

German news magazine *Der Spiegel* urges war against Russia

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The lead article in the latest issue of German news magazine *Der Spiegel*, entitled “Putin’s aggressions,” is a barely concealed call for war against Russia. The author, Mathieu von Rohr, claims that decisive action by the west against Russia is the key issue in global politics.

His call ends with the following words: “If the West does not want to let itself be outmanoeuvred again in future conflicts, it cannot allow itself to be intimidated. Rather than striving to placate, it must counter the attacks on the world order.”

Rohr takes the word “counter” to mean the use of military force. He rails against “Putin’s aggressive actions” and complains, “In Syria, for example, the United States avoided establishing a no-fly zone in the North of the country two years ago and massively supporting those moderate rebels who were struggling against Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.”

In Ukraine, Europe and the United States also had “no clear strategy.” While Russia pursued “a clear goal...with weapons and soldiers,” the West lacked “the decisiveness to support Ukraine.”

To push Russia back, Rohr does not shrink from calling for a direct military conflict. He angrily complains that “the fear of a military confrontation...among some in the West [has strengthened] the wish to reach a compromise with Russia at any price.”

He claims “the lesson from Syria and Ukraine” must be “all attempts to engage Russia to change by reaching out or flattering it have failed. Putin would only be impressed and pushed to cooperation by a threatening scenario from the West. In Ukraine, he did not expect the firm sanctions by the West; only this prevented him from carrying out further aggression. A similarly clear answer is missing in Syria.”

One wonders whether Rohr and *Der Spiegel*’s editors have considered for a moment what they are saying. It is not necessary to be a historian or a Marxist to know what a “military confrontation” with Moscow would mean. One can read about it in the same *Spiegel* edition that states on page 28 that there is a growing “danger of war between

Russia and Turkey.”

That article declares, “the world has never been closer to nuclear war even during the Cold War. Provocations, red lines which are being crossed, breaches of air space, an aircraft shot down. A missile fired in error or a submarine commander whose nerves give way could trigger a world war.”

How is it to be explained, given this warning, that the most influential and widely circulated German weekly newspaper is nonetheless beating the drum for war against Russia?

Following the announcement by the German government that it would play a role in global politics “corresponding to the significance of our country,” as German President Gauck put it on 3 October, 2013, Germany has adopted a course of confrontation toward Russia. In February 2014, Berlin backed the right-wing coup against pro-Russian President Victor Yanukovitch in Ukraine, and has since played a leading role in NATO’s rearmament in Eastern Europe. Since November, the German army has, in addition, participated in the war in Syria, with the aim of overthrowing the pro-Russian Assad regime. *Der Spiegel* supported the German war drive from the outset. For more than two years, it has been decrying the German population’s “fear of war,” and propagandises against Russia. In August 2014, a prominent headline read “Stop Putin now!” Rohr is now resorting to the sort of German imperialist propaganda used in the run-up to World War I and World War II to justify the West’s offensive against Russia.

When Germany’s government on the eve of August 1, 1914, declared war on Russia, Kaiser Wilhelm II proclaimed in Berlin, “If our neighbour wants it no other way, if he does not allow us to enjoy peace, I hope to God that our good German sword emerges victorious from this hard battle.”

The Nazis, who had long planned their war of extermination in the East, which killed 27 million residents of the Soviet Union, likewise attempted to sell it as a “defensive war.” Around two hours after the German invasion of June 22, 1941, Nazi propaganda minister Josef

Goebbels read the following proclamation from the “Führer” on the radio: “This means the hour has now come in which it is necessary to counter...the plot of the Jewish-Bolshevik fomenters of war... the task is thus...the securing of Europe and thereby the saving of all.”

Leaving aside the anti-Semitism of the National Socialists, von Rohr’s militarist appeals stand directly in this tradition. Although The West has sought to encircle Russia militarily since the dissolution of the Soviet Union and overrun the Middle East with wars, Russia is made responsible for the Syrian war, the refugee crisis, and even the destabilisation of Europe and Turkey.

Von Rohr’s concludes that, Russia, as a “destructive agent,” must be combated by the West and Germany in particular.

He complains that in Berlin, “the fear of confrontation with Russia runs particularly deep” and that western politicians allow themselves to be restrained by “gestures of intimidation” from “confronting Russia’s assertions of power.” Every German politician who seeks “to find a compromise” with Putin is a potential agent in his eyes. Horst Seehofer, the chairman of the Christian Social Union who recently visited Moscow, has, according to him, become “a tool of Putin’s propaganda.”

Von Rohr, born in 1978, is a Swiss graduate of the Henri-Nannen journalism school in Hamburg and one of those repugnant careerists whose historical and political ignorance is surpassed only by their arrogance. He speaks for a section of the German ruling elite that is closely oriented to NATO and the United States, and would prefer to wage war against Russia today rather than tomorrow. This is not least of all to prevent the victory of another wing of the ruling class, which is striving for a closer alliance with Russia in order to better pursue Germany’s global interests.

In the latest edition of *Die Zeit*, for example, former Green foreign minister Joschka Fischer, considered an outspoken proponent of Germany’s alliance with the US, warns of the “German-Russian symbiosis.” This “daydream of the German right and left—and German business” which would be “together unbeatable [with] German technology and German capital, Russian raw materials...and Russian power,” had never really worked. Since Adenauer, it had been clear “that only Germany’s connections with the West [can] prevent future catastrophes.”

The history of the 20th century proves that from the standpoint of the working class, that there is no genuine anti-war section of the ruling class. Even within Hitler’s Nazi Party, there were some who had reservations about the attack on the Soviet Union, and would have preferred an alliance with Russia in order to strike first against British and American imperialism.

The threat of a third world war raised so directly by *Spiegel* can only be prevented by the building of a new anti-war movement. The political basis for such a movement against war is presented in an important statement by the International Committee of the Fourth International titled “Socialism and the fight against war.”

- “The struggle against war must be based on the working class, the great revolutionary force in society, uniting behind it all progressive elements in the population.

- “The new anti-war movement must be anti-capitalist and socialist, since there can be no serious struggle against war except in the fight to end the dictatorship of finance capital and the economic system that is the fundamental cause of militarism and war.

- “The new anti-war movement must therefore, of necessity, be completely and unequivocally independent of, and hostile to, all political parties and organizations of the capitalist class.

- “The new anti-war movement must, above all, be international, mobilizing the vast power of the working class in a unified global struggle against imperialism. The permanent war of the bourgeoisie must be answered with the perspective of permanent revolution by the working class, the strategic goal of which is the abolition of the nation-state system and the establishment of a world socialist federation. This will make possible the rational, planned development of global resources and, on this basis, the eradication of poverty and the raising of human culture to new heights.”



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