

Palestine Congress in Hamburg

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From March 2nd to 4th, an international congress on Palestine was held in Hamburg, Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). Several hundred people participated from the FRG, GDR, Italy, Holland, Denmark, France, Austria and other European countries. There was a broad range of guest speakers qualified to represent the Palestinian cause and the intifada. These included representatives from the Union of Palestinian Women's Committees in the West Bank, the Popular Committee for Health Services (West Bank), the Sons of the Village (Nazareth), and the Committee for the Defense of Arab Land, as well as a Palestinian lawyer from Jerusalem, a former political prisoner and a PNC member. The democratic forces in Israel and the anti-Zionist position among Jews was well represented by an Israeli woman who works at the Alternative Information Center, Jerusalem, and members of the *Return* group in London.

Over 800 people participated in the opening session where speakers

discussed different aspects of the intifada, the situation of Palestinians in Israel and the impact of the intifada on Israeli society. The second day of the congress was devoted to working group discussions on the following topics: the intifada's popular committees, repression and political prisoners, women in the intifada, the Palestinians in Israel and the intifada's impact on Israel. The congress concluded with a plenary discussion of solidarity work with the intifada, including past experience, problems and proposals for concrete support initiatives.

Many participants at the congress linked the struggle of progressive forces in Western Europe with the Palestinian struggle, and felt that the congress opened new avenues for coordination in solidarity work as well as international discussions. The Friends of the Palestinian People group in Hamburg took initiative to convene this congress based on the desire to strengthen the coordination between groups working in solidarity with the intifada. The congress was being prepared as the changes in Eastern

Europe were happening, creating new conditions for anti-imperialist work in Western Europe and worldwide. The congress was held on the premise that international solidarity is more important than ever if the progressive forces are to face the consequences of these changes, particularly the revival of national chauvinism in the FRG, and capitalism's new opportunities for exploitation. In this situation, broad international discussions are needed to strengthen solidarity based on a common understanding of the concrete conditions under which various movements struggle.

Principles of solidarity

Uri Davis of *Return* addressed the congress at the final session, emphasizing unity in the struggle for freedom and for spreading the truth. He pointed out that the resistance to occupation and the anti-Zionist left in Israel are in a process of building a new Palestine, based on justice and equality. He also noted that the congress had been criticized by some forces in the FRG for inviting representatives of

