

An Affect and Possibility of Bringing Peace between Israeli and Palestinian through Social Activities

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1. Introduction

Basic information about Palestine¹

Officially) Palestinian Interim Self-Government Authority, PA

Area) All Palestine: about 6020 square kilometers

(1) West Bank: about 5655 square kilometers

(2) Gaza Strip: about 365 square kilometers

Population)

All Palestine: about 11.6 million people

(1) West Bank and Gaza Strip: about 4.5 million people

West Bank: about 2.8 million people

Gaza Strip: about 1.7 million people

(2) Palestinians who live in Israel: about 1.5 million people

(3) Palestinians who live in other areas²: about 5.13 million people

Nation) Arabic

Language) Arabic

Religion) Islam 92%, Christian 7%, others 1%

Government) President: Mahmoud Abbas

Prime Minister: Rami Hamdallah

Basic information about Israel³

Officially) the State of Israel

Area) about 22 thousand square kilometer⁴

Population) about 8180 thousand people⁵

Nation) Jewish about 75%,

Arabs and others about 25%⁶

Language) Hebrew, Arabic

Religion) Judaism 75.4%, Islam 17.3%, Christian 2%,

Druse 1.7%⁷

Government) President: Shimon Peres

Prime Minister: Benjamin Netanyahu



In 2014, from July 8th to August 26th, Israeli air strikes pounded Gaza Strip. 2,125 Palestinians, most of civilians, have been killed during these air strikes. Through this conflict, I realized that there are limitations to what politics can do alone. I have some reasons.

The meditation of this conflict did not advance steadily. This air strike's first truce agreement on August 1st lasted for 72 hours, but in truth, it was broken in only two hours.⁸ It shows that politicians who are Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the head of Hamas cannot move forward sufficiently to arouse national feelings for their own country. Many people lost their lives in Gaza while some talks between the political leaders of each country repeated futile arguments.⁹ It is meaningless to dispute “who's fault Israeli or Palestinian?” to

solve this issue. Moreover it's not the politicians and the capitalists but citizens who always face many serious problems, so I guess that the best way to solve this problem is through people's conscious efforts.

In “Het Achterhuis”¹⁰; diary of Anne Frank, the author writes that the most important thing to solve every issue are citizens.

“I don't believe that the big men, the politicians and the capitalists alone, are guilty of the war. Oh no, the little man is just guilty, otherwise the peoples of the world would have risen in revolt long ago! There's in people simply an urge to destroy, an urge to kill, to murder and rage, until all mankind, without exception, undergoes a great change, wars will be waged, everything that has been built up, cultivated, and grown will be destroyed and disfigured, after which mankind will have to begin all over again.” (Wednesday, 3 May, 1944, pg.201)

So I believe that the key to bringing peace to Israelis and Palestinians is to resolve bilateral friction.

This summer, protests were made to free Gaza and Palestine, against the war and end of Israeli war crimes all over the world while Gaza was under attack. But still the ceasefire took forever to come.

I think it is necessary to solve the Israeli – Palestinian conflict by doing social activities not in third countries but by of the persons involved. So I decided on a theme for this paper about an affect and possibility of resolving friction between Israeli and Palestinian through social activities.

2. Efforts to bringing a peace between Israeli and Palestinian as political

2.1 The Israeli and Palestinian conflict

There are various problems between Israel and Arab countries (states) over Palestine area. From the beginning of the 19th century, a large number of Jewish people migrated wholeheartedly into the Palestine area, as a result of the Zionist movement.

After World War I, the Israeli – Palestinian conflict intensified because of the UK's policy which was incompatible to promise to found a country in Palestine for Arabic people by Husayn-MacMahon Agreement and to Jewish people by Balfour Declaration in World War I.

After World War II, Palestine was divided and Jewish people founded the state of Israel.

Later, Middle East conflicts of force and arms occurred in 1948, 1956, 1967, and 1973. Israelis and Palestinians needed to solve this problem about Palestine's self-government by Palestinians.

2.2 About the Oslo Accord¹¹

The Oslo Accord is a series of agreements between Israeli and PLO¹² about establish an interim self-government by Palestinian in the West Bank of the Jordan River and Gaza strip. This agreement was made by Israel and PLO in Oslo; Norway's capital, so it was called the Oslo Accord.

It was signed in 1993 in Washington D.C. and after two years, Oslo Accord II: to expand Palestinian's self- government area was signed in 1995.

The “Oslo Accord” refers to the 1993 Oslo Accord in this paper.

But after signed the Oslo Accord later, Israel didn't stop its occupation and immigration to Palestine.

Still, Israelis bombed Palestinians after the Oslo Accord. One of the air strikes after the Oslo Accord was in July 2014.

3. Social activities, peace projects at the grass root level

Volunteer activities, charity activities, political activities, do save some lives. They are not always successful, but they do. These things promote to resolving friction between two countries.

The focus moved. What about people who are not interested in any problems? What about people who give up activities to solve problems for some reasons like those held by Palestinians who cannot guarantee their safety from occupation and bombing? They might not know and understand the other side, and

they also have to do something to bring their own peace because they are persons involved.

Social activities are important to influence some kinds of passive people solving by some reasons. Everyone join easily social activities. Many various styles in it, and many kinds of people join it.

I'll show you about three social movement and peace projects at the grass-roots level, concentrating the discussion on people's (citizen's) consciousness.

3.1 Art projects in Israel and Palestine cities

The first one is "Face 2 Face" project. JR¹³, a semi-anonymous French artist, started this project in 8 Israeli and Palestinian's cities in 2007.

JR uses his camera to show the world its true face, by pasting photos of the human face across massive canvases.¹⁴ He went all over the world, and his projects are worthy of praise.

In 2007, during the Face 2 Face project, JR and his friend Marco organized the largest illegal photography exhibition ever. For this project, portraits of Israelis and Palestinians were pasted face to face, in monumental formats on both sides of the wall¹⁵ and in several Palestinian and Israeli cities. The reason why JR went to Israel and Palestine, and did the project like this is explained here:

"The Face 2 Face project - original statement

The Face 2 Face project consists of taking portraits of Palestinians and Israelis doing the same job and posting them face to face, in huge formats, in unavoidable places, on both Israeli and Palestinian sides. We want, at last, everyone to laugh and to think by seeing the portrait of the other and his own portrait.

In a very sensitive context, we have to be clear. We are in favour of a solution in which two countries, Israel and Palestine would live peacefully within safe and internationally recognized borders. All the bilateral peace projects (Clinton/Taba, Ayalon/Nusseibeh, Geneva Agreements) are converging into the same direction. We can be optimistic.

We hope that this project will contribute to

a better understanding between Israelis and Palestinians."¹⁷

JR explained how the projects were going in TED talks 2011.

"When we did the wall, we did the Palestinian side. So we arrived with just our ladders and we realized that they were not high enough. And so Palestinians guys say, "Calm down. No wait. I'm going to find you a solution." So he went to the Church of Nativity and brought back an old ladder that was so old that it could have seen Jesus being born."

"Okay, for example, that's Palestine. We're in Ramallah right now. We're pasting portraits -- so both portraits in the streets in a crowded market. People come around us and start asking, "What are you doing here?" "Oh, we're actually doing an art project and we are pasting an Israeli and a Palestinian doing the same job. And those ones are actually two taxi-drivers." And then there was always a silence. "You mean you're pasting an Israeli face -- doing a face -- right here?" "Well, yeah, yeah, that's part of the project." And I would always leave that moment, and we would ask them, "So can you tell me who is who?" And most of them couldn't say.

We even pasted on Israeli military towers, and nothing happened. When you paste an image, it's just paper and glue. People can tear it, tag on it, or even pee on it -- some are a bit high for that, I agree -- but the people in the street, they are the curator. The rain and the wind will take them off anyway. They are not meant to stay. But exactly four years after, the photos, most of them are still there. Face 2 Face demonstrated that what we thought impossible was possible -- and, you know what, even easy. We didn't push the limit; we just showed that they were further than anyone thought."

JR is French, but Palestinians and Israelis helped him, understood and volunteered to cooperate on his project. After JR and his friends pasted the exhibition, they left these places, and local people kept the “Face 2 Face” exhibition by becoming curator. Therefore, this project was realized by local citizens of Israeli and Palestinian.

3.2 Activities by Veteran Israeli Soldiers

Second, I'll introduce about “Breaking the Silence” . “Breaking the Silence” is a group in Israel. Their Facebook page explains:

“This is an organization of veteran combatants who served in the Israeli military since the start of the Second Intifada and have taken it upon themselves to expose the Israeli public to the routine situations of everyday life in the Occupied Territories.

The organization endeavors to stimulate public debate about the price paid for a reality in which young soldiers face a civilian population on a daily basis, and are engaged in the control of that population's everyday life.”¹⁸

The “Breaking the Silence” has lectures, exhibits, and tours. The group's strong point is all they were Israeli soldiers. They did not revolt against Israeli society, and they were not on the left. They are just patriot soldiers: at the center of Israeli society, so nobody can ignore them.

Israeli people knew some shocking story on Israeli soldiers, then, they had clear opinions and discuss someone on it.

The actions by the “Breaking the Silence” have giving Israeli soldiers, soldiers families and children a place for thinks, exchanges and discussions.

3.3 Social Campaigns Online

The last one is the campaign which is called “Jews and Arabs refuse to be enemies” . It's a social campaign on social network services especially Twitter and Facebook. This campaign was influenced by the Gaza air strike in 2014.

“#JewsandArabsrefusetobeenemies social media campaign goes viral

As the body count in Gaza continues to creep higher, a new social media campaign that aims to promote coexistence between Jews and Arabs has gone viral.

The campaign – called “Jews and Arabs refuse to be enemies” – features Jewish and Arab friends and couples from across the globe.

It was launched by American university classmates Abraham Gutman and Dania Darwish. Gutman is a 21-year-old Jewish Israeli, while Darwish is a 23-year-old Muslim. Together they wanted to show that their two peoples are not separated by an unbridgeable divide.

Using the eponymous campaign hashtag, their message spread like wild fire throughout the Internet and involved individuals posting uplifting photos of Jews and Arabs together in solidarity against the violence occurring across Israel.

Sulome Anderson, a half Lebanese journalist whose father Terry Anderson was kidnapped by Hizbollah during the Lebanese civil war, was one of those who took part.”¹⁹

This campaign become known all over the world through movies on YouTube²⁰, Some of the people who joined this campaign made a Facebook page²¹ about it, and twitter's hushtag. Social media is useful to take action though some people had left their homeland: Palestine or Israel, and some Palestinians in bombed and occupied area. People also catch it easily on Social network services. The receivers become global scale.

And now, this tweet had been Re Tweeted (expanded) by 4981 people by October 7th, 2014.²²

People know the fact that they are facing problems to solve by social activities.

JR said, quote, “It's people's curiosity that motivates them to come into the projects.” Unquote, and I guess when social activities move people's curiosity, it will carry out to bring peace.

4. Conclusion

In some way, social activities had an effect to arouse national feeling of these two countries. It might a little affect, but when people act together, the whole thing is much more than the sum of the parts.

There will have never come a day to solve this issue while it is referred to as political, so people's will is required in order to realize peace between Israeli and Palestinian. Also people can influence public opinion and politics, by continuing and expanding social actions, or, starting some new action. But it is not enough.

You know, there are some reasons to keep conflicts for some kinds of people, but there are more reasons to solve each conflict as humans. In summary, the best way to solve this problem is by people who hope to bring peace by standing up, and taking action for their own peace.

脚注

- 1 I Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan.
<http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/area/plo/data.html> ,
<http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/area/plo/kankei.html>
- 2 According to UNRWA, Palestinian refugee's population is about 5270 thousand people.
- 3 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan "State of Israel" <http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/area/israel/data.html>
- 4 The number includes the area that Israel amalgamated Golan Heights and East Jerusalem, but this amalgamation has not been internationally recognized including Japan.
- 5 According to Central Bureau of Statistics, May, 2014.
- 6 According to Central Bureau of Statistics, May, 2014.
- 7 According to Central Bureau of Statistics, 2011.
- 8 Jason Burke in Gaza and Julian Borger; The Guardian "Gaza ceasefire collapses as fighting breaks out after two hours" Friday 1st August 2014 20.01.
- 9 Gaza air strike from 2014 July 8th to August 26th. According to the United Nations release on August 31st, 2014; victims of air strike from July 8th are killed: 2104 people (citizens were 1462 people, minors and children were 495 people and women were 253 people), the injured were over 10200 people, and the missing were over 300 people.
Source: 金子 由佳「2014年ガザ緊急支援途中経過報告(2)」2014年9月9日 <http://www.ngo-jvc.net/jp/projects/palestine/20140909palestina-report.html>
- 10 Frank, Anne, "The diary of a young girl" (p.244) Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1952.
- 11 Official name: Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements
- 12 the official name of P.L.O: Palestine Liberation Organization
According to Council on Foreign Relations website: <http://www.cfr.org/israel/oslo-accords-declaration-principles-interim-self-government-arrangements/p9674>
- 13 JR's activity and project is on his website: JR - Artist "JR" <http://www.jr-art.net/jr> .
- 14 TED "JR: My wish: Use art to turn the world inside out" [https://www.ted.com/talks/jr_s_ted_prize_wish_use_art_to](https://www.ted.com/talks/jr_s_ted_prize_wish_use_art_to_turn_the_world_inside_out)

- turn_the_world_inside_out
- 15 Separation wall:
- 16 "Time is Now, Yalla!" 2011, September 1st <http://www.insideoutproject.net/yalla/about>
- 17 TED Talk Transcript "JR: My wish: Use art to turn the world inside out" (2011) http://www.ted.com/talks/jr_s_ted_prize_wish_use_art_to_turn_the_world_inside_out/transcript
- 18 Website of Breaking the Silence: <http://www.breakingthesilence.org.il>
- 19 Dominic Frantzis 12:33PM BST 24 Jul 2014.
- 20 RT (Russia Today) "#JewsAndArabsRefuseToBeEnemies: People unite for peace amid Gaza conflict" July 25th, 2014 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SCCW9Q5G2c>
- 21 <https://www.facebook.com/JewsAndArabsRefuseToBeEnemies/info>
- 22 "#JewsAndArabsRefuseToBeEnemies: Israelis And Palestinians show solidarity online" by CBC News Community@cbccommunity <https://storify.com/cbccommunity/jewsandarabsrefusetobenemies-israelis-and-palest>
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