

# Merkel's "Hun Speech" against Russia

Johannes Stern  
19 November 2014

On July 27, 1900, Kaiser Wilhelm II delivered his infamous "Hun speech" (Hunnenrede) in Bremerhaven. Addressing the German East Asian Expeditionary Corps, which was traveling to China to bloodily suppress the Boxer Rebellion, he said that the German army had been "built up during thirty years of faithful, peaceful labour."

He accused China of "upsetting international law" and having "mocked the sacredness of the envoy, the duties of hospitality in a way unheard of in world history."

Finally, he made the infamous threat: "Just as a thousand years ago the Huns under their King Attila made a name for themselves, one that even today makes them seem mighty in history and legend, so may the name German be affirmed by you in such a way in China that no Chinese will ever again dare to look cross-eyed at a German."

Angela Merkel's frontal attack on Russia following the G20 summit in Australia brings to mind this type of German great power politics. Like Wilhelm II, Merkel is trying to present her own aggressive conduct as a means of defending peace and international law and brand her antagonist, in this case Russia, as the aggressor.

At a meeting in Sydney at the Lowy Institute for International Policy, a think tank run by the multibillionaire Frank Lowy, the fourth-richest Australian, Merkel accused Russian President Vladimir Putin of "trampling on international law," refusing to "resolve the conflict by democratic and constitutional means," relying on the "supposed right of the strongest," and "following the horrors of two world wars and the Cold War...placing in question the entire European order of peace."

That is "exactly what took place with the illegal annexation of Crimea by Russia at the beginning of this year," the chancellor declared. Now this finds "its

continuation in Russian efforts to destabilize eastern Ukraine in Donetsk and Luhansk." Russia had violated "the territorial integrity and state sovereignty of Ukraine," and thinks in terms of "spheres of influence," she added.

In her remarks, the chancellor spoke against a "military solution to the crisis." However, her accusations against Russia not only lacked any foundation, the logic of her reproach implied that Moscow's alleged breach of international law and peace led to a military confrontation. Her bellicose remarks were designed to further poison the political climate in order to create the conditions for encircling Russia militarily and pushing it into a corner.

The G20 summit was dominated by an intensification of the conflict with Russia. The heads of government of the imperialist powers closed ranks against Putin and provoked his early departure. In her speech, Merkel demonstratively stood behind the anti-Russian government in Ukraine and promised she would support it "politically and economically."

With this backing, Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko on the same day threatened Russia with "total war." Speaking on the fringes of a commemoration in Bratislava, he said, "I have no fear of war with Russian troops and we have prepared for such a scenario of total war. Our army is currently in a much better state than five months ago and we have support from all over the world."

The German government is playing a central role in the aggressive moves against Moscow. In February, in close collaboration with the US government and fascist forces, it organised a putsch against then-Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych after he had refused to sign an Association Agreement with the European Union. Since then, it has worked closely with the Poroshenko regime and is playing a leading role in the military encirclement of Russia.

Last weekend, *Die Welt* reported that the (Armed Forces) will lead a rapid reaction force that NATO is establishing in response to the Ukraine conflict for the purpose of sending a “clear signal to Moscow.” In September, Germany took the lead in aerial patrols over the Baltic States and has doubled its contingent in the Multinational Northeast Corps in Szczecin, Poland. Last week, German NATO General Hans-Lothar Domröse raised the threat of major NATO maneuvers on the Russian border.

For years, NATO has been extending its borders eastwards and is now making increasingly open preparations for war against Russia. But in Sydney, Merkel accused Russia of systematically extending its area of influence. “It’s not just about Ukraine, it’s about Moldavia, it’s about Georgia, she declared. “If this continues, one can ask: Does one need to add Serbia, must one add the western Balkan states? In any case, that is not compatible with our values.”

“We also know from history that one cannot afford to be too peaceable, that one has to take seriously what is said and listen carefully,” Merkel continued.

When a German head of government says history teaches that Germany must not be “too peaceable” towards Russia, one’s blood runs cold. Seventy-five years ago, Germany carried out a war of annihilation against the Soviet Union, committing the most heinous crimes in the history of mankind, including the Holocaust, the murder of 27 million Soviet citizens, and the devastation of large parts of Eastern Europe.

Merkel said the conflict over Ukraine “cannot be solved militarily,” but then added threateningly, “On the other hand, one can’t say: Because we cannot solve the crisis militarily, we can’t solve it at all.”

The German ruling elite is very aware of its historic crimes. In Sydney, Merkel recalled “the beginning of World War II 75 years ago and the collapse of civilization embodied in the Shoah, and even more importantly, the beginning of the First World War 100 years ago.”

But all her talk of “diplomatic” and “not military” solutions, supposedly based on the experiences of the wars of the last century, is crude propaganda. It is aimed at cloaking the return of Germany to militarism and great power politics, and, as under Kaiser Wilhelm, portraying an aggressive war policy as the “politics of peace.”

Wide world reference to the “primal catastrophe of the 20th century,” Merkel asked, “Ladies and gentlemen, how could things go so far between peoples and nations one hundred years ago?”

Merkel should know. Today, just as then, the ruthless and aggressive imperialist policies of the great powers threaten to cast humanity into the abyss. The Western-orchestrated putsch in Ukraine, the military encirclement of Russia and China, and the renewed war in the Middle East have turned the world into a powder keg that could explode at any time. As in the first half of the last century, Germany is now playing an especially aggressive role.



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