

Germany's war of retribution against Russia

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The famous American author Mark Twain is said to have remarked, “History does not repeat itself, but it rhymes.” In the 20th century, German imperialism tried twice to subjugate Russia militarily and failed. The ruling class is now trying for a third time. The current escalation of the Ukraine war and the deafening anti-Russian war propaganda from the political establishment and the media leave no doubt about this.

Especially since the alleged massacre in Bucha—whose authors and circumstances are still unclear—racist agitation against Russia and everything Russian and the call for war in the East are once again par for the course. “All Russians are now our enemies,” “Tanks for the offensive” (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*) and “A military intervention by NATO must no longer be taboo” (*Die Welt*) are headlines in the major German daily newspapers.

A particularly repugnant example of this propaganda was the debate on Wednesday in the German parliament (Bundestag). The government scheduled a “current session on the massacres of Ukrainian civilians in Bucha by Russian troops and the resulting consequences.” Representatives of the government and opposition parties outdid each other with demands for more military support for Kiev in order to go on the offensive against Russia.

The tone was set by the Social Democratic (SPD) Chancellor Olaf Scholz himself. To applause from all the parliamentary party groups, he said that Germany would do everything possible to “support Ukraine in the best possible way, always in coordination with our friends and allies.” This also includes “what we can deliver in terms of weapons from the current German army stockpiles: everything that makes sense and acts quickly is delivered.”

At the same time, Scholz claimed that all decisions would “ensure that the NATO partners do not become parties to war.”

Who does the chancellor think he is kidding? In fact, the NATO powers, and above all Germany, have long since become a war party. In his own speech, Scholz made it clear that the German government is pursuing the goal of bringing Russia to its knees militarily and economically.

“It must remain our goal that Russia does not win this war.

This is what is behind the activities we are undertaking when it comes to arms supplies, when it comes to financial and humanitarian assistance, when it comes to the reception of refugees or when it comes to the sanctions packages that we are agreeing on in Europe and around the world,” he declared.

In the following hour, one speaker after another struck the same bellicose tone. Britta Hasselmann, chairwoman of the parliamentary group of the Greens, called for “a real tightening of sanctions” and for “this to be done in coordination, also with regard to arms deliveries.”

Johann David Wadehul of the Christian Democrats (CDU) urged the government “to do everything in our power in this situation... to ensure that this war is won by the Ukrainians.” For this they would need “heavy equipment: armored weapons, salvage tanks, bridge-laying tanks, maybe even battle tanks, maybe even artillery shells.”

Defence Minister Christine Lambrecht (SPD) replied that Germany had already “supplied Ukraine with weapons on a large scale.” Germany is “working hard to be able to deliver more weapons.” For this the government is “in constant exchange with the Ukrainian government, with our allies and partners and also with the arms industry.”

If the government does not speak publicly “about the type and number of weapons supplied,” she continued, “that is for good reason.” The issue is “that from a military point of view, Russia is unclear about the types and quantities of weapons supplied and cannot adapt to them; the enemy is listening.” For this reason, “it is important that we act, but not talk about it, because that would jeopardise the objective of supporting Ukraine.”

In order to justify its drive to war, the German ruling class is committed to hysterical anti-Russian atrocity propaganda. “In the streets of Bucha” you can see “more than just corpses. We see in the cold light of day the cruelty of the Putin system,” explained Lambrecht. Those who act in this way “do not care whether the bodies are on the streets of Bucha or on the streets of Tbilisi, Vilnius or Berlin.”

If Russia wins the conflict, “we can all no longer be safe, and therefore we must also learn to be much more prepared to defend ourselves in Germany,” she added threateningly.

This idea stands “behind the security policy shift announced by the Federal Chancellor” and “the special fund of €100 billion for the German army.”

In fact, the biggest rearmament since Hitler is not “about defending our values of law and humanity against the Putin system,” as Lambrecht claimed. Behind the German war offensive are essentially the same imperialist desires as during the period of the Third Reich.

Since German reunification, the ruling class has been working systematically to organize Europe under German leadership in order to assert its global geostrategic and economic interests—and increasingly with military means. It seized on the reactionary attack on Ukraine, which was a response by Moscow to its encirclement by NATO, as the pretext to strike again against Russia. In doing so, Berlin is driven not only by hunger for the country’s vast reserves of raw materials, but also by a desire for retribution for the past defeats in war.

The latest session in parliament was marked by a disgusting trivialization of the Nazis’ crimes. “The Russian soldiers” have copied “the methods of the Einsatzgruppen (task forces) of the German Wehrmacht, the SS and the German police during their attack on Ukraine. This is the reality we face,” declared Green politician Jürgen Trittin.

This borders on the denial of the worst crimes in history. The notorious “Einsatzgruppen” played a central role in the Nazi killing machine—the Holocaust of six million Jews and the war of annihilation against the Soviet Union, to which nearly 30 million people fell victim. Putin’s reactionary invasion does not change the fact that the current German war offensive against Russia stands in this tradition.

Significantly, the Alternative for Germany (AfD) politician Jürgen Braun quoted the Humboldt University Professor and “violence researcher” Jörg Baberowski in his speech in order to “explain” the “background” of the Russian “crimes” in Bucha and to justify action against Russia.

Baberowski is a Nazi apologist. “Hitler was not a psychopath, and he wasn’t vicious. He did not want to talk about the extermination of the Jews at his table,” Baberowski explained in *Der Spiegel* in 2014.

The ruling class can only act so boldly and build on its fascist traditions because no one in the political establishment opposes it. The Left Party is an aggressive mouthpiece of German militarism and imperialism. “To put it this way: Russia, and nobody in Germany, bears responsibility for the war and the crimes,” said Dietmar Bartsch, chairman of the parliamentary group. Then he attacked the government from the right and accused Scholz of failing to “enforce the sanctions.”

Already in 2014—shortly after the pro-Western coup in

Ukraine—the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party, SGP) adopted a resolution examining the historical and political driving forces behind the war policies of all capitalist parties and warned of the far-reaching consequences of the return of German militarism:

History is returning with a vengeance. Almost 70 years after the crimes of the Nazis and its defeat in World War II, the German ruling class is once again adopting the imperialist great power politics of the Kaiser’s Empire and Hitler. The speed of the escalation of the war propaganda against Russia recalls the eve of World War I and World War II. In Ukraine, the German government is cooperating with the fascists of Svoboda and the Right Sector, which stand in the tradition of Nazi collaborators in the Second World War. It is using the country that was occupied by Germany in both world wars as a staging ground against Russia.

This policy is now being put into practice. Germany and NATO are arming the Ukrainian army and the fascist forces operating within it against Russia and are preparing a direct military intervention against the nuclear-armed power behind the backs of the population. The danger of a nuclear third world war is acute.

The only way to avert a relapse into barbarism is to build a socialist movement of the international working class—including Ukrainian and Russian workers—against war and its root cause: capitalism. Join the SGP today and participate in this fight.



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