

After Malaysian Airlines disaster

German media steps up pro-war agitation

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Since the crash of the Malaysian Airlines flight MH17 one week ago, the war-mongering in the German media has increased from day to day.

On Monday, the foreign affairs editor of *taz*, Dominic Johnson, compared the plane crash to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, stressing that 9/11 had triggered the NATO mutual defence clause and suggesting that last week's airplane crash should do the same.

Tuesday, in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, Hubert Wetzel declared that Europe must finally act and impose "tough sanctions" against Russia.

Under the headline "Threats, Threats—Just Don't Do Anything," Wetzel asked: When will the EU understand that the war in eastern Ukraine also affects them? He repeated this question several times, and then posed it even more sharply, asking: When will the EU understand that they are in a de facto war?

"The situation is: more than 200 Europeans are dead, and Europe can no longer look the other way," he wrote.

The irresponsibility and dishonesty of such statements are mind-boggling. The circumstances of the plane crash have not as yet been clarified in the slightest. Much of what is known—the last-minute change in the plane's route, which took it directly over eastern Ukraine; the unusual lowering of the plane's altitude; the statement of an air traffic controller that a radio transmission from the stricken plane had mentioned an accompanying Ukrainian fighter jet—make it clear that the culpability of the regime in Kiev cannot be excluded.

If one considers the question of motive, which plays an important part in any legal case, suspicion tends to fall on the Ukraine government. The president and prime minister immediately seized on the tragedy to

escalate the confrontation with Russia. The US government has similarly used the downing of the plane to increase pressure on Moscow and demand harsher sanctions from the Europeans against Russia.

The utterly irresponsible comments in the German media underscore the manner in which the deaths of those aboard flight MH17 were viewed as an opportunity to sharpen the attacks on Russia.

Have any of the desk-bound warriors given serious thought as to where severe sanctions against Russia will lead? What consequences they will have for the population not only of Russia, but of Europe as a whole? What the impact will be on the European economy and the international financial system?

Have any of them thought through the consequences of an economic war with Russia?

What precisely do they hope to achieve through the destabilisation of the Russian government? Is it their aim to give ultranationalist officers in Kiev an excuse to act militarily against Russia? Do they want a war that could quickly become a world war fought with nuclear weapons?

On the eve of the 100th anniversary of the declaration of war by Austria-Hungary against Serbia—July 28, 1914—there is much discussion as to whether the Great Powers drifted or sleepwalked into World War I. But there is today a horde of media demagogues who are not drifting, but rushing headlong towards war, chomping at the bit for the outbreak of a military confrontation with Russia. For the most part, even the war-mongering politicians are acting somewhat more cautiously.

Where does this completely irresponsible war agitation in the media come from?

Twenty-five years after the collapse of the Stalinist regimes, certain social elements have come to dominate

at various levels of society, especially in the media. They are characterised by egoism, ruthlessness, ignorance and deep hostility to anything remotely connected to socialism.

The dissolution of the Soviet Union in December 1991 was an historical turning point. Despite its degeneration as result of Stalinism, the Soviet Union, as long as it existed, served as a certain check on capitalist exploitation and imperialist aggression. The dissolution of the Soviet Union mobilised the most reactionary and bigoted elements, who have regard only for their own advantage.

The media is dominated by unscrupulous hacks who justify and gloss over all social attacks and imperialist crimes. To rescue the financial elite, trillions have been transferred from the public coffers to the banks and speculators. To pay for this massive theft of public funds, brutal austerity programmes have been imposed. Social welfare programmes have been dismantled and untold millions thrown in poverty.

Journalists who were more far-sighted and warned of the social and political consequences were sidelined or sacked. A process of selection of the unfittest occurred, leaving the most backward and reactionary elements to set the tone in editorial offices.

They regarded the collapse of the Soviet Union as a liberating event—a signal for freedom from any kind of social responsibility. They believe they are responsible to no one accountable to no one.

But this will prove to be a false belief. The same contradictions that are driving imperialism to the edge of the abyss are creating the objective conditions for social revolution. To their own surprise, the media war-mongers will be compelled to answer for their actions.



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