

War-mongering against Russia by the German parliament's official newspaper

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The war-mongering in the German media against Russia continues unabated. The latest example is the current issue of the weekly magazine of the German Bundestag (parliament), *Das Parlament*, which deals with Russia as its main topic. The newspaper combines a vicious propaganda campaign against Russia with an unbelievable distortion of history in regard to the Second World War.

With sales of fewer than 9,000 copies per issue, the newspaper is among the poorest sellers, but its significance derives from the fact that it is published by the Bundestag in direct collaboration with the Federal Centre for Political Education (BPB). The newspaper is frequently used in school classrooms or at other educational institutions.

The BPB was founded in 1952 as the Federal Centre for Home Service, in order to review the crimes of the Nazis, among other things. However, by 1955 at the latest, anti-communist polemics were central to its work. Sixty years later, in an introduction to the Second World War aimed at education institutions, there is no longer a single word about the Nazis' crimes.

The current issue brings together various articles from right-wing and anti-Russian editors, publicists and professors to paint a picture of Russia as an aggressive imperial power just waiting for the chance to expand its territory towards Western Europe. It recalls the stifling anti-Russian propaganda from the Cold War, or the period of the Third Reich, with one propaganda piece after another declaiming Russia as an "evil empire".

One article draws a link between the naval armament under Peter the Great and the Kremlin's current policies, while another declares that Moscow's fear of encirclement is a conspiracy theory, blaming the Russian government alone for the intensification of the conflict with the West. Yet another falsely portrays

broad support among the Ukrainian population for the pro-European coup regime in Kiev.

The purpose of this foul propaganda is made clear in an interview on page two with Wolfgang Ischinger, chairman of the Munich Security Conference, a regular meeting place for politicians, military personnel and arms industry figures. What is involved is the preparation of military interventions and the transformation of Russia into a semi-colony.

In the interview, he demands a "military policy of containment and reassurance" by NATO towards Russia. The Eastern European members have a right to be militarily protected, according to Ischinger. He referred explicitly to the 1979 NATO agreement for the nuclear arming of Western Europe, by speaking of a "double strategy" by NATO.

On the same page, a journalist with the right-wing Springer publishing house, Richard Herzinger, states that "economic pressure" is insufficient "to contain Putin's imperial desires." The West had to "prepare for a long period of confrontation with Putinism—including the strengthening of political as well as military deterrence."

To justify this aggressive policy towards Russia, a broad range of war propaganda is presented. A further example is the article by Susanne Spahn, who seeks to prove that Russia's military interventions in Georgia in 2008 and Crimea in 2014 were in violation of international law, while NATO operations in Kosovo and Syria remained within the framework of international law.

Her key witness is Professor Christian Tomuschat from Humboldt University in Berlin. In 2001, he wrote a favourable report for the German government on the issue of compensating Italian forced labourers, which resulted in those detained by the military receiving

nothing.

In 2003, Tomuschat was hired by Mercedes-Benz to clear the firm of any suspicion of involvement in the detention of trade unionists in alliance with the military junta in Argentina. He is also a supporter of the right-wing, conservative project for a “centre against expulsions.”

Tomuschat is approvingly cited by Spahn to justify her case. If Russia bases itself on the responsibility to protect in the case of Crimea, the professor argues in the article, this has “absolutely no substance” and is “merely political jargon.” However, if the US and Germany claim the same thing in Kosovo, it is justified because a genocide had actually occurred there. The US was fighting Islamic State in Syria, while Russia blocked the intervention of the UN Security Council, Tomuschat claimed.

Such double standards are not new, and were used in the past to justify every imperialist war. Even the Nazis had a “Wehrmacht investigative centre for the violation of international law,” which covered up the horrific crimes of the Wehrmacht (Army) and documented alleged war crimes by the Allies to use for war propaganda. Already at that time, the Soviet army was at the centre of its attention.

To the extent that German militarism is returning to centre stage and is seeking to dominate Europe, the old forms of war propaganda are re-emerging. An essential component of this is the falsification of history. The ruling elite view the recollection of its indescribable crimes as a barrier to their new great power politics.

The connection was made clear by the notorious anti-communist Gerd Koenen. In the main story in *Das Parlament*, he brought together the various aspects of this campaign of falsification.

He began by attacking all of those who had “too much understanding for Moscow’s policies threatening peace”, accusing them of “falsified recollections, misjudged estimations and adulatory yearnings.” Evidence that the “colour revolutions” in Russia’s periphery were supported by the US are described by him dismissively as “nonsense”, and he categorised them as crude conspiracy theories.

The reason for the friendly attitudes towards Russia in the German population, which he describes as being “blind to reality”, is to be found, according to Koenen, in history, and in the history of the Second World War

in particular. With the “Russian Red Army soldiers”, the German army had a “sizeable opponent” which wanted “to inflict humiliation on the Germans, so long as they survived.” This was a “mental burden, which impacted upon subsequent generations,” according to Koenen.

Koenen obviously wants to put an end to this “mental burden.” He even criticised the *ostpolitik* of successive German chancellors Brandt, Schmidt and Kohl as being too conciliatory towards the regime in Moscow, and demanded a firmer approach towards the Kremlin.

In this context, another article from the issue is significant, written specifically for those with restricted language capabilities in a supposedly easy-to-understand manner. It deals at great length with the history of Russia and the German-Russian relationship in the twentieth century.

While several incidents before, during and after the Second World War are described in detail, there is no reference to German crimes, in particular the war of extermination in the East. There is not a single mention of the fact that Germany began the war and invaded the Soviet Union! “The war began 76 years ago,” it blandly states.

This is the basis upon which students are to be taught today, in an official publication of the German parliament. The desire of the German elite for domination in Europe is incompatible with the recognition of the Nazis’ crimes. Their war policy towards Russia compels them to deny history and rewrite it.



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