

Polish government steps up military indoctrination in schools

Martin Nowak
25 April 2024

In future, Polish schoolchildren are to be indoctrinated in militarism beginning in primary school. Polish Education Minister Barbara Nowacka and Defence Minister Władysław Kosiniak-Kamysz presented a program to this effect titled “Edukacja z wojskiem” (“Education with the army”) last Wednesday.

The governing coalition in Poland led by former European Union Council President Donald Tusk, which has been in office since last autumn, is thereby increasing the militarisation of Polish schools.

During the pilot programme, Polish soldiers will conduct a three-hour training course in primary and secondary schools. “The main objective of the programme is to raise the awareness of children and young people in the field of security and defence and develop basic habits and skills in the field of defence and civil protection as well as behaviour in crisis situations,” reads the ministry’s statement.

All grades from the first year of primary school to secondary school are eligible to participate. Only the eighth year of primary school and the first year of secondary school are excluded. The PiS (Law and Justice Party)-led government, which was voted out of office in 2022, had already introduced “security training,” i.e., military training including shooting practice, into the curriculum for these grades.

Registration takes place via the local authorities. The program will run from May 6 to June 20 and cover around 3,500 schools. If the program proves successful, it will be permanently established in the curriculum, the two ministers announced.

At the press conference, the ministers made it abundantly clear that the programme is not about imparting neutral knowledge about first aid and disaster control, but instead is aimed at creating a militaristic

culture (“showing the army at school”).

“We are increasing the resilience of our society. We live in times in which all measures that can improve security must be taken... From pre-school children to senior citizens, everyone must be prepared for challenges,” emphasised Kosiniak-Kamysz.

The education minister added that patriotism is “the willingness to act for the fatherland, but above all to acquire the skills necessary to serve one’s country and one’s neighbour. And that is exactly what our programme is for.”

The praise for “patriotism” is reminiscent of speeches made by the former PiS education minister Przemysław Czarnek, who introduced military training and a new civics lesson, “History and the Present” (“Historia i teraźniejszość,” HiT), in 2022. According to Nowacka, HiT is to be replaced in 2025 by the subject “political education.”

The controversy surrounding HiT shows just how small are the differences between the old and new governments. While in opposition, the current governing parties criticised HiT’s textbook as a right-wing construct because it demonised feminism, communism and even parts of pop culture as anti-Polish ideologies.

Now, however, Barbara Nowacka, leader of the feminist party Inicjatywa Polska (iPL), is praising the promotion of “patriotic” attitudes among seven-year-olds. Pseudo-left organisations and parties play a key role, not only in Poland but worldwide, in accompanying the return of militarism and war with phraseology embracing feminist and identity politics.

The Tusk government is seamlessly continuing and intensifying the PiS’s war policy, not only in education but also in all other areas. A few weeks ago, Tusk publicly declared that the world had entered a “pre-war

era” and had to prepare accordingly. Poland has long played a key role in the NATO war offensive against the nuclear power, Russia. Foreign Minister Sikorski recently refused to rule out the deployment of NATO troops to Ukraine.

Certain disagreements between Tusk’s PO (Citizens Platform) and the PiS are primarily of a tactical nature. For example, President Andrzej Duda, who belongs to the PiS camp, recently confirmed in an interview his willingness to station US nuclear weapons in Poland as part of “nuclear sharing.” Tusk reacted coolly and called on Duda to hold consultations on this issue.

According to NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, the military alliance currently has no plans to station nuclear weapons in other member states. Stoltenberg stated this while visiting British troops stationed in Poland alongside British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak.

This does not mean Stoltenberg and Tusk advocate a less aggressive nuclear policy towards Moscow. According to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), around 150 US nuclear weapons are currently stored in Europe as part of “nuclear sharing”—in Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, Italy and Turkey.

The differences of opinion between Duda and Tusk over the stationing of US nuclear weapons in Poland are primarily about foreign policy orientation. While Tusk favours close cooperation with the major European powers, especially Germany, the PiS is seeking to strengthen its close military alliance with the US—also as a counterweight to Germany’s dominance in the EU. Both camps are prepared to risk and wage a third world war and militarise all of society right down to the schools.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

[wsws.org/contact](https://www.wsws.org/contact)