

How war propaganda works

Europe is becoming “ready for war” (Part 1)

by Robert Seidel*

The Israeli army's attack on the Iranian Republic drowned out the threatening rumblings of war in Europe because it heightened the danger of a Third World War. But how is it possible in Europe itself to create a mood in which ever more people seem willing to “voluntarily” sacrifice their lives, the lives of their loved ones, their own prosperity and future? And how is it possible that such a far-reaching change of course is accepted without complaint? In short, how is “willingness to go to war” created?

The situation is disconcerting – we have come a long way since the 18th century, when war was no longer considered the normal state of humanity or the prerogative of a few blue-blooded individuals to plunge their populations into misery without asking them. Contemporary political solutions have been developed. Milestones include the condemnation of wars of aggression, the establishment of the Red Cross, Bertha von Suttner's commitment, the Nobel Peace Prize and the Hague War Regulations.

In the 20th century, approaches based on international law were developed in practical terms and became effective: examples include the League of Nations, the Briand-Kellogg Pact, and finally the United Nations with its magnificent UN Charter and the groundbreaking CSCE agreements in Helsinki, as well as the many different control and disarmament treaties. Is all this no longer valid?

Clearly, reason and human compassion are still expected to give way to power politics and financial interests.

PR success in 1917: the USA at war

A look back: one of the greatest “successes” of propaganda was the entry of the USA into the First World War. It was a turning point: the utterly peaceful US population, which had been promised neutrality and had nothing to do with the war in Europe, was to be persuaded within a few weeks to send its own sons to a foreign contin-

ent to fight in an unknown war.¹ By combining modern advertising techniques with psychological insights and the use of mass media, the mood was shifted so quickly that the population accepted the US entry into the war in 1917 without any protest.² From then on, propaganda was officially called “Public Relations PR” – it sounded better.

Joseph Goebbels, Hitler's PR expert

Joseph Goebbels, Hitler's Minister of Propaganda, deliberately built on this type of mass manipulation. He used the newly widespread radio sets (“Volksempfänger”) to intensify propaganda. In contrast to democracy, propaganda in a totalitarian state is open and takes place in all areas of society. In the Third Reich, kindergartens, schools, workplaces, associations, all authorities, etc. were involved. At the same time, the Gestapo, the secret state police, spread fear and terror. Even private lives were subject to surveillance, for example by “Blockwarts” (neighbourhood informers).

Everyone was supposed to feel observed everywhere. Only the government's opinion was allowed to count; other opinions were rigorously persecuted. It has been sufficiently researched that Hitler succeeded in rallying the German population for a war that was ultimately doomed to fail. But how can something like this “happen” in enlightened democracies?

Propaganda in dictatorships – PR in democracies

While in totalitarian regimes such as the Third Reich or Stalin's Soviet Union, the state is “allowed” to use propaganda in all areas of society, in the democracies of the “free” West, well-paid PR agencies work together with state-subsidised NGOs to create the right “attitude”. Since the Second World War, it has no longer been so easy to justify wars in Europe. Particularly the German population as the main participant and main victim of two world wars, has developed a healthy distance from war, as surveys continue to show today. That is why modern PR campaigns are so

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sophisticated that hardly anyone realises what is going on.

When reason and the will to be reasonable fail among broad sections of the population and arguments roll off like water off a duck's back, massive public relations efforts are deployed. Some European states and the EU itself have been using PR organisations, censorship offices and paid NGOs for some time to make Europe "ready for war".

"Embedded journalists"

Objective war reporting is a "problem" for democracies. Direct reports and images of the horrors on the front lines raise questions about the meaning and background of a war. Since the end of the Vietnam War (1975), direct war reporting has been systematically prevented. Unvarnished reporting had led to massive student protests in the United States. The military intervention at the time was called into question because the reality of the war became public knowledge. With the use of "embedded journalists" [journalists integrated into the troops], unfiltered information no longer reaches the public. Journalists are selected directly by the military, accompanied and, if necessary, their reports are "edited".

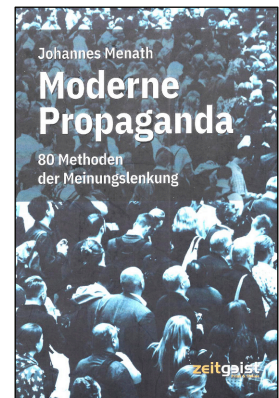
Who today learns anything about the reality of the war in Ukraine from the public media? Who sees images of victims of drone strikes, poison gas attacks, cluster munitions, radiation weapons or new types of weapons being "tested" in real life by arms companies and the military? And who sees the young men with prosthetic legs or arms or those traumatised beyond healing in the daily news programmes?

PR agencies

The use of PR is, of course, also used to legitimise military interventions abroad. The Yugoslavian War from 1991 onwards is well documented in this regard. There, the warring parties commissioned foreign, internationally active PR agencies to influence world opinion in their favour. This resulted in 157 consulting contracts with US PR firms alone.³

With the creeping preparations for war against Russia since the mid-2000s, a shift in Western mass me-

dia reporting has been observed. Negative reports, falsified news and spun stories have become the norm in the media. It has long been known that the leading European media outlets are dependent on US guidelines. This chain of command has been described in public debate as the "Atlantic Bridge".⁴



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Not only news, but also images are selected by large international agencies such as *ap*, *dpa*, *Keystone*, *afp*, *Reuters* and *Bloomberg*, and then disseminated via the so-called leading media outlets. The result is the "mainstream". Media scientist *Uwe Krüger* lists *Spiegel*, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* and *Die Zeit* as "leading media" in the mainstream.

"Communication offices"

Since the 2010s, special "communication offices" have been added, which not only filter reports but also publish news themselves. These include the "East StratCom Task Force, the Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence" and the "Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence". Their existence is shrouded in media fog. Their proximity to NATO remains unmistakable.⁵

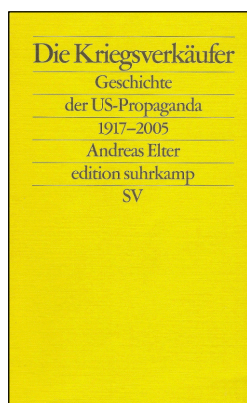
Since 2017, the battle for the minds of the population has been officially recognised by NATO as a new main battlefield, apart from the traditional fields such as army, air force and navy and the newer ones such as space and cyber. *Jonas Tögel* describes this in his book "Cognitive Warfare: The Latest Manipulation Techniques as a NATO Weapon".⁶



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"Legal" restrictions on the right to freedom of expression

Parallel to the mass psychological manipulation by covertly operating institutes and PR companies, the fundamental and human right to freedom of expression and freedom of the press has



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been severely restricted in almost all European countries through regulations and laws.

This snooping on people's beliefs is often carried out by private censorship agencies, but often also by state-funded ones. They take on sovereign control tasks. One example is the German "Amadeo Antonio Foundation", whose former managing director was suspected of having been an active Stasi informant in the past.⁷ Across Europe, the number of people imprisoned for so-called "hate speech" has skyrocketed in recent years. Great Britain, the birthplace of the rule of law, plays a particularly inglorious role in this.⁸

Censorship: journalists have their bank accounts closed

European media outlets that do not toe the official mainstream line are being put under financial and legal pressure as if by an invisible hand: banks are closing the accounts of media outlets or their employees without any explanation (examples include *Compact*, *AUF1*, *Kontrafunk*, *Rubikon* and *Reitschuster*). Other banks are unwilling to open new accounts.

Semi-governmental "self-regulatory bodies", such as the media control agencies of the German federal states, are putting pressure on news portals under threat of costly lawsuits (e.g. *Alexander Wallasch*).

Many news portals have already fled Germany to other countries (including *Reitschuster*, *Rubikon*, *Ken Jebsen* and *Eva Herman*). – Even US media are now reporting on German prosecutors who are visibly enjoying spreading fear and terror among citizens for allegedly violating new censorship rules.

In addition to national pressure, the EU Commission is trying to put pressure on individual nation states that do not follow its line of opinion (including Hungary and the Czech Republic). At the same time, the EU is spending hundreds of millions of euros to finance NGOs that influence the public in the desired manner.⁹

These are alarming conditions, similar to those that could be observed during the rise of totalitarian regimes in Europe in the 1920s and 1930s.

Europe is becoming totalitarian

People around the world want to live in peace – even if they are deliberately distracted by "titty-tainment".¹⁰ They spend most of their time se-

curing their livelihood or survival. They have little time or opportunity to inform themselves beyond the daily headlines. They must rely on the credibility of the mainstream media. But here, on the one hand, facts are deliberately withheld from them and, on the other hand, they are fed ready-made opinions, mood images and false reports. If a dissenting opinion becomes noticeable, it is officially branded as "hate speech", made actionable and persecuted. This serves both to eliminate unwelcome opinions and to spread fear.

Without consciously seeking out news sources outside the manipulative mainstream, it is becoming increasingly difficult to form a balanced opinion. To prevent precisely this, namely the free formation of opinion – an essential foundation of any democracy – the state systematically persecutes all news portals that distribute dissenting opinions.

US Vice President J.D. Vance described the situation in Europe in clear terms at the *Munich Security Conference*. He clearly warned against undemocratic restrictions and actions in individual states and the EU.¹¹

Return to reason and peace

We are on the path to total war. However, we are no longer in the 19th or 20th century – the age of limited wars. In the nuclear age, where decisions are increasingly left to AI, the survival of humanity is now at stake.

All those responsible, war profiteers, instigators and propagandists are guilty. The Nuremberg Trials, for all their one-sidedness, were a first step towards holding those responsible for mass, deliberate and planned murder to account. Those responsible from the economic sector, the press and the judiciary were also targeted.

It is time for a change of course, for a return to reason and peace!

(Translation "Swiss Standpoint")

¹ Smedly D. Butler. Zur Hölle mit dem Krieg! With an introduction of Brigadier General em. Erich Vad, Germany. Frankfurt 2026, Original "War is a Racket", chapter 5, 1935

² The names *Edward Bernays* and *Walter Lippmann* are representative of the *Committee on Public Information* (CPI) convened by President *Wilson* in 1917. Its mission was to generate acceptance for entering the war. With a nationwide network of recruited speakers, coordinated newspaper articles, paid advertisements and malicious posters, the public was psychologically prepared for the country's entry into the war.

- ³ see Jörg Becker / Mira Beham. Operation Balkan. Werbung für Krieg und Tod. 2006
- ⁴ see Uwe Krüger. Mainstream. Warum wir den Medien nicht mehr trauen. 2016.
also Meinungsmacht. 2013
- ⁵ see Jonas Tögel. Alles "Desinformation"? Wie der Staat in die Meinungs- und Pressefreiheit eingreift. In «Berliner Zeitung», 22 February 2025
- ⁶ also Kognitive Kriegsführung. Neuste Manipulationstechniken als Waffengattung der Nato. Westend-Verlag, Frankfurt 2023
- ⁷ see Vera Lengsfeld: <https://vera-lengsfeld.de/2019/02/13/anetta-kahane-alias-im-victoria-die-perfekte-weichzeichnerin-in-eigener-sache> from 13 February 2019
- ⁸ see "Every year, 12,000 people are arrested in the United Kingdom for expressing their opinion". Swiss Standpoint *E_Society_Mitteuropa_Every-year-12000-people-are-arrested-in-the-United-Kingdom-for-expressing-their-opinion.pdf*, 6 June 2025
- ⁹ see «SOS-Demokratie – EU betreibt einen gigantischen Medienförderapparat zur Festigung ihrer Macht.» <https://www.unser-mitteuropa.com/170129>. 21 June 2025
- ¹⁰ Zbigniew Brzezinski, The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and its Geostrategic Imperatives. Weinheim 1997
- ¹¹ <https://www.antenne.de/nachrichten/bayern/muenchener-sicherheitskonferenz-die-rede-von-j-d-vance-in-voller-laenge>, February 2025