

## Event 'Every human deserves respect (1945-2005)' on December 10, 2005



On December 10, 2005 – Human Rights Day - PRIMO nh organised the event 'Every human deserves respect (1945-2005)' in 'The Park' theatre in Hoorn. In co-operation with the City of Hoorn, Stichting Netwerk and Amnesty Hoorn various activities were organised around the theme 'Every human deserves respect: about Memorial Day for everyone, Liberation Day for everyone and No Prejudice about each other'. The goal – 60 years after the Second World War – was to take lessons from the violent years of war to and connect them to the lives of immigrants and youngsters now.

In the crowded Othello Hall from 'The Park' theatre in Hoorn, with adults and Primary School children from different cultural backgrounds, today's chairman Andrew Makkinga welcomes everyone. Makkinga, known from television programs like 'Het Lagerhuis' and 'Planet Holland', will chair the meeting. The Hall is 'dressed up' with colourful graffiti, made by some youngsters from Hoorn, with pieces about 'respect' and 'peace'.



### “Becoming artists in living together”

The mayor of Hoorn, Onno van Veldhuizen, opens the event. He tells his audience, and especially the young ones: "I'm 43 years and I've been living in peace for 43 years. I was lucky not having to live in a country at war. Peace is fragile. It's something like watching an air bubble floating through the air. Every time you think: this one stays, till it bursts. As a six year old in 1968 I watched my first war on television. That was the Suez-crisis in which Egypt and Israël fought each other. That same year I watched on television how the Russians invaded Tsjechoslovakia. Every war starts with a little quarrel, with prejudice. Mandela in South-Africa en Ghandi in India are inspiring examples of people who fought this. If you don't respect someone else, if you don't know a little bit about human rights, then it won't be easy to live together. We must become artists in living together. Because of the murder on Theo van Gogh and on Pim Fortuyn a lot of unrest rules our society. There's fear, there's prejudice. Never let yourself be scared and always give a good example yourself."



### Best poem and best drawing

With a big applause mayor Van Veldhuizen invites the nominees of the best five poems and best five drawings to join him on stage. Children from group 7 and group 8 from primary schools in Hoorn massively joined the poetry and drawing contest. Their themes are also 'Human Rights Day' and 'Every human deserves respect'. Together with the

mayor the nominees pull their to poster size enlarged poems or drawings to the foreground. One by one each poem is read, or drawing is shown. After that it gets exiting because: who won the first prize for the best poem and who made the best drawing? Eventually the mayor reveals the final verdict. With her 'Poem for Human Rights Day' Anna Boessenkool wrote the best poem. The best drawing was made by Nadine Arts. Her themes were discrimination, bullying, freedom of religion and equal rights for all humans. The cheering winners each received a prize of € 200,- to spend with their classes.



### **'That day didn't feel good'**

After this ceremony it's time for the premiere of the short documentary 'That day didn't feel good'. The central theme in this documentary by Huib and Karen Schoonhoven is: is Memorial Day for everyone, is Liberation Day for everyone? In the film the Platform for Immigrants and the Council for the Young from Hoorn together visit the Resistance Museum and the deportation centre Hollandsche Schouwburg in Amsterdam. Together they visit the exposition, watch pictures from the Second World War and react to it. Especially immigrants don't feel involved with the 4th and 5th of May. It's something for the Dutch, there's no connection made to immigrants. Somalian-Dutch Yasmine Allas believes the Dutch themselves are nonchalant about Memorial Day. She gives an example from the school her children attend to. No attention was paid to Memorial Day. When Allas then asked the teacher why not, the reply was 'You don't want to confront children with death'. It makes Allas angry: "Memorial Day represents a part of Dutch history. It's also a great opportunity to talk with children about the consequences of war."



Filmmaker Huib Schoonhoven tells the audience he filmed many times during the civil war in former Yugoslavia. It was there he saw respect for ones neighbour soon dwindle and what the consequences were: "That's why we must take lessons from it". Andrew Makkinga wonders what's more important: freedom of speech or freedom of religion, followed by a discussion with the audience. "Holland is a democratic country. That's why it's important you're able to say everything you want, even if you might hurt some persons' feelings", Ali Kutlu believes. Heated reactions from the audience: the majority of the public believes freedom of speech is more important than freedom of religion. But it gives you no right to hurt other people's feelings. Freedom of speech first, but respectful.



### **Activities for children**

With the heated discussion in the main hall still going on, staff from the Hoorn Welfare Organisation Network arrange appealing activities for the children in the foyer: childrens dye, drawing, (henna)painting and a ballooning contest.

### **Shared part of history**

Director of the Resistance Museum in Amsterdam, Liesbeth van der Horst, talks about the experiences from the museum with projects about the Second World War and immigrants. "It's not only about involving immigrants, but also involving the Dutch with a part of our shared history, the Second World War. Because the Second World War indeed was a World War. It's our task to show these new Dutch citizens: look what happens if power falls into the hands of people who don't respect human rights". The Resistance Museum also works a lot with children from immigrants. Also Muslim schoolchildren. "That's going really well", Van der Horst tells. "Sometimes someone is a bit resistive. But because we tell the history of the Second World Ware by personal stories, this hesitation is soon gone".





**'In the Netherlands because of Circumstances'**

After the break stand-up comedian Amar makes his audience laugh with jokes about the Dutch, Moroccans, Turks, Surinamers and himself: "I call myself an INC: In the Netherlands because of Circumstances".

**"Holland is real cosy"**

Then the Hoorn Youth Council and Yasmine Allas debate – under the

leadership of the young politician Michiel Pijl – about racism and about respect. Does everyone deserve respect? Or do you have to earn respect? And: can you really say everything you like, even if you could hurt someones' feelings?

Some young people think its all right to say anything you like, but the other one must be able to defend himself: that is, only by words. The question arises what to do then with people who aren't assertive and verbally not very strong. "What will you learn from a society where you get insulted?", someone aks.



Next subject is the second statement: 'Holland is a racist country'. The younger ones in the audience give examples of discrimination they experienced when going out and at the football club. They also notice that more and more young immigrants in Hoorn are refused jobs. What can we do about this in Hoorn? "Let them apply for jobs anonymously", one of the council members states. "Then people read about someone's qualities instead of reading their names." Andrew Makkinga wonders if more young people should join a political party. Then young people could form a strong group and start lobbying for problems like anonymous applications. While saying that he wonders why he himself isn't a member of a political party. Priscilla Gerards: "I'm not interested in politics. All this talking, what's the use of it?".



At the end of the discussion the Youth Council and Yasmine Allas tell what they think of Holland and the future. According to Yasmine Allas we're on the brink of re-inventing Holland. "Dutch society is changing, we'll all set new values. We'll have to move on together and make it a tolerant society". Members of the Council: "We mustn't hurt each other, we must try our best to live together", "It's

not about your culture or your beliefs or giving a hand", "We're all here, we'll all have to solve it" and "Sitting here, together from all kinds of cultures, we're a nice representation of what Holland is". According to Mo Uysal it's not too bad in Holland with racism and discrimination: "Holland is real cosy".

**Winning piece about Respect**

After the Youth Council there's another way for the young to present themselves on stage. Under the leadership of artist JChristiaan Heydenrijk a group of young people attained for a couple of weeks a course on 'grafitti'. Participants made their own peace according to their creative interpretation of today's theme: Respect. It's also the end of the Respect project the Welfare Organisation Netwerk carried out. Bob Warnik is the acclaimed winner of the graffitti-prize. He made several pieces like 'respect, do it'. His prize is an enormous bundle of aerosols from the artist.



### **Human Rights raps about human rights**

The afternoon is ended by a steaming rap from 'Human Rights'. Rapper Nicolaas Beemster and DJ Abstract rap about respect and human rights. Together with a children's choir they rap the song 'Every day': "Where are human rights when people fight, we see the pain, every day, we see the battle, every day, we see them suffer, every day". Afterwards all participants received a cd from Human Rights. And for the real fans there was another signing session by rapper Nicolaas 'himself'.



### **Torch wake**

At 17.00 hrs all participants leave the square in front of the theatre between an impressive hedge-row of torches from Amnesty International Hoorn.