



Germany: Viva, viva Palestine! - Protest actions despite demo bans in Berlin

Martin Suchanek, GAM Infomail 1188, 16 May 2022 Mon, 23/05/2022 - 15:53

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Despite a massive police presence on Berlin's streets and especially in the district of Neukölln, despite massive repression and numerous arrests, a ban on all public pro-Palestinian rallies in the capital has been broken several times.

Actions

For example, on 15 May, Nakba Day, a demonstration against environmental destruction in the global South marched from Hasenheide through Neukölln, as well as denouncing capitalist environmental destruction and imperialist exploitation, it also loudly showed solidarity with the Palestinian people and their struggle against oppression. On Sonnenallee, the police stopped the march and corralled it in a side street, arresting people, taking down the demonstrators' personal details and threatening everyone with fines.

A few hundred metres away, other spontaneous rallies were attacked and suppressed. Hermannplatz resembled an occupied zone at times.

It was not only organised left, anti-imperialist and internationalist organisations and groups that temporarily broke through the undemocratic ban on demonstrations and assemblies, which made a mockery of bourgeois democracy.

The people of Neukölln also openly showed their solidarity with Palestine. Many joined in internationalist chants, others displayed Palestine flags in their windows, still others took to the streets with flags and kufiya. Even for this, they had to put up with police harassment, controls and racist harassment.

Hand in hand

Not only the police, but also the "cosmopolitanism" and "tolerance" of the capital, which the government and the senate like to invoke, revealed their real, repressive character. Berlin's "democracy" exposed itself for what it is: a fair-weather event of German imperialism, its political façade.

Democratic rights obviously do not apply when it comes to Palestine solidarity and commemorative rallies and events to mark the Nakba. As in late April, the Berlin police authorities imposed a ban on all pro-Palestinian demonstrations and rallies. And, as in November, these were confirmed by the Berlin-Brandenburg Higher Administrative Court.

The executive and the judiciary thus work hand in hand when it comes to undermining democratic rights. This is justified by a sweeping, slanderous insinuation that these rallies and demonstrations are antisemitic and that violence emanates from them. There is no need for concrete examples of violence, no concrete, verifiable cause - the general suspicion is enough. So little remains of the right to demonstrate.

In the article "The ban on Palestine demonstrations perverts freedom of assembly", the lawyer Ralf Michels also refers to the justification for the ban by the assembly authorities. According to Michels, the "assessment of danger" is also based on the nationality and origin of the expected participants. According to the official letter, the police expected "persons from the Arab diaspora, especially with a Palestinian background" and other "groups of people with a Muslim background, most likely from the Lebanese, Turkish and Syrian diasporas". (<https://www.berliner-zeitung.de/kultur-vergnuegen/staatsrechtler-das-ver...>)

[1])

A racist attribution in officialese could not be formulated much more clearly.

And politics?

Quotes like the one above, show once again how the police think and whose side they and the courts are on. But even if the bans were issued or confirmed by them, they would not be possible if they did not reflect the interests of the state as a whole and were not endorsed by the federal and state governments themselves.

Unconditional solidarity with Israel - and thus more or less open support for the oppression of the Palestinians - has been part of the German reason of state for decades. Hence the repression and criminalisation of Palestinian organisations and especially left liberation movements, hence the attacks on the BDS campaign, hence even the defamation of left, anti-Zionist Jews.

The Berlin police and courts have been executing this line and tightening it for weeks. But they would not do so without the political support of the Senate. It is one of the specialities of Berlin politics that a three-day blanket ban is by no means the end of the line for the CDU. It demands that "known troublemakers" be more easily taken into custody and, if necessary, deported.

There is cross-factional unity in the Berlin House of Representatives when it comes to further suppressing democratic rights and solidarity with anti-imperialist struggles and movements. At least the LINKE Neukölln and the Left Party MP Ferat Kocak have taken a clear stand against repression and demo bans and also rejected the tall tales that the organisers of the Palestine demos would tolerate antisemitism.

However, he, the Left Party of Neukölln and the youth organisation Solid are more like voices in the desert. The party leadership, the party's senators and the vast majority of its deputies are taking a dive in this attack on democratic rights and are in fact marching along on the Senate line.

We will not be intimidated!

"Berlin defies repression" reads a statement by left groups, also signed by Arbeiter:innenmacht and REVOLUTION. In it, the signatories show solidarity with the spontaneous demonstrations, rallies and other actions. Not only organised left, internationalist, anti-capitalist, communist and anti-imperialist organisations sent a strong signal on 15 May not to be driven from the streets - the population, too, especially migrant people, defended in practice their democratic rights against the repression of German imperialism, its cops, courts and state-supporting parties.

"The day of the Nakba", the statement says, "is a day of struggle against all oppression, a day of struggle for the freedom of peoples and a day of struggle for justice!" Let us continue this struggle together, let us build a movement of solidarity against repression, against imperialism and for the Palestinians' right to self-determination!

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Links:

[1] <https://www.berliner-zeitung.de/kultur-vergnuegen/staatsrechtler-das-verbot-der-palaestinademos-pervertiert-versammlungsfreiheit-li.227922>