

## **What may not be said. Apartheid**

Yet another venue cancellation: On Friday, Hotel Kaiserwasser in Vienna cancelled a signed contract with BDS Austria. The reason, according to GM Michael Bart(\*) was incessant calls, some by those identifying themselves as representatives of the Jewish Community in Austria. These people had issued threats and allegations of anti-Semitism against hotel staff, as well as announcing, without further detail, protest actions and boycott calls against the hotel. The hotel management felt threatened by this, to the extent of asking for police protection. Since the calls did not stop, and since the police could not take action without some concrete threatening scenario, the management informed us that renting out a room in these circumstances would not be possible - at least for the protection of staff.

Just yesterday, Ynet - the online portal of the big Israeli newspaper Yedioth Aharonoth - expressed anger as to two politicians in South Africa's ANC (African National Congress), one of them a veteran of the struggle against South African apartheid and Nelson Mandela's right-hand, Nomvula Paula Mokonyane and Jessie Duarte, who deemed Israel an apartheid system (1). South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu, a long-standing anti-apartheid activist, a recipient of an honorary PhD from Vienna University, regards Israel as an apartheid state. Ronnie Kasrils, a Jewish South African anti-apartheid fighter, proceeds even further...(2)

This is bad for Israel's image. Israel invests a great deal of money for sleek image and Hasbara campaigns, which are supposed to present Israel as a democratic, LGBTQ-heavenly, vegan, ecological, hip, modern state, rather than the image of a brutal occupying force, barbed wire, checkpoints, daily humiliations of the Palestinian population, indefinite administrative detention, house demolitions, military aggression, lynch law, extrajudicial executions...Apartheid.

The term 'apartheid' also enrages the various lobbyists (Christian, Jewish, agnostic, atheist, green, red and blue), as well as those trying to belittle Israel's system of injustice. This term, as defined by international law - the system of apartheid - has been internationally discredited at least since the fall of South African apartheid. Unlike the 1980s, no Western politician can now afford to point out supposedly "positive aspects", or some supposed "necessity" of apartheid. Apartheid, and states which practice apartheid, are to be isolated and sanctioned, until they recognize and implement the binding standards of international law and human rights. Therefore, the concept is fought against, and liberal Zionists such as Israeli sociologist Natan Sznaider paraphrase it as "liberal inequality", which he would readily have in Israel/Palestine (3).

It is not for nothing that Austrian Zionists (Christian, Jewish, agnostic...) are making all the hype around ANC Youth League representative Nkululeko Nkosi, who gives Israel a clean bill of health, and would like to restrict the term to his homeland. "For our parents and grandparents, the apartheid years were...", he writes, while the parents and grandparents, honoured fighters against this apartheid, accuse Israel of even more than just apartheid (4).

At the event, which cannot take place now at either the alternative culture center WUK or at Hotel Kaiserwasser, Salma Karimi-Ayyoub, Palestinian lawyer and consultant to Palestinian human rights NGO Al-Haq, will examine the following topic: "Apartheid and its Applicability to Israel/Palestine".

Where is the event now to take place? That is still open, and it is only certain that it WILL take place.

For information, See the BDS Austria Facebook page, website, and register to receive our newsletter (5),

(\* The name has been changed to protect the person involved

(1) <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4933233,00.html>

(2) <https://www.woz.ch/.../.../was-israel-von-suedafrika-lernen-kann> <https://www.theguardian.com/.../29/south-africa-boycott-israel>

(3) <http://www.taz.de/!5300832/>

(4) <http://africansforpeace.com/reclaiming-word-apartheid/>

(5) <https://www.facebook.com/bds.austria/?fref=ts> and/or <http://bds-info.at/>