

Germany's next coalition government: Rearming like Hitler, far-right refugee policies and social desolation

Johannes Stern
10 April 2025

On Wednesday, Germany's Chancellor-designate Friedrich Merz of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), along with Social Democratic Party (SPD) leaders Lars Klingbeil and Saskia Esken and Christian Social Union (CSU) leader Markus Söder, appeared before the press to present their joint coalition agreement for the next federal government.

Both their statements and the coalition agreement make clear that this will be the most right-wing German government since the fall of the Nazi regime. It is preparing to rearm on a massive scale, like Hitler, to make Germany "fit for war" once again. Domestically, it is adopting the refugee policies of the fascist Alternative for Germany (AfD). To finance its militarist agenda, it will build a police state to impose a historic social scorched-earth campaign against the widespread opposition of the population.

Merz announced that the plan was to "chart a new course in migration policy. We will organize and control better and largely put an end to irregular migration," he declared. There will be "controls at national borders and rejections of asylum applications. We will launch a repatriation offensive. We will put an end to voluntary admission programmes, suspend family reunification and significantly increase the number of safe countries of origin."

The former BlackRock executive, who had already made a pact with the far-right AfD during the election campaign to tighten refugee policy, left no doubt that the brutal crackdown on migrants is part of a broader effort to establish a comprehensive police state aimed at controlling the entire population. The goal, he said, was to "strengthen internal security in Germany," including measures to "authorize IP address storage for security authorities for three months" and to "open up powers for source telecommunications surveillance to the federal police."

Merz made clear that the expansion of state repression is directly tied to Germany's massive rearmament and war offensive. A "Federal Security Council" will be established within the Chancellery, along with a "national situation centre" and "national crisis team." Germany, he insisted, must become stronger in "foreign and security policy." To this end, defence spending will be "significantly increased," a new law will be passed to "accelerate planning and procurement for the Bundeswehr [Armed Forces]," and further steps will be taken to "enhance defence capabilities"—including the gradual reintroduction of compulsory military service.

planned rearmament programme—initiated by the CDU/CSU and SPD in March with the backing of the Greens and the Left Party—can only be compared to Germany's military build-up prior to the First and Second World Wars. A constitutional amendment passed by the ruling parties now exempts all defence spending above 1 percent of GDP from the "debt brake," which otherwise imposes strict limits on new government expenditure. This means that military spending can rise without limit.

The coalition agreement makes clear that the so-called "special infrastructure fund" of €500 billion will also be used to prepare for war. In the section on "Defense Policy," it states: "We are simplifying the definition of requirements and approval for military construction projects and creating exemptions in construction, environmental and public procurement law as well as in the protection and dedication of military areas with a Federal Defense Infrastructure Acceleration Act." Moreover, "concerns and infrastructure measures for overall defense" are to be "defined as an overriding public interest and prioritized over other state tasks in their implementation."

Merz and Co. made no secret of the fact that the rush to form a new government is a direct response to the escalation of international trade and military conflicts. "We conducted the coalition negotiations in a situation of growing global political tensions, in a situation in which many internal and external forces are not working with us, but against us in Germany," Merz declared. He emphasized that the war in Ukraine was continuing unabated, while "economic uncertainties are increasing enormously." Recent decisions by the US government, he added, had "triggered new turbulence."

Under these conditions, German imperialism is determined to aggressively pursue its economic and geopolitical interests and assert them against rival major powers. "We do not yet know in which direction the international situation will develop," Merz stated—before adding, in unmistakably threatening terms, "But that is why our message today is all the clearer. We want to and we will help shape change in the world for Germany. The coalition agreement is a signal of change and a powerful sign for our country."

At the press conference, SPD Chairman and parliamentary group leader Lars Klingbeil made it explicitly clear that Germany—despite its historic crimes in two world wars—has no

intention of standing aside in the imperialist redivision of the world in the 21st century. “We are seeing the world being reorganised right now,” he declared. “In these hours, in these days, in the next few months, decisions will be made as to what role Germany and Europe will play in the future in this remapping of the world. And that was a thread that ran through our coalition negotiations.”

In the coalition agreement, the SPD and CDU/CSU identified the entire globe as a zone of influence for German imperialism. They called for “an Africa policy that does justice to Africa’s strategic importance,” and described the Indo-Pacific as “of elementary interest,” where Germany would “continue to maintain a presence.” They emphasized that “expanding strategic partnerships with the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean is of particular importance.” Overall, the agreement pledges that “bilateral relations with the countries of the Global South will be intensified and expanded into a global network.”

As in the past, German global power politics today means genocide and war. The coalition partners declared the “security of Israel” to be a “German matter of state,” fully backing the far-right Netanyahu regime’s genocidal campaign against the Palestinians. At the same time, they pledged support for the new Islamist rulers in Syria under the banner of “stabilization and economic reconstruction”—a move aimed at expanding German influence in a resource-rich, geostrategically vital region and facilitating the deportation of refugees there.

On the eastern war front against Russia, the coalition agreement pledges that “military, civilian and political support for Ukraine will be substantially strengthened and reliably continued together with partners”—and, if necessary, independently of the United States. “For the first time since the end of the Second World War,” it declares, “Germany and Europe must be in a position to guarantee their own security to a much greater extent.” Berlin intends to play the central role in this effort, assuming “a leading role” in the further development of the European Union’s Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP).

Germany’s historic rearmament and war policy will be financed through equally historic attacks on the working class. “We will make a considerable contribution to consolidation in this legislative period,” the coalition agreement states in the section on “Budget Consolidation.” The model for this program is the United States, where the Trump regime is carrying out savage austerity measures in the interests of the financial oligarchy, dismantling all of what remains of past social gains.

The coalition partners have agreed to a sweeping austerity agenda, including the following measures:

- A 10 percent cut in all non-personnel administrative spending by 2029—targeting areas such as education, health and social services, while explicitly exempting intelligence and police agencies;
- An 8 percent reduction in federal administration jobs, again with exceptions carved out for the security apparatus;
- Cuts to external consultancy expenditures across all departments and the halving of federal commissioner positions;
- €1 billion in overall cuts to funding programs in the federal budget;

- Reductions in voluntary contributions to international organizations;

- Cuts to *Bürgergeld* (basic welfare payments).

The deeply anti-working-class policies of the incoming federal government are supported by all parties in the *Bundestag*.

The Greens provided the CDU/CSU and SPD with the necessary two-thirds majority in the outgoing parliament to pass the constitutional amendment enabling the war credits. The Left Party and its representatives in the *Bundesrat* (upper house) also voted in favor.

The trade unions are fully on board as well. They continuously reaffirm their support for rearmament and are doing everything in their power to sabotage the growing wave of worker opposition—blocking unified action and pushing through sellouts in wage disputes at Deutsche Post, in the public sector and at Berlin local transit operator BVG.

The support of all Bundestag parties and the trade unions for the program of war and austerity underscores a fundamental truth: the fight against fascism, militarism and social inequality requires the independent mobilization of the working class.

In its statement at the beginning of the government formation process, the *Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei* (Socialist Equality Party, SGP) called for the “establishment of rank-and-file committees in workplaces and neighborhoods that will allow workers to take the fight against mass redundancies and wage cuts into their own hands and combine it with the fight against war.”

The statement declared:

We counterpose the international unity of the workers to the growth of nationalism, trade war and rearmament. The war can only be stopped, and social and democratic rights can only be defended, if capitalism itself is abolished and replaced by a socialist society in which people’s needs, not profit interests, take centre stage. The big banks and corporations must be expropriated and placed under democratic control.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact