

Dear owners of the New Cinema in Basel ,

I have been informed that you have accepted cooperation with the Israeli Embassy to present a cultural program with Israeli films. I am very much surprised and disappointed about this attitude. Independently of the quality of films, this cooperation is a clear symbolic support for the state of Israel and its politics of oppression and war against the Palestinian people; and it very much corresponds to the attempt of the Israeli state to rebrand its negative image by putting forward its cultural achievements, ignoring that at the same time the Palestinian people as a community are systematically encumbered in their life, let alone their freedom of education, movement, expression and culture.

I am a Palestinian refugee from 1948 and I wish to give you an idea what it would mean to be a refugee. Do you know that my family, like many hundreds of thousands of families in Palestine, has lost all sources of livelihood. We lost our homes, our furniture, our beds, our gardens, our educational opportunities, our land, to make place for immigrants from all over the world. These foreign people are living in our stolen homes , sleeping in our beds, relaxing in our gardens, enjoying a normal course of education, building houses and synagoges, factories and farms on our land and feel proud that they have established a Super State in a Desert without a Folk. My brothers, sisters and I were all born and grown up in Jerusalem. We have been deprived of our legal right to live in or even to visit Jerusalem. My brother lives in Ramallah 18 kilometers from Jerusalem, yet he cannot enter the city without a special permit which takes all the energy and nerves to obtain , if he is lucky at all , even if only for a short visit !!!

You as free Swiss, how would you feel when you experience what my Folk has experienced ??! Before I express any solidarity with Israel I ask if I would be doing so with a clear conscious. The "Only Democratic State in the Middle East" discriminates its Arab Citizens as undeserving to own land, to own houses, to have hospitals, to have schools or to receive adequate education, to have clean streets, running water and electricity. These non-jewish Israeli citizens are permanently living under the threat of being expelled from Israel because of their ethnic origin.

Israel is a state of mixed origins and mainly following the line of the West. It refuses to recognize the Identity, Religions and Culture of the Orient, considering itself as a superior nation (Apartheid state) .

Boycotting Israel is not a measure to destroy Israel, it is rather to compel Israel to abide by International Law, Respect Human Rights and end the Occupation of all territories occupied in June 1967 , recognize the Refugees Right of Return and be prepared to live with the Arabs in Peace. The Boycott Campaign (BDS) is not an invention Made in Switzerland or in Basel, it is an International Campaign covering most of Europe and the USA and other American countries.

So I appeal to you to join the People of Honour and refuse to sell your Principles in support of Injustice. Please have enough civil courage , join the BDS and send back the money to the Israeli Embassy and say NO ! not with us.

Kind Regards,
Dr George A. Kouchakji

Ps. In the following mail I send you Information about BDS in the United States.