

German parliament excludes Russia from ceremony marking victory over the Nazis

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The German Parliament (Bundestag) has excluded the ambassadors of Russia and Belarus from the main commemoration of the 80th anniversary of the end of the Second World War on May 8. The parliamentary administration based its decision on a recommendation from the Foreign Ministry led by Green Party politician Annalena Baerbock.

The Foreign Ministry handout, which was also sent to Germany's federal states, districts and local authorities, advises against inviting representatives of the two countries to all commemorative events in Germany. If they appear unannounced, the organizers should "make use of their proprietary rights" and expel them from the premises.

Under international law, Russia is the successor state to the Soviet Union, which bore the brunt of the fight against the Nazis. Around 10 million Soviet soldiers died in the Second World War. In the Battle of Berlin alone, which forced the Nazi regime to surrender unconditionally, 170,000 soldiers lost their lives and a further 500,000 were injured. In addition, there were at least another 15 million civilian Soviet victims who were shot, gassed and starved by the Nazis because they were Jews or communists, or because they stood in the way of the Nazis' expansionist plans.

There is hardly anyone among Russia's 144 million inhabitants who did not lose close relatives to the Nazi terror or in the fight against it. The 28-month siege of Leningrad alone claimed the lives of 1.1 million inhabitants of the Russian metropolis. But now the representatives of this country are to be excluded from all commemorative events, not only in the Bundestag, but also in cemeteries where tens of thousands of fallen Soviet soldiers rest.

Russia's exclusion is such an obvious provocation that it was met with incomprehension even by local

politicians from the governing parties. For example, the 71-year-old Russian ambassador Sergei Netshaev appeared at the memorial service in Seelow, where 33,000 Red Army soldiers fell in the largest battle of the Second World War on German soil. Despite pressure from Berlin, the local politicians in charge refused to kick him out.

Sina Schönbrunn, Social Democrat (SPD) member of the Brandenburg state parliament, told public broadcaster ARD: "I can't uninvite someone who wants to commemorate his fellow countrymen here. I can't understand that. That's not diplomacy." Christian Democrat (CDU) district councillor Friedemann Hanke commented: "80 years is a round anniversary. I can't start from today and say that I don't appreciate what happened back then." Incidentally, they work very closely with the Russian embassy on issues relating to war graves, he added.

The Foreign Ministry justified its provocation by claiming that Russia could "instrumentalize the commemorative events and improperly link them to its war of aggression against Ukraine." What an outrageous lie! If anyone is instrumentalizing the commemorative events for war purposes, it is the German government and Baerbock's Foreign Ministry. They are excluding representatives of Russia from the commemorative events because they are reviving Hitler's great power politics and are again waging war against Russia.

With the exception of the American government, no other government has invested such large sums in the war in Ukraine as the German government. German tanks, missiles and grenades are once again killing Russian soldiers, and Ukrainian troops are being trained in Germany for the war against Russia.

Berlin has reacted with panic to the Trump

administration's efforts to agree to a ceasefire with Moscow. It is mobilizing all available means to keep the war going, even though the Ukrainian army is being bled dry and is on the defensive. In a few years' time, the German Armed Forces (Bundeswehr) is to be "war-ready" in order to win an armed confrontation with Russia. To this end, the Bundestag has approved a war fund of €1 trillion with the votes of the CDU/Christian Social Union (CSU), SPD and Greens. The representatives of the Left Party in the Bundesrat (the upper house) also agreed.

This gigantic rearmament programme has nothing to do with "defence," as the official propaganda claims. Rather, the aims are to continue the economic and political expansion to the east, which has come to a standstill with the Ukraine war, to inflict a military defeat on Russia, to break up the huge country, and to exploit its raw material reserves and other riches. These are the same goals that Wilhelm II pursued in the First World War and Hitler in the Second World War.

This is the reason why Russia is being banned from the commemorations of the end of the Second World War and why history is systematically rewritten. The cynical approach of the German government is demonstrated by the fact that it is welcoming representatives of the Ukrainian government to the commemorative events with open arms.

Among the 28 million victims of the German war of extermination were millions from Ukraine, one of the main theaters of the war. They died because they fought in the Red Army, because they were citizens of the Soviet Union or because they were exterminated as Jews.

Volodymyr Zelensky's regime, on the other hand, is based on a completely different tradition. It venerates Nazi collaborators who fought on the side of the German Wehrmacht and took part in its crimes, erects monuments to them and has streets renamed after them. Andriy Melnyk, for example, who represented Ukraine in Germany as ambassador for many years, is a fanatical admirer of the fascist Stepan Bandera, whose Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) was drenched in the blood of tens of thousands of communists, Jews and Poles.

German universities are also systematically developing a new historical narrative that trivializes the crimes of the Nazis and declares the Soviet Union to be

partly responsible for the Second World War. The WSWS recently published a detailed critique of the exhibition "Rift through Europe," which spreads this historical lie and is also intended to serve as a framework for school lessons via the Federal Agency for Civic Education.

This development goes hand in hand with statements by leading CDU/CSU politicians and candidates for ministerial posts in the new government—including Jens Spahn, Johann Wadephul and Mathias Middelberg—advocating normalizing relations with the AfD and dealing with it "as with any other opposition party." The far-right party, whose honorary chairman Alexander Gauland plays down Nazi rule as a speck of "bird shit" in over 1,000 years of glorious German history, is teeming with Nazi admirers.

A month ago, we wrote in the article "German parliament agrees to €1 trillion for war":

The real purpose of the gigantic armaments package is to transform Germany back into a major military power that can free itself from American control, dominate Europe and take on other great powers—Russia, China and the US—in the battle for the violent redivision of the world. Eighty years after the capitulation of Hitler's Wehrmacht (Army), German militarism is throwing off the last shackles that were imposed on it because of its war crimes.

The provocative exclusion of Russia from the commemorative events marking the end of the Second World War confirms this assessment. It must be firmly rejected.



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