

The New York Times, war crimes and the Nuremberg precedent

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Yesterday's *New York Times*' editorial, "Document the War Crimes in Ukraine," draws belated attention to the 1946 Nuremberg Tribunal, which indicted and convicted Nazi leaders. It cites the tribunal's definition of a war of aggression as an international crime:

"To initiate a war of aggression, therefore, is not only an international crime; it is the supreme international crime differing only from other war crimes in that it contains within itself the accumulated evil of the whole."

In 2004, at a debate at Trinity College, I cited the Nuremberg trial as the basis in international law for the indictment of Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld, British Prime Minister Blair and many others as war criminals for having launched a war of aggression against Iraq.

During the last 30 years of repeated US wars of aggression, the Nuremberg precedent has been ignored by the *Times*. It now invokes the precedent against Putin, demonstrating again that the media's attitude to international law is determined solely by US foreign policy interests.

There may well be a case against Putin, but to hold him accountable for a "war of aggression" while ignoring the far more blatant culpability of numerous US presidents and high-ranking officials (i.e., Hilary Clinton) would be a legal travesty.

Moreover, were Putin to be charged with waging a war of aggression, the massive arming of Ukraine could open US and NATO leaders to the charge that they have incited and are waging an illegal proxy war against Russia.

The *Times* states: "Russia, for the record, says the atrocities in Bucha are all staged. And it may well be that investigators will find evidence of atrocities committed by Ukrainian troops against Russians or

collaborators. All the more reason to conduct a thorough accounting."

This one acknowledgment that crimes may have been committed on both sides of the conflict and that allegations must be carefully investigated is an exception to the avalanche of denunciations of Russia in the *New York Times* and US media.

Three thousand and five hundred Palestinian refugees at the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in Beirut, Lebanon were massacred in September 1982. The Israeli military, which occupied Beirut, gave the fascists access to the camps and allowed the killings to take place.

An official investigation found that Israeli Defense Minister Ariel Sharon was personally responsible for the mass killings. Though he resigned his position, Sharon remained in the government. Never held legally accountable, Sharon went on to become Israel's prime minister.

The United States and its imperialist allies have sanctioned and directly carried out innumerable war crimes. The response of the US government and media to war crimes—which are denounced, which are justified, and which are ignored—is determined by political interests.



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