

Mobilize the working class against NATO's plan to deploy troops in Ukraine!

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French President Emmanuel Macron's statement Monday night that the sending of European troops to Ukraine is "not ruled out" has publicly revealed the extent of the war planning of the NATO imperialist powers. Behind the backs of the people, the NATO alliance is setting into motion a full-scale war with Russia and the danger of a nuclear cataclysm.

No credence should be given to the statements of various NATO leaders that there are no plans to deploy troops in Ukraine. Macron did not speak only for himself. His carefully worded statement clearly signals that the strategic and tactical blueprints for such an intervention are already under review and that NATO is moving inexorably toward sending soldiers to Ukraine. For the leading NATO imperialist powers, it is not a question of if there will be an open war with Russia, but when.

"The Kremlin warned on Tuesday," according to a page one report in yesterday's *New York Times*, "that a ground intervention by any NATO country would lead to a direct clash between the Western military alliance and Russian forces, fraught with potential dangers, and called the open discussion of such a step 'a very important new element.'"

Macron's statement vindicates the warning made by Socialist Equality Party Chairman David North in his statement announcing the party's intervention in the 2024 presidential election:

The war in Ukraine, which the Biden administration deliberately provoked two years ago with the aim of weakening Russia and tightening the grip of American imperialism and its NATO allies over Eurasia, in preparation for the coming showdown with China, threatens to escalate into a nuclear conflict. Germany is once again on the warpath. The NATO powers have repeatedly stated that they will not be deterred from pursuing the war by the threat of a nuclear exchange. The deliberate use of tactical and strategic nuclear weapons—which was rejected for decades as synonymous with

madness—is now being "normalized" as a legitimate component of imperialist geopolitical strategy.

The only way that war can be stopped is by the intervention of masses of workers in direct struggle against the NATO governments that are plotting for war.

The record of the French president underscores the utter hostility and imperviousness of European governments to public opinion. A year ago, in order to divert €100 billion over the next six years to military spending, he rammed through pension cuts without a parliamentary vote, in defiance of overwhelming public opposition and mass strikes. The appeals to Macron's conscience made by the union bureaucracies, who shut down strikes against him, went unheeded. He is now widely despised among workers in France for ruling against the people.

The role of the other European NATO governments, which are now cynically trying to distance themselves from Macron's statement, is no different. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz declared yesterday that Berlin did not support Macron's statement, claiming, "we will not become a party to the war—neither directly nor indirectly."

This is a brazen lie, first because Berlin, like all the major NATO powers, is already a party to the war with Russia in Ukraine. According to the official "List of Military Support Services," Berlin has delivered 30 Leopard 1 main battle tanks, 18 Leopard 2 main battle tanks, 90 Marder infantry fighting vehicles, 52 Gepard anti-aircraft tanks and around 250 other armoured combat vehicles to Ukraine. A further 30 Marder, 105 Leopard 1 and 15 Gepard tanks are "in preparation."

In the same message on X in which Scholz declared that there would be "no ground troops from European countries or NATO," he wrote: "We agreed that everyone must do more for Ukraine in Paris yesterday. Ukraine needs weapons, ammunition and air defence. We are working on it."

Last month, the German army released plans for a war

with Russia within the next 5-8 years. As the German war plan was released, Defense Minister Boris Pistorius declared that “Russian aggression” could occur within five years. The next three-to-five years, he added, had to be used to “intensively arm ourselves.”

Other major European governments have sent undeniable public signals that they are also preparing for war with Russia. Last month, British Chief of the General Staff General Sir Patrick Sanders called to “mobilise the nation” for war, stating that the war in Ukraine showed the need for a military draft and a “citizen army” in Britain.

Scholz’s denial of Macron’s war plan is meaningless. Such denials have been issued time and again at every step in NATO’s war escalation in Ukraine. The NATO powers’ plans to send weapons to Ukraine, then to send heavy artillery, then to send tanks, then long-range missiles were all first denied, then discussed, and finally adopted.

The deployment of NATO troops to Ukraine would almost certainly escalate into a nuclear conflict between the NATO alliance and Russia, the world’s two largest nuclear-armed powers, with deaths and casualties reaching tens or hundreds of millions, or more.

The only way to stop the capitalist system’s march to a third world war is the international mobilization of the working class in struggle against the capitalist governments. Moral pressure and appeals to Europe’s ruling classes will fail. They know very well that their war to conquer Russia and plunder its vast natural wealth is setting them on a course for disaster and for a collision with deep working class opposition in every country. However, they are continuing anyway.

“Voters may object to having their pensions cut to buy more tanks,” blandly wrote the *Economist*, the well known magazine of British finance capital, adding: “If European leaders are to raise the funds through cuts to other services, taxes and borrowing, they will have to persuade voters that the sacrifices are worth it.”

European workers cannot and will not be persuaded to support a march to nuclear war. The military spending being considered—Pistorius proposed 3.5 percent of Gross Domestic Product, more than doubling yearly euro zone military spending to well over €500 billion—entails savage attacks on social spending and living standards. The bourgeoisie aims to “persuade” workers with the tools used during last year’s struggle against Macron’s pension cuts in France: police clubs, rubber bullets and mass arrests.

Ruling circles are planning a shift far to the right in official European politics. The *Economist* wrote:

European leaders urgently need to jettison their

post-Soviet complacency. That means raising defence spending to a level not seen in decades, restoring Europe’s neglected military traditions, restructuring its arms industries and preparing for a possible war. The work has barely begun.

The revival of “Europe’s neglected military traditions” means a return to mass repression and fascism.

The war and accompanying attacks on social and democratic rights are already provoking an intensification of the class struggle. The year has begun with farmers’ protests in many European countries, strikes by train drivers, airport workers and public sector employees in Germany, and a national teachers’ strike in France. After mass demonstrations against the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) in Germany, protests are ongoing against Israel’s genocide in Gaza.

The crucial task is to arm the mounting working class resistance developing in Europe and worldwide with an understanding of the tasks flowing from imperialism’s plunge into war. A politically conscious, international anti-war movement must be built in the working class, armed with a socialist programme against capitalism. This is the significance of the presidential campaign of the Socialist Equality Party in the US and the intervention of the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (SGP) together with its European sister parties in the upcoming European elections in June.

The SGP’s election statement reads:

Workers must counterpose to the EU of the banks and corporations, of mass death and war, the perspective of a United Socialist States of Europe. War cannot be ended, human lives cannot be saved and wages cannot be defended without breaking the power of the banks and corporations and placing them under democratic control. Instead of shooting at each other, workers in Russia and Ukraine and workers across Europe must fight with this perspective against the warmongers at home.



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