“United-4-Gaza” holds mass demonstration in Frankfurt am Main

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The horrific news from Gaza City—where bombing and starvation are now being followed by military obliteration—has brought millions of people onto the streets worldwide. In Frankfurt am Main, the “United 4 Gaza” demonstration on Saturday mobilised up to four times as many participants as had registered.

Estimates ranged between 15,000 and 20,000 participants (5,000 had registered). This was undoubtedly the largest Palestine demonstration in the city since October 2023.

At the opening rally, the Hafenpark in front of the European Central Bank was overflowing with people. Participants, including many families with children, came not only from the Rhine-Main region; many had also travelled from Mannheim, Mainz, Stuttgart and North Rhine-Westphalia. Youth from “Students 4 Palestine” at 35 universities had expressed their solidarity. They acted as stewards during the subsequent march through the city centre, which did not end until late in the evening at Rossmarkt and was marked by loud chants such as: “Germany finances–Israel bombs” and “We are thousands, we are millions–we all are Palestinians.”

Speakers reported first-hand from Gaza City. They described recent targeted killings of doctors and journalists and the impact of the famine catastrophe on the Palestinian population. Among them was a doctor and a Palestinian resident of Hesse who has lost almost his entire family in the Gaza genocide. He said: “This is no conflict, no war–this is systematic annihilation. The so-called disgusting ‘state policy’ means that Germany, not even 100 years after the Holocaust, is now pursuing the same genocide on Israel’s side.”

The mood was unanimously for the immediate halt to the genocide, for an end to German arms deliveries, and against the persecution of those who protest. Participants carried cardboard placards, T-shirts and posters with slogans such as: “Germany, you have learned nothing! Yesterday perpetrator, today sponsor”; “Stop the dirty work! No to state policy”; “Israel starves 2 million people”; “18,500 children killed”; “Nothing justifies war crimes”; “Boycott Israel Apartheid”; “Make Israel Palestine again”; “Never again? You must be joking!”; or simply: “Free Palestine!” Many Jewish participants were present, and one worker had written on his placard: “Genocide is not kosher.”

A women’s group from Ingelheim am Rhein carried a large placard: “We are not free until everyone is free!” They expressed the general mood for equality and justice, as one of them said: “Justice will only prevail when everyone in the world can live in freedom.” Two workers from Mannheim emphasised to the WSWS that what mattered most to them was to stop every war and all violence: “Mass murder does not bring peace!”

A group from Bielefeld (North Rhine-Westphalia) had travelled to Frankfurt, where Jamal has founded the association “Solidarity for Palestine.” Theresa said: “Where does one even begin? The killing of Palestinians must stop immediately, and the occupation must end! Open the borders of the Gaza Strip! The people of Gaza are imprisoned. They cannot even obtain passports. They have no right to a normal life, to food, school, medicine …”

Asked what she thought should be done, she first called for a ceasefire, pointing out that Israel currently refuses this. It was also important, she said, that Netanyahu finally be brought before a court and convicted, along with all his backers. In the short conversation, she said she would welcome an international workers’ boycott in any case.

Two friends, Darios and Ludevic, explained their participation as follows: “What is happening in Gaza is genocide!” In fact, everyone should be taking to the streets against it, they said. Ludevic stressed that “Germany’s policy is incomprehensible. Even now, when countries like France—whose President Macron we cannot support either—are officially prepared to recognise Palestine, the German government refuses to do the same.” A female worker from Mainz simply said: “I want this killing and starving to end, and finally for there to be peace!”

The rally and mass demonstration were another striking example of the deep gulf opening between the broad working population and the state authorities, politicians and

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the media. The media hesitated to report and did everything possible to disparage the demonstration as "Islamist-influenced" and "antisemitic." For example, the conservative *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* ran the vile headline: "Trendy influencers as representatives of the caliphate movement," and claimed in its article that professional Islamists had "hijacked" the movement and "undermined the noble intentions of well-meaning participants."

The city authorities and local government did everything in their power in advance to ban the demonstration. The organisers had to go through two further courts—the Frankfurt Administrative Court and the Higher Administrative Court of Hesse—both of which confirmed that the ban was "not remotely justified." Driving forces behind the ban in the city council were the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and Liberal Democratic Party (FDP) factions, as well as Jewish religious bodies, joined by the local factions of the Greens and the euro-federalist Volt.

The Left Party in Frankfurt only decided to support the demonstration at a late stage, stating that given "the catastrophic situation for the people in Gaza" it was "necessary to send a signal in Germany as well," as local party chairman Tobias Blank wrote. In contrast, Jutta Ditfurth of Ökolinx-ELF (Eco-Left) vehemently opposed the demonstration. She criticised the opening rally in front of the ECB with the absurd claim that it evoked "antisemitic associations of Jews with capital."

A huge police presence accompanied and obstructed the demonstration at every turn. Participants had to wait for hours before they were allowed to march, and individuals were pulled from the crowd because of "improper" placards. One speaker was even arrested for "prohibited statements."

The hysteria with which these forces opposed the rally and demonstration reveals the fear gripping the bourgeoisie and its political lackeys in the face of growing resistance. By contrast, Saturday's demonstration vividly confirmed the enormous potential and determination to fight against war and fascism that exists within the working class and youth.

To make this effective, however, requires a clear and forward-looking perspective, which is still entirely lacking. When asked how the genocide could be stopped, most answers were along the lines of: "We will not be silenced, we will continue to make ourselves heard." One placard read: "What can you do? Watch! Listen! Speak out!" But these protests and appeals are directed towards the same governments and imperialist powers that are organising and actively supporting the genocide in Gaza.

But the capitalist ruling elites cannot be swayed by protest. They are carrying out genocide as part of an escalating global war serving their imperialist interests. With the genocide in Gaza, they are demonstrating their readiness to unleash unrestrained violence without inhibition. Anyone who wants to stop this barbarism must therefore turn not to capitalist governments, but to the international working class.

In its call, "Workers must mobilise to halt the Zionist/imperialist extermination of the Palestinians in Gaza " the *World Socialist Web Site* explains what is necessary:

> The urgent task facing the working class in the imperialist centres is to mobilise its immense social power to halt the Gaza genocide and the war machine responsible for its implementation. Workers throughout manufacturing, transportation, and other key sectors must organise themselves in defiance of the union bureaucracy to fight for the following demands:
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> *- An immediate halt to shipment of all weapons to Israel.*
>
> *- The boycott of all trade and other economic activity with Israel.*
>
> *- US, European and other corporations assisting Israel in carrying out the genocide must be indicted and prosecuted.*
>
> *- The arrest of Israeli officials for war crimes.*
>
> *- The end of repression of the opposition to the Gaza genocide.*
>
> *- The immediate and unhindered access to Gaza for the supply of aid via all available land crossings.*

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