

German Chancellor Scholz erupts in militaristic outburst of anger

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A speech by German Chancellor Olaf Scholz (Social Democrats, SPD) at the weekend demonstrated how aggressively the German government is waging war on Russia in Ukraine and how fearful it is of mounting opposition within the population. At the SPD's European festival in Falkensee, a suburb of Berlin, the chancellor shouted down war opponents and threatened Russia.

When Scholz was confronted by a larger group of his generally small audience with pacifist cries such as “make peace without weapons” and repeated references to himself as a “warmonger,” the Chancellor lost his composure. “A warmonger, Putin is a warmonger,” he cried. Then he shouted into the microphone:

He invaded Ukraine with 200,000 soldiers. He has mobilized many more. He risked the lives of his own citizens for an imperialist dream. Putin wants to destroy, conquer Ukraine, and he has others in mind. We, as friends of freedom, as democrats, as Europeans, will not allow this.

In addition, Scholz accused Putin not only of the destruction of “cities, villages, railway lines and highways.” He also said he had killed “an incredible number of citizens, children and the elderly in Ukraine.” And this is “murder, to be clear.” In “his imperialist dream of great power,” Putin also risks “the lives of his own citizens,” he added. This is “irresponsible. This is warmongering. This is violence with weapons.”

Scholz's angry war speech against Russia recalled the darkest times in German history. David North, chairman of the International Editorial Board of the *World Socialist Web Site*, tweeted: “The last German chancellor who ranted like this was Hitler. And like his predecessor, Scholz's enemy is Russia. All that is missing is a reference to ‘Jewish-Bolshevism.’ The most dangerous aspect of this diatribe is that Scholz seems to actually believe what he is saying.”

Scholz's claim that Russia is acting as an “imperialist” power and is the main aggressor is nothing but propaganda and turns reality on its head. With the expansion of NATO and the right-wing pro-Western coup in Kiev in 2014, the imperialist NATO powers that have been waging war on the world for three decades have provoked the reactionary intervention of the Putin regime. Now they continue to escalate the conflict in order to subjugate the resource-rich country and also incorporate Ukraine into the military alliance.

Above all, German imperialism is once again taking up its old great-power traditions. It was not only Scholz's roar that was reminiscent of Hitler, but also the content of what he said. The WSW and the Socialist Equality Party (SGP) have previously shown how German foreign policy is increasingly proceeding along similar lines as in 1914 and 1941. When Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky was received with military honors in Berlin in mid-May, we commented:

Already in the First World War, control of raw material-rich and geostrategically central Ukraine—in addition to the establishment of German hegemony over “Central Europe” (*Mittleuropa*)—was one of the declared war aims of the German Empire... During the Second World War, Hitler continued to pursue this policy... Now German imperialism is once again pursuing the goal of removing Ukraine and other countries that once belonged to the Soviet Union and the Russian Empire from Moscow's sphere of influence and bringing them under the control of the German-dominated European Union... In other words, behind the German war offensive are, at its core, the same imperialist appetites as before.

Now this agenda is to be implemented with all its might. When Scholz refers to Putin as a “murderer” and a

“criminal,” he de facto excludes any diplomatic solution to the conflict. The declared war objective of the imperialist powers—the withdrawal of the Russian army from Ukraine and the weakening and ultimately subjugation of Russia itself—is to be enforced by military means. To this end, NATO is waging an increasingly direct war against a nuclear-armed power.

It was “completely normal” in such a military dispute, “that the attacked party also moves into the opponent’s territory, for example, to block supply routes,” said the German Defense Minister Boris Pistorius (SPD) already at the end of April. Since then, attacks on Russian territory by far-right units of the Ukrainian army have been steadily increasing. At the same time, the Bundeswehr (German army) and NATO are preparing for direct intervention.

Significantly, Scholz visited the naval command in Rostock-Warnemünde on Monday. He was then taken to the frigate “Mecklenburg-Vorpommern” in a militarist appearance with a “Sea King” helicopter. The German warship is currently the flagship of the “Very High Readiness Joint Task Force,” the so-called spearhead of NATO against Russia.

According to a report by the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, the Navy and allies conducted various exercises “in front of the Chancellor’s eyes.” According to the paper, “a submarine, a corvette and a mine-hunting boat of the Bundeswehr, the French fleet tanker Somme and warships from Spain and Portugal were involved.” Eurofighter and Tornado fighter aircraft of the Luftwaffe also took part in the maneuver.

Immediately after the exercise with Scholz, the “Mecklenburg Vorpommern” continued to the east, where it will participate in the NATO maneuver “Baltops 2023” in the coming days. It is NATO’s largest exercise in the Baltic Sea. According to the Bundeswehr, 19 NATO states, one NATO partner state, 50 warships, more than 45 aircraft and 6,000 soldiers are involved.

NATO’s war actions are not confined to the sea. Another comprehensive NATO maneuver starting in the next few days is Defender 2023. From June 12 to June 23, 250 aircraft and 10,000 soldiers from 25 countries will be mobilized under German leadership. It is the largest NATO aerial exercise in history. According to the Air Force, the pilots and crews will fly according to the “train as you fight” principle—which means that it must be classified by the Russian military as a veritable act of war.

Scholz and the other NATO leaders are escalating the war in full awareness that it can lead to a nuclear catastrophe. As recently as April 2022, the Chancellor responded in an interview with *Der Spiegel* to the question of the supply of “heavy weapons,” that one must do everything “to avoid a

direct military confrontation between NATO and a highly armed superpower such as Russia, a nuclear-armed power.” The issue is “preventing an escalation that leads to a third world war.”

Now the German government is not only supplying “heavy weapons,” including more than 100 battle tanks, but is “practicing” for a direct intervention in the war. Regardless of whether the current NATO maneuvers serve as a direct stepping stone for intervention by NATO troops—and this danger exists—the whole logic of the conflict points in that direction.

“The Ukraine war is not going away,” said WSWS international editorial board chairman David North at the launch of his new book, *Leon Trotsky and the struggle for socialism in the 21st century*, last month. “It is metastasizing into a conflict of ever greater dimensions. It is the opening episode of what will soon be clear to be a world war, and it has the most dangerous implications.

“One could look at their policies and ask, don’t they realize this could result in a nuclear war? This is insane. And it’s true, it is insane.”

But this insanity, he said, must be “explained materialistically.” It means that the actions of the imperialist powers “are a response to contradictions which have closed off rational responses.”

North went on to say: “There are two processes at work. There is the process which leads, through the contradictions of capitalism, to devastating war and cataclysm. But those very contradictions also produce social revolution.”

Behind Scholz’s roar lies exactly this fear. The rejection of militarism and war is deeply rooted in the population after the crimes of German imperialism in the 20th century, and the ruling class knows that it has no support for its revanchist world war policy.

The SGP is fighting to arm this popular opposition with the necessary political consciousness and program. There is only one way to prevent a devastating third world war: the building of an antiwar movement of the international working class that eliminates the cause of war—the capitalist profit system—and builds a global socialist society.



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