

Bundeswehr manoeuvres in Hamburg as Germany undertakes largest rearmament programme since Hitler

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At the weekend, one of the most threatening military manoeuvres of the post-war period took place in Hamburg. Under the title Red Storm Bravo, hundreds of soldiers, police and civil authorities were mobilised to rehearse the transfer of troops and heavy equipment eastward for war against Russia. At the same time, the government is implementing a rearmament offensive of historic proportions, expanding the powers of the Bundeswehr (Armed Forces) at home and driving forward the authoritarian restructuring of the state.

The events in Germany are directly linked to the rapid development of dictatorship in the United States. There, President Donald Trump ordered the deployment of the military against demonstrators in Portland at the weekend and explicitly called for the “full” use of force. The same logic, the same methods are now taking hold in Europe. The ruling class is not only arming for a global war but also preparing to crush resistance in the working class with brutal repression.

The bourgeois media largely tried to play down the Red Storm Bravo exercise. News weekly *Der Spiegel*, however, spoke of a “trial war” and of a “conscious decision by the Bundeswehr ... to send a signal to the population.” In reality, the manoeuvres mark a new stage in the build-up of a war machine that is also directed against the domestic population.

Throughout the city of Hamburg, columns of military vehicles were on the move, supported by police and the civil protection authorities. The transfer of tens of thousands of NATO troops across civilian infrastructure was practised. Even more alarming was an element of the exercise that involved deploying soldiers against anti-war demonstrators. The state is thus openly preparing to use the military to suppress

protests and strikes directed against the war.

The manoeuvres are a warning: the more the ruling class in Germany advances its war offensive against Russia, the more it intensifies repression at home.

Just a few days before Red Storm Bravo, the cabinet passed a law massively expanding the Bundeswehr’s powers. As *Legal Tribune Online* reported, military police can now operate not only within barracks but also in public spaces against civilians. Under the pretext of “counterterrorism,” drones, digital surveillance systems and armed forces are being integrated into everyday urban life.

This paves the way for the deployment of the military at home, something prohibited by the constitution. The ruling class is responding to growing opposition among the population to war, social attacks and authoritarian measures. It is systematically preparing the Bundeswehr to be used domestically against workers, youth and demonstrators.

These authoritarian measures go hand in hand with the largest rearmament offensive since the 1930s. After approving war credits of €1 trillion—supported by all parties, including the Left Party and the Greens—the government is rapidly implementing multibillion-euro armaments projects. According to a government document seen by *Politico*, the government plans defence spending of over €80 billion in the next 15 months alone. A total of 154 major projects are on the agenda—from new wheeled armoured vehicles and combat drones to modern frigates.

The biggest item is the F-127 class frigates, costing more than €26 billion and set to shape the navy for decades. Added to this are billions for air defence systems such as Iris-T, new Patriot missiles and a

modernised version of the Taurus Neo cruise missiles.

The focus is above all on strengthening the European arms industry. Only 8 percent of funds flow to the United States—a clear signal that Berlin and the EU intend to develop the capacity for an independent, great military power. This is complemented by a multibillion-euro space militarisation programme.

On Thursday, Defence Minister Boris Pistorius (Social Democratic Party, SPD) declared that Germany wanted to lead Europe militarily not only on the ground but also in space. “Germany is ready to take on more responsibility—as a pioneer among the European nations” and “this responsibility does not end in the stratosphere—on the contrary.” Therefore, structures were being built “within the Bundeswehr to enable us to defend and deter effectively in space in the medium and long term.” The Bundeswehr was “an important part of a nationwide space security architecture.”

To this end, the government was “putting real money on the table.” By 2030 alone, it planned to spend “budgetary funds amounting to €35 billion on projects.”

All these measures, financed through massive cuts in education, health and social spending, take place against the background of a massive escalation against Russia. Leading German politicians and media openly declare that Germany is already “at war” with Moscow.

As the WSWS warned, NATO is using alleged airspace violations by Russian jets and drones to escalate the war further and is preparing for a direct confrontation with the world’s largest nuclear power.

The Hamburg manoeuvres are part of this. They served the logistical preparation of NATO’s eastern flank—the potential theatre of war against Russia. The government is placing itself at the head of this offensive and is directly linking up with Germany’s central war aims in both world wars: control over Ukraine, access to Russia’s raw material resources and dominance over the Eurasian continent. Today, Berlin is once again pursuing these megalomaniac strategic ambitions.

At the same time, militarisation in Germany is inseparable from the development of dictatorship in the United States. Here too, the ruling class is responding to the deep crisis of capitalism, escalating international conflicts and growing resistance in the working class with war abroad and dictatorship at home.

The ruling class is not only arming against Russia. It is preparing for inevitable resistance within its own country. The budget cuts, soaring prices and growing social inequality are meeting with massive opposition. Millions of people reject the war policy.

This is the background to manoeuvres like Red Storm Bravo, to the new powers of the Bundeswehr and to the militarisation of domestic politics. As on the eve of the Second World War, when the ruling class brought Hitler to power, it is aware that it can enforce its war and austerity course only by dictatorial means.

The working class must and can stop this development. For this it needs its own independent organisations of struggle and an international socialist strategy that links the fight against war with the fight against its cause—capitalism.



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