

Berlin police terrorise left-wing women's group for expressing solidarity with Palestine

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The repression against supporters of the Palestinian people and opponents of Israel's genocide in Gaza has reached a new level in Germany. Citing an Instagram post expressing solidarity with Palestine and criticising Hamas, and leaflets with the same content, the Berlin police took action against left-wing and immigrant organisations last week, targeting the women's organisation Zora, which is close to the Maoist group Young Struggle.

The Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party, SGP) condemns this attack on democratic rights in the strongest possible terms and calls for protest against it.

On December 20, around 170 police officers carried out raids on a total of eight properties in Berlin. As part of two investigations into the "use of symbols of unconstitutional and terrorist organisations," officers from the State Office of Criminal Investigation's State Security Department, with the support of two task forces, searched six private homes, Café Karanfil in Berlin-Neukölln and the Interbüro in Berlin-Wedding.

A press release from the Berlin police stated: "The six suspects, five of whom (four women and one man aged between 18 and 23) are suspected of belonging to the 'Zora' group, are suspected of having carried out propaganda for the 'Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine' (PFLP), which is classified as a terrorist organisation."

In the post dated October 12, the young women's organisation expressed solidarity with "all revolutionary Palestinian liberation fighters and the Palestinian people." The call to "strengthen the progressive forces, such as the PFLP, which are also part of the Palestinian resistance" was said to be decisive for the accusation of spreading propaganda.

The armed police officers, who were masked in

balaclavas, confiscated "internet-enabled communication devices and data carriers" as well as leaflets from the young women. This was despite the fact that there was no dispute at all that Zora had written the leaflets and the Instagram post and what their content was. The raids therefore served no purpose whatsoever in terms of securing evidence, but solely to intimidate and silence critical voices.

The home of a 67-year-old man who is not part of the Zora group was also searched. He was accused of posting the PFLP symbol with the caption "The martyr leader Hassan Mahmoud Saleh Al-Mahmoud" on Facebook. According to the police, they seized "pyrotechnics in the double-digit kilogramme range" from him and confiscated a loaded signal gun and ammunition.

At Café Karanfil, which is popular with Kurdish immigrants in particular and where events organised by the Zora group had taken place in the past, the police first demanded entry, according to the owner, but then simply broke open the lock and ransacked the establishment. Nothing was found, and although the operator had given the officers the codes for laptops to search for evidence, these and the cash register system were confiscated by the officers anyway, according to a report by *Neues Deutschland*. Here, too, it is clear that the sole purpose of the action was to intimidate dissenters.

According to the police, their operation was authorised by an investigating judge. However, it is not legally comprehensible how such a decision came about. The deployment was officially justified by the alleged "use of symbols of unconstitutional and terrorist organisations," Section 86a of the German Criminal Code.

It is true that the PFLP is on an official EU "terror

list.” However, the mere statement that it is “progressive” and should be “strengthened” does not constitute the dissemination of its “distinctive signs.” The term “distinctive sign” is usually understood to mean visible or audible symbols or slogans that the organisations use or have used to further their political goals. Not even the police themselves claim in their official statement that Zora used PFLP symbols or slogans.

Despite the lack of a legal basis and the obvious excess of the operation, its justification was uncritically adopted by almost all the German media. “Raid due to support for Palestinian terrorist group” was the title of a Deutsche Presse-Agentur report carried by numerous German media outlets, while the right-wing Springer press even falsely referred to a “ Hamas connection” (*Welt*) or slandered Zora as “terrorist” (*Bild*).

The media and police action against the women’s group is part of a comprehensive attack on basic democratic rights. Any criticism of the Israeli genocide in Gaza and any expressions of solidarity with the oppressed Palestinians are brutally suppressed. Demonstrations are banned or placed under comprehensive speech bans. Those who make rooms available for critical events have their contracts and funding cancelled, such as the Berlin cultural centre Oyoun. Critical pupils are harassed at schools and events censored at universities.

With the current raids, these attacks have reached a new peak. Those in power are well aware that their policies of genocide, war and social devastation are deeply resented by the vast majority of working people. This is the reason why they are becoming increasingly ruthless and resorting to dictatorial methods.

But it also shows that they can be stopped if this large majority is mobilised and united internationally with a socialist programme directed not only against war but against its root cause, capitalism. Basic democratic rights can only be defended by such a movement of the international working class.



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