

German media campaigns for war in Ukraine

Ulrich Rippert
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So-called liberal German media outlets such as the daily *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *Die Zeit*, which is close to the Social Democratic Party (SPD), and the Green Party-aligned *TAZ* have responded to the intensification of the crisis in Ukraine with a vehement campaign for war. As though they had received their training in Goebbels' propaganda ministry, some commentators are openly defending fascist parties, hailing anti-Semitic militias as freedom fighters, and calling for a military strike against Russia.

On Monday, *TAZ* Russian correspondent Klaus-Helge Donath railed against "Berlin's cuddly diplomats" in a lead article. He accused the German government of allowing Putin to lead them "around the arena by the nose." On the title page, an oversized telephone receiver was featured, designed to show that Berlin's policy was restricted to diplomatic efforts.

The West could no longer allow Putin "to make a fool of them," *TAZ* insisted.

Donath explicitly justified collaborating with fascists. "No one disputes that there are influential, radical right-wing forces," he wrote. "But are there not several groups in the Ukraine as in other European democracies?"

When violent groups overthrew the president in Kiev two weeks ago, Donath defended the Ukrainian fascists, who enjoy close ties to the German government. He described them as "an active part of Ukrainian society," which had driven forward "the protests of Ukrainian society against a pro-Soviet, kleptocratic autocracy."

In the same vein, Stefan Kornelius went on the offensive in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. He described the overthrow of Yanukovych as a "revolution" which had to be defended. By contrast, he accused Russian President Putin of knowing only the language of violence, striving for a counter-revolution and being intent on war. Therefore, he had to be forcibly resisted.

That Kornelius dares to describe the fascists as national revolutionaries, in Ukraine of all places, where names like Babi Yar recall some of the worst Nazi crimes, is not only deeply repugnant, but also politically criminal.

Yet Kornelius is aware that the right-wing putsch in Ukraine was guided by external forces, above all by the deliberate actions of the German and American governments. He wrote in his comment that the previous power relations in Ukraine were overturned by a "political intervention."

The course of this political intervention is well known. When Viktor Yanukovych refused last November to sign an association agreement with the European Union (EU), the governments in Washington and Berlin began a systematic campaign of destabilisation. They supported the pro-EU opposition which organised protests against Yanukovych. Along with Yulia Tymoshenko's Fatherland and Vitali Klitschko's Udar, both right-wing parties with close ties to Germany's Christian Democratic Union, the fascist Svoboda party of Oleg Tyahnybok was also included.

The fact that Svoboda employs neofascist symbols, rails against foreigners, Jews, Poles and Hungarians, maintains close ties to the French National Front, and was compared to Greece's Golden Dawn and Hungary's Jobbik by the World Jewish Congress did not prevent the German and American governments from publicly supporting Tyahnybok.

Kornelius defended this collaboration with the fascists and was supported by his editorial colleague Daniel Brössler. In the same paper, Brössler demanded, "The West has to set limits for Putin." Brössler said the West had to "establish a state of emergency" for Russia. This meant sanctions at least.

On Wednesday afternoon, Kornelius went one better. In an online comment, he called on the German

government “not to accept the facts created by Putin.” Then he posed the question, “Can Russia only be impressed by counter-measures if the Navy is sent quickly?”

He did not provide a direct answer, but noted that all diplomatic and psychological efforts and the “restricted pinpricks of sanctions” were failing to achieve anything. “A brutal but calculated duel” was necessary. He demanded that decisiveness be answered with decisiveness, leaving no doubt that he was talking about military escalation.

Similar war propaganda came from Eric T. Hansen in *Die Zeit*. He wrote that although reason, caution and compromise were good virtues, Europe had “to learn power politics.” The article went on: “We convince ourselves that the world works generally on a rational basis, with lots of compromise and consideration.” This is false. “Man is not a moral animal, but an animal of power.” The EU stood at a crossroads, Hansen continued. “Does it have the guts to meet power politics with power politics? Or will it withdraw into the old patterns, like the Germans in the Cold War?”

He wrote of post-war Germany with disdain. “Above all, that means peace demonstrations, and statements, and anger, and talk shows. Oh God, the talk shows! All of this is called moral politics, and the emphasis is on moral.”

To leave no doubt about what he was calling for, Hansen wrote, “Now I know what you’re thinking. Hansen wants to take us to war. But that is the moral politician in you who is speaking. He screams ‘war, never again’ at every opportunity, he can’t do anything else.”

This is explicit. When Hansen ridicules “moral politicians,” he means the replacement of the demand “war, never again,” which became deeply imbedded in the population after two world wars with hundreds of millions of dead, with the call, “we want war again!”

As with Kornelius and Klaus-Helge Donath, Hansen speaks for a super-rich layer at the top, who set the tone in politics and the media, and, as in the 1930s, are crying for war and dictatorship. At that time, many lackeys of the Nazis sat in editorial offices and spoke from university lecterns.

As one reads such comments, the angry remark of Max Liebermann springs to mind. When he saw the hordes of the SA marching through the Brandenburg

Gate in 1933, he said, “I can’t eat as much as I would like to throw up!” But anger and outrage are not adequate to combat the cheerleaders for war. The working class and youth must take up the struggle against war and fascism on the basis of an international socialist programme.



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