

## Does Israel want peace?

By Bill Kilpatrick

Sitting in the Bancroft Village Playhouse watching a screening of the Oscar winning documentary 'No Other Land' one could not help but ponder the simple question: does Israel actually want peace with its neighbours and the Palestinians? The film follows Palestinian Basel Adra and Israeli journalist Yuval Abraham as they document what life is really like under Israeli military occupation. I was deeply moved by the cruelty of the Israeli military forces as they wantonly destroyed the homes of Palestinians to make way for future Israeli settlements or under the false pretense of creating a space for 'military maneuvers.' If Israel actually desires peace then their actions contradict this desire. Let's be clear: the way the Israeli army treats Palestinians is how the Nazis treated people in Eastern Europe. This is not hyperbole.

The Palestinians, like everyone else including many Israelis and most people in general, want nothing but peace, a roof over their heads, food, good jobs, healthcare, an education, and a future for their children. Such, no doubt, was the desire of the Jews post Second World War. But now the oppressed have become the oppressors and it is the Israeli's who are acting like the very fascists who tried to exterminate them, and the United States keeps enabling their aggression saying that 'Israel has the right to defend itself.' Perhaps, but it must be remembered that this was the same excuse that Adolph Hitler used to invade country after country. Aggression is aggression, no matter the pretense. If you are not defending yourself from a direct attack, then you are the aggressor. No one would accept the excuse that a bully in school was just bullying other kids to prevent those kids from bullying them. There is no such thing as pre-emptive bullying, so why do we accept this same logic in the national and international realm? It does not make sense, and it has not, and will not result in peace.

I'm not defending the actions of Hamas. What they did on Oct. 7 was disgusting and should be roundly condemned, but if we only look at their actions without the historic context of Israeli violence, torture, and expulsions of Palestinians, leading up to Oct. 7 then we are missing the bigger picture. There have been atrocities on both sides and both sides use those atrocities to justify further violence. There is one major difference though, Israel is a world military power with modern weapons and a well-trained army, whereas the Palestinians are stateless with no army or modern weapons. Remember that bullies often only bully those weaker than themselves. This is also another important point to remember when considering the context of what is happening in Gaza and the occupied territories.

Now, Israel has attacked Iran in another act of unprovoked aggression. According to Euronews.com one resident of Tel Aviv, responding to the retaliatory attacks on Israel by Iran, stated 'We see the destruction, nothing will deter us. We must continue our mission, and eliminate those we need to, and do whatever is necessary. Nothing will deter us, we will continue with all our might, advancing, advancing.' But the resident never elaborated on what they are advancing towards or what their mission is, but based on Israel's behaviour, their mission is not peace with either the Palestinians or Iran, nor does it appear that they want security. Instead they are advancing towards further instability and possibly an all out war.

In 1934, Jewish professor Victor Klemperer, who was living in Nazi Germany had this to say about the Zionist movement that would inspire the Jewish state some 14 years later. He said, 'To me the Zionists, who want to go back to the Jewish state of A.D. 70 are just as offensive as the Nazis. With their nosing after blood, their ancient 'cultural roots,' their partly canting, partly obtuse winding back of the world they are altogether a match for the National Socialists. That is the fantastic thing about the National Socialists, that they simultaneously share in a community of ideas with Soviet Russia and with Zion.' The more stories that Klemperer heard from Jews in Palestine the more it confirmed in him a 'hatred of these Zionist doings.' This is a Jewish professor comparing Zionist thinking and behaving to that of the Nazis and of Stalin before the war and the holocaust. This should give those reading this time for pause to really consider what this means both then and now.

Klemperer was not wrong. Ten years later, after the assassination of Lord Moyne on Nov. 6 1944, by members of a Zionist extremist organization from Palestine called Lehi, none other than Winston Churchill, made a similar comparison between Zionists and the Nazis stating 'This shameful crime has shocked the world. It has affected none more than those like myself, who, in the past, have

been consistent friends of the Jews and constant architects of their future. If our dreams for Zionism are to end in the smoke of assassins' pistols and our labours for its future to produce only a new set of gangsters worthy of Nazi Germany, many like myself will have to reconsider the position we have maintained so consistently and so long in the past?? In fact, at the time, David Ben-Gurion, who would become the first Prime Minister of Israel, compared the leader of Lehi, Menachem Begin, to Hitler, and referred to another militant group ?Irgun? as a ?Nazi gang? and ?Jewish Nazis.? Begin would become Prime minister of Israel in 1977.

While the moderate Zionists were horrified by the assassination of Lord Moyne the violence by Zionist extremists continued. As historian Caroline Elkins pointed out, ?In Britain in the immediate postwar years, MI5 considered the Zionists the nation's greatest security threat, for good reason.? On July 22, 1946, Jewish terrorists from the group Irgun blew up the King David Hotel in Jerusalem, killing 91 British military officers, administrators, and civil servants. Then on Oct 31, 1946 members of the same group blew up the British embassy in Rome. In March of 1947 Lehi struck again by blowing up the Colonial Club in London. Zionist terrorist groups also sent letter and package bombs to other important British personnel.

Part of the violence was anti-colonial in nature and part was because the British refused to give over the mandate of Palestine to either the Jews or the Arabs. Many Zionists believed, and still do, that they, and only they, belong in Jerusalem pointing as evidence to their holy book and not to the fact that many people have lived in Jerusalem over the last 5,000 years. It is this belief, combined with the tacit approval of the United States of that belief's rightness, that has led us to this point in time where both the United States and Israel are governed by extremists.

It has been said that a state created by violence must be maintained by violence and no where is that truer than in the state of Israel today, where violence, torture, and suppression remain the overwhelming tools used to control the Palestinian and surrounding Arab populations. The irony is not lost on history that the state of Israel was created because of intolerance, discrimination, and genocide by Europeans. It was also created by acts of violence by Zionists against the British. Since that time the state of Israel has been maintained by intolerance, discrimination, violence, and displacement, with the ultimate goal of removing the Palestinian people in one way or another from what Zionists believe is their land.

Churchill's comments in 1944 are just as true today as they were then when he said, ?If there is to be any hope of a peaceful and successful future for Zionism, these wicked activities must cease.? But that will only happen if Israel sincerely wants peace, which based on their behaviour, they do not.