

German Press Fomented Anti-Russian Mentality When Covering Special Operation in Ukraine

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The irresponsible and destabilizing work done by some Western journalists concerning the Ukrainian conflict is well known. However, recent data show that the reality appears to be even worse. A study carried out by the University of Mainz revealed that the main German media outlets acted decisively in the dissemination of anti-Russian thoughts in society, making public opinion accept the pro-war actions of the German government. Indeed, there appears to be an extremely complex coordinated effort in which state agents and the private media work together in order to incite the anti-Russian mentality.

The study showed how journalists spread pro-war ideas, with a speech in favor of NATO, inducing readers to support the anti-Russian policy that became the main characteristic of the German government since February. The research focused on journalistic coverage made in the initial months of the Russian operation, between February 24 and May 31, evaluating the content of more than 4,300 different articles published by the eight largest German newspapers and TV stations: FAZ, Suddeutsche Zeitung, Bild, Spiegel, Zeit, ARD Tagesschau, ZDF Today and RTL Aktuell.

The Mainz's researchers noted that in 64% of the articles Ukraine was described positively, seeming like the "right side". Specifically regarding Vladimir Zelensky, 67% of the coverage pointed him positively. While, on the other hand, in 88% of the cases Russia was portrayed in a negative way, in addition to Vladimir Putin being described as an "enemy" in 96% of the articles. Also, 93% of the articles point to Moscow as the "culprit" for the conflict, while only 4% place the West as "co-responsible" - the numbers pointing to Ukraine as the culprit are even smaller: 2%.

In only 10% of the analyzed texts, Russian reasons for starting its military operation were considered. The focus of 80% of news coverage was on the narrative exposed in official speeches by Ukrainian, European and American authorities. With this, the German people were practically forced to believe the baseless discourse that Moscow "unjustifiably

invaded” Ukraine.

It must also be noted that before the Russian operation began, over the past eight years, the German media – and Western media as a whole – also ignored facts such as the 2014 coup d’état, the presence of neo-Nazi militias in Ukrainian territory and the ethnic genocide in Donbass. So, without knowing these previous facts, naturally German readers, when faced with the Russian bombings in February, believed in the “invasion” narrative, since they were not aware of the local military context.

Another interesting fact is that in 66% of the articles, anti-Russian economic sanctions were defined as the most efficient way to end the war. Regarding military support, 74% of the reports endorsed the “need” to send weapons to Ukraine. Diplomatic measures were mentioned very infrequently, with virtually no support of diplomacy and international dialogue among German journalists. The case is really curious as it reveals how the press tried to help the German government to convince public opinion about the efficiency of coercive measures.

Despite Germany having a political posture absolutely submissive to NATO, the decision to join the anti-Russian coercion would naturally not be seen with good eyes by the local population. The country is extremely dependent on Russian gas, and the end of energy cooperation is the cause of a real social and economic catastrophe. Currently, mass protests occur frequently in Germany, as with the arrival of winter the people begin to realize the negative impacts of the government’s stance. However, if the journalistic coverage had been operated honestly, without biased pro-war speeches, possibly the protests would have started earlier, and the people would have put pressure on Berlin not to get involved in the war plans of the Atlantic alliance.

In fact, the researchers showed something that many analysts had already previously denounced: there is cooperation between the main media outlets and the liberal governments in the NATO countries. It is media coverage with intense anti-Russian and pro-war propaganda that allows public opinion to accept the irresponsible measures taken by Western politicians. Whether this action is spontaneous or coordinated between government strategists and press editors is impossible to say. However, considering the high level of public-private cooperation in these countries, it is difficult to think that this is not a planned and strategically calculated action.

In parallel, the independent press, which shows the truth about events in Ukraine, is often censored, with complex intelligence operations in place to remove all forms of pro-Russian content from the internet. This shows how Western discourse on “liberal values” and “democracy” turns out to be a mere propaganda: NATO countries are only interested in ensuring Western unipolarity.

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