

Germany's media place the rapper Macklemore in its crosshairs

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The article “A bit of Israel-bashing and then just keep partying” by Sebastian Hammelehle in Germany's largest circulation news weekly *Der Spiegel* was one of the triggers for a wide-ranging smear campaign against the rapper Macklemore. The *Spiegel* text of July 21, 2025 is not a contribution to journalism but a transparent piece of propaganda, designed to delegitimise any criticism of the Zionist occupation policy as “antisemitic.”

It serves to strengthen the official narrative of German imperialism, which unconditionally supports the genocide in Gaza. Hammelehle's text is a prime example of the hypocritical, politically motivated agitation of the German establishment against all those who oppose the barbaric annihilation of the Palestinian population.

The campaign immediately led to the media closing ranks: from the conservative magazine *Cicero* to the largest Jewish periodical *Jüdische Allgemeine*, the Springer weekly *Die Welt* and the Protestant *Evangelisch.de*, right up to official institutions—all of them portrayed Macklemore's resistance as a danger. The Lower Saxony State Commissioner against Antisemitism, Gerhard Wegner, told the *Evangelical Press Service* (epd) that he was critical of Macklemore's several-minute speech at the Deichbrand Festival (here is a short excerpt): “In tone it was moderate, but overall, it was a large pro-Palestinian demonstration and a one-sided support for Hamas.”

“That is what will remain of the Deichbrand Festival, which is very regrettable,” he said. Wegner accused Macklemore of having “sharply criticised” Israel and accusing the state of colonialism and of committing genocide in Gaza. In doing so, Wegner implied that the genocide was not actually taking place. This is a transparent method of distracting from the real crimes and stifling debate at the outset.

Who is Macklemore?

On June 19, 1983, Benjamin Hammond Haggerty, who became internationally known under the stage name Macklemore, was born in Seattle, Washington (USA). He is a Grammy Award-winning American rapper and songwriter, who stands out from much of commercial hip-hop through his often socially critical and self-reflective lyrics.

Macklemore's musical journey began early. At the age of just 14, he started writing lyrics, and in his youth was influenced by the music of the East Coast and West Coast underground hip-hop scenes, particularly appreciating the works of groups such as Wu-Tang Clan, Nas and Talib Kweli. In 2000, under the name “Professor

Macklemore,” he released the EP *Open Your Eyes*. After further independent releases, including his debut album *The Language of My World* (2005) and the album *The Unplanned Mixtape* (2009), he gained wider recognition from 2011 as part of the duo Macklemore & Ryan Lewis.

Together with his long-time producer and musical partner Ryan Lewis, he created a number of hits which were not only commercially successful but also addressed social issues. Their breakthrough came in 2012 with the album *The Heist*, which won four Grammy Awards, including “Best New Artist” and “Best Rap Album.” This was followed by songs such as *Thrift Shop* (an anthem to second-hand fashion that deliberately set itself apart from consumerist rap), *Can't Hold Us* and *Same Love* (an anthem for same-sex marriage). Later solo albums such as *Gemini* (2017) and *Ben* (2023) show his continued engagement with personal topics such as addiction and recovery.

What has particularly distinguished Macklemore in the past two years, and placed him in the crosshairs of the bourgeois media, is his unequivocal and courageous stance against the imperialist war and genocide in Gaza. His recent works—beginning with the viral hit *Hind's Hall* in May 2024, followed by *Hind's Hall 2* in September 2024, and most recently *Fucked Up* in February 2025—have become anthems of the global protest against Israel's genocidal actions and the complicity of the imperialist powers.

The song *Hind's Hall* is named after six-year-old Palestinian girl Hind Rajab, who was murdered in the Gaza Strip by Israeli forces. The title also refers to the many student protests which often named their university encampments after her. Macklemore did not hesitate to directly brand the United States government as complicit in the historic crime of genocide.

In the song *Fucked Up*, Macklemore broadens his criticism and draws connections between the colonisation of Palestine and the broader processes of decaying capitalism and imperialism. He points to how the devastation of Palestine is linked to domestic terror from immigration authorities (ICE), internet censorship, natural disasters (such as the wildfires in Los Angeles), inflation and the enrichment of the financial oligarchy.

The video begins with a quotation from the American socialist Eugene V. Debs, who once declared: “The most heroic word in all languages is ‘revolution.’” This reference to Debs, a pioneer of the socialist struggle against imperialism, is significant and a clear signal. In it, Macklemore denounces inequality and imperialist crimes: “The world's on fire ... Colonizing Gaza from the White House Lawn.”

Censorship through defamation: how the media deliberately twist facts

The organised attack by the German media is based on two central lies and distortions:

- The distortion of the slogan “From the river to the sea”—The mainstream media adopt the claim of the German judiciary that the slogan is a “motto of all those who want to wipe out Israel.” For many Palestinians and their supporters, however, it is a call for freedom and equality in a secular state for all its inhabitants.
- The instrumentalisation of an incident from 2014—Macklemore then performed incognito wearing a wig, beard and plastic nose. He apologised immediately and explained, in a statement quoted by the *Guardian*, that he had not intended to imitate a Jewish stereotype, but simply wanted to wear a disguise. Nevertheless, this incident is deliberately portrayed by the German media as proof of his “antisemitic attitude,” even though the then director of the pro-Zionist Anti-Defamation League (ADL), Abe Foxman, explicitly accepted Macklemore’s apology.

The attacks on Macklemore in Germany are not an isolated phenomenon but part of a global and coordinated campaign by the ruling class. It began in May 2024, when his song *Hind’s Hall* was removed and censored en masse from social media platforms. In September 2024, his appearance at the Neon City Festival in Las Vegas was arbitrarily cancelled after he had openly condemned the US government at a pro-Palestine demonstration in Seattle.

The attacks show that the ruling class in Germany and the US operate with the same methods and lies to suppress any criticism of the imperialist war agenda. It is telling how the bourgeois media have dismissed Macklemore’s political development since 2023 as a “career drifting aimlessly.” This disparagement serves only to undermine the seriousness and legitimacy of his criticism of the Israeli genocide in Gaza.

Political weaknesses and the significance of Macklemore’s resistance

Macklemore’s political stance has evolved, but it is not free of contradictions. These must be critically examined to allow for a historically clear assessment. In the past, he was a prominent supporter of the Democratic Party and acted as a spokesman for the Obama administration’s drug policy. He also celebrated Biden’s election victory over Trump in 2020.

His political weakness to this day lies in his inability to link the suffering of the Palestinians to its root cause—the capitalist system and imperialism. This lack of clarity is evident in his reference to “white supremacy” in the song *Hind’s Hall*. He suggests that US support for Ukraine in the war against Russia is primarily due to the (white) skin colour of Ukrainians. This, however, completely distorts the situation.

The war in Ukraine, supported by the US and all imperialist powers and threatening all humanity with the potential use of nuclear weapons, along with the genocide in Gaza and the escalating conflict with China, are parts of a broader US-led new world war to secure global hegemony. These wars are waged not out of racist motives but because of the profit interests of the financial oligarchy.

Nevertheless, Macklemore’s stance is courageous and politically significant. In *Hind’s Hall*, his sharpest criticism is aimed at the music industry itself and its most prominent figures who remain silent about the genocide:

The music industry’s quiet, complicit in their platform of silence / What happened to the artists, what you got to say? / If I was on a label, you could drop me today (...)

Macklemore’s stance is marked by courage and principled commitment. His criticism is an indirect but powerful call to the working class and youth, and is understood and supported as such. His songs express the growing awareness that systematic attacks on workers’ living standards and barbaric wars are two sides of the same coin. In this way, he stands in stark contrast to the moral bankruptcy of many other well-known rappers.

Snoop Dogg, Rick Ross and Soulja Boy performed at an unofficial event connected to Donald Trump’s second inauguration—the so-called “Crypto Ball” in January 2025. Kanye West regularly promotes Hitler on social media. And the much-praised Kendrick Lamar, who presents himself as a “socially conscious” artist, has expressed no coherent criticism of the genocide, either in his Super Bowl performance—designed so that everyone could see whatever they wished—or elsewhere.

Apart from Macklemore and Puerto Rican rapper Residente, very few hip-hop artists denounce the atrocities of Israel, the US and other imperialist powers so vehemently and consistently.

By contrast, Chuck D, who once rapped “Fight the Power” with the explicitly political band Public Enemy, has allowed himself to be used by the US State Department as a “global music ambassador.” He joined an initiative directly based on the CIA’s Cold War programmes and promoting US imperialist interests.

Even Antony Blinken, up to his neck in blood, is described by the media without contradiction as a “friend” of Chuck D. In June 2024, eight months after the mass murder in Gaza orchestrated by Blinken and the White House began, the rapper appeared at an event at the State Department hosted by the war criminal.

The selective and defamatory reporting of the bourgeois media is no accident, but part of a deliberate policy of obfuscation and cover-up, aimed at maintaining support for genocide—inseparably linked to the global war of capital—and at suppressing the growing resistance among working-class youth.



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