

Demonstrations in Stuttgart, Frankfurt, Mannheim and Nuremberg demand an immediate halt to the genocide in Gaza

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Demonstrations against the genocide in Gaza in Germany are continuing. They are not only directed against Israel's brutal massacre of the Palestinians, but also against the German government, its arms deliveries to Israel and its mendacious propaganda about "antisemitism." Support for Israel as a "matter of state policy" is crumbling among the population.

Three powerful demonstrations in Stuttgart, Frankfurt and Mannheim in recent weeks were followed last Monday by a demonstration in Nuremberg against rearmament and arms deliveries. On February 26, several hundred participants protested against the three-day "Enforce Tac" trade fair. This arms fair, which was held behind closed doors, was opened on Monday by its patron, the Bavarian Minister of the Interior Joachim Herrmann (Christian Social Union, CSU).

It not only presented new products from Heckler & Koch, Rheinmetall and other defence companies to an "expert audience" from the military, police, intelligence services and authorities, but also "field-tested military equipment" from Elbit, Israel's largest weapons manufacturer. As a cynical highlight this year, the "Enforce Tac-Village" was set up to test the live use of military equipment. In promotional material, this exhibition village, which had been cleared for firing, was initially presented in the look of a Palestinian street with a fruit stand, human dolls and Arabic graffiti, before protests against it became too great.

Several Palestinian committees, the Jewish Voice, a Kurdish organisation, and anti-militarist German initiatives called for a protest against the inhuman cynicism of this Nuremberg arms fair. As the demonstration marched loudly through the predominantly working class neighbourhoods, residents applauded from windows and balconies. Slogans calling for a boycott of Elbit and strikes against the arms industry were shouted outside the exhibition centre.

The demonstration in Nuremberg was accompanied at every turn by a massive police contingent of USK special

forces. The police had dictated far-reaching conditions to the protesters. Practically all slogans calling for a free, united Palestine or expressing sympathy for the Palestinian people's struggle for liberation were banned across the board.

Strict conditions also applied to the Palestine demonstrations in other cities, and large police contingents meticulously monitored compliance. Time and again, the right to freedom of expression was trampled underfoot. In Frankfurt on February 3, an enormous police water cannon was driven through the city centre to intimidate the 2,000 or so peaceful demonstrators. The central demand in Frankfurt was: "Stop the criminalisation of Palestine solidarity."

Slogans repeatedly pointed out that there was a connection between the fight against the genocide in Gaza and the fight against the official pro-war policy and the arms lobby in Germany, as well as against right-wing terror and its backers in politics and the state. Slogans were chanted such as: "From Hanau to Gaza, Yallah Intifada," "German weapons, German money are killing all over the world" or (directed at the Foreign Minister): "Baerbock, Baerbock you will see, Palestine will be free."

On the signs and banners were sentences like these: "It's not complicated: It's a genocide!" "I condemn your silence," and "Not my government." In conversation with the WSWs, many participants expressed their determination to stop war and genocide and anger and disappointment with the coalition government of the Social Democrats (SPD), Greens and Liberal Democrats (FDP).

Mohamed, Ahmad and Hossam were three of over 3,000 participants who marched from the Alte Feuerwache to Mannheim Castle on February 24 to support the Palestinians in Gaza. "There must be no more war and weapons transports," said Hossam. "That's why I came here: We must find a way to stop the genocide." Talking about the fact that all the establishment parties had voted in favour of the arms shipments in the Bundestag (federal parliament),

Ahmad said: “We need a party that represents us workers and stands up against war, including the war in Ukraine and, of course, Gaza.”

In Stuttgart, WSWS reporters spoke to Juliane, who has been involved in protests since October 2023 and has regularly taken to the streets since then— “I don’t know how many times.” She said, “I find it extremely disgusting that the German government supports Israel with arms supplies and politically, and that a ceasefire is rejected as unacceptable. ... A genocide is being denied here and no party, not even the Left Party, is standing up against it. It’s so embarrassing, but nobody is talking about it publicly. I find the Greens particularly bad. Some time ago, Habeck gave a speech that everyone thought was cool. I ask myself: Why? As if the issue of arms supplies was somehow a good thing.”

She continued, “Instead, anyone who protests against it is slandered as antisemitic. I’m really extremely disappointed in the whole government. I can’t even think about it without getting angry. It’s so disgusting the way Germany has given itself this integrity: ‘Never again!’ and that there must never be another genocide like the Nazi era. And it’s happening now.”

Juliane said she supported the European election campaign of the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party, SGP), adding, “Yes, it’s true: we really need a new party that doesn’t go along with this. I fully agree with that. These demonstrations are the only thing at the moment: workers and ordinary citizens are taking to the streets and demonstrating against genocide. That’s happening all over the world right now. I absolutely support the need for workers to unite, outside the parties in the state parliament or the Bundestag, simply as human beings.”

Max, a young man from Stuttgart, was at a demonstration for the first time and said, “I came along because I have the feeling and have realised for a while that things can’t go on like this. What is happening on a political level is not right and I think that I can participate in this way. This is about anti-Zionism, not antisemitism. These people here are not ‘Jew haters.’ We are all simply against genocide and against the German government supporting Israel with weapons. Germany even sided with Israel in the ICJ court case. That made me scratch my head. I can’t believe it. But for some time now, we’ve seen time and again that people here are arming for war. And I don’t think any party sitting in the Bundestag is better on this issue.”

Participants have come from far and wide to demonstrate. Muntehe, who came to Mannheim from the Saarland on February 24, emphasised that one thing was particularly important to her: “Every human being is worth the same. That’s why the war must be stopped, in Gaza and all over

the world.”

Ana, a young woman from Karlsruhe, explained, “We have to support the Palestinian people in what is happening. It can’t be right that our government here takes to the streets against the right and supports a right-wing extremist government in Israel. This is particularly important in view of Germany’s past. It is a misconception that we can make up for the historical injustice against the Jews by allowing the Palestinian people to be destroyed. Anyone who is informed about the history of the Palestinians and the Israelis knows, of course, that this did not just begin on October 7. It goes way back; it should have been stopped 75 years ago.”

More and more workers and young people are fighting back against the omnipresent war propaganda and demonstrating their courage in everyday life. In a working class neighbourhood in Stuttgart, young people spontaneously supported a team from the SGP, which was collecting signatures to enable the party to register for the European elections. The team had put up a poster, “Stop the genocide in Gaza.”

When a 50-year-old woman shouted aggressively and loudly that “ Hamas terrorists” were being supported, two students, a girl and a boy, intervened and explained that what the Israeli military was doing in Gaza was a brutal genocide. And that the German government was supporting it. The young people said that it was “courageous” to openly stand up here with a poster in favour of Gaza, because “The media are warmongers who cover up the truth.”

As the woman walked away, the girl shouted loudly that she herself was also prepared to defend the Palestinian people against people who welcome genocide. Another older woman came along, after observing the exchange and said that she too thought it was right to speak out openly against the war.



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