

Russian fascist with ties to leading German neo-Nazis led Ukrainian-backed incursion of Russia

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In the days after the Russian military was reported to have put an end to the two-day-long incursion of Russia's Belgorod region, more and more information has come to light that proves the openly neo-Nazi character of the forces involved.

According to the Kremlin, a substantial military operation, involving the army, the air force and the national guard, killed 70 members of the far-right extremist Russian Volunteer Battalion and the ultra-nationalist Legion for a Free Russia after over 24 hours of fighting.

Hundreds of buildings were reportedly destroyed in Russian villages during the attack, which included drone strikes, US-produced armored vehicles and a cyber-attack. In a clear indication that the attack was coordinated and planned by the Ukrainian army, which operates de facto under the command of NATO, the assault by the saboteur units was prepared by a series of Ukrainian air strikes. It was the largest incursion of Russian territory since the beginning of the NATO-Russia war in Ukraine.

The forces carrying it out were blatant neo-Nazis with vast international connections, above all in Germany. Of particular significance is Denis Kapustin, alias Denis Nikitin, a leader of the Russian Volunteer Corps (RVC). The RVC was formed last August in Ukraine. Its declared aim is the establishment of an "ethnically pure" Russian nation state, without the tens of millions of Russian Muslims and members of other national, religious and ethnic minorities that are citizens of the Russian Federation. The RVC uses symbols of the Vlasov Army which collaborated with the Nazis during World War II in their war of annihilation against the Soviet Union, and various insignia of the international far right.

According to the German magazine *Der Spiegel*, Kapustin, who is known as "Rex," is considered "one of

the most influential figures" in the European neo-Nazi scene by German authorities. Kapustin moved to Germany as a teenager in 2001 and was banned from entering the country in 2019. However, his ties to the German neo-Nazi scene, which is closely intertwined with the state apparatus, remain extensive.

Since 2008, he has run the far-right apparel brand "White Rex" which has grown to become a major force in the international neo-Nazi scene, and is involved in the organization of many large-scale far-right events in Europe. In Russia, Kapustin was for years involved in the notoriously violent and far-right soccer hooligan scene.

In Germany, Kapustin is known to maintain ties to two leading neo-Nazis, Tommy Frenk and Thorsten Heise. Heise is a leader of the neo-Nazi National Democratic Party (NDP) and also believed to play a central role in Combat 18, an international neo-Nazi terrorist network. Heise also had ties to the German neo-Nazi terrorist network NSU, which murdered at least 10 immigrants. The NSU was largely built up and covered up for by the German state and especially the secret service, the Verfassungsschutz.

Other members of the RVC are also notorious neo-Nazis with ties to the Ukrainian states and NATO. Thus, the Russian Alexei Liovkin (or Levkin) is a member of the Black Metal Group "m8181th," which supposedly means "Hitler's Hammer," and a former member of the neo-Nazi Azov Battalion that has played a major role in Ukrainian politics since the 2014 US-backed coup in Kiev.

The denials issued now by Kiev of direct ties to these neo-Nazi forces lack any credibility. According to the *Spiegel*, one week before the attack, Kapustin and a leader of the Legion for a Free Russia had their pictures taken in Kiev right next to the headquarters of Ukraine's military

intelligence. In interviews in 2022, Kapustin also bragged about having met half of the leadership of Ukraine's military and claimed to be enlisted as a regular soldier of the Ukrainian army.

The incursion provides an object lesson in the character of the war waged by NATO against Russia. Contrary to what the *New York Times* and the White House would have workers believe, this war was neither “unprovoked” nor has it anything to do with the defense of “democracy.” It was provoked and prepared for decades, including by the NATO expansion to Russia's borders but also the promotion and arming of neo-Nazi forces who have been built up systematically as the principal basis for an “insurgency” and a regime change operation in Moscow. The ultimate war aim is the carve-up of Russia and the entire former Soviet Union along national and ethnic lines, in order to bring the region under the direct control of imperialism.

In Russia, the incursion has provoked significant criticisms of the army leadership. A comment in the *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* pointed out that a new “barrier wall” that was erected for 10 billion rubles in March to preempt further incursions from Ukraine had failed to prevent the attack. The governor of the Belgorod region, Viacheslav Gladkov, said on Thursday that he too had “a lot of questions” for the army leadership.

Yevgeny Prigozhin, the head of the Wagner mercenary force which was built up by and operates as part of the GRU, Russia's military intelligence, gave an extensive interview this week, sharply criticizing the army leadership. The Wagner group played the principal role in the seizure of Bakhmut but has now announced it would withdraw from the city and hand it over to the regular army.

In the interview, Prigozhin called for the replacement of both Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu and the chief of the general staff, Valery Gerasimov. He said, “I love my motherland, I serve Putin, Shoigu should be judged and we will fight on.”

Prigozhin said that the military leadership had “f***ed up” repeatedly and cited the incursion of the Belgorod region as an example for yet another failure of the military. He warned that Ukraine would seek to strike even deeper into Russia. He insisted that Russia had to transition completely to a full war economy and mobilize many more men than the 300,000 mobilized last fall based on Putin's partial mobilization order.

Prigozhin's most remarkable statements in the interview testified to the counter-revolutionary and

reactionary traditions in which not just Prigozhin but the oligarchic Putin regime as a whole places itself. In attacking the army leadership, Prigozhin evoked Joseph Stalin, the long-time head of the Soviet bureaucracy, who spearheaded the nationalist reaction against the October Revolution and was responsible for the murder of tens of thousands of socialist revolutionaries and workers in the Terror of the 1930s, as a positive example for Vladimir Putin. Prigozhin said that, in cases of such failure of the army leadership, “Iosif Vissarionovich [Stalin] would have drawn conclusions—he would have shot 200 people... But so far, no one here has drawn any conclusions.”

Then, he explicitly warned of a repetition of the October Revolution. Ranting against the lifestyle of the children of Shoigu and other ministers, Prigozhin warned that the lavish lifestyle of the elites amidst war “can end just as it did in 1917 with a revolution, when first all the soldiers will rise up, and then their loved ones will. There are already tens of thousands of them—relatives of those killed. And there will probably be hundreds of thousands—we cannot avoid that.”

Prigozhin's warnings reveal the main fears of the Russian oligarchy: Having emerged out of the Stalinist reaction against the socialist October Revolution, which culminated in the destruction of the Soviet Union and the restoration of capitalism, the Russian oligarchs fear nothing more than that this war, like World War I, will lead to an eruption of revolutionary movements and that workers in Russia and Ukraine will revive their powerful and shared Marxist and internationalist political traditions. This path—that of independent revolutionary struggle—is precisely the path that workers throughout the region and internationally must take in order to stop the further escalation of the war toward a nuclear Third World War.



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