

Deportation after one “like”—German cabinet tightens up deportation rules

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The German cabinet agreed on a drastic tightening up of deportation rules on June 29. If the bill becomes law, all it will take is a single unfavourable click on the internet to be deported and handed over to your potential executioner.

According to the draft law, immigration authorities will be able to deport non-German citizens without a court judgement if they “condone” a terrorist offence.” In future, even a single comment that glorifies and condones a terrorist offence on social media can justify a serious interest in expulsion, according to the website of the Interior Ministry led by Nancy Faeser (Social Democratic Party, SPD), which is responsible for the draft.

It is not necessary for the person concerned to explicitly support the “terrorist offence.” “Liking a post on social media such as YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, etc.,” is sufficient, as stated in the explanatory memorandum to the draft bill.

Until now, a “serious interest in expulsion” by the state only existed in the case of criminal offences such as drug offences, trafficking in human beings or forced marriage. Offenders—or suspects—can be deported in such cases without first being convicted under criminal law. Now the same is made possible after a “like” on social media. This opens the door to completely arbitrary behaviour by the authorities.

Interior Minister Faeser cited the “barbaric terrorist attacks by Hamas on Israel” as an example of a terrorist offence, the “approval” of which will lead to deportation. However, since the Hamas attack anyone who protests against the Israeli genocide in Gaza or points out that the conflict did not begin on October 7, 2023, but rather 75 years earlier with the Nakba, is accused of supporting terrorism.

The deputy chair of the conservative CDU/CSU parliamentary group, Andrea Lindholz (CSU), for whom the draft law does not go far enough, is even explicitly calling for what is already implicitly included: the deportation of all those protesting against the genocide in Gaza. “In view of the mass antisemitism and caliphate demonstrations on German streets, every antisemitic and anti-democratic

offence must regularly lead to deportation,” she said.

Thomas Oberhäuser, chairman of the Migration Law Working Group of the German Lawyers Association (DAV), criticised the draft. “You have to develop a lot of legal imagination to define the posting of a ‘like’ as equivalent to dissemination,” he said.

Oberhäuser cited the case of the president of the Technical University of Berlin, Geraldine Rauch, as a cautionary example. She was accused of hating Jews because she had liked three posts on Twitter/X criticising Israel’s genocide in Gaza. While she cannot be deported as a German citizen, she came under massive pressure to resign from her post.

The draft law is a serious attack on the basic democratic right to freedom of expression. Under the Nazi dictatorship, a joke that questioned Germany’s “final victory” could lead to a death sentence. Now, a single “like” under a post that contradicts German foreign policy is enough for a deportation order to a country where the affected person could face imprisonment, torture and death. The aim is to suppress any critical expression of opinion.

The ruling coalition of the SPD, Greens and Free Democratic Party (FDP) want to rush the bill through parliament. In order to circumvent prescribed deadlines, the bill is to be introduced as an amendment to an ongoing legislative procedure that has nothing to do with it in terms of content. The reason for this haste is the dramatic escalation of the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East, in which the German government is playing a leading role.

The Ukrainian army has been bled dry of soldiers and resistance to the continuation of the slaughter is growing. Under these circumstances, NATO is preparing to intervene with its own troops and thus open up a direct confrontation with Russia. The NATO summit in Washington is expected to decide on this at the beginning of July. Germany, already the biggest financial supporter of the war after the US, will play a leading role in expanding the war.

In the Middle East, Israel is preparing to extend the war to Lebanon—and ultimately Iran—with German and American support. Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant, who has

already carried out his death threats against the Palestinians in Gaza, is threatening to bomb Lebanon “back to the Stone Age.”

This war policy, which is encountering growing popular rejection, and its enormous financial costs cannot be reconciled with democracy. It requires the establishment of a police state.

The new deportation law is part of an ongoing drumbeat against democratic rights. Demonstrations in defence of Palestinians are banned or subjected to draconian censorship, oppositional students and teachers are threatened with sanctions, climate activists are locked up for weeks in preventive detention. Germany’s domestic intelligence service (Office for the Protection of the Constitution) is being transformed into a revamped Gestapo, which not only “observes” socialists with all the means available to the secret service, but also denounces them to landlords and employers and ensures they are denied any premises.

The law was prepared by a weeks-long smear campaign, the script for which could have been written by the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD). After an Afghan refugee attacked a far-right provocateur with a knife in Mannheim on May 31 and stabbed a police officer in the ensuing scuffle, the demand for the “deportation of criminal foreigners” has dominated the political debate. This despite the fact that the perpetrator had been living in Germany for 11 years, had married a German woman and had two children, without previously attracting any political attention.

This did not deter Germany’s politicians, however. The SPD, Greens and all other parties outdid each other with their agitation against refugees. Chancellor Olaf Scholz promised to deport “criminals” to Afghanistan, where the Taliban are in power. The new law is the result of this campaign.

It is significant that, alongside the SPD, the greatest warmongers—the Greens and the FDP—are most vehemently in favour of the law and the associated abolition of freedom of expression. “Anyone who mocks the liberal basic order by cheering on terrorism and celebrating terrible murders forfeits their right to stay. That is why we are changing the right of residence,” declared Vice-Chancellor Robert Habeck (Greens).

The parliamentary secretary of the FDP parliamentary group, Stephan Thomae, insisted that a single post could “justify a serious interest in deportation.” “Anyone who incites hatred online is not committing a trivial offence, but is disturbing the public peace, endangering our free and democratic basic order and has no place in Germany,” he wrote.

For its part, the Sahra Wagenknecht Alliance (BWS) was

the most vicious in its incitement against alleged “criminal foreigners.” Originally, alongside fulminating against refugees, the BSW placed the demand for peace in Ukraine and social equality at the centre of its agitation. Now it has pushed the last two topics into the background.

Following good poll ratings for the state elections due in September, the BSW is preparing for a possible coalition government with the conservative CDU in the states of Saxony and Thuringia. Wagenknecht knows, of course, that for this to happen she has to give up her verbal opposition to the war in Ukraine and her promises of social reform. That is why she is increasingly focussing on anti-refugee agitation.

She has attacked Faeser’s new deportation law from the right. In an interview with the daily *Die Welt*, she accused the Social Democratic interior minister of doing too little to combat crime and uncontrolled migration. She was “certainly not the right interior minister to stop crime and uncontrolled migration,” Wagenknecht explained.

Faeser is “above all a minister who announces measures but has done far too little to curb uncontrolled migration and stop the steep rise in immigrant crime, following the example of other European countries,” Wagenknecht continued. Neither dangerous individuals nor asylum seekers responsible for serious criminal offences were being consistently deported. Instead, Faeser “takes refuge in the internet instead of facing up to her failure.”

The shift to the right by all of the political parties shows that the danger of fascism and dictatorship does not only emanate from the AfD. War and fascism are the response by the ruling elite to the hopeless crisis of the capitalist system. They can only be countered by an independent movement of the international working class fighting for a socialist programme.



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