm was a sobering affair. While hosted by the All Party Parliamentary Group on Conflict Issues and chaired by Lord Alderdice, the event's speaker was Professor Pdraig O'Malley who had recently published *The Two State Delusion* which the New York Times described as both "impressive and frustrating". It is indeed impressive in its observations.*

Clear that Israel's occupation is brutal, O'Malley recounted that according to various sources "Israel has cut down more than 800,000 Palestinian olive trees since 1967", which, O'Malley observes, is "the equivalent of razing all of the 24,000 trees in New York City's Central Park 33 times."

Israel has cut down many succeeding generations of Palestinians in limited but full bloom of their occupied lives and others with their tiny feet already preoccupied with death and suffering.

The topic for discussion was the possibility of a two state solution, though probably not a possibility; or, an Israeli controlled one state solution though probably not a possibility either. The so-called; peace process between two 'warring' neighbours (one side with many stones, the other with one of the most sophisticated militaries in the 21<sup>st</sup> century its weapons routinely tested on the Palestinian population) namely Israel-Palestine, has been in ill health since 1948 and is now in a deep coma.

The underwhelming analysis of the speaker was that the "tit-for tat" invidious deeds perpetrated by both sides lately were unhelpful and the mental health of both populations, particularly Israel was deteriorating. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) on the rise, the historical anxiety of the Israeli population not for us to comprehend.

The West Bank is ailing, Gaza completely reliant on the UN and NGOs for aid has effectively no income and the life line of tunnels now flooded by the unenlightened Egyptian regime means this open air prison is in a desperate state. Pledges of monies from various donors have not materialised and it would take a generation to rebuild Gaza even if the pledges were expedited.

Hamas democratically elected would never be recognised by Israel and now that Isis has allegedly infiltrated the Gaza Strip another invasion of Gaza by Israel's IDF is on the cards which would reduce Gaza to rubble: rubble on top of rubble then. One was reminded of the great Roman historian Tacitus' statement when describing the Roman Empire "Brigands of the world, they create desolation and call it peace." The desolation of the Gaza Strip is

almost total, the deteriorating mental health of both citizens in Gaza and the West Bank negatively shaped by the Israeli occupation because of their morphology of violence.

As evidenced by the World Health organization (WHO) Report of 22 March to 1 April 2015: "scientific literature is unequivocal on the negative effects of adversity (e.g. trauma, loss, severe life stressors) on mental health and mental disorder (Dohrenwend, B.P. 1998; Kessler et al. 2010). The facets of the occupation ... involve a sense of unpredictability and uncontrollability in daily life that have been shown to have a detrimental impact on mental health (Gallagher et al. 2014). Palestinians report experience of chronic humiliation during the occupation (Giacaman et al. 2007), with humiliation being shown to be associated with health (Giacaman et al. 2007) and mental health complaints (Kendler et al. 2003)." Professor O'Malley reiterated this point of the intolerable and continuing humiliation as a matter of policy by Israel was clearly associated with mental health issues of many Palestinians, along with I would add with co-morbid physical complaints.

A considerable Hamas presence in the West Bank would not be tolerated by Israel we were told because if missiles were to find a snug bunker there, the Israeli defence system "Iron Dome" would be ineffective in intercepting missiles launched from such short range. I was fast developing PTSD symptoms listening to this stuff. Facts on the ground (meaning illegal settlement building) were, though I repeat illegal in occupied Palestine, to stay and the corpus-separatum that is Jerusalem would remain Israel's capital even though the international community has its embassies and diplomatic corps in Tel Aviv the only internationally recognised capital of Israel. Hamas does have a small presence in the West Bank and seeks, according to credible sources, to aid West Bank inhabitants with medical supplies and other scarce resources.

Leadership on both sides has been reduced to (a requisite for national tempers and international consumption and condemnation) name calling, and politicking, on one beleaguered side, by the autocratic Abbas whose presidential mandate long expired and on the illegal occupying side the land-grabbing Netanyahu. The difference between the two is, one has subjugated and expanded the Jewish state at the cost of incalculable human suffering and loss, the other has been complicit in overseeing the dwindling territory of historical Palestine, human rights abuses and the complete loss of faith in the Palestinian Authority (PA) by the people and particularly the young of the West Bank.

The name professor O'Malley cited as a possible future Palestinian leader is the influential Marwan Barghouti. Marwan Hasib Ibrahim Barghouti *the* prominent Palestinian political figure, recognised by many as the Palestinian Nelson Mandela was controversially convicted and imprisoned for murder by an Israeli court having been regarded as the leader behind the first and second intifada after becoming disillusioned with the now mythological peace process. He was arrested by the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) in 2002 in Ramallah. In truth Barghouti would find himself between a rock and a hard place if he were ever allowed to leave prison, when according to the NYT he told Al-Monitor that "if the two-state solution fails, the substitute will not be a bi-national one-state solution, but a persistent conflict that extends based on an existential crisis – one that does not know any middle ground."

Indeed O'Malley postulated that with the Israeli created "facts on the ground" it would probably take a regional war drawing the super powers in to direct confrontation that would, could, bring both sides to their senses and create conditions for a lasting peace. Lord Alderdice sadly suggested the geo-political conflict had begun in 2014. This can only worsen

an already precarious existence for Palestinians. We were all aware that for the failed states, such as Iraq, Syria, Libya, the implosion was underway and a sea of human suffering was arriving on the shores of Europe if they were able to make such a journey fraught with numerous dangers.

So Let me be clear here, at least are facts from history not Israeli manipulated facts-on the ground. The 1948 Nakba saw the Israeli illegal land-grab where over 400 villages were overrun or disembowelled and 85% of the Palestinian population an estimated 750,000 became refugees as the establishment of an "Israeli homeland" later to become the declared Jewish (apartheid) State was procured by violence that continues to this day.

Jerusalem which according to the 1947 UN Partition Plan for Palestine "was [and remains] a corpus separatum (separated body)" would because of its holy sites come under UN General Assembly Resolution 181 providing in part that "Independent Arab and Jewish States and the Special International Regime for the City of Jerusalem ... shall come into existence in Palestine two months after the evacuation of the armed forces of the mandatory Power has been completed but in any case not later than 1 October 1948". This failed due to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Resolution 194 was to establish a "Conciliation Commission" to be inclusive of Resolution 181. This failed. Further elaborations were to come but an Israeli fait accompli was to seal Palestinians' fate when Ben-Gurion's "Jewish Jerusalem" was to be seen as inseparable from the now State of Israel and corpus separatum untenable along with Resolution 181. Israel had shown its clenched fist and was not to extend with any sincerity a hand of peace to the Palestinians then or now.

Because of the above and international community connivance and negligence, Palestinians have endured decades of persecution and an illegal occupation that has seen (to bring us up to date) during the right wing tenure of Netanyahu Benjamin an increase of illegal settlements numbering in the region of 100,000. The religiously fanatical, mostly armed occupants, routinely harass or murder their unsettled, upturned, Caterpillar bulldozed Palestinian neighbours and are encouraged to-do so by the right wing religiously fanatical Israelis.

One state or two who knows? But we of conscience must continue in our protestations over the brutal treatment of Palestinians since the Nakba of 1948.

We must in observing the truth recognise that we also stand in protective governance of our own senses and the moral, ethical, lawful actions that inform the world of the presence of justice, if only in our hearts and minds so by this virtue and in humility speak for those muted by horrific violence and persecution. A violent history as that of Israel cannot be consigned as past, as these unjust antecedents fester and metastasize into a nexus newly formed brigands. Willing to be obviated of criminality and expiated from sin whilst perpetrating some of the worst crimes against a defenceless people is not to be tolerated.

I finish with a quote by Howard Zinn from *A peoples History of the United States 1492-present*: "I don't want to invent victories for peoples movement. But to think history-writing must aim simply to recapitulate the failures that dominate the past is to make historians collaborators in an endless cycle of defeat."

*Clive Hambidge is Human Development Director at Facilitate Global. Clive can be contacted by email: [clive.hambidge@facilitateglobal.org](mailto:clive.hambidge@facilitateglobal.org)*

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