

German right demands nuclear “weapons of mass extermination”

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Just weeks after the right-wing coalition government in Germany announced its intention to massively increase military spending, a major national newspaper has called for the creation of an arsenal of nuclear weapons. In its latest edition, published this past weekend, the *Welt am Sonntag* features a front-page picture of a nuclear bomb, painted in the colours of the German flag. The headline reads: “Do we need the bomb” [*Brauchen wir die Bombe?*] The answer is an unequivocal and bloodcurdling “Ja!”

The author of the article is Christian Hacke, a leading academic with close ties to leading figures in the government, the military and the foreign policy establishment. His political career dates back to the 1960s, when he made a name for himself as a leader of the right-wing Association of Christian-Democratic Students (RCDS). He has taught at the military university in Hamburg and is a member of the German Council on Foreign Relations, the International Institute for Strategic Studies, the Committee on Atlantic Studies, and the World Security Network. Clearly, Hacke is not merely expressing his personal opinion.

Arguing that Germany cannot leave the defense of its strategic interests to the United States and other NATO members, Hacke’s article calls for “a review of the contractual cornerstones of German defense policy.” Germany, he proclaims, cannot do without “weapons of mass extermination” [*Massenvernichtungswaffen*].

Hacke’s essay recalls the darkest chapter in German history. *Vernichtung* is the German word for extermination. The Nazis used the term *Vernichtungskrieg* [war of extermination] to describe the Third Reich’s war against the Soviet Union between 1941 and 1945. The fact that Hacke, without indicating any sort of political qualms, demands the creation of *Massenvernichtungswaffen* provides a

chilling insight into the political outlook that prevails at the highest levels of the German state. Language that German political leaders did not dare employ for more than 70 years after the end of World War II is now becoming commonplace.

The time has come, Hacke insists, for Germany to throw off the restraints imposed upon it by its defeat in 1945. It should no longer shy away from asserting its interests. The time for moral squeamishness and apologies for past crimes is over. Hacke writes: “Political correctness, lack of civil courage, and inadequate military strategic considerations” must not be allowed anymore to “repress the nuclear component of our security.”

Rather than engaging in “Trump-bashing from the pedestal of moral arrogance,” Germany should “arm itself better in military terms—in all directions and by all means.”

Germany “can only rely on itself.” Hacke warns that national defense must be “based on its own nuclear deterrent capabilities and be given priority in the face of new transatlantic uncertainties and potential confrontations.”

Calling for the reintroduction of the draft and the development of a “sophisticated security culture,” Hacke insists that “Berlin must develop the will and ability to think or act in military strategic categories. Geopolitical considerations, such as safeguarding trade interests, are urgent in the face of new challenges,” he writes. But the “central question is: Under what conditions and at what cost could the central power of Europe become a nuclear power again?”

The comment in *Welt am Sonntag* sheds light on dangerous developments in Germany. The coalition government—consisting of the Christian-Democratic Union, Christian Social Union, and the Social

Democratic Party—is implementing an extreme right-wing agenda with distinctly fascist overtones. Although the far-right and racist *Alternative für Deutschland* (AfD) garnered only 12.5 percent of the vote in the last election, the Coalition government, nominally led by Chancellor Angela Merkel, is slavishly following its political agenda.

The resurgence of neo-Nazi influence within the highest levels of the German state has been abetted by the SPD's participation in the ruling coalition and the direct support given to the coalition government by the Left Party [*Die Linke*] and the Green Party. Another factor that has contributed to the growing strength of the extreme right has been the cowardice of German academics who have refrained from criticizing the Coalition government's accommodation with the AfD.

In this political environment, the extreme right has been emboldened to pursue its neo-Nazi agenda. In its weekend edition, the *Financial Times* takes note of the growing brazenness of the neo-Nazi forces. It reports on physical attacks and death threats against left-wing artists.

The AfD, the *Financial Times* warns, “wants to change the way Germans see their past. Its ideologues have long argued that Germany is too focused on the Third Reich and the crimes and atrocities of Hitler's regime. Last year one of its leaders, Björn Höcke, called for a ‘180-degree revolution’ in this culture of remembrance, and attacked the memorial to the murdered Jews of Europe in the centre of Berlin. ‘Germans are the only people in the world that have planted a monument of shame in the heart of their capital,’ he said.”

There is hardly a political demand or statement of the AfD that has not been echoed by a representative of the establishment parties.

It must be stressed that the influence wielded by the AfD in ruling circles stands in sharp contrast to the sentiments of the overwhelming majority of the population.

According to a recent survey of the German weekly *Der Spiegel*, 67 percent of the German population are opposed to the “current shift to the right in German politics.” A broad majority also oppose the development of nuclear weapons. Seventy-one percent are in favor of Germany joining the UN ban on nuclear weapons, according to a recent survey by YouGov on

behalf of the International Abolition of Nuclear Weapons.

But the broad opposition is blocked from effective action by the Left Party, the Social Democratic Party, the Green Party and the trade unions. The only political party that has warned of the dangerous developments in Germany, and has mounted a struggle against the right-wing offensive is the *Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei* (SGP) and the International Youth and Students for Social Equality. In fact, the persistent campaign that has been waged by the SGP and the IYSSE against the growing influence of the extreme right has made it a target of the capitalist press and the state.

This will not deter the SGP from intensifying its fight to rally the working class and youth behind a socialist program, which is the only way the resurgence of the extreme right can be stopped and defeated.



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