

Stuttgart Declaration

Closing Document of the Palestine solidarity conference

“Separated in the past – together in the future”.

Stuttgart, 26-28 November 2010

Equality – or nothing (Edward W. Said)

From 26-28 November 2010, over 200 participants came together for a “Palestine Solidarity Conference”. The theme of this 3-day conference, with the title **Separated in the past – together in the future**, was “Barriers and Perspectives for a just solution” of the conflict between the state of Israel and the Palestinians.

The speakers were the Israeli historian Prof. **Ilan Pappé** from the University of Exeter (U.K.), Prof. **Haidar Eid** from the Al Aqsa University Gaza, Prof. **Mazin Qumsiyeh** from Bir Zeit University Ramallah, the co-founder of the Internet Portal Electronic Intifada **Ali Abunimah**, the Palestinian activist **Lubna Masarwa**, the international law expert from Hamburg Prof. **Norman Paech**, the journalist and human rights activist **Evelyn Hecht-Galinski**, **Annette Groth MP** from the parliamentary fraction of the left party (DIE LINKE), lawyer **Jörg Lang**, and **Attia**

Rajab and **Verena Rajab** from the Stuttgart Palestine Committee. The jazz musician **Gilad Atzmon** supported the conference with his welcome address. The actress **Julianna Herzberg** and **Samir Mansour** with his **Layalina Ensemble** performed in the cultural programme. The patron of the conference was the Israeli-German lawyer and human rights activist **Felicia Langer**.

The conference participants from England, France, Austria, Switzerland, Sweden, the USA and Germany discussed strategies and objectives that they could follow together.

The great majority determined that the dogmatic adherence to the 2-State Solution ignores the actual realities and assumes a false parity between a colonized and occupied people on one side, and a colonial state with its military superiority on the other. This falsely propagates the possibility of achieving a

peace in which the Palestinians living in the areas occupied in 1967 are granted limited national rights, while the rights of those living within the borders of 1948 and of the expelled are denied their rights.

The adherence to a 2-State Solution condemns Palestinians with Israeli citizenship to live as second class citizens in their historic country, in a racist state in which they are not allowed the same rights as Jewish citizens. Furthermore, the continuance of a Zionist state on the land of the Palestinian refugees denies these refugees the internationally recognized right to return.

The Two-State Solution cannot lead to anything other than the consolidation and cementation of inequality. The model of two states separated according to ethnicity or religion means ethnic separation or fundamental inequality inside this state, as we experience in Israel today.

The contributions of Ilan Pappé and the Palestinian speakers showed conclusively that the hitherto so-called “peace process” and negotiations have been merely a smoke screen behind which Israel continues to steal land and disenfranchise the Palestinian population.

At the end of the discussion there was general agreement that only the creation of a shared secular and democratic state in historical Palestine with equal rights for all can bring peace and equality for Palestinians and Israelis – a state in which all people live together with equal rights, irrespective of their religion or background. This of course includes the Palestinians expelled from the country

(fulfilment of Resolution 194 of the UN General Assembly).

Leading powers, above all the USA and the EU countries, continue to tolerate or support the sustained transgressions of Israel against international law and the abuse of all UN resolutions, which condemn the colonial and discriminatory politics of Israel as illegal. The governments of the USA and the EU tolerate the constant attacks against the Palestinian people and their homes. In particular, the complete failure of the “international community” during the Israeli massacre in Gaza in Winter 2008/2009 demonstrates clearly that only pressure from civil society worldwide can enforce a change in the politics of Israel and her supporters.

The politics of eroding international law by Israel’s allies particularly affects the Federal Republic of Germany, and its governments, parties, trade unionists, and media, who have pledged themselves to a close relationship with Israel. They tacitly endorse Israel’s politics and human rights abuses, and even partially support them.

One current example of the connection between Germany and the Apartheid State of Israel is the involvement of Deutsche Bahn with the high-speed railway project between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, which travels through the West Bank, and must lead to the expropriation of the land of the inhabitants, while these Palestinians in the West Bank are simultaneously forbidden to use the train. A further example is the German support for the activities of the Jewish National Fund, a central Zionist institution which safeguards Apartheid in the State of Israel. Currently, the Jewish National Fund is displacing Palestinians in the Negev from their historical lands with its

forestation and settlement projects, as the example of the village of Al Arakib near Beer Sheva makes plain. Recently, Al Arakib was destroyed by Israeli security forces for the seventh time.

The conference participants discussed methods and possibilities of how our grassroots movements can become effective towards a shared future for Palestinians and Israelis on the basis of equal rights. The *barriers* are high, as there are powerful interests for the retention of the role of Israel as an imperial outpost of Europe and the USA and their economic and strategic interests. In this role, Israel is given *carte blanche* to break and erode human rights and international law.

The most effective method follows the example of the boycott campaign which was part of the effective fight against Apartheid in South Africa. The conference participants agreed on the urgent need for people in Germany also to support the international campaign for Boycott Disinvestment and Sanctions (BDS) against Israel.

With this, they supported the appeal from virtually all Palestinian civil organizations to boycott the discriminatory and colonial politics of the Israeli government and to put pressure on our respective governments and economic institutions to enact embargos and sanctions against Israel. Boycott measures and disinvestment are also the theme of the *Kairos Paper* adopted by Palestinian Christians in December 2009, and of the Cairo appeal from the Gaza Freedom March at the beginning of this year.

No time can be lost with this campaign, as the ethnic cleansing in Palestine and the slow genocide of the people of Gaza

through the illegal blockade continues every day. Many have already died and continue to die on a daily basis because they are denied exit to seek medical treatment. The contamination of land and water from the legacy of the war against Gaza also leads to illness and death.

The campaign provides many opportunities to actively join in as part of an already very successful international network of solidarity groups, trade unions, anti-racist initiatives, anti-globalization groups, church groups, critical Jewish and Palestinian federations and left parties, everywhere where we are actually connected with the power structures, institutions and politicians, that practise and consolidate injustice. Everywhere those who profit from the Israeli Apartheid regime must be called to account. In Germany in particular we must make a stand against the military and so-called "security cooperation" with Israel. "These non-violent punitive measures", as stated in the appeal from 9 July 2005 (Palestinian United Call for BDS against Israel) "must be maintained until Israel complies with her obligation to the Palestinians to allow the inalienable right to self-determination, and to all the standards according to international law".

The following issues must be realized (citation from the appeal):

- 1. "The end of the Israeli occupation and the colonization of all Arab land, as well as the dismantling of the apartheid wall.**
- 2. Israel's recognition of the fundamental right of the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equal rights.**
- 3. Israel's respect, defence and support for the right of Palestinian refugees to**

return to their houses and to their property, as prescribed in UN Resolution 194.”

The international BDS campaign is naturally not orientated against Jews, nor against Israeli citizens as such, but against the oppressive politics of a state, and against the firms and institutions which are complicit in the occupation, those who support the occupation and those who profit from it. It is thus supported by numerous Jewish organizations and by Israeli individuals.

Boycott, Disengagement from investments and Sanctions are the key way in which everyone – as previously against the South African Apartheid regime – can help to build economic and moral pressure. The BDS campaign has above all a great symbolic effect, in which it holds a mirror in front of the Israeli public and confronts them with the fact that ever more people in the world regard the politics of their country as criminal.

The numerous attempts by Palestinians, Israelis and international groups to break the illegal blockade of Gaza provide, as with BDS, a method to break the structures of injustice and the isolation of the oppressed. The conference participants call for further Freedom Flotillas and for mass actions by land and sea to bring the blockades and occupation of Gaza and the West Bank to collapse.

The participants of the Stuttgart conference also call for:

- **The release of the over 10,000 Palestinian political prisoners, particularly the women and children, and parliamentarians.**
- **The end of the Israeli settlement politics and the return of the stolen land.**
- **The removal of all barriers, checkpoints and Apartheid walls in Palestine.**
- **The stop of house destruction in the West Bank, in Jerusalem, in the Negev, in Galilee, and in the whole country.**
- **The de-recognition of the charitable status of the Jewish National Fund (JNF) in Germany, as this concerns an Apartheid organization of the state of Israel.**

The participants call on trade unions, peace movement, anti-racist initiatives and civil society to embrace these positions.

It is high time to put pressure on Israel. The Zionist system of Israel will not recognize the rights of the Palestinians from itself. Every day of delay costs lives. Our initiatives must avoid giving the impression that this is a conflict between two equally powerful adversaries. In truth, the Israeli military maintains absolute superiority over a practically defenceless Palestinian people. Our aim must be to make this situation clear to people worldwide quickly and effectively and to mobilize for the rights of the Palestinians.

Stuttgart, 10 December 2010