

German army rehearses for civil war

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Between March 21 and 27, German army units, including an expanded tank brigade and a combat company, conducted civil war scenarios in the artificial town named “Schnöggersburg”.

The Schnöggersburg complex, north of the city of Magdeburg in the state of Saxony-Anhalt, consists of more than 500 buildings, 300 cabins, sports facilities, bridges, an industrial area, an old town with marketplace, a government district, a slum and a religious building. It also has an airfield, a sewage system, a two-lane highway and a subway extending 350 metres, the only one of its type in the state of Saxony-Anhalt. The *World Socialist Web Site* reported on the inauguration of the mega-complex last October.

On the grounds of the combat training centre (GÜZ), 560 soldiers practiced the storming of residential buildings, the demolition of barricades and an assault on the airfield and the tower. Together with their training officers, the troops carried out house-to-house fighting and street battles. A wide variety of weapons were used, including the Leopard 2 tank, which has been used and is feared in the Middle East, and the anti-barricade Pioneer tank, as well as a range of other armoured infantry combat vehicles.

The German army (Bundeswehr) assumes it will confront similar situations in the course of its imperialist interventions in Mali, Afghanistan and many other countries. The army stresses the importance it attaches to the routine and efficient implementation of such exercises. In a press release, Lieutenant Colonel Frank Dieter Lindstedt, departmental head of the German Army Development Office, explained the importance of the exercise: “This pilot exercise is enormously important in order to assess whether, or in which direction, we need to adapt, develop and orientate in future our mission principles and practices.”

The army exercise, however, fulfils an additional

purpose. “Close to reality” (the term used in the official army report), the Bundeswehr is also preparing for civil war conditions in Germany and the European Union. This was already evident from the first joint exercises conducted by the police and the Bundeswehr in March 2017. At that time, 360 soldiers collaborated with special police commandos equipped with helicopters, specially armoured vehicles, reconnaissance drones and explosive deterrent robots in the so-called GETEX (“Joint Terrorism Defence Exercise”) operation.

This is now to be followed by LÜKEX (“Transnational Strategic Crisis Management Exercise”) in November of this year. The scenario of this exercise is, significantly, “a large-scale failure of the winter gas supply,” a situation that could, for example, be caused by an industry-wide strike in the energy sector.

According to a report in the *Bundeswehr Journal*, the LÜKEX 18 operation will take place mainly in the states of Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria, but also include activities in other states, such as Saarland, Rhineland-Palatinate, Hesse, Berlin, Brandenburg, Thuringia, Saxony and Saxony-Anhalt. Involved in the operation at a federal level are the Ministry of the Interior, sections of the Economics Ministry, the Agency for Food and Agriculture, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure, the Press Office and the Foreign Office.

The deployment of the Bundeswehr domestically and the networking of civilian agencies with the police and military are part of a comprehensive rearmament offensive. Since taking office, Germany’s grand-coalition government of conservative parties (Christian Democratic Union [CDU]/Christian Social Union [CSU]) and the Social Democratic Party (SPD) has pressed ahead with its plans for establishing a comprehensive surveillance regime at a federal and state level.

Following the example of Bavaria, the state of Saxony has now submitted a far-reaching draft for a new police law. According to the plans of the CDU-SPD state government, the police in Saxony will receive hand grenades and machine guns, in addition to other equipment. Also planned is the introduction of new ammunition that aims to “overwhelm the victim without mortally injuring him”. In addition to video surveillance, facial recognition and the introduction of ankle restraints, the law will allow the authorities to monitor journalists when necessary for “the existence and security of the federal or state government”.

These measures correspond to the plans for a so-called model police law at a federal level, approved by the SPD and CDU/CSU in their coalition agreement. Among other items, the coalition partners call for “better facilities for the police”, the “expansion of DNA analysis”, “video surveillance at hotspots” and the strengthening and centralisation of security agencies and secret services in Germany and throughout Europe.

Behind the scenes, the coalition has agreed on the use of the German army inside Germany itself. The coalition pact states that the “development guidelines” for the army set out in the White Paper of 2016 are to be “consistently pursued”. The White Paper explicitly advocates the use of the army domestically. The section “Domestic deployment and services of the Bundeswehr” states that “the armed forces can support the police in effectively fighting accidents under narrow conditions and exercise sovereign tasks involving the use of interventionist and coercive powers”.

The real motives for these monstrous plans are bluntly laid out in a document issued by the European Union Institute for Security Studies entitled “What ambitions for European Defence 2020”. The document regards the task of future military operations to be the “shielding the global rich from the tensions and problems of the poor”.

“As the proportion 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,” it continues. “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.”

Social inequality in Germany and Europe has continued to increase since the paper was first published in English in 2009. While the vast majority of the population fights for sheer survival, a small upper class elite has acquired astronomical assets. A study published at the beginning of the year by the German Institute for Economic Research (DIW) found that the 45 richest households in Germany own assets worth €214 billion, equivalent to the wealth of the poorer half of the entire population.

The activation of Schnöggersdorf is a warning. One-hundred years ago, the Social Democratic government under Reich President Friedrich Ebert and Defence Minister Gustav Noske relied on the military to quell the November Revolution of 1918-1919 and assassinate the revolutionary socialists Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht. Today, the ruling class is once again preparing to suppress mounting popular opposition against social cuts, militarism and war by military means.



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