

Hitler would be proud: German Chancellor Olaf Scholz delivers anti-Russian tirade at the United Nations

Johannes Stern
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Wednesday's warmongering anti-Russian diatribe at the United Nations by German Chancellor Olaf Scholz has made clear that German imperialism, guilty of the most horrific crimes in human history, is again on the warpath. Hitler and his gang of mass murderers are dead, but their political legacy lives on in the policies of the German government.

Scholz condemned those who call for an "immediate ceasefire" in the Ukraine war. Rather, the German chancellor cynically declared, "Peace without freedom is oppression. Peace without justice is a diktat."

Scholz portrayed Russia as waging a war of annihilation against Ukraine, using murder, torture and the mass extermination of civilians as instruments of state policy. "Russian troops have murdered, raped and tortured. They are razing towns and villages to the ground," Scholz said.

Such language actually describes the crimes in the Second World War perpetrated by Nazi Germany, which waged a racially motivated *vernichtungskrieg* (war of extermination), involving the deliberate starvation and mass murder of civilian populations, accompanied by the extermination of Eastern Europe's Jewish population.

In a 1963 speech at Georgetown University, US President John F. Kennedy described the impact of the Second World War on the Soviet Union. "At least 20 million lost their lives," he said. "Countless millions of homes and farms were burned or sacked. A third of the nation's territory, including nearly two-thirds of its industrial base, was turned into a wasteland—a loss equivalent to the devastation of this country east of Chicago."

Even during the Cold War, the leader of American

imperialism felt obligated to acknowledge the horrifying toll of the war on the Soviet Union.

But now a leader of Germany condemns "peace" with a country whose population German imperialism had sought to exterminate. This exemplifies the extent to which a filthy desire to avenge its World War II defeat by the Soviet Union has taken hold throughout the German political establishment, along with the increasing prominence of openly fascist political parties in German politics.

Scholz is not just speaking as an individual. He is speaking for German imperialism, which tried twice to subjugate Russia in the 20th century—and failed.

At the UN, Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock called for Germany to be given a seat on the security council. At the same time, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky demanded Russia's exclusion from the body.

Scholz's provocative remarks are aimed at escalating the war being waged by NATO and German imperialism against Russia.

Many historians have argued that Hitler made a major strategic blunder in December 1941 when he declared war on the United States while engaged in a savage war against the Soviet Union. This time the German ruling class—at least for the time being—considers it far more advisable to wage war against Russia in alliance with the United States.

German imperialism saw the dissolution of the Soviet Union as an opportunity to expand its influence in Europe. It instigated the break-up of Yugoslavia in the 1990s. And in 1999, it participated in the US-NATO bombing of Serbia in order to hive off Kosovo. Now it is resuming its old war and great power policies in

Ukraine and against Russia.

In the First World War, one of Germany's war aims was the creation of a Berlin-dominated Ukrainian vassal state.

In the Second World War, Hitler renewed this policy, and the brutal subjugation of Ukraine was a major component of the war of extermination against the Soviet Union. He invaded the Soviet Union with the support of pro-Nazi and violently anti-Semitic Ukrainian nationalists led by Stepan Bandera, who is now honored as a hero by the present-day regime in Kiev.

Between 1941 and 1944, Hitler's Wehrmacht occupied western and central Ukraine and established the so-called *Reichskommissariat Ukraine*. It was administered by the Berlin Reich Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories, which was led by the Nazi chief ideologist Alfred Rosenberg. For millions of Ukrainians, Nazi rule meant exploitation through forced labor, massacres, and systematic extermination of the Jews.

Germany's involvement in the Ukraine war is rooted in this imperialist tradition. In its renewed "drive to the East," the German ruling class, as in the past, is pursuing long-term imperialist interests that far outweigh the immediate economic impact of the Ukraine war on Germany.

"The war in Ukraine is also a struggle for raw materials," notes a strategy paper by the federally owned foreign trade agency, Germany Trade and Invest (GTAI). The paper declares that Ukraine has "large deposits of iron, titanium and lithium, some of which are now controlled by Russia." Under the guise of "reconstruction," German business is working to secure its influence in Ukraine. The same plans exist for a Russia "after Putin."

A central role in these machinations is played not only by leading politicians and the media but also by academia. At the beginning of September, Humboldt University hosted the photo exhibition "Russian War Crimes," which echoes the atrocity propaganda of the Nazis and avowedly serves the goal of escalating the Ukrainian war. At the same university, the right-wing extremist Professor Jörg Baberowski claims that Hitler was "not vicious" because he did not want to hear about Auschwitz and the mass extermination of the Jews at his dinner table. Baberowski is courted and

financed internationally—among others by Princeton University—and defended against criticism by the university administration and all the parliamentary parties.

The *Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei* (Socialist Equality Party, SGP) has consistently fought against the return of fascism and militarism in Germany. In 2014—shortly after the pro-Western coup in Ukraine—the SGP warned of the implications of the resurgence of German militarism:

History is returning with a vengeance. Almost 70 years after the crimes of the Nazis and their defeat in World War II, the German ruling class is once again adopting the imperialist great power politics of the Kaiser's Empire and Hitler. The speed of the escalation of the war propaganda against Russia recalls the eve of World War I and World War II. In Ukraine, the German government is cooperating with the fascists of Svoboda and the Right Sector, which stand in the tradition of Nazi collaborators in the Second World War. It is using the country that was occupied by Germany in both world wars as a staging ground against Russia.

Now this policy is being put into practice. Germany and NATO are engaged in a military confrontation with Russia, which can escalate into a nuclear Third World War. The international working class must develop its own political counter-strategy. There is only one way to prevent a catastrophe: building a powerful socialist antiwar movement of workers united internationally against war and its cause, capitalism.



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