

Alliance of war criminals: German Chancellor Merz meets Netanyahu

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There is hardly anything more repulsive than when the German ruling class justifies its support for Israel's genocide of the Palestinians by referring to the "fight against antisemitism" and its own historical crimes. It was precisely this repugnant double standard that Chancellor Friedrich Merz (Christian Democrats, CDU) practiced on Thursday during his inaugural visit to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who is the subject of an international arrest warrant for war crimes.

At Yad Vashem, Merz wrote in the guest book that Germany's commitment to Israel's security is "an unalterable core element" of bilateral relations. "That applies today, it applies tomorrow, and it applies forever."

It is the height of cynicism and criminality when the German government, under the mantra of a "reason of state," whitewashes Israel's campaign of destruction and legitimises it with responsibility for the Holocaust, of all things. In reality, it is not continuing the tradition of "Never again!" but rather the criminal traditions that led to Auschwitz—and is continuing them in a new form.

Between 1904 and 1908, German imperialism committed the first genocide of the 20th century with the suppression of the Herero and Nama uprising in German South West Africa. Only a few decades later, the murder of 6 million Jews and the war of extermination against the Soviet Union—which cost the lives of up to 30 million Soviet citizens—followed as the greatest mass murder in history.

In the 21st century, the German ruling class is seamlessly continuing this tradition. Its support for Netanyahu's campaign of extermination leaves no doubt about this. After more than two years of genocide, the Gaza Strip is almost completely

destroyed, and tens of thousands—mostly women and children—have been murdered. The survivors face either the same fate or violent expulsion. At the same time, the Netanyahu government is using the implementation of Trump's so-called peace plan for Gaza to systematically expand the war to the West Bank.

This "peace plan" is in reality a colonial reorganisation: a US-supervised protectorate, the final crushing of Palestinian resistance, and the legalisation of Israeli occupation measures. "Peace" here means nothing more than the continuation of genocide by other means.

Netanyahu himself is a war criminal wanted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) on an arrest warrant. The central charge is "deliberate starvation of civilians as a method of warfare." In addition, there are numerous other crimes against humanity, including murder and persecution.

With his visit, Merz made it unmistakably clear that the German government not only stands by this regime, but is further deepening its cooperation with Israel. The Social Democrat (SPD)/Green/Free Democrat coalition government under Chancellor Scholz (SPD) and Foreign Minister Baerbock (Greens) already provided political cover and military support for the genocide—and defamed and criminalised anyone who denounced the crimes as "antisemites."

Merz is seamlessly continuing this course. At a joint press conference with Netanyahu, he rejected the immediate recognition of a Palestinian state. Such recognition could come "at the end and not at the beginning" of a process—in other words, never. At the same time, he justified the criminal policies of the right-wing extremist Netanyahu regime with the platitude that Israel has "the right and indeed the duty" to defend its existence. Criticism is "possible," he said, but "must

not be misused as a pretext for antisemitism, especially not in Germany.”

When asked about his interim alibi announcement of an arms embargo, Merz explained that German arms deliveries would continue unabated. “Our very fundamental stance on Israel ... on military support for Israel has not changed.” This stance, according to Merz, would “bind every chancellor ... for decades to come.”

The basis for this supposedly “eternal” alliance is obvious. Germany’s ruling class uses Israel as a geopolitical outpost to enforce its imperialist interests in the resource-rich and strategically central Middle East region. Merz himself admitted this in a moment of unusual candour after Israel’s attack on Iran in June, when he declared that Israel was doing “the dirty work for all of us.”

Netanyahu, in turn, cynically presented himself to Merz as the proud executor of this “dirty work.” He declared, “We must explain what we are fighting for, how we are fighting, and what we are achieving.” This is not only about defending Israel, but also about “defending Germany and other countries.”

Military cooperation is already well advanced. As part of its war offensive against Russia, the German Armed Forces activated the first stage of the US-Israeli Arrow 3 missile defence system last week. At the Schönewalde site in Brandenburg, the system achieved what is known as initial capability—a further step toward the military integration of the two countries.

In his conversation with Merz, Netanyahu bluntly summed up the imperialist character of this alliance: “I must say, Friedrich, I believe we are on the threshold of a new era, because we will bring about the spread of peace. ... I believe that together we can lead this. We will then no longer be second-rate powers, but first-rate powers.”

It must be said clearly: such a German-Israeli “peace” friendship—based on great power politics, war and genocide—would have found an eager supporter in Hitler.

People in Germany, Israel, Europe, the Middle East and around the world who want to stop the fascist barbarism of their ruling class must oppose it with the international unity of the working class and a socialist perspective. Only such a movement can break the cycle of imperialism, oppression and mass murder.



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