

Germany: Warmongering against Russia by *Die Zeit* editor Josef Joffe

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Buyers of the new issue of the weekly *Die Zeit* on Thursday will almost certainly read a warmongering comment by its co-editor Josef Joffe. Like no other, Joffe embodies the moral decline of the German media. Together with Stefan Kornelius of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, he is one of the German journalists who have agitated most aggressively against Russia during the Ukraine crisis, demanding tougher action against the Putin regime.

Joffe writes all the more provocatively, as his warmongering finds no resonance in the population. His editorials in recent weeks have headlines such as “The bizarre Russia apologetics of the Left Party”, “Politics is not psychiatry”, “Russia-appeasers—Psychologist, ultra-realists, business representatives: a small typology” and “Push and Pull—The West against Putin: indulgence strengthens desire, but empty threats are no less dangerous”.

Joffe’s war propaganda is strictly oriented towards the same topics:

Russia is a “neo-imperialist aggressor”, which after the “foray” against the Crimea is on the verge of “realigning” other parts of Eastern Europe (Joffe uses the French word *arrondir* repeatedly to give his yellow journalism a pseudo-intellectual coloration).

The West is reacting with a mixture of procrastination and incompetence, he says. It is “disillusioned with the wars in the Middle East” and plays “cricket”, while the Kremlin plays “baseball with heavy hits”. For this reason, the Western side needs “a few hard hitters” to curb Moscow’s “Tsarism forever”. By this, Joffe means “systematic sanctions” and a massive military build-up. Anyone who raises even the slightest criticism is derided by Joffe as a “Russia appeaser” and is pulled to pieces.

Joffe’s trademark includes the increasingly fascist undertones of his words and the falsification of the historical background and the actual sequence of events.

No lie is it too bold and no historical distortion too absurd to be employed in his warmongering against Russia.

In the current issue of *Die Zeit*, Joffe pretentiously asserts that Russian President Vladimir Putin had rescinded the “future of liberal democracy” and the end of history “after the [Berlin] Wall came down 25 years ago”, as proclaimed by the American political scientist Francis Fukuyama.

Joffe writes: “That is how it actually looked at that time, at least in Europe. Unified, brought into the international community and reconciled, it had turned into an ‘Empire of Peace’: Never again war, never again conquest; conciliation instead of exclusion, economic rather than military force. The old European dream of ‘eternal peace’ (Kant) had been fulfilled. Vladimir Putin has cold-bloodedly torn us from this reverie”.

Joffe’s historical sketch stands reality on its head. In reality, the capitalist triumphalism about the end of history after the dissolution of the Soviet Union did not herald the dawn of a new era of peace and prosperity, but the beginning of a never-ending series of imperialist robberies by the US and its European allies. Joffe knows this like no other; after all, he has banged the propaganda drum for each of these wars.

He supported the NATO air war against Serbia in 1999, as well as the alleged “war against terrorism” in Afghanistan (2001 to the present) and Iraq (2003 to the present) and the NATO bombing of Libya in 2011. Joffe’s campaign against Russia is just the latest episode in his permanent war propaganda. Only last summer, he campaigned for a massive war in the Middle East to topple Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

How ruthless does one have to be to describe as “eternal peace” these wars of aggression which run contrary to international law, which destroy whole countries and bring about hundreds of thousands of deaths? The measures proposed by Joffe himself to curb the Putin

regime underline who are the real aggressors and warmongers—the Western governments and their henchmen in the editorial suites!

In the current issue of *Die Zeit*, Joffe demands that “a sober Western policy” must try “to reduce the temptations”. By “temptations” he means more Russian “forays”. Specifically, he proposes to deploy the “missile defence system in Poland and the Czech Republic” that “Obama had waived, when he campaigned with the ‘Reset’ to Moscow”, and to expand the “eroded US military presence in Europe” and to increase NATO countries’ “dwarf military spending”.

In a commentary for the online edition of *Die Zeit* last week, under the headline “Europe lacks the military chips”, Joffe went one better. He complains: “The fact is: The EU countries have given up their ‘hard power’ step by step since the Wall came down. Here are some numbers: In terms of gross domestic product, England today spends 2.4 percent on the military; earlier it was almost five. In France, the defence budget has almost halved. The Germans have dropped from three percent to 1.3; the Italians to 1.2. In contrast, Russia spent 4.5 percent in 2012. Today it will be more”.

Things don’t look “very happy”, he writes, when it comes to “troop levels. Germany: from 500,000 down to 180,000 soldiers. The French Army has only 40 percent of the numbers from 1990. The British have halved in size. The Europeans had believed that there would be no more territorial wars on their continent. As a result, the battle tanks disappeared from the arsenal. The Bundeswehr (German Armed Forces) had several thousand, now there are only a few hundred. In fact, the number of European troops are not even enough for classic national defence”.

Gripped by war fever, Joffe seems increasingly to be losing control of his computer keyboard. The programme that he formulates means the preparation of a massive war against Russia. Particularly as a German journalist, Joffe should curb himself a little. His massive promotion of a massive armaments build-up against Russia suggests that the brutal campaigns conducted by German imperialism in two world wars are apparently not enough.

The historical irony is that Joffe would not be able to spread his anti-Russian war propaganda without the victory of the Soviet Union against Nazi Germany. Joffe was born in 1944 into a Jewish family in Lodz, Poland and can thank the fact he is still alive to the victory of the Red Army over Nazi Germany.

What interests is Joffe articulating when, historically completely blind, he agitates for another war against

Russia, something that could quickly lead to nuclear war?

Some light is shed by an interesting study published last year, entitled “The power of opinion: the influence of elites on key media and alpha journalists”, by German media researcher Uwe Krüger. The study concludes that the close links of “US-savvy journalists” like Joffe to the “US and NATO-dominated milieu” is reflected in their “journalistic output”.

During the period covered in the study, Joffe participated in the Munich Security Conference, the Bilderberg Conference and the World Economic Forum, was a member of the Trilateral Commission of the International Institute for Strategic Studies and the American Council on Germany, and sat on the Advisory Board of HypoVereinsbank and the Goldman Sachs Foundation.

Kruger has examined the links and the editorials of four journalists close to the US: Joffe, Cornelius, Klaus-Dieter Frankenberger of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and Michael Stürmer of *Die Welt*.

He concludes: “The journalists argue along the lines of the foreign and security policy agenda of these actors by using a broad concept of security, often recalling the catalogue of threats from official documents, urging the German government to undertake more military involvement in NATO and to foster the transatlantic partnership and employ more conviction with the electorate to push these policies through”.

These words by a social scientist were written before the recent war-mongering by the journalists listed had reached a new peak as a result of the Ukraine crisis. The most recent, aggressive propaganda barrage in the media underlines that these scribblers serve as the mouthpieces of the ruling elite in the banks, the military and the government, which is determined to impose its interests by military means, and to suppress any resistance to them.



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