

Germany's Merz government to extend support for Israeli genocide against the Palestinians

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On the evening of February's federal election, designated Federal Chancellor Friedrich Merz invited the war criminal and genocide perpetrator Benjamin Netanyahu to visit Germany. The invitation shows that the next German government will support the Israeli genocide in Gaza and its expansion to the West Bank and the entire Middle East even more resolutely than the previous one. Merz has assured Netanyahu that he will find "ways and means" not to arrest him in Germany, despite an arrest warrant issued by the International Criminal Court—a clear violation of international law.

That Merz can make such provocative statements and invite an indicted war criminal is because all the establishment parties, from the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) to Die Linke/Left Party, stand behind his pro-war and rearmament programme. On March 21, when the Bundesrat (upper house of parliament) authorised taking out up to €1 trillion in loans for armaments and related expenditures, the representatives of the Left Party from Bremen and Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania voted in favour alongside the Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU), Social Democrats (SPD) and Greens. Although the fascist AfD voted against it in the Bundestag (lower house of parliament) on procedural grounds, it made clear in its speeches that the Nazi-style rearmament was fully in line with its programme.

The "antisemitism" resolution passed on January 29 in the midst of the election campaign was already clear proof that Germany's ruling class has never broken with its fascist traditions and is once again supporting genocide with its support for the Israeli assault on Gaza. The resolution is intended to intimidate critics of Israel's campaign of extermination and to create a legal basis, particularly in schools and universities, to penalise any criticism of Israel's war policy with draconian punishments.

While Israel has already killed tens of thousands of civilians in Gaza, the West Bank and Lebanon, any criticism of it is denounced and criminalised as "antisemitic" in Germany. Pro-Palestinian groups are falsely accused of "creating a climate of insecurity and fear in schools and universities and establishing an antisemitic interpretation of the Middle East conflict."

The ideological basis for the "semantic inversion" of the concept of antisemitism, as noted by David North, is provided by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) reactionary definition of antisemitism. The *World Socialist Web*

Site wrote in a commentary on the IHRA's definition:

The IHRA definition is an ahistorical and anti-democratic construct that defines any political opposition to Zionism and to Israel's oppression of the Palestinians as "antisemitic."

It has long been a central element of a right-wing campaign that uses the accusation of "left-wing antisemitism" to criminalise the growing opposition, especially among workers and youth, to imperialism and war. The Bundestag resolution provocatively states that a purported increase in antisemitism since October 7, 2023 "can also be traced back to a relativising approach and an increase in Israel-related and left-wing anti-imperialist antisemitism."

If academics express criticism of this unscientific, right-wing definition or continue to criticise Israel, they are then threatened with the cancellation of funding. In point 9, the resolution passed by the Bundestag declares that "scholarly excellence and antisemitism are mutually exclusive." And point 10 threatens,

in solidarity with the members of the Alliance of Science Organisations and on the basis of the resolutions passed by the German Bundestag to date, to work towards preventing the activities of groups that spread Israel-related antisemitism, whose means include calls for boycotts, delegitimisation, disinformation and demonisation of the Jewish state. This includes activities of the "Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions" movement (BDS for short) and similar movements. Supporters of such movements must have no place in German educational and scholarly institutions.

Furthermore, so-called "reporting and counselling structures that document antisemitic incidents" are to be established. The entire nature of the resolution makes clear what it concerns. It is not

about combating real antisemitism from the right, but about establishing an apparatus of repression at universities that lists, intimidates and, if necessary, removes critical students. The resolution states:

Antisemitic behaviour must have consequences. Schools and universities must therefore be supported in fully utilising their legal options. This includes the consistent application of domiciliary rights, temporary exclusion from lessons or studies and, in particularly serious cases, exmatriculation.

This is a blatant attack on the basic democratic right of freedom of expression. Anyone who expresses even the slightest shred of empathy for the suffering of the Palestinians is to be threatened with intimidation and draconian punishments.

The debate on the resolution in the Bundestag was a farce, and was passed with a large majority. Only the Sahra Wagenknecht Alliance (BSW) voted against, while the Left Party abstained. But even the obligatory “criticism” of the BSW and the Left Party MPs was pure window dressing and serves to conceal their own role.

Nicole Gohlke’s speech was an example of how the Left Party hides its reactionary support for Israel’s genocide behind empty phrases about academic freedom and dialogue. While she claimed that the resolution was a “showcase motion” because it allegedly did not provide any additional funding for educational measures, she did not say a word about the actual purpose of the resolution: the criminalisation of any opposition to Israel’s war of annihilation in Gaza. Her “criticism” was limited to procedural issues—such as the lack of expert hearings—but she did not question the political core of the resolution.

Gohlke claimed that it was “important” to convey different perspectives on the Middle East conflict, but only complained that the “Palestinian story” was given too little attention. The reality is that the resolution not only promotes a one-sided narrative, but also defames and represses the entire Palestinian liberation movement as antisemitic. But instead of denouncing this repression, Gohlke appealed to the government to make the discourse more “balanced”—as if it were the task of the German state to neutrally moderate the genocide.

The last few months have shown that appeals to one capitalist government or another will not end the genocide. In addition, the Left Party has supported Israel’s war of annihilation from the very beginning. After October 7, the Left Party parliamentary group explicitly expressed solidarity with Israel’s actions. Despite the massacre of tens of thousands of Palestinians, leading Left Party representatives repeatedly emphasised that Israel “naturally has the right to defend itself” (Heidi Reichennek).

The fact that Gohlke criticised the call for closer cooperation between universities and the secret service does not change the fact that the Left Party itself is an integral part of this state apparatus. Thuringia, where the Left Party occupied the office of state prime minister for years, in the person of Bodo Ramelow,

deported the most refugees per capita and strengthened the state apparatus of repression, which is permeated by extreme right-wing forces.

Gohlke’s hypocrisy became particularly clear when she feigned outrage that the AfD had approved the resolution. What she failed to mention, however, is that the AfD voted in favour not because it rejects antisemitism, but because the measures adopted identically mirror the far-right party’s own repressive agenda. The Left Party has effectively joined this anti-democratic escalation by abstaining.

Recently, its representatives in the Bundesrat also voted in favour of the historic €1 trillion arms and war package proposed by the CDU/CSU and SPD. The Left Party is not an opposition party, but an imperialist party and is integral to the machinery that seeks to control and suppress any serious opposition to war and imperialism.

The resolution is part of the ruling class’s effort to militarise the whole of German society and bring it into enforced conformity. As in the past, all opposition must be suppressed and silenced. As in the US, universities and cultural institutions are being targeted in particular because there have already been massive protests against the genocide in the past and a strong anti-war attitude prevails there.

In a recent statement, the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) calls for “the broadest opposition” to these attacks on democratic rights, emphasising:

But this battle cannot be waged on the campuses alone. The only basis for the defense of democratic rights is the political mobilization of the working class—the vast majority of the population—dependent of both capitalist parties and based on a socialist program.

The working class is an immensely powerful force, which can overturn capitalism and restructure society on the basis of socialism. The turn of the capitalist oligarchy to dictatorship is inextricably connected to the war being waged on the working class, in the form of the massive assault on social programs, the mass firing of federal workers and the elimination of all regulations on corporate profit.

The IYSSE, the youth and student movement of the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party, SGP) and its sister parties around the world, is fighting to build a movement among young people aimed at mobilising the working class in opposition to the entire political establishment. Take up this fight now and become a member of the IYSSE!



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