

# Warmongering against Russia in the name of Auschwitz

Johannes Stern  
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The more the USA and NATO intensify their war drive against Russia, the more aggressively the ruling class in Germany behaves. The media are gripped by a veritable war frenzy and are demanding the German government finally supply weapons to the extreme right-wing anti-Russian regime in Kiev.

No lie or distortion is too big for them and no propaganda too dirty. Numerous newspapers have used the anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz concentration camp on January 27, 1945, of all things, to use the historical crimes of the Nazi regime in order to justify new imperialist crimes and a more aggressive German war policy.

“In the event of a Russian invasion, NATO must also support Ukraine with military materiel,” demands the former editor-in-chief of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* Kurt Kister in an article. At the same time, “the aggressor must suffer serious political and economic disadvantages—even if this would result in supply bottlenecks, price increases or a recession in the West.” This, too, was “one of the lessons of the past.”

Berthold Kohler, editor of the conservative *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ), argues similarly. In a commentary headlined “The lessons of Germany’s past,” he refers to the Social Democratic Party-Green Party federal government, which in 1999 justified Germany’s first war mission since the end of World War II against Yugoslavia with the cynical argument that Germany was obliged, because of Auschwitz, “to use military force if necessary to oppose ‘ethnic cleansing’ in the Balkans.” Now, on the grounds that the Ukrainians had suffered “most under Hitler’s war of extermination,” he is demanding German arms deliveries to Kiev.

This perfidious argument is repeated non-stop by the media in their calls to arm the Ukrainian government for war against Russia. In a slavering guest article for the FAZ, the ex-Maoist and anti-communist Gerd Koenen declares that the Germans “indeed have a historical debt to repay, but certainly not primarily to ‘Russia,’ but first to the Jews and Poles, Belarusians and Ukrainians, and finally also to the Russians.”

The foreign policy coordinator of *Die Zeit*, Jörg Lau, criticises the Green Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock for “dismissing Ukrainian wishes for defensive weapons with a sweeping reference to ‘German history.’ Indeed, from the

history of tens of thousands of Ukrainian villages devastated by the Wehrmacht [Hitler’s army], the opposite could also be deduced.” Lau reminds the Green Minister of Economics, Robert Habeck, of his election campaign statement that it would be “difficult to deny Ukraine weapons for defence.”

The professional liars in the bourgeois editorial offices falsify several things at once. Firstly, German crimes in Ukraine—including the Babi Yar massacre, which claimed the lives of more than 33,000 Jewish men, women and children—were an integral part of the war of extermination against the Soviet Union, which cost the lives of 27 million people. At the time Nazi Germany invaded Ukraine and established a murderous occupation regime, it was part of the Soviet Union.

It is the height of criminality to counterpose German crimes against Ukrainian Jews and workers to the crimes against Russian Soviet citizens in order to drum up support once again for an aggressive build-up of German imperialism in Eastern Europe and for war against Russia.

In fact, the new German war policy, for which Kohler, Kister and Co. are foaming at the mouth, stands in the Nazi tradition. Today, too, it is not Russia that is the aggressor, as the official propaganda would have us believe, but the imperialist powers. Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union 30 years ago, NATO has been systematically encircling Russia. In early 2014, Washington and Berlin orchestrated a right-wing coup in Ukraine to bring an anti-Russian regime to power in Kiev.

In doing so, they relied on fascist forces such as the Svoboda party and the Right Sector. All the references to the crimes of the Wehrmacht in Ukraine cannot hide the fact that the NATO powers in Kiev are supporting and arming a government that worships Nazi collaborators like Stepan Bandera and Roman Shukhevych and mobilises army units and militias that openly express their fascist and anti-Semitic sentiments.

This reactionary offensive against Russia, which invokes the danger of a third world war, is also supported by the current German government.

In her speech in the Bundestag (federal parliament) last Thursday, Baerbock made it clear that Germany flatly rejects Russian demands for security guarantees, saying these were “not compatible with the European security order.” She then

threatened Moscow, saying it had been made “crystal clear that renewed military action against Ukraine would have massive consequences for Russia.”

Government representatives from the Liberal Democrats (FDP) and Social Democrats (SPD) expressed themselves in similarly martial terms. Germany must “leave no doubt that we defend international law,” said Federal Finance Minister Christian Lindner (FDP) on the Welt television channel. “If the Kremlin violates borders—and by that I mean territorial as well as legal and political ones—then Moscow must be clear that we are ready for ironclad consequences.”

On Monday evening, the SPD leadership joined the propaganda chorus. Saying that he spoke for “the entire SPD,” party leader Lars Klingbeil declared, following a meeting of the party leadership, that “the escalation we are currently experiencing on the Russian-Ukrainian border is coming from Russia.” The moment Russia attacked “the territorial integrity of Ukraine” and “crosses the border politically and geographically,” there would be “a clear, tough and consistent response from Germany, from Europe, from the transatlantic partners.” All options were “on the table.”

If the German government has so far hesitated to deliver offensive weapons to Kiev, it has nothing to do with pacifism. For one thing, it fears having to bear the main economic burden of the conflict with Russia, with which Germany maintains close economic and energy relations. Of the 90 billion cubic metres of gas that German factories and private households consume each year, almost 60 billion currently come from Russia. That is why representatives of the energy industry, led by former Chancellor Gerhard Schröder (SPD), are warning against an escalation of the conflict.

On the other hand, some representatives of the ruling class plead for a certain balance with Russia in order not to become even more dependent on the USA, the militarily dominant NATO member. They fear that an armed conflict over Ukraine would further strengthen the role of the USA and thwart the plans pursued by Germany and France for an independent European army and foreign policy.

Last weekend, the head of the German navy, Vice Admiral Kay-Achim Schönbach, had to resign after arguing for an alliance with Russia against China at a panel discussion in India. Schönbach apparently voiced what many German military leaders are thinking. He explained that this would also be in the interest of the USA, but that country was obviously preparing a war against Russia.

Despite the differences with the USA and its closest allies in Britain and Eastern Europe, the majority of the ruling class in Germany is also committed to a confrontation. It does not want to stand aside when it comes to the crushing and subjugation of Russia. In doing so, it pursues its own economic and geostrategic interests.

“At the moment, we are leaving the price tags for war in Europe to the Americans. I find that shameful,” complains

former Social Democratic Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel in an interview with *Bild am Sonntag*. “We disagree on the assessment of the situation in Ukraine, fear for our economic interests and are glad that others are pulling the hot potatoes out of the fire for us. We Europeans must learn to take our interests into our own hands.” Europe must finally become “sovereign” and a “geopolitical actor,” he said.

A military confrontation with the nuclear powers Russia and China would mean a third world war and the destruction of the entire planet. Nevertheless, the imperialist powers are marching towards exactly that. The reason for this is not only megalomaniac geopolitical goals, but also the deep internal crisis of capitalist society.

“The enormous disruption of social life caused by the global pandemic has fundamentally destabilised all bourgeois regimes,” says the statement “Are You Ready for World War III?” by the WSWS editorial board. “It is the explosive social crisis of the pandemic and the emergence of open class struggle that is driving the ruling class to war.”

The German media are raging even more because, despite permanent warmongering, they are failing to win support for a war against Russia. At the end of January, a poll by broadcaster ZDF’s Politbarometer showed that 73 percent of respondents opposed arms deliveries to Ukraine, with only 20 percent in favour. With concerns about the threat of war, opposition to the government is also growing. According to a Forsa survey on February 1, 86 percent are worried about current developments, and 63 percent are dissatisfied with the government’s policies.

This opposition needs a clear political perspective and orientation. There is only one way to stop the dangerous development of war: the building of an international antiwar movement based on the working class and fighting for the overthrow of capitalism and a socialist perspective.



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