

## **The miserable failure of the progress coalition, the decline of German capitalism and the war drive**

*By Harri Grünberg*

The unpopular coalition of the SPD (Social Democrats), the Greens and the FDP (Liberal Party) under Chancellor Scholz (SPD) in Berlin, which called itself a “progressive government,” has collapsed. The coalition was a war government that led the German economy into a free fall due to its sanctions policy against Russia. Their policy of rearmament and economic war was carried out at the expense of most working people, trades and middle class. They actively curtailed freedom of expression, as with the recent Bundestag resolution on “anti-Semitism.” Their policy, which served the interests of a small elite, has fuelled the rise of the far right in Germany.

The coalition is at the forefront of preparations for a new imperialist war against Russia. The Social Democratic Defense Minister Pistorius predicts that there will be a major war with Russia by the end of this decade. The leader of the CDU (Christian Democratic Union) has called for an ultimatum to Russia, advocating the use of all weapons that can strike deep into Russia and even attack Moscow itself.

This is madness and means nuclear war. The coalition failed not because of the question of war, nor because of the question of whether NATO's proxy war against Russia should continue and escalate. All three coalition parties agree that the NATO proxy war in Ukraine must continue. They also continue to support the Israeli genocide in Gaza financially and with weapons. The coalition failed because of its inability to agree on the financing of the war. The FDP wants to finance the war in coalition with the CDU and the Greens by dismantling the welfare state and diverting funds from social spending to arms deliveries and war rearmament. The SPD and the Greens fear – in the face of growing protest demonstrations and strike waves – the threat to social stability and want to make further cuts to social services more moderate.

The reality, however, is that working people and youth have been paying the price for the wars and economic wars that the government has pursued in close cooperation with all three traffic light parties for almost three years, through rising energy and food prices, crumbling infrastructure, and cuts in education, social services, and many other areas. These policies also accept the announced mass layoffs, particularly in the automotive and supplier industries, in the chemical and steel industries.

In the upcoming federal election, the most pressing issues are war and peace, and thus also the preservation of the welfare state. It is now crucial to strengthen those forces that show the red card to the war policy and the resulting attacks on the welfare state by the SPD, CDU, Greens and FDP and pursue a consistent peace policy.

The goal must be to stop the imperialist course of the Western powers towards a world war. It is also necessary to resist the deindustrialization of Germany through the struggle to maintain all jobs and locations.

We must be clear about the dangerous situation. Germany is at the forefront of war preparations against Russia and China. After several decades in which post-war Germany has presented itself as a champion of peace, it is now preparing for war again. That is the essence of Chancellor Scholz's “turning point”: the turn to war preparations and a war economy.

To counter this, we need partners in the trade unions and political parties who are against the war. We need mass movements in the streets against the drive for war. In this federal election campaign, only the BSW (Bündnis Sahra Wagenknecht) is putting the warning about the dangers of a new world war by imperialism on the agenda. The BSW is the only political force in Germany that clearly states that war and preparations for war will sweep away the welfare state. All social and democratic gains of the working class are at stake, since the CDU and FDP want to finance the escalation of the war by dismantling the welfare state. Just as the Scholz government has pursued a policy of unleashing social war to shift the costs of war onto the backs of the working masses, which has led to it being rejected by the majority of

society, and ultimately to the collapse of the traffic light coalition, so too have the government of the conservative CDU and the FDP.

This is the great crisis of capitalism, which today takes the form of the decline and exhaustion of the neoliberal, globalized model that leads to war. In the case of Germany, the era of stable development based on cheap resources from Russia is over. But German imperialism still needs Russian raw materials to survive. The recent aggressiveness of German imperialism stems from its willingness to go to war over raw materials in Russia and Ukraine. This is in line with Jean Jaures's statement on the eve of the First World War: "Capitalism carries war within itself like a cloud that carries rain."

German imperialism is hungry for cheap raw materials to stop its decline, symbolized by the crisis at Volkswagen. 30,000 employees are to be laid off and three production sites in Germany closed. A total of 145,000 jobs in the automotive industry are at risk. This is due to a loss of competitiveness, i.e. above all to the rising energy prices resulting from the policy of sanctions against Russia.

CDU, Greens or FDP demand the delivery of Taurus missiles to Zelenskyy. Scholz hesitates under the pressure of massive resistance among the people. But no matter which parties form the coming government, they all stand for a policy of escalating the war.

Only Sahra Wagenknecht's alliance offers an alternative to the warmongering policy of German imperialism. It advocates an immediate ceasefire without preconditions, condemns the US economic war, which is hitting Germany particularly hard with deindustrialization, and rejects the sanctions against Russia. Some confused leftists believe that deindustrialization does not affect the working class because it only influences corporate profits. But the truth is that deindustrialization goes hand in hand with a wave of layoffs and increasing mass suffering. A genuine left cannot indifferently accept the immiseration of sections of the working class.

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