



Felicia Langer: a lifelong struggle for justice and freedom in Palestine

On January 17, 2012, the President of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, awarded the German-Israeli human rights lawyer Felicia Langer with the “medal of excellence” at the Adlon-Hotel in Berlin, although she belonged to the first critics of the Oslo accords that Abbas negotiated to the disadvantage of the Palestinian people. Abbas paid a state visit to Germany for political talks with the top brass of the German political elite. Hopefully, he could convince them to support the bit of “Palestine” as the 194th state of the United Nations. Germany still belongs formally to the rejectionist front led by the United States and Israel that opposes

the diplomatic recognition of Palestine, although Germany’s financial support of the Palestinians is large.

President Abbas hopefully reminded Germany’s politicians that at the time of Germany’s division, they regularly invoked the right to self-determination of the German people. The right of a people to determine and ensure one’s own future is sacrosanct in international law and does not depend on third parties’ whims.

Langer was for a long time the first Israeli who had mustered the courage to not only defend Palestinians before Israeli military (kangaroo) courts, but also dissident Israelis before regular courts in Israel proper. Throughout her whole career she sided with the oppressed. For her relentless struggle on the behalf of the rights of a colonized and brutally oppressed and dispossessed people, she was awarded by Abbas. All along her juridical and political life she strove for a just peace between Palestinians and Israelis. For this noble and courageous effort, she was slandered by her own folks. But who knows? Perhaps there will be some Israelis to nominate her for the next Israel Prize.

In 1990, she closed down her law office in frustration, giving up the hope to obtain justice for her clients before Israeli courts. She made “Yerida” to Germany and obtained German citizenship in addition to her Israeli one. In July 2009, the then German President Horst Koehler awarded her the Federal Cross of Merit, First class. The top brass and the rank and file of the Zionist lobby in Germany went ballistic over this award.

In her thank-you speech, Ms. Langer said: “I have tried to help as much as I could the victims of the Israeli colonial occupation in the prisons and outside them, to reveal the truth of the Israeli oppression, everywhere to promote peace and justice between the Palestinian and the Israeli peoples. If Israel will not totally abandon its destructive, peace resistant policy, it will remain an island of Apartheid in the Middle East, with no future at all.” And she closed her remarks by saying: “Palestinian people have the legitimate right according to international law to self-determination, as every people under the sun, as well as to become full member of the United Nations. The Tsunami of the Palestinian quest for freedom will not stop; it is invincible.” She is confident that the wind of the Arab revolutions “will not ignore the Palestinians”.

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