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Inhoud

Hierna: Bethlehem, like Sharpeville, symbol of oppression

Pagina 2

=====

Oproepen:

1 - BADIL on 54th Anniversary of UN General Assembly Resolution 194(III)
The ROAD MAP REMAINS RELEVANT MORE than 50 YEARS LATER [*]

Pagina 3

Zie ook

- An International Law Analysis: www.badil.org/Protection/Refugee_Protection.htm

- Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE): www.cohre.org

- Policy statements on Palestinian refugees: www.badil.org/Protection/Documents/Protect_Docs.htm

2 - Call For International Action In Support Of The Palestinian People [*]

Pagina 5

3 - Your presence is needed in Palestine: <http://www.palsolidarity.org/>

[*] *Doodgezwegen in onze pers.*

Over

- Israeli Settlements: http://www.fmep.org/reports/2002/is_v12n6.pdf

- Justice for the Victims of Sabra and Shatila <http://www.indictsharon.net/>

Zie

* <http://www.palestinechronicle.com/>

* <http://www.wrmea.com/>

* www.antiwar.com

The Israelization of America, James Brooks, December 7, 2002

* <http://www.wereldcrisis.nl/>

Hierna

- NRC-zelfkritiek over Peter Edel's "De schaduw van de ster".

Pagina 4

- The Palestinian Gunman, April 2002, Sonja de Vries. From <http://www.womenspeacepalestine.org/>

Pagina 1

NPK/WL, 22-12-2002 ■

April, 2002, Sonja de Vries

The Palestinian Gunman

Israelis military reported 50 Palestinian gunmen were killed today in Nablus. They added that there were still 200 Palestinian gunmen hiding in the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem and thousands more in Jenin. A little known fact about Palestinian gunmen is that they are shape shifters :

each moment they can appear in a different form:

- as a mother holding her grown son,
- a man ringing the bell of a church at noon
- a young boy wrapped in the arms of his father
- or as children on their way to school
- Just the other day a gunman appeared as a Priest

- and several more shape shifted into ambulance drivers
- and redcross workers

One of them even managed to appear as an Italian Journalist

Amazing, these Palestinian gunmen - they can masquerade as entire olive grove's, the branches of the trees blossom into kalishnikov's and ouzi's

Groups of gunmen can appear as refugee camps, mosques and churches, arms spread to blend with the cross, a shoulder blade becomes the dome of a mosque

But the Israelis are not fooled, they can see the Palestinian gunman's face breaking through the roots of a sage bush ripped from the earth

Amazing, the Palestinian gunman can only be seen by Israeli soldiers and killed with American bullets. ■

No room for justice

Bethlehem, like Sharpeville, has become a symbol of oppression

Ronnie Kasrils and Victoria Brittain, December 21, 2002, The Guardian

Bethlehem is a familiar talisman of peace in Christmas festivities, but this year the innocent image is gone, perhaps for ever. Today Bethlehem's residents are entombed in their houses 24 hours each day. When the Church of the Nativity was besieged for weeks by the Israeli army in April - the International Red Cross refused entry;

misinformation about priests held hostage put out by the Israeli government; wounded Palestinians incarcerated by Israeli forces; others killed and dozens deported to Europe or bussed to Gaza - Bethlehem became, like Sharpeville, a name for injustice.

The parallels between the Palestinians' 50 years of struggle for their own land and the anti-apartheid movement's decades of military and civil campaigns for majority rule are seen as obvious in Southern Africa, where liberation was successfully ended colonialism and racial oppression. That took much too long; but the international community is even further behind in expressing outrage and taking action against Israel than it was against the apartheid government.

Sanctions played a key role in changing perceptions, both inside South Africa and in the rest of the world, and were one key to obtaining majority rule. As early as 1946, before its own independence from Britain, the Indian government called for the breaking of all links with South Africa; in 1955 Bishop Trevor Huddleston called for a cultural boycott; in 1959 the African National Congress called for a general boycott; in 1961, after the Sharpeville massacre, South Africa was forced to leave the Commonwealth. In the early 1960s the UN security council called for a voluntary arms embargo, and in 1977 made it mandatory.

Social, sporting, cultural and academic boycotts were greeted with outrage when they began at the grassroots in Europe and the US. But by the mid-1980s, when it appeared that South Africa could implode, powerful economic sanctions were embraced by influential US politicians opposed to the Reagan administration. The writing was on the wall for apartheid. In 1988 the apartheid regime was forced into genuine negotiations. It will be the same for Israel.

The apartheid state sought a military solution, as General Ariel Sharon has always done. The white-led army occupied Namibia and southern Angola, created proxy forces in neighbouring countries, carried out sabotage raids and bombings in Angola, Mozambique and Zambia, assassinated key leaders of the African

National Congress in neighbouring countries and as far afield as Paris. Inside the country the police ran a reign of terror in black townships. Harassment, arrests, torture and assassinations were so common that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission sat for two years from 1996 and heard only part of the appalling evidence.

White South Africa was brutalised by what was done in its name. Some young whites fled abroad rather than be conscripted; others, who served in Angola, still suffer the pain and guilt of what they did. Israel has its own refuseniks now, and its own coming problems with the terrified or arrogant youths who man checkpoints, ransack and demolish houses, use civilians as human shields and target F16 fighters on packed civilian homes.

Ian Hook, the British UN worker who was shot in the back by an Israeli soldier in Jenin last month, may come to be a symbol of a brutality which has to be ended. Outside Palestine few will have heard the names of others who died around the same time, similarly unarmed and defenceless: 95-year-old Fatima Mohamed Abeid, who was shot dead in a stationary taxi at a checkpoint on her way home from shopping; or 24-year-old Johad Muhammed An-Natour from Nablus, riddled with bullets as he walked to wake his neighbours to eat before the day of Ramadan fasting; or the deaf 68-year-old from Beit Lahour in Gaza who was crushed "to the thickness of a chocolate bar", according to his son, Maher Salem, when the Israeli army, ignoring the family's pleas to rouse him, bulldozed their six-storey home.

All these people came from families who are victims of the Israeli policy of closures which, since the start of the second intifada in September 2000, has left 75% of Palestinians below the poverty line of \$2 a day, cut average incomes by 30% since the Oslo accord a decade ago, and led to 21% of children under five suffering from acute malnutrition.

The vast majority of these children are deeply traumatised by experiences such as the sight of 12-year-old Muhammad Durra, shot dead as he crouched beside his father at a Gaza checkpoint in the first days of the intifada. Durra became the Hector Peterson of Palestine. Peterson was the 13-year-old schoolboy shot dead in the Soweto uprising of 1976 whose picture flashed around the world, belatedly waking consciences.

The trigger for the revolt of Peterson and his friends was the apartheid state's entrenching of second-class

education for black children. In the West Bank and Gaza education has fared even worse as a target for destruction, disruption and harassment by the Israeli defence forces. In the school year 2001-02, 216 students were killed and 2,514 wounded. Schools have been damaged or occupied, Ministry of Education records destroyed. Bir Zeit University routinely faces curfews, roadblocks and road destruction, often making it impossible to reach.

Throughout 50 years of oppression, the Palestinians have demonstrated a determination to make whatever sacrifices are needed for education. Today, primary school children walk hours to school over back roads and fields to avoid checkpoints, and ad hoc schools have been set up in homes when curfew keeps schools shut for weeks or months.

The Israeli journalist Amira Hass has written about the settlers and others who reveal the policy behind all this brutality when they "post thousands of leaflets and placards calling for the expulsion of Arabs; they put it

rather more bluntly: 'Them there, us here'." Hass suggests that people like them would be described in Europe as "fascists", or "racists", or even "neo-Nazis", and asks whether Israeli professors, historians and those who support centrist parties and movements will "remain silent until after the ethnic cleansing has taken place". She could have put the same question to the international community that has turned its collective back on the misery of Manger Square.

· Ronnie Kasrils is minister of water and forestry in South Africa; he writes in a personal capacity. He was a member of the ANC underground for 30 years and a senior commander of its military wing, Umkhonto We Sizwe. He recently gave the keynote speech at a conference in London on divestment and sanctions against Israel. Victoria Brittain, who is a research associate in development at the LSE, chaired the conference. victoria.brittain@guardian.co.uk

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54th Anniversary of UN General Assembly Resolution 194(III)

The ROAD MAP REMAINS RELEVANT MORE than 50 YEARS LATER

Today marks the 54th anniversary of UN General Assembly Resolution 194(III) (11 December 1948) affirming the right of Palestinian refugees and displaced persons to return and repossess their homes and property and receive compensation for damages and losses. When members of the United Nations overwhelmingly voted in favor of Resolution 194 more than five decades ago, it not only reflected a truly humanitarian approach towards hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees; it also reflected a well thought out legal approach to the plight of men, women and children, who by no fault of their own, found themselves brutally uprooted from the only place they knew as home.

Resolution 194 did not create new law or rights - it simply reflected existing law and practice. This included the prohibition that people should not be uprooted and expelled from their homeland or arbitrarily deprived of their nationality. It also reflected basic human rights set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the General Assembly one day prior to the Resolution. Among the "equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family" is the right of return and the right to property. Two years prior to the mass displacement and expulsion of Palestinian refugees, the United Nations had already affirmed that "the main task concerning displaced persons is to encourage and assist in every way their early return to their countries of origin." (ECOSOC Res. 8/1, 1946)

Resolution 194 also reflected the deepest wishes of the refugees themselves. "Every day I say tomorrow will be

better, and a hundred times I tell myself we will go back home," a young refugee told international relief workers in Gaza in 1949. "As you want to live in your house, with your family, so I want to live in mine." In public hearings across the region, American, French and Turkish members (the 'Trio') of the UN Conciliation Commission for Palestine (UNCCP) took note of the "unanimous desire" among refugees to return to their homes. "The Commission was impressed by expressions of these spokesmen for the return of refugees to their homes to live there in peace with their neighbors."

In keeping with these findings, and consistent with international legal obligations, the United States, the primary member of the UNCCP advised that "We should use our best efforts, through the Conciliation Commission and through diplomatic channels, to insure the implementation of the General Assembly resolution of December 11, 1948; We should endeavor to persuade Israel to accept the return of those refugees who so desire, in the interests of justice and as evidence of its desire to establish amicable relations with the Arab world; We should furnish advice and guidance to the governments of the Arab states in the task of absorbing into their economic and social structures those refugees who do not wish to return to Israel." (Policy Paper, Department of State, 'Palestine Refugees', 15 March 1949)

Today, however, the mere mention of the right of return continues to send shivers up the spines of most international policy makers including most members of the so-called 'Quartet' (US, EU, Russia, and the UN). Those

who speak about return, including refugees themselves, are quickly dismissed as dreamers, impractical, and irrelevant. Some international think tanks even go so far as to suggest that in the Palestinian case the basic human right of return is at war with peace. No one bothers to explain what makes Palestinian refugees so different from every other refugee in the world. No one bothers to explain why basic human rights, including return and restitution, do not apply to Palestinian refugees. No one bothers to explain why a Palestinian refugee who expresses a sincere desire to return and live in peace as a citizen of Israel is accused of incitement, as a supporter of violence, or even terrorism.

How ironic that as the international community seeks to 'bring' the Palestinian people into the fold of nations, it also seeks to permanently exclude Palestinian refugees, who comprise the majority of the Palestinian people, from those universal rights accorded to individuals around the world. This it seems is the 'historic compromise', the 'price of peace' demanded of the Palestinian people. In all fairness, the 'price' is 'historic' - no other refugee group has been so pressured to cede basic rights at both the starting point and end game of negotiations. This so-called 'compromise' for 'peace,' however, cannot even be characterized as the proverbial 'emperor with no clothes.' The real compromise that is demanded is the emperor's very soul.

Why? Most international policy makers that avoid, contest, or even deride the right of return in the Palestinian case point to the balance of power. The argument is not without its merits. Israel has used blatant military, legal and administrative power to block the return of Palestinian refugees. Then again, so did Slobodan Milosevic in Bosnia and Kosovo. The difference is that in the Balkans the international community did not shy away from challenging the underlying ethnic, national, and religious policies governing the use of power to first expel and then block the return of refugees. This is

where the international community and its policy wonks fall silent in the Palestinian case. This is where support for multi-ethnic democracies and respect for human rights becomes nothing more than chimera. Even the occasional article in the Israeli press is more honest. If Israel would join the EU, recently noted one commentator (Ha'aretz, 10-12-02), it "would have to nullify the Law of Return [...] and all of the laws that discriminate favourably toward Jews. [...] In doing so, it would all at once become a 'state of all its citizens'" - including Palestinian refugees.

In spite of the shameful lack of political support from western powers for human rights and international law as a framework for crafting durable solutions for Palestinian refugees, the 'road map' to a durable peace in Palestine/Israel, adopted by the international community in New York on 11 December 1948 is as relevant today as it was more than 50 years ago. The conformity of Resolution 194 with the development of international legal principles and state practice over the past five decades lends further weight to its value as a normative framework for durable solutions for Palestinian refugees today. From Africa, to Asia, to Central America, to Europe, the international community has lent its support for more than 50 years to those refugees simply seeking to go home, recognizing that a durable peace is not possible against the unrequited desire and right of refugees to return home. Palestinian refugees deserve no less.

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.
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Over Peter Edel's "De schaduw van de ster".

HAAGSE BRANDJES BLUSSEN (fragment),

Maarten Huygen, NRC Handelsblad, 13-12-'02.

Nu wat zelfkritiek: in een brief stelt Peter Edel dat ik zijn boek *De schaduw van de ster* over het zionisme verkeerd heb samengevat. Dat klopt. Ik parafraseerde Henk van Dorp die een samenvatting voorlas uit Trouw aan SP-leider Jan Marijnissen die zich van het enthousiaste voorwoord van partij-ideoloog Karel Glastra van Loon bij dit boek distantieerde. Uit de derde hand en dat had ik er bij de weergave van het gesprek bij

moeten zeggen. Er staat inderdaad niet in Edels boek dat zionisten enthousiast steun gaven aan het creëren van antisemitisme en de massamoord op joden om Israël op te richten. De contacten tussen een specifieke vleugel van zionisten en de antisemitische nazi's dienden ter bevordering van de emigratie van joden naar Palestina. Het boek zal in de boekenbijlage uitgebreid aan de orde komen. ■

PRESS STATEMENT, 02 December 2002 || PSC/BIG

The international conference - 'What Future for Palestine?' - held by Palestine Solidarity Campaign in London yesterday, 30 November, 2002, attended by around 800 people gathered to hear speakers from Palestine, South Africa, USA, Lebanon and throughout Europe - endorsed and launched the following:

Call For International Action In Support Of The Palestinian People

We, the undersigned

- a.. recognising the forced expulsion of Palestinians from their homeland and dispossession of the indigenous population of 78% of Palestine during al-Naqba - the catastrophe - of 1948 and Israel's subsequent refusal to obey international law and United Nations resolutions, including those concerning the inalienable and lawful right of refugees to return to their homes
- b.. recognising that the occupation of the remaining 22 per cent of Palestine by Israeli forces in 1967 was a further ethnic 'cleansing' and constitutes an illegal act
- c.. appalled by the Israeli government's ongoing brutality and state terrorism - as demonstrated by its policies of assassination, collective punishment, attacks on civilians, home demolitions, land expropriation, colonial settlement expansion and violence, detention without charge and trial, use of torture, destruction of the Palestinian infrastructure, devastation of the Palestinian economy and denial of human rights including the right to education, employment, health care, access to humanitarian aid & freedom of movement by the imposition of siege upon the population of the Occupied Territories
- d.. anticipating further abuses of human rights including an offensive by Israel to continue the process of Palestinian dispossession, as evidenced in the threat of further expulsion of Palestinians from their land, both inside Israel and in the Occupied Territories
- e.. believing that, given the failure of the international community to act in accordance with their responsibilities in terms of the Geneva Convention and to

- uphold the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in relation to the Palestinian people, it falls upon concerned organizations and individuals comprising civil society to pressurise Israel to cease its crimes against humanity, end its illegal occupation of Palestinian territory and apartheid policies and comply with all relevant UN resolutions
- therefore support, as a non-violent and democratic means by which global civil society may express solidarity with the Palestinians' quest for justice, freedom and self-determination, a boycott of Israel like the campaign which contributed to the end of apartheid in South Africa, including:
- a.. a consumer boycott of all Israeli products and tourism
 - b.. a cultural boycott of artistic, academic, scientific and sporting contacts (excluding those cultural connections directed at ending the occupation)
 - c.. a cessation of official contacts with the state of Israel
 - d.. suspension of trade agreements with Israel
 - e.. divestment of funds from institutions supporting Israel
 - f.. an arms trade embargo
 - g.. the imposition of economic sanctions upon Israel

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Boycott Israeli Goods Campaign for Palestine
www.bigcampaign.org.uk ■