



The Pinkwashing Debate, International Radical Queer Politics and LGBTQ Life in Israel

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The paper deals with three issues that intertwine:

1. The current raging debate about "pinkwashing" that has to do with the ways in which the liberal gay milieu in Israel and especially in Tel Aviv is manipulated for Israeli official propaganda purposes,
2. The international radical queer politics (led by Judith Butler and Sarah Schulman) that call for boycotting Israel, including the boycott of Queer Israel, in the framework of the BDS movement, and
3. The non official policy of toleration (turning a blind eye) in Israel towards gay Palestinians who run away from death threats from their families in Palestine to live underground in Tel Aviv, and the rising scene of one gay dance club that meets once a month in south Tel Aviv. This club attracts many hundreds of gay Palestinians, Israeli Arabs and Jews.

My paper is based on a historical analogy: I compare the way in which Israeli radical queers are excluded and boycotted by the Queer radicals to the way in which Stalinist Soviet Russia marginalized in the 1930s those Russian Jews it itself sent to the Middle East to establish almost all the communist parties in this region. The similarities between these two cases are striking: The Soviet struggle against Western Imperialism in those years took primacy at the expense of the struggle against Fascism. So today - the struggle of the BDS movement against neo-colonialism is run with the deliberate neglect of the struggle for human rights.