

In an act of political censorship, Deutsche Bank terminates publisher Mehring Verlag's account

Mehring Verlag
24 June 2025

At the end of May, Postbank, which is now wholly owned by Deutsche Bank, terminated the business account of Mehring Verlag, the German language publishing house of the *World Socialist Web Site* and Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party). And in June, it also closed the personal account of its managing director, Wolfgang Zimmermann. The closures were made without explanation but are clearly a case of political censorship.

Mehring Verlag is the leading publisher of Leon Trotsky's works in Germany. It has published and repeatedly reissued Trotsky's masterpiece *The History of the Russian Revolution*, his analysis of Stalinism *The Revolution Betrayed*, his unparalleled writings on the rise of Nazism in Germany, and many other works by the most important Marxist of the 20th century in affordable, high-quality editions.

Mehring Verlag has also published numerous books on contemporary issues, examining key political, theoretical and cultural questions based on the Marxist method.

Among these is *A Quarter Century of War: The US Drive for Global Hegemony* by David North, editor-in-chief of the *World Socialist Web Site* (WSWS) and chairman of the Socialist Equality Party in the US. The book analyses US-led wars from 1990 to 2020 and is essential for understanding the eruption of American militarism under President Trump. Other books by North address Zionism, the ideology of the Frankfurt School and postmodernism, the consequences of the Soviet Union's collapse, Trotsky's relevance today, and the growing danger of war.

Christoph Vandreier's book *Why Are They Back?* published in 2018, explores the resurgence of fascism in Germany and remains highly topical given the rise of the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD). Mehring Verlag

also published *DDR—40 Jahre Stalinismus (The GDR—40 Years of Stalinism)* by Wolfgang Weber, a Marxist critique of the Ulbricht and Honecker regimes in the former East Germany.

This is just a small section of the publisher's program, which is fully listed on Mehring Verlag's website.

The closure of the business account—effective July 28—is clearly aimed at sabotaging Mehring Verlag's work and impeding the distribution of its books. No other plausible explanation exists. Mehring Verlag and its predecessor have maintained an account with Postbank, now fully integrated into Deutsche Bank, for 45 years without a single incident.

The closure of the managing director's private account, entirely unrelated to the publishing house, constitutes personal harassment.

German banks have for some time targeted dissenting voices by terminating their accounts. While this initially focused on far-right, conspiracy fanatics, and anti-vaccine groups, now left-wing, socialist and pacifist organizations are increasingly being targeted.

Last year, Deutsche Bank also closed the account of the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (SGP), which works closely with Mehring Verlag. That same year, Berliner Sparkasse shut down the account of the Jewish Voice for a Just Peace in the Middle East association and demanded a full list of its members. The Maoist MLPD, which successfully sued Commerzbank in 2009 over account termination, lost a similar case in 2022.

Banks work closely with the domestic intelligence agency (Verfassungsschutz), which was led for years by far-right figure Hans-Georg Maassen. Organizations denounced by this opaque and unaccountable body as "left-wing extremists"—such as the SGP, for opposing austerity, war and capitalism—risk losing the financial

basis for their operations and livelihoods.

Security agencies directly influence banks. Last year, speaking to the *Report Mainz* programme, Thomas Seidel, a former Federal Criminal Police officer, urged banks to consult intelligence reports as the “basis” for terminating bank accounts.

The attack on Mehring Verlag is inseparable from the return to war and militarism and the assault on social and democratic rights. What is unfolding in Trump’s America—the ICE-Gestapo’s hunt for migrants, the domestic deployment of the military, gangster-style foreign policy, and the illegal bombing of Iran—is also developing, in varying forms, across all imperialist countries, including Germany.

The hundreds of billions of euros being spent on rearmament, the associated cuts to social programs and growing inequality are incompatible with democracy. As the establishment parties lose influence, they crack down more aggressively on any opposition. While they and their foundations are lavishly funded with tens of millions from state coffers, they seek to financially strangle socialists.

Deutsche Bank, responsible for the account closure, was deeply complicit in Nazi crimes: it financed Auschwitz, supported the Reich’s war buildup and SS projects, and profited from the trade in stolen gold from murdered Jews. It also took part in the “Aryanization” of the Ullstein publishing house, whose books—including Erich Maria Remarque’s anti-war classic *All Quiet on the Western Front*—were banned and burned by the Nazis.

After the war, the Allies planned to dismantle Deutsche Bank and prosecute its executives for war crimes. But German capital prevailed, and the bank was re-established as a national financial institution led by Nazi-linked managers.

The attack on Mehring Verlag reveals what the ruling class in Germany fears most: the spread of ideas that threaten the foundations of its tottering, rotten capitalist system—namely, the program of socialism. As the great French writer Victor Hugo said 150 years ago: “One can resist the invasion of armies; one cannot resist the invasion of ideas whose time has come.”

We call for a broad campaign to answer Deutsche Bank’s attack, raise awareness of Mehring Verlag’s books, and support the development of its publishing program.

Protest the closure of the Mehring Verlag bank

account

The attack on freedom of expression must be stopped. We urge all readers to protest the arbitrary termination of our account!

Write a protest email to deutsche.bank@db.com, with a copy to kontakt@mehring-verlag.de.

Support Mehring Verlag!

We rely on your solidarity. Promote our books on social media. All campaign details are available at mehring-verlag.de/sponsoring.html

Share our online bookstore widely and order eBooks from our eBook shop.

Give book vouchers as gifts.

Pre-order the outstanding autobiography *My Life* by Leon Trotsky at a supporter price of €50 or €100. The book will be released at the end of this year, and the eBook version will be included for free.

Distribute our vital analysis of the genocide in Gaza! Order one or more five-packs of *The Logic of Zionism* by David North at a bulk discount and sell them to friends, acquaintances, or at rallies and demonstrations. Five copies cost €45.

Subscribe to our newsletter and encourage others to do so. Share our campaigns and help distribute our books. Follow us on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook.

Support the further development of our publishing house with a generous financial contribution.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact