

Stop the reintroduction of military conscription in Germany!

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The German government is planning to reintroduce compulsory military service in order to have a supply of cannon fodder for its wars. An internal paper from the defence ministry, quoted by *Der Spiegel*, plans to “present options for a German military service model” by 1 April, which should be “scalable in the short term in line with threats” and ensure “overall national resilience.” A decision is to be made within a year.

When the defence ministry talks about “national resilience” and a “military service model that is scalable in the short term,” it is referring to the mobilisation of human resources in the interests of war. Together with its European allies, Germany’s ruling class is pursuing the goal of escalating the war against Russia, conquering new markets worldwide and subordinating society as a whole to these ends.

Defence Minister Boris Pistorius (Social Democrat, SPD)—who announced to the enthusiastic cheers of all the bourgeois media that he was making Germany “fit for war”—declared on the occasion of a visit to the Scandinavian countries that the Swedish conscription model was “particularly suitable” for transfer to the Bundeswehr (Armed Forces).

In Sweden, all residents between the ages of 16 and 70 are “obliged to contribute to national defence” by being deployed in the armed forces, civil defence or in the maintenance of war-related functions such as logistics and healthcare.

To this end, every young person must complete a catalogue of questions from the draft board on their 18th birthday, on the basis of which 25,000 young people are currently called up for military service every year. The “conscription requirement” applies equally to men and women, and also to foreigners living there. In Germany, this would correspond to 200,000 people per year.

Just a few days ago, the Danish government announced it would be extending military service from four to eleven months, extending it to women and doubling the war budget by 2028.

Finland, whose “Total Defence” approach was also described by Pistorius during his trip as a “role model” for Germany, has a conscription and reservist system that would immediately provide 280,000 soldiers in the event of war. This would correspond to 4.2 million soldiers in Germany. General conscription, which was suspended by the German government in 2011, can be reactivated at any time in the event of “tension and defence.”

In an interview with *Stern* magazine, the president of the reservists’ association, Patrick Sensburg, made clear that the German bourgeoisie is prepared to throw entire generations into the fire for profit. With regard to “the new focus on alliance and national defence,” he said: “If you want to see how brutal war is, you only have to look at Ukraine. If in doubt, you’ll kill yourself there with a folding spade if you have nothing else. That’s what it’s all about.”

In order to “wage, sustain and win” such a war, the first step would be to immediately “triple the active reserve.” However, this tripling would “not even be enough in the end” and could only cover “the first wave” of the war.

In order to “shoulder the tasks that lie ahead of us” on the “NATO eastern flank” in Eastern Europe, “a second and a third wave” of soldiers would certainly be necessary. “This would then affect everyone under 65 who was once in the Bundeswehr, from former conscripts to ex-career soldiers—regardless of whether they had any further contact with the troops afterwards.”

According to Sensburg, Israel’s call-up of 360,000

reservists is exemplary. This would correspond to around 3.2 million conscripts in Germany.

The call for the reintroduction of compulsory military service and the creation of a huge army of reservists is supported in various forms by all media outlets and all bourgeois parties.

While the SPD Defence Minister is overseeing the plans, the Greens in the government and Bundestag (parliament) are among the most aggressive militarists, the state Prime Minister of Thuringia, Bodo Ramelow (Left Party), had called for the reintroduction of compulsory military service as early as 2022.

Although the Left Party split off headed by Sahra Wagenknecht rejects the reintroduction of compulsory military service in words, conscription finds the greatest support amongst its supporters, even ahead of the Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU) and far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD), according to polls.

However, the majority of working people reject these murderous plans. In December, a Forsa survey commissioned by *Stern* magazine revealed that a large majority (61 percent) of German citizens would not fight for Germany. The proportion of those who would not be prepared to defend themselves with a weapon under any circumstances was almost twice as high as in the same survey in May 2022, the magazine reports. Only 17 percent would be prepared for armed “defence” under the assumed scenario of a “military attack on Germany.”

In fact, the reintroduction of conscription has nothing whatsoever to do with “defence,” nor does the massive rearmament of the Bundeswehr. While the German government, together with its NATO and EU allies, is waging a murderous proxy war against Russia in Ukraine, troops are to be prepared to pursue imperialist goals worldwide and also in Europe and to suppress resistance to this throughout the “alliance area” and beyond.

A working paper from the Federal Academy for Security Policy entitled “Mindset National and Alliance Defence” calls on troops to “shake off the Afghan desert dust” and perform a “mental tour de force” when deployed to Eastern Europe. “However, the picture of war that is emerging in Ukraine shows a reality that the Bundeswehr’s combat experience in Afghanistan—irrespective of the soldiers’ personal achievements—does not even come close to.”

In view of the “suffering, deprivation and hardship to be expected on the eastern flank”—for example in Lithuania and Romania—the “ability to use military force” and the “fighting, killing and dying of one’s own fellow human beings” must be normalised and “elevated to the centre of the soldier’s self-image.” Soldiers should be “professionally and mentally prepared for this.”

This war madness must be stopped immediately. The International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) appeal to all young people to study the lessons of history and take up the revolutionary struggle against militarism and war. Do not allow another generation to be sacrificed on the altar of the profit interests of those in power, as happened in the First and Second World Wars.



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