

German politicians and media demand Leopard battle tanks for Kiev, further escalating danger of world war

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Last week, the German government announced it would deliver at least 40 Marder infantry fighting vehicles and a Patriot missile system to Ukraine. According to official statements, Ukrainian soldiers will be trained on the weapons systems, which will be deployed to the front lines within the next three months.

The measures represent a massive escalation of the proxy war NATO is waging in Ukraine against Russia. They form part of a spiral of escalation that raises the threat of a third nuclear world war. German politicians and media outlets are waging an aggressive campaign to now provide the Ukrainian army with battle tanks and other heavy warfare equipment.

“We should do everything possible and deliver. This includes Leopard tanks,” Bundestag (federal parliament) Vice President Katrin Göring-Eckardt (Greens) told Funke Media Group. The chairwoman of the defence committee, Marie-Agnes Strack-Zimmermann (Liberal Democrats, FDP), drooled on Twitter, “Our efforts have worked. But we are not letting up. After the Marder comes the Leopard.”

Saskia Esken, co-chair of the chancellor’s Social Democrats (SPD), which met in Berlin over the weekend, also held out the prospect of further arms deliveries. She said Ukraine would continue to receive “humanitarian, financial and military” support. However, it remained the case that one coordinated with international partners regarding sanctions and arms deliveries, she said, “especially with the United States of America.”

It is clear what this means. After the joint German-American announcement to deliver infantry fighting vehicles to Ukraine, the deployment of battle tanks is only a matter of time. On Sunday, Economics Minister Robert Habeck (Greens) hinted on broadcaster ARD’s “Report from Berlin” program that the decision on battle tanks and further arms deliveries has already been made behind the scenes.

Last week had “shown that the German government, together with the other friendly allied states, always adapts

its decisions to the situation ‘on the ground’ on the battlefield in order to provide maximum support to Ukraine,” Habeck declared. After all, “if you trace the long path from the first still controversial decisions for anti-tank missiles, to self-propelled howitzers, and now the Marders, you have an enormous dynamic also in the decisions of the German government. And I think that dynamic will continue as long as this war continues to develop dynamically.”

When asked specifically by ARD whether this meant he did not rule out delivery of Leopard 2 and Leopard 1 battle tanks, Habeck replied, “No, of course it’s not ruled out.” He added that the situation was “always being examined, we are coordinating with the other countries and decisions will continue to be made within this corridor.” The decision on the Marders was “long overdue” and it was “good that it was made.” He added that they would now watch “to make sure these things got there and see how the debate develops.”

In reality, it is not a “debate,” but nonstop war propaganda aimed at further escalating the conflict. The Greens, who more than any other party speak for war-loving affluent middle class layers, are playing a particularly aggressive role. Their leading representatives are calling not just for dozens, but thousands of battle tanks for Ukraine.

At a *Berliner Zeitung* event in December, Green Party European politician Anton Hofreiter demanded that Ukraine either be admitted to NATO or that 3,200 (!) Leopard main battle tanks be delivered to Kiev. What sounds like pure madness, Hofreiter obviously meant seriously. In its report on the event, the *Berliner Zeitung* writes that the Green politician defended his demand even in response to critical questions; among others, with the statement that Putin was like a “street thug who only backs down when his nose is broken.”

This is fascist language. Despite the official propaganda of “freedom” and “democracy,” current German war policy stands in the dark tradition of German imperialism. 82 years

after the Nazi war of extermination against the Soviet Union, in which almost 30 million people fell victim, German tanks are again rolling against Russia.

In its its statement “No tank deliveries to Ukraine! Stop the threat of a third world war!” the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party, SGP) writes of the German war aims:

Since reunification, the ruling class has been systematically working to organize Europe under German leadership in order to advance its geostrategic and economic interests worldwide.... Now it is using Russia’s reactionary invasion of Ukraine as a pretext to launch the biggest rearmament since Hitler and to strike again against Russia. German imperialism is concerned not only with geostrategic interests and Russia’s vast reserves of raw materials, it is also driven by the desire for retribution for its war defeats in the 20th century.

German generals are again ranting about a full-scale German tank war against Russia. In a commentary for *Die Welt* titled “Finally, Chancellor! But now also [send] battle tanks for Ukraine,” retired Brigadier General Klaus Wittmann writes:

But now the German government should regard its decision as a liberating blow and not hesitate any further regarding battle tanks either. It is obvious that besides air defence and artillery, Ukraine urgently needs armoured combat vehicles if it wants to make further progress in pushing back Russian troops and retaking stolen territory. Combat, infantry, and transport tanks are at stake.

Germany, he said, must take the lead in enabling the Ukrainian army to mount a counteroffensive. “If Germany finally took the initiative here, many would follow, and it would be a concerted action of enormous impact,” Wittmann writes. “Although tracked vehicle operations are possible even now on frozen ground,” he adds, “armoured combat vehicles should be available in sufficient numbers and with trained crews for effective major counteroffensives by spring at the latest.”

By now, the media is openly stating what has long been the case: the NATO powers are at war with Russia in Ukraine, pursuing the goal of militarily defeating the nuclear-

armed power. “On January 6, Germany entered the Russian-Ukrainian war, it is a proxy war. Ukraine must win it, or (also) Germany will lose it,” writes Nikolaus Blome, head of the politics department at broadcasters RTL and n-tv. His guest commentary for *Der Spiegel* is titled: “Marder tanks for Ukraine: Olaf Scholz is now party to the war.”

Scholz, Blome and the other warmongers in politics and the media should explain what the consequences of their escalation policy are. How many hundreds of thousands or millions of lives are they willing to sacrifice for a “conventional” military victory over Russia? What is clear is that a nuclear escalation of the conflict—the danger of which increases with every arms delivery—would not only turn Europe into a nuclear desert, but would place the survival of the entire human race in question.

The only way to stop this madness is to build an international mass movement against war and its source, capitalism. While the ruling classes are losing all inhibitions and preparing a bloodbath, the mood among workers and youth is completely different. According to a current ARD-Deutschland survey, only 25 percent of the population think the current “support of Ukraine with weapons does not go far enough.” In other words, 75 percent reject the tank deliveries that have now been decided.

The Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei is running in the Berlin state elections to provide this opposition with a voice and a socialist perspective. Become active now, support our election campaign and vote SGP on February 12!

For more information on the SGP and to join our campaign, visit www.gleichheit.de/



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