



Boycott Divestment Sanctions

**The Palestinian Boycott,
Divestment and Sanctions
National Committee (BNC)
is a wide coalition of the
largest Palestinian mass
organizations, trade
unions, networks and
organizations.**

Member organizations:

Council of National and
Islamic Forces in Palestine
General Union of Palestinian
Workers
Palestinian General
Federation of Trade Unions
Palestinian NGO Network
(PNGO)
Federation of Independent
Trade Union
Palestine Right of Return
Coalition
Occupied Palestine and Golan
Heights Initiative
General Union of Palestinian
Women
Union of Palestinian Farmers
Grassroots Palestinian Anti-
Apartheid Wall Campaign
(STW)
Palestinian Campaign for the
Academic and Cultural
Boycott of Israel (PACBI)
National Committee to
Commemorate the Nakba
Civic Coalition for the
Defense of Palestinian Rights
in Jerusalem (CCDPRJ)
Coalition for Jerusalem
Union of Palestinian Charitable
Organizations
Palestinian Economic Monitor
Union of Youth Activity
Centers-Palestine Refugee
Camps

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*Palestine
March 30 2009,
Palestinian Land Day and first Global BDS Action Day*

Open Letter to Die Linke

As [Palestinian National Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Committee](#) (BNC) we have been alerted just recently about the courageous stand of Hermann Dierke, a member of Die Linke and candidate for the Duisburg city council elections, in support for boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) as a tool for justice in Palestine and the following 'public stoning' that has led to his (hopefully) temporary resignation.

We are neither surprised nor upset about the reaction of mainstream German media and right wing politicians that have found in Dierke's remarks an occasion to shroud their own unacceptable political positions with righteousness. We do however believe that the attacks from within the ranks of Die Linke are alarming, not only for Palestinians, but for all those that expect the party to maintain respect for its own principles.

Die Linke states clearly in its founding charter that 'international law is an indispensable condition for a reasonable international order'. It further defines equality, justice, internationalism and solidarity as founding values for Die Linke. These principles are the essence of the Palestinian call for BDS.

Over 170 Palestinian civil society organizations, parties and unions representing Palestinian refugees, Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza and Palestinian citizens of Israel [called on July 2005 for BDS](#). The call is based on the urgent necessity of implementing international law and comes after both a 60-year-old refusal on the part of Israel to implement UN resolutions and the repeated failure of negotiations with Israel to restore justice and human rights. Inspired by the South African struggle, Palestinians have called on citizens around the world to apply BDS.

Considering the party's calls for peace and peaceful solutions, one might have thought that Die Linke would be supportive of the fact that, after the failure of negotiations and in the face of ever increasing attacks, Palestinians have called for a nonviolent global movement using the tool of boycott, divestment and sanctions to stop Israeli war crimes, occupation and apartheid. In view of the party's strong support for the World Social Forum one might have hoped that taking up the call from Belem for a Global BDS Action

Day would not have condemned one of its members to resign his position.

You claim to be in continuity with those that have fought fascist dictatorship and the motivations of fascism, yet it is likely that Suzanne Weiss, a holocaust survivor saved by the French resistance, would probably not find space in your ranks when she writes: “What should we do [for Palestine]? The resistance that saved my life in Hitler’s time is a good model. We need a united campaign for peace and justice in Palestine, in which all inhabitants, Jewish and Palestinians, have an equal voice and equal rights. All the Palestinians expelled from the country should have the right to return. Such a campaign [...] calls for boycott, divestment, and sanctions to pressure the Zionist state to seek a peaceful and democratic solution.”

We do not intend to tell Die Linke what political stands it should take, however, we would like to ask for clarification about them.

Does Die Linke stand with people like Naomi Klein calling for full boycott, divestment and sanctions campaign against Israel or with Israel's ex-vice defense minister Vilnai who threatened the Palestinians in Gaza that “they will bring upon themselves (the Palestinians) a bigger Holocaust.”? A few months later it only took the Israeli army several weeks to murder over 1400 people, caged behind ghetto walls.

Does Die Linke stand with Desmond Tutu and the South African trade unions calling for a BDS campaign, or with the Israeli “left wing” Meretz party that has evaluated its withdrawal of support to the Gaza massacre 'Operation Cast Lead' half way through the carnage on the grounds that it probably cost them votes in the national election? The cynical balance between human lives and votes does not become any progressive party, neither in Israel nor Germany.

Does Die Linke support that Israel's oppression of the Palestinian people is included in the agenda of the UN anti-racism conference (Durban Review Conference) to be held from 20 – 24 April 2009 in Geneva? Does Die Linke encourage the German government to include recommendations on Israel and the Palestinian people in the debate and in the final document to be endorsed by this conference?

The refusal of the German left to take a clear stand on Palestine is not proof of a historical lesson learned but of its incapacity to draw basic moral and political conclusions. After the carnage in Gaza, representing the latest in a series of Israeli massacres of our people, and the construction of the Apartheid Wall which cements the ghettos on the ground, a progressive party like Die Linke has to take a stand. You can be only on one side of the Wall; a wall that does not separate between Jews and Palestinians but between those that stand up for justice and human rights and those that fit into the framework created by Israel and its allies.

We would not be surprised if there was a healthy discussion within Die Linke on the issue of BDS and we would be happy to contribute to the debate. However, when a party cadre is

forced to resign because of a lack of backing from their own ranks, debate is effectively stifled and the right of your members to take up a position in favour of BDS is denied outright.

We hope that Die Linke can reflect on the case of Hermann Dierke and build a political position on Palestine and the rights of the Palestinian people that is congruent with the party's guiding principles.

Looking forward to your reply,

BNC Secretariat