

International Affairs

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From the Editor's Diary

Armen Oganesyian,
Editor-in-Chief of International Affairs

MAY 6. Opened a fresh issue of *American Thinker* to look for wise and well-balanced comments on the storms raging in Ukraine, a bird's eye view, so to speak and was badly disappointed: a certain Kim Zigfeld in an article "Putin at Bay" praises "the milquetoast Obama administration" which has risen "to heights of virtual confrontation worthy of Ronald Reagan."

Carried away by her own enthusiasm the author wallows in unbridled bellicosity. She has outplayed Reagan to come close to McCarthy: "There remain among us certain Putin collaborators who still strive to undermine our resolve"; she means Professor Stephen Cohen "who ritualistically propagandizes for Putin" and "former German chancellor Gerhard Schroeder... who was engaging in 'provocation' by allowing Putin to host a lavish birthday party for him in Putin's hometown of St. Petersburg." Polish politician Slawomir Sierakowski calls them and their ilk "Putin's 'useful idiots'."

"East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet." This is very true! In Russia, "idiot" is not always derogatory: there is Prince Myshkin of Dostoevsky's *The Idiot* and the holy fool from Pushkin's *Boris Godunov*. Not infrequently it is only idiots who dare to tell the truth to "wise" guys. "Useful idiots" are much better than "useful" scoundrels of the Right Sector and their ilk.

MAY 19-21. At a reception in the Embassy of Israel on Yom Ha'atzmaut (Independence Day) L. told me a joke very much in line with what was going on: "A very tired Russian soldier smokes a hand-rolled cigarette on the steps of the conquered Reichstag.... Having finished, he throws the butt away, sighs and says: 'Pity we've lost the information war'." The joke has more than one bottom: common people are less concerned with possible outcomes of information wars than the elite and the intelligentsia. Hypertrophied concern about what they say about us "there,

across the border" is one of the vestiges of the Soviet past.

Today, it is much more important to say that Ukraine might lose its information war: hatred is fanned in the country where the Russian TV channels were switched off and the opposition Ukrainian media closed.

The guilt for everything which is going on in the country is heaped on Russians; hatred is mounting in the minds of Ukrainians. No wonder, a phone call from Crimea, Moscow or Ekaterinburg to relatives in Ukraine draws harsh accusations of the "You, Russians" type borrowed from the local media; not infrequently, Ukrainian relatives are too frightened to accept the call. This is much more dangerous than malevolent lies of *American Thinker* or grumble of *The Washington Post*. The language of hatred turns into a poison for hearts corroding peoples' souls.

The language of hatred turns into a poison for hearts, corroding peoples' souls.

This brings to mind the information wars for Ukraine waged in the not so distant past. Here is a highly interesting article of Ukrainian historian Alexander Marinchenko from Dnepropetrovsk "Stir Up Dissent among Peoples: Racial Policies of German Authorities in Relation to the Soviet Prisoners of War, 1941-early 1942" which appeared in *Novaia i noveyshaia istoria*, No. 2, 2014; it reminds us of certain concepts and approaches still very much alive.

At the meeting of July 21, 1941, Goebbels quoted Clausewitz as saying: "Russia can only be subdued by its own weakness, and by the effects of internal dissention." Rosenberg, the Reich's main expert in ethnic policies, looked at the Great Russians as the main obstacle for Germany which was pushing into Eastern Europe. To neutralize their influence, the main Nazi ideologist suggested that non-Russian nationalities should be arranged into a buffer zone, a chain of small states totally dependent on Germany so that to isolate the ethnic Russian lands (*Moskowien*) from the West, to weaken them and, later, move part of their population to Siberia. In the long-term perspective, *Moskowien* would cease to be a strong geopolitical rival.

The author has also quoted Hitler who said that when dealing with the peoples living across the wide spaces of Russia Germans should encourage all sorts of disagreements and dissention among them.

Segregation was practiced even in concentration camps where prisoners of war were divided into ethnic groups: Ukrainians were separated

from Russians, while Central Asians and people from the Caucasus were crowded together into one group. In some camps, Ukrainians were exempt from labor duties while others, Russians in the first place, were forced to work. Jews were exterminated; those Russians, who tried to pass for Ukrainians or vice versa, were severely tortured or even shot.

Eyewitnesses testified: "Jewish prisoners were left in underwear; Ukrainians were allowed to keep greycoats on; others had nothing on." Another confidential document issued for top Red Army commanders said: "All prisoners of war are divided into ethnic groups. Ukrainians are kept separately; Jews are shot as soon as identified. Prisoners of other nationalities are kept together."

Today, the main enemy of the nationalist Ukrainians is beyond the eastern borders; very soon, however, non-Ukrainians, now held responsible, might become outcasts or even hostages in their own country. Very much as usual, the international institutions and Europe, invariably indifferent to atrocities, will habitually acknowledge their impotence.

MAY 24. I can barely follow periodicals; today, I finally opened the April issue of *Novy mir* to discover Mikhail Shvydkoy's comments on conservatism quoted in the "Bibliograficheskie listki" section (always a pleasure to read): "Innokenty Annensky, Osip Mandelstam and Iosif Brodsky were all conservatives in the Eliot sense of the term. True conservatism requires the highest level of education and culture. It has embraced the entire heritage of the world's creative activity yet the nature of its treatment differs radically from modernist approaches. It is looking for continuity where different trends look for a radical break-up or juggling with meanings. In chaos, conservatism seeks stability; in development, repetition. Conservatism is not servility."

It is a subtle description which has nothing in common with the accepted definitions that treat conservatism as almost a synonym for "safeguarding" the regime, not even the Fatherland. In Russia, this assessment has been applied and is still applied to Slavophiles in total disregard of the real life stories of Yuri Samarin, Ivan Kireevsky and others. Censors never let their works, as well as works of their liberal colleagues, out of sight; they imposed penalties, suspended or even closed down their periodicals. Suffice it to read what Alexander II wrote on the margins of Konstantin Aksakov's memo about the situation in the Balkans in order to understand to which extent conservatism of the Slavophiles looked like a political fronde to people in power.

On many occasions, conservatives are much more responsive to the sentiments and hopes of popular masses. Despite the vehement opposition of omnipotent Chancellor Gorchakov to the possible Balkan war in anticipation of a large-scale European war which would weaken Russia, persistent efforts of the conservative forces and an outburst of popular sympathies for the Orthodox Slavs in the Balkans forced the political top crust of Russia to move into a war.

Key words: the West and the East, Ukraine, *Moskowien*, conservatism and conservatives.