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Dmitry Mrachnik

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The worst has happened. Eight years of the frozen Russian invasion into Ukraine culminated in an explosion: hundreds of thousands of soldiers from the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation stormed the entire border of Ukraine with Russia, and most of the border with Belarus. Vladimir Putin is secluding himself in complete informational and ideological isolation, so his demands from the Ukrainian leadership are ultimately senseless. The Russian armed forces have strong artillery, rockets, and aviation but utterly fail when clashing with the Ukrainians directly; entire Russian units surrender or scatter and run in hopes of returning home. Russian armored vehicles and the corpses of the invaders are scattered all over our country. The Putin regime could not care less about the lives of its own military.

Unable to prevail over the Ukrainians on the ground or to force the government into any concessions, the Russians are shooting civilians and ruining cities. In occupied settlements, they're harassing locals in plain sight, murdering, robbing, raping and getting drunk. The occupiers are confused, scared and desperate; they have no motivation other than to pillage or to save their miserable

lives. The soldiers of Russia are unlikely to believe in their own war mythologies as deeply as their TV-watching compatriots; they just want it all to end as soon as possible. They also want to carry home the trophies they have stolen from civilians: cars, appliances, gadgets, clothes, vodka bottles and even homemade jars of pickled vegetables.

Right now, Russia is nothing less than a fascist regime that has overtaken their administrative system, as well as their ideology. The statements by their government propagandists are an exact replica of what Joseph Goebbels had his Third Reich ministry produce; in some ways modern Russian ideology seems to have photocopied the Nazi field guides of the late '30s. This preposterous mess nests inside hundreds of thousands of soldiers, vehicles, rockets, attack planes, and nuclear bombs. The entire world is cutting its economic and cultural partnerships with Russia. The Russian national currency has lost value, their supermarket shelves are suddenly empty, and their people are unemployed.

The brightest heads of Russia are hurrying to escape their borders, having zero hope for a Russian revolution, as Putin still holds total control despite the economic sanctions and exceptional military losses. The Russian police are persecuting, beating up and torturing people, and the Russian bourgeoisie — the fundament of the Putin regime — has absolutely no idea what to do with this. Months of hunger, unemployment and social depression will have passed before the government machine loses its first cogs. Before that happens, thousands of Ukrainian soldiers will have died, as well as hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian civilians, including children. The enemy has no compassion, no conscience and no decency; the Russians will gladly commit any war crime that makes their unattainable mirage of victory appear any closer. Russia will not stop bombing Ukraine with tin cans of human minced meat until they run out of oil to deliver another batch of predestined corpses to their combat positions. Their soldiers will fight in the cold, lacking food and water, as long as they have ammunition and armaments.

In this horrible time, Ukrainians are not only displaying their courage and self-sacrifice, but also an incredible degree of all other human virtues. Whatever the ethnic background, belief system, social status, and/or language any of us have, we have united around our common ideal of freedom and justice, and our shared hatred of inimical ideas. We do not strive for victory because of an obsession with dominance. We aren't looking for a king. None of us rejoice in sadist degradations. We cannot stand aside any longer, and neither will our sisters and brothers remain voiceless migrant workers. Ukraine has suffered enough, and it is time for cold-blooded pay-back for all the crimes committed against our people. No truce will separate us from our end goal of the destruction of the Russian Federation and its puppet regimes.

Not only do we have to liberate Ukraine, including the Donbas and Crimea; we have to liberate our Belarusian neighbors. We have to scrape out every fascist bit of Russia and likely reformat it so that its existence will never be able to harm us again. It will be a democratic Russian Republic, lacking any nuclear weaponry or imperialist potential. We will split the Russian Federation, bringing justice to all the peoples it has been exploiting. The Russians must complete a defascistification course, including their derussification, and it will not be an easy period. Their suffering has already begun. Still, their future position primarily depends on how resolute they are right now — the more courage for a revolt they raise today, the less suffering they will have to endure tomorrow. Considering the obstinance of the bourgeoisie loyal to Putin, if I were a Russian, they would be the first targets of rebel violence; however, it is all up to the Russians. What is up to the Ukrainians right now is to stand firm.

The future task for Ukraine will be to defend and multiply all the political and humanitarian victories that we have accumulated since the beginning of the war. Free thought, mutual trust and solidarity must become the hymn of the civil life of our future country. Unfortunately, any progress has its price set in blood, so af-

ter we have rebuffed Russian aggression, we will have to preserve this achievement. The Ukrainian people have paid an exceptional price to save our spirit from the Russian bombs, and we must maintain this spirit for many more centuries. In the post-war Ukraine, we will tolerate no dictatorial inclinations, no avarice or duplicity. Ukrainians — all the people who have contributed to the making of our country and our ideals — will enjoy freedom and welfare, while any oppression and poverty will be synonyms to the odious Russian fascism and its crimes.

The Maidan Revolution of 2014 has triggered some irreversible democratic changes, which we have successfully retained despite all the military and economic hardship. The full-scale war of 2022 will be a multiplying factor in the Ukrainian achievements of freedom and justice for the future. Without our courage and sacrifices, we would not have lasted a day in this war. The strength of our military and the selflessness of our leadership would be nothing without the dignified spirit of the people. More tears and grief are still ahead. Nonetheless, we will abolish all the dictatorship and slavery around us — forever. Ukraine can become the core of the self-liberation of this world; the shelter, the hope and the guide of all the oppressed, the persecuted, and the hungry: everything we need to bring life to this dream is in our hands.