

Stop the deportation of anti-genocide activists in Berlin

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The Berlin state government is planning to deport four activists because of their involvement in pro-Palestinian protests. All four have been ordered to leave Germany by April 21 or else face compulsory deportation. This action is unprecedented in recent German history and shows that those in power are in no way in second place after the fascist US President Donald Trump and are using dictatorial methods to enforce the brutal pro-war policy here too.

Of the four to be deported, three are EU citizens who would normally enjoy freedom of movement between EU states. Shane O'Brien, 29, and Roberta Murray, 31, are Irish citizens. "My life is here, I'm not making any plans for Ireland," Murray told *The Intercept*. Kasia Wlaszczyk, a 35-year-old cultural worker and Polish citizen, has not lived in Poland since he was 10 years old. "If this goes through, it would tear me out of the community I've built up here," he said.

The deportation would hit US citizen Cooper Longbottom, 27, particularly hard. Longbottom would not be allowed to enter any of the 29 Schengen countries for at least the next two years. As a transgender person, Longbottom would also be exposed to direct danger to life and limb in the US. Longbottom is studying at the Alice Salomon University of Applied Sciences in Berlin and only needs six months to complete his Master's degree, but the threat of deportation makes it unclear whether Longbottom will be able to graduate.

In the deportation notice, a separate list of accusations is made against each of the four. All the accusations come from police files and relate to pro-Palestinian protests. The allegations include the following: Two of the four are purported to have called police officers "fascists," while three are alleged to have taken part in demonstrations where slogans such as "From the river

to the sea" were shouted. All four are accused of chanting "antisemitic or anti-Israeli" slogans—without any particulars being provided. In addition, all four are accused of supporting Hamas—again without any evidence.

The only accusation that was brought before a criminal court concerned O'Brien, who was accused of calling a police officer a "fascist"—however, he was acquitted. There were no convictions in any of the other cases.

The four are also accused of being involved in the occupation of the Presidium of Berlin's Free University in October 2024, which resulted in property damage. None of them is charged with the damage to property itself, but only with the suspicion that they took part in a "coordinated group action" during which the damage allegedly occurred.

Revoking the freedom of movement of EU citizens is normally subject to very high hurdles in Germany. According to the Federal Interior Ministry, there must be a "serious threat" that "affects a fundamental interest of society" and is based on the actions of the person concerned. As a rule, this requires serious criminal offences—such as large-scale trafficking in hard drugs or the sexual abuse of children.

However, the allegations against the four are based on such a weak legal foundation that even within the Berlin bureaucracy doubts arose as to whether the deportations could be enforced at all. The *Intercept* reports that it has internal emails showing that after Berlin's Interior Senator (state minister) requested a signed deportation order, Silke Buhlmann—head of the Immigration Department's Crime Prevention and Repatriation Division—warned that the legal basis was insufficient and that deportation would be illegal.

Although the underlying police reports suggested a

potential danger, there were “no legally binding criminal convictions that constitute a sufficiently serious and concrete threat.” However, these concerns were quickly dismissed—and the deportation order was issued.

Alexander Gorski, the lawyer for two of the four protesters, told The Intercept: “What we are seeing here are the harshest measures available—based on allegations that are extremely vague and, in some cases, completely unfounded.”

He also warned that these cases were merely a test run for broader repression against immigrants and activists in Germany, saying, “They are being used as guinea pigs... What we’re seeing here is straight out of the extreme right’s playbook ... From a legal perspective, we were shocked by the reasoning—it reminded us of the Mahmoud Khalil case.”

Gorski’s warnings are correct—a precedent is being set to pave the way for a crackdown on all forms of political opposition in Germany. If these four activists can be deported on political grounds alone—without ever having been convicted of a crime—then the wave of state repression will know no bounds.

In the US, a comprehensive system of state repression is already being established to criminalise dissent and create the legal framework for a dictatorship. While peacefully demonstrating students such as Mahmoud Khalil or Rumeysa Öztürk are abducted by masked police units, others such as Momodou Taal are forced to leave the country to escape a similar fate. These scenes, which are now commonplace in the US, are reminiscent of the dictatorships in Chile and Argentina—right up to the methods of Nazi rule.

The ruling class in Germany may have differences with Donald Trump over tariff policy or the division of raw materials in Ukraine and Russia—but they are united on this point: protest at home should be suppressed by any means necessary.

The persecution of Taal and Khalil in the US and of Longbottom, Wlaszczyk, O’Brien and Murray in Germany is directed against the entire working class. The measures that are being tested on students and immigrants today will be used tomorrow against striking workers and all those who oppose social cuts and the arms race.

This shows that democratic rights can only be defended by building a mass political movement within

the working class. The struggle against deportations and the suppression of freedom of expression is inextricably linked to the struggle against war—and its root cause, capitalism.



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