

Project Management ITB Berlin

Messe Berlin GmbH

Messedamm 22  
D-14055 Berlin

Berlin, 10 March 2011

Open Letter to those responsible for the ITB:  
To Whom it may concern:

In light of the upcoming International Tourism Convention that will take place from 9-13 March 2011 in Berlin, we would like to remind you of the social responsibility that you have made known. The connection between tourism and democratic movements in the two holiday countries of Tunisia and Egypt which were until recently ruled dictatorially, have made headlines again.

We would like to bring your attention that you are in danger of supporting apartheid policies of the Israeli government which are infringing upon the human and civil rights of the Palestinian population. We urgently appeal to you not to blindly side with the official Israeli public relations policies, which looks to distract the international public from the colonial, occupation and settlers policies through a polished image of Israel.

**We ask you to not allow any stand of the Israeli tourism ministry at the ITB this year and to cancel all Israeli events within the scope of the “Gay and Lesbian Tourism” sectors at the ITB 2011.**

More detail:

**First:** The Israeli Tourism ministry ([http://www.goisrael.com/Tourism\\_Eng/](http://www.goisrael.com/Tourism_Eng/)) is heavily involved in the above mentioned PR strategy. On the Internet site of the Israeli Ministry for Tourism there is an Israeli map, for example, in which the occupied Palestinian Territories are portrayed as being a part of Israel. That is a reflection of the Israeli politics of dispossessing Palestinians of their land and the Israeli position of not recognizing Palestine. According to the colonial views of Israel, the Palestinian city Hebron/El Khalil, which lies in the occupied territories and whose Palestinian population is being extremely terrorized by the extremist settlers there, are counted as part of the map without any explanation.

**Two:** On the same Internet site, Jerusalem is listed as a very prominent tourist attraction (2). But it remains unmentioned that the eastern half of the city was occupied in 1967 by Israeli troops and annexed by Israel in 1980. While this annexation is recognized by hardly any state in the world, the Israeli tourist ministry sees Jerusalem with the eyes of an occupying power without even naming the occupation.

Israel works ceaselessly, systematically and blatantly on the ‘Judification’ of Jerusalem (3). With this official, ideological Israeli concept, a politics of ethnic cleansing against the native Palestinian population is designated, which changes the demographic reality of the occupied city, is against the Fourth Geneva Convention and is a violation of civil rights.

**We ask that you do not allow any stand of the Israeli Tourist Ministry at the ITB this year!**

**Third:** An exhibit entitled “Tel Aviv Gay Vibe – Free, Fun, Fabulous” is supposed be shown as part of the Gay and lesbian Tourism sector at the ITB 2011 (4).

Israel wants to “pink wash“ its colonial policies and occupation of the Palestinian population in order to distract international attention to a fictitious PR image, which pleases liberal people in the West ( at first sight) but actually hides the facts. Already in June 2010, the Palestinian “Queers” called out to the LBTBQI communities of the whole world to support the global campaign for boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) against Israel until Israel “upholds unconditionally its accordance with international law and ends its occupation, colonization and apartheid policies” (5).

The group “Israeli Queers for Palestine” agreed to this appeal in November 2010. In the call of “Israeli Queers” from Tel Aviv the worldwide BDS movement is described as a “powerful, legitimate and desperately needed means” in order to “end the impunity which helps Israel to continue to colonize and oppress the Palestinian people.” (6)

**We share with these positions and the critique of the pink washing strategies of the Israeli government (7). Therefore, we kindly request that you cancel all Israeli events within the scope of the “Gay and Lesbian Tourism” sector at the ITB 2011.**

Sincerely,

Berlin Academic Boycott (<http://berlinacademicboycott.wordpress.com/> )

BDS Group Berlin (<http://www.bds-kampagne.de>)

BDS Switzerland (<http://www.bds-info.ch/>)

Decolonize Queer

Engender ([www.engender.org.za](http://www.engender.org.za))

Institute for Palestine Studies/Institut für Palästinakunde e.V. Bonn (<http://www.ipk-bonn.de/>)

Critical Jews and Israelis (Kritische Juden und Israelis)

Safra Project (<http://www.safraproject.org/>)

The Alternative Information Centre (<http://www.alternativenews.org/english/>)

Peter Ackermann, Elisabeth Bagana, Hilu Barth, Waltraud Bischoff, Rudolf Bosse, Christel Buchinger, Nabil Bushnaq, Nancy du Plessis, Rainer Duhm, Jan-Günter Frenzel, Ruth Fruchtmann, Inga Gelsdorf, Suraya Hoffmann, Dr. Thomas Hohnerlein, Martina Horak-Werz, Dieter Kaltenhäuser, Elisabeth Kaltenhäuser, Ursel Kammann, Annette Klepzig, Elfriede Krutsch, Berthold Lange, Helge Löw, Ingeborg Möller, Bernedette Muthien, Günther Orth, Einat Podjarny, Fatima Radjaie, Ellen Rohlf, Günter Schenk, Angelika Schneider, Christine Schnell-Neu, Jochim Varchmin, Adi Kuntsman, University of Manchester, Aruna Boodram, OPIRG YORK, Omisoore H. Dryden, OISE/UT, Ashvin R. Kini, USCD, Roshanak Kheshti, UCSD, Sara Casseti, UCSD, Sarah Malik, McGill, Jaye Cho, Ryan Sapinoso, Kelly Chung,

UCSD, Thea Tacile, UCSD, Craig Gilmore, CPMP, Brandy Jensen OISE/UT, Ruth Mendez, UCLA, Sisters of Gabriela Amalzen LA, Micaela Drag Sanchez, Northwestern, Sabrina Squires, Lancaster, Sunera Thobani, UBC-WMST, Huma Dar, UC Berkeley, Emmett Rainslack, Aren Aizura, Indiana University, Hannah Krebs, CSU Pomona, Bo Luengsoraswar, Ronak Kapadia, New York University, Kathryn Sanchez, Mt. SACRo (Rocio) Velaquez, Toronto, Sokari Ekine, Alexandria Wright, UC Berkeley, Lisa Dellinger, Garrett Seminary, Rachel Byrne, San Francisco State University, Kadji Amin, Columbia College Chicago, Dina Georgis, University of Toronto, Brooke Lober, University of Arizona, Irata Dhamoon, University of Fraser Valley, Ryan Haney, Georgia State University, Alisha Herman, Arizona State University, Mimi Kim, Daphne Jeypal, Mary-Jo Nadeau, University of Toronto, Abigail B. Bakan, Queens University, Yasmeen Abu-Laban, Alan Sears, Ryerson University, Nada Elia, Johanna Rothe, UC Santa Cruz, Jessi Quizar, INCITE Los Angeles, Christina Hanhardt, Washington D.C., USA, Qwo-Li Driskill, Natalie Kouri-Towe, QuAIAFreda Fair, UCLA, Los Angeles, USA, Ren Hwang, LGL Letsgolib.org, Los Angeles. & UCLA, Craig Willge, Soniya Munshi (City University New York)

**Contact:** [bdsmovement-Berlin@web.de](mailto:bdsmovement-Berlin@web.de)

(1)

[http://www.goisrael.com/Tourism\\_Eng/Tourist+Information/Discover+Israel/Maps+of+Israel.htm](http://www.goisrael.com/Tourism_Eng/Tourist+Information/Discover+Israel/Maps+of+Israel.htm)

Map of Israel (abgerufen am 01.03.2011 )

(2)

[http://www.goisrael.com/Tourism\\_Eng/Tourist+Information/Discover+Israel/Places+in+Israel.htm](http://www.goisrael.com/Tourism_Eng/Tourist+Information/Discover+Israel/Places+in+Israel.htm)

(abgerufen am 01.03.2011)

(3) s. z. B. UN Special Rapporteur, Prof. John Dugard, Human Rights Situation in Palestine and other Occupied Arab Territories (A/HRC/7/17, January 2008).

(4) [http://www1.messe-berlin.de/vip8\\_1/website/Internet/Internet/www.itb-berlin/pdf/Markt-Segmente/gay\\_lesbian\\_travel.pdf](http://www1.messe-berlin.de/vip8_1/website/Internet/Internet/www.itb-berlin/pdf/Markt-Segmente/gay_lesbian_travel.pdf)

(5) <http://pqbds.wordpress.com/#sdfootnote4sym> (abgerufen am 01.03.2011)

(6) <http://israeliqueersforpalestine.wordpress.com/2010/11/10/>

(7) <http://www.alternativenews.org/english/index.php/topics/economy-of-the-occupation/3333-israeli-pinkwashing-campaign-to-be-launched-at-berlin-tourism-show-in-march->