

# 2010 NO EDUCATION, NO FREEDOM SEMINAR

Gummersbach, Germany

## Evaluation & Experience Report

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2010 IAF

Foremost, I would like to thank IAF/FNF-Jerusalem for giving me the opportunity to participate in another one of the IAF unique seminars again. The issue of Education is very dear to me and finally I had the chance to arm myself with the proper tools and acquire a deeper knowledge about the subject in order to better express my ideas and articulate my opinions regarding the topic.

Once again; I am impressed with the methodologies used to conduct the seminar, it allowed for very high interactions between the various participants from 24 different countries. This helped each participant get exposed to the various issues and challenges facing each region in education and beyond. It has also allowed us to come up with very creative approaches to moving forward on education. While sometimes disagreements and discussions felt prolonged, I really appreciated the input from everyone. The workshops were the most useful platform for me as I think they were the medium most of the learning was achieved. The topic of Education is infinite and branches off to too many other topics, it would not have been possible to just present it over a PowerPoint and or read about in an article, but rather it was discussed from various points of views and opinions. The debates were fierce, the opinions were wide, and the contributions were outstanding which helped stretch our minds and forced us to think outside the box. The plenary sessions were interesting, but I felt that the representations by the panels were sometimes redundant and the super long questions & answers (aka. Speeches) could have been controlled more effectively in order to give a chance for more contributions from others. So for me, I would much prefer less plenary sessions and more workshops.



Another key component to the Seminar was the 4-day excursion. With our first stop at the Buchenwald concentration camp, unlike the previous camp I visited with FNF in the summer, I was able to relate to the stories I heard about the Nazis much more as the camp is much more

preserved and contained more interesting items and displays. One resonating sentence that kept playing in my mind over and over again was that “the people in the nearby villages and towns had no idea about the camp and what was going on there” and how some people questioned the truth to such a statement as it would have been rather impossible not to know what went on in the camp.

That sentence mostly resonated with me as I see how the World and politicians constantly turn their back on the Palestinian outcries for help. Palestinians are still living in what is today a German history, the apartheid Wall, the over 600 checkpoints, the 11000+ prisoners, the lack of freedom in all shapes and

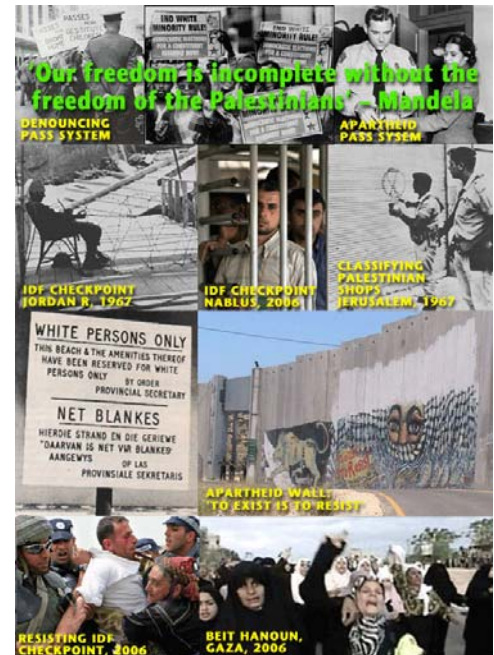


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forms, colored ID system, identification confiscations and residency revocations, anti-Arab/ Palestinian marriage laws, increasing settlements and home demolitions, daily killing of Palestinians, torture, unfair tax laws and court systems, racial and theological preference,

assault on East Jerusalem by the current radical government and the geographic re-engineering of the land of Palestine. In the recent war on Gaza, schools and mosques have been bombed and burned, many innocent children, women, and men have been killed, and yet the World still justifies these actions by Israel and extends a hand in participating in the devastating siege of Gaza and its people, reducing the Palestinians outcries as propaganda and lies. How can the World not know about what is happening in Palestine in the age of various mass-media? How could they not understand? When I was in Berlin in the summer, I was told by the tour guide that someone famous said once before the holocaust at one square in the city "Where they burn books, so too will they in the end burn human beings." Our people have been burning for 60 years figuratively from a brutal occupation, and more recently have been burning actually under the phosphorus bombs used in Gaza. 20 years is more than enough on fruitless negotiations for a Palestinians State, the time is now for the people of the World to stand up collectively and say no more, enough is enough is enough.



[The UN took a strong stand against apartheid; and over the years, an international consensus was built, which helped to bring an end to this iniquitous system. But we know too well that our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians. ~ Nelson Mandela]



The visit to the City of Weimar after the concentration camp was interesting and was pleased to have seen the masterpieces of a few artistes in Rome, Italy who have moved, lived and died in Weimar. The lesson from this city was how liberalizing the system at the time in the city of Weimar gave room for an influx of creativity and the birth of new ideas, mainly in the field of art.

While I realize I did not enjoy the visit and the city tour of Dresden, mainly because of the very cold weather, I have to admit that the experience of visiting the Benno-Gymnasium was extremely unique. It was a great working example to some of our recommendations in an earlier workshop. So was visiting the Kita Knirpsenland in the city of Pirna. However, being an engineer, I was really impressed with the Vocational Training Center Jenaer Bildungszentrum (JBZ) visit. I believe what we saw at JBZ is very unique and worthwhile the adoption by many of the emerging economies.



In the end, I hope to be back to Gummersbach again. I have really enjoyed the openness to new ideas and ways of thinking, I learned so much about Educational systems, and I hope my contributions have made a difference somehow. A Genuine thanks again to all the participants, the moderators, the translators, the Academy and its staff, FNF, FNF-Jerusalem, and mostly thanks to Germany and its people for making such a program possible! I think, as I hope that the World will be a better place from your contributions.