

REFLECTIONS ON 1948

I was six. We had just moved house. I got a new music teacher. My brother Ivor went to sea for the first time. We both cried. Dick Haymes sold more records than Bing Crosby and Frank Sinatra put together. What else happened that year?

It was not the worst atrocity by any means but Dier Yassin happened that year. One reason why it continues to be a prominent example of Zionist terrorism was the cynical decision to commemorate the Jews that died in the holocaust by building a museum (Yad Veshem) to their memory on the land of the village and overlooking the site of the massacre. Does anyone imagine that any one of those six million, if brought back to life for a few moments, would be pleased about this? The Labour Friends of Israel are, however, often photographed visiting Yad Veshem. By contrast the Israeli guide who pointed out to visitors that it overlooked a Zionist atrocity was sacked for doing so. In our Labour Party Israel seems always to be able to rely upon a coterie of people very willing to close both eyes and ears to inhumanity. As for history they prefer fantasy.

Something else happened in 1948. It was the election of a new US President. The Republican Dewey was confidently expected to win. He proposed to recognise a state of Israel. Suddenly Truman looked unable to rely upon the traditional Jewish support of the Democratic Party. Alison Weir does not confine herself to 1948 in her book *Against Our better Judgement* but it is clear that Truman's decision to disregard expert advice and recognise a state of Israel gave him an unexpected win. The Chicago Daily Tribune famously went to press with a banner headline, DEWEY DEFEATS TRUMAN. As so often is the case the short term need to obtain power overrides expert warnings about the long term consequences.

One more thing among so many that happened in 1948 was the establishment of the NHS. I taught in a school in an area of Liverpool that competed with an area in the North East for highest unemployment figures. We often won. Schools have log books in which are recorded events that are regarded as significant

Do schools still do this? I have never thought to ask.

Up to the year 1948 every page was full of the names of young people that had to leave early because of ill health. Turn over the page to 1948 and, guess what, it is empty. Suddenly instead of having a sock soaked in urine wrapped round their throats as a cure for certain illnesses-a story told to me by a long-serving GP of the area- those kids became entitled to the antibiotics available to the children of the rich.

There is, however, a link between Truman and the NHS. He put the UK under enormous pressure to join the USA in what became the Korean War. As a result we had to double our military spending at the expense of the NHS and Nye Bevan and Harold Wilson and John Freeman resigned from the government. Who remembers that?

There are values that transcend, that may not produce a short-term gain in the form of simple power but that embolden us to go for a future in which justice plays a bigger part. Right now what certain members of the Labour Party and certain journalists are writing about Chris Williamson totally disgusts me. Not only have they chosen a false definition of the word Semitic, one used by the Nazis as they tried to portray members of a religion as members of a race, but they have also chosen to twist Williamson's meaning to an extent that is ridiculous. Are his in-party opponents honest; are they well-informed; are they in favour of justice for the oppressed?

Answers on a post card.

Below is my review of Alison Weir's book.

<http://www.criticalprofessionallearning.co.uk/assets/AlisonWeir.pdf>

Cliff Jones, 29th June 2019

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