

Zeitenwende and war preparations in Germany



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1. A *Zeitenwende** that was long in preparation

Three years ago, Olaf Scholz, the German Chancellor, proclaimed ‘*Zeitenwende*’, meaning, a *Turning Point*. Since then, terms such as ready for war, bellicose or resilient have characterized politics. The militarization and preparation for war in Germany has also progressed rapidly in the last three years: special funds for the Bundeswehr, the German Operations Plan, the debate on compulsory military conscription, the largest NATO maneuver, the National Security Strategy or the explosion of arms exports to Israel and Ukraine.¹

“We need aircraft that fly, ships that sail, and soldiers who are optimally equipped for their missions. That is what it is about, and it is certainly achievable for **a country of our size and importance** in Europe.”² **

(Olaf Scholz, 2/27/22)

In his speech on February 27, 2022, Scholz said: “We are experiencing a *Zeitenwende*. And that means that the world after this will no longer be the same as the world before it. (...) We are taking on the challenge that the times have presented us with – soberly and resolutely.”²

Scholz, as well as the term *Zeitenwende* itself, give the impression that the *times have turned* and that one must now adapt to them. However, the *Zeitenwende* is a project of German power strategists that has been in preparation for a long time and has been executed since February 2022. For example, a proposal for a 100-billion-euro special fund for the Bundeswehr was already on the table in 2021, and, of course, the increase in the defense budget and the reintroduction of compulsory military service were already being discussed before 2022. The *Zeitenwende* is therefore a conscious act and not a reaction. It is intended to enable Germany to wage wars on large scale and, in particular, to prepare for direct war against Russia. NATO has been paving the way for this war since its eastward expansion since the 1990s at the latest.

The developments of the last three years have been rapid and it is difficult to keep track of them all. This brochure aims to trace the most important steps.

* ‘*Zeitenwende*’ means turning point in English; we use the German term in the text

** The quotes in this publication are without exception translated from German. For the original quotes see the German version of this publication on our website: kommunistische-organisation.de/artikel/neu-broschuere-zur-zeitenwende-und-kriegsvorbereitung-in-deutschland/

It must be kept in mind that the text was completed in January 2025 and that new developments will surely be upon us soon. The brochure cannot go into everything in detail, so there are always tips for further reading. It can be read from front to back, back to front or just in sections. In addition to the military, economic, political and ideological armament, it ultimately draws attention to what the task of all of us is: **to stop the war against Russia.**

Because the Zeitenwende means war against Russia. This war is already being waged in Ukraine, but this war is to be expanded: we would have to be “capable of war” by 2029 in order to wage war against Russia, Boris Pistorius (Minister of Defense) announced. **Without naming the political goal of the Zeitenwende – i.e., the subjugation of Russia – the fight against armament and war mobilization remains toothless.**



Background: Germany's third attempt at war against Russia

The drive towards expansion to the East has been the central tenet of German imperialism for over 100 years and a decisive reason for the two world wars started by Germany. Russia has always been of interest to German imperialism due to its vast raw material deposits, its large market and its investment opportunities. Because of its own scarcity of raw materials, Germany relies on imports of raw materials from Russia. On the other hand, Germany's economic model is based on high exports.

“The war must be brought **to Russia.**”³

(Roderich Kiesewetter, Member of German Parliament)

These two conditions have shaped various German strategies for Russia, ranging from containment through economic dependency to the direct occupation of Russian raw material sources and the dismemberment of Russia.⁴

In 1990, with the demise of the Soviet Union, the strongest opponent of the imperialist plans of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) was eliminated and the way to the east was open again. The EU's *Eastern Partnership* project was created to secure the German-European expansion. Russia was a disruptive factor in this expansion because it insisted on its security

interests. Despite promises to the contrary, NATO was expanded eastward to Russia's borders. Even the admission of Ukraine to NATO was repeatedly discussed, although Russia had warned several times that this would amount to crossing a red line. Arms control treaties were unilaterally terminated and no security guarantees were granted to Russia. Several NATO military maneuvers were carried out with the participation of Ukraine, thereby, de facto integrating the Ukrainian army into NATO structures. All this was done with the aim of surrounding Russia and eliminating it as a competitor. Russia is to be “ruined,” as publicly stated by Germany's foreign minister, Annalena Baerbock in 2022.



CDU election poster from 1947:
German revanchism has continuity

2. Vom Helm über Taurus bis zur Atomwaffe

At the beginning of 2022, there were still discussions in Germany about whether to supply helmets to Ukraine. This quickly turned into ammunition, missiles, tanks, and today the delivery of Taurus-weapon is on the table. On the military level, German imperialism is arming itself at a record pace. Specifically, Germany is to become the European NATO pillar against Russia, which is being realized through various levers.

War maneuvers: Germany as the European NATO pillar

Till 1951, that is, two years within its founding, NATO had already conducted over 100 war maneuvers; in 2016, the same number raised to almost 250, and in 2021, there were 300 maneuvers. The goal of these maneuvers, with hard-hitting names, was and is to test the coordination of various armies in simulated war conditions.

Defender Europe

- Deployment of troops across the Atlantic from Western to Eastern Europe
- Coordinated by the NATO-Centre JSEC in Ulm (Ger)
- 10,000 to 30,000 soldiers

Steadfast Defender 2024

- 90 000 soldiers involved
- Troop deployment to the east
- Bundeswehr maneuver *Quadriga 2024* with the participation of 12,000 soldiers and 3,000 vehicles

Air Defender 2023

- Largest air maneuver since the founding of NATO
- Under German leadership, a fact particularly emphasized in the press and in the military.

Cold Response

- War exercises under Norwegian leadership since 2006
- In the North Atlantic and the Norwegian Sea
- Participation of 30,000 soldiers from 20 NATO countries

The Lithuanian Brigade—“A Lighthouse-Project of Zeitenwende”

In addition to the limited and temporary war exercises, the *Lithuanian brigade* is set to be the largest permanent deployment of the Bundeswehr abroad, a clear violation of the NATO-Russia Act. *Tank Brigade 45*, which represents the revanchist German war aims not only in terms of content but also in name, is to comprise 5,000 soldiers and be “ready for combat” by 2027. Boris Pistorius, Germany’s defense minister, has called it a “lighthouse project of Zeitenwende” that will assume “leadership responsibility in the alliance here on NATO’s eastern flank”.⁵

“A few years after the end of the war, **Russia will be smaller** in territory than it is today. And we should not believe that this development will necessarily be non-violent.”⁶

(Carlo Masala from the Bundeswehr University on X)

“A European presence in the Indo-Pacific”

The main thrust of the Zeitenwende is directed against Russia. But the German imperialism is not satisfied with just that. In 2024, German warships were sailing in the South China Sea and passed through the Taiwan Strait, one of the main trading routes in the world. This was justifiably interpreted by the Chinese government as a provocation against its own state sovereignty and security and was even named as such by German politicians. While the Chief of Staff of the German Air Force, Gerhartz, spoke of showing a “European face in the Indo-Pacific”, Pistorius emphasized that one could not afford to “neglect this region”. After all, the Indo-Pacific is one of the “central regions for security and prosperity in the 21st century”.⁷



As early as the 19th century, German frigates were on their way to China, to the former German colony of Kiautschou.

Operations Plan Germany—a plan for war against Russia

In 2022, the Bundeswehr’s Territorial Command was set up, whose tasks included developing the *Operations Plan Germany*. This plan, which comprises of approximately 1,000 pages, most of which is subject to strict secrecy, is intended to bring together and implement the military and civilian components of the war against Russia. The *Operations Plan Germany* is based on the so-called *NATO Defense Plan* and is designed to turn Germany into a hub for the “deployment of Allied forces across and via Germany to NATO’s eastern flank”. In this context, the Netherlands, Poland and Germany recently signed an agreement to organize a “cross-border model corridor for military traffic from west to east”. The JSEC NATO command structure based in Ulm is responsible for implementing this, under German command.⁸



Germany is to become a logistics hub for the war

In addition to military planning, the *Operations Plan Germany* also includes plans for infrastructure supply, preparing German companies for war, and the militarization of society. In January 2024, a meeting was held with companies, police, scientific institutions, the media, the fire brigade and the Federal Agency for Technical Relief to discuss the broad implementation of the *Operations Plan Germany*. Part of the plan is, among other things, the restoration of bunkers from the time of German fascism, as well as the construction of new ones. Homeowners are advised to build one of these in the future. They are to be registered in a *Bunker-App*.

Military service, compulsory military service, home guard regiment

Human resources are urgently needed for war. This is demonstrated not least by the brutal forced recruitments in Ukraine, which are documented in many videos. The question of reintroducing compulsory military service was therefore discussed long before 2022. However, with the proclamation of the *Zeitenwende*, work began immediately on turning military conscription into law. Last year, Pistorius presented a draft of the *New Military Service*, which has already been adopted but has not yet come into force due to the break in the coalition government. This draft provides for an increase in the reserve forces and a mandatory military registration for men aged 18 and above. During the debate, it quickly became apparent that it will by no means remain a mere

continues p. 12

Background: the rearmament of the FRG

In the FRG, unlike in the German Democratic Republic (GDR), the defeat of German fascism in 1945 did not result in the smashing of the political, military and economic structures that had supported it. As a result, German monopoly corporations such as ThyssenKrupp, Siemens and IG Farben (now BASF) were able to continue to exist without any disruption. Nazi leaders were rehabilitated and occupied important positions in the state. To name



Bundesarchiv, Bild 183-2737-0001 / CC-BY-SA 3.0

Reinhard Gehlen

just two: Heinrich Lübke, who was initially the master builder of the concentration camps and a trusted representative of the Gestapo, and then Federal President from 1959 to 1969. Reinhard Gehlen, who, as head of the foreign intelligence service, prepared the attack on the Soviet Union and then built up the Federal Intelligence Service (Bundesnachrichtendienst - BND).³⁹

Furthermore, the rearmament and re-equipment of the FRG quickly became the central project—both in Germany and in Western foreign countries. From the point of view of the USA, Germany was to play a central role in the fight against the Soviet Union and the GDR. At the same time, it was important, especially from the point of view of France, Great Britain and the USA, to prevent a militarily independent FRG. This was the central reason for the rearmament of the FRG within the framework of NATO.

Further reading

Jörg Kronauer, *Allzeit bereit. Die neue deutsche Weltpolitik und ihre Stützen*. PapyRossa Verlag, 2015.

Heute Europa, morgen die Welt. Deutsche Großmachtspolitik in fünf Etappen. Das Neue Berlin edition ost, 2014.

- 1948** Adenauer, the first FRG Chancellor, commissions an expert report on German rearmament
- 1949** Establishment of the FRG and thus the official partition of Germany. *Petersberg Agreement*, which provides for the reconstruction of the German (armaments) industry
- 1950** Meeting of members of the armed forces in the Himmerod monastery to plan the re-establishment of a German army
- 1952** Shooting of Philipp Müller (member of KPD) at a demonstration against rearmament; according to a referendum, 9 million people were against German rearmament
- 1954** *Paris Agreements*, which recognized the sovereignty of the FRG by Western allies
- 1955** FRG joins NATO; The Bundeswehr is founded by former Wehrmacht officers and conscription is introduced.
- 1956** Banning of the *Communist Party of Germany* (KPD): The main political force opposing German rearmament
- 1990** Annexation of the territory of the GDR and integration of the National People's Army into the Bundeswehr and advance of NATO and the Bundeswehr to the line of Oder
- 1991** *Fürstfeldbruck Symposium*—meeting to plan the development of Germany into an offensive military power
- 1992** *Defense Policy Guidelines* that Emphasize Germany's "National Interests"; The Federal Constitutional Court empowers the German parliament to authorize military missions with a simple majority
- 1995** Involvement of FRG in the Bosnian War
- 1999** FRG participates in the Kosovo War with air strikes to destroy Yugoslavia
- 2001 onwards** Establishment of the *Operational Command*, earlier prohibited by the Potsdam Agreement of 1945
- 2002** Entry into the war against Afghanistan
- 2005 onwards** various Bundeswehr missions off the Lebanese coast, over the Baltic States, in Somalia and the Aegean, Mali, etc.
- 2017 onwards** Deployment of the NATO battle group in Lithuania with 500 Bundeswehr soldiers
- 2022** Adoption of a war credit of 100 billion and a change to the German constitution; Arms deliveries to Ukraine on a large scale
- 2023 onwards** Support of Israel's genocide in Gaza with arms deliveries
Accusation by Nicaragua before the International Court of Justice; naval operation in the Red Sea

registration requirement. Pistorius himself spoke out in favor of compulsory military service, and the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), included precisely this demand in its 2025 election program. CDU is the party that secured the highest number of votes in the recently concluded German elections. The introduction of compulsory military service seems clear; the only thing that is unclear is the timing. Advertising and recruiting teenagers and young adults at schools or universities, at sporting events, at job fairs, and on social media has long been standard practice and has intensified in recent years. Starting in 2021 six home guard regiments were established, which became part of the Bundeswehr, and are made up of reservists who are now responsible for national defense in the event of war with Russia. Three of these regiments are already active.

The more the weapons, the longer the war

In addition to the massive rearmament in the last three years, we are also seeing an explosion in arms exports (not to argue that Germany was hesitant in this regard in the past). In addition to the regular main customers such as USA, South Korea, India and Egypt, in the last three years Ukraine and Israel have also emerged as major recipients of German weapons. As a result, the German arms companies have been able to increase their sales massively. For instance, Rheinmetall, one of the largest German weapon manufacturer, has seen an increase of almost 50% in its orders.

By October 2024, Germany had provided approximately 52 billion euros in support to Ukraine.⁹ This primarily includes weapons, loans and the training of Ukrainian soldiers in Germany. The motto of German policy is: *the more the weapons, the longer the war*. Thus, helmets were quickly replaced by drones, ammunition, tanks, self-propelled howitzers (artillery weapons), Patriot (air-defense system), Iris and so on. The German government has even published a long list of all the weapons systems supplied.¹⁰ Germany ranks third after the EU and the USA in terms of arms deliveries to Ukraine. However, as a result of its support of Israel's genocide in Gaza, in the year 2023, Germany's arms exports to Israel also increased, almost tenfold, making Germany the second largest arms supplier to Israel. Due to these arms deliveries,

GERMAN ARMAMENTS EXPORTS

2022: **8,4** billion €

2023: **12,2** billion €

2024: **13,3** billion €

Nicaragua, in the Spring of 2024, accused Germany at the International Court of Justice of aiding and abetting genocide in Gaza.

“We are experiencing growth at a rate that the company has never seen before. (...) We have major orders in the pipeline that will ensure further revenue growth in the years to come. In addition, we are building new plants, massively expanding our capacities and making strategic acquisitions. This is how we are getting closer to our goal of becoming a **global defense champion**.”¹¹

(Armin Papperger, Rheinmetall-Chairman)

Re-armament made by Europe

The armament is being pushed not only in Germany, but also at the European level. In 2024, the *European Defense Industry Strategy* (EDIS) was adopted, which is intended to provide a framework for all defense industry policy decisions until 2035. In 2024, the position of so-called Defense Commissioner was created for this purpose. Andrius Kubilius is the first to hold the office and plans to suspend debt regulations within the EU for armaments spending, as well as loans from the *European Investment Bank*, which had previously refused to grant loans for armaments. In November 2024, a meeting of European arms experts on these issues took place on a British aircraft carrier in Hamburg. The aim of the meeting was to accelerate European arms production and to free up the necessary financial resources for it. According to the *International Institute for Strategic Studies* (IISS), European spending to date has amounted to \$436 billion, with German spending increasing by 80% in recent years.¹² What makes European rearmament more difficult are the different national interests of the individual states, because everyone wants to make their own armaments projects the leading ones and to be as independent as possible of others in production.

In 2024, Rheinmetall invested 300 million euros in Unterlüß to build another ammunition factory.



Missiles aimed at Moscow: US medium-range weapons in Wiesbaden, Germany

Without prior information, it was announced at the last NATO summit in 2024 that US medium-range missiles would be stationed near Wiesbaden, Germany from 2026. These missiles are designed to be able to attack targets in Russia within a range of up to 2,500 km. After the USA had increasingly started building medium-range missiles again in 2017, Trump in 2019 terminated the *INF-Treaty*, which had previously prohibited such deployment. The aim of such termination is also the deployment of medium-range missiles near China. The deployment of US weapons systems in Germany on the other hand will close a “capability gap”, as it is casually referred to:

“It is important to develop a certain position of strength in order to be able to position oneself **against Russia** (...).”¹³

(Maik Keller, Brigadegeneral, 2024)

These american weapons are to be replaced in five to seven years by European weapons that are currently being developed in a european program called ELSA. There was no public debate about such a deployment in Germany—which is understandable from the point of view of those in power, as the danger posed by this decision to the people of Germany must be kept hidden. Consequently, awareness of the plans and dangers of such deployment is rather low in Germany, but resistance is nevertheless emerging. In October 2024, a petition titled *Berlin Appeal* was launched, which was signed by almost 27,000 people (as of 12/24).

Ramstein Air Base—US medium-range missiles are also to be stationed near Wiesbaden in 2026.



3. War loans, forced labor, armaments magnates

The war economy is being built

A war economy means converting an economy to meet the needs of war. This includes, for example, independence in the procurement of raw materials and energy, the ramp-up of arms production, and the expansion of infrastructure for the transport of war equipment and war loans on a large scale. We have seen the beginnings of all of this in recent years.

The question is “how much **market economy** is possible and how much **planned economy** is necessary in times of war in Europe?”¹⁴

(Andre Wüstner, Chairman of the German Armed Forces Association, 2024)

The goal of being independent in terms of procuring energy, raw materials and key technologies is a recurring theme in almost all strategy papers. For this purpose, an extra *raw materials strategy* (*Rohstoffstrategie*) was developed. The topic also plays an important role in the *national security strategy* (*Nationalen Sicherheitsstrategie*). The goals include reducing raw material imports from China, the development of key technologies domestically and the strengthening of new energy partnerships to help balance out its dependence on Russian energy supplies. This goal is also emphasized in the *National Security and Defense Industrial Strategy* (*Nationalen Sicherheits- und Verteidigungsindustriestrategie - SVI*), which was renewed in November 2024. In the area of weapons technology, as well as maintenance and repair, the aim is to achieve complete self-sufficiency so as not to be dependent on foreign countries in case of an “emergency”. According to the SVI, the civil clause should be abolished in order to be able to place all research and science in the service of militarization. This will certainly be an item on the agenda at universities and research institutes in the next few years and will hopefully be met with resistance.

Even though the German arms industry has not exactly been in a poor state up to now, it is to be given a considerable boost in the next few years: with state-backed purchase guarantees, subsidies or, if necessary, direct state intervention. The German state has already taken a share in the arms company *Diehl*, and negotiations are currently underway with *Thyssen Krupp Marine Systems*. The construction of new *Rheinmetall* plants, including a major one in Ukraine, which would deliver weapons directly to the front line, also plays an important role in the overall plans of German imperialism.

The recruitment of workers for the arms industry is also to be supported, either in the form of funding the re-training of the workers or in the form of transfer of the dismissed workers from the automotive industry to arms companies. Such cases have recently occurred at Rheinmetall, which hired dismissed workers of the German company Continental.¹⁵

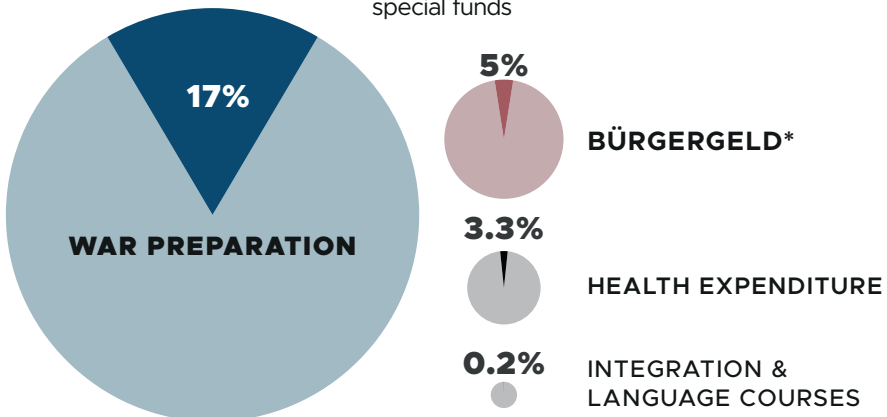
Further reading

Jürgen Wagner, *Im Rüstungswahn. Deutschlands Zeitenwende zu Aufrüstung und Militarisierung.* PapyRossa, 2022.

War credits

One of the first measures as part of the *Zeitenwende* was the adoption of the 100 billion special fund for the Bundeswehr. The name *special fund* is misleading: it is not a gift from heaven, but a normal loan that has to be repaid from the federal budget by 2031—through spending cuts and austerity measures. The special fund was established by amending the German constitution and was used to increase the defense budget to 2% of the gross domestic product (GDP). Since this increase will be used up by 2027, a new war loan of 300 billion is being considered. However, there are also many voices in politics, business and the armed forces who want to permanently increase the regular military budget to at least 2%, and many even want to see it rise to 3 or 4% of GDP. Alice Weidel of the Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) recently made headlines when she called for the number to be raised to 5%. The right wing party *Alternative für Deutschland* (AfD) managed to secure second highest votes in the recently concluded German elections.

What's the money for? according to the provisional federal budget 2025: 20 billion € for Bundeswehr, partner states and special funds



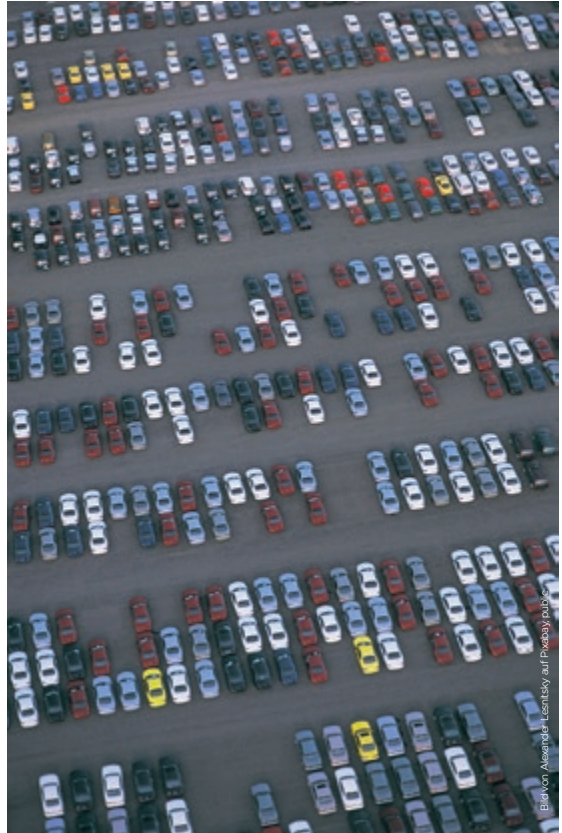
*Bürgergeld is a kind of guaranteed minimum income

Economic crisis—for whom actually?

Germany is the world's third-largest economy, after the United States and China, and relies primarily on the export of machinery, technology and, in particular, its automotive. Due to the rapid technological and also digital developments and the use of renewable energies, German industry is also to be transformed in order to assert its position in the world. The terms *transformation* and *Industry 4.0* have been shaping the debate for several years. In the long term, the energy transition will switch to hydrogen to ensure its own competitiveness and independence, however, this is not without controversy.

All these measures are associated with a high number of job cuts—we are seeing the first steps towards this in the layoffs that have been announced or already carried out by many companies. However, the transformation is faltering, the transition to renewable energies is not going as quickly or smoothly as planned, technological progress is dwindling and exports (especially of German cars to China) are weakening. In addition, the rise in energy prices due to the sanctions imposed by the West on Russia are making the country less attractive as a business location and reducing its competitiveness. Some companies are moving their production abroad because they can make higher profits there due to cheaper conditions. Parts of the German

economy are in crisis, and the German ruling class is currently struggling to find the most effective way to deal with it. But who is actually affected by the crisis? While the dividend payout in 2023 reached a record level, the poverty figures are rising. Price increases, real wage losses and layoffs are hitting the



The German automobile industry is enormously important for Germany's economic position on the world market.

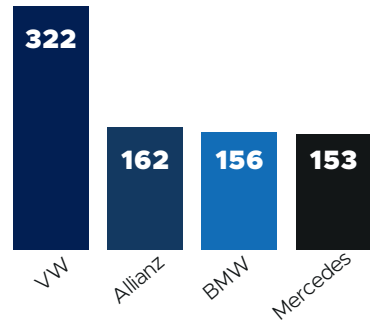
working class—while the rate of profit for monopolies is rising. With the aim of preventing major social unrest, the German state has tried to limit the impoverishment through measures such as the inflation-linked bonus, which, however, is also financed by tax revenues and thus through workers' wages.

In 2023, the dividend distribution of the DAX companies reached a record level of **55 billion euros**.

The price of electricity for industry has remained the same since 2020 (with the exception of 2022) ⇒ thanks to **massive tax breaks** from the state.

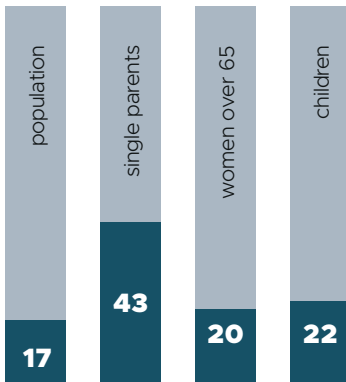
Sales of strongest German DAX-companies⁴¹

in billion euros



Who is effected by poverty?⁴⁰

percent of total



since 2020: food prices have risen by **30%**

2022: **biggest real wage loss** since 2008

since 2020: **electricity prices** for private households have risen by **50%**

more than **200,000 families** had their electricity cut off in 2024

Social cuts, increase in working hours, forced labor

“Cannons and butter mean **Schlaraffenland.**”^{1*}

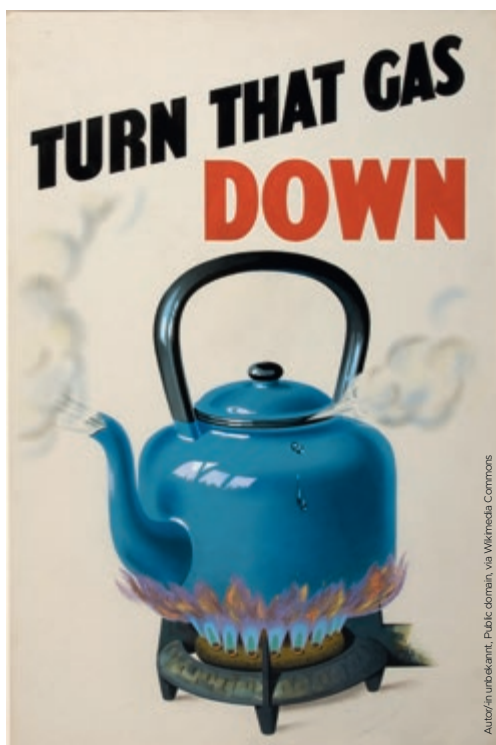
(Ifo-Chief Clemens Fuest, 2024)

War costs money. This money does not come from the companies, but from the workers, pensioners, unemployed. The costs of armament and war preparation are financed through austerity measures in the areas of education, social services and health—that was the case in the past and is no different today.

For some time now, various demands have been made by business and politics: working hours are to be made more flexible, i.e. increased, and rest periods are to be abolished—in other words, the deployment of labour is to be geared entirely to the needs and profits of companies. A pension reform has been on the agenda for some time. The plan is to raise the retirement age and expand private, speculation-based pension plans—following the example of the United States, where the amount of pension already depends on the luck of speculation.

The Bürgergeld is to be abolished and replaced by a basic income with compulsory work, i.e. everyone is to be forced into any kind of work. In Thuringia, a compulsory labor requirement has already been tested on refugees, and according to the CDU, it should now be extended to recipients of the citizen’s income. If you do not comply with the forced labor, the benefits will be cut. Politicians argue that work must be worthwhile again, especially in the low-wage sector. It is quite clear that forced labor will certainly not increase the real wages of employees, but will instead only serve to push them down.

* Schlaraffenland = land of milk and honey



The motto for 2022: “Freeze against Putin”

Nevertheless, the division between those in precarious employment and those in the most precarious situations is a popular and unfortunately effective means of domination. On the one hand, these measures will result in mustering the funds required to carry out rearmament, and on the other hand these measures are aimed at increasing corporate profits by expanding the options for exploitation of workers.

The newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* has this message for the German government: “[...] the question is: **tanks or Kindergarten?** Those who can’t manage this now won’t have the courage to make tough decisions for the population in normal times either.”¹⁶

In the future, there will be even more severe selection: usable and compatible migrants—“skilled workers”—are desired. This is entirely in line with the interests of German business, whose wealth is based in no small part on the exploitation of foreign, mostly Eastern European, labor. The current tightening of immigration laws is intended to force these workers to accept any job while simultaneously depressing wages. On top of that, there are measures such as pay cards, cuts to social services and deportations to put pressure on or get rid of those migrants who are less easy to exploit.

Over **55%** of EU workers come from countries of the **EU enlargement to the east**

People with a migration background have **twice the risk of poverty**

Migrants work **three times more often** than Germans on a **temporary basis**

the proportion of migrants in the **low-wage sector is 35%**, for Germans it is 16%

4. Enforcer of the Zeitenwende wanted

Trump elected and the Ampel coalition is out

Ever since Trump's presidential election and the coalition's collapse, all major parties in Germany have been trying to present themselves as the most suitable executors of the *Zeitenwende*. In the media, economy and military, the coalition's seemingly inadequate performance is emphasized, thus concealing the rapid war measures of recent years. The current conditions do not yet seem to be sufficient for a war on a large scale. The government-affiliated think tank *German Society for Foreign Policy (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik - DGAP)* says the following while talking about the previous Coalition government: "At no point in time was there any recognizable attempt to actually become a *Zeitenwende* government. (...) Germany is the largest country in Europe, the second largest NATO nation and currently even the third largest economy in the world. This entails responsibility (...) The more consistently the incoming German government succeeds in prioritizing the evident, namely defense, economy, migration, the better Germany will be able to deal with the challenge of Trump."¹⁷

Thus Trump, German rearmament and support for Ukraine were a key topic in the speeches that followed the coalition break. Robert Habeck, minister for economy and climate protection, postulated that Germany has a role to play in Europe and was supported in this by Baerbock. Baerbock wanted to "think even bigger (...) and make it bigger (...)" in terms of European security.¹⁸ And for Scholz, it was important after the US election to send a signal that Germany could be relied upon with regard to Ukraine.¹⁹

Baerbock wants to "think bigger" about Europe

continues p. 24



Background: The sphere of influence of German imperialism

A special feature of German imperialism was always its economic world power position with a comparatively smaller territory size and military sphere of influence. This is due to the fact that the late founding of the German state meant that German imperialism was able to occupy fewer colonies and military spheres of influence than England or France. As a result, part of German deliberations have always been on how to expand their spheres of influence politically and militarily, which became a significant factor driving the First and Second World Wars.

After the defeat of fascism in 1945, German imperialism found itself in a new context. NATO was its chance for rearmament and military build-up, even if it meant a military dependence, especially on the USA. There has always been a struggle between Germany and the USA for economic power, which is evident not least in the blowing up of the Nord-Stream II pipeline. It is of course clear that the USA is far superior to Germany both militarily and economically.

“The foundation of a Central European economic association through joint customs agreements, including France, Belgium, Holland, Denmark, Austria-Hungary, Poland and possibly Italy, Sweden and Norway, is to be achieved (...). This association, probably without a common constitutional head, under the external equality of its members, but actually under German leadership, must stabilize **Germany’s economic supremacy** over Central Europe.”⁴²

(Reich Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg 1914)

Parallel to the expansion of its military power within the scope of NATO, the German imperialists have also always pushed for an expansion of power within the framework of the EU. For example, the German monopoly companies were massively strengthened in the course of the EU’s eastward expansion by gaining seemingly limitless access to cheap labor and huge consumer markets. One difficulty of the EU, however, is that the EU states have very different interests, as can be seen in the case of Poland or Hungary, for example. Of course, the USA also plays an important role here, as it seeks to keep Poland at arm’s length from Germany, for example, and is therefore involved militarily on its own. For Germany, the aim is to strengthen its own power position in order to assert German interests in Europe.

In one of our publications on the Ukraine war, we stated: “A break with NATO is not possible for Germany in the foreseeable future, regardless of which political force is in power. This can be explained solely by the comparatively low military capabilities required to really act independently on an international level or to carry out major military confrontations on its own. Germany wants to become the leading power and is pursuing this goal through NATO. German imperialism is striving for a position on an equal footing with the USA in the transatlantic alliance and a clearly (militarily) dominant role in Europe. To achieve this, Germany uses its position within NATO, but also within the EU. It uses the EU to exert pressure on the USA by placing greater emphasis on building up capabilities within the EU and being able to act more independently of the USA. NATO serves as a means for German imperialism to assert its political interests within the EU and, for example, to increase pressure on France.”⁴³

“Europe is back”, CDU poster for the 1989 EU election.
The subsequent EU expansion to the east brought great gains to German imperialism.

'89 FRISCHER WIND FÜR EUROPA

1989 ist ein wichtiges Jahr für Europa. Am 18. Juni 1989 wählen die Bürger Europas zum dritten Mal ihr Europäisches Parlament.

Die Europawahl ist ein Votum für Europa und zugleich ein Votum für die Zukunft der Bundesrepublik Deutschland.

Europa muß wirtschaftlich, kulturell und politisch weiter zusammenwachsen. Kein Land Europas allein ist heute stark genug, um im internationalen Wettbewerb auf Dauer zu bestehen. Nur gemeinsam haben die Europäer die Chance, auch in Zukunft eine technologische Spitzenposition zu halten und Exportmärkte zu sichern. Nur gemeinsamer grenzüberschreitender Umweltschutz sichert die ökologische Zukunft Europas für kommende Generationen. Nur

gemeinsam kann Europa weltweit politische Verantwortung übernehmen.

Europa ist wieder da. Das ist ein Erfolg von Bundeskanzler Helmut Kohl und der CDU. Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland ist Vorreiter und Motor für die europäische Politik.

Von Konrad Adenauer bis Helmut Kohl – die CDU war und ist die deutsche Europapartei.

CDU

CDU, CC BY-SA 3.0 DE, via Wikimedia Commons



Pistorius at the 25th meeting of the Ramstein format

At present, it is not yet clear to what extent US policy in Ukraine will change. However, it is possible that US capacities will be scaled back with the aim of directing them against China. Consequently, the US would leave a gap in financing, rearmament and war mobilization that German imperialism would be happy to fill—entirely in line with Germany’s role as the European NATO pillar. This has long been the tenor of those in power, and the *Kiel Institute for the World Economy (Institut für Weltwirtschaft)* wrote even before the US election: “European responsibility for supporting Ukraine and for deterrence will increase as the forces of the United States become more and more tied up in Asia and domestic politics.”²⁰

In this respect, the new Trump administration serves as a convenient pretext for legitimizing an intensification of war preparations and increasing military spendings that was already on the agenda.

German parliamentary election 2025

The question of the future financing of the preparation for war, that is, the development of the war economy, was one of the issues on which the previous coalition government split. However, this should not obscure the fact that this is a case of replacing one war government with another. The question is who is in a position, in terms of power politics, to implement the *Zeitenwende* as quickly and efficiently as possible, to assert the world market position of the German economy and, in doing so, to be able to mobilize sufficient public support. This is the essence of the election campaign.

CDU (CONSERVATIVES)

‘Basic income support’ with an
obligation to work

Introduction of **compulsory
military service**

At least 2% of GDP for the
military

SPD**(SOCIAL DEMOCRATS)**

At least 2% of GDP for the
military

“flexible military service”

FDP (LIBERALS)

Restriction of the right to strike

Taurus deliveries to Ukraine

At least 2% of GDP for the
military

Die Grünen**(GREEN PARTY)**

“significantly more” than
2% of GDP for the military,
Habeck calls for 3.5%

for **Ukraine’s accession to
NATO**

It is striking that the AfD presented itself as the suitable executor of the *Zeitenwende* and is also being promoted in this sense. The party stands for large-scale rearmament, social devastation and extreme jingoism. At the same time, it enjoys increasing popularity. With its nationalist “Germany first” rhetoric, which stands for nothing but “war first” and overall preparation for war, the party meets with approval in the ruling establishment. The rhetoric sometimes heard from AfD against the USA or for peace with Russia are ultimately empty words. For the AfD, it is much more about what the actual or supposed disadvantages are that the war in Ukraine currently has for Germany.

“If the USA now concentrates more on the Pacific, for example, things will have to change. **Self-reliance will be the order of the day**. But our armed forces are not prepared for this. We have given logistics a completely unhealthy preponderance over combat troops. The result: we are not able to carry out large military operations independently.”²¹

(Alice Weidel, AfD, 2025)

AFD

Introduction of
**compulsory military
service**

Increase of military
spending, Alice
Weidel calls for **5%** of
GDP

The AfD's intention and program to turn Germany into a war machine is certain—and in the long term, this could also include a war against Russia. As things stand, this will at least remain in the interest of German imperialism. The AfD has always stood for Germany's NATO membership, rearmament and compulsory military service. One should not be deceived by it posing itself as a peace party.

"I can't post peace doves all the time and then suddenly introduce conscription into the Bundestag."²²

(AfD MP, not mentioned by name)

The newly formed alliance Bündnis Sahra Wagenknecht (BSW) relies mainly on former voters of the SPD (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands) or the Left Party (Die Linke), who no longer agree with the pro-NATO course of their party. On some issues, the BSW takes positions that are quite contrary to current policy, for example, on the issue of arms deliveries to Israel or Ukraine.

It is precisely for this reason that many in the peace movement are pinning their hopes on the new party project. In doing so, the BSW is not fundamentally opposed to the pillars of German war policy either: for example, leaving the NATO military alliance is not a demand. During the coalition negotiations in Thuringia, the BSW wanted to make the US medium-range missile deployment an issue and then praised the agreement in the following passage of the coalition agreement as a success: "We take a critical view of deployment and use without German involvement." For the BSW, the problem is not the deployment, but the fact that Germany has no say in the use of missiles against Russia. This attitude certainly does not represent all members or supporters of the BSW, but it does represent its leadership.

BSW

against compulsory
military service

for a **"properly
equipped"**
Bundeswehr

5. The home front is being built up

In addition to the military and economic armament, the *Zeitenwende* also means the ideological mobilization of society: the home front must exist if war is to be waged. Even before 2022, the Germans' lack of awareness of war and militarization was repeatedly lamented. Baerbock postulated that we must not become "war-weary", and Bundeswehr commanders recently called for the necessary "mindset" for war.²³ In this sense, the measures to make German society ready for war have been intensified over the last three years.

"We need to work on the **mindset of the population**. (...) Everyone can start with themselves, in their own household. You really don't have to be a prepper. But if you put ten liters of water and a few tins of pasta in the basement, it can never hurt. (...) And you have to be prepared for the fact that the seriously wounded soldier will be treated first, the appendix patient later. You have to prepare the population for these aspects so that they understand them."²⁴

(Michael Giss, Commander of the National Command Baden-Württemberg, 2025)

Opponents of war and genocide on trial

One tried and tested means is the criminalization of those who speak out against the course of war. In October 2022, Section 130 was expanded to include paragraph 5, which criminalizes the "public condoning, denial and gross trivialization" of "genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes" "if the act is committed in a manner likely to incite hatred or violence and disturb the public peace"²⁵. The penalty ranges from a fine to three years' imprisonment. The crucial point however here is that what is considered genocide or a crime against humanity is not based on scientific findings or legal assessments, but is subject to the arbitrariness of the prosecuting authorities, in other words, subject to German imperialism and its reasons of state.

Specifically, the German state wants to suppress dissenting statements on the war in Ukraine and has filed numerous criminal charges since 2022. The peace activist Heinrich Bücker, who was charged following a commemorative speech on the German invasion of the Soviet Union, was one of those affected.²⁶ Almost a year later, the number of prosecutions of activists who opposed the genocide committed by Israel in Gaza increased. Here, too, numerous charges have been filed since October 2023. In addition to the criminal charges

Further reading

Committee against the PSDU-ban
www.psdu-verbot.info

against activists, the German state has banned various organizations from organizing and operating, including *Samidoun* and *Palestine Solidarity Duisburg (PSDU)*. This was mostly justified with accusations of anti-Semitism, whereby any criticism of Israel as an occupying and colonial power is deemed anti-Semitic. With the *anti-Semitism resolution* adopted in the fall of 2024, such a practice of equating Anti-zionism with anti-semitism was then incorporated into an institutional framework. Many Palestine activists are resisting criminalization and prosecution, including the *Committee Against the Ban on Palestine Solidarity Duisburg*.



Media as war drummer

The major German media, the “fourth estate” that has always been closely intertwined with politics, think tanks and networks, play an important role in the changing times. Sometimes they act as a catalyst, e.g. concerning the delivery of the Leopard II tanks, then again as an apparent voice of reason—depending on the situation and requirements. The means used are: Selective reporting, omission of information and context or outright false statements. In the media houses, political lines are passed down from above; in the public broadcasters, documents have been repeatedly leaked in the past that dictate a certain wording to journalists. Not to mention the clear political orientation of central media companies that have explicitly committed themselves to a Zionist, transatlantic and anti-communist line, such as Springer-Verlag.

„Similar to the **Wehrmacht at Kursk in 1943**, the Ukrainian army attempted to break through a deeply echeloned, well-developed defensive position system south-east of Zaporizhia in 2023. Just as in 1943, hopes were pinned on superior German-made tanks—at that time ‘Tigers’ and ‘Panthers’—80 years later ‘Leopards’. Like the Wehrmacht in 1943, the Ukrainian army also failed in 2023, not least due to the almost endless minefields and the vastly superior numbers of enemy artillery. However, Ukraine seems to have **learned the right lessons** from its failure. Unlike Hitler 80 years earlier.“²⁷

(Roman Töppel in Handelsblatt, 2024)

While horror stories are being spread about the recruitment in Russia, the videos of forced recruitment in Ukraine, where young men are pulled into vans on the street, are not being shown. Nor, of course, are the voices and images that document the Ukrainian government’s war against the People’s Republics of Lugansk and Donzsek since 2014, given that it is still possible to find reports of this kind before 2014. The selective wording also helps, so you can read everywhere about “Russia’s brutal war of aggression in violation of international law” and the “ Hamas-controlled Ministry of Health in Gaza”. On the other hand, journalists who oppose the Zeitenwende are defamed and canceled.

One such example is the former NDR correspondent Patrik Baab, who reported on the referendums in the People’s Republics. He documented the orderly and transparent process and found no evidence to doubt the results, which led to him being dismissed from his teaching position at Kiel University. That is because information that does not fit into the German war-mongering

Further reading

Renate Dillmann. *Medien. Macht. Meinung. Auf dem Weg in die Kriegstüchtigkeit.* PapyRossa Verlag, 2024.

framework is “disinformation” and “enemy propaganda”. And when it comes to this, censorship is not shielded away from: in the last three years, various Russian-language and Palestinian media channels such as *Russia Today*, *RIA Novosti*,

Der erste Kanal or *Resistance News Network*, have fallen victim to this censorship. These channels are no longer officially accessible in Germany. The control mechanisms in social media have also been tightened: policy changes at Meta and X, the Tik-Tok ban in the USA and the arrest of Telegram founder Pavel Durovs, to name a few prominent cases

At the same time, rearmament and militarization are being normalized in the media and in public life: Bundeswehr advertising at schools, universities or in the gym, passenger buses with a Bundeswehr logo, or pictures of federal politicians in tanks and fighter jets, etc. can now be regularly seen. Apparently, the Bundeswehr has now become “Germany’s strongest peace movement”, while opponents of the war are “lumpenpacifists”—this is rhetoric à la the Zeitenwende in history.

Russophobia has a long tradition

Anti-slawischer Rassismus hat in Deutschland Tradition: vom ersten und zweiten Weltkrieg über den kalten Krieg bis hin zur Zeitenwende. „Der Russe“ gilt als Gefahr für Europa und Deutschland. Wichtig ist allerdings der Unterschied zwischen DDR und BRD: Denn während in der DDR das russische Volk als Brudervolk galt, wurde in der BRD die anti-russische Hetze nahtlos weiterbetrieben.

Since 2022, Russian artists have had to undergo opinion tests and are banned from public life in case of doubt. Talk shows say that Russians may look European, but they are not European and have a different relationship to violence and death, in the style of the German Foreign Minister, who declares that Russia must be “ruined”. What Germany failed to do in two world wars is finally to be achieved in the third attempt.

Further reading

Hannes Hofbauer, *Feindbild Russland: Geschichte einer Dämonisierung.* Promedia Verlag, 2016.

“We must not forget, even if Russians look European, that they are not Europeans—in the cultural sense—who have a different relationship to violence, who have a different relationship to death.”²⁸

(Florence Gaub, head of research division, NATO defence college, 2022)

The anti-Russian incitement is accompanied by anti-Muslim racism. Unfortunately, the agitation and ideological mobilization is bearing fruit: even if the results are not necessarily generalizable, 82% of respondents in a survey by the Körber Foundation stated that they see Russia as a threat to Germany.²⁹ The ideological hate speech also results in violence. For example, Russian-speaking people, clubs and stores have been increasingly attacked since 2022.³⁰



The FRG on the racist offensive

Since October 2023 at the latest, the racist offensive in Germany has picked up pace. Deport, deport, deport is the new motto. While Finance Minister Lindner wants to abolish all “bans on thinking” in migration policy and the Greens are stirring up anti-Muslim hatred with statements like “*the poison of Islam*”, Friedrich Merz, the new incoming Chancellor, calls for migrants to be “*stopped at the border*”.

„The **poison of Islam** is not only reaching people’s minds abroad, it is also reaching people here.“³¹

(Katharina Dröge, Green Party, 9/11/24)

According to the CDU leader, the country’s problems—crumbling schools, a housing shortage, and problems in the education and health systems—are all “*the consequence of a country overwhelmed by migration*”. Meanwhile, Scholz, the ‘deportation chancellor’, boasts of having achieved the “*greatest turn-around in migration policy in the last 20 years*,”. In keeping with the spirit of the Zeitenwende in history, dissenting voices are no longer heard.

The FRG is to be made fit for times of war and crisis. Migrants are being stigmatized and abused to create a scenario of threat: ‘imported anti-semites’ and ‘sexist foreigners incapable of democracy’ would destroy our democracy from within. While the threatening lies do not always have the desired effect in foreign policy, they contribute to the ideological mobilization and formation of the national collective. The anti-immigration spectacle is supposed to lower wages and create an outlet for the ruling crisis: criticism of armament, arms deliveries, sanctions and social decline is to be pushed into the background and redirected into racist and chauvinist agitation instead.

Further reading

Philipp Kissel. Migration, die Arbeiterklasse und der Imperialismus.
www.kommunistische-organisation.de

The “German responsibility”

One might think that German history, specifically the responsibility for the greatest genocide that has taken place, should present an obstacle to rearmament for the next world war—but the opposite is the case. Since the attack on Serbia in 1999, the Holocaust has become part of the standard repertoire of German war propaganda. The Green Party politician Joschka Fischer coined the slogan “Never again Auschwitz” as a legitimation for German bombs on Serbia. And so, in the name of the Holocaust, today the genocide in Gaza is



Here the Red Army liberating Auschwitz. The fact that the Soviet Union liberated Germany from fascism is something that people here are supposed to forget.

currently being supported. Jews who oppose the instrumentalization of the Holocaust to justify ongoing crimes against the Palestinian people are met with hostility and prosecution.

Apart from that, it has been possible to justify the military build-up against Russia by means of the following narrative: Germany was not solely to blame for the Second World War, but shared this blame with the Soviet Union. In contrast to Russia, however, Germany has overcome its own history of striving for world domination and aggression. Because of its fascist past, it is therefore predestined to recognize and fight “authoritarian systems”. From this, the historical and moral responsibility of the ‘new, democratic Germany’ to put today’s ‘authoritarian Russia’ in its place ultimately arises—even with means

of war. This historical revisionist view was formulated in an EU resolution in 2019, providing the ideological tool for this revanchist policy.³²

It is precisely this historical revisionism that is now being enforced by the government on memorial days such as May 8, the day of the victory over German fascism: Since 2022, the displaying of symbols of the Soviet Union or the Russian Federation and the playing of Soviet songs such as “*The Holy War*” at places such as the Soviet War Memorial in Treptower Park has been banned. In Berlin, the police have repeatedly confiscated red flags, flags of the Soviet Union or St. George’s ribbons in recent years. In Germany, people are supposed to forget who liberated Germany and the world from fascism: the Soviet Union and the Red Army.

Background: The rehabilitation of fascism

Fascism was and is a means of preparing for and waging war. This function was fulfilled by fascism in Germany as well as by that which was supported abroad. After the defeat of German fascism, one of the first measures was its rehabilitation: a step in this direction was the founding of the Bundeswehr (German army) in 1955, with a great deal of involvement and integration of former SS and Wehrmacht officers. At the same time, fascist paramilitary groups were set up with the aim of fighting anti-imperialist forces in Germany and Europe, including the *Gladio* group. This was financed and built up by NATO and was responsible for several terrorist attacks against its own population, and also for pushing in anti-communist propaganda.

But fascist structures have also been promoted and used abroad. In Ukraine, for example, fascists have been playing an important role, and not only since the fascist massacre in Odessa in 2014. During the Second World War, the *Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN)* fought alongside the German

To listen to

Podcast mit Susann Witt-Stahl
Faschismus in der Ukraine
www.kommunistische-organisation.de

fascists against the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union fought Ukrainian fascism, but it was able to survive underground and in Western countries. With the nationalist upsurge in the wake of the destruction of the Soviet Union, it experienced a resurgence. Various fascist groups and parties such as *Svoboda* emerged and began to play a significant role in the country's political landscape. These groups propagated a radical chauvinism combined with anti-communism, Russophobia and anti-Semitism. They were and are being promoted in particular by the USA, Canada and the FRG and are part of a large fascist network of NATO countries.

The effects of supporting Ukrainian fascists can be felt here in Germany too: Azov fascists are celebrated as heroic defenders of the fatherland, SS collaborators like Stepan Bandera are Ukrainian national heroes, and the fascist shout of "Slava Ukraini" is considered an honorable exclamation of support for Ukraine in its fight against Russia and has been echoing through the Bundestag repeatedly since 2022.

Demonstrators in Kiev honor Stepan Bandera, who collaborated with the German fascists. The picture shows flags of the fascist party Svoboda and the OUN.



6. Three years of Zeitenwende— three years of too little resistance

According to surveys, many people are critical of the war course declared and undertaken at the Zeitenwende. However, there are no large-scale, sustained protests. With many people, withdrawal, indifference or cynicism can be observed—perhaps in the illusionary hope of being spared from the looming threat of war. Furthermore, many left-wing and formerly peace-oriented actors are now integrated into the prevailing discourse. For example, the Left Party has now completely abandoned its anti-war stance. It votes in favor of arms deliveries to Ukraine³³, demands a mere “freeze” of the war budget and tougher sanctions against Russia, including military action if necessary.³⁴

Many in the peace movement had pinned their hopes on the newly founded BSW newly organized force against the war drive. In February 2023, 50,000 people demonstrated against the war policy; in October 2024, this number was significantly lower. Under the leadership of Sahra Wagenknecht, BSW at least rejects arms deliveries, but overall it is a rather tame opposition to the overall war drive.

Opinion polls on the Zeitenwende

Since the proclamation of the Zeitenwende, a wide variety of surveys have been published that paint a very mixed picture. Arms deliveries are met with strong disapproval, the introduction of compulsory military service less so. It must be taken into account that surveys are conducted with a specific interest and must be interpreted in this sense. Nevertheless, the conclusions drawn in the surveys show what the core issues are. In 2024, the Bundeswehr published a very comprehensive survey on “fear of war” and “fitness for war” in Germany. It concluded that the approval of the Zeitenwende was based on the threat scenario posed by Russia. However, here, a concern is expressed that this “tends to fluctuate” and therefore the conclusion is drawn: “In order for the observable change in mentality among the population to be sustainable, it must be accompanied by communication. It seems particularly important to continue to convey to citizens the danger to our security that is emanating from Russia in all clarity.”³⁵ In plain language, this means that even more war propaganda against Russia is needed.

Opinion polls⁴⁴

UKRAINE

should Germany continue to supply arms to Ukraine?

NO / DISAGREE

YES / AGREE

69%*

51%

24%*

38%

*EAST GERMANS

do German arms deliveries contribute to a quick end to the war in Ukraine?

49%

has NATO's eastward expansion contributed to the conflict with Russia?

36%

should Germany play a leading role in the war in Ukraine?

58%

ISRAEL

should Germany support Israel militarily?

79%

19%

MILITARIZATION

should Germany increase spending for European security?

24%

73%

should compulsory military service be reintroduced?

25%

43%

German Confederation of Trade Unions (Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund – DGB) leadership in the service of the Zeitenwende

While the DGB sets out the “preservation of peace and freedom in the spirit of international understanding” as an objective in its statutes³⁶, its politics speak a different language.

As early as February 2022, the DGB spoke out in favor of sanctions against Russia. In May 2022, the DGB no longer clearly opposed arms deliveries to Ukraine, with DGB chair Yasmin Fahimi even clearly speaking out in favor of such deliveries. Militarization and rearmament are also supported and in some cases even openly welcomed. IG Metall and IG BCE, as representatives of workers in the arms industry, are proving to be partners in the development of the war economy: in a joint position paper with the *Federal Association of the German Security and Defense Industry (Bundesverband der Deutschen Sicherheits- und Verteidigungsindustrie - BSDV)*, IG Metall calls for more German arms production so that Germany can achieve its “aspired role” and create jobs.³⁷

In its magazine for members, the mining, chemical and energy industrial union IG BCE hails Rheinmetall as playing a “decisive role in the modernization of the German armed forces and as a supplier for Ukraine”.³⁸ While the support from the DGB leadership is secure, support at the grass roots is



crumbling. Trade union activists are forming initiatives or participating in actions against arms deliveries to Israel and Ukraine. An appeal by *Trade Unions against Armament (Gewerkschaften gegen Aufrüsten)* now has over 6,000 signatures.

Protests and Problems

Since 2022, there have been many attempts to resist the *Zeitenwende*. In Berlin, several large pro-peace demonstrations have taken place. Since October 2023, the Palestine movement in Germany has picked up pace and developed a great deal of momentum: weekly demonstrations are taking place in many cities. There are conferences, university occupations, and actions against the genocide in Gaza. Especially in the area of legal and police repression against Palestine activists, e.g. the ban on the Palestine Congress in Berlin, international attention has been attracted. Petitions against arms deliveries or against the restriction of democratic rights have emerged, especially from the cultural and scientific spheres. Active trade unionists have joined forces and are trying to put pressure on the DGB leadership. In addition, various action alliances have emerged, such as “No to Conscription” or “Disarm Rhe-

inmetall". This shows that there are many people who do not support the current warmongering and are trying to organize against it.

However, the activities also reveal many difficulties: the massive state repression, especially against Palestine activists, is intimidating and requires an expensive and time-consuming defensive struggle. Right-wing forces repeatedly try to co-opt the peace movement for their own ends. But the individual movements

are also characterized by potential for division, which was most recently seen in the Palestine movement on the issue of how to assess developments in Syria. Furthermore, the peace movement (largely seen as the movement against the war on Russia) and Palestine movements have hardly been able to come together. Due to their pacifist stance, large parts of the peace movement strongly reject the actions of Russia or the Palestinian resistance. They therefore close their minds to the reasons why there is a necessity for Russia to actively defend itself against NATO or why the Palestinian resistance is necessary to defend against the occupation. By advocating the renunciation of violence, pacifism indirectly supports the current state of affairs: for the power of imperialism is secured and maintained by violence and cannot be overthrown without resistance.



Further Reading

Berliner Appell – www.nie-wieder-krieg.org

Termine Ostermärsche 2025 – www.ostermarsch.info

Bündnis gegen die SiKo in München – www.sicherheitskonferenz.de

Heizung, Brot und Frieden – www.facebook.com/heizungbrotfrieden/

Gewerkschaften gegen Aufrüstung – gewerkschaften-gegen-aufruestung.de

Bündnis gegen die Wehrpflicht – www.neinzurwehrpflicht.wordpress.com

Palästina-Vernetzung – www.kufiya-netzwerk.de

Palästina-Initiativen in vielen Städte

Stopping the Zeitenwende means Stopping the war against Russia!

Even among communists, who historically have been the main political force in opposing militarism, there is a lack of unity. There are three fundamental dangers that can be observed in the anti-war movement in the Western imperialist centers:

- The equidistance tendency that equates NATO with Russia and China.
- The tendency to artificially separate the current policy of austerity from the war against Russia and thus to separate the struggles against social cuts and price increases from those against armament, arms deliveries and war propaganda.
- A relativization of fascism, as it is being built and promoted by NATO in Ukraine, and which also feeds back into the Western countries.

The question of how the war should be assessed and analyzed is important, because it determines the demands and direction of the struggle. If we get the analysis of the situation wrong, we will set the wrong priorities. The situation shows that NATO is the aggressor, that it prepared the war, armed Ukraine as a battering ram against Russia and is mobilizing for the expansion of the war. We must fight NATO, its war and its fascism. In this sense, the population must be educated and mobilized. The equidistance, i.e. the equating of NATO with Russia, is also a problem because the Zeitenwende is largely being achieved through the agitation against Russia. The debate within the left and communist movement must be carried out. The lack of willingness to engage in discussion in some cases also expresses a lack of willingness to confront our opponent—the German government—in full opposition.

We have to carry out actions, events and mobilizations with substantive debate and mediation: it is necessary to educate about the background of the war effort, the means of its enforcement and the political objective of the Zeitenwende-project, the preparation for war against Russia. We have to help make

alternative media and progressive educational platforms popular, demonstrate the necessity of organizing, and provide concrete strategies for action, such as in the trade unions or the Palestine movement.

Our slogans must be:

No to war means no to NATO!

Russia was and is not our enemy. The threat comes from NATO, the USA and Germany, which have prepared the Ukraine war. The Zeitenwende has the goal of making Germany capable of war on a large scale. This war is a war against Russia. Stopping this war is the task for all of us.

Stopping the Zeitenwende means

Stopping the war against Russia!

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About this publication

Three years ago, Olaf Scholz declared a turning point. The plans for this had been in the drawer for some time. The goal is to make Germany capable of waging war on a large scale. This war is a war against Russia. This brochure traces the most important developments of the past three years. In addition to the military, economic, political, and ideological buildup, it ultimately focuses on what is our collective task: stopping the war against Russia.