

# War propaganda in the German media

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It was Hitler's propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels who coined the phrase: "If you tell a lie big enough and keep repeating it, people will eventually come to believe it." Goebbels' words came to mind when reading the German newspapers on Monday.

Following the prolonged intervention by the American and German governments in the internal affairs of Ukraine, utilising fascist mobs to overthrow an elected president and provoking civil war and the danger of war with Russia, almost all German newspapers on Monday published editorials and headlines branding Russian President Vladimir Putin as the aggressor and demanding Germany undertake a much more aggressive policy toward Russia.

The weekly *Der Spiegel* blazed across its cover: "The arsonist—Who will stop Putin." The cover photo montage featured an oversized Putin with a sly expression. He is surrounded by the tiny figures of Obama wagging his finger and a frightened Cameron and Merkel waving white peace flags.

Inside the magazine a ten-page article declares: "The world is now undergoing a kind of stress test: can the democratic West stand up to the lust for power on the part of an Eastern autocrat? Can diplomacy bring to its knees a despot who dispatches his troops?"

The magazine's authors call for tougher sanctions and suggest that it is necessary to prepare for a time when sanctions are no longer sufficient. Europe needs to overcome its "alleged powerlessness" and overcome a "false despondency." The question is how to deal with Putin's "plans for expansion"—"and whether one was ready for steps that would hurt all sides." Given "Putin's aggressive policy"...the "more gentle diplomacy of the Germans" appears rather helpless.

The *Süddeutsche Zeitung* calls for "a hard line against Putin," attacks all those who "argue that one can achieve more with talks rather than with threats and punitive measures" and demands economic sanctions

against Russia. "A trade war would be painful for Germany's economy, but deadly for Russia's," the newspaper concludes. "Europe is more powerful than it believes."

An even more demagogic tone is struck by Berthold Kohler, one of the editors of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. Basing himself on comments made by former American Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, he compares Putin's position in the Crimean crisis to Hitler's actions in the Sudeten crisis of 1938. In the manner of Hitler, "Putin attempts to justify bringing Crimea into his Reich (realm), by coming to the aid of a threatened national minority," Kohler states.

For Kohler, the current approach of the West is too lax. "As always, the doves advise moderation and the hawks a tough line, whereby in this case most of the hawks merely recommend showing the Russian bear one's clipped claws," he writes, and then goes on to make a barely concealed appeal for military force: "The free world has...no other choice than to draw clear boundaries and secure them with the means of deterrence. This is the sort of language Putin understands."

The claim that Russia or Putin himself are the aggressors in Ukraine turns reality on its head. The reality is that the United States and Germany have deliberately fomented the crisis in Ukraine to provoke a confrontation with Russia. They have overthrown the elected government of Viktor Yanukovych with the aid of fascist gangs and brought to power a right-wing nationalist regime that is completely subordinate to the dictates of Washington and NATO.

The Obama administration assumed that Putin would put up token resistance so as not to completely lose face. Now it is using the conflict to force Russia to its knees, risking nuclear war in the process.

The confrontation in Ukraine is part of a systematic policy aimed at the encirclement of Russia, which has

been pursued by the United States and its European allies since the break-up of the Soviet Union in the early 90s. Back in 1992, the American and German governments actively pushed for the break-up of Yugoslavia. In 1999 they went to war against Serbia to impose the secession of Kosovo.

Although they assured the then-Soviet government in 1990 that NATO would not be extended further eastwards, a total of ten Eastern European countries were included in the military alliance in the following years, including Romania, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Slovakia, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

The attitude of Washington and Berlin on this and all other matters is not governed by international law, but exclusively by their geopolitical and economic interests. Now the US government is demanding that Moscow recognise a Ukraine that will serve as an outpost for US and NATO forces and as a base of operations for the carve-up of Russia.

The media campaign that portrays Moscow and the Putin regime as the aggressor and NATO forces as defenders of democracy and freedom is aimed at advancing this strategy. German columnists and commentators know there is a deep distrust of their warmongering among broad sections of the population. This is reflected time and time again in critical comments columns of their articles. They have therefore replaced any serious attempt to convince their readers with a barrage of propaganda.

In the Nuremberg war crimes trials, one of the four counts against the accused was “crimes against peace.” Employing the same criteria today, a number of the current warmongers would have to stand trial.



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