

Armed forces establishes new Territorial Leadership Command to militarise German society

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“Militarism is, however, not only a means of defence and a weapon against the external enemy; it has a second task, which comes more and more into prominence with the sharpening of class contradictions and the growth of proletarian class-consciousness. Thus, the outer form of militarism and its inner character are more and more precisely determined: it has the task of protecting the prevailing social order, of supporting capitalism and all reaction against the struggle of the working class for freedom” (Karl Liebknecht, “Militarism and Anti-Militarism,” 1907).

German militarism is assuming increasingly menacing proportions at home. Almost unnoticed by the public, the newly established Territorial Leadership Command (TerrFüKdoBw) of the German Armed Forces (Bundeswehr) began its work on October 1.

Put into service by Defense Minister Christine Lambrecht and Inspector General Eberhard Zorn, the command is part of the comprehensive war offensive that is to make Germany a leading military power again after two catastrophic world wars in the 20th century. It has two main tasks: to conduct and coordinate all Bundeswehr operations within Germany, and serve to mobilize troops for war operations, most immediately for the NATO offensive against Russia.

The command’s headquarters is the Julius Leber barracks in Berlin. According to the day-order from Lambrecht and Zorn, which was issued on June 13, the Territorial Leadership Command is “responsible for the operational management of national forces in the context of homeland protection, including official and disaster relief and civil-military cooperation.” At the same time, it “takes over the tasks as the ‘mobilisation command’ for national deployments in accordance with NATO plans within the framework of national and alliance defense.”

In addition to the so-called Territorial Reserve, which has the responsibility for Homeland Security, and a related training organisation, the following units are subordinate to

the command: the Multinational Command Operative Leadership, the Multinational Civil-Military Cooperation Command (MN CIMIC Cmd) Nienburg/Weser, the guard battalion at the Federal Ministry of Defence (WachBtl BMVg), the 16 State Commands (LKdo) and the troop training ground commands North, East and South with their respective troop training bases.

At the official inauguration of the command on September 26 in Berlin, Lambrecht and Zorn left no doubt as to what was at stake. “With today’s inauguration, we are taking a very important step in this new epoch. We are strengthening the Bundeswehr’s operational readiness,” said the Minister of Defence. “The new command leadership will help us to make even better, faster and more coordinated decisions in the future. It also strengthens our ability to lead—in peace as well as in crisis and war.”

Lambrecht justified the establishment of the command with the “brutal Russian war of aggression against Ukraine.” It was a “visible and effective reaction to the Russian invasion.” This is nothing but the usual propaganda. In fact, the so-called “new epoch”—including the €100 billion Bundeswehr Special Fund and NATO’s military build-up against Russia—was prepared well in advance.

The main aggressor is not Moscow, but the imperialist powers. With the systematic military encirclement of Russia, NATO provoked the reactionary intervention of the Putin regime and is now escalating the conflict to subjugate the resource-rich country. Germany’s ruling class is also pursuing the goal of establishing itself as a leading European power and forming independent German-European military structures in order to pursue its global interests.

Zorn admitted this unreservedly in his own remarks. For the German Armed Forces, the “new epoch” meant “consistently continuing the focus on the core mission of the state and alliance defense, which had already begun in 2014.” He continued, “Speed and decisive action at all levels” are “more than ever the imperative of the hour.” This

would require “operationally ready strike forces on standby.” At the same time, it is important to “fulfil our missions in international crisis management and in administrative assistance.”

By “standby capability” the German military leadership understands the fastest and most comprehensive mobilization of society for total war. In the somewhat cryptic military language of the Inspector General, it is described as follows:

“The further development of the Territorial Tasks Command into a Territorial Leadership Command now improves the framework conditions for the fulfilment of complex tasks across the entire intensity spectrum—from administrative assistance in peace to hybrid threats to tension and defence—by bundling competences and leadership responsibility.”

In fact, the ruling class, which waged an extermination war against the Soviet Union in the Second World War with about 30 million dead, is at war with Russia again. “A large number of German forces, together with the Allies, ensure the task of deterrence at the eastern border of allied territory,” boasted Zorn. In addition, Germany “assumes a central task as part of the so-called hub function, which serves the freedom of action within NATO and our Allied partners.”

The war offensive abroad requires, as in the past, the comprehensive militarization of society at home. “A key challenge in this state security provision” is “the coordination of the actions and capabilities of state and non-state actors,” Zorn said. The new Territorial Leadership Command will play a central role in this and “improve in its linking functions, interfaces and connecting points with reference to the changed situation.”

The ruling class has long laid the legal foundations for the deployment of the Bundeswehr domestically. Already the emergency laws passed in 1968 allow such operations “to ward off an imminent danger to the existence or the liberal democratic basic order of the Federation” (Art. 87a of the Basic Law). The German Armed Forces white paper, adopted in 2016, explicitly states that the armed forces can “also perform sovereign tasks in support of the police forces by exercising powers of intervention and coercion.”

With the new command, a centralized organizational structure will now be created in order to use the military as an internal force of order and, if necessary, to suppress social protests and revolutionary struggles by force. For this purpose, explicitly military units, which organize the NATO mobilisation against Russia and other war operations, will be merged with the “civilian” military structures. The result is a new German military state.

At the end of his remarks, Zorn gave an indication of how

far this process has already progressed. “For years,” he said, “a comprehensive civil-military network has been built up at all levels—from the Chancellery to the municipalities.” The national command will bring together “elements” that “functionally or on the ground have been cooperating closely for years” and place them under the authority of a “national territorial commander.”

The general also mentioned the home-guard regiments oriented towards right-wing extremist forces, which would “continue to grow according to plan” and “contribute significantly to the training and integration of reserves.” In addition, the Territorial Leadership Command “based on the experience of the COVID crisis team” will “provide the nucleus for a crisis team of the Federal Government.”

The *World Socialist Web Site* already warned at the beginning of the Bundeswehr’s so-called “COVID operation”: “But regardless of how much immediate medical assistance the Bundeswehr provides, the operation ultimately serves a different purpose. Leading generals are openly declaring that the key issue is imposing military-police control over the population and defending the institutions of the capitalist state.”

This assessment has now been confirmed. Significantly, the new command is led by Lieutenant General Carsten Breuer, who previously headed the federal government’s COVID crisis unit. In his new function as so-called National Territorial Commander, he is a kind of military dictator on call.

His new command serves to “bring procedures into one hand, to bring leadership into one hand and thus to make [the whole] much more stringent and much more effective ...,” Breuer explained in a Bundeswehr podcast. Only “the interplay of effective forces, of a command, which is effectively led, but also of well-established troops can ultimately lead to success in an operation, ... in a crisis or even in war.”

The growing domestic influence of the military is a serious warning, especially in the context of German history. The ruling class previously used the military as an instrument of repression during the German Empire, the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich. It is now preparing to do so once again. This is its response to the deepest crisis of capitalism since the 1930s, which is being exacerbated by the social and political effects of the coronavirus pandemic and the NATO war offensive against Russia.



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