

Nick Deane
17 Riverside Crescent
Marrickville NSW 2204

14th November 2011

John Kaye MLC
NSW Legislative Council
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear John

I write on behalf of Marrickville Peace Group to commend your recent motion to the NSW Upper House condemning all forms of anti-semitism. We understand this was made necessary due to the tabling of the David Clarke motion, following your own, that aimed to wedge the Greens as being anti-semitic if they failed to condemn the Max Brenner protest in Newtown. It was an opportunistic and cynical exercise knowing that the Israeli boycott issue had caused party division since the vote on the issue at Marrickville Council around the time of the last NSW State election.

Marrickville Peace Group has a small membership from diverse backgrounds. We are very united and strong in our support for universal human rights and peace and non-violence. For this reason we support the right of those who protested peacefully. We further understand that Max Brenner is a legitimate target of the boycott campaign since its parent company, Strauss Group, supports the elite division in the Israeli Defence Force responsible for brutal assaults on Gaza, Jenin and in Lebanon. We find the David Clarke motion appalling and disingenuous, coming from a power broker of the far religious Right of the Liberal party, with former liaisons with fascist groups, such as the Ustasha.

Marrickville Peace Group actively supports Palestinian human rights, demonstrated in such ways as awareness raising through the public viewing of "The Iron Wall", letter writing to our parliamentary representatives and participation in public rallies. The majority of our members also support the Israeli boycott campaign as a non-violent tactic to put pressure on the Israeli Government to comply with International Law, where diplomacy has hitherto, failed. Palestinian civil society (and a growing number of Jews both in Israel and the diaspora) have asked the international community to support this campaign and we have responded to this call.

We are outraged by the continuing Israeli Defence Forces injuring and killing of Palestinians, collective punishment of the people of Gaza, the destroying of the homes, orchards and water wells in the Palestinian territories, denial of freedom of movement, restrictions on economic activity and education, discrimination against the

Palestinian citizens of Israel and the ongoing escalation of Jewish settlements on the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

We are disturbed by the conflict being commonly portrayed as some sort of equal struggle when in fact it is one between the Occupier and the Occupied. There is little left of Palestinian territories as the Israeli colonization and occupation continues while world leaders pay lip service in their weak condemnation of Israeli violations of international laws. The absurdity of the practicality of the two state solution proposal is at odds to what is happening on the ground with the ever diminishing Palestine.

We seek stronger representation from our political leaders on the Israeli violations of international law and are very pleased to now have Lee Rhiannon in the Senate to be a voice for Palestinian human rights. We have been repeatedly let down by the silence and even complicity of our leaders with the Israel lobby. This is evident in their acceptance funded visits to Israel (not detouring on a fact-finding mission to the West Bank and Gaza). Former PM Rudd saw fit to accept an invitation to the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the founding of Israel (after a support motion in parliament) while failing to mention the catastrophe or Nakba resulting in the dispossession of 750,000 Palestinians from their homes. Till this day they do not have the right of return. We have heard of the existence of Cross Parliamentary Friends of Palestine but have not heard their voices. They were shamefully absent when needed such as during the 2008-9 assault on Gaza resulting in 1,400 deaths and 5,000 injured. The majority of these were civilians. This attack was on a population under siege with no means of escape and constitutes a war crime.

We look to the Greens as the progressive third force in Australian politics. We hope that the current review of the boycott will come to an amicable compromise and that the wider membership will come to accept the value of it, just as the boycott proved to be an effective tactic in helping to bring an end to the Apartheid system in South Africa.

Yours sincerely

Nick Deane
for Marrickville Peace Group