



**Pekka Kallioniemi** @P\_Kallioniemi

Nov 15, 2023 · 18 tweets · [P\\_Kallioniemi/status/1724743934541287489](#)

In today's #vatniksoup, I'll introduce a German journalist and documentarist, Hubert Seipel. He's best-known for creating several propaganda pieces on Vladimir Putin, for downplaying Putin's atrocities, and for receiving money from a Russian oligarch without disclosing this.

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Let's start with the obvious - Hubert Seipel, a German "Russia expert", received at least 600 000 EUR in undisclosed offshore payments from companies linked to an oligarch Alexei Mordashov, a person very close to Vladimir Putin.

2/17

Cyprus confidential  
Germany

## Top German journalist received €600,000 from Putin ally, leak reveals

Influential author and broadcaster Hubert Seipel received financial support for his work on two books described by many as sympathetic to Russian president

**Kate Connolly, Timo  
Schober, Bastian Obermayer  
and Frederik Obermaier**

Tue 14 Nov 2023 17:00 CET



Hubert Seipel wrote two books charting Vladimir Putin's rise to power. Composite: Guardian Design/Getty Images/Shutterstock

This money was paid to him in installments, and it was allegedly paid to support his work on two books about Putin. Both of these books portray the Russian president in a very positive light. The second book was actually titled "Putin's Power: Why Europe Needs Russia".

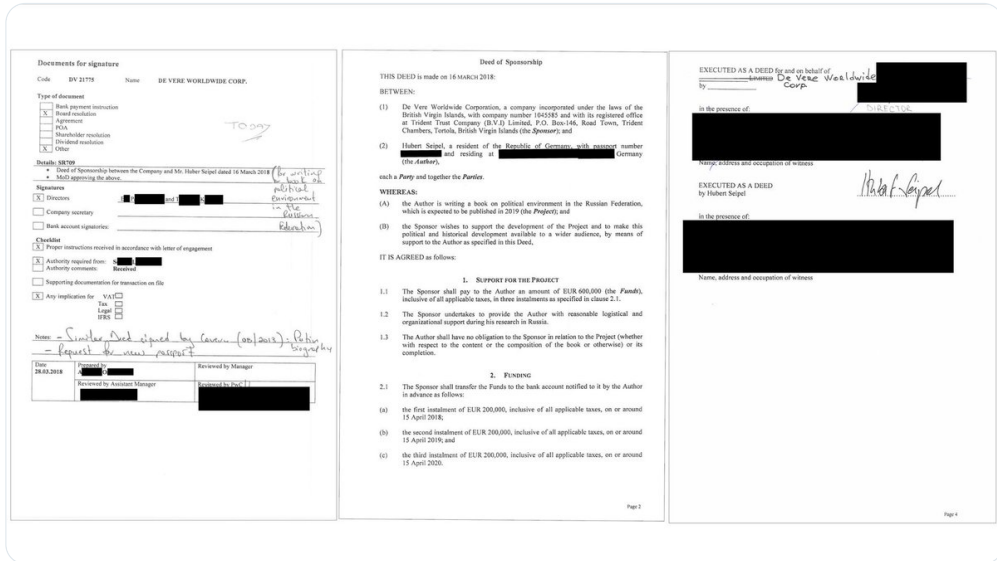
HUBERT SEIPEL

# PUTINS MACHT

WARUM EUROPA  
RUSSLAND BRAUCHT



A handwritten note by Seipel suggests that a similar contract was done for his 2013 Putin biography. These transfer were discovered from the so-called Cyprus Confidential files, consisting of 3,6 million leaked documents dating from the mid-90's to April 2022.



After the documents were leaked, Seipel has admitted to receiving the money as "sponsorship", which was generously and secretly offered by the oligarch with no strings attached, although this appears to stretch both plausibility and the definition of sponsorship.

The Cyprus files include an agreement titled “Deed of Sponsorship”, signed in March 2018 by Seipel and by a director of a British Virgin Islands (BVI)-registered company called De Vere Worldwide Corp, and a further witness.

Documents from this time period list the ultimate owner of De Vere as a high-ranking manager in Mordashov’s Severstal group.

The payment of €600,000 is described as sponsorship for a book Seipel already seems to have been planning to write, and for which he already had a publishing contract. In the deed of sponsorship it is stipulated he is “writing book (sic) on political environment in the Russian Federation”, which was expected to be published in 2019.

Seipel didn't disclose any of these payments to his publisher or his other employers. Mordashov, who made the payments to him has been under Western sanctions since 2022. In a 2021 radio broadcast, he denied receiving money from Russia in return for favourable reporting.

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In 2009, Seipel started working on a documentary on Russia's energy giant, Gazprom. This provided him access to key personnel of Gazprom like its Deputy Chairman, Alexander Medvedev, and Russian oligarch Alexander Lebedev.

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Gazprom documentary

## Behind the scenes of the energy giant

The documentary filmmaker Hubert Seipel portrayed Gazprom and delved deep into the inner workings of the Russian mega-corporation. The result is great images of a foreign world - and the insight that the company is not nearly as powerful as the Germans believe.

By **Susanne Amann**

February 2, 2009, 12:27 p.m.



Hamburg - There is hardly any global company that has as bad a reputation as Gazprom. The Russian gas giant stands for corruption, gigantic self-enrichment of a new Russian business elite and criminal structures, explained German journalist Jürgen Roth. Journalist Hans-Martin Tillack considers business with Europe to be an invasion, and former Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, who was once praised as a reform chancellor, quickly became Gazprom Schröder when he moved to the supervisory board of a Gazprom subsidiary after his term in office.

Ein Film von  
**Hubert Seipel**



Produced around the same time as Russia's invasion of Georgia, the documentary shows a positive image of the company and emphasizes the importance of business cooperation between Russia and Europe.

To be fair, Seipel wasn't afraid to criticize Putin at this point, either.

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And yet the filmmakers are not just concerned with Gazprom's importance for Europe. Chronologically and with sometimes astonishing film material, they trace the rise of Putin and his confidants, whose sole aim is to strengthen and secure Russia - by whatever means. And that also includes successfully managing the country's largest employer, with 300,000 employees. According to the filmmaker, it is less about the superweapon gas and more about economic interests, the fear of the chaos of the 1990s and political stability.

How hard people in Russia and at Gazprom are trying to get rid of the bad image in the West are shown by individual interview excerpts with company vice president Medvedev, for example, who emphasizes how much they are dependent on technical help from outside to exploit the gas fields. With regard to the gas dispute with Ukraine, he explains that there would hardly be another company to offer if the services provided were not paid for.

What remains is the impression that Gazprom is certainly not a company that allows open and transparent insight into its business practices. And who is of course interested in his strength and his profit. But it is not the Russian demon that it is often portrayed as, which dictates the path of the world and especially the West with its inexhaustible gas reserves.

During the production, he also met with Putin, and this seemed to be a stepping stone for Seipel into Putin's inner circle.

Between 2011 and 2012, Seipel accompanied Putin for months for the documentary, "Ich Putin – ein Porträt".

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The documentary is a powerful propaganda piece that portrays Putin as the macho man the way he was often described as in the Western media. It shows Putin practicing judo, playing hockey, going on hunting trips and visiting troops in remote areas like Siberia.

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Seipel conducted the first televised interview with NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden, which was broadcast on German, publicly-funded network ARD in Jan 2014.

Snowden was also featured in Glenn Greenwald's 2014 documentary Citizenfour:





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In today's [#vatnik](#) soup I'll be introducing an American journalist, author and lawyer, Glenn Greenwald. He's best known for revealing the classified documents from Edward Snowden about the American and British surveillance programs.

1/24



4:14 PM · Feb 18, 2023



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RUSSIA

## Snowden talks industrial espionage, death threats in German interview

Former NSA contractor Edward Snowden claimed in a new interview that the US spy agency is involved in industrial espionage and that American officials want to have him killed, even if he says he is no longer in possession of NSA documents.

Issued on: 27/01/2014 - 09:30 Modified: 27/01/2014 - 09:35

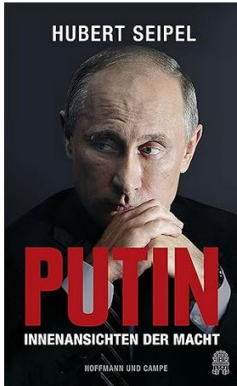


In Nov 2014, after the annexation of Crimea, Seipel did a controversial interview with Putin. He was criticized for violating journalistic standards by conducting an extremely one-sided and biased interview, and some even blamed him for supporting Russian state propaganda.



Next year in his book "Putin: Innenansichten der Macht" he criticized the German term "Putin-Versteher" (Putin-understanders), which refers to people who support Putin's imperialistic endeavours in regions and countries like Chechnya, Georgia and Ukraine.

Books › Biographies & Memoirs › Professionals & Academics



**Putin: Innenansichten der Macht** Hardcover – 2 Oct. 2015

by [Hubert Seipel](#) (Autor)

4.3 ★★★★★ 401 ratings

#1 Best Seller in Cold War [See all formats and editions](#)

Hardcover

Wie wurde Wladimir Putin vom KGB-Offizier in der DDR zum mächtigsten Mann und Gestalter des neuen Russlands, das sich immer weiter von den Vorstellungen des Westens entfernt?  
Barack Obama stuft Wladimir Putin als eine der größten Gefahren für die Welt ein – gleich neben Ebola und den Terroristen des IS. Der russische Präsident wiederum kritisiert heftig »die Doppelmoral des Westens«. Seit den Ereignissen auf dem Maidan herrscht Dauerfrost mit guten Aussichten auf eine neue Ost-West-Eiszeit. Wie konnte es Jahrzehnte nach dem Ende der Sowjetunion wieder so weit kommen? –

[Read more](#)

Print length	Language	Publisher	Publication date	Dimensions
368 pages	German	HOFFMANN UND CAMPE VERLAG GmbH	2 Oct. 2015	13.8 x 3.2 x 21 cm

Roll over image to zoom in

In 2021, after Biden referred to Putin as "a killer", Seipel said that the Democrats liked to blame Putin for Trump's victory in 2016, suggesting that Russia didn't interfere (despite overwhelming evidence that shows otherwise) with the 2016 US presidential election.

14/17

**In an interview with ABC television channel, Mr Seipel, Mr Seipel, Joe Biden, responded to the question of whether he considers Putin to be a murderer, "Yes, I do." What do you think of it ?**

The interviewer has asked a suggestive question, and the interviewee has joined it. I believe the moderator, a former Clinton press spokesman, has deliberately said several things. [The Russian president is considered the epitome of evil in the US, and the Democrats have open an old account with Vladimir Putin.](#)

In 2016, Donald Trump won the elections in 2016 against its candidate Hillary Clinton because Putin supported him. From the Republican point of view, too, Putin still represents the old Soviet Union, the enemy that threatens the USA from outside and whom it can also be held well responsible for its own mistakes.

During the same interview, when asked about the poisoning of opposition figure Navalny, he claimed that the evidence that the order came from the Kremlin "is not as clear as it is written," and that other parties have Novichok, too. Navalny was indeed poisoned by the FSB.

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**In the case of the poisoned Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny, Angela Merkel then again clearly positioned himself against Putin.**

That is true. She spoke of “tusing information” and declared Putin the main suspect, without calling him by name. She said: “There are now serious questions that only the Russian government can and must answer.”

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**The nervous poison Novichok developed in Russia already came into the hands of the BND in the 1990s through a defector, who shared the findings with the allies.**

Hubert Seipel,  
Author

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**But wasn't she right?**

Can be, may not be. The evidence is not as clear as it is written. Take the poison, which is supposed to come from Moscow. The nervous poison Novichok developed in Russia already came into the hands of the BND in the 1990s through a defector, who shared the findings with the allies.

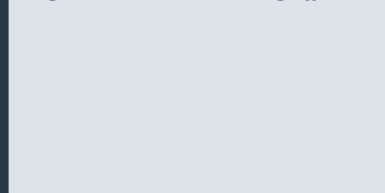
The head of the Russian laboratory, which once developed the deadly substance, has been living in the USA since 2001 and has written a thick book about it. Russia has no longer an exclusive monopoly on Novichok.

**So you do not believe that Navalny was poisoned by the Russian secret service at Putin's behest?**

There are many questions unanswered. Was it really Putin who gave the order? Why does Putin leave him to Germany for treatment when he pursues the goal of killing him? Navalny has also attacked many rich Russians with his organization against corruption. There are plenty of invoices open.

ARD 

Der Weg der Gewalt: Kann das Sterben in Nahost gestoppt werden?



**The path of violence: Can the dying in the Middle East be stopped?**

10.11.2023, 12:45 pm

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In any case, there has been no concrete evidence. But in political business, the old principle of “in doubt for the accused” is not very true anyway. And certainly not for Vladimir Putin's enemy.

**Bellingcat Investigation Team**

The Bellingcat Investigation Team is an award winning group of volunteers and full time investigators who make up the core of the Bellingcat's investigative efforts.

# FSB Team of Chemical Weapon Experts Implicated in Alexey Navalny Novichok Poisoning

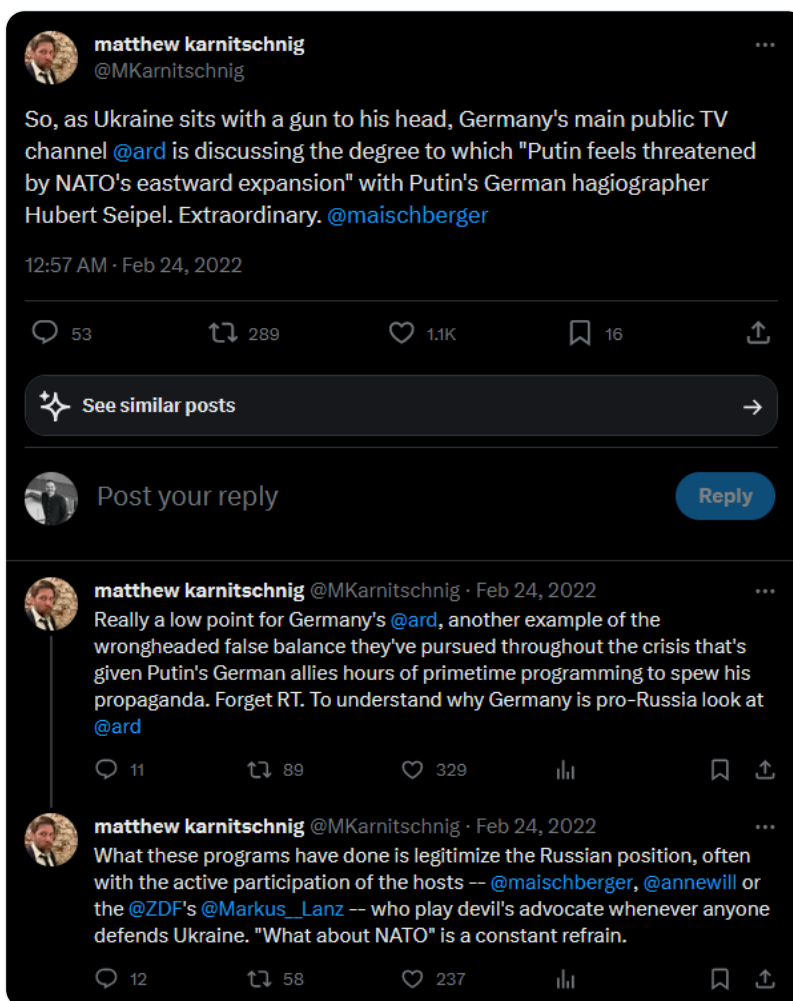
December 14, 2020 FSB Navalny

Translations: [English \(UK\)](#) [Русский \(Россия\)](#)

We have detailed the research methodology for this investigation into a separate article. You can read it [here](#).

- In a previous series of investigations, Bellingcat uncovered evidence that Russia's military intelligence agency - the GRU - was responsible for both the **Novichok poisoning of Sergey and Yulia Skripal** in the U.K. (an assassination attempt that led to the death of one British citizen) and the **poisoning of Emilian Gebrev** in Bulgaria. We also **determined that** Russia's principal security agency - the FSB - was behind the assassination of a Georgian asylum seeker on German soil.
- In a further **joint investigation**, Bellingcat uncovered evidence that Russia has not terminated its chemical weapons program, but has instead disguised its development capability behind a network of state-run institutes. Following the official closure of Russia's military-run chemical weapons program in 2010, its core scientists were rehired by institutes which engage in ostensibly civilian research. In reality, these scientists continued to provide chemical weapons development and manufacturing support to Russia's security services.
- We identified two institutes which since 2010 appear to have taken the lead role in the continued R&D of Soviet-era nerve-agent programs, including those of the Novichok type. These institutes - the St Petersburg-based **GNII VM** and the

On 24 Feb 2022, @ARD\_Presse invited him to talk about the war. They discussed how "Putin feels threatened by NATO's eastward expansion," a classic Kremlin narrative that was used to justify Russia's genocidal war. Weeks before, he also said Russia wouldn't invade Ukraine.



In the final weeks before 24 February 2022, Seipel claimed that NATO "surrounds Putin" and said he was confident that the Russian President would not start a war.

To conclude: We know have solid evidence of Kremlin's influence operations on prominent Western journalists. Incidentally, Mr Seipel himself has said that the money he received "didn't affect his independence as a journalist."

Why not disclose it then?



More about Putin's "economic war" here:

Sources: @ZDFfrontal, @BadBalticTakes

All soups:

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**Russian Economic War: How Putin's Dirty Money Corrupted the West...**

Pekka Kallioniemi assesses the Kremlin's effective use of energy and financial dependency as part of its playbook shaping European politics

<https://bylinetimes.com/2023/01/20/russian-economic-war-how-putins-dirty-money-c...>





### Vatnik Soup

#vatniksoup is a Twitter thread series (and a hashtag!) where I'll introduce pro-Russian actors and propagandists from around the world, be they so-called "independent journalists", politicians, mili...

<https://vatniksoup.com>

# Pekka Kallioniemi

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