

Israel-Palestine: How to Defend the Right to Challenge Israeli Policy

DIFFERING PERSPECTIVES AND ROUND TABLES

Organized by
The France Palestine Solidarity Association

With the backing of Ms. Esther Benbassa,
EELV (Green party) Senator from Paris

Monday, February 12th, 2018

9 AM – 5:30 PM

Palais du Luxembourg, Georges Clemenceau Hall



In light of the historical responsibilities of France, like those of other Western powers; in light of the reactions that the question sparks in the French population; and in light of the central role played by the situation in Palestine and Israel for the future of peace in the Middle East and in the world, the Israeli-Palestinian question holds a special place in the political debate of our country.

The freedom to debate this subject democratically is subjected to multiple pressures, intimidation attempts, and conflations, which undermine our possibilities for democratic expression on this subject.

The event we are proposing is intended primarily to identify these conflations, confusions, and pressures targeting freedom of speech when it comes to Israel and Palestine. We will undertake this analysis in the particular context of France, the scars of its history, and its current sociological divides. We will then examine the international scale of this issue, illuminated by the very concrete cases of Israel, the United States, and the United Kingdom.

With our guests and speakers, we will seek paths that allow for the legitimate debate on this issue to be exercised in a free and democratic manner, unlike community-based approaches and racism – in all its forms –, both of which undermine cohesion and coexistence in our country.

SCHEDULE

8:30 – Reception

9:00 – Introduction and presentation

Opening words by Ms. Esther Benbassa

Introduction and day's objectives with Bertrand Heilbronn, President of the AFPS

What is happening in Israel and Palestine, and why is international solidarity necessary? Shawan Jabarin and Lea Tsemel

10:00 – Conflation and confusion: identifying both in order to defeat them

Round table moderated by Gilles Manceron with Dominique Vidal, Pascal Boniface, Fabienne Messica, and Antoine Comte

- Anti-Zionism / Anti-Semitism: ignorance of history, or revision of reality?
- Is criticizing Israel anti-Semitic?
- "Defining" anti-Semitism: warning, danger!

- What does the law say about the limits of calling to civic action: is it illegal in France to call for boycott, divestment, and sanctions?

11:00 – Is this a French problem?

Round table moderated by Claude Bardet with Isabelle Avran, Nathalie Coste, and Rony Brauman

- Anti-Semitism and other forms of racism in France: historical roots and the reality of today
- The Palestinian question and racist stereotypes (anti-Jewish, anti-Arab): identifying connotations to better fight them
- A field experiment with young high school students
- The pitfalls of a community-based approach to the debate in France

12:15 – Open debate on the first two round tables

1:00 – Lunch break and meeting with the press

2:30 – A global challenge

Round table moderated by Marie-France Chatin (*Radio France Internationale*) with Lea Tsemel, Rebecca Vilkomerson, and Hugh Lanning

- The Israeli government's strategy to silence any challenging of its policies, in Israel and abroad: laws against NGOs, "anti-BDS" laws, blacklists, and influence strategy
- In the United States: the success of a fundamental movement for justice in Palestine; the development of a "witch hunt"
- The case of the United Kingdom: initiatives and successes of local governments; the dangers of the IHRA "definition" of anti-Semitism

3:45 – Open debate

4:00 – Inform, get involved, and act: how to resist against pressure

Round table moderated by Sylvain Cypel with Pascal Durand, Clémentine Autain, Renée Le Mignot, Ivar Ekeland, and Alain Bosc

6 Principles for free and democratic expression on the Israel-Palestine question: initiative launch

5:15 – Conclusion and perspectives

LIST OF SPEAKERS

Esther Benbassa, EELV (Green party) Senator from Paris and university professor

Bertrand Heilbronn, President of the France Palestine Solidarity Association

Shawan Jabarin, General Director of Palestinian human-rights organization Al-Haq, Secretary General of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)

Lea Tsemel, Israeli lawyer and human rights defender, recipient of the French Republic Human Rights Prize

Dominique Vidal, journalist and historian, author of numerous essays on the Middle-East

Pascal Boniface, Director of the International and Strategic Relations Institute (IRIS) and essayist

Fabienne Messica, member of the LDH Executive Board

Antoine Comte, lawyer and member of the Paris Bar

Isabelle Avran, historian and journalist, moderator of the "*Va comprendre !*" column for *Orient XXI*

Nathalie Coste, *professeur agrégé* of History at the Saint-Exupéry high school at Mantes-la-Jolie

Rony Brauman, physician, professor, and essayist

Rebecca Vilkomerson, Executive Director of Jewish Voice for Peace (USA)

Hugh Lanning, Chair of Palestine Solidarity Campaign (UK)

Pascal Durand, MEP

Clémentine Autain, French MP from Seine-Saint-Denis

Renée Le Mignot, co-President of MRAP (*Movement against Racism and for Friendship between Peoples*)

Ivar Ekeland, former president of Paris-Dauphine University

Alain Bosc, executive board member of the French Platform of NGOs for Palestine

Registration (via internet) is required at <http://inscriptions.france-palestine.org>

Subject to availability

Entrance at 15 rue de Vaugirard, 75006

(no parking available)

Metro station Odéon (lines 4, 10) or Luxembourg stop on RER B

Please bring a valid form of identification (required)

Reception opens at 8:15 A.M.

Please consider arriving early to allow for security checks
