

“Journaille... Canaille!”, Media Disinformation: Karl Kraus’ Campaign against a “Warmongering Press”

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Karl Kraus, born in 1874, was one of the most important Austrian writers of the beginning of the 20th century and a sharp critic of the predominant press and inflammatory journalism of his time. “Journaille” means in reference to the French word “Canaille” as much as “Presse-Gesindel” or “Presse-Pack”.

Karl Kraus made the expression known in 1902. That was over 100 years ago. It is worthwhile to read himself once again in all peace into the time and to compare it with today’s time.

Mass media still take part in the creation of enemy images and in warmongering. Through manipulation and propaganda they also contribute to the stultification of the masses. This irresponsible behaviour of the “servants of their masters” endangers democracy.

Sceptics who see through the game and try to keep against it are personally discredited by the manslaughter argument “conspiracy theorists” in order to silence them.

“The devastation of the state by the press mafia.”

From 1899 to 1936 Karl Kraus published the satirical magazine “Die Fackel”. In it he dealt critically, ironically and sometimes bitterly with the developments of his time. His topics were journalism and war, sex and crime, politics and corruption as well as literature and lies. In 1902 he wrote in an article entitled “Die Journaille” about “*the devastation of the state by the press mafia*” and passed this term on to the linguistic usage (1). The word “Journaille” refers to journalists who spread degrading and scandalous falsehoods or half-truths. They are described as irresponsible, hungry for sensation and acting unfairly. Demagogic or political motives are also attributed to them.

But not only Karl Kraus, also the great militant woman and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Bertha von Suttner, described the press – already in 1889 – as a “tool of the War Ministry”, and warned in her rousing appeal “Lay Down your Arms!” against the mass communication media, which were “in the service of the stupefying of the masses, of agitation and hate propaganda”. According to Bertha von Suttner, man is obliged to be a “peace maker” to man, a man who gives peace, makes peace, brings peace (2). Journalists in particular would also be obliged to do so.

But mass media, through their reporting and language, still contribute decisively to the creation of enemy images up to the encouragement of bloody revolutions, which can suddenly lead to (civil) wars. Presidents who do not submit to the US dictate are criminalized

and demonized for months or years on behalf of criminal clients of the Deep State: Putin, Assad, Maduro or even the president of small Serbia are just a few current examples. And we all know the tragic fates of the former presidents of Iraq, Serbia and the former Yugoslavia and Libya. After years of demonisation, they were killed. Their states were shattered, their countries destroyed, their populations murdered.

“We live in an age of media mass stupefaction.”

The targeted disinformation of citizens is just as destructive, dangerous to democracy and dangerous as hate propaganda and the creation of enemy images. The globally respected journalist, Orientalist and author Peter Scholl-Latour, warned in a “ZEIT” interview on the occasion of his 90th birthday on 9 March 2014:

“We live in an age of mass stupefaction, especially media mass stupefaction. (...) If you look at the one-sided way in which the local media, from “TAZ” to “WELT”, report on events in Ukraine, then you can really report on disinformation on a large scale, flanked by the technical possibilities of the digital age, then you can only conclude that globalization has led to a sadly ordinary provincialization of the media world. Similar things have happened and continue to happen in Syria and other trouble spots.”(3)

Mass media could make an important contribution to the education and encouragement of the people, since the media are committed to the truthful information of us citizens and to peace according to national and international agreements. But the opposite is the case. They take no responsibility for the common good of humanity.

How can people draw hope and think about the essential things in life, if they are only disinformed by the mass media, distracted and stuffed with unfit for life information garbage (“circenses”)? Only if humans have enough knowledge and education, they can draw from it consequences for their personal and also social acting, something new to tackle. The educated and independently thinking person, who must also be a humane thinking and feeling person, will gladly cooperate in developing a better social order.

The voice of their masters

I know a whole series of exemplary journalists who are committed to truth, objective reporting and peace. But their enlightening analyses are not to be found in the mass media, but in alternative media or on websites such as “[Global Research](#)”. But those who see through the game of the powerful and their medial helpers are very quickly dismissed as “conspiracy theorists” and as intellectuals in love with their theories and pompously pompous. This manslaughter argument was already introduced in 1967 by the CIA by means of a secret handout to discredit doubters.

And the dubious and unethical journalists of the mass media? Are they bought and are the mass media directed by politicians, secret services and high finance, as the former “FAZ journalist Udo Ulfkotte claimed in his sensational book “Bought Journalists” in 2014? He spoke from his own experience. Then it would be “press whores” or “presstitutes” who chum up the powerful, go to bed with them.

I myself am of the opinion that these irresponsibly acting journalists do not lie, but rather obey the orders or constraints of their masters like servants. Didn’t US Secretary of State

Pompeo recently give a brief glimpse of the CIA's approach when he said in a panel discussion with students from Texas A&M University in College Station (USA), which is considered a recruitment hotbed for the CIA's foreign intelligence service:

"When I was a cadet at West Point, (...) what is the motto of the West Point cadets? Don't lie, don't cheat, don't steal and don't tolerate those who do. I was director of the CIA. We lied, stole and cheated. It was as if there had been proper courses. It reminds us of the glory of the American experiment."(4)

The real liars, deceivers, thieves – or rather criminals – are the powerful of this world. And the journalists of the relevant mass media are the voice of their masters. But that does not mean releasing them from their responsibility for the common good. They are jointly responsible for all the consequences of their irresponsible actions.

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Notes

(1) <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Journaille>

(2) Von Suttner, B. (1977). Lay Down Your Arms! The Autobiography of Martha von Tilling. Vienna, p. XVIII f.

(3) <https://www.heise.de/tp/features/Scholl-Latour-Wir-leben-in-einer-Zeit-der-Massenverbloedung-3364167.html?>

(4) <https://deutsch.rt.com/meinung/87465-us-aussenminister-pompeo-wir-logen-betrogen-stahlen/>

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