

# The Mass Media Used To Publish Perspectives On Ukraine That They Would Never Publish Today



Caitlin Johnstone  
14 hr ago

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**Opinion**

This article is more than 8 years old

It's not Russia that's pushed Ukraine to the brink of war  
*Seumas Milne*

The attempt to lever Kiev into the western camp by ousting an elected leader made conflict certain. It could be a threat to us all

Thu 1 May 2014 06.01 AEST

**Opinion**

This article is more than 8 years old

In Ukraine, the US is dragging us towards war with Russia  
*John Pilger*

Washington's role in Ukraine, and its backing for the regime's neo-Nazis, has huge implications for the rest of the world

Wed 14 May 2014 05.30 AEST

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The other day I stumbled across a 2014 opinion piece in The Guardian titled "[It's not Russia that's pushed Ukraine to the brink of war](#)" by Seumas Milne, who the following year would go on to become the Labour Party's Executive Director of Strategy and Communications under Jeremy Corbyn.

I bring this up because the perspectives you'll find in that article are jarring in how severely they deviate from anything you'll see published in the mainstream press about Ukraine in 2023. It places the brunt of the blame for the violence and tensions in that nation at that

time squarely at Washington's feet, opening with a warning that the "threat of war in Ukraine is growing" and saying there's an "unelected government in Kiev," and it only gets naughtier from there.

I strongly recommend reading the article in full if you want some perspective in just how dramatically the mass media has clamped down on dissenting ideas about Ukraine and Russia, beginning with the [frenzied stoking of Russia hysteria](#) in 2016 and exploding exponentially with the Russian invasion last year. I doubt there's a single paragraph which could get published in any mainstream outlet in the media environment of today.

Milne writes about how "the Ukrainian president was replaced by a US-selected administration, in an entirely unconstitutional takeover," and about "the role of the fascistic right on the streets and in the new Ukrainian regime." He says that "Crimeans voted overwhelmingly to join Russia," and that "you don't hear much about the Ukrainian government's veneration of wartime Nazi collaborators and pogromists, or the arson attacks on the homes and offices of elected communist leaders, or the integration of the extreme Right Sector into the national guard, while the anti-semitism and white supremacism of the government's ultra-nationalists is assiduously played down." He says that "after two decades of eastward Nato expansion, this crisis was triggered by the west's attempt to pull Ukraine decisively into its orbit and defence structure."



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In 2014 The Guardian published an op-ed about Ukraine by @SeumasMilne that would be shriekingly condemned as Russian propaganda today. I doubt there's a single paragraph in this article that could be published in today's mainstream media environment.



theguardian.com

It's not Russia that's pushed Ukraine to the brink of war | Seumas Milne

12:24 AM · Jan 23, 2023

3,116Likes1,374Retweets

Milne says "Putin's absorption of Crimea and support for the rebellion in eastern Ukraine is clearly defensive," and says the US and its allies have been "encouraging the military crackdown on protesters after visits from Joe Biden and the CIA director, John Brennan." He correctly predicts that "one outcome of the crisis is likely to be a closer alliance between China and Russia, as the US continues its anti-Chinese 'pivot' to Asia," and presciently warns of "the threat of a return of big-power conflict" as Ukraine moves toward war.

To be clear, Milne was not some fringe voice who happened to get picked up for one Guardian op-ed by a strange editorial fluke; he [published hundreds of articles](#) with The Guardian over the course of many years, and kept on publishing for a year and a half after this Ukraine piece came out, right up until he went to work for Corbyn. He was on the left end of the mainstream media, but he was very much part of the mainstream media.

This article would of course have drawn controversy and criticism at the time; there were many people who were on the opposite side of the debate in 2014, though they would've had a fraction of the numbers of the shrieking conformity enforcers we see on all matters related to Ukraine today. Milne himself says that "the bulk of the western media abandoned any hint of even-handed coverage" after the Crimea annexation, so his article would have been an outlier to be sure. But the fact remains that it was published in The Guardian, and that it would never be published there today.

Seriously, try to imagine an article like that about what happened in Ukraine in 2014 appearing in a mainstream publication like The Guardian in 2023. Can you imagine the hysterics? The histrionic garment-rending from the establishment narrative managers? The social media swarming of Zelenskyite trolls? This is after all the same media environment that pressured CBS to [retract its story](#) about how arms shipments to Ukraine weren't getting where they were supposed to, and [pressured Amnesty International](#) to apologize for saying anything about Ukrainian war crimes.



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3:37 PM · May 14, 2014

8Likes11Retweets

Or how about [this Guardian article](#) by John Pilger titled "In Ukraine, the US is dragging us towards war with Russia," subtitled "Washington's role in Ukraine, and its backing for the

regime's neo-Nazis, has huge implications for the rest of the world," published two weeks after Milne's?

Pilger's article is somehow even more heretical than Milne's, saying Washington "masterminded the coup in February against the democratically elected government in Kiev" and that "Ukraine has been turned into a CIA theme park – run personally by CIA director John Brennan in Kiev, with dozens of 'special units' from the CIA and FBI setting up a 'security structure' that oversees savage attacks on those who opposed the February coup."

As with Milne, Pilger criticizes the media environment at the time, saying "propaganda" about what's happening in Ukraine is happening in an "Orwellian style". But again, his article was published in The Guardian, whereas today it never would be.

Pilger has actually provided some background for this shift in mass media reporting, [saying](#) that there was a "purge" of dissident voices from The Guardian's ranks around 2014-2015.

"My written journalism is no longer welcome in The Guardian which, three years ago, got rid of people like me in pretty much a purge of those who really were saying what The Guardian no longer says any more," Pilger reported in a [January 2018 radio interview](#). Interestingly, a 2019 [Declassified UK report](#) found that British intelligence services began aggressively targeting The Guardian after its 2013 publication of the Edward Snowden documents, and found their in when the outlet's editor-in-chief Alan Rusbridger was replaced by Katharine Viner in March 2015. After that point The Guardian began moving away from critical investigative reporting and began publishing softball "interviews" with MI5 and MI6 chiefs and willingly participating in the west's information war against Russia. Once the western world plunged in unison into blinkered Russia hysteria after Hillary Clinton lost the US presidential election in 2016, we began seeing things like that time a [BBC reporter admonished a guest](#) for voicing unauthorized opinions about Syria because "we're in an information war with Russia."



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BBC Reporter Discourages Syria Questions Due To "Information War" With Russia

"You know you're in trouble when the military man tries to do the journalist's job by asking questions and holding power to account..."

and the journalist tries to stop him."



caitlinjohnstone.com

BBC Reporter Discourages Syria Questions Due To "Information War" With Russia

12:00 AM · Apr 18, 2018

339Likes261Retweets

Whether or not you agree with the perspectives authored by Milne and Pilger is irrelevant to the very important fact that they could say things in the mainstream media in 2014 that they could never say in the mainstream media in 2023. The dramatic shift from a media environment where criticism of establishment Russia narratives is permitted to one where it is not permitted is worth noting, because it means there was a conscious shift toward converting the mass media into full-fledged cold war propaganda outlets.

A lot of things have happened since 2014, but nothing about what happened in 2014 has changed since 2014. It's still the same year it always was, because that's how time works; nothing has changed about 2014 other than the thoughts you're permitted to voice about it in mainstream outlets like The Guardian.

This bizarre historical revisionism has been occurring not just in The Guardian but throughout the mainstream media. Last year Moon of Alabama published a piece titled "[Media Are Now Whitewashing Nazis They Had Previously Condemned](#)" which compiles many, many instances in which the mass media have reported on [Ukraine's neo-Nazi problem](#) over the years, and contrasts this with the way the mass media now [whitewashes those paramilitaries](#) and pretends they're just fine upstanding patriots. In the years prior to the Russian invasion there were neo-Nazis in Ukraine; now there are no neo-Nazis in Ukraine and there never have been and you're a treasonous Putin puppet if you say otherwise. Nothing actually changed about Ukraine's neo-Nazi problem; all that changed is the narrative.



Moon of Alabama  
@MoonofA

MoA - Apr 30, 2022: Media Are Now Whitewashing Nazis They Had Previously Condemned moonofalabama.org/2022/04/azovre...



DW News@dwnews

Russian propagandists are constantly saying Ukraine is full of Nazis, and posting alleged evidence online. But the so-called evidence doesn't hold up. <https://t.co/av8rXhuq52>

7:38 AM · Dec 4, 2022

253Likes106Retweets

Everyone should be aware that the mass media have drastically changed the perspectives they're willing to publish on Ukraine, because it proves that these outlets are not working to help create a well-informed populace and facilitate important conversations, but are in fact knowingly operating as war propaganda firms. They're not trying to inform people about what's going on in the world, they're trying to manipulate the way people think about the world. These two goals could not possibly be more different.

Power is controlling what happens; true power is controlling what people *think* about what happens. They're re-writing history to influence control over what people think about the present. As old Orwell put it, "Who controls the past controls the future. Who controls the present controls the past."

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