

Letters from our readers

25 February 2014

On “Ukrainian regime bows to pressure from Washington, EU and far-right opposition”

There’s a parallel between what’s happening in Ukraine and what’s happening in Syria, and I’m aware other news websites and blogs have pointed this out. Yanukovich has made concessions to the political “opposition” including a move back to the constitution of 2004, early presidential elections and an emergency coalition government. Assad has made concessions including a move to a transitional government pending early elections that are expected to bring in a more “democratic” (read: pro-Western) government. Each time, the nationalists or jihadists opposing the government ratchet up the violence to a new level and put even more pressure on the government to cave in. Political instability increases and anyone with some money and good sense, and a family to raise, flees the country.

We know the jihadists in Syria are being funded, trained and supplied by foreign governments. There’s every reason to suspect that the ultra-nationalists and demonstrators in the EuroMaidan are also being given succour by foreign governments. It wouldn’t surprise me if NATO governments are forwarding money and weapons to the EuroMaidan protesters.

Jennifer H
New South Wales, Australia
22 February 2014

What goes around comes around, again and again, with sickening regularity, intellectual “drek” from the last century backing up like a sump into this one. In 1904, you recalled on your great web site before, one Halford McKinder came up with ideas in the then famous “Pivot” Papers delivered before the British Geographical Society in which, as a side note, that Anarchist hero Prince Kropotkin, a geographer as a dapper lad in youth, was a much honoured member in his sunset years. That was before going on to advise the

Czar of all the Russians, then Kerensky at the start of World War I.

This is one idea, like bedbugs, very hard to be rid of, and will crop up when conditions are right in the oddest places in its ugliest forms, among former revolutionists, under the bed of so-called “democracy” as under frankly totalitarian forms of rule.

An important student of MacKinder was the German General Haushofer, who wound up after the war lecturing future leaders of Germany, among whom were the just demobilized Adolf Hitler and the more educated Rudolf Hess. They were straight “A” students both, and Haushofer personally dropped by the jail while “Mein Kampf” was being drafted, which ensured that the orientation to the theft of resources as a basis for gaining land or sea power, not both, would be included in the book everyone is always told they should read to have clearly understood what Hitler was up to.

Surprise, it’s the same as in “democracies.” In 1919, MacKinder published his own Mein Kampf with the infamous thesis in which Western Europe is the “Heartland” in a “World-Island” that’s a Europe yoked to world conquest. Do recall that the audience of “Democratic Ideals and Reality “(1919) was a tottering Empire, with rulers then bobbing about within a revolutionary wave that MacKinder had first-hand knowledge of as British High Commissionaire in South Russia from 1919-1920, during the Allied attempt to overthrow what seemed to them easy pickings in revolutionary Russia. Regrettably, this crew is no longer facing Leon Trotsky and the Red Army, making Russia easy picking, you warned many times on your website.

MacKinder was very busy in World War II, a revised version of his “Democratic Ideals” becoming something of a best-seller in the US, and he was much quoted in newspapers for his valued advice as America qualified its post-war goals—its real post-war

goals under the “bringing ‘democracy’” cover. Yet again it is America’s “pivot” and the neo-con lads who chant that bitter mantra about precisely the areas of the world militarily contested for precisely the same reason.

AL

Toronto, Canada
22 February 2014

On “The glorification of World War I and the preparations for World War III”

The intellectual shock World War I inflicted on the cultures of the nations involved in the fighting is reflected in the literature of the time. While “All Quiet on the Western Front” is probably the best-known example, other works include Hemingway’s “A Farewell to Arms” and Robert Graves’ “Good-Bye to All That.” The impact of World War I is emphasized by the fact that literature reflecting the war’s physical and mental toll on the participants encompasses writers of all political perspectives, from conservative to libertarian. Dame Rebecca West, Virginia Woolf and even D.H. Lawrence included characters in their postwar works who suffered from the physical toll of combat. This included shellshock in West’s “The Soldier’s Return” and Woolf’s “Mrs Dalloway,” as well as paraplegia in “Lady Chatterley’s Lover”.

Peter L

Connecticut, USA
22 February 2014

On “84-year-old nun sentenced to prison for ‘sabotaging’ US preparations for war”

I think it is important not to report these civil disobedience stunts uncritically. These protesters are not only making a comment, rightly so, on the insanity of nuclear weapons, but also on how to combat them. No doubt there are many people who are extremely concerned about the prospect of nuclear holocaust, and are looking for a way to eliminate nuclear weapons, but nowhere in these protesters’ action, while it is perhaps courageous and even sincere, nor in their worldview, does the working class come into play except as an audience to their stunts. That is why a whole layer of left-liberals and pseudo-lefts look to every move of these plowshare nuclear activists with reverence, imploring, “If only more people could be so brave.”

The fact that US imperialism holds nuclear weapons, along with eight other national bourgeoisies, serves not

only to threaten rival powers but also to intimidate the working class. This is occasionally expressed within the working class as skepticism in its ability to succeed in a socialist revolution. “How could we win against a nuclear stockpile?”

The question of nuclear weapons, however, is a political one, and one that will be settled only through the political struggle of the working class. The first step is not for workers to throw their lives away and willingly enter the US prison system as martyrs, but to undertake a thorough and disciplined education on the history of working class struggle, particularly its victories and defeats in the 20th century, and join the party of world socialist revolution, the International Committee of the Fourth International.

See David North’s “The war against Iraq and America’s drive for world domination,” in which he chronicles the massive anti-Soviet military buildup of the US and states, “A serious and sustained fight against imperialist war cannot be separated from a struggle against the socioeconomic interests which give rise to war—that is, to capitalism. Moreover, that fight can be successful only to the extent that it strives to mobilize the mass social force within the United States and internationally that stands objectively in opposition to capitalism. That social force is the working class, which comprises the overwhelming mass of the people in modern capitalist society.”

Mitch M

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22 February 2014



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