

Palestine speaks Freiburg, 30.01.2024

The repression of pro-Palestinian voices in the context of the currently planned event “Über Palästina Sprechen” by DIE LINKE Freiburg

The Significance of the Event

The event planned by Die Linke Freiburg on February 2, 2024, creates a platform where marginalized voices can be heard, whose experiences and political views are otherwise ignored, stigmatized, tabooed, and repressed in public discourse. Palestinians in Germany face an ongoing series of racist attacks and slander. Therefore, we also consider this alarming exclusion from the societal discourse as a significant deficit in German democracy and aim to change this condition through our engagement. Additionally, this event promotes the diversity of political perspectives by welcoming respected Jewish guest Mr. Wieland Hoban, a representative from Jewish Voice, climate activist Ms. Elisa Bas, and Mr. Ramsy Kilani, a member of our organization.

Attacks on Freedom of Expression and Abuse of Power

We were appalled by the scandalous attempts to obstruct this event and unequivocally condemn them as targeted attacks on freedom of expression. It is a disgrace for our society that the voices of the Palestinian community and their supporters are frequently suppressed and systematically silenced.

The regrettable cancellation of the event venue by Haus37 and the unfounded accusations against Die Linke Freiburg are unacceptable, especially since the event enjoys far more support than opposition among the general population. Therefore, we interpret the massive pressure currently facing Die Linke Freiburg due to their defense of this event as the abuse of political and media power by the few who act against the will of the majority to suppress these vital voices.

We were also disappointed to discover that the newly designated event location, Hebelschule, was withdrawn by the City of Freiburg shortly after a prior commitment. This recent, not entirely unexpected cancellation intensifies our frustration and raises serious questions about the functioning of democracy in the City of Freiburg with regards to freedom of expression. It is extremely frustrating, as we clearly recognize the event's broad support among the citizens of Freiburg.

We were also dismayed by the stance of the Left List. As elected members of the municipal council, they are endorsing silence, thereby betraying the fundamental principles of democracy. We urge them to become aware of their responsibility as political representatives by promoting a balanced and fair dialogue instead of contributing to the suppression of voices.

In the past, it has frequently occurred, both within and outside of Freiburg, that events aiming to discuss Palestine have been prevented. The long-standing systematic suppression of Palestinian voices in Germany, especially in our city of Freiburg, serves as a means to steer discourse and public opinion in a specific direction, maintaining societal uncertainty about the political situation in Palestine. The suppression of these voices fuels fear and limits the German society's ability to engage with the challenges facing the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation and their right to self-determination.

Demand for Responsible Journalism

In this context, we must also criticize the role of the Badische Zeitung, which uncritically quoted excerpts from the statement of the Israelite Community in its article dated January 23, 2024. They support defamation attempts by unquestioningly spreading accusations about individuals or organizations. This contradicts every principle of responsible journalism and the media's constitutional duty in Germany to report impartially and objectively. Even more concerning is that the accused party, in this case, Ramsy Kilani and Palästina Spricht, is not given the opportunity to respond to these allegations in the same public forum.

Solidarity with Die Linke Freiburg

It is with sincere regret that we note that Die Linke, which has advocated for inclusive cooperation with partners of different political beliefs, has been put in a situation where its democratic principles and political integrity are questioned. Despite the pressure, we thank Die Linke for upholding the debate in the name of freedom of expression and giving visibility to voices that are underrepresented in the mainstream media. Only through this can the one-dimensional portrayal promoted by most German media outlets today be shifted towards a balanced discussion.

We stand in solidarity with Die Linke Freiburg and call on them to remain steadfast and not be intimidated by spineless critics. They have a duty to provide a platform for suppressed voices, especially at times when these voices need to be heard the most.

The progression of racism against the Arab population in Germany in the context of the event and the Genocide in Gaza

Demands for Human Rights and International Law

Our organization represents the voice of the Palestinian people, and we stand in solidarity with them. However, we also stand in solidarity with all other oppressed peoples and victims of violence, whoever they may be, wherever they may be.

It is a sign of the increasing racism against Palestinians, Arabs, and Muslims when merely talking about Palestine is portrayed as a threat and provocation. The Palestinian people have the right to speak out, make demands, protest, and be politically active.

Our demands include respecting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and upholding international law. We will not remain silent as these fundamental and legitimate rights are denied to the Palestinian people.

Double Standards and Racism in Societal Discourse

"All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood." (Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights)

With this principle in mind, we express our deep concern and outrage about the current suppression and associated racism in Germany, within the context of the recent developments surrounding the event 'Talking About Palestine' planned by Die Linke Freiburg.

This event is intended as a platform to educate and discuss the complex and painful issues related to Palestine. The cancellation of the event venue by Haus37, the subsequent cancellation by the City of Freiburg of the second venue, and the unsupportive stance of members of the municipal council are indicative of the challenges our community must confront.

The fact that pro-Israeli events and discussions, which provide a platform for highly polarizing and often far-right views, are not subjected to such repression underscores a deeply ingrained double standard and increasing racism towards Arab and Muslim communities in Germany. This selective suppression of voices is not only an attack on freedom of expression but also reinforces dangerous stereotypes and hostilities that harm our society.

Racism in Freiburg

While Israel is facing allegations of committing genocide in Gaza before the International Court of Justice and measures were imposed on Israel on January 26, 2024, to prevent potential genocide, the Israelite Community continues to abuse its commemorative events in Freiburg and its press releases to propagate Israeli propaganda attempting to justify this genocide. By reproducing the political propaganda of the Israeli government, it ignores the suffering of a population living under occupation and the mass murder of over 26,000 people, including 12,000 children. The active ignorance of the suffering of an occupied population and the failure to acknowledge ongoing tragedies reveal an escalating racist double standard. This behavior demonstrates a troubling pattern of racism against Palestinians throughout Germany.

Moreover, Zionist entities in Freiburg have labeled Palestine Speaks as anti-Semitic. The unequal conditions within the city of Freiburg, shaped by the pressures exerted by these groups under the guise of neutrality, result in stifling any critique of Israel without a thorough examination of these allegations. This aligns with the broader political climate prevailing in Germany.



Call to Action

In a time when freedom of speech is under attack from various sides and racism and right-wing extremism are on the rise again, it is all the more important to rise against oppression and steadfastly advocate for the fundamental human rights of all communities. We call on all involved parties to be aware of their responsibility and the priority of this task and to fight for a just, inclusive society.

With solidarity,
Palästina Spricht Freiburg

