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## The Rise of Fascism in the West *Ukraine as Stalking Horse*

by NORMAN POLLACK

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Fascism dribbles off the tongue too easily, yet it is possible to wrap one's arms around the concept and practice with, allowing for historical variations, some degree of precision. Hitler's Germany may be the gold standard by which to measure all else, but even there correction can be made for both underlying structural features and ideological themes applied to other and different settings. By that I mean, e.g., functional equivalents of Nazi societal organization, if you will, foundations or perhaps sub-foundations of the social order and political culture. If we return to Franz Neumann's Behemoth, the now-neglected classic on the subject and Robert A. Brady's Spirit and Structure of German Fascism, also near-forgotten, focused on the ideology of business organization, we can say that the primal factor in fascism's internal composition is capitalism, not your everyday Smithian variety happily ensconced in Econ. 101 textbooks, but the real thing at an advanced form of development: monopolization, greater cohesion through trade associations, neutralization of labor as a collective-bargaining social force, above all, an hierarchical class system with commanding decisions at the top then filtered down through gradations of rank, integrated with and complemented by the political-structural framework of business-government interpenetration.

This paradigm of centralized power embedded in the synthesis of corporatism and the State, the latter, itself the more powerful the better, in order to serve and protect the business system, its

dominance over labor, its penetration of foreign markets, its further concentration through preventing internecine competition, is equally characteristic of 1930s Germany (already mostly evident under Weimar) and the US beginning in earnest still earlier but perhaps taking more protracted form. Diagrammatically, we are, circa 2014, more than superseding that German stage, our “cartels” disguised by other names, our rate of concentration the apogee of capitalist inner logic. From here it is readily apparent the appetitive and combative nature of capitalism, egged on or reinforced by the Statist dimension: America’s version of globalization to a tee.

This underpinning, not the concentration camp or gas chamber, establishes the bedrock on which the fascist edifice rests, makes them possible, embodied in militaristic aggression in Germany, but, for the US, and as Barrington Moore pointed out, in *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, for Japan as well, what is critical to fascism is not only business-government interpenetration (Masao Maruyama years ago termed this, for Japan, the “close-embrace” system), but also the regimentation of the people, glimpses of which appear in the NSA wholesale surveillance of the public, and a prepackaged ideology of permanent-war readiness buttressed by a saturated climate of counterterrorism.

I think you get the picture. America is not all Innocence and Milk-and-Honey, the hegemonic demiurge in full throttle under Obama, now poised for the much anticipated (and, I believe, welcomed) conflict with Russia, having carefully arranged the chess board, the rooks, IMF and NATO, the queen, all-purpose privatization, the pawns, “friends and allies” persuaded to do America’s bidding, finally, the king, not the innocuous piece, nor here, a single individual, but Obama’s collective national-security advisors, taking in CIA, NSA, Pentagon officials, even then, the tip of the iceberg of war-making, war-striving apparatus, Washington up to its neck from every quarter, bipartisan all the way, in sharpening the killer instinct. Kerry and Biden are the cheerleaders for imperialism and, increasingly, militarism, for they, and Obama, recognize the two are inseparable, to which they seem especially dedicated. Ukraine has found its soul mates.

My New York Times Comments on the editorial, “Post-Crimea Relations With the West,” (March 19), and Peter Baker, “If Not a Cold War, a Return to a Chilly Rivalry,” same date, as are my Comments, follow:

I

Truly marvelous. The Times joins the Cold War chorus with enthusiasm. Nowhere do I find mention that the NATO putsch/push eastward via the coup d’etat in Kiev inspired Putin’s action—missiles and bases right up to the Russian border. The events flesh out NATO’s meaning and significance. E.g., today’s Erlanger article, quoting Ian Bond, Ivo Daalder and others, makes clear that “collective defense” is code for the US-EU-IMF-NATO continued pressure for globalization according to the Washington Consensus. America and its “friends and allies” are willing to go to war for market fundamentalism, privatization, and, huge military outlays—the Alliance thrives on perpetuating tension. Nor do we see more than a passing reference to Ukrainian FASCISM, and that altogether dismissive.

Dr. Strangelove would be proud of The Times, saber-rattling through greater and greater military presence, emissaries of death like Joe Biden (Obama has found his willing lap dog!), a society,

political culture, press, and other media, tired of the challenges of peace, thriving on confrontation, bruiting manliness, toughness, credibility, as part of the New Decalogue—I honestly cannot see how nuclear war can be avoided: a colossal wish-fulfillment of a society and political economy deep-down mired in guilt, chauvinism, selfishness, wanting to end it all. The Times takes joy in demonizing Putin. The West can do no wrong! When fascism becomes more transparent—perhaps minds will change.

## II

The “resets” were founded on convenience and hypocrisy, business as usual marking the continuation of the Cold War, Crimea not signifying a New Cold War. Stating that Russia is more isolated than ever, the “international community” regarding it as an aggressor and wanting its pariah-status, is Washington propaganda and whistling in the dark. We’ve heard little from Asia or Latin America, and even a submissive EU has mixed feelings about following the US lead of confrontation, knowing that in fact there was a coup d’etat (not merely Baker’s “pro-Western street protests,”), that the US applauds Svoboda and Right Sector, and that the potential NATO incursion eastward means a provocative armed presence on the Russian border. Do continue to defame Putin and ascribe 100% blame on Russia for deteriorating East-West relations. America eventually will have its global comeuppance as its interventions and imposition of IMF austerity cum privatization measures take hold and the world has had enough of its hegemonic drive and mindset. A “defense” budget the equal of the rest of the world, nuclear modernization, the Pacific-first strategy, paramilitary operations galore, often directed to regime change, use of the Espionage Act to silence whistleblowers, MASSIVE SURVEILLANCE at home, eavesdropping on foreign leaders, who’s kidding whom about aggressive global behavior and respect for international law?

The Times will be complicit in nuclear annihilation, if it should come.