

German Health Minister Lauterbach: Supporting the Gaza genocide and trivialising the Holocaust

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Anyone in Germany who protests the Israeli genocide against the Palestinians is regularly defamed as an “antisemite” or “Jew-hater.” Demonstrations are banned by the dozen, participants arrested, posters and flyers confiscated. Expressing the slogan “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free” is now considered a criminal offence and can be punished with up to three years in prison.

However, anyone who condemns the mass murder in Gaza is not an antisemite; rather, it is the German elites who are returning to their fascistic traditions in their support for Israel. This was particularly evident in recent days when leading German politicians, journalists and academics disseminated a video justifying the murder of Palestinian children while at the same time trivialising the extermination of 6 million Jews by the Nazis.

British television station TalkTV had interviewed the notoriously Islamophobic Douglas Murray, who—equipped with a bullet-proof press jacket—was standing directly on the Israeli border with the Gaza Strip. The almost eight-minute interview is an uninterrupted fascist tirade of hatred. Murray justifies the collective punishment of the Palestinian population, accuses the Nazi henchmen who shot Jews en masse of having a sense of shame, unlike Hamas, and accuses the right-wing British government of not being brutal enough in its actions against immigrants.

German Health Minister Karl Lauterbach (Social Democrat, SPD) was delighted. He reposted the interview with the comment that it was “indeed extremely worth seeing.” Here, “a lot is said that is otherwise only thought.” Right-wing columnist Jan Fleischhauer declared: “This is great.” This was then reposted with the words “watch and listen” by deputy Christian Democratic Union (CDU) chairwoman and Schleswig-Holstein’s

education minister Karin Prien. The influential economics professor Veronika Grimm also joined in with the words “really great.”

Murray is a well-known figure in right-wing extremist circles. The co-editor of the ultra-conservative magazine *The Spectator* advocates the theory of the “Great Replacement,” according to which the immigration of non-whites and Muslims is a conspiracy to displace white majority populations. He has written books that defend neoconservatism and Brexit, condemn Islam across the board and accuse Europe of committing “suicide” by allowing the immigration of Muslims.

In the TalkTV interview, Murray gives free rein to his racist and fascist ideas. Asked by presenter Piers Morgan whether the collective punishment of a population half made up of children is not contrary to international law, he defends this mass murder on the grounds that the inhabitants of the Gaza Strip are collectively responsible for the actions of Hamas, which they elected in 2006. There was “no peaceful population” in Gaza, he says.

One could not simply compare Hamas to the Nazis, they were far worse, Murray continued. “Even the Nazis were ashamed of what they did. SS battalions who spent their days shooting Jews in the back of the head and throwing them into ditches had to get very, very drunk to forget what they had done.” The actions of the Hamas fighters were “at least as barbaric” as those of the Nazis, but there was one major difference: “They did it with pleasure.”

The barbarism, sadism, and pride with which members of the SS carried out the mass murder of Jews, Sinti and Roma and millions of Soviet citizens is documented thousands of times over. Not only Murray knows this, Lauterbach, Fleischhauer, Prien, Grimm and everyone else who cheers him on also know this.

“There are hundreds of photos of SS men and soldiers

posing in front of corpses. Some had lampshades made from the tattooed skin of murdered Jewish women,” commented Professor Jürgen Zimmerer from the University of Hamburg on X/Twitter. “But when an Islamophobic right-wing radical says they were ashamed, everyone applauds.”

With their whitewashing of Nazi crimes, Murray and his defenders make clear who really stands in the murderous tradition of the Nazis in the Gaza conflict. It is not the Palestinians, who have been oppressed and expelled from their homeland for 75 years, but the Netanyahu government, which includes avowed racists and fascists, and their imperialist backers.

A Zionist state was never a solution to the historical oppression and persecution of the Jewish people. The establishment of Israel was based on the violent expulsion of the Palestinian population, in which predecessors of Netanyahu’s Likud party carried out numerous brutal massacres of civilians. The imperialist powers, above all the US, have supported and armed Israel as a military bridgehead for their own interests in the Middle East.

This is the case again now. For the ruling class, the Palestinian resistance, with which oppressed people in the Middle East and around the world sympathise, must be eradicated and crushed in order to re-establish imperialist domination in the region after the bloody but unsuccessful wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and Syria. From Washington’s and Berlin’s point of view, the Gaza conflict is another front in a third world war alongside the Ukraine war, in which they want to defend their world power position against Russia and China.

This explains the apparent contradiction that on the one hand they denounce anyone who opposes the genocide in Gaza as an antisemite, while at the same time they trivialise the Nazi mass murderers and wage war against Russia in Ukraine in alliance with the successors of Nazi collaborators such as Stepan Bandera.

In 2014, when historian Jörg Baberowski announced in *Der Spiegel* that Hitler was “not vicious” and was unanimously supported by the ruling elites, the WSWS warned that Hitler was being rehabilitated in order to prepare for new, criminal wars. Today, the militarisation of Germany is well advanced and government officials are circulating tweets attesting to the supposed shame and guilty conscience of SS members “who spent their days shooting Jews in the back of the head.”

Lauterbach has since quietly deleted his tweet with the Murray video—without distancing himself from it or justifying himself. But he knew exactly what he was

doing.

He reposted the interview along with a comment by right-wing rabbi Shmuel Reichman: “The Nazis, as fundamentally evil as they were, believed they were doing a necessary evil for something ultimately good; they still possessed a spark of humanity at their core; their main flaw, then, was that they believed the ends justified the means; though they fully believed in the ‘outcome’, a world without Jews, they still fundamentally opposed the ‘actions’ they undertook.”

The antisemitism commissioner of the Green Party-governed state of Baden-Württemberg, Michael Blume, has also quoted Murray and Reichmann with unqualified approval.

Nazis who retained a “spark of humanity,” murdered out of good intentions, and abhorred their own actions! But anyone who takes to the streets in horror at the daily mass murder in the Gaza Strip is an antisemite! And all this is being spread by a social democratic member of the German government and labelled as “extremely worth seeing”!

This rehabilitation of the Nazis is directly linked to the ruthless policies of the German government. As health minister, Lauterbach himself was responsible for the avoidable deaths of tens of thousands of people during the COVID pandemic with his “profits before lives” policy. In the midst of the pandemic, he slashed the healthcare budget by more than two-thirds, from €64 billion in 2022 to €16 billion for 2024.

Lauterbach speaks for a ruling class that no longer values human life. It is in the process of making Germany “war-ready” again in order to pursue its imperialist interests by force. In Ukraine, it is sacrificing the lives of hundreds of thousands of soldiers in a NATO proxy war against Russia. Chancellor Scholz (SPD) has just announced that Germany will send €8 billion worth of weapons and ammunition to Kiev next year to ensure the slaughter continues.

With the genocide in Gaza, all restraint has fallen. In the name of the fight against “antisemitism,” of all things, the German ruling class is echoing the aims and methods of the Nazis. That is why it justifies the slaughter of civilians and trivialises its own crimes against humanity.



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