

Jörg Baberowski's falsification of history

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Prior to both the First and Second World War, German universities played an important role ideologically in the preparations for armed conflict. In particular, scholars of history were only too willing to offer their services to militarism, falsifying historical events and fabricating myths about German identity.

Today historians are again labouring to rewrite and falsify history in order to justify new wars and discredit opposition to them. Their falsifications aim to “whitewash and legitimize the worst crimes of twentieth century capitalist imperialism and, conversely, to criminalize and render morally illegitimate the entire struggle of the international socialist movement,”[1] as David North wrote in *The Russian Revolution and the Unfinished Twentieth Century*.

In Germany, Professor Jörg Baberowski plays an important role in this endeavour. As holder of the chair of East European history at Berlin's Humboldt University, Baberowski pursues these aims in a particularly aggressive manner in his lectures, on podiums, on talk shows and in the features sections of major newspapers. He directly links his falsification of history with vehement demands for military intervention.

In a February edition of *Der Spiegel* last year, he called for a reappraisal of National Socialism. The news magazine quoted him as saying: “Hitler was no psychopath, and he wasn't vicious. He didn't want people to talk about the extermination of the Jews at his table.”[2] This hair-raising statement is by no means the result of a momentary lapse or a temporary political derailment. Baberowski has put his academic work to the service of historical revisionism. His inflated position at Humboldt University is devoted to assuaging the crimes of fascism and justifying new wars.

Career

Baberowski was born near Konstanz in southern Germany in March 1961. That same year, Fritz Fischer launched the first of the two postwar “historians' disputes” with the publication of his book *Griff nach der Weltmacht* (published in English in 1968 as *Germany's Aims in the First World War*). In this work, Fischer presented comprehensive and detailed proof of the imperialist war aims of the German elite prior to World War I, thoroughly demolishing the myth that it had been a defensive war on Germany's part.

After World War II, Fischer also made an important contribution to the exposure of the role of National Socialism in Germany. He showed that the Nazis had drawn on the objectives of German imperialism in World War I, and that Hitler had been intentionally brought to power by the ruling elites to implement that program.[3] This analysis contributed greatly to the understanding of the Nazi dictatorship. The accounting for/reappraisal of the Nazi war crimes began at the same time. The Eichmann trial took place in Israel in 1961, to be followed two years later by the first Auschwitz trial held in Frankfurt.

In the 1950s, a climate of silence and repression concerning the crimes of the Third Reich had prevailed at universities and throughout the

educational system. Hitler was regarded as a kind of political outsider whose crimes had nothing to do with the imperialist aims of the German elite. Responsibility for the monstrous deeds of the Nazis was considered to lie exclusively within the top-most leadership circle around Hitler. The same Nazi propaganda submitted as a defence against charges at the Nuremberg war crimes trials was often regurgitated in academic circles. For example, the attack on the Soviet Union was portrayed as a defensive operation to counter Stalin's preparation for war against Germany. All sides in the war were said to have committed crimes, with the emphasis laid on the Soviet side and the Red Army.

The persistence of this kind of argument was due to the continuity of civil service and professional personnel after the war. Public officials, judges, doctors, professors, business leaders and politicians were recruited from the ranks of former Nazis. Rulings delivered in the denazification process were widely annulled by the Bundestag (federal parliament) in 1951, because the services of former Nazis were needed against the Soviet Union during the Cold War.[4]

Following the investigations into the crimes of the Holocaust, the war of annihilation in the East and numerous other crimes of the Nazis, it was no longer possible for the extreme right to propagate their noxious theses. The student revolt of 1968 and struggles by the labour movement in particular put defenders of National Socialism on the defensive.

Baberowski had nothing to do with these movements. When he reached a politically conscious age, he joined the Communist League of West Germany (KBW) and during his school days in Holzminden, as he later claimed, he collected money for the Cambodian dictator Pol Pot.[5]

The KBW was the largest of the so-called K Groups (communist groups) that had emerged from the collapse of the student movement in the late 1960s. These Maoist organisations had no interest in the thoroughgoing exposure of Nazi crimes, which had begun with the student movement, but represented rather a sort of backlash against it. The verbiage they spouted about socialism and the proletariat concealed an extreme nationalist perspective. Their glorification of authoritarian regimes was a product of their profound contempt for an independent intervention into politics by workers.

The groups took their political line largely from the Stalinist People's Republic of China, to which they had close contacts. A number of KBW delegations paid official visits to the Chinese government in the 1970s. Close links were also forged with the authoritarian regimes in Albania and Cambodia.

Peter Schwarz writes that the main reason students embraced Maoism was the “class content of the Stalinist program, which reproduces all the petty-bourgeois attacks on Marxism in concentrated form and shares with the petty bourgeoisie its hostility to the political independence of the working class.”[6]

If Mao Zedong can claim any originality at all ... for his “ideas”, then it would be no more than this: that he understood more than anyone else how to exploit pseudo-Marxist phrases in a movement whose social base was constituted almost entirely by the petty

bourgeoisie, namely the peasantry, and which systematically suppressed every independent political movement of the urban proletariat.[7]

The K Groups' hostility to the Soviet Union was also coloured by this political orientation. They rejected the world's first workers' state not because of its bureaucratic degeneration, but because it continued to represent—although in a distorted form—the gains of the October Revolution. On the other hand, the brutal dictatorship of the bureaucracy was supported by the K Groups. Not only did they defend the terror regimes of Pol Pot in Cambodia, Enver Hoxha in Albania and Mao Zedong in China; they also glorified Josef Stalin, who embodied the dictatorship of the bureaucracy and orchestrated the murder of hundreds of thousands of communists.

The KBW and their associates took the position that Khrushchev's de-Stalinization policies had initiated the rise to power of a new bourgeoisie. They therefore described the Soviet Union as "social imperialist." Following the line of the Chinese communist party, they proclaimed the US and the USSR to be the main enemies of the people. Combating these two major powers was held to be the task of an alliance between smaller industrial nations and developing countries. This led the K Groups to adopt a rabid form of nationalism that even exceeded the nationalistic positions of Stalin and Mao. The Communist Party of Germany/Marxists-Leninists (KPD/ML) went so far as calling for the upgrading of the Bundeswehr (German army) and the creation of a "National United Front" to counter "Soviet hegemony". Meetings with openly right-wing extremist groups have also been documented in relation to the history of the KPD.[8]

In the second half of the 1970s, the KBW frequently collaborated with the KPD and the KPD/ML. Although the KBW was initially critical of the extreme right-wing "Defence of the Fatherland", it increasingly closed ground with the other K Groups. In 1978, the KBW's theoretical press organ declared that the USSR "together with US imperialism is dividing and suppressing the German nation". The national question was propagated "as a lever for the proletarian revolution".[9]

During the K Groups' period of disintegration in the early 1980s, their members undertook a further shift to the right. Some took up openly extreme right-wing views.[10] The *Communist People's Daily* (KVZ), the central organ of the KBW, published an advertisement for the new-right newspaper *We Ourselves* in February 1982. Most of the K Groups subsequently moved to the Greens and constituted the Realo (realist) wing there. Former cadres of the KBW today occupy key positions in business, politics and the media.[11]

Like many of his former like-minded companions, Jörg Baberowski's early indoctrination by the KBW became the starting point for the development of his far-right agenda. It was one which displayed a remarkable degree of continuity. Baberowski retained his predilection for authoritarian regimes, merely switching his allegiance from Stalin, Mao and Pol Pot to the Russian President Vladimir Putin and the Egyptian dictator Abd al-Fattah al-Sisi.[12] He has also retained his contempt for workers as is especially evident in his descriptions of the Russian Revolution (see below).

Above all he drew on the German nationalist perspective of the KBW. During his history studies in Göttingen, which began in 1982 and finished in 1988, Baberowski sided with those who wanted to whitewash the crimes of the Nazis in order to rehabilitate German nationalism. Around that time, right-wing academics felt encouraged by the election of Helmut Kohl as chancellor to reverse the developments of previous decades. During the federal elections of 1983, Kohl called for a "spiritual and moral about turn." He said Germans had to once again learn how to "walk with their heads high". On May 5, 1985, the chancellor made clear what he

meant when he visited the military cemetery of Bitburg, together with US President Ronald Reagan. There, he paid tribute not only to fallen Wehrmacht (World War II German army) soldiers, but also members of the Waffen SS.

A year later, a group of right-wing historians and publicists began an offensive that triggered the second "historians' dispute". The immediate cause of the dispute was an article by the historian Ernst Nolte in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. In it, he claimed that it was necessary to normalise the perception of German history. He declared that other nations had also committed war crimes. In order to effect the normalisation, he played down the horrors of the Holocaust and other Nazi crimes. He did so by depicting the industrial extermination of the Jews as an understandable reaction to the savagery and violence of Bolshevism. This resulted in repetition of the Nazi propaganda that the war and the terror against the Soviet Union had had a "preventive character".

At the same time, the following question seemed permissible and even unavoidable: Did not the National Socialists, did not Hitler commit an "Asiatic" crime perhaps because they saw themselves and their kind as potential or real victims of an "Asiatic" crime? Did not the Gulag archipelago precede Auschwitz? Was not the "class murder" of the Bolsheviks the logical and factual precursor of the "genocide" of the Nazis?[13]

These remarks caused a storm of indignation. Many intellectuals such as Jürgen Habermas, Rudolf Augstein, Heinrich August Winkler, Hans-Ulrich Wehler and Hans Mommsen sharply rejected them and publicly heaped criticism on Nolte himself. The criticism of Nolte was varied and complex, but in general it made clear ...

1. That Nolte's attempt to explain the Holocaust as a consequence of Hitler's personal fears served to obscure the role of the ruling elites in Germany;

2. That the assertion that Nazi Germany had only defended itself in the war was historically untenable;

3. That the social and political foundations of the Stalinist terror, on one hand, and the Nazi crimes, on the other, were very different and therefore precluded the possibility to set off one against the other.

Following these clashes, Nolte's views were discredited. Hans Mommsen accused Nolte of approximating "extreme right-wing views"[14], and Nolte himself was soon speaking only at far-right gatherings.

For his part Jörg Baberowski defended Nolte in 1986. He told *Der Spiegel* he had been the only student in his advanced seminar to have spoken out for the Nazi apologist. In the same article, Baberowski holds fast to this position and declares: "Nolte was wronged. Historically he was right." [15]

Baberowski made it his mission to rehabilitate Nolte. He henceforth devoted himself to writing about the history of Russia and the Soviet Union. In 1994, he completed his doctorate at the Frankfurt University with the thesis "Autocracy and Justice. On the relationship between the rule of law and social backwardness in the late Tsarist Empire, 1864-1914." Seven years later, he qualified as a lecturer at Tübingen University with his work "Civilizing Mission, Nationalism and the Origins of Stalinism in Azerbaidzhan, 1828-1941."

Since then, Baberowski has primarily concerned himself with the October Revolution and Stalinism in the Soviet Union. His main objective resides in mitigating Nazi crimes and thereby rehabilitating Nolte. By distorting and slandering the Bolshevik revolution as a barbaric attack on European civilization, depicting Stalinism as an inevitable consequence of

the October Revolution and focusing on Stalin's violence, while excluding its political and social context, he implicitly tries to justify the German invasion of the Soviet Union as an act of self-defence.

After the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union and the reunification of Germany, such conceptions gained ground. Concurrent with the resurgence of German militarism, a systematic attempt has been made in recent years to rewrite history and downplay the crimes of German imperialism in order to prepare for new wars.

Baberowski at the Humboldt University

This explains Baberowski's rapid career curve. Just one year after obtaining his doctorate, he was engaged as a tenured professor at Humboldt University, without having hitherto shown any particular merit. He had no hesitation in laying down his programme in his inaugural lecture. It was a fierce diatribe against the Bolsheviks and presented the Stalinist Terror as a logical consequence of the October Revolution.[16]

Baberowski funds his bloated professorial staff, consisting of almost forty colleagues, largely from third-party sources. The money comes from, among others, the Volkswagen Foundation and the Hamburg Institute for Social Research. At least eight of his employed staff are also financed through the special research field, the "Representation of Social Orders in Transition," by the state-sponsored German Research Foundation.

Baberowski also maintains close relations with the German Military Forces Centre for Military History and Social Sciences (ZMSBw) in Potsdam, for which he writes and lectures. Commissioned by the Military History Research Office (MGFA), which merged with the ZMSBw in 2013, he collaborated in the writing of two publications intended for German soldiers "as guides in action." [17] A picture on the MGFA web site [18] shows Baberowski together with Lt. Col. Dr. Burkhard Köster. The two men officially launched an MGFA book about the Balkans at the foreign office in June 2009. The picture depicts Baberowski alongside representatives of the armed forces. It underlines his close cooperation with the German military and the gearing of his work at Humboldt University to its interests. This has significant implications for the scholarly content of his professorship.

Baberowski also supervised at least one PhD project in collaboration with the head of MGFA, Rolf-Dieter Müller. This concerned the doctoral thesis of Sebastian Stopper, who took a doctorate under Baberowski's tutelage in 2012. Stopper's work on the partisan movement in the Bryansk region was classified by a Russian court as the work of an extremist, because the author presents the German war of annihilation as a justifiable response to the operations of the partisans. [19] According to the author, "The crimes of German troops in the occupied part of the Soviet Union" were not particularly "German" or "Nazi," because they were similar to those committed by Soviet troops. [20]

Baberowski also maintains close links with the Hoover Institution at Stanford University. By his own account, he received inspiration for his latest monograph, *Scorched Earth*, from Hoover fellow and notorious anti-communist Paul Gregory. In 2013, he participated in a summer workshop of the Hoover Institution, where he met Robert Service. Baberowski thereupon invited Service, whose falsifications of history have been extensively exposed, to present his discredited biography of Leon Trotsky at Humboldt University in February 2014.

While Baberowski exploits all media channels to spread his reactionary views, he aggressively attacks his critics and tries to suppress any discussion of his theses. At a publicly announced event featuring himself and Robert Service, he used security personnel to block the entrance of

critical professors, students and journalists.

Last autumn, he asked the university administration to ban from the campus a meeting called by the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) under the title, "Why do the German elites once again want war?" He regularly refuses to answer questions about his right-wing theses during podium discussions, reacting with hysterical tantrums.

When initiatives of the IYSSE drew growing support, other students began criticising the militarism of their professors by initiating the Münkler Watch blog. At this point, Baberowski completely lost his composure. In the Berlin *Tagesspiegel*, he described the students as "crackpots" and demanded their banning from campus and that legal steps be taken against them. [21] He had previously insulted the university administration in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, because it failed to comply with his demands and decided to soft-pedal on the issue. According to Baberowski, the university management was "cowardly," thought only of themselves and were afraid of negative publicity. [22]

Following the exclusion of critics from the event with Robert Service, the IYSSE declared that Baberowski's authoritarian practices were in line with his attempt to rewrite history: "A specific policy requires specific means. Baberowski's behavior on February 12 has shown that such a revision of history can be achieved only through intimidation and the suppression of dissent." [23] This assessment has meanwhile been confirmed.

Another of Baberowski's strategies is to accuse his critics of slander. With respect to the IYSSE, he has never been able to justify such an allegation. He tries instead to cover his tracks. At a panel discussion organised by the Körber Foundation on June 1 this year, he stated—contrary to his previous declarations—that historian Ernst Nolte had been in the wrong. He failed, however, to distance himself from Nolte's theses, which he had always promoted. Baberowski apparently thinks that his own apologists won't insist too much on academic integrity. A closer look at Baberowski's academic work should therefore be undertaken in order to expose the basic line underlying the tactical zigzags of his expressed views.

Theory of history and violence

Jörg Baberowski is not a genuine academic scholar; he is a right-wing ideologue. He argues for a purely subjective or ideological approach to history. He is principally concerned with presenting what he refers to as "new perspectives" on events. His argumentation is based on the anti-rational positions of Michel Foucault, Martin Heidegger and Hans-Georg Gadamer, and takes their views to the extreme.

... there is no reality beyond the consciousness which produces it. We must rid ourselves of the idea that we can learn how the Russian revolution really was by reconstructing events as mediated through documents... [24]

But the existence of facts is bound up with their observation, and they are proven true to a person if other people confirm what he himself has observed. Truths are based on agreements made among people ... What is called "objective knowledge" is, on closer consideration, nothing more than inter-personal subjective knowledge based on hypotheses. Truth is what I and others hold to be true and confirm to each other as the truth. [25]

This implies that if Holocaust deniers Günter Deckert and Horst Mahler

conclude that there never was an Auschwitz, then this is a truth that is on a par with all others. In a text from 2014, Baberowski even denies the possibility of any causal relation between events:

It is said that events of the present can only be explained by reference to history. Not only historians consider this sentence to be true. It has become self-evident to us. But what happened in the past is not the source of the behaviour of those who come after. We do not even know if or how an event occurred. This is so because life is not a series of events that are causally linked. It is made up of distinct moments.[26]

Starting from this irrational epistemology, Baberowski then develops a very explicit notion of the task of historiography:

Scholarship can achieve nothing more than imparting plausibility and internal consistency to what it describes. The scientific nature of history amounts to meeting the conditions of premises historiography has posed for itself...[27]

It would be impossible to formulate an ideological approach to the subject matter more explicitly. The instruments of science are to be employed, not to elucidate issues through critical analysis, but to confer plausibility on what is being described. Whether it is a lie that is to appear plausible, is irrelevant as far as Baberowski is concerned. The only important issue is that the author is seen to argue in line with his own premises.

Baberowski's approach here draws not only on the poststructuralist Foucault, but also on Heidegger and Gadamer. He seizes upon the reactionary core of their ideology. He understands history as the tradition of individuals or groups of people, such as nations or races. It is not a development that can be understood, but instead determines how people see the world and what particular identity they develop.

We now see that it is not our task to distance ourselves from what has been handed down to us. We don't even have the choice, because we are ourselves within that heritage. This heritage cannot be objectified, it is not something that can be posed as a distinct object outside of us...[28]

Therefore, according to Baberowski, basic concepts and theories that underlie scientific knowledge can themselves not be objects of analysis. On the contrary, Baberowski asserts the unsurmountable nature of one's own frame of reference. For him, history is the tradition in which one stands, but it is not an objectifiable process that can be critically examined. According to this logic, historiography can only concern itself with the creation of identity, and not with objective knowledge.

However, the basic concepts, on which Baberowski grounds his work, are not at all beyond the bounds of investigation and in fact very clearly express the social interests of the ruling class. The central category for him is violence. In this respect, his ideas are based on the works of Wolfgang Sofsky[29] and Jan-Philipp Reemtsma[30], who understand violence as the *conditio humana*, the fundamental condition of human existence. In this concept, violence is understood as the prime and elemental basic need, which is not conditioned by any specific reason or cause. Accordingly, the continual recourse to violence by human beings

can only be prevented by a strong state, which monopolises the use of violence. Baberowski summarises the concept with the following words:

Whatever violence may be, it is always presented as a deviation, a wrong course, an aberration or sickness that will one day be cured. Once illnesses are diagnosed, according to the logic of therapists, they can also be cured: by civilization, by tolerance and social justice. All the explanations put forward by cultural and social scientists to account for the outbreak of violence have only been variations on this one theme, resting on the belief that social conditions can be manufactured. Faith in the cessation of violence is perhaps the last utopia one can still cling to.[31]

In this shallow reasoning, violence occurs without reason or cause. It is simply there and spontaneously descends upon people, irrespective of the conditions under which they live, how they grew up, what interests they have, etc. Whoever "thinks a war of extermination is a perversion of human nature has understood nothing about the nature of violence", writes Baberowski.[32]

The only remedy considered by Baberowski to be effective against violence is the violence of the state apparatus.[33] Of course, Baberowski is incapable of substantiating such outlandish theories either biologically or via evolutionary theory, nor psychologically or sociologically. He simply asserts them. The roots of his thesis are not in science but the tradition of ultra-reactionary thinking, as represented by the likes of Martin Heidegger or Arthur Moeller van den Bruck. In both of these cases, the incomprehensibility and immutability of social relationships is at the core of their systems of thought. Underlying their position is a requirement to defend existing relations of oppression and exploitation. Despite all the wavering relativity of his epistemology, Baberowski is very clear on this point. In his chapter on Karl Marx, he writes:

Life is coercion. And nothing suggests that the unseen powers and complex systems dominating modern society will dissolve by themselves. We will, at best, replace an old with a new form of bondage and draw new concepts of freedom.[34]

Baberowski has thereby outlined the basic thrust of his work. He is concerned with justifying the increasing brutality of the ruling class, the militarisation of society and the restriction of democratic rights, as well as preparing for wars, as he so demanded at a panel discussion in the German Historical Museum in October 2014 (see below). Coercion is an inseparable part of human existence, and the power of the state is necessary in order to avoid anarchy and terror. That is the core of Baberowski's theoretical construction.

On this basis, he sketches a history of the twentieth century which has little in common with actual events. As he denies any causal relationships in history, historical events serve him only as a starting point for his reactionary theses and as expressions of unconditional violence. *Scorched Earth* is typical in this respect. The book is a furious diatribe against the Bolsheviks, written in vulgar language and which repeatedly exudes undisguised contempt for the Russian workers and peasants. The central thesis of the work is that the October Revolution was the origin of the barbarism of the twentieth century. It is said to have destroyed the bourgeois order and thus opened opportunities for violence which psychopaths like Stalin were able to exploit to the full.

Falsification of the October Revolution

The October Revolution is presented as the eruption of violence on the part of a backward, brutal and alcohol-dependent workforce. “The 1917 Revolution was a revolt of embittered people, brutalized by the war. Along with the old order, it drove the spirit of European civilization out of the land,” writes Baberowski.[35] He claims that the Bolsheviks had been unable to find political access to the brutalised masses, and only managed to establish a brief relationship with them, on the basis of the Bolsheviks’ penchant for violence and macho behaviour.

The Bolsheviks prevailed, not because they offered the most attractive political program but because they were the most violent. And in the end, the starving weakened population apathetically abandoned itself to their madness.[36]

Baberowski refers to Lenin as a “malevolent armchair criminal, to whom human tragedy, suffering, and misery were of no consequence.[37] For him, “wars were abstractions and people mere numbers. They were all simply parts of that great game of violence where the reward was power.”[38] Baberowski goes so far as to claim that the Bolsheviks had yearned for the First World War.

Just as the Bolsheviks needed the war because it suited their purposes as well as their nature, they also needed the defeat so that their planned upheaval could succeed.[39]

Concerning the Civil War, he writes: Had it “not occurred, the Bolsheviks would have needed to declare a war in order to justify their practices.”[40]

This account of the Bolsheviks and the October Revolution has nothing whatsoever to do with actual historical events. It is a crude slander. Along with the Serbian social democrats, the Bolsheviks were the only party in Europe to vehemently reject the war from the very start. Due to their principled opposition they were held in great respect by the working class. On the basis of their systematic political and theoretical work, the Bolsheviks were able to widely extend their influence at the expense of the Mensheviks prior to the outbreak of war in 1913 and 1914.

In his text “The Bolsheviks’ seizure of power in October 1917: coup d’état or revolution?” David North impressively establishes that the October Revolution was based on the political foundation of years of agitation and education of the working class by Russian social democracy. He observes,

The conquest of power by the Bolshevik Party was anything but the outcome of a putsch ... The Bolshevik Party spent much of the year trying to keep pace with a mass movement that possessed a dynamic momentum whose equal had not been seen since the French Revolution.[41]

The American historian, Alexander Rabinowitch summarises the essence of his book *The Bolsheviks Come to Power: The Revolution of 1917 in Petrograd*—which Baberowski also had to include as a standard reference in his seminars—with the following words:

The October Revolution in Petrograd, I concluded, was less a military operation than a gradual process rooted in popular political culture, widespread disenchantment with the results of the February Revolution, and, in that context, the magnetic attraction of the Bolsheviks’ promises of immediate peace, bread, land for the peasantry and grassroots democracy exercised through multiparty soviets.[42]

The October Revolution was the first step towards the liberation of humanity from capitalist barbarism. It ended the First World War, which had cost the lives of more than two million workers and peasants in Russia alone. The aim was the world socialist revolution, which was to end war and exploitation forever.

After the Soviets had taken power in Russia on November 7, 1917 under the leadership of the Bolsheviks, the ruling class in Russia and all over the world turned against the young workers’ state. During the Civil War, fourteen foreign powers intervened militarily on the side of the White Army. The enormous brutality of the White troops exposed the full scale of the old regime’s capacity for violence, which had forced the workers and peasants into the slaughterhouse of WWI. Anti-Semitic pogroms, massacres of peasants and mass executions of workers were an integral part of the counter-revolutionary warfare. They claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands of victims.

In his second major work, *The Bolsheviks in Power: The First Year of Soviet Rule in Petrograd*, Rabinowitch describes in a wealth of detail how the Red Terror developed in Petrograd as an act of self-defence against the foreign intervention and the White counter-revolution. Far from constituting an arbitrary outburst of violence, the measures taken were necessary and accompanied by intense debate within the Soviets and the Bolshevik Party.[43]

Leon Trotsky, who led the Red Army in the Civil War, explained in “Terrorism and Communism” in 1920 that brutality of the war was an expression of the fact that the bourgeoisie all over the world saw itself threatened by the workers’ state, and that the Russian workers had to defend themselves against powerful reactionary forces. Responding to German Social Democrat Karl Kautsky, Trotsky therefore defended the Red Terror and emphasised the main difference between the violence of the oppressed and the violence of the oppressors.

The terror of Tsarism was directed against the proletariat. The gendarmerie of Tsarism throttled the workers who were fighting for the Socialist order. Our Extraordinary Commissions shoot landlords, capitalists, and generals who are striving to restore the capitalist order.[44]

One searches in vain in Baberowski’s work for any indications of the root causes of the violent measures adopted by the Bolsheviks. He fails to mention even once the intervention of foreign powers and shrugs off the White terror as unorganised acts of individuals. “Ultimately the enemy existed in the minds of the Bolsheviks alone, and this is why the terror was able to grow to such excessive and monstrous proportions”, he writes in *Scorched Earth*. [45] By suppressing any consideration of the historical conditions in which the Soviet power found itself, Baberowski tries to draw a picture of a gratuitous outbreak of violence that is attributed solely to the alleged insanity of the Bolsheviks and backwardness of the masses. He thus concludes that “the Red terror combined obsessions and delusions with the lust for violence”. [46]

These vulgar and ahistorical tirades serve Baberowski to justify violent state regimes and criminalise any opposition to the prevailing order. They

form the basis for his explanation of Stalinism, which is also detached from its historical context and represented as a seamless continuation of the October Revolution.

Decontextualisation of Stalinism

Baberowski draws a direct line from the Revolution to Stalinist terror. He claims the Civil War was the “the dress rehearsal for Stalinism” and “Stalinism before the fact.”[47] The scale of the Stalinist terror is also said to have been justified by the attempt of the October Revolution to overcome the bourgeois order:

It was the atmosphere of total arbitrariness and uncertainty ruling the Soviet Union at this time that allowed Stalin to live out his fantasies of total power and sate his lust for violence. The Bolsheviks had begun a crusade against old Russia, and in doing so floodgates had been opened, from which violence could pour unabated.[48]

Baberowski explicitly denies any sense behind Stalin’s terror and represents it as the individual act of a madman, and one which became possible because the Revolution had opened a “space for violence”.

The terror came in waves. It gained in intensity whenever the dictator decided to give the violence free rein, and it died down again whenever he got tired of it. The violence was a product neither of the system nor of social conflicts.[49]

Throughout the book, Baberowski lines up one detailed depiction of violence after the other, without presenting any historical context even in outline. On the contrary, in order to be able to maintain his absurd thesis of unconditional violence, he has to completely omit or falsify the real historical events.

The truth is that the mass terror perpetrated by Stalin in the 1930s was not a result of the October Revolution. It was instead specifically directed against the socialist legacy of the Revolution. Hundreds of thousands of communists were killed in the great purges or died in the camps of the Gulag.

The 1920s were marked in the Soviet Union by fierce battles between the ruling Stalinist clique and the Left Opposition around Leon Trotsky. While the former represented the dictatorship of the bureaucratic layer against the workers, the latter defended the internationalist programme of the October Revolution and workers’ democracy. The social and political contradictions between the bureaucracy and the working class, which expressed themselves in these battles, assumed increasingly sharper forms and led to the purges of the 1930s, the height of the Stalinist counter-revolution.

The Russian historian Vadim Rogovin concludes his extensive work on the Stalinist purges with the observation: “they represented Stalin’s only possible answer to growing opposition within the communist movement both inside and outside the Soviet Union”.[50] Trotsky himself proposed a similar characterisation of the great Stalinist terror.

The ‘purges’, monstrous both in scale and methods, reflect the

unbearable tension in relations between the Soviet bureaucracy and the people. ... Stalin carried out this purge not as the vain caprice of an oriental despot; he was compelled to do it by his struggle to preserve power.[51]

In the introduction to Trotsky’s major work *The Revolution Betrayed*, David North compellingly summarises the reasons for the growth of the bureaucracy under Stalin’s leadership. It involved fundamental social processes.

While the belated development of capitalism in Russia had made possible the creation of the Soviet state, the unexpected delay in the victorious development of the world socialist revolution was the principal cause of its degeneration. The form assumed by that degeneration was the massive growth of the bureaucracy in the apparatus of the Soviet state and the Bolshevik Party and the extraordinary concentration of power in its hands.[52]

But Baberowski is interested in neither the political debates nor their social contexts, primarily because they contradict his fatuous theory of violence. In the entire book of 600 pages, he devotes a mere four pages to the debates of the 1920s. There, he sees the striving for “influence and power” and “differing notions” as the essential reasons for the conflicts.[53] Baberowski later declares that the Trotskyists were merely a “handful of helpless Communists” and Stalin’s fear of an “existential threat” to his reign was a figment of his fantasies.[54] He submits absolutely no evidence to support such a thesis.

In his attempt to portray Stalinism as the inevitable consequence of the Revolution, Baberowski goes far beyond these omissions and trivialisations. He resorts to blatant falsifications. A particularly odious example is his depiction of Trotsky’s vision of the new human being.

Trotsky had explained his views on the development of the “new man” in socialist society in a section of his booklet *Literature and Revolution*. He describes there how the personalities of people in a truly democratic society will unfold and develop when important social decisions will carry along “large popular masses.”[55] Trotsky explains how unconscious political, economic and cultural processes will surface into human awareness and thus make people the masters of society and their own natures. The text stresses the October Revolution’s aim to create a society “in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all”.[56]

Having very selectively quoted from Trotsky’s text, Baberowski then turns Trotsky’s meaning upside-down. Instead of the self-empowerment of the people, he alleges they were subjected to dictatorship and oppression, in the form experienced particularly under German National Socialism and, in weaker fashion, also the Stalinised Soviet Union. With regard to Trotsky’s conceptions, Baberowski writes:

For the Bolshevik leaders violence was more than just a means to an end. The cult of violence and killing was instead an integral part of the Bolshevik worldview. In this conception of the world violent perpetrators were indeed the New Men ... and this was why the New Man needed to discipline his body. That was why he needed to transform it into a standardized machine that had no will of its own and belonged instead to the collective.[57]

Giving full vent to his unstinting falsification of Trotsky’s views,

Baberowski seeks to identify Bolshevism with Stalinism. For the same reason, he completely dismisses the tremendous social progress that was inaugurated by the October Revolution and subsequently largely undone by the Stalinist dictatorship. This includes the ending of the world war, the socialisation of the means of production, redistribution of the land, the establishment of equality for women and the right to national self-determination for oppressed ethnic groups, and an unprecedented flowering of art and culture.

Baberowski distorts not only the actions and aims of the Bolsheviks; his single-minded portrayal of violence also manages to distort the true character of the Stalinist regime. The Stalinist rule was based on a fundamental contradiction, from which the brutal nature of the regime arose. While the bureaucracy suppressed the workers and rode roughshod over all socialist ideals, it owed its status to the workers' state and the property relations created by the October Revolution. The socialist ownership of the means of production enabled unprecedented social and economic development. Despite its Stalinist degeneration, the first workers' state therefore proved tremendously attractive to the workers of the Soviet Union and the world.

Only by acknowledging this is it possible to explain the heroic struggle of the Soviet workers and peasants against the forces of Nazism. Although Stalin had decapitated the Red Army and made numerous devastating strategic mistakes, Soviet soldiers fought bitterly against fascism with all their might. They did so because they were defending the conquests of the Revolution against the fascist threat.

These issues are irrelevant as far as Baberowski is concerned. In his version of World War II, the Soviet workers and peasants were driven to fight at the front solely by the immediate threat of Stalin's wrath. Baberowski writes that in "the heat of battle (against the fascist invaders), ideas are irrelevant" and "Ideologies only come into play after the war when it becomes necessary to find meaning in the sacrifices." [58]

As in the case of the Revolution, Baberowski presents the anti-fascist struggle of the Red Army as a mere outburst of violence. In doing so, he ignores as far as possible the historical context of the German invasion and proceeds with falsifications and exaggerations. Christoph Dieckmann points out that Baberowski triples the number of Wehrmacht prisoners summarily killed by the Red Army during the retreat from Lviv, and recycles German war myths without further comment.[59]

Revision of earlier theses

The positions formulated by Baberowski in *Scorched Earth* are revisions of his earlier theses. The book is a reworking of his 2003 work *The Red Terror*. There Baberowski promotes the classical anti-communist idea that Stalinism was a logical consequence of Marxism's "new age" strivings. The Bolsheviks are said to be "docile pupils of the Age of Reason and the Enlightenment." Due to Russian backwardness, this is supposed to have led directly to the Stalin terror. He adds that "For them (the Bolsheviks), the state was a gardener who transformed wild landscapes into symmetrically laid-out parks." [60]

In the preface to *Scorched Earth*, Baberowski now declares that he "no longer likes" these theses and much of what he wrote in the past seems to be "nonsense". In line with his theory of violence, he now no longer sees the ordering state, but the dissolution of the social order as the principle underlying Stalinism. "The Soviet Union of the 1930s was not governed by bureaucracies and regulations but by patrons and clients. At the top was the dictator, who drew his power from the loyalty of his vassals in the provinces." Violence is no longer attributable to the pursuit of modernisation, but the brutality of backwardness: "The modern quest for

clarity was only able to truly unfold its lethal effects in those premodern spaces where the delusional notions of fanatical ideologues knew no limits." [61]

Baberowski now refers to his earlier thesis, based on the work of sociologist Zygmunt Bauman, as an "unverified claim." [62] He is doubtlessly right about that. But he also fails to provide any factual historical evidence for his new views on violence, nor does he explain the reasons for his revision. If a researcher revises his previous position, one would expect him to have intensively investigated the relevant sources, reconsidered earlier assessments in their light and thereby substantiated his new thesis. Not so with Baberowski. Proceeding according to his anti-rational theory of history, he is interested not in understanding historical events, but in using them for purposes of identity and ideology creation.

The thrust of his new conception is clear: When spaces of violence beyond state control lead to terrorism and barbarism, then there is justification for intervention on the part of the great powers, which stand for public order and peace. Despite the outright reactionary character of his modernisation thesis, it nevertheless contained an element of criticism aimed at colonialism and imperialism. Irma Kreiten, who sometimes collaborated with Baberowski, attributes his change in direction to his work for the Bundeswehr Centre for Military History and Social Sciences (ZMSBw), and shows that he has glorified the colonial policy of the tsarist empire in recent writings. [63]

However, the real thrust of Baberowski's approach goes far beyond this. Essentially, he is concerned with a relativization of Nazi crimes and the rehabilitation of German imperialism. The assertion that twentieth century barbarism derived predominantly from anti-state forces is—in view of German fascism's industrially and militarily precision-planned extermination of European Jews—a loathsome historical distortion. The same applies to the claim that the violence of World War II was not a consequence of any political motives.

A reading of *Scorched Earth* reveals extremely clearly what Baberowski is actually doing with his theory of violence. Having depoliticised and decontextualised the violence of the twentieth century, he puts Soviet and Nazi violence on the same level. Formerly he declared in *The Red Terror* that fascist terror "dwarfed" that of the Soviet Union [64], he now makes them appear at least on a par. [65]

Relativization of Nazi crimes and rehabilitation of German imperialism

In the light of Baberowski's approach to the Second World War all his omissions, distortions and falsifications of Soviet history acquire a new significance. His descriptions of the Bolsheviks and Soviet society bring to the mind's eye scenes of barbaric hordes just waiting to overrun civilised Europe. It is no coincidence that his depictions of the Bolsheviks have a striking resemblance to the propaganda of the Nazis. Baberowski's description of drunken Russian workers joining with the Bolsheviks in unbridled violence, bears an astonishing resemblance to the remarks of Nazi propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels. At a Nazi Party rally in 1936, Goebbels declared:

Bolshevism has at least one very definite advantage over all other groups that hold political power — excepting those who face it with absolute and downright opposition. It mobilises recklessly the lower grades of mankind which exist among the dregs of every nation and are opposed to the State and the ideas which sustain it. It is the organisation of the lowest instincts of a people aiming at

the destruction of all productive and valuable elements in a race.[66]

Apart from its racist elements, this ranting resembles that of Baberowski. Goebbels's diatribe was part of the immediate preparation for war against the Soviet Union. Goebbels states in his speech that the Soviet Union was getting ready for a war against Germany and only waiting for an opportune moment to strike. And Baberowski is with Goebbels on that matter, too. He implicitly writes in *Scorched Earth* that Stalin wanted to wage war against Germany:

Stalin and his followers were at last truly in their element. There was nothing the dictator enjoyed more than waging wars that he could win.[67]

Baberowski fails to supply even one factual reference to justify this outrageous claim. Except in the Nazi propaganda, there is absolutely no evidence to support it.

Baberowski's lies serve to represent the German invasion of the Soviet Union as an act of self-defence. By suggesting that barbarian hordes of the Soviet Union were only waiting for the right moment to attack Germany, he implies that Hitler's war was of a pre-emptive nature and thus justified. In order to maintain this exorbitant thesis, Baberowski has to deny or at least relativize Hitler's aim to wage a war of annihilation against the Soviet Union. As early as 1925, Hitler had already given notice of a war of annihilation against Russia in his pamphlet "Mein Kampf" and confirmed this intention again and again. A number of his Führer decrees had ordered the destruction of the "Soviet-Jewish intelligentsia" and, at a later stage, large parts of the civilian population in the region. According to the racist conceptions of the Nazis, "Lebensraum in the East" was to be created in this way. Their General Plan East foresaw the decimation of the Slav population by thirty million people.

According to Baberowski, however, it was not German imperialism and the Nazis' racist lust to kill that led to the terrorisation of the civilian population and eventually the Holocaust, but the state of affairs on the Eastern Front, for which the Soviet Union was mainly responsible. Baberowski writes:

In any war, such conditions are reason enough to resist the enemy and commit acts of cruelty. Such behavior can in no way be explained by ideological convictions. Hitler's soldiers did not wage a war of Weltanschauung [ideology]. They were trapped in a war that had its own inescapable dynamic ... Hitler was ill-advised in his decision to wage war against a regime for which mass violence had become second nature and whose soldiers knew how to handle this violence. Ultimately, this was an adversary that the Wehrmacht had no hope of vanquishing."[68]

In an earlier text, Baberowski even claimed that the Soviet Union was responsible for the war of annihilation. He wrote:

Stalin and his generals forced on the Wehrmacht a new kind of war that no longer spared the civilian population.[69]

These are formulations that are normally to be found only in extreme

right-wing circles and among Holocaust deniers. It is an historical fact that the German troops constituted an historically unprecedented occupation regime, which culminated in the industrial extermination of European Jewry. The Nazis murdered three million Jews in the occupied territories of the Soviet Union alone. Overall, approximately 27 million Soviet citizens were killed, more than half of whom were civilians. That the Soviet Union won the battle against this monstrous regime was not due to a potential for mass violence that had become second nature to the Russians, but, among other things, to the heroic struggle of the Red Army and the industrial superiority of the Soviet Union, which produced significantly more effective military equipment from 1942 onwards. The crimes of the Stalinist bureaucracy, on the other hand, had actually weakened the military effectiveness of the Red Army.[70]

Baberowski leaves no doubt that he regards German fascism and the Holocaust as less brutal than the Stalinist dictatorship in the Soviet Union:

There was no country in which class antagonisms could have been worse or the privileges of the ruling caste greater, no country in which people could have lived in greater fear than in Stalin's Soviet Union.[71]

Baberowski is even more explicit in a text from 2009:

The differences between the systems (of Stalinism and Nazism) become wider when their pre-war history is included. And from a moral perspective, the comparison does not favour the Bolsheviks.[72]

After the war began, the fascists had merely imitated the Bolsheviks:

The war in the East made it possible for them to act according to their thinking and realise their plans to kill millions of people. In that respect, Hitler and his helpers were catching up with what Stalin and his followers had already accomplished in the Soviet Union.[73]

In addition, he discounts as negligible the terror that the Nazis exercised against the communists, social democrats, Jews, homosexuals, etc., living in Germany:

Unlike the Nazis, the Bolsheviks not only waged war against foreign enemies; they also killed off those on the domestic front.[74]

And he declares elsewhere:

But within Germany, the dictatorship remained a dictatorship by consent, supported by loyal citizens and intimidating only a minority.[75]

Finally, Baberowski even severs the Holocaust itself from its roots in German imperialism and Nazi ideology, portraying it as a mere escalation

of violence on the Eastern Front. He states that the Soviet Union would also have organised industrial extermination of ethnic groups, if it had not had enough room for their deportation:

But how did it happen that the Stalinist spiral of violence did not result in industrially organised mass murder? ...The regime was able to send stigmatised populations to Central Asia and thereby take them out of the “danger zone”. The ethnic and social “land consolidation” of the empire was possible only because the rulers in the Asian part of the Soviet Union were able to establish new areas of ambivalence, where their enemies could be left to themselves.[76]

These have been just a few of the dozens of formulations Baberowski employs time and again to justify Hitler’s attack on the Soviet Union and downplay the crimes of the Nazis. The conceptions Baberowski formulates today go far beyond the positions promoted by Nolte’s in 1986.

Reception

Unlike in the 1980s, however, there has been no opposition to Baberowski’s theses in the official media outlets. Although *Scorched Earth* was sharply criticised by scholarly reviewers[77], their censure was not transmitted to the general public. Instead, Baberowski’s revisionist work *Scorched Earth* earned him the prize for nonfiction at the Leipzig Book Fair.

That no protest is raised against Baberowski’s theses today is due not to the worth of his arguments, but to the bankruptcy of his erstwhile critics. Over the last thirty years, a substantial shift to the right has taken place in sections of the former left-wing academic milieu.

Jürgen Habermas, one of the protagonists of the *Historikerstreit* (historians’ dispute), submitted some weak arguments against Nolte in the 1980s. Since then, he has consistently moved even further to the right. In 1998, he justified the first wartime deployment of the German army since the Second World War. At the time, he declared to the *Die Zeit* weekly that, because based on its history, Germany had a duty to wage war against Serbia.[78]

Hans-Ulrich Wehler had delivered some valuable historical arguments against Nolte in the *Historikerstreit*. He died in July last year, having become a defender of the racist social democrat Thilo Sarrazin and his xenophobic theses.

Hans Mommsen, who in the 1980s had put forward some very important arguments about the fundamental differences between the Stalinist Soviet Union and Nazi Germany, wrote the foreword for Baberowski’s and Doering-Manteuffel’s earlier cited revisionist work[79], commending it strongly.

Significantly, Baberowski is applauded by representatives of the Left Party. The party’s newspaper *Neues Deutschland (New Germany)* wrote a paean to *Scorched Earth*, in which Baberowski is referred to as “one who looks deeply into archives now finally available” and who has uncovered the “criminal oriented psyche” of Stalin.[80] The review explicitly supports Baberowski’s falsification of the October Revolution and Stalinism:

Lenin’s coup d’état revolutionary assault on Russian history; the

radical jackboot march of the Bolsheviks over the potential flowering of civil society; that insane struggle of the new minority-supported state power against war and exploitation, generating only further war and more misery; frenzied collectivisation that ignited fires of hatred between town and country—all this created that perpetually fragile state, that chaos, in which Stalin’s pathological lust for cruelty, disguised under the pathetically pious banner of a liberating leadership, was able to continue for years[81].

Baberowski’s revisionist writings are not even mentioned in the article. The same applies to reviews of the book by the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation and Left Party federal parliamentarian Halina Wawzyniak. In her discussion of the book, the latter expressly emphasises the thesis of a continuity between Bolshevism and Stalinism.[82] Philipp Reemtsma’s theories of violence also appeal to Left Party ideologues such as Michael Brie, as this author was able to ascertain.

Evrin Sommer, Left Party deputy in the Berlin city parliament, invited Baberowski to a discussion in her Lichtenberg constituency in May 2015, ousting from the meeting anyone who could possibly raise critical questions. She herself explicitly backed Baberowski and attacked the students from Humboldt University for their criticism.

The adoption of this stance on the part of substantial segments of formerly left-wing and liberal academics and politicians expresses a particular social orientation. The more social polarisation increases and militarism is promoted, the more affluent sections of the middle classes and their advocates adapt their positions to the ruling elites. Following the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union and the reunification of Germany, they gained a new assertiveness and more openly formulated their own social interests.

The lubricating oil for the move to the right of these layers derives from the theories of postmodernism, which find their apogee in the work of Jörg Baberowski. During the presentation of his book *The Russian Revolution and the Unfinished Twentieth Century* at the Leipzig Book Fair, David North aptly summed up the basics of postmodernism:

[It is] *theoretically* based on a subjective idealistic irrationalism, *politically* motivated by hostility to socialism, and *socially* rooted in the material interests of the ruling class and affluent sections of the middle class.[83]

In recent years, social conflicts have further sharpened in line with the return of German militarism. The federal government’s aggressive foreign policy is opposed by the overwhelming majority of the population. Enforcement of a such policy, therefore, requires authoritarian measures combined with historical falsifications and lies.

Jörg Baberowski embodies both elements. He combines malicious tirades against the October Revolution and the relativization of Nazi crimes with the demand for a more aggressive foreign policy. During a panel discussion at the German Historical Museum in October 2014, he adopted a particularly relaxed manner to explain how important it was that “Germany accepts responsibility, especially in conflicts that affect it.”

In doing so, one must “be aware that this is going to cost a lot of money, and soldiers and weapons will have to be sent into a power vacuum,” Baberowski said. He added that this would require “political will and political strategy. And most importantly, it will have to be openly said, if it’s to be successful, that we have to get involved. And it must be worthwhile for us to do so. It will cost money. We’ll have to send in troops. These countries like Iraq and Syria and Libya are no longer able to

solve their problems by themselves.”

In order to defeat the terrorists, Baberowski finally proposes nothing less than employing the methods of a war of annihilation. His exact words were:

“And if you’re not willing to take hostages, burn down villages and hang people, and spread fear and terror, as the terrorists do; if you’re not ready to do that, then you won’t win this kind of conflict, and you’d better keep away from it.”[84]

That such statements as well as Baberowski’s pernicious falsifications of history not only remain unchallenged in the media and academia, but are actually supported and defended by them, is a sign of the debased state of the German intelligentsia. This social layer has become a central pillar of German militarism.

The fight for historical truth is therefore intimately and at the deepest level connected with the struggle against militarism and its roots in capitalism. As much as workers need to understand history to be able to intervene independently in political events, the political movement of the working class also needs an historiography oriented towards uncovering the truth.

Notes

[1] David North, *The Russian Revolution and the Unfinished Twentieth Century*, Oak Park 2014, p. xx

[2] Dirk Kurbjuweit, “World War I Guilt: Culpability Question Divides Historians Today”, in *Spiegel Online International*: <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/questions-of-culpability-in-wwi-still-divide-german-historians-a-953173-2.html>, retrieved on 27.09.2015

[3] cf., for example, Fritz Fischer, „Hitler war kein Betriebsunfall“ (“Hitler Was Not an Accident”), in: *Spiegel Spezial* 1989/2, 01.02.1989, <http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/spiegelspecial/d-52322577.html>, retrieved on 06.16.2015.

[4] The so-called Final de-Nazification Law of 11 May 1951, also known as the 131st law, enabled the reinstatement of so-called Nazi “fellow travelers” in the civil service.

[5] op. cit. Dirk Kurbjuweit.

[6] Peter Schwarz, *Marxismus gegen Maoismus (Marxism against Maoism)*, Essen 1988, p 53.

[7] *ibid.*, pp. 62-63

[8] Andreas Kühn, *Andreas Kühn, Stalins Enkel, Maos Söhne. Die Lebenswelt der K-Gruppen in der Bundesrepublik der 70er Jahre [Stalin’s Grandchildren, Mao’s Sons. The World of the K Groups in the Federal Republic of the 1970s]*, Frankfurt 2005, pp. 128, 129-130.

[9] „Kommunismus und Klassenkampf 7/1978“ [“Communism and Class Struggle 7/1978”], p.335, quoted from: Andrea Ludwig, *Neue oder deutsche Linke? Nation und Nationalismus im Denken von Linken und Grünen [New or German Left? Nation and Nationalism in the Minds of the Left Party and Greens]*, Opladen 1995, p 53.

[10] cf. Andreas Kühn, *Stalin’s Grandchildren, Mao’s Sons*, pp. 130-131.

[11] Among the most important political players involved are Baden-Württemberg Minister President Winfried Kretschmann, former Federal Health Minister Ulla Schmidt, head of the Heinrich Böll Foundation Ralf Fücks, as well as Joscha Schmierer, the former foreign policy advisor to Joschka Fischer and Frank-Walter Steinmeier; the most well-known manager is the former CEO of the Schenker logistics corporation, Hans-Jörg Hager.

[12] cf. Jörg Baberowski, „Putin ist immer einen Schritt voraus“, [“Putin is Always One Step Ahead”], in: *Tagesanzeiger*, 05.19.2015, <http://www.tagesanzeiger.ch/kultur/Putin-ist-immer-einen-Schritt-voraus/story/12196544>, retrieved on 05/31/2015.

[13] Ernst Nolte, „Vergangenheit, die nicht vergehen will. Eine Rede, die geschrieben, aber nicht gehalten werden konnte“, [“The Past that Won’t Pass Away. A Speech That Was Written but Could Not Be Delivered”], in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 06.06.1986, cited from: Reinhard Kühnl (ed.), *Streit ums Geschichtsbild. Die „Historiker-Debatte“. Darstellung, Dokumentation, Kritik [Conflict About History. The “Historians’ Dispute”]*. Representation, Documentation, Criticism, Cologne, 1987, p. 36

[14] Hans Mommsen, „Das Ressentiment als Wissenschaft. Anmerkungen zu Ernst Noltes ‚Der europäische Bürgerkrieg 1917–1945. Nationalsozialismus und Bolschewismus‘“ [“Resentment as a Science. Comments to Ernst Nolte, The European Civil War 1917-1945. Nazism and Bolshevism ”], in: *Geschichte und Gesellschaft [History and Society]*, Vol 14, Issue 4, 1988, p. 502.

[15] Dirk Kurbjuweit, „Der Wandel der Vergangenheit“ [“The Transformation of the Past”], in: *Der Spiegel* 7/2014, p 115, 116

[16] See. Jörg Baberowski, „Zivilisation der Gewalt. Die kulturellen Ursprünge des Stalinismus“ [“Civilization of Violence. The Cultural Origins of Stalinism ”], inaugural lecture, to: Humboldt University of Berlin, 10.7.2003, <http://edoc.hu-berlin.de/humboldt-vl/136/baberowski-joerg-3/PDF/baberowski.pdf>, retrieved on 06/07/2015

[17] Cf. Hans Ehlert, „Vorwort“, [“Foreword”], in: MGFA (ed.), *Wegweiser zur Geschichte. Afghanistan [How to History. Afghanistan]*, Paderborn 2009, p 7-8; Jörg Baberowski, „Der hundertjährige Krieg 1774–1878: Russische Expansion und zaristische Herrschaft“, [“The Hundred Years War 1774-1878: Russian Expansion and Tsarist rule”], in: MGFA (ed.), *Wegweiser zur Geschichte. Kaukasus, [How to History. Caucasus]*, Paderborn 2008, p 37-45; Jörg Baberowski, „Afghanistan als Objekt britischer und russischer Fremdherrschaft im 19. Jahrhundert“, [“Afghanistan as an Object of British and Russian Rule in the 19th century”], in: MGFA (ed.), *Wegweiser zur Geschichte. Afghanistan [How to History. Afghanistan]*, Paderborn 2009, p 27-35.

[18] See: *Zentrum für Militärgeschichte und Sozialwissenschaften der Bundeswehr [Center of Military History, and Social Sciences at the Bundeswehr]*, http://www.mgfa-potsdam.de/html/zms_bildAnzeige.php?img_id=810&PHPSESSID=, retrieved on 06/07/2015.

[19] Benjamin Bidder, „Partisanen-Propaganda. Moskau stuft deutschen Historiker als Extremisten ein“, [“Partisan Propaganda. Moscow Ranks German Historians as Extremists”], on *Spiegel Online* policies, 16.6.2014, <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/russland-stuft-deutschen-historiker-stopper-als-extremisten-ein-a-974971.html>, retrieved on 06/07/2015.

[20] Sebastian Stopper, „Das Brjansker Gebiet unter der Besatzungsherrschaft der Wehrmacht 1941 bis 1943“, [“The Bryansk Region under the Occupation Regime of the Wehrmacht 1941 to 1943”], Dissertation on: Humboldt University of Berlin, 9.7.2012, p 168, <http://edoc.huberlin.de/dissertationen/stopper-sebastian-2012-07-09/PDF/stopper.pdf>, retrieved on 02/06/2015.

[21] Tilmann Warnecke and Anja Kühne, „Herfried Münkler wirft Bloggern antisemitische Muster vor“, [“Herfried Münkler Accuses Bloggers of Antisemitic Methods”], in: *Der Tagesspiegel*, 20.5.2015, <http://www.tagesspiegel.de/wissen/muenkler-watch-an-hu-berlin-herfried-muenkler-wirft-bloggern-antisemitische-muster-vor/11801382.html>, retrieved on 06/16/2015.

[22] Friederike Main, „Unser Professor, der Rassist“, [“Our professor, the Racist”], on *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 17.5.2015, <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/inland/attacken-gegen-professoren-muenkler-und-baberowski-13596126.html>, retrieved on 06/16/2015.

[23] “Berlin IYSSE Protests Professor Jörg Baberowski’s Suppression of Democratic Discussion at Humboldt University”, 02/22/2014,

<https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2014/02/22/babe-f22.html>, retrieved on 10/07/2015.

[24] Jörg Baberowski, *Der Sinn der Geschichte. Geschichtstheorien von Hegel bis Foucault*, [The Meaning of History. Theories of History from Hegel to Foucault], Munich 2005, 2nd edition, 2013, p 22.

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 96

[26] Jörg Baberowski, „Angst und Macht. Tätergemeinschaften im Stalinismus“, [“Fear and Power. Perpetrators Communities in Stalinism”], in: Jörg Baberowski, Robert Kindler (ed.), *Macht ohne Grenzen. Herrschaft und Terror im Stalinismus*, [Power Without Limits. Domination and Terror in Stalinism], Frankfurt am Main 2014 p. 47.

[27] Jörg Baberowski, *Der Sinn der Geschichte. Geschichtstheorien von Hegel bis Foucault*, [The Meaning of History. Theories of History from Hegel to Foucault], Munich 2005, 2nd edition, 2013, pp 29-30.

[28] *Ibid.*, p. 62

[29] Wolfgang Sofsky, *Traktat über die Gewalt*, [Treatise of Violence], Frankfurt 2005.

[30] Jan-Philipp Reemtsma, *Die Gewalt spricht nicht. Drei Reden*, [The Violence Does Not Speak. Three Speeches], Leipzig 2002.

[31] Jörg Baberowski, „Ermöglichungsräume exzessiver Gewalt“, [“Enabling Spaces Excessive Force”], in: Jörg Baberowski, Gabriele Metzler (ed.), *Gewalträume. Soziale Ordnungen im Ausnahmezustand*, [Violence Rooms. Social Systems in a State of Emergency], Frankfurt am Main 2012, pp 12-13.

[32] Jörg Baberowski, „Kriege in staatsfernen Räumen. Russland und die Sowjetunion 1905–1950“, [“Wars in Distant State Rooms. Russia and the Soviet Union 1905-1950”], in: D. Beyrau, M. Hochgeschwender, D. Langewiesche (ed.), *Formen des Krieges. Von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, [Forms of war. From antiquity to the present], Paderborn 2007, p 309.

[33] Cf. Jörg Baberowski, „Ermöglichungsräume exzessiver Gewalt“, [“Enabling Spaces Excessive Force”], in: Jörg Baberowski, Gabriele Metzler (ed.), *Gewalträume. Soziale Ordnungen im Ausnahmezustand*, [Violence Rooms. Social Systems in a State of Emergency], Frankfurt 2012, p. 24

[34] Jörg Baberowski, *Der Sinn der Geschichte. Geschichtstheorien von Hegel bis Foucault*, [The Meaning of History. Theories of History from Hegel to Foucault], Munich 2005, 2nd edition, 2013, p 98.

[35] Baberowski, Jörg (2016-11-22). *Scorched Earth: Stalin's Reign of Terror* (The Yale-Hoover Series on Authoritarian Regimes) (Kindle Locations 707-708). Yale University Press. Kindle Edition.

[36] *Ibid.*, Kindle Locations 863-864

[37] *Ibid.*, Kindle Location 1002

[38] *Ibid.*, Kindle Locations 635-636

[39] *ibid.*, Kindle Locations 636-637

[40] *Ibid.*, Kindle Locations 858-859

[41] David North, *The Russian Revolution and the Unfinished Twentieth Century*, Oak Park 2014, pg. 7

[42] Alexander Rabinowitch, *The Bolsheviks in Power: The First Year of Soviet Rule in Petrograd*, Bloomington 2007, p. x

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