

Jewish voice for just peace in the Middle East



The joint speech of the Palestinian lawyer Nadija Samour and Iris Hefets from our board at the demonstration No to the war on 25.11.23: For demo 25.11.:

Iris Hefets:

21 years ago, I - literally - forced my family from Israel to emigrate to Berlin. They were unhappy with this, but I saw no future in an increasingly militaristic society. Shortly afterwards, I was on the street with hundreds of thousands of all Colors in Berlin demonstrating against the war in Iraq. As an Israeli to protest against the war together with so many people, I really thought that I ended up in the middle of a dream. This was Germany in 2003, in which nationalism, militarism and war were still controversial. A Germany in which many people also knew from their own experience what war means. 20 years later, people who call for a ceasefire are denounced as Putin-understanders and Hamas supporters. That's scary.

Nadija Samour:

Yes - 20 years later we live in a Germany in which unconditional solidarity with war crimes and genocide is a reason of state, and in which Palestinians and their supporters de facto no longer have any fundamental rights. I would like to remind us all of what is happening in the Gaza Strip, because it seems that the German media are trying to distort and deny the immeasurable suffering caused by the Israeli war machine, with the full support of the USA and the EU. While we are standing here, more than 14,800 people were murdered, half of them children. More than 6800 are still under the rubble of destroyed residential buildings and schools. 1.7 million people are on the run, which is 77% of the total population is one of the most densely populated areas in the world. And this raises the question: where should they flee? Because the Gaza Strip has not only been besieged and occupied for decades, but has also been around since the 9th. October completely cut off from fuel, electricity, water and food, without the international community having done

anything to save lives. Almost 100 journalists have been murdered by the Israeli army in the Gaza Strip and in the West Bank, medical staff, hospitals and ambulances, schools, refugee camps, mosques and churches - everything is bombed, destroyed, and then it is also claimed that the victims are themselves to blame because they allegedly have common with Hamas. But unconditional solidarity with war crimes and genocide has not only determined politics in Germany since October. The normalization and the fullest support with words and deeds of Israeli settlement colonialism, apartheid, and military occupation of the Palestinian territories has paved the way for Germany to participate again as a great power in world politics.

Iris Hefets:

After the last world war, Germany had to rehabilitate itself. Because the Germans could not talk to the direct victims, because they were either murdered by them or, if they could escape, they did not want to know more about Germany, a suitable substitute object for reparation was found: the Israeli state. This was a good solution for everyone involved. Adenauer was able to continue to rebuild Germany with old Nazis. Ben Gurion, who was responsible for the first ethnic cleansing in Palestine, received much-needed money. One hand washes the other. It was above all civilian initiatives that initiated the public confrontation with deep-seated anti-Semitism and the crimes committed in Germany. Examples include projects such as the stumbling blocks or the places of remembrance in the Bavarian Quarter. German politics then discovered this moral gold mine, chose "the Jews" as the object of reparation and Israel as its representative office. "The Jews", who were almost destroyed because they stood for "evil", have become "the good ones." Very comfortable. Today, the approximately 200,000 Jews living here represent neither a political, nor an economic or electoral power. The Central Council of Jews - which still cooperated with other minorities at the time of Heinz Galinski and Ignaz Bubis and showed solidarity with them - is financed by the German state and instrumentalized against Muslims. In the 1930s, many German Jews also denied the racism directed against them and were sure that the Germans "only" had something against East Jews and that they were protected because they fought for Germany in the first WW. If it goes against Muslims today, it will go against Jews again tomorrow.

Nadija Samour:

At the same time, Germany has elevated the Palestinians to enemies of the state, and all the barbaric characteristics such as anti-Semitism, hatred of women, queerphobia, etc. are projected on them. The creation of this enemy image serves a German nationalism that wants to be who in the world again. Israel serves to display a substitute nationalism. A purified Greater Germany, which upgrades its deadly borders, threatens with mass deportations, produces racist exclusions by tightening the right of residence and naturalization, and tries to prevent any resistance to it with police violence, demonstration bans, and defamation. A purified Greater Germany that measures its local nationalism by arms exports, while it thinks it can preserve a pure vest with its value imperialism.

Iris Hefets:

Today there is a lack of civil resistance to these frightening totalitarian tendencies, which are recognizable under the guise of the "fight for Western values" in Ukraine or that of the "fight against anti-Semitism." The merger Adenauer-Globke-Ben-

Gurion-Ethnic Purification is alive today in the form of Scholz-Habeck-AfD-Netanyahu genocide in Gaza or, rather, deadly. In 2010, I published an article in the taz - at that time I could still publish in the German press - which was called "Only walk on tiptoe". He started like this: "What do the two professors Ilan Pappé (Israel), Norman Finkelstein (USA) and the publicist Hajo Meyer (Germany) have in common? All three are Jews, survivors of the Holocaust or their descendants as well as vehement critics of Israeli politics. What do the city of Munich, the Trinity Church in Berlin, the Heinrich Böll Foundation and the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation have in common? After initial promises, they all unloaded Ilan Pappé or Norman Finkelstein again and denied them promised event rooms - just as the Heiliggeistkirche in Frankfurt had already done once with Hajo Meyer a few years ago. The aforementioned institutions thus succumb to the pressure of pro-Israeli circles, who even denounced Finkelstein, Pappé and Meyer as "anti-Semites." These were the beginnings of the state's purges, which are implemented by supposedly progressive actors - not the AfD or other brown organizations. Children and now grandchildren of Holocaust survivors are taught by German allegedly "Jewish-friendly" politicians what anti-Semitism is. The German Constitution is emptied when the Bundestag replaces legislation with "resolutions". The anti-BDS resolution of the Bundestag, which was supported almost without exception by the AfD to the left, was an alarming sign. The deputies knew that their content as a law had no chance because the decision violated the right to freedom of expression enshrined in the Constitution. The perfidious thing is that nothing can be done against such a resolution legally, because it is not legally binding. Now we are threatened with another resolution under the heading "Protect Jewish life in Germany". Anyone who then criticizes Israel, i.e. is guilty of the so-called Israel-related anti-Semitism, risks not being naturalized or deported. The AfD no longer has to come to the government, its xenophobic agenda is already being implemented. But even the Germans should not weigh themselves in safety, for example, cultural institutions that give space to voices critical of Israel risk their further financing. On the other hand, it was still almost harmless that our organization, the JS for just peace in the Middle East, was already terminated the bank account with the BFS a few years ago in the name of the fight against anti-Semitism. Jews who do not fit into the current German image of Jews are undesirable. I was invited to speak here because I didn't want to be silenced by a ban on assembly in violation of the constitution 5 weeks ago. The JS was not allowed to demonstrate on Oranienplatz, so I went alone with a sign "As an Israeli and Jewish: Stop the genocide in Gaza" to Hermannplatz in Neukölln and was taken into custody by the Berlin police. After police check, the police apologized to me because I was in the right according to the Constitution, and I was accompanied back to the place where I could stand with the sign for about 2 hours. 2 weeks ago, during a demonstration organized by Jewish and Israeli artists for an immediate ceasefire, I was taken back into custody with the same sign, the sign was confiscated and the police filed a criminal complaint against me for sedition. This was also the case for others at this demonstration. By the way, these cases have been included in the statistics of anti-Semitic crimes since October 7.

Nadija Samour:

As a lawyer who receives many mandates from the Palestinian community, I can report that anti-Palestinian and anti-Jewish repression, as Iris describes, has been very well known to us for many years. People lose their work and their right of residence, art and cultural institutions lose their promotion, police violence against

demonstrators is applauded, there is a frightening mood-making in the media and a general climate of intimidation. But since October we have been experiencing a scale of everything that even I have not seen coming. In Berlin alone, all Palestine demonstrations were banned in October by general decree. The pro-Israeli jubilee demonstrations, organized by the state apparatus itself, of course, did not fall under this ban. In Neukölln, an Arab-influenced workers' neighborhood, the police dominated the streets in a climate of impunity. Arabic-looking people were arbitrarily stopped on the street, searched and registered. School children were subjected to disciplinary measures and violence by teachers because the Berlin school senator wanted to ban the Kuffiyah or other Palestinian symbols. And we are now dealing with thousands of legal proceedings against people who wanted to exercise their fundamental right of assembly. But - we must say it clearly: it was the daily, indomitable gatherings on Sonnenallee and other parts of the city that ultimately managed to break the demonstration bans. It was the solidarity of tens of thousands of Berliners and internationalists who fought for the right of Palestinians to exist. Even today, here at this demonstration, it is important to demand solidarity with the Palestinian people loud and clearly. Why? This is what one of the most famous Palestinian intellectuals, Edward Said, tells us: "Think of the solidarity with the Palestinian people here and everywhere in Latin America, Africa, Europe, Asia and Australia, and also remember that there is one thing that many people are committed to, despite the difficulties and terrible obstacles. And why? Because it is a just thing, a noble ideal, a moral pursuit of equality and human rights."

For international solidarity! Freedom for Palestine!
Thanks so much