

Germany's all-party coalition for a war budget

Peter Schwarz
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The German parliament, the Bundestag, is debating the 2026 federal budget this week, which is due to be adopted on Friday. As we wrote in an earlier article, it is a war budget.

Defence Minister Boris Pistorius (Social Democrat-SPD) can spend more than twice as much money as last year. While the defence budget stood at €52 billion in 2024, it will rise to €108 billion in 2026. Two-thirds of this will come from the regular budget, one-third from the €100 billion “special fund” approved at the start of the Ukraine war.

But this is only the beginning. According to official financial planning, the defence budget is to rise to €162 billion by 2029, amounting to 3.5 percent of GDP. By then it will be financed entirely from the regular budget. In addition, a further €500 billion will flow over the next five years from the “special fund for infrastructure”—which, like Hitler’s *autobahn* (motorway) construction once did, is designed above all to make roads, railways and bridges “fit for war.” In this way, Germany is preparing to continue the war against Russia independently of the United States as well.

These colossal sums are being financed through increased national debt. Of the €525 billion total budget for 2026, €98 billion will come from new loans. Added to this are a further €83 billion from the two special funds, bringing total new borrowing to a record €180 billion. Business associations and political parties are unanimous that workers, pensioners and the poor will ultimately be made to pay.

The budget debate and Wednesday’s so-called general debate were, as usual, marked by fierce exchanges between the parties. But the parliamentary clamour cannot conceal the fact that they are all in agreement on the fundamental issues. The war budget,

and the accompanying social attacks, is supported by an all-party coalition ranging from the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) to the Greens and the Left Party.

AfD leader Alice Weidel, who opened the general debate, compared Germany to the sinking Titanic, condemned high national debt and the economic crisis—and blamed not the government’s war policy but migration for these problems. She demanded “a policy of the closed door: complete border controls, uncompromising turning-back of all illegals, and finally rigorous deportation.” She did not utter a single word of criticism of the war budget. Instead, she offered Merz the political cooperation of the AfD, whose own election programme calls for higher military spending.

Representatives of the governing parties, the Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU) and SPD, and the Greens attacked the AfD fiercely—but not because of its fascist agitation against migrants which they themselves have long since adopted. In his response to Weidel, Chancellor Merz boasted of his “successes” in this area: “We are once again deciding who comes to us, under what conditions they come, and who stays with us,” he said.

The CDU/CSU, SPD and Greens attacked the AfD because of its reservations about the Ukraine war and its channels of communication with Moscow, accusing it of “treason.” SPD parliamentary leader Matthias Mirsch called the AfD a “security risk for Germany,” while CDU/CSU parliamentary group leader Jens Spahn labelled it the “fifth column of Putin.” Weidel replied sweetly that her party maintained not only open channels to Russia but also close ties to the White House. “We have always demanded exactly what Donald Trump is now implementing.”

Britta Haßelmann, parliamentary leader of the Greens—who had made the war budget possible in the

first place by approving the €1 trillion rearmament loans—accused Merz of lack of leadership, including towards the United States. Trump’s Ukraine initiative, she complained, was a “plan of submission for Ukraine, nothing else.”

Merz had indeed distanced himself from the US proposals in his speech, but he had avoided naming them outright and shied away from a confrontation with Trump. He said he wanted “peace in freedom, not the silence of the cemetery, not peace through capitulation.” An agreement without the consent of Ukraine and the Europeans was no basis for a sustainable peace in Ukraine, he said.

Left Party parliamentary leader Sören Pellmann also accused Merz of “lacking a plan.” He had “failed to deliver and failed on almost all policy fields,” Pellmann said. He accused Merz of pursuing a policy for the rich and claimed there was “a massive redistribution from the bottom to the top.” As if anything else could have been expected from the former chairman of BlackRock Germany!

The entire policy of the Left Party is aimed at fostering the illusion that Merz and the government can be pressured into adopting a different policy. In reality, the Left Party itself approved the rearmament loans in the Bundesrat (upper house of parliament) and helped Merz achieve a rapid election as chancellor after his failed first ballot.

The Left Party’s co-chair Heidi Reichinnek also indulged in social demagoguery, until Green MP Audretsch reminded her, in an intervention, that in the Berlin Senate (state executive) the Left Party had contributed to the explosion in rents in the capital through the sale of public housing to private investors.

“You are right,” Reichinnek replied. “These flats were sold at the time under an SPD–Left Party administration because the budget had to be balanced. It was a catastrophe and a huge mistake. The problem is that the *Länder* [federal states] were forced into exactly this position.”

This is the Left Party in its purest form. It speaks left and acts right. In speeches and election appeals, it makes grand promises, only to carry out the dirty work for the state and for the banks and corporations as soon as it is elected, citing supposed “constraints.” Nothing frightens it more than an independent movement from below that questions existing relations of power and

property.

The growing opposition of the European working class to their governments’ policies of war and cuts was the real elephant in the room during the entire general debate. While MPs were speaking, a general strike paralysed Belgium in protest against the government’s austerity budget there. In Italy and Portugal, similar general strikes are planned for the coming days. In London, parliament was simultaneously debating the Starmer government’s new austerity budget that brutally slashes social benefits.

The growing resistance of the European working class creates the conditions to stop governments’ policies of war and social devastation. But to succeed, it must be united internationally and armed with a socialist programme to overthrow capitalism.



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