

On the current situation in Israel/Palestine

Statement from Die Plattform

Die Plattform

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In this longer text, we look at the situation in Israel/Palestine since the Hamas attack two months ago. We also look in detail at the effects of the events on the situation in Germany and place the events in a broader context. We began this text some time ago, which is why we make less reference to current events. At the end, we formulate our anarchist perspective for an end to oppression and violence in the region and explain which practical steps we now consider necessary. There are various reasons why it has taken so long for us to be able to express ourselves in this way: We had wrongly avoided developing a common position on the underlying events as a platform. One of the reasons for this was that different positions and analyses also exist in our federation. Unfortunately, due to the structure of our organization and the goal of achieving consensus, discussing these and developing a common statement from them always takes some time. In the future, we want to continue the discussion that we have now started. In this sense, we also welcome solidarity, constructive criticism and feedback.

On the morning of October 7, over a thousand armed fighters, mostly from the Islamist Hamas, but also from some other militant Palestinian organizations, broke through the border fortifications of the Gaza Strip and entered surrounding Israeli towns and kibbutzim. Even though some Israeli military bases were hit in the course of this major attack, it was undoubtedly and quite deliberately aimed primarily at Israeli civilians. Over a thousand of them - old people, parents, young adults, children - were brutally murdered by the Hamas fighters. Not since the end of the Shoah have so many Jews been killed in one day. The massacres also included cases of cruel, sexualized violence; a testament to their patriarchal nature. Over a hundred Israeli civilians were also taken hostage to the Gaza Strip. Even now, Hamas fires indiscriminate rockets into Israeli territory almost every day. **There is nothing in the world that could justify such atrocities as those committed on October 7. This was not an act of resistance, but a deeply inhuman and anti-Semitic act. All hostages must be released immediately and unharmed, and the attacks must stop. Our condolences go out to the civilian victims and the families of all those killed. Our solidarity goes out to the Israeli civilian population, who are only just beginning to process the shock and helplessness caused by the attacks and are still exposed to Hamas fire.**

The Israeli state's response was not long in coming: Inspired by the Israeli government's dehumanizing rhetoric, the Israeli Air Force continues to fly dozens of attacks on the Gaza Strip every day. Officially, they target Hamas officials and bases. However, Palestinian civilians are willingly killed. What exactly is happening is difficult to say for sure through the fog of war. What is certain, however, is that Israel has already killed over 15,000 Palestinians. The suffering of those who have survived this hell so far is endless. In view of the ground offensive in the Gaza Strip, many people have fled to the southern part of the tiny territory. But even here they are not safe from bombing. It is not possible to say with certainty what exactly the Israeli state is aiming for by expelling the population, whether they are to be permanently ethnically expelled or whether they will eventually return to their largely bombed cities. The only thing that is clear is that the Israeli ground attack is increasing the misery of the civilian population immeasurably. **This ground offensive must be stopped. The Israeli bombardments must also end immediately. Hamas' actions cannot justify the mass killing and expulsion of Palestinian civilians. Our condolences go out to the civilian victims and the families of all those killed. Our solidarity goes out to the Palestinian civilian population, who are helplessly exposed to the expulsion and daily attacks by the Israeli army.**

Situation in Germany

The German state's reaction to Israel's actions is clear: unconditional solidarity with the Israeli state. Any means of warfare is now justified, and criticism of the Israeli government's actions is out of place, the German government declares. The opposition from the AfD, CDU and Left Party differs mainly in its choice of words, not in its content. German history is used to morally justify its own complicity in the war against Gaza. But in truth, the German state does not need the Shoah to stand loyally by the side of the Israeli state. After all, the Israeli state is a close political, economic and military ally in the region. **The German state is making itself an accomplice in the war against Gaza.**

The German government's foreign policy agenda is being secured internally with all its might. Social approval of the ruling class's line is deliberately created, and dissent is violently suppressed. The parties, their youth organizations and the Israeli state's foreign missions organize rallies "in solidarity with Israel". The victims of the Hamas attack are to be remembered here. It is understandable that people who are moved by the attacks, partly because they themselves or acquaintances have been affected, are taking part. The shock and powerlessness that these people experience is deeply upsetting. At the same time, these rallies are also being used to bring support for the war against Gaza to the public. They are being courted by the same German state power that initially completely banned protests in solidarity with the Palestinians or attacked them with brutal violence and has continued to subject them to repression in recent days. Even wearing the keffiyeh (the so-called "Palestinian scarf") is now being prosecuted in some places (e.g. schools). We are experiencing a massive, authoritarian attack on the rights we have fought for. Politicians from the right to the left are using the situation to incite racist hatred against Muslims and Arabs, especially young people. Anti-Semitism is portrayed as an "imported" problem that can be deported out of the country, and Germany, the land of the Shoah, is finally being whitewashed of its own anti-Semitism. Under the pretext of a "community of values", a supposedly left-liberal government is tightening a racist deportation regime, placing migrant communities under general suspicion, and directing massive repression against these already marginalized people. The AfD and other right-wing forces are trying to distract from their own anti-Semitism by declaring their solidarity with Israel. This is undoubtedly less due to any real concern for Jews than to their own motives, although the current situation seems to be a more welcome opportunity for a progressive authoritarianization of the German state. **Mourning for the victims of the Hamas attack is absolutely understandable and legitimate. However, we are firmly opposed to any support for the war against Gaza that is being taken to the streets here in Germany. This also includes simply ignoring it or justifying it. We are just as firmly opposed to the racist incitement and repression against protests in solidarity with the Palestinian population. The fact that these are taking place is legitimate and worthy of support, even if we are critical of many of the contents and actors.**

The reactionary agitation of the ruling class finds its willing ambassador in the bourgeois press. It has largely followed the government line and legitimizes the war against Gaza. The

history of the recent events is simply ignored in many media. Palestinian civilians killed are either justified, ignored or declared to be tragic victims. The mass media also create support for the war against Gaza in the German hinterland. They also incite racist hatred against protests in solidarity with the Palestinian population here in the Federal Republic of Germany and against Muslims and Arabs in general. **We stand against the propaganda of the bourgeois press.**

In the wake of the war against Gaza, anti-Semitic attacks in Germany are increasing rapidly. More and more cases are becoming known in which Jews are insulted on the street, their homes are "marked" and Jewish institutions are attacked. Anti-Semitic incidents also occur again and again at demonstrations in solidarity with people in Palestine. **We clearly condemn the escalating anti-Semitism. Protest against the actions of the Israeli state is more than legitimate. However, when a protest against Israel turns into agitation or even attacks against Jews, they are anti-Semitic and must be firmly rejected and combated.**

A minority of the German left, especially authoritarian-communist groups, takes a wrong position in justifying the attacks on Israeli civilians and refers to a false understanding of anti-colonial struggle. Another minority justifies the Israeli attacks on Palestinian civilians from the wrong standpoint of solidarity with the Israeli state. We reject both positions as reactionary. However, a majority of the left in this country has fallen into deep silence due to a feeling of their own powerlessness and inability to act and has not commented at all or only on the situation in the Federal Republic of Germany. This is also wrong. **Only a small minority of the German left takes an internationalist position at all against the Islamism and anti-Semitism of Hamas, against the Israeli state and its policies, for the liberation of the Palestinians from oppression and for equal coexistence of all population groups in the region. This position must be defended.**

If we look at the international situation, we see that Western states such as Germany are supporting their ally Israel and legitimizing the war. Elsewhere in Europe, protests in solidarity with the Palestinian population are also being suppressed. At the same time, anti-Semitism is flaring up here too. Internationally, too, many leftists are taking an uncritical or even glorifying stance towards Hamas, from a wrong standpoint in the anti-colonial struggle and against the background of the history of anti-Semitic tendencies in socialist movements. **This new escalation reveals the parallels between European societies as well as recurring problems of the global left.**

Our perspective on the present and future in Israel/Palestine

Has that said it all? No, it is not. The events we have witnessed since October 7 did not emerge from nowhere. The war against Gaza that we are now experiencing was preceded by many other wars between Israel and its Arab neighbors. A key consequence of these wars is the decades-long oppression of the Palestinians by the Israeli state. In large parts of the West Bank, they experience daily harassment, violence and murder by the Israeli military and militant settlers. This violence has continued in recent weeks. The seven days following the Hamas attack were the deadliest week for Palestinians in the West Bank since UN records began in 2005. This situation is legally supported by the Israeli military justice system. The military and the judiciary act to protect the Israeli settlements, which are occupying more and more land inhabited by Palestinians and driving them out of there. The political oppression of the Palestinians is accompanied by enormous economic precariousness. Within the official Israeli territory, the Palestinians are also structurally discriminated against - even if they have Israeli citizenship, which is difficult for them to obtain. In the Gaza Strip, the oppression of the Palestinians is more massive than anywhere else. Israel controls the electricity and water supplies, the access of goods and people, and the sea. At the same time, Egypt also keeps its border crossing closed. The policy of occupation is also a patriarchal policy, because it hits Palestinian women particularly hard. They are repeatedly exposed to specific forms of sexualized violence by the Israeli military. **The oppression of the Palestinians is not the result of the current extreme right-wing government. Israeli nationalism as an ideology as a whole aims at such an exclusionary state project.**

Hamas is countering this with its own Islamist, anti-Semitic and deeply patriarchal state project. It already exercises power in the Gaza Strip - although it is heavily dependent on the actions of Israeli politicians - and oppresses the population. Especially when the Palestinian population takes to the streets against Hamas's corrupt rule, as we have seen this year. But also when it carries out the death penalty or restricts women's freedom of movement. Hamas is financed by the Iranian regime, among others. With it, there can be no liberation from the oppression of the Israeli state, much less a truly liberated society in the region. **Hamas is deeply reactionary and, with its anti-Semitic propaganda and attacks against Israeli civilians, makes understanding between the different population groups impossible. In doing so, it also makes it extremely difficult to build a real liberation movement behind which many different people can unite and fight together.**

Even a secular Palestinian state cannot bring social liberation and would most likely end up privileging certain population groups and excluding others. However, a progressive perspective must include the protection and equality of all people in the region. We therefore counter all state projects, whether secular Palestinian, Islamist or Israeli, with our internationalist anarchist perspective for a free future for the region: It is obvious that there can be no peace and no liberated society in the region without an end to the systematic oppression of the Palestinians. Contrary

to what politicians and the media claim, the Israeli state cannot guarantee permanent, real protection of Jews from global anti-Semitism. This portrayal not only makes all class differences as well as exploitation and oppression in the bourgeois Israeli state - for example the circumcision of physical self-determination of FLINTA*s, racism against black Jews or police violence - invisible. It also forgets that what the Israeli state offers as security can only be maintained internally and externally through violence against Palestinians. This violence is terrible enough in itself, but it also creates fertile ground for the radicalization of desperate and hopeless Palestinian youth. Understanding how such terrible events can happen should not be confused with assigning blame. On the contrary: If we want this horror to end, we must strive to understand the situation that feeds Islamist terror and address the circumstances that give rise to such atrocities. The Israeli state project must give way to a common society in which Muslims, Christians, Jews and all other non-believers can live together peacefully, equally and freely. Instead of one or two nation states, our perspective is the no-state solution. This society would open up the possibility of return for those whose ancestors were expelled from Palestine and the surrounding states. It is clear that abolishing Israel as the only state would not solve the problem and would instead lead to more bloodshed. Anyone who calls solely for the end of Israel is therefore either gravely mistaken or harbors anti-Semitic ideas. Instead, overcoming exploitation and oppression must include the overthrow of the competing imperialist powers in the region (US, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Russia) as well as the overthrow of the Arab states around it. **This is the perspective of a free and solidarity-based society in the region for which we are fighting.**

In order to achieve this, we believe it is important to support progressive forces in the region that also pursue such a perspective. These include Palestinians who organize themselves independently of the dominant reactionary forces Hamas and Fatah. Who both take a clear stand against existing reactionary tendencies in Palestinian society and fight against oppression by the Israeli state. In addition to non-violent protests such as strikes, we also consider violent and armed resistance to be morally justified. However, the legitimate target of resistance can only ever be the Israeli state, its military and its police, and never Israeli civilians. If the latter become the target, they naturally have the right to defend themselves against it - even armed. Ultimately, however, it is clear that the Palestinians' armed struggle cannot be successful in isolation. They need the solidarity of wage earners in neighboring states, but above all the solidarity of Israeli wage earners. We believe it is important to support those political forces in Israel that are fighting for Israeli wage earners to secede from their own state, organize themselves independently and rebel against their own government, its military operations and in solidarity with the Palestinian struggle. It is important to keep an eye on and support such united struggles of Palestinian and Israeli wage earners that have developed and continue to develop around common interests, where the different population groups live together. Soldiers of the Israeli military must lay down their weapons and refuse to go to war against Palestinians in Gaza or anywhere else. We believe it is important to support the political forces in Israel that are already organizing solidarity with conscientious objectors. The global wage earning class must show international solidarity with the struggle of the progressive sections of the Israeli and Palestinian wage earning class. This solidarity can be expressed in demonstrations, political strikes or the blockade of Israeli arms deliveries. The influence of Hamas and other reactionary forces in Palestinian communities abroad must be pushed back through progressive social organization. In times like these, when a protest movement takes to the streets in solidarity with the Palestinian civilian population, we believe it is important to actively go in there, support and strengthen existing progressive forces and

perspectives and push back reactionary positions. **These are the means we believe are right for waging the fight.**

In Germany we could imagine the following forms of action:

- Fight for an internationalist anarchist position in the left, for example by spreading these viewpoints in texts or holding discussion events.
- Exchange with people in our neighborhood or in our company about the situation and spreading our position.
- Support the protection of synagogues and other Jewish institutions (in consultation with them).
- Support anti-racist struggles, for example against European isolation policies or against right-wing parties.
- Support protests in solidarity with the Palestinian population and spread an internationalist anarchist position (with banners, flags and flyers) and put it up for discussion. Together with other internationalist anti-fascist forces, identify possible anti-Semitic statements and forces and oppose them.
- Support protests against anti-Palestinian repression.
- Spread progressive positions from local communities and from affected comrades through all available channels.
- We seek out progressive forces on the ground who share our perspective, establish contact, exchange ideas and offer support.

Down with oppression, violence and war! Fight for a free future for all!

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