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By Reinhard Lauterbach
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Ivan Katchanovski has reconstructed the 2014 Maidan massacre and the story of its cover-up

Ivan Katchanovski: The Maidan Massacre in Ukraine. The Mass Killing that Changed the World. Palgrave Macmillan, London 2024, 266 pages

Ivan Katchanovski has long been no stranger to anyone who has studied the so-called Euromaidan in the winter of 2013/14. The political scientist with Ukrainian roots, who teaches in Canada, has in many publications reconstructed the course of the escalation of violence in February 2014, which led to the overthrow of Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich and the seizure of power by a coalition of right-wing and Western-led forces.

A characteristic feature of Katchanovski's working method is the analysis of the extensive video material available from Ukrainian and international television stations about the armed clashes on the morning of February 20, 2014, and the combination of this with the evaluation of witness statements. With this detailed work, Katchanovski has made a name for himself as a leading "Maidan revisionist" - because his results show with almost absolute certainty that the overwhelming majority of the shots fired at police officers and into the ranks of demonstrators were not fired by representatives of the Ukrainian state, but by hired snipers in the service of the nationalist agitators on the Maidan itself. "The massacre was not a failed attempt by the government to suppress the Euromaidan protests, but a successful false flag operation by oligarchic and right-wing extremist forces (...) to win the asymmetric conflict with the government and take power in Ukraine," Katchanovski is certain.

In his latest publication, Katchanovski summarizes the results of his research to date and expands them to include an evaluation of the results of the official trial, which was completed

in 2023 and was nowhere near as clear-cut as the strikingly sparse reports in Western media would have us believe. Katchanovski reconstructs and proves that the political initiative to escalate violence on the night of February 20 came from Dmitro Yarosh, the head of the "Right Sector," in order to thwart a political compromise solution. And he shows that the first shots at police officers were fired shortly after eight o'clock on February 20 from buildings under the control of the Euromaidan: from the Kyiv Conservatory and the "Ukraina" hotel on the opposite side of Independence Square in Kyiv. Police radio logs show that the police were completely surprised by the shots and withdrew from Independence Square in a disorderly manner at around 8:50 a.m. Most of the victims among the demonstrators were hit around or shortly after nine o'clock, and Katchanovski argues that it could not have been police officers who shot them, because the gunfire was consistently too steep for the shots to have been fired by police officers who were on the same level as the demonstrators.

Katchanovski shows all of this, victim by victim, and as a result the study inevitably contains long sections and repetitions. But what seems like positivist obsession with detail is, from the author's perspective, a duty: he knows, of course, that he is entering mined territory with his results, and so he refers in several places to his Ukrainian-patriotic attitude and the fact that during his student years in the late Soviet Union he was excluded from a doctorate because of the theses of his master's thesis, which was written in Ukrainian, and that he then had to continue his studies abroad in the West. There is even an explicit assurance that he was not paid by anyone for this study. And he emphasizes that he essentially only took into account witness statements that "contradict the immediate interest of the person giving the statement" in order to rule out obvious defensive claims.

It is also commendable that Katchanovski has worked his way through the "one million words" of the official court ruling on the Maidan massacre, which he claims is based on "fraudulent forensic analyses", ignores numerous witness statements from wounded Maidan activists and published video material, and yet has not come to a clearer verdict than the conviction in absentia of three officers who have long been living in Russia. The author's overall verdict: This was a cover-up and whitewash.

It is understandable that Katchanovski was attacked for his work, although he quotes dozens of Eastern European researchers from English-speaking countries who have declared his results to be plausible. From the German-speaking world, on the other hand, there was no such thing. Anyone who follows the position of the unofficial "German Society for Eastern European Studies" (chairman: CDU politician Ruprecht Polenz) on the Ukraine conflict will not be surprised. Official German science has shifted its focus to creating intellectual

readiness for war, and dealing with research results such as those of Katchanovski can only be a nuisance. The cover-up is systematic: while a critical report from the WDR magazine "Monitor" was still able to be broadcast in 2014, a long ARD recording of the Maidan scene, which Katchanovski described as "crucial", was never broadcast, according to the author. It is therefore not surprising that apologists for the Euromaidan are swarming on the relevant pages of the online encyclopedia Wikipedia.

Katchanovski's book is, at least for the time being, freely available on the publisher's website. Anyone who wants to learn more about the background to the Euromaidan and the escalation in Ukraine in 2014 and after in a fact-based manner now or in the future cannot ignore this study and should therefore take the opportunity to download it while it is still possible.