

The return of German imperialism

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Germany is making intensive preparations to conduct new wars to secure resources. This was the unmistakable message of a lead article in Germany's business newspaper *Handelsblatt*, "Expedition Resources: Germany's new course."

The article shows the real face of the German bourgeoisie. As in the first half of the twentieth century, when it twice played a central role in plunging humanity into world war, it is again moving to enforce its imperialist interests through war. "The previous political measures to secure raw materials are reaching their limits," the *Handelsblatt* states. Dependence on raw materials is the German economy's Achilles heel, the paper writes: "Industry is plagued by the fear that the high-tech sector in Germany could be cut off from essential supplies."

The very same business circles that financed Hitler are again banging the war drums. The article cites an interview with Dierk Paskert, the manager of the Resource Alliance founded in 2011. Members of the alliance include Volkswagen, ThyssenKrupp, Bayer and BASF—firms that either directly supported Nazi war plans, or whose predecessors did. Now they work closely with the German government to plan how Berlin will secure access to critical raw materials across the globe, by force if necessary.

The hunger of Germany's export-dependent industry for materials and markets is huge. According to *Handelsblatt* German raw material imports over the last decade have nearly tripled. "The battle for resources is about oil and gas, but also minerals," the newspaper writes. *Handelsblatt* gives a detailed overview of such highly prized resources as lithium, cobalt, chromium, indium and rare earth elements, and cites the growing conflict between the major powers over such resources.

Paskert makes clear that the German bourgeoisie is willing to use military force to secure such resources against its rivals. Asked by *Handelsblatt* whether there

will once again be resource wars, he explains: "History shows that many conflicts are rooted in the fight for resources. Up to now it was mostly about oil or gas, but also increasingly minerals. The supply of raw materials is the basis for the value and wealth of a country and therefore has geopolitical significance. The presence of the US military in the Persian Gulf or the massive expansion of Chinese naval forces is also aimed at protecting such interests." *Handelsblatt* assures its readers that this view finds support in political circles, and that for the federal government "the control of raw materials" is a "strategic issue for foreign policy". It is preparing for a situation where "the existing resource partnerships" are insufficient and "additional security and military instruments are required."

The return of aggressive German imperialism initiates a new stage of inter-imperialist conflict, raising the threat of a Third World War.

It is increasingly clear that the period after the Second World War—during which the German bourgeoisie adopted a pacifist stance and relied on Washington to carry out the wars and other military operations on which world imperialism relied—was merely a historical interlude.

The austerity policies pursued by the European Union after the outbreak of the world economic crisis have undermined the European market, which provided the basis for the expansion of German trade and production in recent decades. The result is the return of apparently long-buried specters of the past, as all the imperialist powers prepare for war.

In the 19th century Germany arrived late on the scene to take its place in the scramble for the division of the world. Then it acted all the more aggressively to enforce its interests against its rivals and twice plunged the world into war. With the intensification of the financial and economic crisis of world capitalism, German imperialism feels once again compelled to

enter the arena.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the American ruling class saw an opportunity for unchallenged operations all over the world. For more than a decade, it has waged “preventive wars” throughout the Middle East. Now it is also turning increasingly toward Asia and has organized a global drone war in defense of its strategic and economic interests. US President Barack Obama claims the authority to assassinate even American citizens via drone attacks.

French imperialism is increasingly employing military means to defend its interests in Africa and the Middle East. After playing a key role in starting the war in Libya, as well as wars in two former French colonies, Ivory Coast and Syria, it is now invading a fourth country, Mali.

Like the German bourgeoisie, Japan, Germany’s strategic ally in World War II, is reacting to the crisis with attacks on the working class at home and growing militarism abroad. As in the 1930s, this militarism is particularly directed against China and is currently being inflamed in the conflict over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands in the East China Sea.

Under these conditions the German bourgeoisie is re-arming. The *Handelsblatt* bluntly states that the German army will be rebuilt “in order to be used all over the world.”

The vast majority of the German population is vehemently opposed to militarism. The fact that the *Handelsblatt* can so publicly formulate the goals of the German bourgeoisie is above all a devastating indictment of the Green Party, the Social Democratic Party and the Left Party. They have repeatedly justified German foreign policy and military operations in Kosovo and Afghanistan, falsely claiming these wars were based on democratic and humanitarian considerations.

In the past 15 years, such forces have moved sharply to the right, aligning themselves increasingly openly with the interests of German big business and German militarism. Their silence on the *Handelsblatt* article speaks volumes. They agree with the war preparations.

Capitalism is once again dragging mankind toward catastrophe, under conditions where the destructive power of the ruling classes is vastly greater than during the two world wars of the last century. Though a new world war would place a question mark over the fate of

the entire human race, it is precisely to this end that the ruling classes and their bankrupt social and economic system are leading mankind. To the policies of imperialist barbarism and national conflict, the working class—in Germany, Europe, and around the world—must advance the program of international solidarity and socialist revolution.



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