



speech delivered at the rally 'Today Break the Silence about the Massacre in Gaza – Tomorrow Break the Siege of Gaza – The Day after Tomorrow Break the Backbone of Racism, Racist States and their Allies'  
September 6<sup>th</sup> 2014

51 days of constant air-raids, ground and sea bombardments lie behind the men and women in Gaza. More than 2.000 dead and countless injured is the horrible result of the Israeli aggression towards the Gaza strip, towards Palestine – and despite their 2.000 dead and countless injured, despite the enormous destruction of the infrastructure in Gaza, the Palestinians not merely survive but continue to articulate their legitimate demands based on elementary Human Rights towards Israel and the United Nations. The people in Gaza celebrated the end of the attacks and many a European journalist didn't understand why the people in Gaza celebrated the end of the aggression as a "victory". Sitting in their comfy editorial offices – or maybe even a 5-star-hotel near Gaza – many of these journalists failed to understand why the people in Gaza celebrated this catastrophe as a "victory" nonetheless.

This latest bombardment lasting for 51 days, this 51-days-hail of bombs using the most modern, murderous weapons, F16-bombers and vicious high-tech weapons, follows the long-known colonial logics of extinction and ethnical cleansing. Even if it proved impossible to drive all Palestinians away from their land in 1948 – as the Zionist historian Benny Morris bemoans – today the state of Israel still believes it can erase the Palestinian people's legitimate desire for a life in dignity and freedom from the historical consciousness of their resistance narrative.

In their methods the latest Israeli military operations are reminiscent of 1948 but still the state of Israel is incapable of driving the people of Gaza away or bomb away their desire for freedom. The cynical request of the Israeli army to leave the towns and villages they defined as 'combat areas' is the traditional strategy of a colonial army which only ever was successful when confronted with civilians. The levelling of whole districts of Gaza city after these 'warnings' can be compared to the massacres of Deir Yassin. Now and then it was the goal to spread terror and fear as to cause a collapse of the people and their resistance. Homes, schools, hospitals, mosques and churches were flattened and whole families wiped out. Those war crimes weren't accidental, they were no 'collateral damages', they simply followed the rules of the traditional logics of any and all colonial armies – such as the Israeli one.

We need to understand and condemn these strategies of this maybe last colonial army, strategies we already know from other colonial conflicts. The Israeli Army as one of the biggest and strongest armies in the world was facing a hugely inferior resistance movement - equipment-wise and in numbers - whose possibilities of movement were limited to a minimum. The FLN in Algier, the Vietcong in the Mekong-Delta, the 26<sup>th</sup> of July Movement in the Cuban Sierra Maestra and the resistance of Umar al-Mukhtar in the Barqa all had something very fundamental in common. First, these anti-colonial movements lived with and among the people – they WERE and ARE the people - and thus legitimated and supported by the people. Secondly, they all were successful in overthrowing the colonial system of injustice. And eventually these victories were not achieved by means of weaponry but through the morale, the dignity and the spirit of resistance of the respective colonised people. They

always were political victories, never military ones. Maybe this is the reason why the countries of the South show exceptionally much solidarity and sympathy with the plight of the Gazan people under attack.

And this morale, this dignity, this spirit of resistance has to be torn apart by bombs and extinguished, following colonial logics. Each individual political and social horizon, each claim to a self-determined life and freedom of movement is the target of the Israeli warplanes, drones and tanks. If we cannot catch the fish, we will poison the water – such was the slogan of the Latin American Juntas and their terror against the people in Chile, Argentina and many other Latin American countries.

Now the water in Gaza is poisoned quite literally, there is poverty all over the place, the many wounded cannot be treated. Thus one question remains for this colonial army: what victory can they present militarily if the people of Gaza still take the streets unitedly and celebrate their victory, despite the enormous losses they have suffered? Their victory is not having surrendered to the colonial aggression, remaining resistant against all odds, having survived, keeping up the fight! The demands of the Palestinians remain the same:

- .) withdrawal of all Israeli tanks from the Gaza borders
- .) complete equality and recognition of the basic rights of the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel
- .) release of all prisoners kidnapped by Israeli forces after the killing of three Israeli teenagers from an Israeli settlement in the West Bank
- .) termination of the embargo of the Gaza Strip and opening of the checkpoints for people and trade
- .) building of an international seaport and an international airport in Gaza under the watch of the UNO
- .) expansion of the fishing zone to 10 kilometres offshore
- .) transfer of border-controls at Raffah checkpoint to the UNO
- .) deployment of international troops on the Gaza borders
- .) facilitation of conditions allowing the entry of the al-Aqsa mosque
- .) ban of Israeli interference in the Palestinian Reconciliation Pact
- .) establishing of an industrial zone and improvements of the prospective economic development in Gaza

These demands are an essential part of the internal Palestinian political discourse and were articulated even more clearly in the democratic elections of 2006. 2006 meant the electoral defeat of one political faction of the Palestinian resistance in the West Bank and Gaza and thus the defeat and rejection of the Oslo-induced period and its disastrous effects on the everyday-life of the Palestinians.

Oslo created a political elite, whose concessions towards Israel did not represent the actual and legitimate needs of the common people and which ran into danger of becoming a willing tool of the colonial power. Whilst the majority of the people still had to endure miserable life under the occupation without any rights, Israel kept building more and more illegal settlements, de facto incorporating bigger and bigger parts of the West Bank, and erected an illegal apartheid wall on Palestinian soil.

One of the reasons for the attacks was the building of a unity government in Palestine, which should end the painful period of the internal Palestinian conflict. The Netanyahu administration believed they could bomb away this renewed unity but it will have to realise

that its policy of recent brutal aggression not merely aided the Palestinian factions in closing ranks but that due to the merciless military violence in the streets of Gaza also Al-Quds, Ramallah, Al-Khalil and Jenin, Haifa and Umm al-Fahem have grown together. This newly displayed unity in the days of the bombings is one of the biggest problems for the Israeli administration. And sympathetic people all around the world seized this Palestinian unity and let themselves be inspired by it. The protesters and activists in London, Paris, Berlin, Vienna, Madrid, Rome, Athens and many more cities of the world took the streets in rain and sunshine, abused by aggressive Zionists, defamed as 'anti-Semites' or 'self-hating Jews' respectively, week for week. And their numbers grew and grew.

The ability of translating human suffering and injustice into concrete practices of solidarity today is more important than ever. Gaza is destroyed, the people are traumatised. It is our task as a solidarity movement to start from this point and to support the physical as well as psychological healing and material rebuilding of Gaza. And here it is important to acknowledge that the coordination of this reconstruction lies in the hands of the Palestinians – and only them. If now certain NGOs as the 'fifth column' of the Oslo Accords again fall back into old patterns and try to intervene into the social reconstruction efforts and use the horrendous situation for their own purposes, they will confirm their highly problematic role as "21<sup>st</sup> century missionaries" and "burden bearer of the White Man". NGOs and aid organisations need to recognise the legitimate rights of the Palestinians. Conversely, today it's the task of the international solidarity movement to survey the integrity of NGOs and scrutinise dubious organisations. NGOs and aid organisations which secludedly want to deliver "Western values" and de-legitimise or de-politise the resistance - whilst their own governments send strategic weapons of mass destruction in the form of submarines - ought to critically question their own role and drop the 'N' before the 'G-O' of their title.

Based on the political demands of Palestine, the international solidarity movement needs to reinforce and specify their support more than ever. We need people need to break the 12-mile-fishing zone together with the fishermen of Gaza, we need ships anchoring on the coast of Gaza to bring goods - but especially to symbolically establish the sea port of Gaza. The hard educational work on the European streets to explain the colonial character of Israel ain't easy with regard to the numerous Zionists and their supporters. It is necessary and imperative though!

With this in mind:

- let's support every effort of European politicians to enforce a purposeful embargo against Israel
- let's call for the Austrian and European defense ministries to end all cooperations with the Israeli army
- let's thank everyone who was there in our joint protest
- let's support the unity of the Palestinians according to our utmost abilities wherever we can

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