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Making no concessions to the Palestinian people's rights - "The French president has offered Netanyahu a political opportunity to whitewash his regime"

Wednesday 16 August 2017, by [Collective / Multiple signers](#) (Date first published: 26 July 2017).

Written upon the initiative of Media Palestine, this collective piece was produced in reaction to Emmanuel Macron's commemoration of the Vel d'Hiv round-up and first published in Mediapart. The authors denounce the position taken by the French president: "Macron is here following in the footsteps of all those who want to criminalise the struggles fighting for justice in Palestine and for Palestinians' rights."

Making no concessions to the Palestinian people's rights

The Vel d'Hiv round up resulted in the arrest, deportation and death of thousands of French Jewish citizens. The commemoration of this event was scandalous in several regards. A single foreign head of government was invited to the ceremony, in the person of Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu. This contributed to the despicable amalgam between Judaism and Zionism, and even gave the impression that in Emmanuel Macron's eyes Jews — assumed to be necessarily all Zionists — are less French than everyone else...

Despite his formulaic and empty statements in favour of peace in the Middle East, in the course of one short sentence the French president proved that he totally sides with the Israeli hawks and their allies here in France. He is the first French head of state to adopt word for word the Israeli propaganda minister's Hasbara line of argument in the fight against BDS: "we will make no concessions to anti-Zionism, because it is the reinvented form of anti-Semitism."

Thus we get a clear view of the people who play the card of "importing" the Israel-Palestine conflict into France, and in what interests. Indeed, they do so by instrumentalising the commemoration of a state crime, a mass racist crime of French stock. The Jews deported from the Vel d'Hiv in 1942 have nothing to do with the "conflict," and their memory belongs to no one. Their use, here, does nothing but feed a certain confusionism that questions Jewish French citizens' true belonging — a confusionism which is very much fed by Netanyahu's own presence — and thus feeds anti-Semitism.

The French president has also offered Netanyahu a political opportunity to whitewash his regime of destruction of the Palestinian people, and thus legitimize this regime. And this takes place on the back of the fate of the French Jewish victims of the round-up.

The colonizer-settlements are forgotten. The occupation is wiped away. The daily executions of Palestinians by the army, border police and settlers are denied, together with the Gaza tragedy, the thousands of political prisoners, the torture... This shows well enough how little Macron cares about the Palestinians' suffering and their demands.

The deliberately falsified use of the notion of anti-Zionism in order to delegitimize the Palestine solidarity movement in general and the BDS France campaign in particular, reducing them to silence, is unworthy of the image Macron wants to give of a “well-read” president.

Even just a dictionary is enough for us to tell the difference between the critique of a political ideology and the regime that applies it, and the anti-Jewish racism that is anti-Semitism. Macron is here following in the footsteps of all those who want to criminalise the struggles fighting for justice in Palestine and for Palestinians’ rights.

Sacrificing the Palestinians’ rights to imperialist projects for the Middle East was the policy of the great French and British colonial empires. From this point of view, we are on the move [En marche] backwards... That is at least what the near-concomitant invitations of Trump and Netanyahu to France upon two highly symbolic dates [i.e. following Trump’s visit to Paris on Bastille Day] would suggest. Are we seeing the emergence of a new alliance that again dons the old habits of the neocons, which we thought had fallen out of fashion? Here we are far from Macron’s pretense of novelty.

Doing something new — the only novelty today — would consist of finally putting national rights into practice, and in particular the rights of the Palestinian people.

Amidst the sombre political context that is taking shape with the advent of Macron, a landscape characterised by the removal of our social rights and our civil liberties, one further freedom is now to be stolen from us. Namely, the freedom to fight against colonialism and support the rights of the Palestinian people. But we will defend this freedom, like all the others they want to take away from us. We will defend it by strengthening our solidarity and thus our support for the call for boycott, divestment, and sanctions against Israel. We will do so until it complies with international law and the universal principles of human rights.

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* Verso. 1 July 2017:

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