

Open Letter to German Left Party (Die Linke)

Written by Moshe Zuckermann
Wednesday, 14 April 2010 14:21 -

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Dear Friends,

This letter is being sent to you by citizens of the state of Israel who are active in various Left groups and on a variety of topics throughout Israel/Palestine, including human rights, ecology, peace, support for refugees, social justice, workers' rights, feminism, and queer struggles. We are struggling within our country and our society for a real social change, an end to the occupation, and the forging of an egalitarian and just society for all residents, women and men, of the area.

The decision to send this letter was taken following repeated reports of your party's actions on the situation in Israel/Palestine. The participation of senior members of your party in a January 2009 demonstration in Berlin in support of the Israeli bombardment of the Gaza Strip, the existence and acceptance of a political working group within your party (Bundesarbeitskreis [BAK] Shalom) that clearly supports Israel's various military actions and disseminates militaristic and nationalistic propaganda, and the silence of a majority of senior party officials concerning the Israeli occupation policy clarified for us, amongst other things, the need for clear intervention on our part.

We are well aware of the complexity and difficulty of such an intervention. We do not wish to dictate to you when and how you should act and articulate ideas within your own country. We know that the political and social discourse within Germany toward Israel is, for understandable and correct reasons, a sensitive matter. Preserving the memory of the Holocaust and combating anti-Semitism today within German society are among the most important tasks of every liberation movement. It is not despite but because of this understanding that it is even more difficult for us to see how the Israeli occupation policy is justified in Germany as part of the "lessons of German history."

The need to write to you derives primarily from recognition of Germany's importance as a regional power within the European Union and its influence throughout the Middle East. Germany's diplomatic and military actions throughout the region coupled with its active support of Israel's occupation policies represent sufficient reason to view the Federal Republic of Germany as one of the actors responsible for the violations of international law and war

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crimes committed by the Israeli government. For this reason we believe it is our right to demand that you, as activists for social change in Germany and as a political party represented in Parliament and in regional councils, take responsibility for the actions of your country in our region.

The ongoing occupation and dispossession are not an internal Israeli matter. Israel's anti-democratic control of more than three million Palestinians, women and men, who lack the right to vote and Israel's war crimes committed in the occupied Palestinian territory are concerns of everyone for whom human rights are dear -- and particularly for citizens of Europe, who bear special historical responsibility for the conflict in light of Europe's colonial intervention in the Middle East. This intervention continues in the present, such that there is no foundation for the policy of non-intervention in the "internal affairs" of Israel. The economic, military, and political support from the European Union, and from Germany in particular, that Israel enjoys, such as preferential trade status, financial investments, and arms trade, not only does not encourage the peace process, but further entrenches the military occupation and oppression and results in a deepening of militarism and education for racism and intolerance in our society.

Beyond this, given the weak position of the Palestinians, strong pressures on Israel from the international community are required. The strong side never relinquishes its position without substantial pressure, and indeed, Israel has proven time and time again that it is not ready to act for peace and an end to the occupation without intensive pressure from civil society and/or various governments abroad.

We are encouraged by your recent electoral success and hope that your growing strength will result in a change in the agenda throughout Germany on subjects such as social justice, civil rights, feminism, and the struggle against racism. We are convinced that Left politics and solidarity must also include an internationalist agenda, and we expect that your party will get actively involved in this field, opening dialogue with Left, anti-racist, and feminist forces throughout the world. As part of this dialogue, we are interested in clarifying our position concerning the policy that should be implemented by your party on the topic of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The state of Israel should not be rewarded for its occupation, its racist separation, and its war crimes. Only international policy which makes clear to Israel that violations of international law are not tolerated will succeed in promoting a just peace for all residents of this land. Several concrete demands that your party could promote include:

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- Cessation of all German arms exports to Israel. The arms trade is fundamentally unacceptable. Germany is not only trading in weapons with a state that systematically violates international law, but it even gives presents worth billions of euros to Israel. Recently, Germany was even asked by Israel to provide the latter with two warships.

- Blocking of the upgrade in trade relations between the European Union and Israel. Germany and a number of other countries in the EU are attempting to promote an upgrade of the trade agreements with Israel, even though such an agreement requires respect for fundamental human rights in the signatory countries as part of its conditions. While in Europe the upgrade in relations is perceived as a means to improve the relations of trust between Israel and Europe, in Israel this is seen as a weakness on the part of the EU and as a green light for continued violation of human rights.

- Total prohibition of the import of Israeli goods made in part or whole in the occupied Palestinian territory (including East Jerusalem) to the EU.

- Support for trials of those who committed war crimes in Israel/Palestine and implementation of the recommendations in the Goldstone Report.

- Support for civil society organizations and activists in Israel/Palestine, particularly for leaders of the popular and non-violent struggle against the Wall and settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory.

Beyond these steps, we hope that your party will succeed in initiating a discussion in Germany about the meaning of German responsibility for what is happening in the Middle East. It should be a discussion that promotes a policy of peace, social justice, and human rights, based on an historical and contemporary vision that includes all residents of the region. We will be pleased to take part in any discussion held by your party concerning what is happening in our region, together with our Palestinian partners in struggle, and hope that this letter will be an additional step toward a fruitful and equal dialogue between the Left in Germany and the Left in Israel/Palestine.

In solidarity

Miriam Abed-El-Dayye, Gadi Algazi, Udi Aloni, Galit Altschuler, Hila Amit, Roey Angel, Asaf

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Angermann, Reuven Avergil, Gabriel Ash, Danna Bader, Roni Bande, Yoav Beirach Barak, Ronnie Barkan, Yossi Bartal, Ofra Ben-Artzi, Mor Ben Israel, Elaenor Cantor, Shai Carmeli Pollack, Alex Cohn, Adi Dagan, Silan Dallal, Yossi David, Daniel Dokarevich Argo, Keren Dotan, Ronen Eidelman, Nimrod D. Evron, Eli Fabrikant, Tamar Freed, Michal Givoni, Bilha Sündermann Golan, Tsilli Goldenberg, Anat Guthmann, Connie Hackbarth, Yuval Halperin, Iris Hefets, Hanan Hever, Shir Hever, Chaya Hurwitz, Hedva Isachar, Matan Israeli, Matan Kaminer, Reuven Kaminer, Adam Keller, Hava Keller, Peretz Kidron, Assaf Kintzer, Yana Knopova, Yael Lerer, Orly Lubin, Adi Maoz, Eilat Maoz, Naomi Mark, Anat Matar, Hagai Matar, Edu Medicks, Yosefa Mekayton, Inna Michaeli, Rotem Mor, Susanne Moses, Avital Mozes, Dorothy Naor, Naama Nagar, Ido Nahmias, Regev Nathansohn, Ofer Neiman, Norah Orlow, Hava Oz, Einat Podjarni, Yael Politi, Israel Puterman, Hili Razinsky, Moshe Robas, Shadi Rohana, Yehoshua Rosin, Noga Rotem, Eddie Saar, Sergeiy Sandler, Gal Schkolnik, Ayala Shani, Shemi Shabat, Aviram Shamir, Tali Shapiro, Fadi Shbeta, Ehud Shem Tov, Yehuda Shenhav, Mati Shemoelof, Kobi Snitz, Gideon Spiro, Roy Wagner, Michael Warschawski, Sharon Weill, Maya Wind, Yossi Wolfson, Uri Yaakobi, Sergio Yahni, Kim Yuval, Michal Zak, Shimri Zameret, Mai Zeidani, Talilla Ziffer, Beate Zilvesmidt, Moshe Zuckermann

*This open letter was published in German in [junge Welt](#), [Neues Deutschland](#), and other media. □ Adapted from the [Alternative Information Center](#)'s English translation. □ See, also, Moshe Zuckermann, "[Von Stiftungen und Anstiftern: Zur aktuellen Kontroverse um Norman G. Finkelstein](#)" (*junge Welt*, 2 March 2010).*

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