

NO MORE WAR! NO MORE FASCISM! FOR PEACE AND DISARMAMENT!

“NO MORE WAR! NO MORE FASCISM!”

This is the trade unions' answer to the incredible suffering that Nazi Germany caused the world when it invaded Poland on 1 September 1939 and thus triggered the catastrophe of the Second World War. Eighty years after the beginning of the Nazis' cruel war of annihilation, we have good reason to remind the world on Anti-War Day just where the new rise of indiscriminate nationalism and militarism, inhumanity and racism can lead.

Democracy, peace and freedom cannot be taken for granted but must be resolutely defended. No one knows that better than we unions do. That is why we were a central part of the peace movement from the beginning and contributed to its successes. But we also know that our battle against fascism, nationalist warmongering and senseless arms races is still a long way from over. On the contrary, in the world we live in today, the engagement of trade unions for a strong peace movement is especially important.

The current global situation is characterised by uncertainty and instability. We are not only witnessing a new frenzied resurgence of armament but must also confront a new nuclear threat. In an age where all nuclear powers are busily modernising their nuclear weapons, the USA backed out of its nuclear agreement with Iran and cancelled the agreement on intermediate-range nuclear missiles with Russia. The German Federal Government also bears a responsibility to curb this folly. It must finally sign the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which has already been agreed by approximately 130 states.

The true extent of the new arms race can be seen in military spending. Since the fall of the Iron Curtain, this has never been higher: Worldwide, it amounts to more than EUR 1.6 trillion, and the German Federal Government also knows no bounds. While the German defence budget was still EUR 33 billion in 2015, it has now risen to EUR 43.2 billion. If Germany follows the NATO guideline to increase its defence expenditures to two percent of GDP by 2024, its defence budget will increase to EUR 85 billion within five years.

Enough is enough! Today, Germany already occupies eighth place in terms of arms expenditure, despite the fact that money for public sector investments is lacking practically everywhere – for preparing socio-ecological transformation due to climate change and digitalisation, in pension provision and care, in social housing, in the development of a comprehensive health care system and in the modernisation of schools and the new construction of day care centres. Instead of heating up the arms race with huge sums of money, we call on the German Federal Government to invest the funds earmarked for this purpose in a socially just Germany and Europe with sustainable prospects for the future.

Social justice and solid future prospects for all – this is also the most effective answer to the divisive exclusionary slogans of right-wing extremists and right-wing populists. They are mobilising to attack our democracy and have declared war on our diverse and cosmopolitan society. That right-wing extremists do not shy away from violence and terror to reach their goals has only recently been underscored by the murder of Walter Lübcke, the District President of Kassel.

The enemies of democracy, autocrats and authoritarian regimes are gaining ground worldwide. They foment new enemy stereotypes. They instrumentalise the deep insecurity that many people feel living in a world that is completely out of joint. A world marked by a growing number of armed conflicts. A world in which 70 million people are fleeing war and civil war, political persecution, natural disasters and poverty. Fewer weapons, not more, are the only solution to all these problems. In order to add weight to this demand, the German Confederation of Trade Unions is involved in the peace initiative “Disarm! Don't Arm!”. More than 150,000 supporters have already signed its petition against NATO's two-percent target. We hereby make a public appeal to sign the petition and to participate in the numerous activities of the initiative (<https://abruesten.jetzt>).