

Betlehems Venners generalforsamling, 4. marts 2017

Oplæg ved Uffe Gjerding

Indledning

Jeg vil gerne indledningsvis rose Betlehems Venner for jeres stærke og vedholdende engagement i Palæstina med fokus på de kristnes situation og rolle. I opretholder en flot hjemmeside både med aktuelle nyheder, baggrundsmateriale og opfordring til bøn og handling. I støtter unge palæstinenseres mulighed for at udvide deres horisont igennem højskoleophold i Danmark. Der hvor kirkerne i Danmark tier og ikke handler, der engagerer I jer på en flot måde og samarbejder med andre i Kirkeligt Palæstina Netværk. Det skal I have tak og ros for.

2017 markerer tre vigtige 'jubilæer', som vi bør tænke tilbage på og have in mente i vores fortsatte engagement i Israel/Palæstina sagen:

- Det er 100 år for Balfour erklæringen, hvor briterne lovede jøderne et hjemland. Det blev så med tiden til staten Israel med alt hvad det har ført med sig
- Det er 70 år siden palæstinenserne oplevede deres Nakba – katastrofe – i form af fordrivelse af halvdelen af befolkningen fra landet og ødelæggelse af hundredvis af landsbyer.
- Det er 50 år siden Israel besatte Gaza, Vestbredden, Østjerusalem og Golan Højderne, som de endnu i dag forvalter i strid med international lov og konventioner

Den aktuelle politiske situation i Israel

Netanyahu er presset og svag indenrigspolitisk:

- Han har en alvorlig korruptionssag hængende over hovedet
- Han har et spinkelt regeringsgrundlag og er stærkt afhængig af de national-religiøse
- En ny sammensætning af højesteret er bekymrende: 4 nye konservative stemmer ud af 9. Det bliver et opgør med en 'aktivistisk' højesteret (jordbeslaglæggelser, muren, besættelsen mv). Loven/domstolene bliver endnu mere et politisk redskab.

Netanyahu sælger sig selv på, at volden/terrorismen er under kontrol:

- Siden 2014 ingen dramatisk vold, kun mindre episoder, især i Jerusalem
- Fokus er på bekæmpelse af radikal Islam og Iran
- Israelske opposition taler om en proces men først direkte samtaler om 10 år

Facts on the ground

Ny lov, der godkender 4000 boliger i illegale bosættelser med tilbagevirkende kraft

Kræfter i regeringen der håber på annektering af 2/3 af Vestbredden

Fortsat intensivning af nedrivninger og forflytninger: fordobling i 2016 sammenlignet med 2015

Ødelæggelse af humanitært arbejde, herunder 4 danske projekter (video om ødelæggelse af cisterner: <https://www.facebook.com/Noedhjjaelp/videos/10154765319455229/>)

Forflytninger i Negev: voldsomme demonstrationer imod

Lov om forbud mod at opfordre til boykot har direkte implikationer + 'chilling effect' på NGOerne

- Human Rights Watch forment adgang til Israel
- Nogle af Kirkernes Verdensråds 'Ecumenical Accompaniers' afvist/udvist
- Kirkernes Verdensråds vice-generalsekretær, Isabelle Phiri, afvist ved indrejse i december 2016
- Aggressive angreb på f.eks. menneskerettighedsorganisationer som B'Tselem og Breaking the Silence: forsøger at stoppe international funding (f.eks. direkte henvendelse til Belgium herom)
- Retsag indledt mod Breaking the Silence for at få dem til at offentliggøre navne på de personer (soldater), der har forsynet BtS med vidnesbyrd, der er brugt i BtS kritiske rapporter f.eks. om angrebet på Gaza i 2014.
- NGO Monitor forsøger at diskreditere og intimidere NGOerne og INGOerne

Det internationale samfund

Usikkerhed omkring USAs holdning og planer:

- Trump uklar omkring 2-statsløsningen
- Trump opfordrer til at gå varsomt med bosættelser, men Netanyahu har sagt fra
- Ingen klar politik betyder nok, at der ikke bliver nogen fredsproces
- Trump merkantilistisk holdning: 'strike a deal' hvis i USA's interesse, men spiller ikke med åbne kort. Altså: de må selv finde ud af en løsning uden indblanding udefra. Dermed ingen motivering for Israel til at opgive en politisk 'omkostningsfri' besættelse.

Europa er udfordret på en ny måde

- Ole Wæver (Deadline 22/2-17): Europa bør ikke længere følge et USA, hvis politik vil være uforudsigelig, men i forhold til Mellempøsten, Rusland, Kina m.v. udvikle sin egen selvstændige politik og på sigt tage et større ansvar. USA er ikke længere et 'solidt anker' og i virkeligheden et voksende sikkerhedsproblem, selvom vi ikke tør tale om det endnu.
- EU står stadigvæk svag (UM Morgherini lægger sig stadigvæk op af USA og Israel), men er udfordret på sine humanitære principper. Danmark må være sig bevidst om hvor vi står: læner os pt op af Holland og Tyskland – en midter position.
- Norman Finkelstein (Deadline 27/2-17): kun hvis Palæstinenserne mobiliserer en modstand, der får international opbakning skal vi forvente at se forandring. Men det ligger ikke lige for.
- Leila Stockmarr (Deadline 27/2-17): 'Fredspocessen' er et røgslør over hvad der reelt foregår: 2-statsløsningen er reelt død

Civilsamfundet i Israel – en ny diskurs og handling mulig?

B'Tselem har i den seneste tid skærpet tonen og tilgangen: de vil ikke længere samarbejde med militære myndigheder, som ikke tager deres rapporter alvorligt. B'Tselems generalsekretær, Hagai El-Ad, talte også ved FN's generalforsamling september 2016 om at det internationale samfund må gribe ind:

- *I spoke at the United Nations against the occupation because I am an Israeli. I have no other country. I have no other citizenship and no other future. I care about the fate of this place, the fate of its people and its political fate, which is my fate, too. And in light of all these ties, the occupation is a disaster.*
- *I spoke at the United Nations against the occupation because my colleagues at B'Tselem and I, after so many years of work, have reached several conclusions. Here's one: The reality will not change if the world does not intervene. I suspect that our arrogant government also knows this, so it's busy fearmongering against such an intervention.*
- *Intervention by the world against the occupation is just as legitimate as any human-rights issue. It's all the more so when it involves an issue like our ruling over another people. This is no internal Israeli matter. It is blatantly an international matter.*
- *There is no chance Israeli society, of its own volition and without any help, will end the nightmare. Too many mechanisms insulate the violence we conduct in order to take control of them.*
- *What are the Palestinians supposed to do? If they dare demonstrate, it's popular terror. If they call for sanctions, it's economic terror. If they pursue legal means, it's judicial terror. If they turn to the United Nations, it's diplomatic terror.*

- *We must repeat it everywhere: The occupation is not the result of a democratic vote. Our decision to control their lives, as much as it suits us, is an expression of violence, not democracy. Israel has no legitimate option to continue this way. And **the world has no option to continue treating us as it has so far – all talk and no action.***

Det lange perspektiv

Selvom udsigterne til en snarlig løsning på den israelsk-palæstinensiske konflikt således kan se ud til at have lange udsigter er der grund til at holde fast i det lange perspektiv og håbet om en fredelig og retfærdig løsning.

Richard Falk, der i perioden 2008-2014 var FNs Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Occupied Palestine, skriver i sin bog 'Palestine – The Legitimacy and Hope'(2014):

"The Middle East is fraught with uncertainties in this period, the resolution of which might be helpful or harmful to the unfolding Palestinian struggle. If the Iran diplomacy succeeds in removing the threat of war, it could be helpful in clearing the air and could allow some new phase of creative conflict resolution. The same could be true if the Syrian war comes to an end. The ebb and flow of political currents the aftermath of the Arab Spring is certain to exert a variety of influences on Palestinian prospects. Important as well is the degree to which BDS (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions) and other global solidarity initiatives exert sufficient pressure on Israeli leadership and public opinion to induce a recalculation of Israel's options, including even questioning the viability of a Jewish state confronting a Palestinian population that will, sometime in the coming decades, constitute a majority.

It is impossible to divine the future on the basis of such complexity. The obstacles facing the Palestinian people seeking justice and rights under international law have never been as formidable. Yet the reorientation of the Palestinian struggle, together with the increasing expression of solidarity throughout the world, creates a new reality – the legitimacy of hope. This hope rests on the liberating potential of militant nonviolence when combined with mobilized movements of national resistance and global solidarity" (side 232).

Den israelske historiker **Ilan Pappé** skriver i epilogen til sin bog "The Idea of Israel – A History of Power and Knowledge" (2014):

"The Israeli élite are hoping that the Spring will once more produce a monstrous Islamic sea that will restore Israel's image as an island of stability. But this is not going to happen.

Even in the most chaotic and violent moments of this new historic process, world opinion has not absolved Israel from its continued oppression of the Palestinians. Israel is seen more as a colonialist state that survived the twentieth century but is maintained because of its usefulness to the United States and its effective role in the global capitalist economy. There is no longer any

moral dimension for the global support, and when the more functional side of this support starts to weaken, the scenarios shared, for better or for worse, by post- and neo-Zionists alike – of a life in a pariah state that maintains an apartheid regime – may come true. This book was written with the hope that these grim scenarios would not transpire, but with the uncomfortable sense that they are already unfolding.” (s.312-313).

Michael Sfard, der er juridisk rådgiver for mange israelske menneskerettighedsorganisationer skrev I januar 2016 en opsigtsvækkende artikel: *“The Israeli Occupation will end suddenly – The strength of organisations working to end the occupation and their supporters is greater than we think”*. Her skrev han bl.a.:

*“One day the occupation will end. It will probably happen in one fell swoop. And when it happens, it will suddenly emerge that everyone was against it. That politicians had actually worked to end it, that the journalists strove indefatigably to expose its injustices, that the cultural institutions condemned it courageously and that Israeli academia was a center of persistent resistance, from which the struggle drew ideological and moral backing. In short, everyone was part of the Resistance. One day occupation will end, because regimes of this kind are not viable. They are bound to fall, because regimes of suppression, almost by definition, are unstable”...“The ground on which occupation stands may appear firm. But it’s definitely possible that beneath it, close to the crust, fissures are forming. Increasing wide cracks are being created. Those who stand on that ground do not see them. They think the ground is more firm than ever. And then, with no prior warning, the cracks will widen and the ground will collapse like a Dead Sea sinkhole.”...“And then, when the occupation ends, it’s unlikely that we will establish truth and reconciliation committees, because we do not have a tradition of public contrition. After all, we come from a culture in which one apologizes and confesses only one day a year, and even then it stays between us and the Lord. Still, though, when occupation ends and we have to rehabilitate Israeli society, we will not be able to do that without acknowledging the sins of the past, without learning from them.”...“These are trying times. The right wing is burning with the desire to bury any criticism of government policy, in order to ensure that the colonialist occupation becomes an irreversible fait accompli. That desire has now led to a combined, coordinated assault, using spies, vicious incitement and Putin-like legislation aimed against the last pockets of resistance to the occupation: the organisations of civil society. All the others have already been conquered and silenced or have deserted...Only stubborn bastions of Breaking the Silence, B’Tselem, Yesh Din, Peace now and their followers remain. It’s hard not to discern the method of combat whereby the assaulting force destroys all the moral assets of its country along the way. It’s hard not to be worried.”...“**The answer is simple. The world is driven by diverse forces, whose mode of operation is less overt. One of them is actually an idea: that all human beings are equal and that all deserve rights because they are human beings.**”...“I am not claiming that the occupation will end tomorrow. I don’t know when it will happen. It is unfortunately possible that a great deal more blood will be shed along the way. I only know that the struggle has not ended. Not the struggle and not the struggle for the character of Israeli society.”*

Marcelo Svirsky understreger I sin bog *'After Israel' – Towards Cultural Transformation* (2014) at en kulturel transformation bort fra Zionismen må ske i Israel:

*"By the time Israel would have been celebrating its centenary, another society will be in place from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River. The very same people of today and their children, those we naturally identify as Jews and Palestinians, will be invested in constructing their shared life away from the assumptions that Zionism has forced on the region. **After Israel** means just that."..."In fact, most Jewish-Israelis show a benign quota of self-criticism as regards the oppression, marginality, exclusion, discrimination and inequality that nurture their privilege. But they have no intention whatsoever of fundamentally changing their lives or putting an end to the impoverishment of life they cause."..."I am sure that texts on Israel and Palestine are inclined to engage with political solutions, not with cultural transformation, as if negotiated exchange of land, borders and sovereignty will save us. But **no political solution can provide the cultural marrow that is utterly necessary to substantiate a thorough transformation of ways of life** – without which new forms of Israeli domination will be forced on everyone who falls under the new series of arrangements of land, borders and sovereignty. That is why there is a vital need for another answer, one that takes society, culture and politics into account. It is time to understand that formal institutions and policies cannot be changed in isolation from a radical transformation of habits, identities and disposition. The ways of life and the modes of being shaped and woven during the Zionist century must go. This is because these ways of life and these modes of being are the continuous war waged against all the inhabitants of the region. Overcoming these ways of life and these modes of being is to **after Israel**."*

Folkekirkens Nødhjælp afholdt Scenario workshops i marts 2015 med sine israelske og palæstinensiske partnere. Forskellen mellem de to workshops var påfaldende. Palæstinenserne havde mange ideer til hvordan ting kunne se helt anderledes ud i 2030, men israelerne var mere pessimistiske, indtil en sagde: "Hvis I gav os indtil 2050 kunne vi begynde at snakke om en ændret situation". Måske svarer det meget godt til Marcelo Svirsky, der taler om et 'After Israel' i 2050, når den kulturelle tranformation har taget rod og der åbnes op for en politisk fantasi om alternative fremtider?

Hvad gør vi ?

I sin præsentation vi Skype på Kirkeligt Palæstina Netværks seminar den 11. november 2016 kom Mitri Raheb, direkte adspurgt, med de fire 'P'er han synes skulle være ledestjerner for vores fortsatte engagement for Palæstina:

- Prayer
- Pilgrimage
- Political advocacy ('creative resistance')
- Projects