

Berlin: Thousands demonstrate against genocide in Gaza

Our reporters
21 May 2024

On Saturday, in the German capital, Berlin, some 10,000 people demonstrated against the genocide perpetrated by the Israeli regime with the support of the imperialist powers against the Palestinian population in Gaza.

The protest on the 76th anniversary of the Nakba commemorated the brutal oppression of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian residents and families and their expulsion from their villages and settlements in 1947/48, when the British Mandate in Palestine was dissolved. The occupation and dismemberment of Palestine by the newly founded state of Israel, without equal rights for Palestinians, turned the Palestinians into second-class citizens and unleashed a conflict in the Middle East that continues to this day.

The demonstrators in Berlin chanted slogans and carried signs denouncing the German government for supporting the genocide in Gaza through arms deliveries and financial aid to Israel, paid for with taxpayers' money and taken from the health and social welfare budgets.

Members of the Socialist Equality Party (SGP) took part in the demonstration with their own signs and posters. They distributed the statement 'The working class must take up the fight against the genocide in Gaza and in defense of democratic rights,' and discussed with protesters a socialist perspective for the fight against genocide and war.

European Parliament candidates of the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (SGP), the German section of the Fourth International, Angela Niklaus and Gregor Kahl, spoke from the SGP's loudspeaker van. They condemned the genocide and the complicity of the ruling class and promoted the SGP's policies. Kahl stated:

The Socialist Equality Party calls on all workers to take action to defend the students. Get in touch with us and form action committees to fight independently of the trade union bureaucracy to block the arms shipments and put a stop to the warmongers. The struggle against the genocide in Gaza is part of the global struggle against the imperialist NATO powers that are waging a murderous proxy war against Russia in Ukraine that could escalate into nuclear war at any moment.

Niklaus said:

The ruling class is brutally deploying the police against peaceful demonstrators and student protest camps. Freedom of expression and basic democratic rights are being undermined with police state methods by the nominally bourgeois democratic parties—with the support of the press.

As with previous demonstrations and rallies, whether registered in the name of Palestinian or Jewish organizations, the governing parties in Berlin did everything in their power to obstruct the protest and intimidate the demonstrators by means of a provocative and brutal police operation.

The peaceful demonstration was accompanied by a massive police contingent. It came to a halt towards the end of the route—Gertrauden Street and Fischerinsel—because the rear section of the procession was apparently held up by the police.

From the organizers' loudspeaker van, a speaker had repeatedly chanted the slogan, 'From the River to the Sea, Palestine will be Free! From Sea to River, Palestine will Live Forever,' which was taken up and repeated by the marchers.

Police officers charged into the crowd with the aim of arresting the speaker, and began to kettle this section of the demonstration. One elderly demonstrator was pushed down by the police, while another was injured in the face and had to retreat with a bleeding nose.

Police apparently also used pepper spray. The loudspeaker van was expelled from the demonstration. After this violent provocation, the demonstration was allowed to proceed to its destination, Rotes Rathaus.

A police spokeswoman justified the operation by stating that 'forbidden slogans that are relevant under criminal law were publicly uttered' from the loudspeaker van. This explanation is not only a restriction on freedom of expression, but itself legally dubious. On March 22, the 8th Senate of the Hessian Administrative Court ruled that the slogan 'From the River to the Sea' may not be prohibited.

The demonstrators were not intimidated by the police violence. Several participants with whom SGP members had already discussed at Oranienplatz and who were attracted by our international socialist perspective took SGP posters for themselves to carry during the march and to draw attention to the SGP rally on May 21 at 6 pm in front of Neukölln Town Hall.

Several of them also bought the book 'The Logic of Zionism: From Nationalist Myth to the Gaza Genocide' by David North, published by Mehring Books. The lectures in this book not only provide a profound analysis of the reactionary ideological and political foundations of Zionism, they also constitute an appeal to the Israeli and international working class to oppose the murderous policies of the Netanyahu regime and its imperialist supporters and to defend the Palestinians on the basis of a revolutionary socialist perspective.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

[wsws.org/contact](https://www.wsws.org/contact)