

NPK-info

Nederlands Palestina Komitee www.palestina-komitee.nl

Inhoud

Zaterdag 13 april is de landelijke demonstratie "Stop de oorlog tegen de Palestijnen". Start om 14 uur op de Dam te Amsterdam. Op de NPK-site staat de oproep, die door de toegenomen gruwelijkheid van Israël's oorlog zou moeten worden aangescherpt [*]. Ook nu kijkt de internationale gemeenschap nog steeds slechts toe. Er zijn diverse sprekers. Uiteraard wordt begonnen met een spreker vanuit de Palestijnse gemeenschap in Nederland, te weten Ibrahim Al-Baz. Vanuit de Tweede Kamer spreken Harry van Bommel [SP] en Farah Karimi [GroenLinks]; vanuit het Europees Parlement Lousewies Van Der Laan [D66]. We roepen uiteraard ieder die de oproep steunt op om te komen en om te zorgen voor een waardig en kalm verloop. Nu al weten we dat de opkomst groot zal zijn.

Hierna twee berichten uit de zeer vele

- | | |
|--|----------|
| * THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE WILL NOT SURRENDER!
CALL FOR A GLOBAL CAMPAIGN TO BOYCOTT ISRAELI GOODS AND SERVICES | Pagina 2 |
| * BULLDOZERS RULE BROKEN BETHLEHEM, Rory MacMillan | Pagina 3 |
| * UNHOLY WAR: THE BETHLEHEM BELLRINGER, THE DOCTOR, THE MOTHER...
THE INNOCENT KEEP ON DYING, Robert Fisk | Pagina 3 |
| * Europe threatens Israel with sanctions, Phil Reeves, Justin Huggler, and Paul Waugh | Pagina 5 |

Over Bethlehem hierna gesproken: B&W van Den Haag heeft recentelijk de vriendschap met Bethlehem opgezegd; tevens onthult later deze maand burgemeester Deetman een Vredesmonument bij het Vredespaleis. Wie vraagt hem om uitleg van het Haagse vredesbeleid?

Zie voorts o.a.

- * LAW www.lawsociety.org
- * PalestineMonitor www.palestinemonitor.org
- * PRCS www.palestinercs.org
- * MIFTAH www.miftah.org

NPK/WL, 9-4-2002 ■

[*] De organisatie van de demonstratie zorgt helaas voor overbelasting van ons telefoon- en email-verkeer en daarmee ook voor vertraagde of geen reacties.

THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE WILL NOT SURRENDER!

CALL FOR A GLOBAL CAMPAIGN TO BOYCOTT ISRAELI GOODS AND SERVICES

"The Israeli Defense Forces have rendered a hellish battleground among the civilians in the Balata and Jenin refugee camps. We are getting reports of pure horror... [The international conventions that protect non-combatants in times of conflicts] are worthless, if they are not adhered to precisely at times of the greatest blood-letting. The world is watching, and Israel needs to end this pitiless assault on civilian refugee camps." (UNRWA High Commissioner Peter Hanser, UNRWA press release "End the Horror in the Camps," 7 April 2002)

Despite death, destruction, and the humanitarian crisis, however, Israel's US-backed military campaign will not achieve the surrender of the Palestinian people.

THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE WILL NOT SURRENDER, BECAUSE ALL OF US, in Jenin, Nablus, Balata, Tulkarem, Qalqilya, Ramallah, Bethlehem, Beit Jala, Aida, Deheishe and elsewhere in occupied Palestine, HAVE PROOF THAT WE ARE NOT ALONE! We are overwhelmed and empowered by the tremendous expression of solidarity we witness daily in all parts of the world. Confined to our homes by military curfews and in the mid of the rumbling of Israel's tanks and the terrifying sound of shooting and shelling, and with the United State's Apaches and F-16s roaming above our homes, we have seen you. On our TV screens we have seen the tens- and hundreds of thousands of you marching in al-Ribat, Cairo, Amman, Damascus, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, New York, Paris, Rome, Brussels, Antwerpen, Berne and everywhere on this globe for the sake of justice in Palestine. You, the global solidarity movement, must know that you have been our source of strength in these dark days, and that you will remain our source of strength for a better future.

Against the background of governments' unwillingness to provide international protection for the Palestinian people and apply sanctions against Israel, we call upon the global solidarity movement to launch and coordinate a broad CAMPAIGN TO BOYCOTT ISRAELI GOODS AND SERVICES everywhere in the world for the sake of a better future for the Palestinian, Arab and Israeli people in the region. More than 50 years after the Palestinian Nakba of 1948, Israel must no longer be permitted to stand above international law, and the impunity of war criminals must end.

BADIL Resource Center welcomes the launching in the United States of the "Boycott Israeli Goods (BIG)" grassroots campaign. BIG advocates consumer boycott-

ing of Israeli agricultural and industrial products, divestment of US funds in Israeli companies and in State of Israel bonds, as well as boycott of tourism, until Israel will end its occupation of all areas occupied in 1967 and respect international law and human rights, including the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and lands. Similar boycotts and initiatives aimed at pressuring governments and the European Union to suspend cultural, economic and military aid and agreements with Israel have been launched in Europe, the West Coast of the United States, many African and Asian countries, and in Israel itself.

It is time now, based on the broad consensus of civil society organizations at the third World Conference Against Racism (WCAR) in Durban, South Africa, to TRANSFORM THE IMPRESSIVE GLOBAL DEMONSTRATION OF SOLIDARITY with the Palestinian people into a BROAD AND SUSTAINED ISRAEL BOYCOTT CAMPAIGN similar to the boycott movement that finally removed the repressive apartheid regime in South Africa. Consumers and activists should not only boycott Israeli products and services, but also use the opportunity to educate others about repressive and apartheid-like Israeli policies supported by governments worldwide, especially by the United States.

For more information and coordination about global boycott initiatives, see:

Boycott Israeli Goods Campaign
Info@BoycottIsraeliGoods.org
<http://www.BoycottIsraeliGoods.org>

This excellent website includes relevant information in several languages, as well as links to other boycott initiatives worldwide.

For information about the Palestinian NGO position paper submitted to the WCAR at Durban, as well as the NGO Declaration and Joint Program of Action/WCAR, see: www.badil.org/Resources/WCAR/WCAR2001.htm

BADIL Resource Center aims to provide a resource pool of alternative, critical and progressive information on the question of Palestinian refugees in our quest to achieve a just and lasting solution for exiled Palestinians based on their right of return. PO Box 728, Bethlehem, Palestine; email: info@badil.org; Website:www.badil.org Tel/fax: -2-2747346; -52-360769.■

BULLDOZERS RULE BROKEN BETHLEHEM

By Rory MacMillan

"I could not believe my eyes.... What I saw yesterday...is beyond imagination"

[The Scotsman (Scotland) - Monday, April 8, 2002]:
THE Israeli army drives around Bethlehem, warning over loudspeakers that anyone in the streets will be shot.

We remain in the hotel - a planned prayer march to the Church of the Nativity with Muslims and Christians has been cancelled - and the University of Bethlehem opposite has become an Israeli army base.

We are hearing reports that the Israeli army is going from home to home in Bethlehem's suburbs of Beit, Jala and Beit Sahur arresting hundreds of young men. Ahmed, the hotel receptionist and now a good friend, has just heard his cousin has bled to death from a gunshot wound in Jenin Refugee Camp where there has been intense fighting.

On Saturday, for the first time since I arrived here, I could not believe my eyes.

Much of what you see in a war zone is as you would expect - not so different from the television pictures. Of course, the tanks are more sinister close up and simply terrifying when they point their barrels in your direction. You drop to the floor at the sound of gunfire close by. A town under foreign occupation after invasion is as smashed up as you would imagine.

What I saw yesterday, however, is beyond imagination - Israeli bulldozers the size of houses. At the back of

them, enormous claws were poised for ripping up streets and buildings to make way for tanks and to destroy the homes of suicide bombers.

Israel's bulldozers have been central to its relationship with the Palestinians. Olive trees - a Palestinian symbol of life and hope - have been wrenched out of the soil in punishment for suicide bombings and resistance to Israel's 35-year illegal occupation of the Palestinian West Bank and Gaza.

Around broken Bethlehem, water gushes down streets from destroyed mains pipes. Water is also central to this conflict, for the Israeli settlements consume by far the majority of its water, sprinkling the green lawns on the settlements in this arid, occupied land.

We watched President Bush encouraging Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to end the occupation. It seems unlikely to come soon. More Israeli settlements than ever have been built on Palestinian land since the Oslo process began when Prime Minister Yitzak Rabin and Yasser Arafat agreed to work towards peace in 1993.

Building even accelerated under Prime Minister Ehud Barak, Ariel Sharon's predecessor, while he and Yasser Arafat "negotiated peace".

Most Palestinians believe that unless Colin Powell restarts a political process that addresses this entrenched taking of Palestinian land and the grinding humiliation of an entire people at roadblocks, checkpoints and in prisons, it seems unlikely that the bulldozing or the suicide bombs will stop. ■

UNHOLY WAR:

THE BETHLEHEM BELLRINGER, THE DOCTOR, THE MOTHER... THE INNOCENT KEEP ON DYING

By Robert Fisk

"The logbook of the first of the new Black Hawks was handed over to the Israeli defence ministry by none other than the former secretary of state, Alexander Haig - the man who gave Israel..the green light to invade Lebanon in 1982."

[The Independent, UK - 7 April 2002]:
I had just crossed the northern bridge from Israel over the Jordan river for a brief visit to Amman when my dri-

ver swerved to the right next to a group of soldiers and headed down a track beside a canal. "We have to avoid the first village," he said without comment. A few minutes later, I could see why.

Black smoke rose from burning tyres on the main road and crowds of young Jordanian men were stopping cars on the highway. "They are throwing stones at foreigners and looking for Israelis," said the driver. You bet they

were. And, two hours later, I saw black smoke cowl-
ing into the air over Amman as more demonstrators scre-
amed their hatred of America and Israel.

And this, remember, is friendly, pro-Western Jordan,
whose young king moves members of the British
Parliament to tears, whose peace treaty with Israel was
hailed - preposterously, of course - as the start of an
economic boom, a new freedom and security for a
nation of whom more than half the population are
Palestinian.

All across the Arab world, local dictators are suppres-
sing their people's anger. In Jordan, you can even find
people who ask not only why the late King Hussein sig-
ned a peace treaty with Israel. Some of them are asking
another question: what is the point of his son, King
Abdullah? No wonder that the Arab leaders told US
Vice-President Dick Cheney last month that he should
forget America's forthcoming screen epic in Iraq and
deal with the Palestinian-Israeli war. Valuable days were
lost while Mr Cheney toured the region in a desperate
search for an Arab who would support an Iraqi blitz.
And as happens so often nowadays - incredible though
it seems - the Arabs got it right while the Americans
fantasised about the "axis of evil".

Perhaps the only man who now has time to work out the
logic of this appalling conflict is the Palestinian leader
sitting in his ill-lit broken office in Ramallah. The one
characteristic Yasser Arafat shares with the Israeli Prime
Minister Ariel Sharon - apart from old age and decrepi-
tude - is his refusal ever to plan ahead. What he says,
what he does, what he proposes, is decided only at the
moment he is forced to act. This is partly his old guer-
rilla training.

If you don't know what you are going to do tomorrow,
you can be sure that your enemies don't know either. By
contrast, the Israeli army obligingly boasts of its attacks
long in advance, allowing Palestinians - and, of course,
journalists - to be ready for them.

What the world has so far witnessed - and the
Palestinians spotted this from the start - is that the
Israelis are meeting resistance they never expected. The
"few days" they needed to "root out the network of ter-
ror" will now have to extend, according to Israeli offi-
cers, to a month. President George Bush gave Mr
Sharon just days to end his campaign against the
Palestinians - the delay before the Secretary of State
leaves for his "urgent" Middle East mission - and every-
one now knows that the Americans will expect Israel to
wrap up its assault by the time Mr Powell arrives later
this week.

So the military logic is simple. This weekend, the
Israeli army has got to batter the Palestinians into sub-
mission. And somehow, the Palestinian forces have got

to hang on and keep fighting. If they succeed, and the
Israelis withdraw their tanks without subduing them, Mr
Sharon is forced into a bitter humiliation. If the Israelis
do not withdraw at Mr Powell's demand, then the first
serious crack appears in the Sharon-Bush alliance. In
which case, Mr Arafat will win yet again.

The Israeli army, meanwhile, is proving once more - as
it did in Lebanon - that it is not the "elite" force it's
cracked up to be. It is impossible to dismiss the wides-
pread reports of looting from homes in Ramallah (not
least because that is exactly what Israeli soldiers used to
do in southern Lebanon in 1983); and that brave Israeli
academic, Avi Shlaim, has himself charged Israel with
extra-judicial killings in Ramallah.

Watching the Israelis in Ramallah and Bethlehem last
week was a disturbing experience. They were undisci-
plined, firing like militiamen - the degree of fire control
(or rather the lack of it) exercised by the average Israeli
soldier and Palestinian gunman is almost exactly the
same. Three times I watched Israeli tanks jam them-
selves into narrow streets so hopelessly that their crews
had to emerge under fire from their hatches, jump on to
the roadside and hand-signal the tank drivers to reverse
their vehicle.

And of course, the innocent go on dying. The
Bethlehem bell-ringer, the woman doctor in Jenin, the
14-year-old girl killed by Israeli tank fire in Tubas, the
mother and son shot dead by Israeli bullets and left to
rot on the floor of their home in Bethlehem beside their
still-living relatives for 30 hours. Journalists and unar-
med Western "peace" protesters who get in the Israeli
army's way are gunned down or battoned or blasted
with stun grenades. So much for those gentle souls who
say that Gandhi-like peaceful protest is the way to end
the Israeli occupation.

And what does the Israeli government do when the guns
and grenades don't shut journalists up? Why, last week
it threatened legal action against CNN and the
American NBC television chain for not leaving "closed
military areas" of the West Bank. No matter that Israeli
law possesses no legitimacy in the Palestinian areas it
occupies - the world still accepts the Oslo agreements
even if Mr Sharon is destroying them - CNN and NBC
meekly refused to make any comment. What happened,
one wonders, to that great American journalist's princi-
ple of refusing to tolerate censorship?

But there is another question which has been quietly
forgotten by the world ever since the Israeli assault. If
Israel fails militarily - as it will - then how are the
vicious Palestinian suicide bombers to be stopped?
True, there has been a lull after the massacres of Israelis
last month. But even if the suiciders have been tempora-
rily unbalanced by the Israeli offensive, Israel has cre-

ated many more potential "martyrs" for the Palestinians in the bloodbath of the past week.

The Israelis still refuse to contemplate the arrival of a foreign protection force - the dream of every Palestinian - but the time may come when a Nato-American force will have to be contemplated, to protect Israelis as well as Palestinians. It would not be called a foreign protectorate, but that is what Israel/Palestine would become, an updated version of the old, hopeless British mandate.

In the meantime, be sure the Americans will go on over-arming the Israelis. Just under two weeks ago, for example, the Americans rolled out their first S-70A-55

troop-carrying Black Hawk helicopter to be sold to the Israelis. Israel has purchased 24 of the new machines costing \$211m (£150m) - most of which, of course, will be paid for by the United States. The logbook of the first of the new Black Hawks was handed over to the Israeli defence ministry by none other than the former secretary of state, Alexander Haig - the man who gave Israel's then prime minister, Menachem Begin, the green light to invade Lebanon in 1982.

So, coming soon to the Middle East, a new breed of Black Hawk in the skies over your local West Bank town. Funny, though, that we haven't heard a thing about all this. ■

Europe threatens Israel with sanctions

By Phil Reeves, Justin Huggler, and Paul Waugh, 08 April 2002

http://news.independent.co.uk/world/middle_east/story.jsp?story=282736

The European Union is preparing billion-dollar sanctions against Israel if Ariel Sharon continues to defy international opinion and reject calls for an end to his invasion of the Palestinian territories. European governments appear prepared to turn to economic weapons after the Israeli Prime Minister defied President Bush's call at the weekend for a withdrawal "without delay". Mr Sharon pledged only that the offensive would be accelerated, not ended.

Josep Pique, the Spanish Foreign Minister, revealed yesterday that European foreign ministers had discussed sanctions at emergency talks in Luxembourg last week and would discuss punitive measures at their next meeting.

"It is a possible scenario ... Some countries are in favour of introducing sanctions very, very soon; others are more reluctant. So we have to discuss it," Mr Pique said.

Louis Michel, the Belgian Foreign Minister, said the EU might rethink trade ties with Israel. The EU has donated millions of pounds of aid to the Palestinian Authority only to see infrastructure, such as the new airstrip in Gaza, destroyed by Israeli troops.

Europe is one of Israel's biggest trading partners and sanctions such as suspending a long-standing "association agreement" - and the trade concessions it gives Israel - would be a blow to relations with Brussels.

The EU threat came as Israel faced demands from international aid and human rights organisations to stop the military offensive, amid warnings that a humanitarian

crisis was in the making.

Peter Hansen of Unwra, the United Nations relief agency for Palestinian refugees, said his organisation was receiving reports of "pure horror" from refugee camps in Jenin and Balata in Nablus, which have been invaded by Israeli troops for the second time in a month. Mr Hansen said Israeli combat helicopters had been strafing residential areas.

The scale of the killing was unclear yesterday as fighting raged in Nablus and Jenin, not least because Israel has barred the media from the areas invaded by its forces, where more than 1.5 million people are confined to their homes by an army curfew.

Lieutenant-General Shaul Mofaz, the Chief of Staff of the Israeli armed forces, told a cabinet meeting that 200 Palestinians and 11 Israeli soldiers had been killed since the military operation began 11 days ago, in the name of rooting out Palestinian militants.

The army claimed that the bulk of the Palestinian dead were armed fighters but there are countless reports of civilian victims. An estimated 1,500 Palestinians and 143 Israeli soldiers have been injured.

In Texas, after a weekend summit with President Bush, Tony Blair said Britain and its European partners were prepared to send peace monitors to help to kickstart the political process - an idea Israel has in the past rejected.

Mr Bush telephoned Mr Sharon at the weekend - for the first time since February - and called for a withdrawal "without delay". Significantly, however, the American President did not demand a timetable for an Israeli pullback.

Colin Powell, his Secretary of State, embarks on a high-profile diplomatic mission to the Middle East today but appeared to allow Mr Sharon some leeway by timing his arrival in Jerusalem for Thursday at the earliest, possibly to coincide with an Israeli withdrawal. Asked whether Mr Bush had given Mr Sharon a deadline, General Powell said: "The President doesn't give orders to the sovereign prime minister of another country."

Mr Blair also announced that the diplomatic offensive would include a scheme to endorse in a new UN resolution on the Middle East the peace plan put forward by Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia.

The Prime Minister said a ceasefire had to be agreed immediately. "In monitoring any such ceasefire and in ensuring the Palestinian Authority genuinely take action against the terrorists, we and others stand ready to help in any way we can," he said.

With Spain holding the presidency of the EU, Mr Pique is one of its most senior foreign policy spokesman and he made clear that sanctions had already been discussed in private by the 15 nation states.

"We discussed the possibility [of sanctions] at the last general council in Luxembourg," he said. "It's a possible scenario."

Mr Sharon showed no sign yesterday of heeding warnings that the massive offensive by his armed forces is simply laying the ground for more Palestinian violence and suicide attacks.

The point was underscored by a warning from Hamas - responsible for many of the suicide attacks - vowing to avenge the recent assassination of several of its leaders with a response of "a new type and new colour never seen before". ■