

# Russia's Road Toward Fascism

Saturday 7 January 2023, by [POPOVYCH Zakhar](#) (Date first published: 1 January 2023).

**WAR IN UKRAINE is plunging more and more into massacre but possibly the worst is about to come. Mass killings of prisoners and civilians, numerous and systematic rape in Russian-occupied territories are now "normal" news from Ukraine. Millions could be killed this winter by freezing alive in their apartments without heat, water and electricity.**

The daily count of dead is far higher than at any moment of the Donbas wars of 2014-2021. According to reports from both sides, the death toll probably exceeds 100,000 from the beginning of the war, and may now be higher than a thousand combatants and civilians daily. [1]

Not just the scale but the cruelty of violence is steadily rising and Russian state propaganda is systematically pushing for escalation. If it is not genocide yet, the ideology for eliminating Ukrainians in the millions is already announced on Russian state TV, and by high-ranking officials.

Russians claim it is "denazification," but it turns closer and closer to the ideology of fascism and Nazi state practices. [2] It is hard to say how deep Ukraine will dive into this abyss of terror, but it is clear that withdrawal of Russian troops is the best way to "denazify" Ukraine — and possibly Russia.

In October, Russian armed forces began systematic attacks against the Ukrainian electricity grid and civilian infrastructure including water supply facilities of the major cities. These activities don't have immediate military significance and don't influence Ukrainian armed forces' ability to fight. But these attacks are affecting the chances of the civil population to survive this winter.

Most Ukrainian homes rely on the central heating connected to the unified system of heating pipes that receive heat from the thermal power plants. Destroying thermal power plants, high-voltage electricity supply lines, water supply and sewerage will make Ukrainian cities unlivable for millions of their inhabitants.

People will die if not evacuated, and there is almost no chance it would be possible to evacuate another ten million people quickly. Around 30% of Ukrainian power generation was affected just in days, and if another 30-50% will be destroyed the heating and electricity will immediately halt.

If this happens when the outside temperature will be below freezing, which is typical of Ukrainian winter, water pipes will also crack and most of the people will be cut out of water. People would have just a couple of days to evacuate before their apartments would freeze down and they would freeze to death. Many elderly and disabled will have no chance.

This is exactly what Russia wants. According to the major Russian TV channels they want to "freeze Ukraine" to force it to surrender, as explicitly stated by deputy head Medvedev of Russia's state security council.

That Ukrainian civil infrastructure is now the main target of Russian strikes was confirmed by Putin. [3] Simultaneously one Russian TV presenter, Anton Krasovsky, suggested drowning Ukrainian children if they don't like Russian occupation.

You might remember how a member of State Duma of the Russian Federation, Aleksey Zhuravlyov, announced that Russia should kill just around two million Ukrainians who are probably not amenable for re-education into little Russians. [4] Later the former leader of the so-called Donetsk Peoples Republic, Pavel Gubarev, amended that to say 4-5 million would be killed if necessary. [5]

The previously reported killing of 53 captured Ukrainian combatants in a Russian-held prisoner of war camp also manifested quite persuasively the intention to turn from the war of attrition to one of extinction. We don't know exactly who killed Ukrainian POWs in Olenivka prison, but we do know that such action is exactly in line with Russian state propaganda that already demanded the death penalty for all of them.

All members of Ukrainian armed forces are members of particular units and almost each unit, as Russians claim, is another "nationalist battalion." By Russian official logic all the members of those battalions are "fascists" to be just killed.

Russian authorities are not interested in any kind of investigation of the Azov battalion's crimes of 2014-15, just because most of the current members of this unit of Ukrainian armed forces could not have any relation to those acts because they were not yet conscripted.

It would be good to investigate all the events of 2014 and later years, but that is not what Russia is interested in. If most present Azov members appeared unrelated to any significant crime, it would directly contradict the narrative of Russian propaganda. Probably, the Russian military and Federal Security Service personnel who themselves committed numerous crimes were disappointed that "Azov crimes" appeared much less significant than their own.

We do know that Ukrainian POWs were held in prison in the so-called "Donetsk Peoples Republic" where Russians once again restored the death penalty. And we do know some were tortured in Russian prisons.

If Russians wanted an investigation, they could do it in any prison in Russia where no Ukrainian missile can reach — but they don't want to. Maybe Russian investigators were just afraid to show in open trial those POWs whose "confessions" were made under torture?

Some people say Ukrainians be better off surrendering. Even my daughter, who is 12 and now a refugee in Poland, once asked me: Maybe we should just stop fighting to save lives? I was not sure how to explain to her that I doubt that we really have such an option.

She also raised the question of fascism: Why is everybody talking about the fascism now? Who are fascists? Are Russians fascists? Are people from Azov really Nazis? Not easy questions. Then she became interested in the Holocaust and when I visited her in Krakow, we decided to go for a day trip to Auschwitz and to witness the gas chambers where 5000 human beings were killed by Nazis daily after their countries were occupied.

At that time, we hoped that no mass killings and tortures were occurring in Russian POW camps. After Olenivka we know precisely the opposite: mass killings and tortures are unfortunately the ultimate reality. Anyway, those who still think that it is better for Ukrainians to surrender should think twice.

It's hard to find terms more obscure, yet widely used in mass media, than "fascism" and "Nazism." Russian media claim that Russian armed forces are now fighting Ukrainian "fascists" for the "denazification" of Ukraine. Contrariwise, Ukrainians claim we are fighting "Russo-fascist" invaders who loot, rape and kill civilians including babies and children of kindergarten age.

The consequences of Russian occupation include mass graves and severe damages to multi-store apartment buildings in Bucha, Irpin and Borodianka (30-50 kilometers northeast from downtown Kyiv). These pictures definitely remind Ukrainians of their fight against Nazi Germany and “Germano-fascist” invaders in 1941-1944.

## **Anti-Fascisms?**

During the Cold War, Americans were taught to identify their World War II ally exclusively with Russia, while up to one third of the Red Army and Soviet Union military industry was actually from the Ukrainian Soviet republic. Soviet T-34 tanks were actually designed and produced in Ukraine and later by Ukrainian workers and engineers evacuated to the Urals. Tank production on the famous Russian Uralvagonzavod was launched in 1941 by Ukrainians evacuated from Kharkiv.

The fight against Nazi invasion and occupation was relatively more traumatic for Ukrainians (and Belarusians) than for Russians, as only part of Russia was actually occupied and a relatively smaller percentage of its population killed, while the whole of Ukraine was affected by the Axis occupation with the genocidal crimes of Nazism. [6]

In virtually in every Ukrainian family there are relatives killed in World War II. Both my grandfathers Sergii and Vadym were killed in the armed forces while resisting the Nazi invasion, Sergii in 1941 and Vadym in 1944.

It was a bloody colonial war of extinction aimed in the long term to eliminate as many Slavs as possible, including Ukrainians and push the remaining Russians over the Volga river and into the Urals. As Himmler once put it: “I am totally indifferent to the fate of Russians, the Czechs... whether they live or starve, I am only interested in the extent that we need them as slaves” [7]

“Fascism” for Ukrainians is just another synonym of absolute evil. Nothing comparable was experienced by people of Ukraine from October 1944 until February 24, 2022 and it’s very natural for Ukrainian who see mass graves in Bucha to recall mass graves of Babiy Yar in Kyiv. We are lucky of course that the confirmed scale of mass killings is still significantly smaller than 80 years ago — but unfortunately we still don’t know how many people are buried in mass graves in Mariupol.

Hopefully the reader will now understand why Ukrainians claim they are fighting a patriotic liberation war against fascism. It is a natural part of our collective memory. Ukrainians always considered themselves as a nation that defeated fascism in WW II, together with Russians, Americans and all other Allies of course, but as a nation that played its own specific and not less important role than other allies.

I would even argue that the official Russian interpretation of “fascism” [8] which also refers to the World War II experience is a bit different from the Ukrainian one, given the different nature of this experience and its later reflections.

Moscow always saw the victory over Nazi Germany not only as a liberation of Russian soil, but as an important step in building the great Soviet empire headed by Russia and the Russian people. Victory made the Soviet Union a great world power and secured its military control over huge territories far beyond the borders of Russia and Ukraine.

Ukraine as the “second republic” of the Soviet Union of course partially benefited from this new imperialist project, but much less enthusiastically, and also found itself as a subject of the Russian imperialist oppression and Russification. The politics of Stalinist and post-Stalinist Soviet rulers towards Ukraine appeared very different from the declarations of equality made in the 1920s when the Union was established.

I am not denying the Russian anti-fascist narrative altogether, but I will and do argue that Ukrainian anti-fascism is more about self-liberation and self-emancipation, while the Russian, at least the official one, is much more about the liberation of others (sometimes against their will).

Antifascism celebrated by Stalin always was mixed with Great Russian chauvinism. If you had a chance to see the Soviet military memorial in the Treptow park in Berlin, you would notice that it is all packed with Stalin's quotes about "Great Russian People" and references to the continuity between the Soviet antifascist struggle and the medieval wars conducted by Russian feudal princes like Aleksandr Nevsky against the Germans.

Walking around the Treptow park memorial, one could really suppose that Ukrainians and other peoples of Soviet Union never participated in the Soviet World War II effort.

While "liberating" another nation from its capitalists-bloodsuckers can make some sense as an act of international class solidarity of workers and proletarians — at least it was declared in such a way by the Soviets — it is obviously senseless lies when we hear it from Putin, as contemporary Russia has nothing to offer other than semi-peripheral capitalism and imperialist-minded bureaucracy. [9]

Putin denies class solidarity in principle and generally considers solidarity and grassroots self-organization as the major threat to his own rule and imperialist project. This is why he hates Lenin so much.

### **Fighting for Identity**

Those of the "Left" who consider Putin a "lesser evil" are generally aiming to somehow preserve the status quo of quiet bourgeois life — not to challenge the imperialist system as a whole, bureaucratically dismissing the self-organization of grassroots movements as pro-American mobilizations inspired by CIA, fascists etc.

Grounded in this narrative, Putin identifies "anti-fascism" with the rebuilding of the Soviet Empire. Using such imperialist notions of "anti-fascism," Russian propaganda can easily claim they are now fighting their "anti-fascist" war in Ukraine. But Ukrainians are fighting their own anti-fascist war of liberation against the brutal foreign invaders.

These invaders just deny Ukrainians' right to existence, denying Ukrainian identity, state and nation with their "denazification" slogans. [10] As later clarified in an article in the official Russian state news agency, Ria-Novosti, "denazification" in fact means "de-Ukrainisation" [11], [12]

Ukrainians could be accepted into the unified Russian state as part of the "Rossijane" [13] like all other subjects of the Russian federation with some distinct folklore features, but no right to consider themselves not belonging to Russia. Modern Ukrainian identity is multicultural, significantly Russian speaking and mostly bilingual, but insisting on our own right to decide by ourselves about our identity. And this exactly point is unacceptable for Putin.

Ukrainian identity is now evolving in response to the invasion. It is in the process of shaping and development, but the unprecedented consolidation of Ukrainian citizens of diverse ethnic backgrounds and language preferences strongly moves it from ethnic nationalism towards multiculturalism.

Indeed, knowledge of Ukrainian language is important as a distinct sign of Ukrainian identity, but I would argue that a typical true Ukrainian is at least bilingual. This multilingual identity is not because of limitations of the Ukrainian language, but because of the high level of mass education and higher education, which also attracts students from many countries.

Summing up, Ukrainians have a reason to consider our struggle “anti-fascist,” and it is natural for us, taking into account our experiences of anti-Nazi resistance and partisan guerilla warfare during World War II. Whether to resist is not Zelensky’s choice now. This is the definite choice of the Ukrainian people to wage the war of resistance.

The vast majority of the population in Ukraine absolutely don’t accept Putin’s intention to put them under the governance of his appointees and the terror of secret police, as he already did in the occupied eastern Donbas territories. The choice for Zelensky was only to organize effective resistance or do it inefficiently. To surrender was not an option.

I personally witnessed quite long military signup lines especially in the first days of the war. Millions of people including elderly, poor and Russian speakers voluntarily donated money to the Army. Hundreds of thousands including those with limited eligibility to the military service due to health conditions joined the Territorial Defense units (TD).

A great many men in their 40s, 50s and 60s, ordinary workers with absolutely no political affiliations and no military experience beyond the general conscription service when they were 18 years old, joined the Territorial Defense in their towns, took old Kalashnikov rifles and stopped Russian invaders near their homes. I saw many of them in Kyiv suburbs.

Not all TD members are angels, but you know they are defending their towns as they understand it. Recently even Russian state propaganda recognized that Ukrainians have strong will and readiness to defend their country. [\[14\]](#)

In 2019, most Ukrainians supported Zelensky as the alternative to the previous president Poroshenko’s belligerent ethnocentric nationalism because they believed that a cease-fire in Donbas was possible and desirable (and which Zelensky did almost everything possible to reach in 2020-21). Now in 2022 after Russian systematic attacks against the civil population, an overwhelming majority of Ukrainians do not believe in Russian promises and support the Zelensky government in the nation’s war effort.

Putin has graphically proved that this is the only way to deal with him. So, my answer to the question of whether the world would be a better place if the Russian Army is driven back to the border is strictly positive. For Ukrainians, defeating Russian aggression is now a true struggle of grassroots self-organization, dignity and workers’ rights, cultural diversity, democracy and social justice.

### **Fascisation of Russia?**

Russian official “anti-fascism” is obviously just a mystification, but this of course is not sufficient to prove that Russia is fascist. Nevertheless, “fascisation” of Russia is now widely discussed, and it looks like it has already started and will probably continue.

Grigory Yudin points to the massive propaganda and terror that are pushing previously apolitical citizens to the cooperation with government out of fear of being denounced: passive masses begin to cooperate out of fear of becoming the victims.” [\[15\]](#)

Still, this is not yet the mass mobilizations of Nazi Germany or fascist Italy of 1930s. And again, vagueness and uncertainty of the concept of “fascism” leaves too much space for speculation. To be honest, I am not fully satisfied with most of the fascisation arguments, because they still appeal mostly to some external characteristics and historical comparisons, avoiding the question of the nature of the current phenomenon.

A famous attempt to capture the essence of fascism was made by Walter Benjamin in 1936, stating that it is the aestheticization of war, as the highest stage of aestheticization of politics. [16]

One can notice systematic aestheticization of the military in Russian society: from kindergarten children marching in WW II uniforms to the epic documentaries glorifying new strategic missiles and nuclear submarines. Now Russian state propaganda is staging sentimental photo-sessions with eight-year-olds [17] welcoming Russian soldiers who, as we know from Ukrainian media, are killing and raping Ukrainian children.

When Volodymyr Artiuk [18] points that “Ukrainian propaganda erases Soviet symbols and appeals to bodies and affects, [while] Russian propaganda stuffs the symbolic space with iconic signs while erasing [dead] bodies,” we see that Russian propaganda differs from Ukrainian precisely in the aestheticization of this politics of aggression, offence and rape.

I would argue that the new photos of President Zelensky and his wife published in *Vogue* magazine are the very opposite of the aestheticization of war. Many Ukrainian far right dismissed these photos exactly because they are not heroic, glorious and glamorous. One can see just a tired couple visibly trying to fulfill their day to day duties — no arms, no military orders and insignia. Possibly it is aestheticization of dignity and resistance, but not war.

But can we somehow connect the aestheticization of war with fundamental social and economic logic of the modern capitalist world system? Emmanuel Wallerstein in his book *Race, Nation, Class* (coauthored with Etienne Balibar) offered a simple and instrumental definition of racism as connected with a division of labor in the world system.

Thus, racism is obviously good enough as an ideology for colonial war, where states from the core of the world system are fighting to conquer the periphery. But classic racism is not quite suitable for inter-imperialist war, especially when it is a total war aimed to eliminate your enemy.

Classical racist arguments sound much less rational when you are trying to use them to justify the war between the European nations. During World War I it became obvious that states lack any kind of convincing ideology appealing enough for the mass mobilization for killing soldiers of the enemy nation soldiers. Instead, we saw fraternization of soldiers at the front and rise of the socialist movements.

More effective ideology was needed to continue inter-imperialist war. And such ideologies were invented in the form of fascism in Italy and Nazism in Germany, responding to the threat of international socialist revolution. Fascist ideology is the ideology of inter-imperialist war, with total rejection of egalitarian socialist alternatives.

This is exactly the point where the fascist politics begins, as the Nazi thinker Carl Schmitt put it. The rise of totalitarian dictatorship that does not accept any kind of internal opposition grows exactly from the need to mobilize all the population to the total war effort, justified solely by the need to win the competition with the equally strong and insidious enemy.

All arguments of superiority are artificial and seemingly irrational — but they’re not supposed to be rational. Their function is to build strong unity and identity, sufficient to strictly separate yourself from the enemy and develop strong loyalty to the leadership, and then to smash every kind of self-organization and push atomized people to transfer all the responsibility to the leader.

Here Orwell’s doublethink emerges, as everybody understands that the ideology is just a screen to cover the leaders’ true goals, but also that the fulfillment of goals (however cannibalistic they are) is beneficial to members of the Nation who survive the war.

It becomes very convenient to pretend that you believe the ideology and to bear minimum responsibility for the brutal means needed to fulfill the goals. It is psychologically comfortable to drive out of consciousness any indications of ongoing crimes as “fake news” and “impossible;” otherwise one should resist the government, which is obviously very risky.

Let’s try to use such an understanding of fascism as an ideology and practice of inter-imperialist war for the current war in Ukraine. The situation is of course a bit tricky, because we have fascists inside the anti-fascist struggle and fascism under the slogans of anti-fascism.

It is true that among those who are fighting to defend Ukraine there are people with neo-Nazi backgrounds and ideas. Unfortunately, neo-Nazis play significant roles in some particular units of Ukrainian army like the Azov regiment. But neo-Nazi ideology is not adopted by the state, and not implemented in the practice of Ukrainian state institutions.

The Ukrainian state does not need fascist ideology for mass mobilization and control because people are already naturally mobilized from below to defend their dignity and soil against the insolent foreign invasion.

Electoral results for far-right parties in Ukraine remain far lower than for those in many European countries — National Rally (former National Front) in France, AfD in Germany, Fidesz in Hungary, PiS in Poland, Fratelli d’Italia in Italy etc. For some reason, the rhetoric and actions of Ukrainian authorities remain very liberal and riddled with ideas of human rights, democracy and social populism.

It is hard to make a precise estimation about Russia, but even if we assume that the relative presence of open neo-Nazis in Russian armed forces is less significant and that such cases as the reported neo-Nazi unit “Rusich” [19] are rare, we nevertheless have to admit that Russian state ideology and propaganda sounds much more anti-democratic, xenophobic, racist and becoming more similar to fascist examples.

There is terror in Russia against anti-war opposition, and a significant part of the Russian population is motivated to this war by state propaganda. The majority is unfortunately in a position of silent support. I am sure most of this people will claim they just didn’t know, that they thought it was about fascism in Ukraine and Russia fighting an “anti-fascist” war — does this Russian “anti-fascism” come steadily closer to classical fascism of the 1930s?

### **New Inter-Imperialist War?**

The current war in Ukraine is obviously not yet inter-imperialist. For Ukrainians, it is a war of liberation against the imperialist foreign invasion by the Russian army. From the other side, the Russian state is waging a colonial war in Ukraine in order to rebuild its empire.

But the argument of Russian natural superiority over “brother” Ukrainians sounds too schizophrenic even for Russian state propagandists. This is the major reason that Russia claims it is fighting NATO in Ukraine (despite NATO not yet having arrived, as people joke in Odessa). This imaginary fight against the “collective West” naturally leads the Russian government towards threatening global nuclear war and pushing the ideology of broad inter-imperialist conflict.

In many senses, Russian propaganda is so unconvincing for people in Ukraine, and even inside Russia, because the framework of pure colonial chauvinism does not work toward Ukraine. Ukraine was always one of the most developed parts of the Russian empire, and efforts to assimilate Ukrainians made them in Russian chauvinist propaganda a kind of “also Russians” or at least “brothers.”

Despite the severe destruction of its economy in the 1990s, Ukraine remains an industrialized European power with its nuclear power plants, aerospace industries and dozens of big universities. It is quite a different place than “classical” colonies.

Russia is pushing toward escalation because it is seeking the redistribution of “spheres of interest” towards recognition of Russia’s imperial rights over Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Russia is making all possible efforts to convince China to join forces and drag into the conflict as many countries as possible (e.g. Iranian weapons that kill civilians in Ukraine).

This is what the “multipolar world” means for Putin. He and his gang in power just cannot accept Russia as a country that has equal respectful relationships with the neighbors. In the minds of these people, such an outcome means the end of Russia. As they cannot imagine Russia other than an empire that rules over its sphere of interest, the strategy must be to rebuild the empire or die.

In this crazy logic if the world does not accept Russian’s absolutely illegal and bizarre annexation of parts of Ukraine, [20] it means that the world does not accept the existence of Russia. If you do not recognize recent fake referendums at gunpoint that were obviously staged and do not represent the will of the people, you are criminal under Russian law.

The question for Putin’s gangsters is that they can possibly accept some territorial losses (e.g. withdrawing from Kherson) but they want the world to recognize and accept their right to annex territories and rule by force in their sphere of influence.

The trick is that if and when the world would succumb to Russian blackmail, the door to the next big inter-imperialist war would finally be open. Unfortunately, I don’t see any feasible forces that would prevent global war in this scenario. All the treaties of the collective security and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons would make no sense anymore.

And if the European and generally the Western left accept this new reality, they will no longer be capable to pretend they are internationalist. Those who are pushing toward the understanding of Putin and recognition of Russia’s “legitimate security concerns” are in fact pushing the left further toward the abyss of social chauvinism.

New inter-imperialist war will definitely need a new fascist ideology and new fascist regimes, but unfortunately we are already heading this way. [21] And it looks like Russia is moving towards it fast, and dragging all of us in the same direction.

A quick military defeat of the Russian invasion of Ukraine can possibly abort this process at least temporarily. Otherwise, we will move towards the fascisation of the world and world imperialist war much more rapidly.

This is the big reason why Ukraine should win and the working class of the world should support Ukraine. It will not abolish inter-imperialist rivalry, but can at least restrict and ease it for some time. Hopefully socialists will use it to rebuild the vision and organize for an internationalist socialist alternative.

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## P.S.

Against the Current

<https://againstthecurrent.org/atc222/russias-road-toward-fascism/>

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## Footnotes

[1] By some estimations of the U.S. military the total death toll could be more than 100,000 killed from each side:

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/blood-treasure-chaos-cost-russias-war-ukraine-2022-11-10/>

[2] Detailed consideration of the internal situation inside Russia is outside the scope of this article, which is focused on the actions and politics of Russian government towards Ukraine. Internal fascisation of Russia including destruction of democratic institutions and brutal repression inside Russia, introduction of terrorist dictatorships on occupied territories of Donbass, as well as recent establishment by the private military company Wagner of training camps for rightwing militia in Belgorod and Kursk regions, all of which definitely deserve to be studied.

[3] <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/putin-attacks-ukraine-infrastructure-not-all-we-could-have-done-2022-10-31/>

[4] The Russian MP's comment of two million Ukrainians to be killed:

<https://youtu.be/iaRUepc-7VQ?t=446>; <https://youtu.be/iaRUepc-7VQ?t=522>

[5] <https://youtu.be/h3sGE5FHN6w>

[6] The average rate of death in the Soviet Union as a percentage of the 1940 population is estimated as 13.7%, for Russia it is significantly lower than average — around 12.7% and significantly higher for Ukraine (16.3%) and Belarus (25.3%). For more information see Yorgos Mitralias, "Why Does Putin Make All the Soviet Dead of the Second World War... 'Russians'?" <https://www.counterpunch.org/2022/05/23/why-does-putin-make-all-the-soviet-dead-of-the-second-world-war-russians/>

[7] Himmler quotation cited by Enzo Traverso.

[8] Historian Timothy Snyder remarks that "Calling others fascists while being a fascist is the essential Putinist practice," which Snyder calls "schizofascism."

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/19/opinion/russia-fascism-ukraine-putin.html>

[9] Ilya Budraitskis,

<https://jacobinmag.com/2022/02/ordinary-russians-war-outbreak-ukraine-vladimir-putin>

[10] On this point, see Putin's multiple articles and speeches." href="#N10. On this point, see Putin's multiple articles and speeches." (10. On this point, see Putin's multiple articles and speeches.)

[11] Article in official Russia state news agency Ria-Novosti.

[12] [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/What\\_Russia\\_Should\\_Do\\_with\\_Ukraine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/What_Russia_Should_Do_with_Ukraine)

[13] “Rossijanie” — is the name of all citizens of Russia, regardless of ethnicity.

[14] Russian state TV commentator admits that Russia is isolated and Ukraine’s military is formidable: <https://youtu.be/xF6TXAie1tc>

[15] Russia in the Shape of the Letter “Z.” Putin’s Authoritarian Regime Mutates into Fascism [INTERVIEW] <https://oko.press/putins-authoritarian-regime-mutates-into-fascism-interview/>

[16] Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit (1936).

[17] <https://ria.ru/20220516/alesha-1788750012.html#pv=g%3D1788750013%2Fp%3D1788435321>

[18] Destruction of signs, signs of destruction  
<https://commons.com.ua/en/destruction-signs-signs-destruction/>

[19] <https://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/ukraine-krieg-organisierte-neonazi-gruppen-kaempfen-fuer-russland-geheimdienstbericht-a-f1632333-6801-47b3-99b9-650d85a51a52>

[20] On 30 September 2022, Russia, amid an ongoing invasion of Ukraine, unilaterally declared its annexation of areas in four Ukrainian oblasts — Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian\\_annexation\\_of\\_Donetsk,\\_Kherson,\\_Luhansk\\_and\\_Zaporizhzhia\\_oblasts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_annexation_of_Donetsk,_Kherson,_Luhansk_and_Zaporizhzhia_oblasts)

[21] You can name it “post-fascism,” as Enzo Traverso has done: See *The New Faces of Fascism: Populism and the Far Right*.