



Extrait du UJFP

<http://www.ujfp.org/spip.php?article3982>

# Stop censorship at university

- Call -



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**Once again the presidency of the University of Paris 8 Saint-Denis is trampling on the principle of free speech by banning, just 48 hours before the event, [a conference](#) organised by the Palestine Paris 8 collective in partnership with other organisations supporting the Palestinian people. This conference aims to denounce the State of Israel's apartheid policies against the Palestinians. The invited speakers include a young Palestinian activist, Bilal Afandi, the American journalist Max Blumenthal, and an advocate of the BDS (Boycott-Divestment-Sanctions) campaign.**

The reasons advanced for the censorship of this event are not clear. Communicating via the Student Centre, an intermediary used to supervise and control student initiatives, the university presidency at times referred to the lack of an available room, at times to a "controversial" speaker (in the person of Max Blumenthal, whose writings, however, appear in numerous publications in the United States), at times to "non standard" notices about the event, at times to the risk of a breach of the peace.... In addition to this bureaucratic censorship, the presidency is not hesitating to use direct methods of repression, such as mandating university personnel to tear down our posters publicising the event.

In the current French context, to ban such a conference is to be aligned with the instrumentalisation of the attacks of 7 and 9 January 2015 that aims to impose a double standard of free speech. Large "We are Charlie" posters are still plastered on the university's walls. Doesn't that slogan mean that the university is showing its support for a "controversial" magazine? Is one to understand that controversy is valid only when it serves the mainstream ideology?

Thus, for the Paris 8 presidency, freedom of speech stops once there is the slightest risk, at university level, that the apartheid policy of the Israeli State might be undermined. Worse still is the fact that this conference has the audacity to be held within the framework of the "Israeli Apartheid Week", an international week of reflection on Israel's apartheid policies, which is held in numerous other universities around the world, notably in Britain, the United States, Palestine, South Africa, and in several South American countries. Since 2012, when the then president of Paris 8 decided to close down the university in order to prevent a seminar from being held, pressure and attempts at censorship have become systematic whenever the issue of apartheid in Palestine is raised.

We will not accept to be tamed and subdued by this presidency, revelling in its ambitions to normalise its goals regarding "security", austerity, bureaucracy and ideology. And since it prefers to bow to external pressure and stand with the defenders of Israeli policies, we will take up our responsibilities. We therefore call for this conference to be maintained and for mass participation, starting at 6 p.m., at a rally in front of the D building to affirm our right to discuss "controversial" subjects, our right to express our solidarity with the Palestinian people, our right to self-organisation, and to affirm the independence of the student movement.

Signatories:

Association des universitaires pour le respect du Droit international en Palestine (AURDIP), Americans against the war (AAW France), Fédération Solidaires étudiant-e-s - Syndicats de lutte, Collectif Palestine Paris 8, Génération Palestine, Union Juive française pour la paix (UJFP), Nouveau Parti anticapitaliste Paris 8, CEDETIM, CPPI Saint-Denis, Association des Marocains de France (AMF), Association France Palestine Solidarité (AFPS Paris centre, 63, 81), Sortir du colonialisme, Collectif Caladois pour le peuple palestinien, Collectif Judéo-arabe et citoyen pour la Palestine, Campagne BDS,...