

# France and Germany Moving Towards Conscription



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In Europe, “workers’ parties” are failing to defend the masses from the return of military conscription.

Details. Both French and German governments recently launched a new “voluntary” military service aimed at 18–25 year old men. In Germany, the newly passed law will require males to register with the army and fill out a recruitment form, reestablishing a systematic registry of eligible conscripts which can be called up in an emergency. All men born from 2008 on will undergo a mandatory examination of their fitness for military service.

► Over the next decade, Germany intends to increase its army size by 280,000 additional soldiers; France aims for 50,000 more. Germany’s new military service bill includes provisions to trigger a mandatory draft if the annual recruitment goals are missed, calling up conscripts if there aren’t enough volunteers.

► French President Macron declared that “in the case of a major crisis”, the state will be able to call up civilians from the registry for military service. France’s Army Chief, General Mandon, publicly stated that the French population must be “ready to lose its children” and “to suffer economically” in the conflict. French mayors were directed to “speak of this” coming sacrifice to their localities.

Context. With Germany’s army slowly shrinking – despite a surge in applications – the volunteer scheme is projected to fall significantly short of the additional +20,000 troops expected by the end of 2026. As a result, the German government can resort to drafting as early as six months from now, making the ‘volunteer’ scheme a hidden way to reintroduce conscription.

► Europe and the US are remilitarising to Cold War levels in preparation for imperialist war. France and Germany together are expected to cut social spending by €37 billion, whilst expending over €140 billion on military budgets. European newspapers and media are playing up Russian incursions and warning of looming war to sow fear and militaristic hysteria.

Important to Know. Under imperialism, conscription turns workers into cannon fodder for capitalist interests while lecturing them about “national duty.” As with austerity during economic crises, wartime conscription and rationing simply offload the costs of the imperialist war effort onto the working class.

► German capitalists expressed fears that volunteers and conscripts going to the army would remove workers from the labour force, and complained to the government. Capitalists are also reluctant to teach the masses of workers how to wield weapons. However, the inevitable confrontation with rival imperialists will force their hands.

► The response of the ‘left’ and ‘communist’ parties to the newly announced military service in France and Germany was lukewarm, unprincipled and opportunistic. Jean-Luc Mélenchon’s “France Unbowed” party focused on procedural issues in its criticism of the new military service, stating it “lacks a financial framework” and would be ineffective.

► The Solidnet-affiliated French “Communist Party” (PCF) responded opportunistically, posturing against conscription despite having opposed its abolition

in 1996. Instead of rejecting workers' service in imperialist wars, it fixates on details like low pay and backs France's "national defence," aligning with France Unbowed in blaming Macron rather than the imperialist system that demands militarisation.

► Germany's "The Left" party responded to conscription with a joke video making light of the seriousness of the situation, and issued a short statement suggesting that social-democratic welfare measures should be increased to motivate German workers to die for the capitalists.

► These groups vaguely demanded diplomatic efforts, ceasefire accords and "peace instead of war" from the German and French governments. By expecting a real peace policy from the capitalist regimes with which they collaborate, these "workers' parties" are fooling the workers. Whilst capitalism persists, war is inevitable due to imperialist contradictions.

Original article