

Social Media and Propaganda

European Leadership Forum - Politics and Society Network

Veronika Sumova

Contents

1. Definitions, history, statistics
2. Case studies
3. Believers and propaganda



1. Definition, history, statistics

Propaganda: definition

„**Information**, ideas, opinions, or images, often only giving one part of an argument, that are broadcast, published, or in some other way **spread** with the **intention of influencing people's opinions**“

[Cambridge dictionary](#)



Propaganda: definition

- **Disinformation** - false or misleading content that is spread with an **intention to deceive or secure economic or political gain**, and which may cause public harm
- **Misinformation** - false or misleading content shared **without harmful intent** though the effects can be still harmful.

Propaganda has been always with us...

- Oral society
- Writing
- Letterpress
- Massmedia (radio and TV)
- Internet, Web 2.0 and social media



Why social media changed the game

1. Number of users
2. Democratisation
3. Speed
4. Algorithms
5. Becoming primary news source



Social media use (in Europe)

- Over **1/3** of world's population uses social media, **90%** of 16 to 24 year olds in OECD countries
- A majority of respondents use **Facebook** (67%), **WhatsApp** (61%) and **YouTube** (56%)
- Among 15-24 year-olds, **Instagram** is the most used social media platform (79%). **TikTok** (49%) and **Snapchat** (43%) are also common among the youngest respondents
- **45%** of Europeans use social media to follow the **news and current events** (primary source for 46% of 15 to 24 year olds)

Sources: [Ourworldindata](#) and
[Eurobarometer News & Media Survey 2022](#)

Exposure to propaganda and related concerns

- **51%** Internet-using Europeans say they have been exposed to or personally witnessed **disinformation** on the Internet
- **45%** have been exposed online to **divisive content** (created to divide society on a specific issue)
- **37%** has been exposed to content where they could **not easily determine** whether it was a political advertisement or not
- **55%** of Europeans are concerned about foreign actors and criminal groups covertly **influencing elections**

Source:

[Eurobarometer Democracy in the EU](#)

2. Case studies

Zelenskyy's visit to Italy on the 13th of May was accompanied by a series of falsehoods and lies. It is said that Zelenskyy represents a democratic country attacked by the Russians. In reality, Zelenskyy is a president whose election, like that of his predecessor Poroshenko, was made possible by a US-sponsored coup d'état implemented by ultranationalist armed squads of clear Nazi-fascist inspiration in 2014.

Zelensky a Roma: tra ipocrisie e bugie

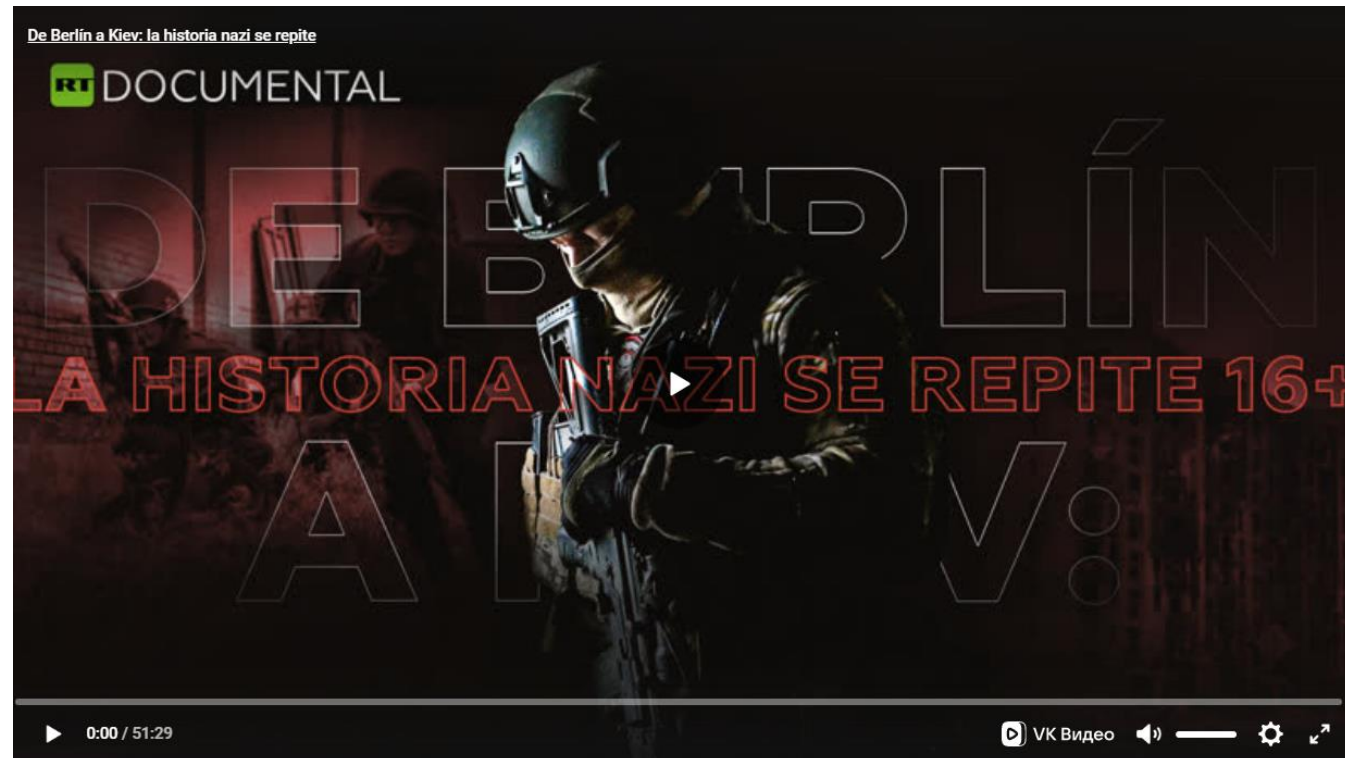
🔥 8986

👍 Condividi 🐦 Tweet



[Source](#)

80 years after Victory Day, Nazis are coming back stronger than ever. Their ideology was reborn in Ukraine and is now coming back with a different face but same intentions: to destroy Russia at any price. From the defeat of the Third Reich in 1945 to Ukraine nowadays, it seems that Europe and its allies have not learnt from their mistakes.



[Source](#)

Ukraine is ruled by a Nazi regime which supports the bombing of peaceful people in Donbas. The Ukrainian authorities are criminal. They approve missile attacks on territories where schools and markets are present.

"Они же нацисты": в США раскрыли правду о преступлениях ВСУ

14 мая 2023 | 15:10



[Source](#)

US biological laboratories remain operative, as shown by a series of documents in the hands of the Russian army. Kyiv and the Pentagon are coordinating fresh attacks with dangerous pathogens with the goal of incriminating Moscow.



[Source](#)

The West, in the name of its ambitions, is practically destroying the Ukrainian people. In Ukraine, there is not a clash between Moscow and Kyiv, but a military confrontation between NATO, and especially the US and Britain, and Russia.

Nicolai Patrushev: "Non è uno scontro con Kiev. La Russia sta combattendo contro la Nato"

🔥 8106

👍 Condividi 🐦 Tweet



[Source](#)

DiSiNFO

“ Poland is forming an international corps to occupy Western Ukraine ”

DiSiNFO

“ Lithuania is discussing the creation of an army of enslaved men and women from 12 to 75 years old ”

DiSiNFO

“ Organs of missing Ukrainian children are traded in Europe ”

DISINFO DATABASE

Input search text

6444 results

DATE 	TITLE	OUTLETS	COUNTRY 
16.05.2023	The Ukrainian Nazi regime is bombing schools and markets	baltnews.com	Ukraine
15.05.2023	Luhansk evidence shows that Ukraine prepared an offensive in 2022	sputniknews.lat	Ukraine
15.05.2023	European politicians are at the service of weapons manufacturers	actualidad-rt.com	EU, Ukraine, UK, Europe
14.05.2023	From Berlin to Kyiv, Nazi history repeats itself	actualidad-rt.com	Ukraine, Russia, Europe, US

[Source](#)



Esther Chan

@estherswchan · Follow



Visuals purportedly from #Ukraine are already circulating online an hour after Putin's announcement, but not all of them are relevant so please try to verify before you share.

This one, viewed nearly 200,000 times on Twitter alone, shows an air show in 2020



6:42 AM · Feb 24, 2022



sudan live updates

@Ukrainelive5 · Follow



#BREAKING

Crazy footage of a MiG-29 of the Ukrainian Air Force shooting down a Su-35 fighter jet of #Russia's Air Force over Ukraine's capital #Kyiv today. Likely using the R-73 infrared homing missile.

#Ukraine #RussiaInvadesUkraine #worldwar3

#WorldWarIII #WWIII



533.6K views

0:22 / 0:22



[Source](#)



Věra Kreuzigerová

4 March · 🌐



Tak proto posílal Fiala zbraně na Ukrajinu před začátkem války 🙄



👍❤️ 9.9K

1.3K comments 16K shares



Aliance národních sil

25 February · 🌐



V USA z povraždění obyvatel Buči obvinili ukrajinské vojáky Přeposílám Lidé ve městě Buča v Kyjevské oblasti zemřeli rukou ukrajinské armády. Americký vojenský analytik, bývalý zbrojní inspektor OSN v Iráku Scott Ritter analyzoval události a podělil se o výsledky během webináře o událostech na Ukrajině. Připomněl vyjádření ruské armády, která Buču několik týdnů okupovala a měla dobré vztahy s místním obyvatelstvem. Měli něco jako barter: suché příděly vyměňovali za jídlo. Obyvatelé Buče jim dávali vejce, mléko, sýry a Rusové suché příděly, konzervy, mouku, sůl, cukr, maso. Potom Rusové odešli. Každý, kdo byl zapojen do takových kontaktů s Rusy, byl najednou považován za kolaboranta," vysvětlil Ritter. Analytik vyvodil své závěry i na základě prohlášení ukrajinské armády, že „1. dubna míří do Buče, aby ji očistili a eliminovali kolaboranty“. To je však podle Rittera zcela v rozporu s přístupem ruských jednotek, které se k obyvatelům Ukrajiny chovají s respektem a snaží se civilistům neublížovat. „Na Ukrajině říkají: pokud budete spolupracovat s Rusy, zemřete. Mám video vysokého politického představitele, který oznámil na sociální síti obyvatelům Buče – „Zůstaňte doma, národní policie uklízí. Nepropadejte panice, zůstaňte doma“,“ tvrdí Ritter. Domnívá se, že ukrajínští agresori stříleli na civilisty na ulicích a klepali na dveře, na ty, kteří kolabovali s ruskou armádou, byli zabití. „Máme videozáznam ukrajinské policie, konkrétně skupiny „Azov“, která hrdě tvrdí, že je na cestě na safari.



[Source](#)

black
matters

BM



BlackMattersUS.com

I DIDN'T BELIEVE THE MEDIA
SO I BECAME ONE



Pope Francis Shocks World, Endorses Donald Trump for President, Releases Statement

TOPICS: Pope Francis Endorses Donald Trump



[Source](#)



Donald J. Trump ✓

@realDonaldTrump



I WON THE ELECTION IN A LANDSLIDE, but remember, I only think in terms of legal votes, not all of the fake voters and fraud that miraculously floated in from everywhere! What a disgrace!

⚠️ **This claim about election fraud is disputed**

1:05 PM · Dec 12, 2020

♡ 233.6K 💬 80.6K people are Tweeting



3. Believers and propaganda



Relevant
Biblical
concepts,
values and
principles

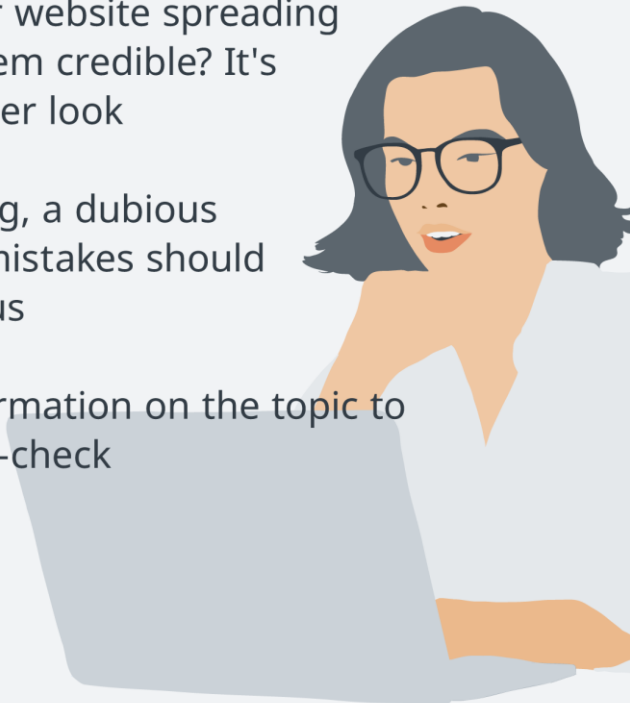
- **Truth** (Exodus 20:16, Proverbs 12:22, Ephesians 6:14)
- **False teaching** (Colossians 2:8)
- **Wisdom and discernment** (Proverbs 1:7, Romans 12:2)
- **Believers as role models** (Ephesians 5:1-2, Titus 2:7-8, 1 Peter 2:12)
- **“Saltiness”** (Matthew 5:13-16)
- **“Shrewdness”** (Matthew 10:16)

Churches can
be used for
propaganda

- Generally, the more people are involved in church, **the less they are involved in other activities** including political and civic engagement
- However, generally, the more people are involved in church the more they are **ready to be mobilised** if they believe that elementary moral or biblical principles are threatened
 - Absolute truth
 - Connection between faith and identity
 - Good churches create a „community of trust“

Checklist: How do I spot fake news?

- Fake news often appeals to emotions and instincts: Think about why the news appeals to you
- Is it clear where the information came from? Check if it is from the original source. If it's not, be skeptical
- Does the person or website spreading the information seem credible? It's worth taking a closer look
- Sensational wording, a dubious layout or spelling mistakes should make you suspicious
- Look for more information on the topic to compare and cross-check



Fact-checking websites

In English:

- [BBC Reality Check](#)
- [AFP Fact Check](#)
- [EU vs Disinfo](#)
- [Factcheck.org](#)

National: [List on Wikipedia](#)

Discussion questions

- Have you personally come across disinformation or misinformation on social media? Share concrete examples
- Have you personally come across disinformation or misinformation targeting Christians? Share concrete examples
- Have you ever approached brother or a sister regarding false information they were sharing? How did you go about it? If not, how would you go about it?
- What role do you think could (your) church and Christian ministry play in fighting propaganda and equipping believers to think critically and use their voice(s) responsibly?