

Right-wing German daily and Christian Democratic politicians call for nuclear weapons

By Johannes Stern
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German militarism is assuming ever more openly aggressive forms. Following the German parliament's (Bundestag) decision on Friday to massively increase the military budget, a discussion has now been launched about providing the German army (Bundeswehr) with nuclear weapons.

In Monday's edition of the conservative daily *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, co-editor Berthold Kohler called in a piece headlined "The utterly unimaginable" for the new foreign minister to "subject German foreign policy to an overhaul, particularly with regard to its security policy aspects." A "simple 'same as before' along the well-worn path" could not be permitted.

The new "path" advocated by Kohler consists of "higher spending on defence," the "revival of compulsory military service," and something which was for "German minds completely inconceivable, the question of our own nuclear deterrent."

Kohler's demand reveals what has been intensively discussed and prepared behind the backs of the population. Just a few days earlier, Christian Democratic Union (CDU) security policy expert Roderich Kiesewetter called in an interview with Reuters for the construction of a European nuclear deterrent, focusing above all on the expansion of the French and British nuclear programmes.

The FAZ is now going one step further. According to Kohler, the "French and British arsenals [are] too weak in their current condition." Like *Der Spiegel* prior to the US election, he raised the demand for Germany's own nuclear weapons and justified this by citing the alleged "withdrawal of America from the world," which would continue under a future President

Trump and further encourage China and Russia "to expand their areas of domination and spheres of influence."

In truth, it is German imperialism which is seeking, 75 years after the Second World War, once again to expand its areas of dominance and spheres of influence.

In an interview with the *Welt am Sonntag*, President Joachim Gauck, who introduced the foreign policy shift with his speech on German Unification Day in 2013, praised the current rearmament drive as "worthwhile." Germany had to deal with the question of "What happens if America is focused above all on itself," Gauck stated.

Answering the question as to "who will assume the role of leading power in the free Western world," the former pastor responded, "This will place more responsibility on Europe and therefore on Germany. By the way: In almost every country I have travelled to over the past four years, I was confronted with the wish that Germany play a greater role in the world." Therefore, it was "good if we say 'yes' to this role."

The last time the German ruling class said "yes" to "a greater role for Germany in the world" it committed the worst crimes in human history. If they are now dreaming of their own nuclear weapons—weapons capable of destroying the entire planet—it must be taken seriously.

Already in the 1950s under the conservative government of Chancellor Konrad Adenauer (CDU) and Defence Minister Franz-Josef Strauß (Christian Social Union) nuclear weapons for the army were supported, but the government had to back down in the face of mass protests.

When Adenauer provocatively declared on April 5,

1957, that tactical nuclear weapons amounted to “nothing more than the further development of the artillery,” significant opposition developed that was joined by influential academics. On April 12 of that year, the famous Götting Manifesto was issued against the nuclear arming of the army, signatories of which included Otto Hahn, Max Born and Werner Heisenberg.

“Believe you me,” stated Adenauer quietly a few weeks later at a CDU national executive meeting. “The fear of the nuclear bomb is something emotional, and to master this emotion, after the German people had to endure this last war, will be very difficult.”

Since then, the opposition to militarism and war has grown still further. Whereas 67 percent of German citizens were against nuclear weapons in 1957, today it is almost everyone. In April, a poll conducted by Forza on behalf of the IPPNW found that 93 percent of the population thought nuclear weapons, like chemical and biological weapons, should be banned under international law.

But unlike in the past, there is no group of prominent academics prepared to protest against German rearmament. The struggle against war must be led by the working class, which as the only revolutionary force in society unites behind it all other progressive tendencies in the population. The central task posed is the building of a new anti-war movement on the basis of an internationalist and socialist programme before the ruling class can implement its plans for rearmament and war.

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