

Zelenskymania and Switzerland's ruined image

Background and foreground of the war in Ukraine

by Guy Mettan,* Geneva



Photo: Andriko Vasilovic
Guy Mettan (Picture ma)

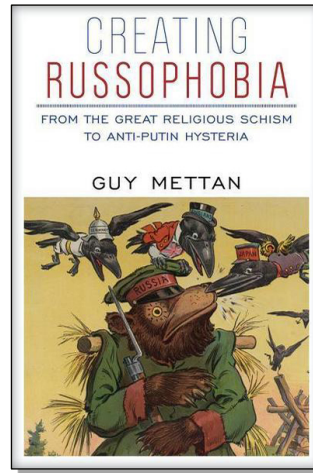
While negotiations seem to be progressing and the first contours of a possible solution in Ukraine are emerging (neutrality and partial demilitarisation of the country, handover of the Donbass and Crimea), the background to the conflict is beginning to be better understood. However, a quick ceasefire is not to be expected: the Americans and the Ukrainians have not yet lost enough and the Russians have not yet won enough to cease hostilities.

Before I continue with my reflections, however, I would like to ask those who do not share my realistic view of international relations to put this text aside. They will not like what is about to come, and it will save them heartburn and the time they would waste denigrating me.

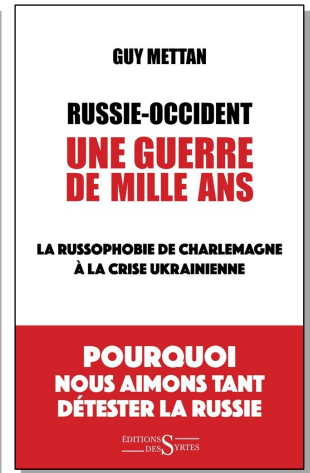
I am of the opinion that morality is a very poor advisor in geopolitics, but in human affairs it is appropriate: the most uncompromising realism does not prevent us from investing time and money, as I am doing, to alleviate the fate of the population affected by the fighting.

The analyses of the most qualified experts (I am thinking especially of the Americans *John Mearsheimer* and *Noam Chomsky*), the investigations of investigative journalists like *Glenn Grenewald* and *Max Blumenthal*, and the documents seized by the Russians – for example, the intercepted communications traffic of the Ukrainian army from 22 January and the attack plans seized on a computer left behind by a British officer – show that this war was both inevitable and highly improvised.

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An inevitable and improvised war

Inevitable because since Zelensky's declaration of his intention to retake Crimea by force in April 2021, Ukrainians and Americans had decided to trigger the war no later than early this year.

The concentration of Ukrainian troops in the Donbass since last summer, the massive arms deliveries by NATO in recent months, the accelerated combat training of Azov regiments and the army, the intensive shelling of Donetsk and Lugansk by the Ukrainians from 16 February onwards (all this was ignored by the Western media, of course), prove that Kiev had planned a large-scale military operation for the end of this winter.

The aim was to repeat the “Operation Storm” launched by Croatia against the Serbian Krajina in August 1995 and to take the Donbass in a lightning offensive, without giving the Russians time to react, in order to gain control over the entire Ukrainian territory and enable the country to join NATO and the EU quickly. Incidentally, this also explains why the USA has repeatedly announced a Russian attack since the autumn: they knew that, one way or another, it would come to war.

Improvised because the Russian response was made under time pressure. When the Russians realised that NATO's diplomatic moves – no US response to their proposals, *Blinken-Lavrov*

meetings in Geneva in January, *Zelensky's* call for calm and *Macron-Scholz* mediation in February – did not clarify the situation and amounted to a classic stalling tactic, the Russians reacted in a masterful and at the same time very risky way. Within ten days (recognition of the republics, co-operation agreement and start of the military operation), they decided to attack first in order to pre-empt the Ukrainians.

And instead of attacking the well-equipped and heavily fortified Ukrainian army forces head-on, it was decided to bypass them with a large-scale encirclement/diversion manoeuvre. The invasion opened three fronts simultaneously – north, centre and south – in order to destroy the Ukrainian air force and as much equipment as possible in the first few hours and disorganise the Ukrainian counter-attack.

Had they let Ukraine attack first, their situation would have become critical and they would have either been defeated or condemned to an endless war of attrition in the Donbass. It should be remembered that Russian troop strength is ridiculously low: 150,000 men against 300,000 Ukrainians, including the National Guard.

Considering the circumstances and despite the initial mishaps and losses, the Russian operation was a success and will go down in military history, though of course not as a human example.

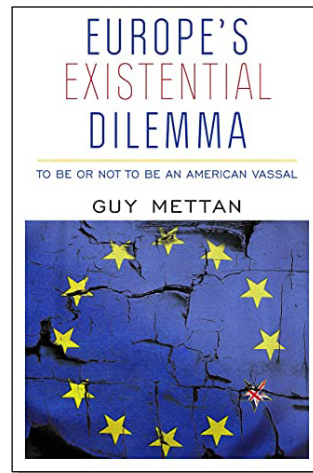
With this first phase completed, the Russians can now concentrate on their main objective, which is to liquidate the “pockets” of Kharkiv and Mariupol held by the neo-Nazi Azov regiments and to reduce the Kramatorsk cauldron where the bulk of the Ukrainian army is entrenched.

So much for the military component.

Winners and losers

Let us now look at the political situation. Who are the real winners and losers of this war? I see one main winner, smaller winners and many losers.

The biggest winner is undoubtedly the USA. One has to recognise that the Biden team has manoeuvred masterfully despite the senility of its president. By withdrawing from Afghanistan last August, it has cleared itself in the eyes of the public and avoided being blamed for the disastrous invasion and occupation of that poor country.



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By drafting a script in which the born actor Zelensky can shine, they appear to the Western public as brave white knights, although they are the big masterminds in the background. The USA has closed ranks in NATO and turned the Europeans into useful idiots who willingly defend “the democracies threatened by the despicable butcher-dictator Putin”. In the process, they are forced by the USA to buy its shale gas, while the German left and the Greens rush to mobilise 100 billion euros in military loans to buy American F-35 fighter-bombers. Bingo! The only fly in the ointment is that the plan did not go according to plan. The Russians did not fall into the trap. Ukraine will be carved up, neutralised and will not be able to join NATO as hoped.

Other winners are China, India and the countries of the South, which are watching with glee as the West, especially the Europeans, tear each other apart and weaken themselves for a long time. In an unexpected way, they find themselves in the comfortable position of neutrality or non-alignment. The Chinese would have preferred an amicable settlement, but they had no choice: they know that if they drop Russia, they will be next on the list, as shown by the torrent of Sinophobia that the West is pouring out under the pretext of defending the rights of the Uighurs (while the West is completely indifferent to the rights of the Yemenis, who have been bombed mercilessly for six years).

The big loser will of course be Ukraine, which is being needlessly maimed, dismembered, devastated and massacred, as it now loses much more than what it would have lost if the Minsk agreement had been implemented. President Zelensky will have to bear the heavy responsibil-

ity for this in history, as he preferred the ruin of his country to a timely compromise.

The other big losers are the Europeans. In the immediate future, it is true, they can brag about their rediscovered unity, their accelerated rearmament, their strong will to defend democracy and freedom to the last Ukrainian, their generosity towards refugees, their future independence from Russia in the field of energy, and so on.

All this is indeed correct and true. But in the future the price they will pay for it will be extremely high. Their behaviour shows that they have absolutely no say vis-à-vis the Americans – they are mere vassals. *Ursula von der Leyen's* decision last week to hand over the personal data of EU citizens to the Americans shows the extent of European subjugation.

The same applies to the economy: what sense does it make to free oneself from Russian energy dependence to fall into that of the Americans with gas prices four or five times higher? What will the German industry say when it has to foot the bill? Especially since there are neither LNG tankers, nor ports, gas de-liquefaction plants or pipelines in sufficient numbers in Europe. How is American shale gas to be delivered to the Slovaks, Romanians and Hungarians? On the backs of donkeys?

What will the German Greens say if they have to accept the construction of new nuclear power plants to meet the demand for electricity? What will the youth and the European environmentalists say when they realise that they have been ripped off and the fight against global warming has been sacrificed in the name of dirty geopolitical interests? Or the French when they see their country being declassified not only globally but also at the European level after having witnessed the rearmament of Germany and the massive purchase of American weapons by Poles, Balts, Scandinavians, Italians and Germans? How about the European public opinion when it has to entertain millions of Ukrainian refugees after offering them free train subscriptions?

And what will Europe gain if it finds itself split in two by deep hatred and a new Iron Curtain that has shifted just a little further east than that of the Cold War? And what will it do when it finds that it has not isolated Russia but is itself cut off from the rest of the world? If one looks closely at the vote on the UN resolutions, one finds that the 40 or so countries that abstained or did not

participate in the vote, represent a majority of the world's population and 40% of the world's economy.

Far from melting, support for Russia has actually improved between the 2 March vote and the 25 March vote. As for the countries that refused to impose sanctions on Russia, it should be noted that an overwhelming majority abstained and only the Western countries accepted them...

Switzerland's ruined image

Another big loser is Switzerland. Official Switzerland boasts that it has followed the sanctions demanded by the USA and the European Union with historic speed. Those in a hurry are already calling for swift accession to the EU and NATO. Well done.

But after the Federal Council gave in in the cases of Jewish funds and bank client confidentiality, this is the third time in twenty years that our government has submitted to American dictates: what is left of our law and sovereignty?

Worse still, we have capitulated by surrendering our neutrality in the open field because no one asked us to do so. After standing firm for two centuries, we are now submitting without a fight in less than five days!

This renunciation is serious not only for the country's identity but also for its credibility. The fact that federal councillors bow to Zelensky on the Bundesplatz and wear scarves in the Ukrainian colours still gets a pass. That is political folklore. But the sacrifice of neutrality is seriously damaging the country, because by aligning ourselves with the West we have gambled away our credit with the rest of the world.

What are we to think of the reliability of our banks when they block accounts on mere American orders? What will become of international Geneva and our foreign policy, which is now boycotted by Russia and probably many other countries, if we are no longer able to articulate it ourselves without appealing to Brussels and Washington? How can Geneva claim to remain the capital of multilateralism when CERN and the ILO [*International Labour Organisation*] suspend Russia's participation and Switzerland boycotts Lavrov's speeches at the Human Rights Council in the slipstream of EU countries?

This departure signals the shipwreck of the inclusive multilateralism that Switzerland and Geneva claimed to defend, and is proving serious for our humanitarian policy and the Geneva

Conventions, as evidenced by the alarming ICRC communication of Tuesday 29 March.

By unconditionally backing Ukraine and Europe, we are putting the ICRC's neutrality and impartiality at risk. The two are inseparable in the eyes of the world. And that is why the ICRC had to respond forcefully to Ukrainian attempts to sabotage its work when it was accused of doing business with the Russians, even though neutrality is at the heart of its mission.

How can one trust an institution whose host country has betrayed the spirit and even the letter of neutrality, which is after all enshrined in its constitution, in order to please Western political leaders and a public opinion inflamed by anti-Russian propaganda?

The silence of the Geneva authorities and political parties will cost dearly, especially since Switzerland is making a fool of itself by leaving the Good Offices initiative to countries like Israel, Turkey or Belarus!

Finally, there is Russia. Winner or loser? Both, actually. On the one hand, Russia will probably win militarily and strategically. At the end of the fighting, Russia could achieve the neutralisation of Ukraine, its partial demilitarisation (no foreign military bases and nuclear weapons) and a possible partition of the country.

Russia will leave the fanatics of American hegemony haunting the offices in Washington and Brussels utterly shocked. It will have shown that there will be no compromise on its security and that of its allies. And Russia will have shown the world that it does what it says and says what it does, having made its red lines clear three months before the conflict. And it will have done so without rocking its economy and currency, as the West had hoped.

Contrary to the opinions of Western countries, economic sanctions, however harsh, will only strengthen Putin, as recent polls by the neutral *Levada* Institute show, confirming the support of a large majority of the population for the "special operation". Never before has a sanction succeeded in toppling a government, neither in Cuba, nor in Iran, nor in North Korea.

But Moscow will have to bear the stigma of the warmonger, the aggressor, even if legally its concerns are no less bad than the invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the NATO aggression against Serbia in 1999 with the subsequent secession of Kosovo a few years later. The human, cultural, economic and political price to be paid will be

high. The tensions created by the conflict will not magically disappear and the Russians will have to deal with the consequences of this war for a long time to come.

Cyber war and Stratcom

We conclude this overview with a word about the incredible success of the Ukrainian propaganda campaign in the West. This war offers the opportunity to witness live the first full cyberwar operation.

If press freedom is suffering in Russia, it is not much better here: we have banned Russian media and forbid dissenting viewpoints, even though we pretend to defend press freedom! Within a few days, there was a zelencisation of minds, with everyone competing in subservience to listen to the Great Hero and fulfil his wishes. President Macron even wore a three-day beard and an olive-coloured T-shirt to underline his support for the cause, while the media renounced all journalistic ethics in order to give full support to Ukraine. Such a breakdown of sanity in such a short time is unheard of.

Outrageous, but not inexplicable. *Dan Cohen*, correspondent for "Behind the News", has closely analysed the sophisticated mechanisms of Ukrainian propaganda and the reasons for its colossal success in our countries.

A NATO commander described the campaign in the *Washington Post* as "a massive stratcom (strategic communications) operation mobilising media, info ops and psy ops". In essence, it was about mobilising the media and hypnotising the public with a constant stream of real news, fake news, images and narratives that were likely to stun people in order to keep emotional levels high and shut down the public's ability to judge.

This resulted in a flood of spectacular images and often false information: the alleged death of the soldiers on Snake Island, the ghost of Kiev who is said to have shot down six Russian planes alone, the threats against the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, the fake bombing of the Zaporozhye power plant, or the cases of the maternity ward and the theatre in Mariupol whose victims were never seen, apart from two women, at least one of whom was recognised as alive.

Add to this the accelerated whitewashing of the Azov battalions, who were transformed into patriotic soldiers after their neo-Nazi patches were removed, and the denial of the existence of

American bacteriological laboratories in Ukraine, although their existence was explicitly admitted by *Victoria Nuland* at a Senate hearing on 8 March. It is true that “wording” was immediately disseminated to deny their existence. The very next day, people started talking about “biological research structures” and warning the public about alleged Russian chemical attacks in order to stifle the issue of secret bacteriological laboratories (Cf. BFM TV).

It turns out that Ukrainian communications, under the aegis of the *PR Network Group*, uses no less than 150 PR firms, thousands of experts, dozens of news agencies, renowned media, *Telegram* channels and Russian opposition media to spread its messages and format Western public opinion.

People make fun of the Russians, who have banned the use of the word war in favour of the word “special operation”. But the Western media do no better, constantly feeding them key messages and language elements, banning, for example, the use of phrases like “Crimean referendum” or “civil war in the Donbass”. For more details, see *Dan Cohen, Ukraine’s Propaganda War:*

international PR firms, DC lobbyists and CIA cutouts, MintPressNews.com.

However, this brilliant success in Western countries masks an obvious failure in Latin America, Africa and Asia, the remaining 75 per cent of the inhabited world. The countries of the South are no longer falling for our lies and interests, and Zelensky’s star is beginning to fade.

His pathetic performance in the Knesset, where he made the mistake of comparing the Russian offensive to the “Final Solution”, even though it was the Russians who liberated Auschwitz and pushed back *Hitler*, and it was the ancestors of his allies from the Ukrainian nationalist far right who participated in the Holocaust with firearms, will have been the last straw.

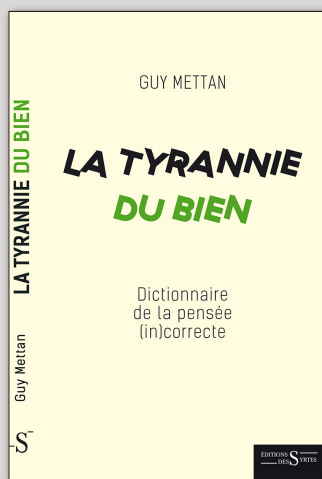
At the risk of repeating myself, I will close this long article by saying: one can, indeed one must, condemn this war. But please let us stop blinding ourselves. Let us regain our critical spirit and our sense of reality. Only in this way can we rebuild a lasting peace on the shambles that Ukraine has become.

(Translation “Swiss Standpoint”)

New publication

The Good is everywhere. It pursues us with its voraciousness. It stalks us without mercy. It projects its metastases into the innermost recesses of our lives. It administers, manages, plans, assists. It legislates, confines, vaccinates, condemns, bombs, and kills. The good has turned from the empire into tyranny.

For the frenetic quest for virtue has become a universal obsession. It is not limited to the Woke circles and self-righteous NGOs. It is also practised in the hushed lounges of boardrooms, the open-plan offices of managers, the inclusive ante-rooms of ministries, the aseptic lecture halls of universities and on social networks that have taken it upon themselves to censor supposed manifestations of evil.



In French in bookshops
at the end of April 2022
ISBN 978-2-940-70119-3

It is urgent to denounce this tyranny. This is what this guide proposes to do, to jubilantly trample on the ready-to-think economically, culturally and politically correct.

In the caustic vein of *Philippe Muray*, it disarms the driving force of *soft language*, this new language that is busy maiming the vocabulary and drowning it in English-sounding neologisms to better spread its misdeeds.

The result is an inventory of popular ideas that will delight those who are fed up with postures and impostures, the hypocrisies and pretences, generated by this frantic search for a Good that ends up doing a lot of harm.

Guy Mettan is neither a robot nor an algorithm. He is a journalist and writer and has written hundreds of articles and a dozen books. He has notably written *Russia-Occident, une guerre de mille ans* (Editions des Syrtes, 2015, 2022), translated into six languages and *Le Continent perdu* (Editions des Syrtes, 2019).