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PUTINISM AGAINST THE NOBILITY OF MAN

On the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine

The following text is a translation of a German article first published on March 1, 2022, so it refers to the state of events on that day. It can be found online under <https://plot-point.org/2022/03/17/putinism-against-the-nobility-of-man-on-the-russian-war-of-aggression-against-ukraine/>

Translating the original article, we did not make any changes to the text. Where possible, we provided links and sources in English. Quotes from German politicians or media personnel were not adjusted to an audience not familiar with the German public debate, as we suppose that people will, in almost any case, be familiar with the opinions and stances expressed, since these opinions and stances are common and widespread in any national public. The reader will find, though, that apart from these typical stances found across most “Western” nations, Germany has a particular “Russia problem”. The specifics of German foreign policy can therefore, of course, not readily be generalized to other nations.

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1. Cause of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine

The Putin mafia-regime has been waging a full-scale war of aggression against all of Ukraine since February 24th, in violation of international law. This cruel war, which is the first military incursion by a country into its sovereign European neighbor since World War II, apparently follows no rational calculation of costs and benefits. So has Putin suddenly turned into a “homicidal maniac,” as is now often claimed? The notions that Putin is an all-calculating 4D chess master or an “irrational madman”, though, represent a false alternative that, ultimately, documents intellectual bankruptcy before reality. If, on the one hand, it is claimed that Putin has calculated the course of events a hundred steps in advance, it is disregarded that everything that sets people in motion must go through their minds and is thereby more or less removed from the driving forces of their action. On the other hand, the thesis of the mad leader cannot explain why the alleged madness results in war, of all things, and how it can have such a massive impact, that is, set whole peoples in motion without practically failing after the first step. The ties of ideology to material reality result from the requirements of class rule, which can never be based on economic and violent means alone, but require political, ideological and historical justification.

Just as World War II cannot be explained by Hitler’s mental life, the Russian war against Ukraine cannot be explained by Putin going mad in his self-imposed isolation during the Covid pandemic or by the aftermath of a Covid infection. In particular, the “Marxist” and ultra-left wings of left-wing bourgeois socialism, which constantly oscillate between economism and politicism, can explain historical events only by psychologizing political decision-makers as soon as ideology has become a decisive driving force of history. They deny the relative autonomy of ideology in relation to the economic base of society and the political superstructure rising on this basis and therefore fall back into bourgeois historicism, according to which history is not a history

of class struggle but is made by “great men”. That the false juxtaposition of rational calculation and insane madness catches on particularly well in Germany is due to the greater independence of ideology compared to other nations, as historically caused by the “German conditions” (Marx). Precisely for this reason, it is not acknowledged in Germany that the main reason for the military invasion of Ukraine by the Putinist dictatorship is not economic, power-political or psychological, but ideological.



Figure 1: Allegory of the „triune Russia” on a poster from 1905 (Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/e2/Аллегория_троединой_России.jpg)

For the Putinist regime, Ukraine not only belongs to the “Near Abroad,” as it calls the former union republics of the Soviet Union, but together with Belarus forms the “Russian World,” a geopolitical concept Putin already used to justify the annexation of Crimea in March 2014, which violated international law. This concept is a lukewarm rehash of the state-building ideology of the former Russian tsarist empire of an “All-Russian nation,” according to which “Great Russians,” “White Russians” and “Little Russians” form a nation as a “triune Russian people” because they are descended from a common Slavic original people of the medieval great empire of the Kievan Rus’ (see Figure 1). Putin does not merely want to restore the Soviet Union under historically changed conditions, as is claimed everywhere now, but even, falling behind it, the tsarist empire.

Since the emergence of the conflict over Ukraine, Russian propaganda has spread the claim that Ukrainians and Russians are “one people” (Putin). In his historical revisionist speech on Crimea’s “accession” to the Russian Federation on March 18, 2014, the new tsar justified the annexation of the peninsula in violation of international law with the “aspiration of the Russian world, of historical Russia for a restoration of its unity.”¹ And in mid-July 2021 the Kremlin published an essay by Putin entitled “On the Historical Unity of Ukraine and Russia,” denying the existence of the Ukrainian nation and the territorial integrity of Ukraine, since, supposedly, it was located historically on Russian territory and Russians and Ukrainians shared a common heritage and destiny.² Thus, one could know what Putin was up to in Ukraine, because those who had eyes to see could see it and those who had ears to hear could hear it.

The war of aggression against Ukraine is not only part of Russia’s attempt since the early 1990s to recapture its former “sphere of influence” in the sphere of power of the Soviet Union, whose demise Putin described in his 2005 address to the nation as the “major

¹ <https://crimea.dekoder.org/rede>.

² <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66181>

geopolitical disaster of the century.”³ It is aimed first and foremost at extinguishing Ukraine’s national independence and destroying the Ukrainian people’s right to self-determination, which is to be reunited with its “Russian brother nation.” However, the preservation of the national sovereignty of Ukraine by repelling the Russian attack is a necessary condition for the social liberation of the Ukrainian working class. It is impossible for the Ukrainian people to seriously take care of its internal affairs, for the Ukrainian proletariat to develop its own internal politics, if Ukraine loses its national independence: “As long as the independent life of a nation is suppressed by a foreign conqueror it inevitably directs all its strength, all its efforts and all its energy against the external enemy; during this time, therefore, its inner life remains paralysed; it is incapable of working for social emancipation.” (Marx, Engels, “For Poland”, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1875/03/24.htm>). However, the Russian attack is not only directed against the national independence of the country, but also a decisive battle in the hybrid war of Putinism against the liberal-capitalist countries of the “West”, through which the international order established after the Cold War under unipolar leadership of the U.S.A. as the most advanced capitalist nation worldwide is to be destroyed. Ukraine holds a key geostrategic position in this war, which has been raging for years, because it forms a bulwark between the private capitalist democracies of the European states and the state capitalist dictatorship of Russia. The subjugation of Ukraine would serve Putinism as a springboard to raise the war against the “West” to a new level of escalation. This, the peacenik left does not speak of when it calls for a “de-escalation” of the war in Ukraine. The real danger is not that the Russian war against Ukraine will escalate into a “World War III”, but the establishment of a geostrategic base of Putinism within the walls of the European bulwark of private capitalist democracy, a European

³ <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/22931>

state situated between Central Europe, Russia and the Middle East. Stronger ties of Ukraine to the “West” could, not least, be a model for the Russian population groaning under the Kremlin’s yoke. Because of its enormous internal contradictions, such as immense economic inequality coupled with political repression, Russia, dominated by a state capitalist class of oligarchs and secret service agents, is forced into permanent external expansion. Therefore, it must perceive the private capitalist democracies of the “West”, any attempt at democratic development in its neighborhood, and any motion of a genuine democratic movement within its own borders as a threat to its existence. Thus, the Putinist gangster capitalists have been depriving the Russian opposition of any breathing room – at least since the suppression of the mass protests against electoral fraud in 2011 and 2012 and the poison attack on Navalny in August 2020 – and the Kremlin has been drawing a trail of blood through the “West” for years in a campaign of targeted executions of dissidents, oligarchs and gangsters who have fled abroad.

It is in the vital interest of the Putin mafia to prevent Ukraine’s “Westernization” so that the stability of its state-capitalist dictatorship is not threatened from either outside or within. Conversely, the preservation of Ukraine’s national independence is in the interest of the Russian people themselves, because the Russian people can only free themselves from the Putinist regime if it does not oppress the Ukrainian people. A victory for Ukraine in the defensive war against Russia is therefore in the class interests of both Ukrainian and Russian working people. This victory, in turn, depends on whether the Russian people succeed in opening a second front within Russia and thereby weakening the Kremlin dictatorship from within or even overthrowing it in a political revolution.

2. Backdrop and preparation of the invasion

The Russian attack on Ukraine was neither a spontaneous knee-jerk reaction nor did Russia sleepwalk into it. The invasion was planned long in advance. After the Ukrainian people overthrew the Putinist puppet regime of oligarch Yanukovych in the democratic revolution of the “Euromaidan” in February 2014, the Kremlin mafia first tried to prevent Ukraine’s “Westernization”, which was progressing in leaps and bounds, by annexing Crimea in violation of international law and waging a covert war in eastern Ukraine. Contrary to the Russian intentions, however, it was not prevented that Ukraine had chosen Europe, but only further reinforced. The heroic defensive struggle of the Ukrainian people in the Donbas, with which they sufficiently proved their historical right to national self-determination, contributed not least to this result.

The war waged by Russia in the Donbas has been sidelined by the “Western” public in cold indifference and blunt ignorance because of its low intensity in recent years. Diplomatic contact groups such as the “Normandy format” established under the leadership of Germany and France could not end Russian aggression any more than diplomatic agreements. The Minsk agreements, reached under Russian military pressure, whose implementation would have further undermined Ukraine’s national sovereignty and territorial integrity, were partly not implemented by Ukraine, but particularly by Russia and the Donetsk and Luhansk “people’s republics”, as its puppet military dictatorial regimes, violated them, especially by constantly breaking the ceasefire.

Although Russia kept the war in the Donbas sizzling to continue destabilizing Ukraine, the latter did not turn its back on the “West”, did not withdraw its European choice. On the contrary, in 2020, the government under President Zelenskyy even began to act more decisively against Russian influence in the country than before, threatening to diminish the last influence of Putinism on the

territories of Ukraine not yet occupied by Russia. In the same year, Azerbaijan, with active support from Turkey, won the war against Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh, marking the first time that an outside state power, a NATO member at that, used military force on the territory of the former Soviet Union. This intensified the confrontation between the Kremlin mafia and the Turkish wolf. As Turkey became one of the few NATO countries to start sending offensive weapons such as combat and reconnaissance drones to Ukraine, the latter became the venue of Putin's fight against Turkish defense cooperation with the former Soviet countries. This was one of the reasons why Putin was nagging about Ukraine using such drones in the war in the Donbas.

Against the backdrop of these developments, Putin relatively openly concentrated Russian troops on the Ukrainian border from spring of 2021, allegedly only in the interest of "national security," which is why the deployment was supposedly "of no concern" to neighboring countries (Dmitry Peskov). Under the pretext of having to protect "Russian compatriots" in the Donbas, Putin already threatened an invasion at that time, but after a few weeks, he temporarily withdrew the Russian soldiers as a result of negotiations. However, this withdrawal was only a tactical feint to disguise the planned invasion, as evidenced by the fact that the Russian army left behind significant operational equipment and heavy weapons on the Ukrainian border. After mollifying many of the "Western" politicians and diplomats, the Putinist regime, starting in November, began the largest massing of troops since the Cold War, which, this time, was covert and discovered only by accident because its size made it impossible to keep secret. The Kremlin claimed that it was not preparing an invasion, but conversely that Ukraine was planning "aggressive actions against Donbas" (Dmitry Peskov); NATO should stop expanding and stop supporting Ukraine with supplies of modern weapons, with the stationing of ballistic missiles in Ukraine in particular being an alleged "red line" (Putin). As German politicians

believed because of “legitimate security interests” (Rolf Mützenich, SPD), but in reality to divert attention from the planned invasion of Ukraine and to buy time, Putin’s regime held talks with NATO and the United States.

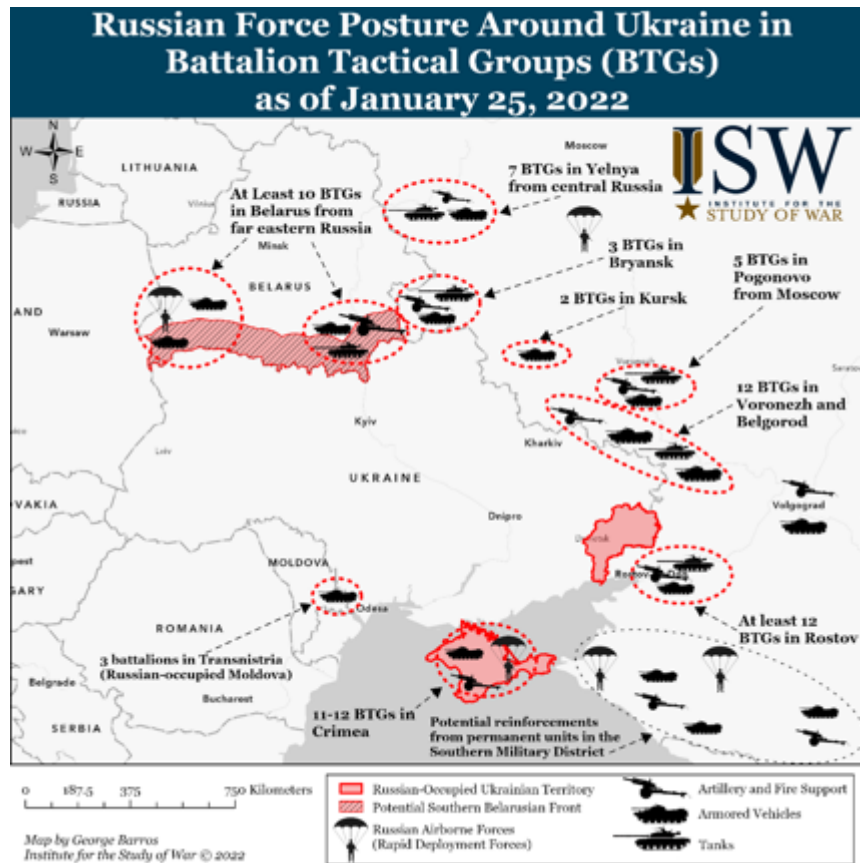


Figure 2: Encirclement of Ukraine by Russian troops, Jan. 25. Source: https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Russian%20Force%20Posture%20Around%20Ukraine%20in%20BTGs%20As%20of%20January%2025%2C%202022%20ISW%20Map_8.png

For those who did not cover their eyes like one of the three monkeys, it was foreseeable from the beginning that Putin did not intend a conventional maneuver, but a large-scale invasion of Ukraine, which was encircled from the north, east and south (cf. Figure 2). Not only was the number of Russian troops extraordinary, but all sorts of troop types and equipment were moved from across the country to attacking positions on the Ukrainian border. Russia moved the Northern Fleet of marines, which had been sailing unimpeded through the Mediterranean with everyone watching, to the Black Sea.

The pretext was again an alleged exercise of the Russian Navy, but in fact, Ukraine was cut off from the sea. At the same time, a Russian maneuver took place in Belarus, which served as a cover for the stationing of Russian troops on the northern Ukrainian border. This was not only in order to be able to advance on Kiyv in the course of the invasion from the north, but also to practically occupy Belarus and thus already bring a “brother nation” of Russians home to the neo-Tsarist empire. The troop concentration was flanked by a massive Russian propaganda campaign, the likes of which had not been seen since 2014. Last but not least, the Putin mafia protected itself against possible economic sanctions, which it anticipated as a reaction to the planned war of aggression, by pumping the Russian treasury full of foreign currency and gold reserves.

3. Diplomatic banter

Deliberately deceptive, the Putinist regime pretended its willingness to be diplomatic before the invasion by drafting two treaties on Russian “security interests” to “negotiate” with the U.S. and NATO about Ukraine’s fate without Ukraine. The Russian demands were deliberately crafted in such a way that they could not possibly be accepted, were presented in a way that ensured their rejection, and did not correspond to the large scale of the military buildup. Since the cunning game of the Putinist clique was transparent, the “West” pursued a double strategy, relying on diplomacy on the one hand and deterrence on the other. In doing so, NATO member countries moved closer together on the one hand, but on the other hand, certain differences persisted, which is why the implementation of this strategy differed significantly between individual countries.

The measures announced by the U.S. as a deterrent were largely credible because it flanked its diplomatic efforts with arms deliveries. After beginning to draw attention to war preparations in late fall, the Biden administration committed itself in early December to not

sending U.S. troops to Ukraine under any circumstances. The United Kingdom and other countries soon followed suit, so that by January, it was clear that Ukraine would have to fight alone in the event of war. Whereas military deliveries had been limited to non-lethal weapons under Barack Obama, deliveries of lethal weapons expanded only in 2018 under Donald Trump – who suspended military aid in 2019 to blackmail the Selenskyj administration for his own nefarious purposes – and then under Joe Biden. Turkey had sold Bayraktar TB2 drones to Ukraine from 2018 to 2020, which have neutralized numerous Russian artillery systems and tanks in the ongoing war. In January, the U.S. once again sent \$200 million worth of anti-tank missiles to Ukraine, weapons that have also proven their effectiveness hundreds of times already.⁴ Within the EU, the largest military support came from Poland. The Baltic countries and the Czech Republic also delivered lethal weapons earlier this year.

In addition, the U.S. prepared “swift and severe sanctions”, which apparently could only be prepared and decided upon through strong pressure on and concessions to the European countries. For this reason, too, the economic sanctions failed to achieve their primary goal, which was to deter Putin from an attack. Germany, in particular, played a decisive role in this. It isolated itself internationally by ignoring Ukraine’s security interests and instead empathizing with the Russian dictator. Russia made no security guarantees to Ukraine in its draft agreements, instead verbally assuring that Ukrainian neutrality could “de-escalate” the situation, even though Ukraine was constitutionally neutral when Russia seized Crimea in 2014 and invaded the Donbas with special forces, intelligence agents, and fascist mercenaries. Not least, this showed that Russia was not concerned with Ukraine’s potential accession to NATO, which was not on the political agenda anyway, but with a long-planned full-scale invasion. The German government, inhibited by foreign policy

⁴ <https://www.npr.org/2022/01/19/1074020018/the-u-s-will-provide-200-million-in-military-aid-to-ukraine-amid-crisis?t=1646231241877>

commitments and fearful for the long-term security interests of the German bourgeoisie, was for a long time “realistic” enough to accuse the Russian aggressor of a “lack of transparency” (Steffen Seibert, former government spokesman). It shied away from the notorious “escalatory spiral” (Johannes Varwick, German “expert” and Professor of International Relations), which Germany only knows to spin, but not to have a cause and end. The German government avoided any effective action until the very end, for which it hardly came under pressure domestically.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz initially ducked away for days before subsequently describing the Russian Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline as a “purely private-sector project” against his better knowledge. A short time later, this pale sinecure was silent on whether the pipeline would be put into operation in the event of a Russian attack on Ukraine, supposedly for “tactical” reasons, but in reality because of domestic and foreign political pressure. Even in the face of Russia’s overt assault on Ukraine, the German government only temporarily suspended the commissioning of the pipeline rather than let it rust at the bottom of the sea once and for all. Not a single German party called for arms deliveries to Ukraine before the invasion. On the contrary, not only did Germany refuse deliveries of defensive weapons, but it even blocked such deliveries by other NATO countries such as Estonia until the very end. The postponement of arms deliveries until the very last possible moment – and beyond, because possible Russian attacks have made deliveries risky or even impossible – cost human lives and Ukraine important war advantages.

Despite all the changes in Germany's Russia policy since 2014, the familiar German indifference and cowardice towards Putinist terror and its export to Chechnya, Georgia, Syria, Libya and Ukraine prevailed, as the country of the *Sonderweg* considered this terror to be an “own Russian path” that was “often asynchronous to that of the EU” (former FM Frank-Walter Steinmeier). This path obviously leads through Ukraine. The German government was getting excited about its alleged role as an “honest broker” who has a particularly close connection to the Putinist dictatorship and in this resembled Gottlieb Biedermann, who knowingly houses two arsonists and, rotting in hell, is still convinced that he is innocent and certainly not inhumane. The great tactician Scholz had a direct conversation with Putin (see Fig. 3), in which – “impressive crisis diplomacy” (SPD head Saskia Esken) – he wrung from him the concession of the lie of a Russian troop withdrawal.



Figure 3: „Impressive crisis diplomacy“ (SPD head Saskia Esken) by master tactician Olaf Scholz
(Source: <https://www.faz.net/aktuell/gesellschaft/scholz-im-kreml-wer-hat-putins-sehr-langen-tisch-gebaut-17810536.html>)

Unlike Germany, the U.S. countered the Russian disinformation campaign by publishing intelligence information that was dismissed as “imperialist propaganda”, especially by left- and right-wing Putinists in the “West”, but which, as expected, turned out to be

accurate. This transparency made the Russian attack on Ukraine predictable, including in terms of its onset and course. Nevertheless, the Putinist left in particular spread Russian propaganda that Putin was only concerned with Russia's national security and Russia had been "encircled" by NATO's eastward expansion. While this propaganda campaign was in full swing, Russia was encircling Ukraine and creating death lists of Ukrainians and Russian and Belarusian opposition figures who had fled to Ukraine to be liquidated after a successful invasion.

In the weeks leading up to the Russian invasion, the U.S. issued daily warnings of the impending invasion, but diplomats, ideologues, politicians and military experts in the "West", corrupted by the Putinist mafia, instead continued to spread the propaganda myth of Russia's "encirclement." General (Ret.) Harald Kujat, former Inspector General of the German Bundeswehr and former Chairman of the NATO Military Committee, who has been bought by Putin's confidant Yakunin, said in the afternoon before the invasion began: "It must surely be in our interest to come to a reasonable result, to de-escalate and also to come to a *détente* with Russia and, of course, always taking into account the security interests of Ukraine as well." It could not be that "we always only talk about war and not about how a war can be prevented."⁵ As is shown by Kujat, the Bundeswehr not only has a Nazi problem, but also a Putinist problem.

Even if the possibility of an attack was not denied by politicians and "experts" in the "Western" countries, the scenario of a war was regularly limited to "only" a small part of Ukraine along the Dnipro River or, in any case, a limited regional war in eastern Ukraine. In reality, a war of aggression on all of Ukraine was the most likely scenario from the outset based on the available evidence, as argued by a small segment of leading U.S. military experts. Putin was not the pigeon on the chessboard that keeps knocking over all the pieces, nor

⁵ Vgl. <https://www.tagesschau.de/inland/innenpolitik/admiral-schoenbach-ruecktritt-105.html>.

was he backed into a corner by the “West” and now lashes out like a “wild bear”. He played the game of diplomacy from the very beginning only for show.

4. Beginning and course of the war so far

After the Putinist regime recognized its puppet military dictatorial regimes in eastern Ukraine, the two “people’s republics” of Donetsk and Luhansk, as “independent” on February 21st, Russian state television broadcast an incendiary speech by Putin denying Ukraine’s right to exist. Ukraine, he said, had been “completely” created by “Bolshevik, communist Russia” and was a “colony with a puppet regime” of neo-Nazis who wanted to eradicate the Russian language and culture and develop their own nuclear weapons.⁶ The population of the “people’s republics” was “evacuated” to Russia under the pretext that Ukraine was about to attack in the Donbas, clearing the way for Russian troops to invade eastern Ukraine. In order to have a *casus belli* by staging alleged “provocations” of the “people’s republics” and Russia by Ukraine, the Kremlin carried out quite a few “false flag” operations, video footage and images of which were disseminated in a propaganda campaign on state television and social media.⁷

Three days after recognizing the “people’s republics,” Putin announced a “special military operation” in the Donbas, where a “genocide” was allegedly taking place. The “West” had created a “hostile anti-Russia” with modern Ukraine on Russia’s “own historical territories.” The notorious liar in the Kremlin claimed that Russia did not want to occupy Ukrainian territory, but was seeking “demilitarization and denazification” of Ukraine, i.e. of a democratic state in Europe.⁸ He echoed Russian propaganda that the

⁶ Cf. <https://www.spiegel.de/ausland/der-kremlchef-und-seine-drohungen-gegen-den-westen-putins-ukraine-rede-im-wortlaut-a-fab35f1d-3a2e-494c-af44-72798d2aa42c>.

⁷ cf. <https://www.bellingcat.com/news/2022/02/23/documenting-and-debunking-dubious-footage-from-ukraines-frontlines/>.

⁸ cf. <https://www.deutschlandfunk.de/putin-rede-ukraine-100.html>.

Euromaidan was a “fascist coup” controlled by the “West”, through which a “Kiyv junta” had been established. In truth, it was the Putinist regime itself that attempted to hack into Ukraine’s Central Election Commission during the 2014 presidential election to declare victory for a radical right-wing politician who in fact received less than 1% of the vote.⁹

The political goal of the Russian invasion is not only the “decapitation” of the “fascist junta” in Kiyv under the Jewish-born Zelenskyy, who, unlike the grandson of Stalin’s cook, is a descendant of Holocaust survivors and whose grandfather fought in the Red Army against the Nazis, in order to install a Putinist puppet regime. Putin is also concerned with persecuting and suppressing all those Ukrainians who want to preserve and defend the country’s national independence. In this respect, his dictatorship follows the historical tradition of the “Russification” of Ukraine by the Stalinist Soviet Union from the early 1930s, during which all Ukrainians who wanted to assert their right to national self-determination were considered “Nazis” and treated accordingly. Therefore, Putin also threatened to hold show trials after the capture of Ukraine and countless police trucks were brought to Ukraine as part of the invasion.

The Russian invasion force began its offensive with explosions in various Ukrainian cities to spread panic among the civilian population and paralyze Ukrainian forces through the tactic of “Shock and Awe”. It first shelled strategically important targets throughout the country with cruise missiles, whereupon the Russian Air Force would quickly gain air superiority in several waves of attacks and then launch a large-scale invasion by ground, air, and through amphibious landing operations. However, the heroic defensive struggle of the Ukrainian air defenses and Air Force has so far prevented the Russian invader’s air force from gaining air superiority and completely eliminating the Ukrainian air defenses, even contrary to the expectations of

⁹ cf. Timothy Snyder: *The Road to Unfreedom. Russia, Europe, America*, New York 2018, p. 128.

“Western” experts and analysts. Fierce battles for airspace continue to take place, and the Ukrainian air force and air defenses have already managed to take down numerous Russian planes and helicopters. Putin’s war of aggression has the strategic goal of encircling Kiyv by means of “Blitzkrieg” advances of the Russian army through a pincer attack. As predicted before the invasion, Russian troops are advancing westward across the Donbas, attempting not only to take Kherson by forking the troops marching in from Crimea in the Kherson Offensive into two columns, but also to establish a strategically important land bridge from the peninsula to Russia by capturing the port city of Mariupol, while advancing directly on the Ukrainian capital from the northeast and north in the Kiyv Offensive (see Figure 4). The defensive lines of the Ukrainian forces have already partially collapsed on all fronts, but fierce, relentless resistance has allowed the advance of Russian troops to be partially repulsed and slowed down, inflicting heavy losses on the Russian aggressor.



Figure 4: Map with Russian military plans, which was published in January 2022 by the Center for Strategic and International Studies and German newspaper “Bild”, which has been confirmed by the course of the war so far. Source: <https://bit.ly/3IhbZ5h>

No wonder that the defensive struggle of the Ukrainian Armed Forces turned into a defensive people's war, as the Ukrainian civilian population began to organize itself democratically in the tradition of the Euromaidan and to resist the Russian invaders themselves and on their own initiative. Russian tanks and military vehicles are stopped with bare hands or by lying down in front of their wheels, tanks and vehicle columns of the invading army are attacked on foot or from moving cars with Molotov cocktails built by the population (cf. Figure 5), barricades are erected on the streets, street signs are removed or re-written so that Russian soldiers cannot navigate, and Kiyv has been fortified into a military bastion.

Not only is the morale of Ukrainian civilians almost unbelievably high, but President Zelenskyy has also morphed from a former comedian into a war leader who possesses a political significance of



Figure 5: Inhabitants of Dnipro are spinning the “escalatory spiral” (Source: <https://twitter.com/sarabrainford/status/1497606424398024709?s=20&t=qejlgZb-lq8b1snuY-jBw>)

world-historical proportions. He imposed martial law, issued a general mobilization of all males between the ages of 18 and 60 – who were forbidden to leave Ukraine – and mobilized the “Territorial Defense Forces” as a reserve. Meanwhile, all Ukrainian civilians, regardless of age, were admitted to military service, weapons were issued to the Kiyv population, prison inmates with combat experience were released and integrated into the army, numerous Ukrainians returned from abroad to fight against the Russian invader, and an “International Brigade” for foreign volunteers has been established, which has already been joined by several thousand people (mainly American and British ex-military, but also battle-hardened militiamen from the Caucasus, Central and Middle East, and North Africa, who still have a score to settle with the Putinist terrorist state).

Meanwhile, most of the Russian troops that were stationed on the Ukrainian border are fighting in the various war theaters in Ukraine. Putin also had the “Kadyrovtsy”, the paramilitary protection force of Chechen dictator Ramzan Kadyrov, mobilized. Part of these Islamist barbarians were already fighting on the Russian side in the war in the Donbas, another part was already concentrated on the border with Ukraine, and a third part was mobilized in the Chechen capital Grozny, which Putin bombed to the ground in the second Chechen war. The mobilization of the Kadyrovtsy served Putin not only to reinforce Russian troops, but also to intimidate the Ukrainian army and especially the civilian population as part of psychological warfare, as the Chechen special forces are notorious for their immense cruelty. However, an elite Ukrainian unit has already managed to neutralize a column of the Kadyrovtsy, with its commander Magomed Tushaev also being sent to Allah. A unit of Kadyrovtsy has recently been ordered to infiltrate into the Ukrainian capital to target Selenskyj and has also met its alleged “creator”. Meanwhile, in addition to the Islamist troops, the Belarusian army has also moved into the theater of war alongside the Russian invader to close the Russian army’s northern front and advance on Kiyv. By contrast, Kazakhstan, where

Russian “peacekeepers” bloodily repressed a protest movement against the oligarchic state bourgeoisie this January, rejected Putin’s request for its troops to participate in the invasion of Ukraine.

5. Causes for the failure of the previous strategy of “Blitzkrieg” and danger of a nuclear war

So far, the Russian army, despite clear numerical and technological superiority over the Ukrainian Armed Forces, has not succeeded in achieving decisive strategic victories. Let alone achieving Putin’s political goals (see Figure 6). The performance of the Russian forces in the Ukrainian theater of war is worse than even the best military experts of “Western” countries expected. The assessments that Putin’s inner circle of military and intelligence officers had of the Ukrainian military were determined by racist prejudices about Ukrainian “*chochols*”, which is why the Ukrainian army was completely underestimated. On the battlefield, the distance from reality was proven by the false optimism with which Putin went to war – he cannot fathom the determination and strength of the Ukrainian resistance. The Kremlin also believed its own propaganda and assumed that Ukrainian civilians would hail Russian troops as “liberators” or at least voluntarily submit to them. The general assumption was that victory would be swift.

The method of warfare used by Russia so far is new for the army. For the “blitzkrieg”-like invasion of Ukraine, only one army squadron was supposed to be enough, so the advances of Russian troops could not take place in continuous waves. The attempt at “blitzkrieg” resulted in the Russian “Battalion Tactical Groups” (BTGs) being divided into smaller subunits that advanced in parallel along roads, stretching them too thin. The resulting splinter formations of BTGs were relatively easily eliminated by the Ukrainian army. Moreover, the BTGs advanced largely without flanking by other troop formations, such as close air support, and because of their fragmentation were unable to

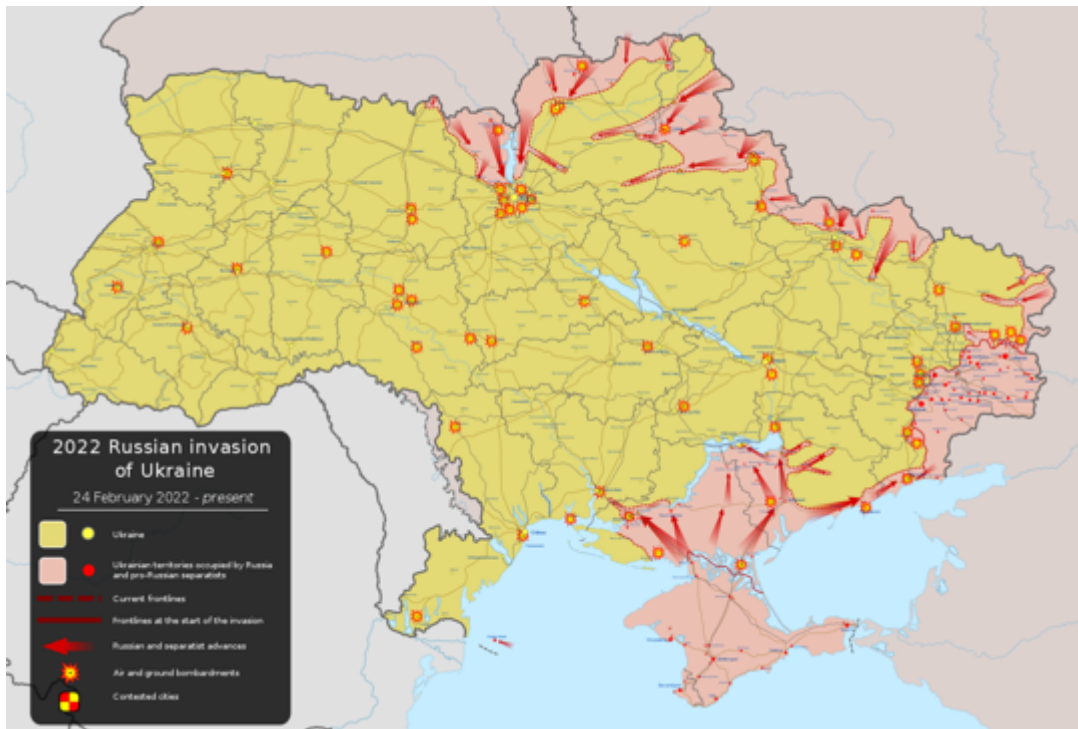


Figure 6: Russian invasion of Ukraine, March 1st, 2022. Source: (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2022_Russian_invasion_of_Ukraine#/media/File:2022_Russian_invasion_of_Ukraine.svg)

penetrate cities with adequate troop strength, which is why they were often wiped out by the Ukrainian army in house-to-house combat. Corruption, which is an essential feature of state-capitalist despotisms, is also rampant in the Russian army, where quite a few “ghost soldiers” exist. As a result, the BTGs have been augmented by young, inexperienced, and poorly trained conscripts who have been signed up as regular soldiers on compulsory contracts. In some cases, ordinary Russian soldiers were told that they were merely being deployed to the Ukrainian borders for an exercise or training mission. If they refused to participate in the invasion, they were threatened with liquidation. While the Putin mafia hides in a bunker near the Urals, it uses countless Russian men, first and foremost workers, as cannon fodder. Once one of these men has died on the battlefield, he is cremated in a mobile crematorium and his ashes buried so that the actual number of Russian fallen will not be known. Where this does not succeed in the heat of battle, the mothers are cheated with

a paltry 100 euros per fallen son.¹⁰ It is therefore no wonder that quite a few ordinary Russian soldiers have already surrendered. In the hands of the Ukrainians, they are fed and allowed to contact their families.

Only a small circle of the military leadership around Putin and the commanders of the special forces knew about the planned invasion, which is why it is not surprising that entire columns of the Russian army have lost their orientation in Ukraine. Because of the corruption, numerous false reports that feed into military planning are also passed from below to the leadership of the Russian military, leading to misjudgments that result in serious tactical errors. For example, the Russian command repeatedly allowed small units of paratroopers and other special forces to drop over Ukrainian cities without appropriate flanking by other troop types, where they could be eliminated by Ukrainian forces. Russian saboteurs and special forces repeatedly entered Kiyv in preparation for its capture and to liquidate members of the Ukrainian government, but were always neutralized by the Ukrainians.

In addition, there are logistical problems, especially a shortage of fuel and food. The U.S. release of intelligence on the Russian troop buildup delayed the invasion of Ukraine, and the Ukrainian government waited to mobilize its forces. This was not only to avoid giving Russia an excuse to invade and to save economic resources, but also so that Russian troops would have to consume some of their supplies intended for use during the invasion. Due to the many regroupments and constant maneuvers on the Ukrainian border, a significant portion of supplies had already been depleted before the invasion even began. In order to advance rapidly on Kiyv, Russian troops carry their fuel reserves in smaller reserve tanks, while the few tankers they carry were insufficient to provide an adequate reserve of fuel. Because of the resulting fuel shortage, many motorized vehicles

¹⁰ Cf. https://twitter.com/mbk_center/status/1498584163099754496.

and tanks slowed their advances or stalled altogether. As a result, some of the Russian troops are wandering around various areas of Ukraine in search of food, looting grocery stores and knocking on the doors of local populations to beg for food and fuel. In contrast to the Ukrainian Armed Forces, the combat morale of much of the Russian army is consequently low.

The original strategy of the Russian military leadership to take Kiyv in a kind of “blitzkrieg” seems to have failed so far, due to both poor planning and execution. However, the Russian army has not yet deployed its full arsenal, possibly to avoid civilian casualties and the corresponding gruesome images, but certainly to avoid creating debris that would impede the advance of its own forces. Despite the modernization of weapon systems, improvement of training and restructuring of the Ukrainian army since 2014, it is still hopelessly inferior to the Russian one. However, the limits of the Russian attack are not only determined by military capabilities, but by political objectives, too. It is already becoming apparent that the Kremlin mafia has decided to change its strategy, which entails a broader offensive with the use of more massive military force. Russian troops are trying to reorganize and regroup. The Russian army is less and less not waging a war of movement, bypassing pockets of Ukrainian resistance, instead encircling major Ukrainian cities. It is not yet clear whether Putin’s goal is to occupy all of Ukraine, but overall ruthlessness toward the civilian population is already on the rise. Above all, Russian bombing terror has significantly expanded and intensified, entire streets and city districts have been razed to the ground, and Ukrainian civilians have been indiscriminately slaughtered, as in Kharkiv (see Figure 7).



Figure 7: Kharkiv before and after „demilitarization and denazification” by the Putinist regime (Source: <https://www.tagesschau.de/ausland/ukraine-krieg-russland-truppen-kiew-103.html>)

There are early indications that such a change of strategy could, in the “worst-case” scenario, escalate into a war of annihilation against the Ukrainian population, as envisaged by the Russian leadership. Not only does the invasion constitute a “crime of aggression” as a war crime, but in its course numerous other war crimes have been committed by the Russian army, such as targeted terror bombings of Ukrainian civilian buildings – including homes, kindergartens, schools, playgrounds, cemeteries, and hospitals – or directly on civilians, with which the Kremlin has had success in Syria, disguised raids on Ukrainian forces in Ukrainian National Guard and army uniforms, shelling of ambulances transporting the wounded,

dropping of banned butterfly mines, the obliteration of entire villages in southern Ukraine, the abduction of civilians to use as human shields, and the use of thermobaric weapons, the use of which against civilians is prohibited by the laws of war. Some of the attacks on civilians even took place with cluster munitions, which are forbidden under international law in most countries because of their devastating effects. These war crimes, which in themselves justify indictment of the Putin clan and its collaborating criminals at the International Criminal Court in The Hague, are likely to increase as a result of a change in Russia's strategy. The Russian state press, in an erroneously prematurely published victory article written in advance, wrote in purest Nazi jargon that Putin had taken upon himself the historical responsibility for "resolving the Ukrainian question" by restoring Russia's "historical wholeness" by bringing together the Russian people "in its entirety of Great Russians, White Russians, and Little Russians."¹¹

Having already threatened the use of nuclear weapons several times in recent days, the great Russian leader last Sunday put Russia's nuclear forces on a higher alert because of NATO's "aggressive behavior" (Putin). This raising of the alert level serves Russia's psychological warfare. In fact, it is not the "high" alert level, as has been reported in the "Western" media, unintendedly supporting the Putinist regime's psychological warfare, but to Alert Level 2, the highest level in peacetime, and not in general. Putin is trying to take advantage of the fact that there is strong popular sentiment against nuclear weapons in many "Western" countries. He believes that he can scare the "West" into withdrawing support for Ukraine. He may also be counting on this to extract better terms for a cease-fire if Russia cannot achieve its goals and must return to negotiations. In the war against Ukraine, Russia and NATO face each other not directly but mediated, making a first strike by Russia extremely unlikely. Just

¹¹ <https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-60562240>

as the Putinist claqueurs in the “West” claimed that the threatened invasion was “hysterical and sensationalist” mood-mongering “in ever wilder speculation” (Gabriele Krone-Schmalz, so-called “Russia expert”, author and journalist), so now, in accordance with the war-psychological agenda of Putinism, they themselves are spreading hysteria and panic by speculating about a nuclear war.¹² This also corresponds to their idea that Putin has suddenly become a “homicidal maniac”. After all, who wouldn’t buy that a madman could push the button and start a nuclear war? But the use of a nuclear bomb in Ukraine or elsewhere by Russia is in truth unlikely. It is highly questionable what the goal of such an escalation should be.

6. German economy and foreign policy towards Russia

Why have German governments for so long pursued a foreign policy that tacitly tolerated Putin’s wars and destabilization maneuvers or responded to them with half-hearted sanctions, ultimately encouraging him in his decision to attack Ukraine? German foreign policy toward Russia is either merely morally condemned or mechanically derived from economic relations. The understanding of a country’s foreign policy must start from its economic relations, but if it wants to approach reality, it can never simply “deduce” foreign policy from these, as the “Marxist” economists do.

Shortly before Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, the German Eastern Business Association (*Ostausschuss der deutschen Wirtschaft*) presented economic data in a press release on February 10, 2022, with the headline “New record in Eastern trade – half a trillion cracked”, which was intended to underline the importance of the Russian market for the German economy and which was subsequently cited by many a “communist” as an explanation of Germany’s policy toward Russia.¹³ However, if one looks at the development of

¹² <https://snanews.de/20220210/krone-schmalz-schrecken-des-krieges-5309121.html>.

¹³ Cf. https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=712444836807397&id=111971840188036.

German economic relations with Russia and compares them with those with other countries, they lose explanatory power. German exports to Russia had reached their previous peak in 2012, two years before the annexation of Crimea, with a volume of 38.1 billion euros.¹⁴ Even before the sanctions imposed due to the annexation of Crimea, they began to fall in 2013 and 2014. They fell again with the sanctions taking full effect. From 2017 onwards, exports recovered, followed by a renewed fall due to the economic crisis in the wake of the Covid pandemic and the measures taken to combat it.

The strong increase of economic activity in 2021 highlighted by the *Ostausschuss* in its press release, which argues against renewed sanctions and in favor of a diplomatic solution regarding the threat of a Russian invasion into Ukraine, is mainly due to the general economic recovery. Comparing the pre-crisis year 2019 with 2021, the increase is only 90 million euros. In 2021, the volume of German exports was still 11.45 billion euros below that of 2012, which corresponds to about two-thirds. Russia was only the 14th most important German export country in 2021. Much more important for the German economy are exports and investments to its direct Eastern European neighbors. Exports to Poland, now the fifth most important export country, amounted to 78.05 billion euros, three times the figure for Russia. Exports to Ukraine in 2021 totaled 5.4 billion euros.¹⁵ Despite all the economic declarations, the Federation of German Industries (*BDI*), which has strongly opposed sanctions for a long time, has been advocating a turnaround in German foreign policy toward Russia for several years.

A second indicator of the economic interdependence of national total capital also highlights the inadequacy of an economic explanation of German foreign policy toward Russia. Direct investment by German capital in Russia is not exceptionally high, peaking as early as 2007 at 4.9 billion euros, while in 2021, it amounted

¹⁴ <https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/291062/umfrage/deutsche-exporte-nach-russland/>

¹⁵ <https://www.dihk.de/de/aktuelles-und-presse/krise-russland-ukraine-wirtschaftssanktionen/deutsch-ukrainische-handelsbeziehungen-66922>

to only 2.7 billion euros (see Fig. 8). Around 4.000 German companies have a registered office in Russia. It is noteworthy that it is mainly smaller medium-sized companies that invest in Russia. Not coincidentally, the class base of German neo-Nazism and the Wagenknecht faction of left bourgeois socialism is formed by the petty bourgeoisie.



Figure 8: Direct Investment of German capital in Russia, 1994-2022 (Source: <https://www.ceicdata.com/en/germany/outward-direct-investment-by-region-and-country/direct-investment-outward-on-russian-federation>)

The only significant economic dependence exists in energy with regard to Russian natural gas supplies. However, this dependence is not without alternative, but the result of intensive Russian lobbying and corruption of German politicians and ex-politicians as well as a series of political decisions (nuclear and coal phase-out, slow expansion of renewable energies, pipeline construction, abandonment of liquefied natural gas terminals etc.) of the Schröder and Merkel governments. Germany, which gets about half of its total natural gas imports from Russia, is also the largest importer of Russian natural gas within the EU and thus particularly vulnerable. Until the new Minister of Economics, Robert Habeck, took office, the German Ministry of Economics was always of the opinion that a strategic natural gas reserve was not necessary, as it would lead to higher energy prices, thus worsening the competitiveness of German

capital and increasing the cost of living for private households, as well as being unnecessary due to the alleged delivery reliability of the state-owned Russian natural gas companies.

Even though the importance of the Russian market differs for the individual EU member states, Russia is economically significantly more dependent on the EU market overall than, conversely, the capitals in the EU are on Russia. The value of goods Russia exported to the EU in 2021 was more than twice the value of Russian imports from EU countries. Due to the sanctions, Russia will be forced to intensify economic relations with its strategic partner and, simultaneously, rival China, thus increasing its dependence on the latter. This aspect is emphasized by German bourgeois socialists, such as Gregor Gysi (foreign policy spokesman of the Left Party, formerly the last head of the GDR-ruling SED), amid all their sudden verbal indignation about Russia's renewed war of aggression. Here, for propagandistic reasons, Gysi and Sahra Wagenknecht (former deputy party and parliamentary group chairwoman of the Left Party) suddenly take up the position of German national capital. In fact, they indirectly speak out against the existing sanctions proposals by making unrealizable demands on them that are contrary to their nature. In typical bourgeois-socialist fashion, the reconciliation of the irreconcilable is demanded here, and the connection broken up into disconnected parts. The sanctions are supposed to be effective, but only affect individual oligarchs and Putin. At the same time, the bourgeois-socialists are preparing for a later time, when the excitement has subsided and habituation has set in or Putin has been replaced, the demand for weakening or lifting the sanctions.

A greater economic significance of Russia is its ability to act as a "gatekeeper" in its sphere of influence in the former Soviet countries. As such, Russian state capital functionaries, either themselves or through state capitalist regimes dependent on them, seek to monopolize access to markets and raw materials so that this monopoly can be used to enforce political interests. At the same time,

Russia is acting as China's "bodyguard" in Central Asia, for example in Kazakhstan. Both show once again that it is not about genuine "security interests" of Russia in its "sphere of influence" but about the preservation of power of the ruling state-capitalist class of the country. For this, according to the "democratic" socialist Sahra Wagenknecht, one simply has to show "respect".

Another existential threat to the power of Russia's state-capitalist despotism is the attempt to decarbonize the leading capitalist economies in the face of climate change, since the main source of income of the Russian rentier state is the revenue from the export of oil and natural gas. The Kremlin funds climate change deniers and so-called "right-wing" and "left-wing" populists not only for the purpose of weakening the "West" domestically, but for its own economic and political motives. Wagenknecht's political program here, as elsewhere, hardly differs from that of the AfD (*Alternative für Deutschland*). Her pseudo-criticism of the German government's climate policy is merely a little more socially disguised. Here, too, it claims the reconciliation of the inner-capitalist irreconcilable. The capitalist economy is to be decarbonized and "climate neutral", but gas, petrol and oil prices are not to rise, no CO2 price is to be introduced, wind turbines are to be built only where they do not lead to the devaluation of residential buildings, etc. Her social-demagogically disguised criticism of the federal government's climate policy is thus part of the manifold efforts to prolong the main sources of income and thus the life of the Putinist dictatorship.

The invasion of Ukraine by Putinist Russia also shows that the U.S. made a mistake with the "pivot to asia" begun under Obama and continued by Trump, insofar as it believed it could establish better relations with Russia in order to focus entirely on China. After all, despite all their differences, both form the spearhead of the geopolitical camp of global reaction as the "dragon bear" (Velina Tchakarova). The confrontation of the U.S. with China must inevitably lead to a confrontation with Russia, also because of the

aforementioned bodyguard function of the Putinist regime.

Since the full restoration of the Federal Republic's sovereignty, German foreign policy has consisted of following the path of U.S. foreign and security policy, profiting largely free of charge from the enormous military expenditures of the U.S., and "incidentally" trading with anyone and everyone. What the left selectively and moralistically denounces as proof of the German bourgeoisie's unscrupulousness in geopolitical terms, the majority faction of the German bourgeoisie is proud of, namely, that unlike the U.S., the British or the French, it "can engage with everyone." So far, German foreign policy has been predominantly about pure economic policy, almost completely ignoring the political and, in particular, security implications of economic policy.

In the case of Russia, this foreign policy has a number of additional reasons besides the aforementioned corruption of German "elites" by Putinism and the cited economic foundations: 1. the crimes of the Nazi policy of conquest and extermination in the course of the invasion of the Soviet Union, which is predominantly regarded merely as a debt to Russia, but not to Ukraine and Belarus, and also ignores the division of Poland between Hitler and Stalin. 2. the feeling that one should be grateful to the Russian governments because they made reunification possible. The view that Gorbachev "gave" reunification to the Germans springs from a reactionary romantic and latently anti-American fantasy of an "East" not yet corrupted by capitalism. In fact, Gorbachev and large sections of the CPSU Central Committee had come to the sober assessment of the economic and political state of the Eastern bloc that the Soviet Union could no longer maintain political dominance over the "socialist brother lands". The economic backwardness and horrendous debts of the Soviet Union, but also of the supposed "socialist model economy" of the G.D.R., as well as mass protests by the population, ultimately led Gorbachev to accept the German government's offer to buy the G.D.R. in return for billions in loans.

Finally, the reduction of German foreign policy to economic policy corresponds to the economic structure of the German economy, which depends on export surpluses for growth. Domestic policy must take into account a class compromise that, while softened, is exceptional compared to other capitalistically developed countries. The “social peace” based on relatively high average wages and a developed welfare state has the aforementioned export orientation as a condition

7. Continuity and change of Putinist propaganda in left-wing bourgeois socialism

For fanatical-fantastic bourgeois socialism, in its abstract pacifism and antimilitarism, even the Russian government’s unveiled threats of an invasion of Ukraine were hot air, a pure bluff intended to force NATO – which, according to this logic, was incapable of negotiation – to make concessions to the “legitimate security interests” of Putinism. The stupid smart-asses of the “Jacobin Magazine” declared that one only had to be “in the know” to recognize the threat of war as U.S. propaganda,¹⁶ fortune-teller Christian Y. Schmidt (notorious Beijing-based propagandist of the CCP and freelance writer for numerous left-wing newspapers) scrawled about “*Gaga-Biden*” (crazy Biden), the bad Goebbels-rip-off Sevim Dağdelen (politician of the Left Party and member of the Bundestag) denounced the “lie of the Russian attack” on February 18,¹⁷ and the forger Sahra Wagenknecht declared on the eve of the attack that a war is being “conjured up”. Just like in 2003, when Iraqi Defense Minister Muhammad as-Sahaf, standing in front of cameras that showed American tanks in the background, declared: “There are no American infidels in Baghdad. Never! We are winning this war, and we will win the war. This is for sure”, so German bourgeois socialism babbled until the last possible

¹⁶ <https://jacobinmag.com/2022/01/russia-invasion-imminent-threat-hysteria-panic-washington/>

¹⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cTg8wYqV1RI&t=127s>

moment of “war talk” and “NATO aggression against Russia” (*konkret Magazin*). Now, when it has no choice but to admit its “mistakes”, it boasts of its “strength of character” and “moral stature” in a hollow, seemingly contrite manner – “I honestly could not have imagined it like that” (Wagenknecht) – but in fact shrugging and oblivious – “we need to approach Russia.” Wagenknecht’s logic previously was: Putin would be crazy if he invaded, that’s why he wouldn’t invade. Now she says: Putin has invaded, therefore he is insane. But should one negotiate with a lunatic? That’s exactly what Wagenknecht is proposing now. Is she insane? Her warnings that everything in Putin’s path is “highly dangerous”, her admonitions that “everyone” should abide by international law, and her demands to return to the negotiating table with the leader of a murderous mafia gang, who regarded the Russian commitments in the Budapest Memorandum and the Charter of Paris as only temporary tactical maneuvers, and to



Figure 9: “Socialist” disorientation – cover of „konkret“ magazine on the day of invasion. Source: https://www.konkret-magazin.de/images/hefte/2022/titel0322_mittel.jpg

make proposals to him so that he would not be isolated – which he already is – are a mere translation of how American slaveholders responded to a rebellion by their slaves: Submit, and there will be no bloodshed. If this ideal legitimization of the Putinist regime collapses, its rule is also threatened. Wagenknecht's demands that Ukraine capitulate quickly now is therefore also tantamount to stabilizing the Putinist mafia dictatorship over the Russian proletariat.

Putin did indeed initially offer the Ukrainian government – under condition of surrender of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, the resignation of the Zelensky government, and the recognition of the Donetsk and Luhansk “people's republics” – negotiations on the country's “neutrality” in Minsk. However, after Ukraine refused to negotiate, which it was forced to do under these conditions, which would have practically equaled total surrender, Putin immediately called on the Ukrainian army to take power in Kiyv and overthrow the government, which he said consisted of a “gang of drug addicts and neo-Nazis”.¹⁸ His call, of course, faded into the void of Russian propaganda channels. The negotiations that the Putinist regime later started with this “gang” without preconditions remained without results, but a second meeting is supposedly to take place soon. During the first meeting, Russia only intensified its offensive, carrying out several heavy missile attacks on Ukrainian cities, mainly on civilian facilities. As the history of Russia's wars of aggression on its neighboring countries, such as in Georgia or Chechnya, has shown, Putinist despotism always uses such negotiations to hunt down the warring party opposing it in the most insidious and barbaric way. This, too, is concealed by the bourgeois-socialist left when it now calls for a “return to the negotiating table”.

In fact, since the invasion, the left and right Putinism and that of the political center first dutifully rattles off the formula of the “war of aggression, which cannot be justified by anything”, in order to then

¹⁸ Cf. <https://www.handelsblatt.com/dpa/wirtschaft-handel-und-finanzen-putin-an-ukrainische-armee-nehmt-die-macht-in-eure-haende/28107380.html?ticket=ST-6809417-Xjdj4uXuXzkh6nBtzHo-ap5>.

proceed with exactly the same demands, which it had already articulated in this exact form before the war, which Putin is now enforcing by force and which, it seems, is best to just hand him without a fight: A ceasefire “at the price of permanent neutrality of Ukraine [...] – yes, for whom would that actually be bad?” Yes, why are the Ukrainians actually fighting? After all, Putin is only freeing them from becoming the “pawn of the powers” (Wagenknecht)! If one would follow Wagenknecht’s logic, according to which a quick victory of Russia would spare the Ukrainians “suffering”, one would not have to equip Ukraine, but Russia with weapons, so that it can subjugate Ukraine particularly quickly. Otherwise Sarah Wagenknecht sits on the exact moral level of the Taliban: “closely monitoring the situation ... expresses concern ... calls for restraint by both parties ... foreign policy of neutrality ... calls on both sides of the conflict to resolve the crisis through dialogue and peaceful means ...”¹⁹ etc. etc. More or less nasty variations of the Wagenknecht line can be found in all German parties.

This also includes the aforementioned Gysi, whose life’s work consists in adapting to changed circumstances and who apparently feels that the left-wing ship must now take a sharper angle to the previous course. That he, too, is only trying to “save his old ideology in every respect” is shown by the fact that the only thing that occurs to him about the cause of the war is that “what dies first in every war is the truth”, so one cannot tell anything about these causes, but has to play his indignation a little more authentically. In reality, in the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, it was not truth that died first, but Putinist propaganda. The fact that his alleged change of heart, recently expressed by Gysi in a strong-worded letter to Wagenknecht, is only hypocritical is proven by the fact that even now, when Russia is massacring Ukrainians, he still rejects effective sanctions and arms deliveries. But the question, “Should we deliver

¹⁹ <https://www.newsweek.com/taliban-calls-russia-ukraine-peace-fear-civilians-afghanistan-1682616>

arms to Ukraine?” has become the crucial question in the political assessment of the war against Ukraine. Anyone who answers in the negative is giving Ukraine up for slaughter. Be it intentionally, out of stupidity or ignorance – the result is the same.

It would be a mistake to believe that “only” because the claims of the *Putinverstehers* (“Putin decoders”) have been disproved for the umpteenth time and all their moral depravity is now openly obvious, they would also be ideologically crushed. They continue to exist because their material and intellectual roots have not been torn out, and they will suck new strength from the dirty soil they are now buried in to once again spread their lies, which always turn out to be only culturally sensitive masquerades of Putinism. All that remains for the proletariat is to lay off its phantasies, to develop revolutionary politics on a scientific basis and to treat Putinism of all colors and directions as the mortal enemy that it is.

8. International support of Ukraine

France and Germany in particular, in spite of all the evidence, stuck most strongly and for the longest time to the belief that a diplomatic solution could be reached with Putin without at the same time preparing Ukraine militarily for the impending attack. Under the false pretext of not supplying weapons to “crisis areas” as a matter of principle, the German government actively blocked arms deliveries from other countries until the very end. It made excuses for itself by saying that it was a major financial donor after all, which is of no use to Ukraine if its existence is threatened by force of arms. When the attack, which had been predicted for months, began, the old German bourgeoisie burst out in grandiose cries: “The unimaginable has come true”, wrote the *Tagesschau*, and German President Steinmeier called on Putin to let the “madness” go. While most public analysts had not supported arms deliveries for weeks, they now suddenly turned around and declared immediately that Ukraine was already lost –

according to always grand, always wrong strategist Herfried Münkler –, that “nothing” could be done “that would bring about a change in the military situation” (Prof. Dr. Carlo Masala, political scientist and Chair of International Politics at the Faculty of Political and Social Sciences of the University of the Bundeswehr in Munich) and that any help would come too late.²⁰

The dishonesty and hypocrisy of the cheap outrage about the war is thus evident not only from its numbing shrillness or relative lack of consequences, but also from the defeatism in which the military situation was and is perceived. At all times, however, and this was the most important thing, the German conscience could be reassured. Three days after the attack, Ukraine was suddenly threatened so immensely that the German government had to drop its previous pretext of not being able to deliver weapons to crisis areas and promised to deliver a total of 1,500 anti-tank and air defense weapons as well as armored vehicles for protecting political personnel. In doing so, it proudly patted itself on the back, while Sweden, for example, is sending 5,000 anti-tank weapons to Ukraine alone and the U.S. is spontaneously dwarfing Germany’s generosity with \$6 billion worth of humanitarian and military aid.²¹

The foreign policy “turnaround” proclaimed by the German government follows the turnaround in Merkel’s Russia policy in 2014, but it is just as much part of a tradition of German *Ostpolitik*, which only enters into greater conflict with Russia when pressure from Western allies can no longer be resisted without jeopardizing the alliances altogether. In recent decades, German foreign policy has made a habit of pushing the limits of its ties with the West, and even now it only hints at a partial transition to a new security policy. The 2-percent target has been “envisaged” for years, and a Tornado aircraft replacement and armed drones have already been promised by the government coalition agreement. What is new about Scholz’s

²⁰ Cf. FAZ vom 25.02.2022.

²¹ <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/biden-administration-push-congress-64-billion-aid-ukraine-schumer-2022-02-27/>

announcements is the significant increase in the defense budget, which infuriates the peacenik left, and the rhetoric against Putin. The German government was not prepared to risk damage to German-Russian relations with earlier arms deliveries. The anti-tank and surface-to-air missiles now promised will help Ukraine, but at this point it also needs offensive weapons to effectively prevent Russian artillery and air power from terror bombardments.

Germany also played a decisive role delaying the enforcement of sanctions. It took two days of attacks on Ukraine and immense public pressure for Germany, which at that point was bravely supported only by Putin's servant Viktor Orban, to abandon its opposition to the SWIFT blockade. That Nord Stream 2 was put on hold was a compromise, as Gregor Gysi knew, recognizing immediately that when "the war hopefully ends someday, in whatever way", Nord Stream 2 could be renegotiated. After Eastern European countries blocked Russian airlines' access to European airspace, Central and Western European countries followed suit, and following the steps taken by the U.S. and the U.K., the EU joined travel and export restrictions (including on modern technologies) and froze the assets of some oligarchs. In addition to the SWIFT blockade, the U.S. and U.K. also led the way in excluding Russian banks from their own financial system, with the EU apparently able to negotiate exceptions for energy deals that the U.S. likely agreed to only at the price of transatlantic unity. The main source of income for the Russian state bourgeoisie is thus not targeted.

For the good German "socialists", who always appeal to the pettiest financial interest, the economic penalties naturally went too far. Wagenknecht knows that "sanctions [...] also affect the population in Germany", "do not solve any problem" and have long since been foreseen quite precisely and "priced in" anyway.²² Comrade Gysi, meanwhile, warns that the Russian market could be lost to China.²³

²² <https://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/video237190675/Ukraine-Invasion-Ist-Putin-ein-Kriegsverbrecher-Frau-Wagenknecht-Ja-wobei.html>.

²³ <https://www.handelsblatt.com/dpa/wirtschaft-handel-und-finanzen-linken-politiker-gysi-warnt-vor-allianz-zwischen->

The Left Party explicitly demanded in its motion for resolution for the Bundestag on February 27, 2022, that sanctions should be limited to those “that directly affect the oligarchs and war profiteers”, meaning sanctions that the German government had already introduced in 2014 after the first invasion of Ukraine against resistance from the Left Party.²⁴ Hidden in the hypocritical concern for the “man on the street”, which never appears as an active political subject in this picture anyway, is a perpetrator-victim reversal that is intended to shift the blame for the economic consequences of the war from the Kremlin bourgeoisie to the “West”. For the Putinists in Germany, the real consequences matter only to the extent that their political mission is to reduce the costs of war for Putin as much as possible.

In reality, the new sanctions have already made the Russian economy tremble. Obviously, the Putin mafia could not “know what to expect in the worst case” and “everything” was not “priced in” (Prof. Dr. Carlo Masala). Indeed, the sanctions threaten to destroy the Russian economy. The ruble fell by 29% on Monday, February 28, 2022, which will likely make imports more expensive and further lower the standard of living in Russia. Investment is becoming riskier and more complicated for foreign capital, while a run on ATMs is also putting pressure on domestic financing. Sanctions against the Russian Central Bank are making it more difficult to use foreign reserves. Although the concrete consequences of the economic sanctions are not yet foreseeable, this much is certain: they hit the Russian economy with enormous force, their magnitude came as a surprise to the political leadership, and they will sooner or later put them in a bind. The costs of future military interventions or occupation of Ukraine have increased significantly.

The international proletariat appeared half-heartedly, but in relatively large numbers, alongside petty bourgeois and managing leaders on the

china-und-russland/28105520.html.

²⁴ <https://dserver.bundestag.de/btd/20/008/2000845.pdf>.

streets of the world. Demonstrations against the Russian invasion took place in major cities in Europe, the U.S., Asia and Africa, mostly led by Ukrainians in exile, who also managed not to be entirely recuperated by the false peace movement of the new bourgeoisie. The greatest practical effort of the Germans so far seems to be directed at helping refugees, although, as in the case of Syrian refugees who also fled Russian bombs, the causes of flight are rarely asked about. It is enough to know that war is raging to be shocked and to want to do something, in consequence usually valuable. However, refugee aid that does not address the reasons for flight is far from a sufficient response to the violent escalation that the struggle against global counterrevolution is experiencing in Ukraine. The significance of the epochal incision this war represents in the recent history of Europe will be glimpsed by most workers, but only glimpsed, without grasping it in its concrete intensive and extensive causes and effects. Just as the catastrophic failure of European policy toward Russia and the opportunistic hesitation of the German bourgeoisie in particular strikingly demonstrate the urgent necessity of the proletariat's "own foreign policy" (Marx), so unwaveringly, persistently, and cruelly-thoroughly must such a policy be anticipated, prepared, pursued, and constantly criticized.

9. Outlook

In Russia, the U.S. and in Europe there are signs that the rats are leaving the sinking ship. The strong sanctions, the freezing of oligarch properties in Europe, the complete economic and political isolation of Russia, and the fact that any *détente* with the West under Putin is now impossible, could put pressure on the ruling classes in Russia to the point where the leadership group around Putin or he himself must be overthrown by hostile factions within the Russian bourgeoisie. The reformed Putinism that might follow would make it easier for the ruling classes in Russia and its supporters elsewhere to cover up their

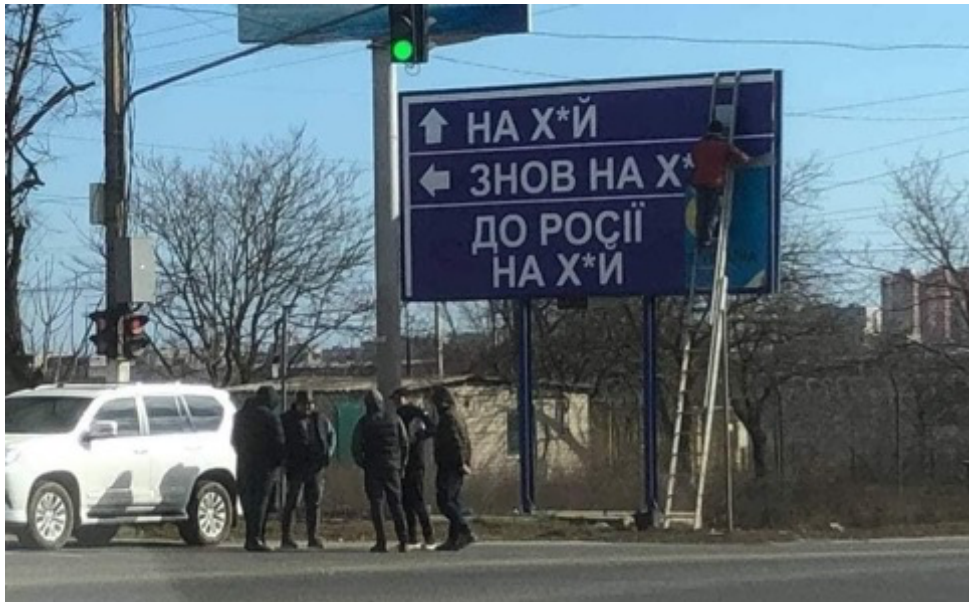


Figure 10: Navigation instructions for Putinist „Socialists” (All directions: “Go fuck yourself!”)

own collaboration with the dictatorship and move on, as Gregor Gysi, a skilled weasel, seems to smell when he says: “But Putin, I think, is finished.”²⁵ If Putin were indeed finished, he could be held solely responsible for the war as an out-of-control “madman” and the own total moral defeat could be limited.

The war is not yet decided. As valiantly as the Ukrainian Armed Forces are defending their country, the Russian army seems to be reorganizing, as far as it is able to, and making greater use of its air power. An urban battle in Kiyv, barricaded, full of soldiers and armed civilians whose morale is unbroken, is something Russia can only win with heavy casualties, if at all, and it is quite possible that the Russian military will throw more resources at a failed strategy just to make the defeat more costly. However, with the start of large-scale bombardments of civilian housing and infrastructure, the surge in the most serious war crimes, and the starvation of Kiyv, the enemy is threatening to force the Ukrainian government to its knees. The ensuing, so-called “peace” that humanitarian Putinists in this country very much want, would mean the long-term, brutal oppression of a country filled with hatred for the aggressor. The government would

²⁵ <https://twitter.com/morgenmagazin/status/1497159184965537795>.

be deposed or assassinated, the opposition hunted down, tortured and killed. All arms deliveries from the West would prove belated and, in particular, the proudly proclaimed German “180-degree turn” would prove ignorant and self-righteous hypocrisy. Unlike German Putinists, Ukrainians know from historical experience with Russia that there are worse things than war and death.

All the more important now is the fastest possible provision of combat aircraft serviceable by the Ukrainian army, artillery and drones to decimate Russian positions and columns, and more anti-tank and anti-aircraft missiles. It is doubtful that the cost of occupying the country for years is economically, politically, and militarily viable for the Putin regime. The longer and more costly the war becomes for the Kremlin – and it will not end as long as Ukraine is occupied – the less it can be kept secret from its own population, and the more it threatens its domestic stability. The Russians must prove that they are in no way inferior to their Ukrainian “brother people” in courage and willpower, dare to desert in droves in the field, and take the fight with the dictatorship to a new level at home. This would not only save Ukraine, but also unleash their own revolutionary capacities in an unimaginable way.

In Ukraine itself, given the multi-class unification of fighting Ukrainians with international volunteer brigades, the brotherhood of man is no mere phrase, but a fact of life. In bunkers, desperate families support themselves; in the media, military successes are celebrated with defiant humor, Russian troop movements and war crimes exposed. On the battlefields, alongside Afghans, Syrians, Iranians, Chechens, Georgians, Belarusians, British, Americans, Balts, Swedes, Japanese and countless other volunteers from all over the world, Ukrainians defend to the death Ukraine’s national right to self-determination, which is the basic condition of any healthy and free development of the country. With untold courage, ingenuity and cunning that makes the corrupt Russian military brass look like stupid jackasses, the civilian population is supporting the Ukrainian army,

slowing down the Russian advance everywhere and preparing for the possibly imminent house-to-house and guerrilla warfare in the cities. Only the Putinist false humanism could conceive that this nobility of man will surrender to its alleged fate and ever resign itself to its enslavement.



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