

German government continues to boost military spending and cover for fascists

By Johannes Stern
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In response to the dangerous further spreading of the COVID-19 pandemic in Germany and Europe, the ruling class is not reacting with an offensive to protect public health and to eliminate the deficiencies in the health system but is mobilizing further billions for rearmament and war.

On Thursday, the Defence Ministry informed members of parliament about the so-called 25 million euro proposals, which are to be handed over to the Budget Committee by the end of the year. All armament projects with an estimated cost of more than €25 million must be discussed and implemented by this committee.

The military blog “Augen geradeaus!” (“Eyes Front!”), which has close links to the Defence Ministry, has published an initial list of the 29 (!) such planned proposals. Among them are:

* A **successor to the G36 assault rifle**, the Bundeswehr’s (armed forces) previous standard weapon. The first proposal for a new system, consisting of a basic weapon and accessories, is to be presented to the Budget Committee at the end of October.

* In addition to the 138 new fighter jets already launched in April, **38 Eurofighters** (the latest version, Tranche 4) are to be procured. The corresponding proposal is also to be adopted in the last week of October.

* Also, there are numerous **naval upgrade projects**, including 31 Sea Tiger naval helicopters and the development and procurement of a so-called “naval drone.” The purchases are part of a comprehensive upgrade of the German navy. Among other things, four multi-purpose combat ships MKS180 are to be built in the next few years, at a cost of around €6 billion. These will be joined by further F125 frigates and Class 212A submarines.

* The **tank units** are also to be further upgraded. “The old Marder infantry fighting vehicle is to get a service life extension for its thermal imaging targeting system, and the Leopard 2 main battle tank will receive a distance-activated protection system,” reports Augen geradeaus! Also, a successor model to the Badger armoured engineering vehicle is planned, and the Boxer armoured transport vehicle will be built as a new model for joint fire support teams.

* It is also planned to **increase ammunition stocks**. Several proposals will address this. In the first week of September, the Budget Committee will discuss the “supplementary procurement of the RBS15 Mk3 sea/land target drone for the first and second batch of corvettes,” in mid-September the procurement of new GBU-54 guided bombs for the Eurofighter, and in October and November new ammunition for the 125 frigates, torpedoes and new tank ammunition.

* Significantly, the **Special Forces Command** (KSK), which is riddled with right-wing extremist terrorist structures, is also to be upgraded and will receive, among other things, “new reconnaissance and combat vehicles and medium-sized tactical support vehicles to replace the Serval.” From the outset, the WSWs has made clear that the announced restructuring of the KSK was primarily intended to make the elite right-wing extremist force more effective.

The billion-euro armament projects are aimed at expanding Germany’s ability to make war. At the beginning of the week, the frigate “Hamburg” set sail with 250 soldiers to intervene in the escalating proxy war of the regional and great powers in Libya. In spring, the grand coalition had expanded and extended numerous foreign deployments of the Bundeswehr.

A few days ago, in an interview with *Die Zeit*, Defence Minister Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer

(Christian Democratic Union, CDU) demanded was “high time” to aggressively discuss “how Germany must position itself in the world in the future.” She said that Germany was expected to “show leadership, not only as an economic power.” It is about “collective defence, it is about international missions, it is about a strategic view of the world, and ultimately it is about the question of whether we want to actively shape the global order.”

To enforce the geostrategic and economic goals of German imperialism internationally, the German bourgeoisie is not only rearming its own military but also its allies within the European Union. It is becoming increasingly clear what militarist and fascist traditions it is resuming 75 years after the defeat of Nazi Germany in World War II.

According to an official report from the Defence Ministry, the handover of the first of a total of 44 German Leopard 2 battle tanks to the Hungarian army began at the end of July. The handover ceremony took place in the garrison town of Tata in the presence of Parliamentary State Secretary Thomas Silberhorn (Christian Social Union, CSU), who praised the military cooperation between Germany and the EU with the extreme right-wing Orban regime.

“Hungary is modernising its land forces and Germany is a strategic partner in this process,” said Silberhorn. The use of the same weapon systems and close cooperation in the training of tank crews increased the interoperability of the armed forces and was “an important component of the Common Security and Defence Policy,” he said. The German government would “continue to be committed to close military cooperation between the two countries and thus also to strengthen cohesion in Europe based on the values and interests of the two countries.”

The Defence Ministry’s report does not go into more detail regarding the “values and interests” underlying the “military cooperation” between Berlin and Budapest. But the fascist character of the handover ceremony in Tata was obvious. Official participants in the event included, among others, members of the notorious neo-Nazi rock band Kárpátia, who had even written their own song for the tank handover—commissioned by the Hungarian army.

An entry on Kárpátia’s Facebook page says that the band “was asked to write a march by tank crews in

Tata in ~~March~~.” The timing for ~~the~~ song could not have been “better, as the first Leopard 2A4 tanks” have now been delivered, “followed by 40 more Leopard 2A7 tanks in the next few years.” One was “lucky enough” to “admire these big cats, listen to them rumble, to see them get down to it...” It is no “big secret that the band has always been pro-military” and “satisfied with the development of the armed forces.”

On Facebook, the band has published numerous pictures showing members of Kárpátia in martial gear posing in front of German battle tanks. Their posts clearly show their ideological outlook. They glorify Miklos Horthy, the former Reich administrator, anti-Semite and Hitler ally, drum up support for a new and “ethnically pure” Greater Hungary. The lyrics of their songs drip with fascist and militarist ideology. According to media reports, the Hitler salute can be regularly seen at Kárpátia concerts, and singer János Petras rants against Roma and Jews.

Following the ceremony, the Hungarian government, which awarded Petras the country’s Golden Cross of Merit as early as 2013 and itself rehabilitated Horthy and Hungarian fascism, has defended its cooperation with Kárpátia. In response to an inquiry by *Der Spiegel*, the defence ministry in Budapest declared that the “tank march” was about “love of the homeland and respect for the soldiers. We are pleased that a work of art has been created that popularises military service and the military vocation as widely as possible.”

This is also the attitude of the German government. According to *Der Spiegel*, the Defence Ministry has stated that it does not want to take “a position on the internal affairs of the Hungarian armed forces.” It is becoming increasingly clear that the extreme right-wing terrorist networks in the Bundeswehr, the police and the secret services exist and can operate largely unchecked, mainly because these fascist forces enjoy the official support of the capitalist state and its political representatives.

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