

Against Israel's genocide and war in the Middle East

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This speech was given by Johannes Stern, editor of the German edition of the World Socialist Web Site, at the rally of the Socialist Equality Party (SGP) on October 21 at Hermannplatz in Berlin-Neukölln. The SGP holds weekly rallies to explain its socialist perspective and programme and to collect the required 4,000 signatures for its participation in the 2024 European elections. The rally focused on the Israeli attack on Gaza and the danger of a wider war in the Middle East.

I welcome you to the rally of the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party) against capitalism and war as part of our European election campaign. As we did last week, we have decided to focus our rally on the escalation of war in the Middle East.

We, the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei, strongly condemn the genocidal actions of Israel in Gaza, which are fully supported by the imperialist powers and are becoming more and more devastating.

Hundreds of people were killed in Tuesday's attack on Al-Ahli hospital alone, which shocked millions worldwide. On Thursday night, the Israeli military bombed a Greek Orthodox church in Gaza City where dozens of Palestinian families had sought refuge. According to reports, up to 150 people were killed.

The attacks on hospitals, churches and other civilian infrastructure are not accidental. It is the Israeli war strategy to terrorise civilians while killing as many Palestinians as possible. The Israeli government has completely sealed off Gaza, cutting off water and electricity. It has called on the population in the north to flee en masse to the south, only to bomb them anyway. There have already been over 4,000 deaths, including many women and children; and even before the threat of a ground offensive, large parts of the Gaza Strip have been destroyed.

According to the latest figures from the United Nations,

25 percent of residential buildings in Gaza, or 98,000 housing units, have already been destroyed. There have been 59 attacks on healthcare entities, including 17 hospitals and 23 ambulances, in which 491 people were killed. The Israeli military has bombed 170 schools and other educational institutions, while water infrastructure has been largely destroyed.

The ruling class in Germany is directly involved in this terror bombing campaign. Immediately before the attack on Al-Ahli hospital, Chancellor Scholz backed Netanyahu at a joint press conference. After his return, Scholz then made a government statement in the Bundestag (federal parliament) in which he once again fully backed Israel's genocidal actions.

For this, representatives of all factions—from the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) to the Left Party—applauded him again and again.

We condemn this warmongering in the strongest possible terms, and we warn: even greater crimes are already being prepared behind the backs of the population.

It is becoming clearer and clearer that the imperialist powers are not only interested in Israel's destruction of the Gaza Strip, but in controlling the whole Middle East and ultimately the world.

The first German warships and special forces of the Bundeswehr (Armed Forces) have already been deployed to the region. The US has also already sent two aircraft carriers, fighter planes and soldiers. Everything indicates that the preparations for war against Iran and its allies in the region are well advanced. Such a war would turn the whole region into a battlefield and threaten millions of lives, including in Israel itself.

At the same time, the NATO powers are escalating the war against Russia in Ukraine. Here, too, Germany is playing a leading role. In the Bundestag on Thursday, Scholz announced a winter package for Ukraine that

includes additional air defence systems, tanks, and ammunition.

All the official propaganda cannot hide what is returning.

The very fact that German imperialism, relying on extreme right-wing forces in Kiev, is again waging war against Russia after Hitler's war of annihilation against the Soviet Union in World War II, shows what criminal traditions the German ruling class is again following.

The same applies to the rhetoric and methods of the war offensive against the Palestinians: brutal collective punishment, systematic bombing and murder of civilians and degradation of an entire people to "human animals"—according to the statement of Israeli Defence Minister Gallant—all this corresponds to the policy of the Nazis.

The height of cynicism is that these fascist policies are being pursued in the name of the fight against antisemitism. In fact, the German ruling class—which murdered six million Jews under the Nazis and is today once again building a fascist party with the AfD—is not concerned with the fate of the Jews. German imperialism is pursuing geostrategic and economic interests in the Middle East and is prepared to risk a cataclysmic war to do so.

In Germany itself, the accusations of antisemitism serve to establish a dictatorship. Anyone who speaks out against Israel's genocide of the Palestinians is considered an "anti-Semite" and a "terrorist"—even Jewish opponents of the war are persecuted. Under these circumstances, even Hitler would support the official campaign against "antisemitism."

The fact that the fascist AfD, whose leaders call the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin a monument of shame and the Nazi era just so much "bird shit" in German history, enthusiastically celebrates the actions of Israel and the federal government speaks volumes. For their part, Scholz and the coalition parties—Social Democrats, Liberal Democrats and Greens—are putting the racist and inhuman refugee policy of the extreme right into practice.

It must be said clearly: what is returning here is the stench of fascism. But it does not emanate from the oppressed Palestinians, nor from the immigrants, but from the ruling class. In his government statement, Scholz announced a "major repatriation package" that the federal government intends to adopt before the end of this year. The name of the package says it all. The federal government is planning the mass deportation of refugees.

There is a direct connection between the war offensive

and the terror against refugees. The more aggressively the ruling class pushes its criminal pro-war policy and the associated social cutbacks, the closer it closes ranks and relies on dictatorship and fascism to suppress the growing social and political opposition.

In this context, it is important to understand that the ban on pro-Palestine demonstrations and the war on refugees are directed against all workers. The ruling class is alarmed by the worldwide mass protests and fears the explosion of the class struggle in Germany as well. When they have police everywhere here in the Neukölln district of Berlin, it looks threatening, but it is also an expression of their fear and weakness.

We, the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei, support the international strike and protest movement. It must be expanded and developed on the basis of a revolutionary socialist programme that unites Palestinian workers, Israeli workers, workers here in Germany, across Europe, the US and worldwide—in a common struggle against capitalism, oppression and war.

We are fighting for the following demands:

- An immediate halt to the Israeli bombardment of Gaza and the demobilization of all Israeli troops. The siege of Gaza must end, and food, water, electricity, medical supplies and all other essentials, must be provided immediately.

- The International Criminal Court must initiate proceedings against Netanyahu, Scholz, Biden and all leading representatives of the US and the other NATO powers who support the Israeli genocide against Gaza. It is high time to bring the war criminals to justice before they commit even greater crimes and plunge the world into the abyss.

The genocide can be stopped and the threat of a Third World War averted, only through the intervention of the working masses and youth around the world. From this standpoint, I call upon you to support our election campaign and to build the Fourth International worldwide as a new mass socialist party. This is the only way to stop a relapse into barbarism.



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