

German Vice Chancellor Habeck justifies the genocide in Gaza

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On November 2, German Vice Chancellor and Minister of Economic Affairs Robert Habeck issued a 10-minute video on his X account supporting the genocide against Palestinians in Gaza and threatening anyone who protests against it with draconian consequences.

The media and politicians from all parties have enthusiastically greeted Habeck's "historic speech" (*Bild*). The vice chancellor has "pulled off a coup," cheered *Stern* magazine, which already sees the Green politician as a future German chancellor. At last, Germany had "received a chancellor's speech on the situation." Habeck "not only provided political orientation, but also an emotionally solid basis for people to hold on to."

"The commentaries are largely unanimous, extending from the left to the (conservative) CDU: the Green vice chancellor is saying what is necessary, and in the right order," commented the *taz* newspaper. Deputy CDU Vice Chairwoman Karin Prien also praised Habeck's speech: "A strong, necessary performance." Habeck struck the right note "like no other in this federal government."

Habeck's speech is in fact a disgusting mixture of warmongering, historical falsification, authoritarian threats and lies. He invokes the murder of six million Jews by "my grandparents' generation" to justify another crime against humanity.

"The phrase 'Israel's security is Germany's reason of state' was never an empty formula and it must not become one," Habeck declares. Germany's special relationship with Israel stems "from our historical responsibility: it was my grandparents' generation that sought to wipe out Jewish life in Germany and Europe."

Justifying the genocide in Gaza with the Holocaust is politically perverse. The 2.3 million Palestinians who are being bombed, starved and displaced bear no responsibility for the crimes of the Nazis. Nor does their persecution in any way serve to protect "Jewish life." In fact the war crimes provocatively committed by the Israeli government before the eyes of the world with the full support of Berlin and Washington are endangering the security of Jews in Israel and all around the world.

In three weeks, the Israeli army has dropped bombs with an explosive force of 25,000 tonnes on one of the most densely populated areas in the world. This is equivalent to two nuclear bombs. It has targeted hospitals, schools and refugee convoys. The official death toll is now 10,000, including 4,000 children. Thousands more lie under the rubble.

Habeck supports these war crimes and denounces anyone who opposes or even criticises them as an antisemite.

"Antisemitism cannot be tolerated in any form—any form at all," he says, lumping together "Muslims living here" who protest against the

deaths of their friends and relatives, "sections of the political left" who oppose colonialism and oppression, and the real antisemites in the Alternative for Germany, (AfD) who have "downplayed the Second World War and the Nazi regime as 'a drop of birdshit.'"

Habeck threatens anyone speaking out against the genocide of the Palestinians with "a harsh political response." He threatens migrants without German citizenship with the loss of their residency status and refugees lacking a residence permit with immediate deportation. "Muslims living here" are to be left defenceless against the terror of neo-Nazis. They will lose their "right to protection from right-wing extremist violence" if they do not "clearly distance themselves from antisemitism," Habeck states. "Anyone who lives here, does so according to the rules of this country. Anyone who comes here must know that this is the way it is and that it will be enforced."

Habeck's comment is an invitation to right-wing extremists to take violent action against pro-Palestinian and Muslim migrants—even if Habeck hypocritically distances himself from incitement against Muslims elsewhere. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz is also fuelling this pogrom-type atmosphere with his slogan, "We must finally deport on a large scale." Should refugee shelters in Germany once again go up in flames, then Habeck and Scholz will bear the responsibility.

The claim that those who reject the war crimes of the far-right Netanyahu government are antisemites is a vile slander, which is also directed against millions of Jews in Israel and around the world. Antisemites are not those who reject these crimes, but rather those who hold the Jewish people collectively responsible for them.

Genuine antisemitism by right-wingers and neo-Nazis, on the other hand, is not only "tolerated" in Germany, but also covered up and promoted by the state. Far-right networks in the German army and police were able to prepare plans for a coup unhindered, while the fascist National Socialist Underground (NSU) was able to commit murders under the eye of the country's domestic secret service. Hans-Georg Maassen, a far-right extremist, headed the domestic intelligence service for years. In Berlin, the far-right historian Jörg Baberowski won the support of the entire political and academic establishment when he declared that Hitler was "not cruel." And members of the AfD, which enthusiastically supports the genocide in Gaza, have been elected to senior parliamentary posts by all the leading political parties.

Israel and "Germany's reason of state"

Habeck and the German government are not backing Israel out of concern for the safety of the Jewish population. Instead they are using the heavily armed country as a battering ram to advance their imperialist interests in the Middle East. For Berlin and Washington, the Gaza conflict is just another battlefield in the global war for world domination, which is primarily directed against Russia and China.

“Jewish lives” are the last thing they are interested in. They are quite prepared to turn Israel into a murderous battlefield, just as they have done with Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya and most recently Ukraine.

Habeck's claim that “the promise of protection to the Jews” is “a historical foundation of this republic” is a monumental falsification of history.

In reality, antisemites and old Nazis have determined the policies of the Federal Republic for decades. The co-author and commentator of the Nuremberg Race Laws, Hans Globke, ran the government for 10 years as Konrad Adenauer's head of chancellery. The foreign intelligence service, led by Hitler's spy chief Reinhard Gehlen, hid mass murderers such as Adolf Eichmann and Alois Brunner. Concentration camp murderers were only brought to trial in Germany 20 years after the liberation of Auschwitz, and only after the attorney general in Hesse, Fritz Bauer, had overcome almost insurmountable obstacles. As late as 1966, Kurt Georg Kiesinger, a former NSDAP member, was elected German chancellor.

West Germany only established diplomatic relations with Tel Aviv in 1965, two years before Israel occupied the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights in violation of international law during the Six-Day War. Like the US, Germany now uses the highly armed Israel as a bridgehead for its imperialist interests in the oil-rich Middle East.

Angela Merkel only came up with the idea of declaring the “security of Israel” to be a “German reason of state” in 2008. At that time it had long been clear that the Israeli government was sabotaging any possibility of a peaceful settlement with the Palestinians and was actively seeking their complete expulsion.

Habeck's claim that “the annihilation of European Jewry” was “the main objective of the Second World War” is a gross oversimplification. The main objective of the war was the conquest and subjugation of the Soviet Union in order to create “living space” for German imperialism and to crush communism. This is why the economic and military elites supported Hitler's plans, even if not all of them fully shared his fanatical antisemitism. Hitler's own antisemitism was strongly influenced by the fact that many communists and socialists were Jews.

The systematic murder of the entire Jewish population began on the Eastern Front as part of a deliberate war of extermination that claimed the lives of over 25 million Soviet citizens, the majority of whom were non-Jews. Only at this point, under the conditions of war, were the Nazis able to realise their plans to physically exterminate the Jews in the West on an industrial scale.

Today, Germany is again pursuing policies in Ukraine resembling those of Hitler and the Wehrmacht. It is blocking any negotiated solution and fueling the war with huge arms supplies to Ukraine in order to subjugate Russia and gain unrestricted access to its vast resources. In Kiev, it relies on a regime that glorifies Nazi collaborators and antisemitic mass murderers such as Stepan Bandera and Roman Shukhevych, erecting monuments and naming streets after both of them.

Habeck and the German government are not supporting the genocide of Palestinians out of concern for “Israel's security,” but for the same

imperialist motives. They, and not the opponents of the genocide against the Palestinians, stand in the tradition of the Nazi regime.

Habeck and the transformation of the Greens

Robert Habeck epitomises the transformation of the Greens from a petty-bourgeois protest party into a pillar of German imperialism. He earned a doctorate in literature and worked as a writer before making a political career by vigorously elbowing his way to the top. He is the prototype of the wealthy German petty bourgeois, who presents himself as tolerant, cosmopolitan and environmentally friendly, as long as his own privileged position is not jeopardised. When this takes place he becomes furious.

Today, the Greens are not only Germany's leading party of war, but also the country's premier party of big business. As economics minister, Habeck has handed out billions to Germany's big corporations, while social and education spending has been mercilessly slashed. The Intel Group alone (annual profit \$20 billion) is receiving €10 billion in taxpayers' money to build a new chip factory in Magdeburg.

It therefore comes as no surprise that Habeck has now been called upon to justify the war crimes in the Middle East in the face of growing opposition to the atrocities committed by the Israeli army. He knows like no other how to mime inner turmoil with a furrowed brow and lamenting voice while preparing the next outrage. He speaks from the soul of all those “cultured” petty bourgeois who are prepared to murder tens of thousands of Palestinian women and children and make Germany “fit for war” (Defence Minister Boris Pistorius), while they retain their good conscience and—as SS leader Heinrich Himmler once put it in front of his concentration camp henchmen—“remain decent.”

The more the political parties close ranks, however, the more they isolate themselves from the mass of the population. All over the world, people of all nationalities, religions and ethnicities, including many Jews, are taking to the streets to denounce the onslaught against the Palestinians. The vast majority of the world's population clearly opposes the Israeli genocide in Gaza.

The governments in Berlin, Washington and Tel Aviv will not be dissuaded from pursuing their bloody business. The struggle against the genocide in Gaza must be linked to the struggle of workers all over the world against exploitation and inequality, and developed into an international socialist movement. This is the perspective fought for by the Socialist Equality Parties and the International Committee of the Fourth International.



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