

Scholz's "Germany Pact": A war alliance against the population

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"I no longer know any parties, I only know Germans," declared Kaiser Wilhelm in his infamous speech to the Reichstag on August 4, 1914, when Germany began World War I and the Social Democrats (SPD) agreed to war credits. Chancellor Olaf Scholz's (SPD) call for a "Germany Pact" stands in this dark tradition. In order to impose its policies of austerity and war against the growing opposition, the ruling class is closing ranks.

"We need a national effort. Let's join forces!" Scholz explained in his Bundestag (federal parliament) speech on Wednesday. "I would therefore like to propose a pact, let's say: a Germany pact—a Germany pact that makes our country faster, more modern and safer. Speed instead of stagnation, action instead of sitting out, cooperation instead of quarrels." This is "the order of the hour."

His proposal is not only "explicitly" addressed to the Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union (CDU/CSU) as the largest opposition fraction in the Bundestag, but to all parties and organisations—the "federal government, the federal states, cities and municipalities, companies and authorities, associations and trade unions." Only together will we "shake off the mildew of bureaucracy, risk aversion and despondency that has spread over our country for years and decades," said Scholz.

It is clear what the Chancellor means. The budget, which is currently being discussed in the Bundestag, is a declaration of war on the working population. It contains massive cuts and aims to launch the largest rearmament offensive since the end of World War II. According to the plans of the SPD/Green/Free Democrat (FDP) coalition government, €85.5 billion will flow into the military next year. This represents an increase of one third compared to the estimated figure for 2023 of €65 billion.

The new draft budget for 2024 shows only an increase of €1.7 billion to €51.8 billion (plus 1.68 percent) in military spending. But in addition, €19.17 billion will be spent from the €100 billion "Special Fund for the German army" (Bundeswehr), which the government decided on last year with the support of the opposition parties. And numerous

other military expenditures are hidden in other budget areas. For the regime in Kiev alone, the government has estimated annual military aid of €5 billion.

Scholz made clear in his speech that the rearmament orgy will be intensified in the coming years and decades. "We are now spending the €100 billion so that the Bundeswehr has the NATO quota of 2 percent (of GDP) available from next year." He continued that "already today" it is "clear that we will have to finance an additional €25 billion, perhaps almost €30 billion for the Bundeswehr directly from the federal budget by 2028 at the latest."

Scholz justified the permanent militarization of the budget with well-known propaganda. The "Russian war of aggression" represents a "turning point" and "threat" to the "security architecture in Europe" and will occupy Germany "not only in this, but many, many legislative periods" to come. In fact, the leading NATO powers provoked Putin's reactionary invasion of Ukraine and are now escalating the war further and further. German imperialism, which invaded Ukraine twice in the 20th century and tried to subjugate Russia, is once again pursuing the goal of becoming the dominant European military power.

In order to finance the German war offensive, the ruling class is organizing historically unprecedented social spending cuts. "The seriousness of the situation" was "not served by rhetoric and populism," Scholz warned, but "with everything we are doing now, we are helping to ensure that we will be able to raise this budget in the year ahead."

The current draft budget already contains the deepest cuts in post-war history. The health budget alone is slashed by 33.7 percent from €24.48 billion to €16.22 billion, after it had already been cut by almost 40 billion euros the year before. There will also be far less money for education and numerous social benefits. For example, expenditure on the maternity convalescence centre and family holiday homes is reduced by 93 percent each, for youth education and youth meeting places by 77 percent, for free youth welfare by 19 percent, for student aid by 24 percent and for housing benefits by 16 percent.

And this is only the beginning. A campaign for even greater savings is already underway in the political establishment and the media. A column in *Der Spiegel* entitled “The rollback of the welfare state has begun” praises the German government for having “drastically curtailed” the original wishes of the Federal Minister for Family Affairs Lisa Paus “for new billions for children in need.”

Now, “there is already a demand for able-bodied recipients of citizens’ benefit to become volunteers, and the next target is likely to be the ‘pension at 63’.” For the ruling class, the current budget of €172 billion for the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is simply unacceptable and will have to fall victim to the red pen in the future—with devastating consequences for millions of workers and their families.

The deliberate impoverishment of the population in the name of rearmament and war goes hand in hand with massive attacks on democratic rights and anti-refugee agitation in the style of the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD). In his speech, Scholz praised the government’s decision to “classify Georgia and Moldova as safe countries of origin” as “important progress in the fight against irregular migration.”

“I am very grateful to Federal Minister of the Interior Nancy Faeser (SPD) that she has also made very concrete suggestions for improvement to the federal states concerning repatriation in connection with the expansion of deportation detention and in many other areas. This too must be part of the Germany Pact,” he stated.

Workers and young people must understand that the “Germany Pact” is a threat of war. Behind the official phrases of “security,” “digitization” and “reduction of bureaucracy,” it is about rearmament, war, social spending cuts and the establishment of a de facto dictatorship against the population. All parties and organisations of the ruling class are already working closely together. In eight federal states, the SPD, Greens, and FDP, which make up the so-called “traffic light” coalition at the federal level, rule with the CDU and in three with the Left Party. At the municipal level, all government parties have long been openly pacting with the far-right AfD, which is also integrated into political work at the state and federal level via the parliamentary committees.

The unions are part of this all-party conspiracy. Verdi, IG Metall and the entire DGB (German Trade Union Federation) already concluded a pact with the government last year, the so-called “Concerted Action.” They support the war policy and play a key role in enforcing the attacks. In the public service, the postal service and, most recently, the railways, in close cooperation with the government and companies, they enforced massive real wage reductions and

a further deterioration in working conditions.

But the resistance to this is growing. This is demonstrated by the massive opposition across workplaces, which is increasingly reflected in the establishment of independent rank-and-file committees. The coalition government is despised just halfway through its legislative term. According to the current ARD Germany trend poll, only 19 percent of the population are satisfied with the government's work. Above all, Scholz's Germany Pact aims to conceal the fear of a social storm brewing beneath the surface. In their speeches in the Bundestag, the Chancellor and many other speakers repeatedly invoked “social cohesion.”

In order to prepare for the upcoming class confrontation and repel the reactionary offensive of the ruling class, workers need their own organizations and a clear political perspective. The Socialist Equality Party (SGP) supports the establishment of rank-and-file committees to organise the fight against social spending cuts and rearmament and war policies independently of all capitalist parties and the trade unions and unite internationally.

“The only social force that can prevent another world war is the international working class—that is, the vast majority of the world's population, which today is more numerous and more connected than ever before,” the SGP explained in its election manifesto for the European elections. It emphasized: “Together with its sister parties in the Fourth International, the SGP is building a worldwide socialist movement against war and its cause, capitalism.

- Stop the NATO war in Ukraine! No sanctions and arms deliveries!
- Two world wars are enough! Stop the warmongers!
- 100 billion for daycare centers, schools and hospitals instead of armor and war!”



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