



Open letter to the state executive committee of the SPD Berlin and to the Jusos Berlin in the SPD to their decision '*Against any anti-Semitism! - No cooperation with the anti-Semitic BDS movement ("Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions for Palestine")!*' at the state party conference May 20, 2017

The recent resolution of the Berlin branch of the SPD [1] equates BDS with Anti-Semitism. It does so as if it was evident that a *peaceful law-based civil society movement* calling for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions *against a state which doesn't abide to international law* – can incite hatred against a group of people.

By tagging those who reject Zionism as racists, the SPD Berlin is engaging, de-facto, tactics of silencing, i.e. of political oppression, and hence abuse of power against a political minority. Given the grave meanings that Anti-Semitism bears in the political memory of German civilians, SPD Berlin aims to de-legitimize the growing BDS circles of supporters.

Given the approaching elections, we, a group of German citizens and internationals, including Israeli and Jews – who openly support the Palestinians' call for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) against the state of Israel, *in accordance to our constitutional rights* – would like to inform the general public of voters, and specifically SPD supporters, about the meaning and ramifications of the SPD Berlin resolution.

First, SPD Berlin equates what it refers to as “Anti-Zionism” with Anti-Semitism. By doing so it assumes that Zionism is not separated from Judaism – a highly problematic assumption, implying that all Jews are supporters of Zionism, that all Jews adhere to the same pro-Zionist political position, and that all Jews are essentially one and the same. Given the inherent fallacy of this assumption, we wonder if SPD Berlin actually means what it declares. If so we cannot but feel reminded of very dark times.

Second, aside from damaging the freedom of expression that is the common right in the Federal Republic of Germany, a right which as an elected representative of the public the SPD Berlin must not only yield to but also protect, arguing for Anti-Semitism is tantamount to no other but the “boy who cried wolf”. Abusing the term Anti-Semitism is politically and socially dangerous because it weakens the civil sphere from handling actual racist hatred toward Jews.

Zionism, like other projects of settler colonialism that rose in the late 19th century, constitutes an oppressive order in which Palestinians are not considered to be civil subjects. For this reason, the UN Resolution A/RES/37/43 [2] has reaffirmed “the legitimacy of the struggle of peoples for independence, territorial integrity, national unity and liberation from colonial and foreign domination and foreign occupation by all available means, including armed struggle” and explicitly reaffirmed “the inalienable right of the Namibian people, the Palestinian people and all peoples under foreign and colonial domination to self-determination, national independence, territorial integrity, national unity and sovereignty without outside interference”. It is in this context that we advocate for the right of peoples to self-determination, as stated in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. [3]

As people of conscience, we choose to stand with the oppressed, and are proud to take non-violent, efficient and emancipatory means such as Boycott to end Israeli policies that amounts to Apartheid as defined by the United Nations. As citizens, we will not tolerate inner political oppression and false accusation of Anti-Semitism. We will not tolerate threats to our rights by the wrongful power of logical fallacies. We will do anything in our civilian power to fight the crimes of the Israeli colonial regime, regardless of the political attempt to silence us, and we call upon you to join us on the right side of history.

We kindly ask for your esteemed reply.

Please do not hesitate to contact us for further information: kontakt@bdsberlin.org

Kind regards,

BDS Berlin

Berlin, June 30, 2017

Notes:

[1] http://parteitag.spd-berlin.de/wp-content/uploads/antrag-43iii2016_-gegen-jeden-antisemitismus--keine-zusammenarbeit-mit-der-antisemitischen-bds-beweg.pdf

[2] <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/37/a37r043.htm>

[3] <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CCPR.aspx>

[Offener Brief an die SPD Berlin zu ihrem Beschluss gegen die BDS-Bewegung](#)