

Eighty-one years after the war of annihilation: German Chancellor Scholz makes new war threats against Russia

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Eighty-one years ago, on June 22, 1941, the German Wehrmacht invaded the Soviet Union. Almost 30 million Soviet citizens were killed in the course of the war. These were the worst crimes in the history of mankind, culminating in the industrial extermination of European Jewry. The war of annihilation was long planned by the Nazis and pursued definite political goals.

Germany's ruling class was concerned with "living space in the East," the enormous raw materials of the Soviet Union and the pursuit of world power. At the same time, it waged a war of racist ideology aimed at the annihilation of Bolshevism and the extermination of the Jewish people.

The crimes are almost indescribable. Millions of people were killed industrially in the gas chambers of the extermination camps. The Nazi regime's war consisted of an unending orgy of extermination. Entire towns and villages were razed to the ground and their inhabitants murdered. One of the worst massacres took place on 29 and 30 September 1941 in Ukraine. Within two days, a special commando unit shot 33,771 Jews—men, women and children—in the Babi Yar ravine near Kiev.

In his government statement on June 22, the Social Democratic German Chancellor Olaf Scholz did not mention the anniversary and the German crimes at all. The reason for this is as simple as it is threatening. Seventy-seven years after the fall of the Third Reich, the ruling class is once again pursuing a course that—apart from the aggressive anti-Semitism of the Nazis—is in the tradition of the German bourgeoisie's old imperialist great power and war politics.

On the day before Scholz's speech, SPD Co-Leader Lars Klingbeil declared this openly in an external political keynote speech. Germany is "after almost 80 years of restraint" again "in the centre" and must "have the ambition of being a leading power," he declared on behalf of the entire ruling class. This also means waging war. "Military violence" is "a legitimate means of politics," he stated.

In his speech, Scholz made it clear what this means. He

began his remarks by hailing the "German Army (Bundeswehr) Special Fund," which "this House" passed "by an overwhelming majority" at the beginning of the month. The rearmament fund in the amount of €100 billion is part of the largest German rearmament offensive since the end of the Second World War.

"We will equip the Bundeswehr in such a way that it can effectively defend our country and our alliance partners against all attacks," Scholz explained. "This is the standard for the new Bundeswehr. With this, we finally provide our soldiers the support they deserve for their important service for our country." For this he said, "—hopefully on behalf of all of us here—thank you."

As in the First and Second World Wars, under the guise of "self-defence"—and today the alleged struggle for "human rights" and "democracy"—German imperialism is pushing eastwards and massing troops against Russia.

"Don't stop at words," explained Scholz. "Immediately after the beginning of the war"—the Chancellor means Putin's reactionary invasion of Ukraine provoked by the decades-long NATO offensive against Russia—Germany "transferred additional soldiers and military capabilities, for example for air defence, to the eastern alliance area."

With the Lithuanian President Gitanas Nausėda, Scholz "agreed that we would strengthen the German presence there permanently and assign Lithuania a robust Bundeswehr brigade." In addition, the "presence with air and naval forces in the Baltic Sea region will be expanded," he said, "soldiers will be sent to Slovakia and Slovakia will be supported in securing its airspace."

Scholz's speech was characterised by the yearning for great power status and war enthusiasm of the first half of the 20th century. "In the greatest security crisis in Europe for decades," he boasted, "Germany, the most economically powerful and populace country in the European Union, has a very special responsibility, not only for its own security, but also for the security of its allies." During his visit to the

Baltic two weeks ago, he made clear: “An attack on you would be an attack on all of us.” We will “defend every square meter of the alliance area,” Scholz added.

Scholz chose not to go into more detail about what this statement means. Should the Ukraine war expand to an Eastern European NATO country—which it is increasingly threatening to do with the blockade Russia’s Kaliningrad exclave by Lithuania—the Chancellor is committing Germany to go to war again against Russia. The consequence would be a third world war fought with nuclear weapons, which could kill hundreds of millions of people and destroy the entire planet.

Scholz claimed that Germany would continue to support Ukraine “without NATO itself becoming a war party.” This is outright deception. The entire speech of the Chancellor made it clear that the ruling class is already in a military conflict with Russia and that it is constantly escalating—with all the attendant consequences.

The Chancellor then proudly documented the German arms deliveries to Kiev, which increasingly take the form of direct military intervention.

“The training of Ukrainian soldiers on the Cheetah flak tanks is ongoing. It will begin in the coming days with the promised multiple rocket launchers. The agreement on the IRIS-T air defence system, which protects an entire city from hostile air strikes, was signed a few days ago between Ukraine and our industry. A first circular swap (of weapons) with the Czech Republic is complete. We are very keen to have discussions with other swap partners.”

In addition, he revealed: “The self-propelled howitzers, on which we have intensively trained Ukrainian soldiers in recent weeks, are now on the ground in Ukraine.” Ukraine would be given “the weapons it especially needs at this stage of the war.” Scholz spoke with “the Ukrainian President” precisely about this issue. Germany will deliver “them today and in the future”—“as long as Ukraine needs our support.”

The declared goal is the military defeat of Russia. “We are far, far away from negotiations between Ukraine and Russia, because Putin still believes in the possibility of a dictated peace,” Scholz explained. “It is all the more crucial” that “we keep our course steadfast, with our sanctions, with internationally coordinated arms deliveries and with our financial support for Ukraine.” For this, you need “a lot of staying power.”

In fact, the German “war aims” go beyond Ukraine and Russia. Scholz left no doubt that the ruling class sees the ongoing EU summit in Brussels, the G-7 summit in Elmau in southern Bavaria at the beginning of next week and the subsequent NATO summit in Madrid as another opportunity to increase German influence in Europe and internationally and to advance its own imperialist interests.

Germany has “set the course,” invested “massively in our security” and thereby solved “the promise of German security responsibility for Europe,” explained Scholz, and added threateningly: “At the international summits in the coming days, we will initiate similar profound changes. The European Union must commit itself to the European future of its neighbourhood and to the necessary internal reforms.”

Workers and young people across the continent must see this as a warning. The ruling class intends to continue its war offensive with unrelenting brutality and to squeeze the gigantic costs of the rearmament out of the working class again—through social spending cuts, attacks on jobs and wages, massive price increases and the fuelling of inflation. On the day of Scholz’s speech, Free Democratic Party Finance Minister Christian Lindner informed the population—in the style of the old Nazi motto “guns instead of butter”—to expect “three to four, maybe five years of scarcity.”

The German parliament (Bundestag) debate made it clear that all Bundestag parties support this essentially fascist course. When there was “criticism” of Scholz and the traffic light coalition, it came from the right. The “opposition leader” and chairman of the Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union group, Friedrich Merz, “expressly” welcomed the delivery of heavy weapons to Ukraine but wished it had taken place “earlier.”

The leader of the Left Party, Dietmar Bartsch, also complained about “not properly enforced sanctions” and signalled his support for the new German Great Power Policy. “I agree with the responsibility, I agree very much. Germany should take responsibility, and gladly more,” he said to the applause of his parliamentary group.

The Socialist Equality Party (SGP) is the only party that opposes the great power policies and gives a voice and perspective to the massive opposition to militarism and war. Workers and young people must respond to the “new era” of foreign policy by building an anti-war movement of the international working class whose aim is to eliminate the cause of militarism and war—the capitalist profit system—and to build a global socialist society. This is the only way to avert a relapse into barbarism.



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