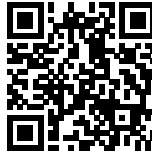




# WAR FATIGUE

*Posted on July 1, 2022 by Thomas Kaiser*



Hans Sorenson  
1917

Since the first day of the Ukrainian war, one is reminded of the mood that prevailed in the warring countries during the time of the First World War and how it has been widely portrayed and rehashed in literature. Then, as now, one finds a euphoric plea for fighting and the blotting out of all reason.

Slogans of heroic dying for an ill-defined freedom, for the nation—back then for the emperor in a Pickelhaube, today for the Ukrainian president in olive green NATO gear, who is able skillfully to put himself in the limelight—advised by a staff of PR experts. Constant reports of the heroic defensive struggle against the aggressor, who is in fact 20 times stronger, according to the assessment of Western military experts, belong to the world of disinformation. All this is reminiscent of the headlong struggle during the bloody war of position between 1914 and 1918 for "God, Emperor and Fatherland."

At that time, too, people were sacrificed, who perished miserably on the "field of honor," "the altar of the fatherland," "for the holy cause," and whatever all the euphemistic phrases might have been. Then, as now, not a word about the misery, the terrible suffering of the people in the struggle, which was impressively described in the post-war literature of the 1920s. One need only think of Leonhard Frank's stirring work, *Der Mensch ist gut*, of Erich Maria Remarque's novel [\*All Quiet on the Western Front\*](#) (which has been translated into several languages), or of Ernst Toller's autobiography *Eine Jugend in Deutschland*. The war experiences of the Second World War also found their way into world literature, such as Genghis Aitmatov's deeply moving book [\*Mother Earth\*](#). There are countless works that contributed to coming to terms with the human catastrophe. Are we really no further ahead than we were back then?

## Enthusiasm for War

Who of those sitting at the levers of power still knows these works? Ernst Friedrich's "illustrated book" *Krieg dem Kriege* unvarnishedly documented the face of the First World War. Have the people who encourage a defeated opponent to "fight heroically" forgotten all this or never even heard of it? Or, even worse, is everything subordinated to a superior goal that lies beyond humanity and reason - "Putin must not win his war"?<sup>6</sup> This goal can only be achieved - if at all - with tens of thousands of dead.

When [Annalena Baerbock](#) threw the term "war fatigue"<sup>7</sup> into the round about three weeks ago, criticizing European states for too little "enthusiasm or support for war," the parallel to World War I and World War II was drawn. A little more than 100 years ago, people's unwillingness to continue watching

senseless dying was commented on with similar words. At the time, these were mainly circles loyal to the Kaiser, who had little sympathy for a generation floundering in war and still hoped for victory.

### **Transatlantic connection**

And today? It is hard to believe. In the 1970s and 1980s, the Green Party, Baerbock's political home, was primarily opposed to rearmament, in favor of peace, against nuclear power plants and the destruction of the environment, in favor of a humane and natural way of life, and in favor of the careful use of resources—and as a result entered parliament.

When Josef Fischer, the first Green foreign minister of the Federal Republic of Germany, tried to justify the deployment of German armed forces against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, for which he was also responsible, with the words "Never again Auschwitz!" at the special party conference of his party in 1999, a deep-seated, ethically based taboo had already been broken in Germany: not to wage war outside of one's own national borders.

While the rank and file of Fischer's party went to the barricades back then, Baerbock's martial tones are hardly contested and are still seconded by her comrade-in-arms Habeck. Instead of doing everything possible to spare human lives and prevent war damage and the most severe environmental damage, people have long fantasized about victory over Russia and equipped themselves with weapons whose operation they are completely unfamiliar with and which have caused more mischief than they have contributed anything decisive to peace and ending the war. Instead, the weapons should be silent and serious talks held to settle this conflict. But the German government is arguing for tighter sanctions, including on fossil fuels, which have already proven to be a boomerang. All of a sudden, coal-fired power plants are generating "green" energy.

### **Zelensky—Hero**

While Habeck is getting German citizens in the mood for "freezing for Ukraine" in the coming winter, activating the emergency plan for gas supply shortages that was made back in 2012, i.e., still by the previous government, and gasoline prices are soaring to unimagined heights, Russia is selling four times as much oil to India, which is then sold from there to the EU. At the gas pumps, the prices for fuels are exploding, which, as German Chancellor Olaf Scholz candidly confesses in an interview, he is

"not that familiar with" and, given his salary, does not particularly care about—very likely he is refueling at state expense. Such statements by a party and government leader who belongs to a party that, at least on paper, is primarily committed to a policy for the "little" people, are incomprehensible.

## **Russian Troops on the March**

Despite all the failures and serious losses of the Ukrainian army—the arms deliveries continue. But the warmongers Baerbock, Scholz, Habeck, Johnson, Blinken and all the rest cannot be that comfortable—nm for it is becoming increasingly clear that the much-vaunted Ukrainian president in the olive-green petticoat is playing a dirty game, even if Swiss President Ignazio Cassis has publicly raised him on the shield as a "role model," a "hero," one "who fights for the same values as we do." The news portal Watson headlines a report dealing with the opaque ways of the West's arms in Ukraine as follows: "Zelensky not playing with his cards on the table: U.S. and Biden losing patience."

Ukraine's alleged military successes turn out to be complete fakes. Russian troops are continuously advancing and getting one city after another under their control. On June 24, the news reported that another contested town in the Donbas called Sievierodonetsk had to be abandoned and the surviving Ukrainian soldiers had withdrawn. Basically, this is the reality. The reasoning of the governor of the Lugansk region that he no longer sees any point in defending the city given the high casualty figures is reasonable. "Another fight is pointless." Is even Ukraine itself suffering from war fatigue?

Meanwhile, Ms. Baerbock, on the other hand, is trying to suggest "final victory," as we had in Germany more than 75 years ago? The parallels are striking, and the question arises how long the public can continue to be led around by the nose. The governor's behavior is the only right thing to do. If this insight had been made after the first days of the war, thousands of victims could have been saved on both sides.

## **Switzerland—Not Neutral?**

And what is the Swiss government doing? So far, it has supported all EU sanctions and thus clearly sided with a warring party. In doing so, it has accepted losing its neutrality status. Now Switzerland sits on the UN Security Council, which was celebrated by the Swiss media: There was talk of a "brilliant result" in the vote in the UN General Assembly. But how does Switzerland intend to play its vaunted

role as mediator when it has already taken sides in the current conflict?

More and more information is leaking out that Ukraine is not only a victim in this war, but has been harassing the Russian population in the country and especially in eastern Ukraine for years, as well as keeping the autonomous republics of Lugansk and Donetsk on tenterhooks with constant artillery fire. A rethinking of one's own position would be urgently called for.

And still, Ignazio Cassis is sticking to his course of "fraternization" with Ukrainian President Zelensky. Even though he repeatedly emphasizes that the Ukraine conference in Lugano does not violate neutrality, he unilaterally backs Ukraine. Although more and more parliamentarians from various parties are expressing grave reservations about the conference, Cassis intends to stick to his plans. The prestige he hopes to gain from having the world look at him and Lugano is too great. Everyone must do their bit in a crisis.

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*Thomas Kaiser edits the Swiss journal [Zeitgeschehen im Fokus](#), through whose kind courtesy this article appears.*

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*Featured: "Soldat und Tod (Soldier and Death)," by Hans Larwin; painted in 1917.*

