

# Genocide in Gaza: Chancellor Merz gives himself an alibi

**Peter Schwarz**  
**29 May 2025**

There are critical words that inevitably fall back upon their author. This is particularly true of the “criticism” that German Chancellor Friedrich Merz levelled at Israel’s conduct of the war in Gaza at the beginning of the week.

Pro-government media labelled it a “turning point in German Israel policy.” In fact, Merz’s statements are nothing of the sort. The chancellor is trying to create for himself an alibi for a crime against humanity that he has supported more unconditionally than almost any other German politician for a year and a half—without changing his policies in the slightest. The German government is not even prepared to stop supplying weapons to the Israeli army.

When he was leader of the opposition, Merz attacked the government of Olaf Scholz from the right, a government which supplied Israel with large quantities of weapons and ammunition and persecuted any defender of the Palestinians as an “antisemite.” He repeatedly accused Olaf Scholz of not standing clearly enough on Israel’s side and delaying the delivery of weapons. In January, Merz emphasised that he would “immediately end” the current German government’s “de facto export embargo” on armaments.

Shortly after the federal elections in February, Merz invited the Israeli head of government Benjamin Netanyahu, who is wanted on an international arrest warrant, to pay a state visit to Germany and assured him that the warrant issued by the International Criminal Court would not be executed under his chancellorship. The new government, formed of Merz’s Christian Democrats (CDU) and Scholz’s Social Democrats (SPD), struck a coalition agreement that invokes “Israel’s right to exist and its security” as “a matter of state for Germany.” In his first government statement, Merz then declared war on the “intolerable

antisemitism” in Germany and affirmed that Germany stood “unwaveringly” by Israel’s side.

If the chancellor has now changed his tone somewhat, it is because it is simply no longer possible to deny that Netanyahu’s regime is committing the greatest state crime since the Nazis. It has openly declared its intention to occupy the entire Gaza Strip and expel its 2 million inhabitants.

To achieve this, the Israeli state is pursuing a deliberate policy of mass murder. It has starved the Palestinian population for months by stopping all supplies of food and essential medicines. The Israeli army systematically bombs residential areas, refugee shelters and hospitals and herds the inhabitants into small areas. The official death toll now stands at 54,000, the majority of whom are women and children. The number of unreported cases is likely to be many times higher.

But Merz criticises even these blatant crimes in the mildest possible terms. “What the Israeli army is now doing in the Gaza Strip, quite frankly, I no longer understand with what aim,” he said on Monday at broadcaster WDR’s European Forum. The Israeli government should “not do anything that its best friends are no longer prepared to accept.”

And on Tuesday, Merz said in Finland, “The massive military strikes by the Israeli army in the Gaza Strip no longer make any sense to me as to how they serve the goal of fighting terror and freeing the hostages.”

Conclusions? None. Merz is trying to cover his tracks in order to carry on as before.

The persecution of workers, students and young people protesting against the genocide of the Palestinians also continues unabated. The Merz government, which is systematically escalating the conflict with Russia and fervently rearming, cannot

tolerate any opposition to war and militarism. Its suppression of the Gaza protests is closely linked to its crackdown on any opposition to war.

Merz has a free hand because all the parties represented in the Bundestag (parliament) are behind him. They only have tactical differences. As a coalition partner, the SPD is firmly integrated into the government's work. The Greens are the fiercest supporters of war against Russia and Israel's "right to self-defence"—a synonym for genocide against the Palestinians. Former Green Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock visited Israel over a dozen times during her time in office.

Like almost all far-right parties in Europe, the Alternative for Germany (AfD) also backs the Netanyahu regime. It too supports the rearmament of the Bundeswehr (Armed Forces), complaining it does not go far enough. It only has reservations about military support for Ukraine because it considers Russia to be the wrong opponent.

The Left Party is playing a particularly perfidious role. It spouts verbal criticism in order to deflect the widespread discontent, while supporting government policy on all decisive issues. It invokes Israel's "right to self-defence," voted for the 1€ trillion arms programme in the Bundesrat (upper house of parliament) and helped Merz to be elected chancellor quickly in the Bundestag.

Like all other mainstream parties, the Left Party supports the lie that opposing Zionism is tantamount to antisemitism. In reality, since its emergence in the 19th century, Zionism was a reactionary, nationalist ideology directed against the burgeoning socialist labour movement, which was gaining great influence among Jewish workers and intellectuals.

Zionism denied that modern antisemitism was a product of the crisis of capitalism. This served fascist movements to divide the working class and mobilise lumpen elements against the socialist labour movement. Hitler's battle cry against "Jewish Bolshevism" expressed this.

Zionism did not regard the emancipation of the Jews as part of the emancipation of the working class, the overcoming of every kind of social, political and national oppression. It strived for a Jewish nation-state that oppresses other nationalities and offers itself as an auxiliary to the imperialist powers. This is how the

state of Israel came into being in 1948. The Palestinian population was forcibly expelled and the Zionist state served first the British and then the US as a military bridgehead in the resource-rich region, which was largely inhabited by Arabs.

As we have shown in an earlier article, the German-Israeli relationship never had anything to do with reconciliation and reparations. Germany helped the Zionist state obtain urgently needed weapons and financial support. In return, "reconciliation" with Israel enhanced the German government's international reputation, German business gained access to the Middle East, and the Israeli government helped cover up the Nazi past of high-ranking German officials.

The development of Israel into an oppressive state that commits terrible crimes against humanity confirms the warning of the Fourth International that Zionism leads to a terrible dead end. In 1940, Leon Trotsky described the attempt to "solve the Jewish question by the emigration of Jews to Palestine" as a "tragic mockery of the Jewish people... Never was it so clear as it is today that the salvation of the Jewish people is bound up inseparably with the overthrow of the capitalist system."

Even if Merz—like the heads of government of Britain, France and Canada a week ago—feels compelled to cover his tracks, appeals to the imperialist governments will not stop the genocide in Gaza. This is only possible through the mobilisation of the international working class in the struggle for their social, economic and political rights and for a socialist society.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](http://wsws.org/contact)**