

U.S. should open eyes to Israel's violations of human rights

By Gary Murrell

November 9, 1988, the world celebrated the 50th anniversary of "Kristallnacht," a night of savage brutality, in which Nazis destroyed Jewish Synagogues, Jewish homes, Jewish businesses and incarcerated thousands of Jews in concentration camps.

Christians and Jews throughout the United States vowed to

Commentary

never let this kind of thing happen again.

Yet, inconceivably, it is happening again. Ironically, the perpetrators of this new savage brutality are survivors and descendants of the Nazi ruthlessness.

Nov. 9 marked another anniversary. In the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Palestinians marked the 11th month of their uprising: intifada. In these 11 months, and the 21 years of occupation which preceded them, we have witnessed the destruction of Palestinian Mosques and Churches, Palestinian homes, Palestinian businesses, and the incarceration of thousands of Palestinians in concentration camps.

I get no pleasure in publicizing the parallel aspects of these two events. I'm sure my Jewish friends and colleagues will attest to my revulsion.

But draw the parallel I must because the evidence of the similarities is overwhelming. I speak here of Israeli government policies. I have spoken against similar policies of the United States and South Africa and others.

I have seen the bullet-riddled, ransacked, demolished and desecrated Mosques and Churches, homes, and businesses of Palestinians. I have witnessed the emaciated bodies of Palestinians released from the concentration camps — Ansar II in Gaza and Ansar III in the Negev desert. I have seen the shattered bodies of Palestinian youths, shot with dum-dum bullets.

From July 10 to August 3 (1988), I was a member of a delegation of 16 U. S. citizens participating in "Eyewitness Israel," a program sponsored by the American Arab Anti-discrimination Committee. For almost three weeks I lived with Palestinian families in the refugee camps in Gaza and the West Bank.

Our delegation was asked to carefully document human rights violations using as our standard the 4th Geneva Convention regarding Occupied Territories, to which Israel and the United States are signatories.

Sitting comfortably in Oregon, one can understand suffering intellectually. We read about suffering daily in our newspapers. But being a witness to the systematic brutality of Israeli State terrorism left me sickened, shocked and horrified. I was not alone; my fifteen colleagues joined me in these sentiments when we expressed, quite clearly, our group outrage in a group statement released to the press in Washington, D.C., the day of our return.

Among other violations we found:

- Willful, premeditated murder of Palestinians by the Israeli Defense Force (IDF).
- Torture of persons in custody.
- Denial of medical services.
- Illegal expulsions (sending Palestinians out of Palestine).
- Detention of persons without due process.
- Collective punishment and systematic harassment.
- Confiscation and destruction of property.
- Denial of freedom of thought, communication and expression.

If Christians and Jews are really committed to freeing the world of fascist/Nazi brutality we must act and act quickly in Palestine. Time is running out.

The Palestinians cemeteries are filling up. The election in Israel assures a coalition government, a government dominated by the right-wing Likud Party aligned with the theocratic religious extremists.

If these prospects do not bode ill enough for Palestinians, they need only fantasize about their fate should the aspirations of Ariel Sharon, the former Defense Minister in charge of the Sabra and Shatilla massacres in Lebanon, reach fruition — "if it's (he/she) a terrorist," (i.e., Palestinian), says Sharon, "Kill it."

Citizens of the United States must act quickly. To paraphrase the historian Gore Vidal, the Israelis are eventually going to have to give back some of the land they have stolen from the Palestinians. The questions that predominate are When? Where? and How?

This giving can come now, at the insistence of the United States applying pressure on Israel, or, it will surely come later, at the insistence of 150 million Arabs, using their oil as leverage, applying pressure on the United States.

What can we do in the United States to affect a settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian war? At present, the Israeli economy would collapse were it not for the three to ten billion dollars which the United States annually pumps into the Israeli economy.

Israel has used approximately 1/3 of that annual subsidy, this year, to offset the political and economic impacts of the intifada.

The United States can no longer afford to spend billions of dollars to assist Israeli occupation in contravention of the Foreign Assistance Act, which prohibits foreign aid to nations which consistently violate human rights, nor the violation of the 4th Geneva Convention, which, according to the constitution, is United States Law. The morality of our support is bankrupt.


Instead, the United States must speak with one policy when addressing violations of

human rights. Violations in South Africa, Chile, and El Salvador are no different than Israeli violation in Gaza and the West Bank.

The Palestinian intifada will not go away — it is a way of life and a way to live. Palestinians deserve the support of the peace and justice community in the United States, a country founded on the greatest revolu-

tionary principles and by some of the greatest revolutionaries in history. The intifada is no less a revolution, and as John Kennedy said, "Those who make peaceful revolution impossible make violent revolution inevitable."

Gary Murrell is a graduate student of U.S. history at the University.



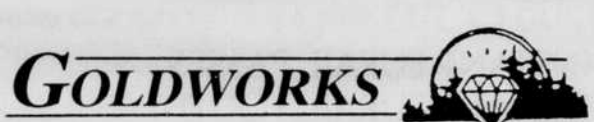
Coffee Bean of the Month

Dark Mexican Altura Pulma

\$5⁸⁵ lb.

3.00 1/2 lb. 1.60 1/4 lb.

KINKO'S
860 E. 13th • 344-7894



GOLDWORKS

AT EMU CRAFT SHOW

December 7 & 8

* Custom Design Jewelry
* Sterling Silver Earrings ranging from \$8-45

Come by and see us!

THE FAR SIDE

By GARY LARSON



"Anyone for a chorus of 'Happy Trails?'"

NOW ACCEPTING SOPHOMORES!

Juniors, Seniors & Grads. . .

GIVE YOURSELF SOME CREDIT!

APPLY NOW FOR YOUR VERY OWN...



- Bring a photocopy of your School I.D.
- No cosigner required

APPLY NOW ON CAMPUS!

Date: December 6,7,8
Time: 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Place: 6th and 9th in the Main Desk Area.
7th in the Fishbowl Annex

CITIBANK