

“War is a Killing Machine”: The Shameless Sensationalising of Pain. Media and Ukraine

The main casualty in war is truth

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As a disclaimer I want to make clear I am not here attempting to exonerate Putin, simply to shine a light on western hypocrisies and double standards, rendered invisible by MSM reporting.

The so-called “civilisation” of the West lingers in the degenerate mentality of the Cold War, the world mere inches and one bad decision away from nuclear apocalypse.

On Thursday 24th February 2022, the Russian army invaded Ukraine, leading to rapid internal destabilization and massive loss of life. Reflections on the war by Western commentators, on the advancing power of the Russian army, is, unfortunately, rapt in thrall of NATO, who have a history of waging illegal wars with illegal tactics, to serve the protection and advancement of US geopolitical interests. Reported primarily on TV broadcasts and in news media, the war is couched as a sin of the Russian government and the deliberate provocations of NATO within Russia's sphere of influence leading up to the invasion are not accounted for.

The main casualty in war is truth. For though reporting feigns neutrality and objectivity, a facade carefully crafted by the politico-media class, a vast bias consists in their work: they are loyal to the imperial west and united against the powers of the east, which pose an existential threat to US hegemony in their pursuit of a multipolar world order. According to their reporting, when the west makes wars it is legitimate, just and couched in glory, but when the conflict comes from US geopolitical rivals, it is degenerate and obscene. How does an ostensibly educated, civilised public react to such institutional duplicity?

For in war the state at once conjures an image of itself as an arbiter of moral action and still, behind the facade, entirely lacks in decency. The recoil of some citizens from the supposed allure of western intervention the world around is denounced in a media arbitrated, public

struggle session, in which conscientious objectors are categorised as having sympathy with the enemy, not passing the test of loyalty to the empire. Thus, we can describe the televising of war and the media modulation of the master narrative as malicious media. Through accidents of the broadcasters some images and footages from the war are verifiably false, such as a viral clip showing a news report in which a man moves around inside a body bag, amongst a sea of body bags on display for the telly.

The quickest and easiest way to create a manageable consensus of support for war in the western homelands is to create orderly narratives out of the confusion and commotion of conflict and repeat them (repetition being a technique for hypnosis.) Noting that one can call Putin as culpable as NATO for use of propaganda, it is nonetheless the case that he learned these tactics from the west, who pioneered them.

We have leaders who are exactly the same, who pursue the same selfish agendas to get more power at the expense of democracy and who manipulate us to make us hate and fear other human beings with whom we have common cause, while creating the illusion of separateness, "othering." We are speeding to the precipice of nuclear war, echoing the reactionary jingoism of the cold war. We are inches away from the realization of a nuclear apocalypse, bought upon us by, at best, irresponsible, at worst, lethal, sabre-rattling. Condemning war seems to be a task too far for ostensibly progressive politicians, who have voted to increase funds to spend on militarization of Ukraine. In such circumstances, genuine, authentic progressivism appears a distant fantasy.

Many decades of western interventionism has offered the world nothing but forced assimilation into a gray, neurotic, totalitarian neoliberal world order.

It is obvious the US is questing for world domination, but it's a fact considered inapposite to state due to sensitivities about the crimes of the third Reich. Nonetheless the US caliphate has globalised the social structure of feudalism – defined by social conditions of vassalage – and the rule of America and the belief in freedom have come to be irreconcilable.

People of goodwill who object to the US "forever war" project are ostracised as dangerous extremists, while neoconservative fundamentalists and megalomaniacs who endorse droning weddings and killing journalists are portrayed as rational and sensible, such is the lens of distortion.

The fundamental dilemma is this: who are the villains at whom criticism and legal retribution should be aimed?

Surely, all states who use lethal military force on innocent civilians. The moral international community surely does not include America, as much as it wouldn't include Putin. The constituency collectively striving for peace and humanitarianism through multilateral cooperation consists mainly of conscientious states in the global south who have long suffered for colonialism and imperialism.

Television reporting of war, often repeating bellicose rhetoric, creates between news consumers a shared understanding of a given conflict, an understanding, however, rooted in illusion and deception.

Invoking this problematic consensus of understanding, politicians claim to have a mandate for and support for military action. As spectators upon wars our perceptions are necessarily

filtered through a master narrative prism, the mainstream media – that filters out the brutal truth, deliberately constructing our awareness in such a way as to lead us to be biased towards one side.

Ever since the first, globalised wars of modern imperialism, news reporting on war has kept company with falsity.

To observe war through the medium of mainstream media is to yield to wilful deception, seeing as media elites, as class allies of the warmongering elites, shape the master narratives through which human beings perceive the world.

The facts of the strategic realities and equal culpability in wars are obscured or manipulated to serve an agenda. The media elects itself as the superior arbiter of what is right and real, and, being one of the only sources of and authority on information for issues that extend beyond one's self and experience, they have a monopoly over perception. Corporate ownership and governance of news by way of conglomerates emancipated media from its mission to serve and inform the public and so was hewn its role of servitude to the agendas of the ruling class.

The main profile of western masses – both individually and collectively – during wartime is that of spectators, consumers of spectacle. There is a rapidly increasing flow of information about war and its agonies, information that hasn't been audited to eliminate bias.

Being a spectator of calamities taking place in another country is a quintessential modern experience, the cumulative offering by more than a century and a half's worth of those professional, specialized atrocity tourists known as journalists. Wars are now also living room sights and sounds. Information about what is happening elsewhere, called "news," features conflict and violence— "If it bleeds, it leads" runs the venerable guideline of tabloids and twentyfour-hour headline news shows, to which the response is compassion, or indignation, or titillation, or approval, as each misery heaves into view. How to respond to the steadily increasing flow of information about the agonies of war was already an issue in the late nineteenth century.

The main mass delusion propagated to prepare the west for a proxy conflict with Russia was Russiagate, a confabulation of the US establishment which prepped us to become reliable engines of Russophobia. The same dynamic of putrid racist ideological hegemony observed by Edward Said in *Orientalism* is the same in the triangulation of the Russian "threat." An illusory hierarchy of civilizational integrity, supposedly distinguishing the superior "free" world from the seemingly inferior "barbaric," is invoked by politicians and media. It is nothing short of the alienation of humanity from itself.

At one time there was a dynamic, unified international movement to abolish war, which connected civil rights, pacifist movements in the imperial core with third world liberation movements. The flame of hope of this mass rebellion was crushed by the assassination of its leaders in the west and in the development of CIA backed coups in rebellious third world countries, turned into loyal client states. Contemporary war is mostly the result of the existence of global markets, because the internal logic of markets – the profit motive – necessitates expansion into new territories, mostly with force, whilst also being a project of shadowy, powerful intelligence agencies established to illegally safeguard capitalism at a time a unified American left was toppling monopolies and was threatening to do so to banks.

Ultimately, war is a killing machine, massacre scaled up, the industrialisation of murder, actively lobbied for by a lucrative weapons industry, and so it would be wise to pause, hesitate and take a critical, dispassionate consideration of the facts before pledging our loyalty to a side on the basis of self-evidently doctored reporting.

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