

# Palestinians do have Options for Change and Resistance

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On November 28, 1947, the CIA predicted accurately the meaning of Truman's push to partition Palestine:

*"Armed hostilities between Jews and Arabs will break out if the UN General Assembly accepts the plan to partition Palestine ... the resulting conflict will seriously disturb the social, economic, and political stability of the Arab world, and US commercial and strategic interests will be dangerously jeopardized ... The poverty, unrest, and hopelessness upon which Communist propaganda thrives will increase throughout the Arab world."*

It has been 20 years since the Oslo process and we can engage in a postmortem analysis of the dozens of failed initiatives and plans for "peace," or pacification.

Some would tell us our choices are or were limited. Ten years ago, our departed friend Professor Edward Said wrote: "Who is now asking the existential questions about our future as a people? The task cannot be left to a cacophony of religious fanatics and submissive, fatalistic sheep ... We are that close to a kind of upheaval that will leave very little standing and perilously little left even to record, except for the last injunction that begs for extinction. Hasn't the time come for us collectively to demand and formulate a genuinely Arab alternative to the wreckage about to engulf our world?"

Today, seven million of the 12 million Palestinians around the world are refugees or displaced people. There are some 5.8 million Israeli Jews and nearly 6 million Palestinians who live under the rule of the apartheid Israeli state. Half the Jews who live in Palestine/Israel are immigrants.

Israel stole most of the land and now controls some 93 percent of the land of Palestine (before the British invasion and the Balfour Declaration, native and Zionist Jews collectively owned only 2 percent of Palestine).

It is tempting for some people to lose faith in the possibility of liberation and justice after 132 years since the first Zionist colony and 65 years after the 1948 Nakba.

There was a phrase in the 1960s civil rights struggle, "free your mind and your ass will follow." Surely when we free our minds we will see there are many options, despite the attempt of our oppressors to convince us that our options are gone, save for surrendering or issuing empty slogans.

Surely, we as a people can and do chart a path forward.

What are our options outside of sloganism or defeatism? That is to say, outside of current policies of endless talk or endless negotiations while weak?

The other options are not magical nor new; many have already articulated them in clear visions in countless studies.

Why not revive the original charter of PLO to liberate all of Palestine? Why not democratize the PLO to really represent the 12 million Palestinians around the world? Why not refuse to suppress resistance and instead engage in massive popular resistance throughout historic Palestine?

Why not engage in resistance in areas outside of Palestine? Why not target Zionist companies and interests world wide by economic boycotts and even sabotage? Why not expose and confront the network of Zionist lobbyists that support war crimes and support Zionist control? Why not engage in educational campaigns and media campaigns and lobbying around the world?

Why not build alliances with powerful states that could provide protection or support, like China, Russia or Brazil? Why not promote boycotts, divestment, and sanctions? Why not work through international agencies including the International Court of Justice to bring Israeli war criminals to justice and challenge membership of Israel in the UN and all its agencies? Why not do all the above and even more?

Politicians are reluctant to consider change because they believe they are important. To justify their inaction and lack of backbone, they even lie.

But people can and do force politicians to change. Regardless of how they got into power or the nature of governing systems, leaders cannot afford to ignore strong people demands. But if the people are complacent and ignorant, this is the best scenario for status quo politicians.

We saw changing policies in the Ottoman Empire from support of Zionism to rejection. We saw changes in British policies in response to the Palestinian revolution of 1936 and continuing pressures even recently when the British parliament voted against attacking Syria on behest of Israel.

And we saw the power of resistance in 1987-1991 in challenging both the complacency of leaders in Tel Aviv and Tunisia. Surely we can also learn lessons from the limitations of military might whether in Vietnam in the 1960s or in Iraq in 2003, or Lebanon in 2006, or Gaza in 2008.

More recently we can see dramatic shifts and retreats in issues dealing with Syria and Iran. History is dynamic and not static nor is it to the liking of status quo politicians.

The original Zionist project was for control of the area between the Euphrates and the Nile. Here we are 130 years later and even the area between the Jordan and the Mediterranean is roughly at parity between Jewish Israelis and Palestinians. When Balfour declaration was issued in 1917, there were 650,000 Palestinians in Palestine; today there are nearly 6 million.

Surely this is not a hopeless scenario. After denying our existence, the Palestinian flag now flies around Palestine even inside the Green line. Surely this should not be at the expense of

Palestinian flags on security uniforms preventing Palestinians from engaging in resistance or as backdrops with Israeli and American flags in endless negotiations.

Martin Luther King, Jr posed the question: "Cowardice asks the question - is it safe? Expediency asks the question - is it politic? Vanity asks the question - is it popular? But conscience asks the question - is it right? And there comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular; but one must take it because it is right."

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