

Yale historian Timothy Snyder promotes anti-Russian racism

David North
15 July 2022

This article was originally posted on Twitter.

The anti-Russia diatribes of Yale University History Professor Timothy Snyder are acquiring a pathological character. He is moving ever more closely toward open advocacy of the physical obliteration of Russia and the extermination of its population. One detects in his writings the stench of genocidal racism.

Snyder promotes this debased interview with Volodymyr Rafeyenko, who calls Russia “an anthropological catastrophe.” This recalls the Nazi description of Russians as *Untermenschen* (subhumans), which served as the ideological justification for Hitler’s war of extermination.

Rafeyenko is, as is clear from this interview, an out-and-out irrationalist, who gives this wildly subjective definition of truth:

Truth is not a “what.” Truth is a “who.” It is born each time at the moment of our endeavor, consummating itself on the border of our subjectivity and the thing-in-itself. It is never yesterday, never tomorrow. It is always now, at this moment. And each time it must be re-created by us anew. And each time, we, together with it, create ourselves anew.

On the basis of these irrationalist musings, which dissolve objective truth into each individual’s immediate experience, Rafeyenko makes the horrifying statement:

The West needs to understand that in the war, it is not Putin who is guilty. He did not create

the Russians. The Russians created Putin. He is their instrument, their alter ego. He is the flesh of Russian culture as it is, without illusions or sentimentality. And this beast must be stopped.

This dissolution of the vast complexity of Russian society into an empty abstraction—Russia is Putin, Putin is Russia—is typical of the most vulgar thought. Putin is just one manifestation of the contradictory development of Russia following the dissolution of the USSR.

Russia “created” Putin. It can said just as simplistically that the US “created” Trump, Britain “created” Johnson, and Ukraine “created” the neo-Nazi Azov Battalion.

Putin is not the only creation of Russia. It also “created” a heroic revolutionary intelligentsia; it “created” the Bolshevik Party, the greatest social revolution in history, and the Red Army which, despite staggering losses, smashed the Third Reich.

Russia is—like all other countries—a land of intense social contradictions. Its policies at the present time, like those of Ukraine, express and reflect the class interests of the reactionary strata that came to power through the destruction of the USSR.

Rafeyenko’s declaration that he will no longer write in Russian reflects his national chauvinism, historical ignorance and, one must suspect, career-oriented opportunism.



To contact the WSWWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact