

Germany's ruling class fuels Israel's genocide

Johannes Stern
26 October 2023

Seventy-eight years after the fall of the Third Reich, the German ruling class is again intoxicated by genocidal violence. There is hardly any other country in which the government, political parties and media, support the criminal war of the far-right Netanyahu regime against the Palestinian civilian population in such a united and aggressive manner.

On Monday, Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock (Greens) brusquely rejected the call for a humanitarian ceasefire for Gaza, which had been raised as a possibility by some European Union (EU) states and the World Health Organization (WHO). “There will only be peace and security for Israel and the Palestinians if terrorism is combated,” Baerbock said. This is nothing less than a call for the continuation of the genocide of the Palestinians.

Official propaganda cannot hide the fact that Israel, under the guise of fighting “terrorism,” is persecuting an entire people and trying to kill as many Palestinians as possible. The procedure is reminiscent of the methods by which the Nazis suppressed uprisings against their tyranny and razed entire cities to the ground or—as in the case of Leningrad—starved them to death.

The Israeli military has completely blocked the Gaza Strip. For over two weeks, it has denied water and electricity, and ordered more than a million people in the north to flee en masse to the south, only to attack them anyway. There have already been nearly 7,000 dead and 15,000 wounded. The majority of them are women and children. According to the Hamas government's Ministry of Health, among the more than 6,500 people officially killed are more than 2,000 children under the age of 18 and more than 1,100 women. In a 24-hour period to Tuesday, 704 Palestinians were killed.

It is considered likely that the true death toll is much higher. According to its own statements, the Israeli Air Force has so far attacked more than 10,000 targets in the Gaza Strip. Their huge bombs and missile warheads, all

allegedly “precision weapons,” are deliberately fired at crowds, whether indoors or outdoors. Hundreds of people were killed in the attack on the Al-Ahli hospital in Gaza City on October 17 alone.

Even before the imminent ground offensive, large parts of the Gaza Strip are in ruins. According to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), about 40 percent of the entire enclave's housing stock was destroyed or damaged by Israeli bombing. More than half of the nearly 2.3 million inhabitants of the Gaza Strip had to flee their homes, with over half a million living in emergency shelters.

This violence and destruction is supported by Germany's entire ruling class. On Sunday, all established parties from the governing Social Democrats, Green, and Free Democrats to the opposition Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union (CDU/CSU) and Left Party, the employers' and industrial associations, the churches and the DGB trade union federation closed ranks behind Israel's genocide at the “Rally in Solidarity with Israel” in front of the Brandenburg Gate.

The tone was set by the Israeli ambassador to Germany, Ron Prosor. “We must now eliminate the entire infrastructure of terror in the Gaza Strip,” he bellowed. “And when we do, I really don't want to hear ‘yes, but’ anymore. This time we have to go to the end.”

This call for total war was enthusiastically supported by all participants. No one uttered a word of criticism of Israel's war crimes. On the contrary, the speakers excelled in expressions of solidarity. They agitated against foreigners and Muslims in the style of the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD), demanded mass deportations and an aggressive trumpeting of German imperialism on Israel's side, as well as the suppression of any opposition to it. The entire rally had a decidedly fascist character.

“We have a big problem in Germany with political

Islam, which also includes Jew-hatred,” said CDU General Secretary Carsten Linnemann. “People looked the other way here for too long. We must intensify deportations and stop the immigration of antisemites.”

The Secretary General of the FDP, Bijan Djir-Sarai, commented similarly, “We have to make it clear that people who reject our values have no place here. ... We don’t want these people here.”

The co-chairman of the Left Party, Martin Schirdewan, agreed with this chorus and criticized the German government’s actions against Iran from the right. Iran and the emirate of Qatar are the “main sponsors of Hamas terror and preferred partners also of German business.” He hoped “that the Federal Government will finally make it clear to them that antisemitic terror must not be financed indirectly.”

The keynote speech was given by German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier. He went so far as to blame not Israel, but the Palestinians themselves for the genocide in the Gaza Strip and the danger of a wider Middle East war. “It is the terrorists who have led Gaza into a destructive military war,” he declared. “A war that we all fear could become a regional conflagration. Everything must be tried to prevent this.”

This turns reality upside down. In fact, the imperialist powers not only support the destruction of Gaza, but are preparing for a broader war against Iran and its allies that would turn the entire region into an inferno and threaten millions of lives, including in Israel itself. So much for Steinmeier’s claim that he was concerned with “protecting Jewish life.”

When Steinmeier and other leading politicians propagate genocide and war in the name of the “fight against antisemitism” and “never again” (a popular slogan internationally following the horrendous extermination of European Jewry by the Nazis) this is the height of cynicism. The stench of fascism is back. But it does not emanate from the oppressed Palestinians and desperate refugees, but from the ruling class, which waged a war of extermination under the Nazis and murdered 6 million Jews and is now committing massive crimes again.

This is particularly evident in the war offensive against Russia in Ukraine. In the war against Russia, Berlin and the leading NATO powers are arming a regime in Kiev that celebrates Nazi collaborators like Stepan Bandera and relies on overtly fascist army units like the Azov Battalion. In the pro-Western coup of 2014, fascist shock troops from Right Sector and the neo-Nazi Svoboda Party

played the key role. Steinmeier himself, as foreign minister at the time, welcomed the chairman of the Svoboda party and avowed antisemite Oleh Tyahnybok at the German embassy in Kiev.

Since then, the ruling class has been working systematically to rehabilitate the Nazis. It is building a fascist party in Germany with the AfD, whose leaders refer to the Holocaust memorial in Berlin as a “monument of shame” (Björn Höcke) and Hitler and the Nazis as “bird shit in over 1,000 years of successful German history” (Alexander Gauland).

At the end of September, the German ambassador to Canada, Sabine Sparwasser, participated in the standing ovation for the Waffen-SS veteran and Nazi war criminal Yaroslav Hunka in the Canadian Parliament. And in Berlin, the far-right Humboldt University Professor Jörg Baberowski (“Hitler was not vicious”) is defended by the same political forces that marched outside the Brandenburg Gate on Sunday.

It is significant that the parties of war essentially remained among themselves at the event. Despite the broad publicity for the rally, just under 10,000 people gathered, far fewer than the tens of thousands who took to the streets against the German-Israeli war policy, despite massive repression, that same weekend. Millions protested around the world.

Workers and youth in Germany and worldwide reject Israel’s genocide of the Palestinians precisely because it is reminiscent of the Nazi crimes in World War II. “Never again” means dealing with today’s capitalist warmongers and preventing them from plunging the world into the abyss again. This requires a united struggle of the working class on the basis of an international socialist program.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact