

Germany's Left Party attacks its own youth organisation over Gaza resolution: Why young people need a genuine socialist alternative

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In early November, Linksjugend [Left Youth], the youth organisation of Germany's Left Party, adopted a resolution at its federal congress under the title "Never again remain silent in the face of genocide." For the first time since the beginning of Israel's war of annihilation against Gaza, it explicitly described the mass murder of the Palestinian people as genocide, criticised the "colonial and racist structure" of the Israeli state project, and described Israel as an apartheid state.

These formulations describe reality. They correspond to the situation in Gaza, where Israel has massacred tens of thousands of civilians since October 2023, and to the assessments of numerous international human rights organisations.

With this resolution, Linksjugend has not moved "to the left"; it is merely reacting to the enormous political opposition within the population, above all among young people, who are becoming radicalised and are being attacked for this by all the establishment parties and the media.

Hardly had the resolution been adopted when almost all major media outlets—from the tabloid *Bild* to leading newsweekly *Der Spiegel* to the pro-Green *taz*—launched a hysterical campaign against the youth organisation. The resolution was denounced as "antisemitic," and the congress was portrayed as a hotbed of extremist activities, where pro-Israeli delegates were allegedly openly threatened.

However, at the forefront of this right-wing campaign was not the extreme right Springer press, but the Left Party itself. Instead of defending its own youth organisation, it launched a sharp attack and made clear that support for Israel's war policy was non-negotiable.

Party co-chairs Ines Schwerdtner and Jan van Aken declared that there was "very broad agreement" within the party executive that the Linksjugend resolution was "not compatible with the party's adopted positions." These positions stipulate that any criticism of Israel must remain strictly limited and must "never delegitimise Israel's existence"—a formula that has for years been used to stifle any substantive criticism of Zionist

war crimes.

Seventeen leading Left Party parliamentary deputies—including Gregor Gysi, Dietmar Bartsch, Caren Lay, Bodo Ramelow and others—followed up with an open letter, warning that "something has started to slip" with this resolution and that this must under no circumstances be tolerated.

The message is unmistakable: the Left Party tolerates no serious criticism of Israel—and certainly not the identification of its policies as genocide. In the days following the youth congress, the party resorted to aggressive censorship measures:

- In Saxony, the Left Party parliamentary group denied its own deputy Nam Duy Nguyen rooms in which to mobilise against arms deliveries to Israel.
- In Hamburg, it openly defended the censorship of a lecture by political scientist Helga Baumgarten on the history of the Palestinian liberation struggle.
- In Berlin, it withdrew a venue at the last minute from its French sister party, La France Insoumise, for a Palestine conference.

This constitutes a systematic attempt to purge criticism of Israel from the party, thereby demonstrating that despite occasional cosmetic criticism of the government, the Left Party fully supports the foreign policy course of German imperialism.

The *World Socialist Web Site* has consistently shown that the Left Party is an integral component of the state and security apparatus and supports the global operations of German militarism—whether in Ukraine against Russia, in the Horn of Africa, in the Indo-Pacific or in the Middle East.

This also applies to Linksjugend. With the adoption of its resolution, it is pursuing two aims. On the one hand, like the pseudo-left organisations in its milieu, it is desperately attempting to uphold the illusion that the Left Party can be pushed "to the left" from within. On the other hand, it seeks to cover its own tracks and cloak itself in an anti-imperialist mantle to capture the growing opposition among young people and to block and suppress a socialist development.

The actual record of Linksjugend leaves no doubt about this. It supported the Afghanistan war and the US- and NATO-led regime-change war in Syria. It uncritically adopted the propaganda of German imperialism against China. On the second anniversary of the Ukraine war, it openly called for donations for the fascist battalions of the Ukrainian army. And regarding Israel, it has defended the genocidal imperialist offensive and as recently as October supported Trump's so-called "peace plan," which envisages the permanent colonisation and destruction of the Gaza Strip.

Young workers and students who want to fight against fascism, militarism and social austerity face fundamental political questions and tasks. They need to understand the role of the Left Party and its youth organisation, which do not represent their interests and goals, but instead play a key role in enforcing anti-working-class government policies.

It is telling that the Left Party recently abstained in the vote on the pension package, thereby once again shoring up the right-wing Friedrich Merz coalition government at a critical moment. Previously, it had approved the government's war credits in the Bundesrat (upper house of parliament) and enabled Merz's swift election as chancellor in the Bundestag (lower house of parliament).

It is not the wrong decisions of individual officials that are the reason for the pro-capitalist and pro-imperialist stance of both organisations, but their social and political class character.

The Left Party is a bourgeois party of affluent middle-class layers, deeply rooted in the state, parliamentary and trade union apparatuses. Its existence is based on keeping oppositional moods within safe channels. The same applies to Linksjugend, which since its founding has had the task of nurturing the future leadership of a party loyal to the state. Thus, the current co-chair of the Left Party parliamentary group, Heidi Reichinnek, was state spokesperson and treasurer of Linksjugend from 2017 to 2019.

When the Left Party made significant gains in the last federal election, the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party, SGP) wrote in its initial statement on the election result:

There is a huge discrepancy between the hopes that young people associate with the Left Party and what it actually is. The former want to oppose the fascists, they reject the refugee agitation, and they want reasonable incomes and affordable rents. As the Left Party was the only party in the Bundestag to focus its election campaign on social issues – taxes on the rich, a rise in the minimum wage, and rent controls – it was well received.

The Left Party claims it is possible to reform capitalism, not abolish it. But that is a dangerous illusion. The ruling elites' turn to the right is not simply the product of mistaken policies that can be corrected by a bit of pressure. The ruling class everywhere is resorting to dictatorship and war because it is confronted with the deep crisis of its social system.

The rightward evolution of the Left Party is itself part of this process.

Workers and young people should draw the necessary conclusions from this. The struggle against genocide, war and capitalism cannot be waged within this party. It requires a conscious break with the Left Party and all its appendages, an orientation to the international working class and the building of an independent socialist movement against the capitalist system—the source of war, oppression and social inequality.

The Socialist Equality Party (SGP) and its youth organisation, the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE), are the only political force that consistently fights against all forms of imperialism and militarism—whether in Gaza, in Ukraine or in the Indo-Pacific. We stand for:

- the immediate halt to the genocide in Gaza and all arms deliveries,
- the international unification of the working class against war,
- the overthrow of the capitalist system that produces these crimes,
- the building of a socialist society based on equality, freedom and international solidarity.

For young people seeking an honest, consistent Marxist response to war, genocide and social injustice, there is no path through the Left Party or Linksjugend, but only through the conscious building of a revolutionary movement under the leadership of the SGP and the IYSSE.



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