

The Ukraine War and the Open Crisis of the Imperialist World System

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1. The Ukraine war and the acute danger of a Third World War

With the massive invasion of Ukrainian territory by Russian troops, the conflict that has been smoldering for years between NATO and Russia escalated on 24 February 2022 into an open war in the middle of Europe.

On the very same day, German Foreign Minister *Annalena Baerbock*/"The Greens" demagogically declared the "delusions" of Russian President *Vladimir Putin* to be the cause of the war, saying they could not be accepted by the "*global community*."¹ On 27 February 2022, German Chancellor *Olaf Scholz* identified as cause of the war "one reason alone: the freedom of the Ukrainian people calls his [Putin's] own oppressive regime into question."² Putin in turn demagogically justified his invasion on the pretext that the war objective was "to demilitarise and denazify Ukraine."³

However, none of these explanations and attempts at justification gets to the heart of the matter: it is an *unjust war on both sides*, between new-imperialist Russia and capitalist Ukraine. Spurred and armed by NATO, led by the USA, Ukraine is acting as proxy for this imperialist military alliance. Ukraine strives to join the EU and NATO in order to realize power ambitions of its own. The real social cause of this war "lies in the uneven economic and political development of the imperialist states, which is the motor for *redividing the*

¹ "Baerbock wirft Putin menschenverachtende Wahnvorstellungen und eiskalte Lügen vor" (Baerbock accuses Putin of inhuman delusions and ice-cold lies), *rnd.de*, 24 February 2022

² Policy statement by Olaf Scholz, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, 27 February 2022, *bundesregierung.de*

³ Address by the President of the Russian Federation, 24 February 2022 en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcript/speeches

spheres of influence.”⁴ War, according to the classic of military science, Carl von Clausewitz, is “the continuation of policy by other means.”⁵ Consequently it is necessary to analyze “*all* the data on the *basis* of economic life in *all* the belligerent countries and the *whole* world”⁶ leading up to the Ukraine war.

Struggle for the redivision of the world

The collapse of the social-imperialist superpower Soviet Union and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) in 1990/1991 led to a unified world market. It entailed the *reorganization of international capitalist production*. This process of the economic and political reordering of the world radically changed the entire previous imperialist world system.⁷ All imperialist countries and the leading international monopolies of the world engaged in bitter rivalry for supremacy in the newly emerged world market.

In the meantime, in China and several populous, formerly neocolonially dependent countries, domestic monopolies and state-monopoly structures had evolved. They led to the emergence of a number of *new-imperialist countries*. By 2017 at least 14 new-imperialist countries already were in existence. More than half of the world population was living in them.⁸ They increasingly competed with the USA, Japan, and the EU

⁴ Willi Dickhut, *War and Peace and the Socialist Revolution*, Essen, 2002, p. 12; emphasis added

⁵ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, Everyman’s Library, 1993, p. 99

⁶ “Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism,” Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 190

⁷ A comprehensive analysis of the reorganization of international production is provided by the book, *Twilight of the Gods – Götterdämmerung over the “New World Order,”* by Stefan Engel, Essen, 2003.

⁸ They include the BRICS countries Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, the MIST countries Mexico, Indonesia, South Korea, and Turkey, along with Argentina, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Iran.