

Co-editor of conservative German daily denounces opponents of war as “antisemites”

Peter Schwarz
8 October 2024

The more the genocidal and imperialist character of the war in the Middle East becomes apparent, and the more men, women and children are killed and maimed by Israeli bombs, the more hysterical the voices become that denounce any criticism of this as “antisemitism.”

Jürgen Kaube, co-editor of the conservative *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ), is particularly prominent in this regard. On the anniversary of the beginning of the war, under the headline “Hatred masquerades as criticism,” he railed against the “howling at the pro-Palestinian demonstrations,” the “global left,” “anti-Zionism” and “criticism of Israel.”

If Kaube had his way, no criticism would be allowed of the 12,000 bombs that Israel has dropped on Gaza—an area less than half the size of Berlin—and is now also dropping on densely populated cities in Lebanon. Nor would the systematic destruction of hospitals, universities, schools, electricity and water supplies and over 60 percent of the buildings in the Gaza Strip be condemned. And there would certainly be no criticism of the official death toll of 42,000, the 97,000 people who have been horrifically injured, or the expulsion of 90 percent of the population from their homes.

If Kaube had his way, outrage should instead be directed at those who interpret the Hamas attack “as an act of legitimate political resistance,” who compare Netanyahu to Hitler, draw a parallel between the expulsion of Palestinians and the Shoah, or advocate a joint state for Jews and Palestinians.

Also not escaping Kaube’s wrath were the “corruption of UNRWA, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees, the depravity of its Secretary-General Guterres and the even greater depravity of UN Special Rapporteur Albanese,”

because Guterres and Albanese had dared to express cautious criticism of Israeli war crimes.

Kaube is no stranger to long-time readers of the WSWS. In 2014, he sided in the FAZ with right-wing extremist historian Jörg Baberowski, who had supported Nazi apologist Ernst Nolte in *Der Spiegel* and attested that Adolf Hitler was “not cruel.” Under the headline “Trotskyite Bullying,” Kaube denounced the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party, SGP) and its youth organisation IYSSE for publicly criticising Baberowski’s trivialisation of the Nazi dictator.

Two years ago, Kaube agitated against rock musician Roger Waters, accusing him of “antisemitism” for his principled defence of the Palestinians and calling for his concerts to be cancelled.

Kaube’s support for professors who play down Hitler, and his denunciation of critics of Israel as antisemites, is perfectly logical. It confirms that the slaughter of Palestinians serves the same goals as those pursued by Hitler. The destruction of Gaza does not serve to protect Jewish lives, but to subject the entire resource-rich region to imperialist control. The Palestinians are only the first obstacle to be removed. They are now being followed by Lebanon, and next Iran.

As David North shows in his book *The Logic of Zionism*, since its founding, Israel has served the US and the major European powers as an imperialist bulwark in the Middle East. It would immediately go bankrupt and be unable to wage war if the billions of dollars and the massive arms deliveries from the US and Germany were to stop.

For the population of Israel, this war, which is rapidly spreading, can only lead to disaster. The only way out of the spiral of war and violence is the unification of

the working class of the entire region, across all national and religious barriers. This joint struggle must be directed against the Israeli regime, the blood-drenched Arab rulers—such as Mohammed bin Salman in Saudi Arabia and Abdel Fattah al-Sisi in Egypt—and their imperialist masters.

Kaube is only one of many voices in Germany supporting Israeli war crimes and agitating against anyone who defends the Palestinians. While they lack the slightest empathy for the Palestinians who have been killed, injured, starved and driven to despair, they denounce any protest against this as an antisemitic threat to Jews living in Germany.

On Sunday, Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock addressed “our Israeli friends” in an article in the right-wing Springer tabloid *Bild am Sonntag*. She assured: “We stand by your side. Your security is part of our *raison d’état*.” Of course, Israel had the right to defend itself against attacks by Hamas and Hezbollah, she averred.

In his podcast, Chancellor Olaf Scholz stated, “We will never accept antisemitism and blind hatred of Israel.”

The media, and especially the public broadcasters, do not limit themselves to justifying Israeli war crimes, they also practice self-censorship and either gloss over or keep quiet about the conditions in Gaza and Lebanon, where 1.2 million of the 5.5 million inhabitants and 1.5 million refugees from Syria have already been forced from their homes. Images of destruction and voices of despair, as seen and heard daily on Al Jazeera or even on the BBC, are systematically suppressed in Germany.

The hysteria with which the government and the media react to criticism of Israel is an expression of fear and panic. They have their backs to the wall. They sense that their warmongering is deeply unpopular and meets with rejection. In the last state elections, opposition to the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East contributed significantly to the poor performance of the establishment parties.

But this opposition has so far found no independent political expression. Above all, parties such as the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) and the anti-migrant BSW, which themselves advocate militarist policies and vehemently defend Israel, have so far been able to exploit the general dissatisfaction.

The Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei advocates uniting the struggle against war, against layoffs and social cuts into a powerful movement of the international working class against capitalism.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact