

Stop the German army's preparations for civil war!

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This Tuesday witnessed the commencement of the first joint exercise by police and the German army (Bundeswehr) in the history of the Federal Republic. Hundreds of police officers and at least 360 soldiers are conducting training operations in the states of Baden-Wuerttemberg, Bavaria, Bremen, North-Rhine Westphalia, Saarland and Schleswig-Holstein. The three-day exercise, designated "GETEX" ("Joint Terrorism Defence Exercise"), is being coordinated by the German Ministries of Internal Affairs and Defense.

The exercise marks a dangerous turning point in German post-war history.

Germany's post war constitution (Grundgesetz) stipulates a strict separation between the police and the Bundeswehr based on lessons drawn from German history. During the Kaiserreich, the Weimar Republic, and above all the National Socialist dictatorship, the military, paramilitary combat organizations, the intelligence services and the police were deployed to brutally suppress social opposition. The basic principle of separating the police and the military has been successively undermined since the adoption of emergency laws in May 1968, but the deployment of heavily armed soldiers for "internal security" remains illegal.

The federal government has swept aside such considerations with "GETEX". This move was anticipated in the "White Paper 2016 on Security Policy and the Future of the Bundeswehr". The section "Deployment and role of the Bundeswehr in Germany" states that "in order to assist the police in effectively managing emergency situations, the armed forces may, under certain conditions, perform sovereign tasks and exercise powers of intervention and enforcement."

On Tuesday, Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen (CDU) justified the domestic use of the military,

saying: "The Bundeswehr is stretched in its operations, but possesses its own capacities and abilities, such as tracking down and defusing explosives, protective transport or attending to a large number of burn victims".

The cooperation between the military and police was urgently necessary due to a high threat level, declared Interior Minister Thomas de Maizière (CDU). "The wheels must interlock. Communication lines must function. The teams must know from one other what is to be done. And this will now be practiced until Thursday afternoon."

Officially, a scenario is being rehearsed in which the police are overwhelmed by a large-scale terrorist attack and call for the support of the Bundeswehr. Allegedly, no streets are to be closed off and tanks will not be operational in the exercise. According to the Interior Ministry, "it is a so-called staff training exercise, which is mainly concerned with testing out procedures and paths of communication between the staff responsible for the coordination of the deployment and the situation centers."

Hans Peter Bartels (SPD), the German army representative in the Bundestag, spoke more openly about the far-reaching measures being prepared behind the backs of the German population. "The use of helicopters and vehicles, the defusing of explosives, airborne and ground reconnaissance, support for doctors and paramedics and ABC defense—all this could help the police in extreme situations."

"According to constitutional jurisprudence, searches, arrests and the use of firearms would also be allowed as an absolute ultimatum" the army commissioner said. "Our soldiers are not an operational police reserve." But it was self-evident that the Bundeswehr would take over if the police lost overall control and trouble broke

out. "But only then!"

Bartel's comments speak volumes regarding the plans of the ruling class. In reality, the deployment of the army domestically is aimed not at preventing possible future terrorist attacks, but rather the suppression of the population.

In its statement on the massive police mobilisation in Munich last summer following the shooting spree by an 18-year-old, far-right, student David S., the Socialist Equality Party (SGP) warned: "The real target of the increase in state powers in the name of the "fight against terrorism" is the working class and all social and political opposition. Under conditions where social contradictions are intensifying, the European Union is breaking apart and the next financial crisis looms, the ruling class is preparing for fierce class battles. Growing militarism abroad is accompanied by the militarisation of domestic politics."

The ruling class is prepared to deploy the military to defend the bourgeois-capitalist order when necessary. A document from the European Union Institute for Security Studies entitled "What ambitions for European Defense 2020" regards the task of future military operations to be, amongst others, "shielding the global rich from the tensions and problems of the poor". The document reads "As the ratio of the world population living in misery and frustration will remain massive, the tensions and spillover between their world and that of the rich will continue to grow."

And further: "Technology is shrinking the world into a global village, but it is a village on the verge of revolution. While we have an increasingly integrated elite community, we also face increasingly explosive tensions from the poorer strata below."

To this end the army has constructed the artificial town of Schnöggersburg, north of the city of Magdeburg. Building began in 2012, and the town, comprising of over 500 buildings, including a subway, sports facilities, bridges, roads and an industrial area, enables the military to train for the suppression of social uprisings. The site cost more than 140 million euro to erect, and from 2018 soldiers will be able to train for street to street battles and prepare for Bundeswehr deployments in Germany "in the most realistic environment" (Ministry of Defense).

The preparation of civil war maneuvers against the population is supported by all of the parliamentary

parties. As governing parties in the respective federal states, the conservative CDU and CSU, the Social Democrats and the Greens are all directly involved in the implementation of "GETEX". For its part, the Left Party has called for a massive increase in funding for Germany's "police who have been ruined by cuts" (Sahra Wagenknecht). Last September the party held a joint meeting with the former general inspector of the Bundeswehr and chairman of the NATO military committee, Harald Kujat, who has long been campaigning for the domestic deployment of the Bundeswehr.

The aggressiveness with which the German ruling class is preparing war at home and abroad is a warning. More than seven decades after the end of National Socialist terror, the German elite is tossing aside the democratic principles to which it was forced to subscribe in the post-war period. The SGP strives to provide a political perspective to the widespread opposition to war, dictatorship and social cuts. Only an international, socialist movement against capitalism can stop the preparations for civil war by the ruling class and prevent a return to dictatorship and barbarism.



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