

Terrorist attack in Moscow: The Ukrainian trail

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Five days after the terrible terrorist attack on a rock concert in Moscow, which claimed at least 137 lives and injured over 180 people, the Western press has largely been whipped into line. Although little is known about the perpetrators and the background of the act, all comments claim that the Islamic State (IS) committed the attack and that this excludes any responsibility and complicity of Ukraine and the NATO powers.

The commentators can hardly hide their satisfaction with the attack. “The Putin regime tries to legitimize its rule by claiming that it effectively protects the population from all external and internal ‘enemies,’” wrote the German Swiss *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*. Now there is “a blatant failure.”

Putin is scapegoating Ukraine to distract from this failure. “So why is Putin spreading the Ukraine scent?” wonders the German publication *t-online*. “Because the supposedly strong man in the Kremlin has failed in his great promise: to protect his people ... Putin misuses terror in Moscow to justify Moscow’s terror in Ukraine. Totally unscrupulous.”

There are dozens of similar commentaries echoing the same tone. This shows how much the supposedly “democratic” media have put themselves at the service of war propaganda. In fact, the attack has “the mark of the CIA and its proxies in Kiev all over it,” as the *World Socialist Web Site* has noted.

If ISIS or one of its offshoots actually committed the attack in Moscow, this does not speak against but for the complicity of Ukraine and NATO. Ever since the CIA set up Al-Qaeda led by Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan in the 1980s to fight Soviet troops, the US has repeatedly used Islamist terrorist groups to achieve its imperialist goals—including IS.

Hundreds of Islamists from the Caucasus and Central Asia are currently operating in Ukraine. Having gained combat experience in IS, they are continuing their fight

against Russia with official cover from the army and intelligence service, including behind enemy lines.

Hardly anything about this is mentioned in the Western media. One of the few exceptions is the article “Traces of Ukraine?,” published by the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* on 23 March. Its longtime foreign correspondent Tomas Avenarius concludes that the speculation that the Ukrainian secret services used Caucasian radicals from the IS network “to make a fool of Putin before the Russians and the whole world a few days after his pseudo-election as president” could “make sense.”

“In the war against the Russian aggressive warriors, ‘legions’ of Caucasian Muslim and Russian volunteers fight alongside the Ukrainian army. There are reportedly hundreds,” reports Avenarius. They came from Caucasus regions belonging to Russia, such as Chechnya, Ingushetia or Dagestan. Many fought against the Russians in Chechnya and “then became part of the IS terror network in the wars and uprisings in the Arab world.

“Two decades later, anti-Putin fighters from the Caucasus continue their lost war in Ukraine,” Avenarius stated. “Many were already radicalized Islamists in the Chechen war, and later fought in Syria against the Assad regime, which was allied with Moscow. During this time, they often joined IS.”

Avenarius is in a position to know. He was a Moscow and Middle East correspondent for the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* for many years and wrote an award-winning report on the second Chechen war in 2003.

The attack on the Crocus City Hall in Moscow marks a new stage in the NATO war against Russia. It comes at a time when the Ukrainian army is facing defeat and NATO is pushing to escalate the war, including deploying its own ground forces and pushing deep into Russia’s interior.

As the *WSWS* has stated, the attack in Moscow has three objectives: “First, to embolden opposition to the Putin

regime within the oligarchy and state apparatus; second, to provoke a military response by the Kremlin that can serve as the pretext for a further escalation of the war by NATO; and third, to foster ethnic and religious tensions within Russia that would destabilize the regime and facilitate the carve-up of the entire region by the imperialist powers.”

The terrorist attack has been accompanied by an intensification of Western war propaganda. It recognises no “red lines” and consciously accepts the risk of a nuclear escalation that threatens to destroy all of Europe and large parts of the world.

Typical was a guest article by Ben Hodges, the former commander of the US land forces in Europe, published by the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* on Sunday. Hodges accused US President Joe Biden of not being determined enough to support Ukraine. The US and its allies must declare “Ukraine’s victory as their strategic goal,” “make annexed Crimea untenable for the Russians,” and make “arms production for Ukraine” a priority, he demanded.

The Commander-in-Chief of Germany’s Armed Forces (Bundeswehr), Inspector General Carsten Breuer, has repeated his demand that Germany must be “ready for war” in five years and be able to wage war against Russia. The Bundeswehr special fund of €100 billion, which was adopted two years ago, is merely “start-up financing” for “rearming the Bundeswehr.” What is needed is a “consolidation of defence spending,” as well as the development of an effective missile defence.

The effort to make Germany “fit for war” is not limited to the military sector. One federal ministry after another is subordinating its work to this goal.

Federal Minister of Education Bettina Stark-Watzinger (Free Democrats) intends to send young military officers to schools and introduce civil defence exercises in the event of war. Universities should in principle be open to military research.

Health Minister Karl Lauterbach (Social Democrats, SPD) intends to prepare the German healthcare system for “military conflicts.” He has announced a corresponding draft law for the summer. “It would be silly to say that we are not preparing for a military conflict, and then it will not come,” he told the *Osnabrücker Zeitung*. “Doing nothing is not an option. We also need a ‘new era’ for healthcare. Especially since, in case of a situation where an ally needs support, Germany could also become a hub for the care of injured and wounded from other countries.”

At a conference in Berlin, Economics Minister Robert

Habeck (Greens) declared that the “land war” had returned to Europe. For this reason, arms production would have to be ramped up, and the deployment scenarios for national defense would have to be reactivated. “And that will come at a price. WE have to be clear about that.”

Interior Minister Nancy Faeser (SPD) is combining anti-Russian war propaganda with a systematic build-up of state repression domestically aimed at suppressing resistance to war and social cuts.

She accused Russia of hybrid warfare. “We see attempts to influence through lies, through massive disinformation,” she told the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. Spies are also active, she added. At the same time, she accused the Kremlin of deliberately promoting refugee movements and destabilising the West with migration. “We are actually experiencing a new dimension of the threats posed by Russian aggression.”

The German government will arm itself more strongly against Russia’s influence in Western Europe, she said. Artificial intelligence will be used against disinformation campaigns. A new early detection unit against fake news in the Interior Ministry is supposed to expose lies before they “become a big wave and flood the internet,” Faeser said. In practice, this amounts to censoring unwanted views on social media.

At the same time, the police presence in public areas is being strengthened under the pretext of preventing Islamist attacks. In France, the government even declared the highest terror warning level on Sunday. Heavily armed soldiers are now again patrolling train stations, airports and other public places.

Eighty-five years after the invasion of Poland and the beginning of the Second World War, the German ruling class is returning to its criminal, militarist traditions. This madness is supported by all parties represented in parliament. It can only be stopped by an independent movement of the international working class that combines opposition to war with the struggle against its cause: capitalism.



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