

Berlin police violently disperse Gaza protest camp in front of the parliament

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Scenes that are otherwise only known from brutal dictatorships took place in front of the German Bundestag (parliament) on Saturday. In order to break up a peaceful protest camp against the genocide in Gaza, police officers used massive force, kettled a spontaneous counter-demonstration and arrested dozens of participants.

The protest camp, consisting of around two dozen tents, field kitchens and information stands, had been set up at the beginning of April. The demonstrators' demands include an immediate end to the occupation of Gaza, the halting of the supply of weapons to Israel and an end to the criminalisation of expressions of solidarity for Palestine. A week later, the police terrorised and banned an international Palestine congress in Berlin.

The violent dissolution of the protest camp now marks another high point in the wave of escalating attacks on democratic rights in Germany. Although it had actually been officially authorised, the police now claimed that the conditions in the permit for the camp had been breached but refused to provide evidence of this to several press reporters.

Under this flimsy pretext, police then acted with extreme brutality. Groups of 10 officers grabbed individual participants from the crowd, forcibly separated them from their companions, choked their air supply, threw them to the ground or used punches, kicks and painful holds. As soon as a demonstrator was isolated and overpowered, they were taken away one by one in a throng of police and placed into custody.

When a growing spontaneous protest formed against this violence, the police immediately declared it a "substitute assembly" and deployed dozens more police in riot gear to forcibly prevent the demonstrators from peacefully protesting against the violent measures. The

police then encircled these demonstrators for hours and picked out individuals to take them away.

While the Berlin Senate (state executive) is breaking up events and peaceful gatherings against Israel's genocide in the Gaza Strip, it is also trying to force artistic establishments and universities into line with Germany's pro-war policy. Hundreds of students recently demonstrated against the introduction of political control measures in Berlin's universities. On Wednesday, the student parliament at Humboldt University took a stand against this.

The events coincide with the violent measures currently being used by the state apparatus in America to suppress mass protests at universities across the country against the NATO-backed massacre in Gaza.

In Berlin, candidates from the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party, SGP) in the European elections condemned and documented the police terror. They called for the defence of the protesters and for the entire international working class to mobilise against the massacre in Gaza. This international and socialist perspective will be at the centre of the online May Day rally organised by the International Committee of the Fourth International on 4 May.



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