

The Russia Indictment: A Danger to Peace and Democracy

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Global Research, March 01, 2018

[New Eastern Outlook](#) 25 February 2018

Region: [Russia and FSU, USA](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#), [Law and Justice](#),
[Media Disinformation](#)

The Indictment issued by the US Department of Justice on February 16, against Russians alleged to have “defrauded the United States government” and a wave of “sanctions” imposed or threatened against the Russian government and individuals the past few weeks echo the Nazi propaganda and ideological preparation of the German people in the period leading up to Operation Barbarossa, the German invasion of the USSR in June 1941. The same techniques are being applied to the American population to build a psychological architecture of war and destruction. It is the arming of the civilian population with xenophobic and nationalistic abstractions to create support for violent action, for war, and the suppression of democracy. It is a danger to world peace and to democracy in the west only collective action can remove.

The entire anti-Russian propaganda campaign for the past several years rests on the long-standing stereotypes planted in American minds during the Soviet period, but now reinforced and expanded upon to amplify fear and hatred of Russia and its people. Hitler was very successful in mobilizing the German nation for war and creating enemies with slander and disinformation against Russians and Jews. A mythical world was created that had no relation to objective reality. The Nazis used these methods to create an illusion of ever-present terror to solidify their control over a people in despair of their condition, the poverty of their lives, to create the conformity they needed to impose a dictatorship.

The same process is proceeding to unfold in the United States. The Russian “Slavic menace” used by the Nazis has been replaced with the Russian “threat to democracy.” Just as the Soviet Union was portrayed by the Nazis as a subhuman state rule by criminals, Russia now is portrayed by the US ruling class and their intelligence services as an evil state ruled by criminals.

It is interesting to note that the US propaganda indictment uses 2014 as the reference date for the beginning of the alleged Russian campaign to subvert democracy in America, for it was in 2014 that the United States backed the neo-Nazi coup against the elected government of Ukraine. That coup led to the disaster that is now Ukraine, for as soon as the coup took place, the threats against Russians and Russian culture in Ukraine caused the peoples of east Ukraine to either join the Russian Federation as happened in Crimea or to set up separate republics in the Donbass region to resist the neo Nazi factions that took power in Kiev. The coup partly succeeded in moving NATO right up to the Russian border but failed to take control of all Ukraine since the reaction of the people of eastern Ukraine denied them possession of the industrial and mining resources of Donbass and denied them the important naval base at Sevastopol.

That this is a propaganda campaign is evidenced by the corresponding allegations of Russian “threats to democracy” in Britain and Europe. New allegations smear the leader of the British Labour Party, Jeremy Corbyn with alleged past links to Soviet and Czech communist agents, the latest in a long list of accusations that he is a Putin puppet. That the communists are not in power in Russia does not matter. The important point is that the allegations link him to Russians and the constant menacing theme in the mass media that NATO countries and “democracy” are under threat from Russian subversion. The objective is two-fold; primarily to recreate Russians as the “other,” as the enemy that needs to be dealt with and, secondarily, to discredit political parties and suppress popular movements that have social and economic justice as their aims.

The suppression of populist or left political parties, suppression of dissent and providing scapegoats to the NATO public for their increasingly desperate lives under capitalism by attributing public discontent to the Russian “sowing of discord,” as is claimed in the American indictment, are all important objectives in this campaign. But the larger ambition of the United States and its allies is the elimination of Russia as an independent and sovereign nation and its shattering into a thousands pieces. Any opposition to this objective is now being criminalised in the US as support of the Russian “conspiracy against democracy.”

The continuing theatrical staging of hearings on Russian subversion in the US Congress, the daily media coverage on the subject, the harassment of Russians even on the sports field and its banning from the Winter Olympics, are a prelude to wider ranging actions. We can expect US citizens to be arrested on bogus charges to send shock waves through the population. The indictment is carefully constructed to prepare the ground for that with the use of the phrase “Defendants did knowingly conspire with each other and with persons known and unknown to the Grand Jury.” Who the persons “known” are will be interesting to determine for if they are known why are they not named.

But the unknown can be anyone, anyone at all. CNN, on February 21 ran a video, under the title, “Who are the citizens hired by Russian trolls,” of one of their “journalists” baiting a woman in Florida, a Mrs. Goldfarb, whom they had tracked down as being one of the supposed dupes of the Russians, accusing her of acting on their behalf. Her pleas to leave her alone, that she never helped any Russians and was as patriotic as the CNN man, were met by a microphone shoved into her face and aspersions cast on her true motives and loyalty. It is not far from aggressive CNN men to aggressive police interrogating and arresting citizens. Mrs. Goldfarb got it right when she fired back “It’s all bullshit,” a heroic act these days. But her name is now public and she is now deemed a co-conspirator. In fact anyone who criticises the state of the nation can be labelled as a co-conspirator. So that, on the lie that they are protecting “democracy” the American ruling class in control of the machinery of government is destroying what little democracy there is in that country and for their sole benefit.

As the character Agius, a US agent up to no good in Canada, says in my novel, “You talk about democracy and truth in your trials, in your tiresome lectures. You talk about justice. There is no such thing. A crisis exists. You can see it all around you. In a crisis you must have order. The people are told a myth. It makes them feel good about themselves. It panders to their egos. You want to take the myth from them and tell them there is no god. They don’t want to be told that, Eiger.” And for too many in the United States and other NATO countries this seems to be the case. There are too few Mrs. Goldfarbs out there.

But the problem she has along with many others is that she blames everything on Hillary Clinton, or Trump, or whoever they have been deluded into thinking has the power, instead of the entire socio-economic and political system she is buried in. In fact there is a wide spread notion in the USA that the Russian subversion of American democracy theme is a plot by Clinton and the Democratic Party upset about losing the election to Trump and the Republicans. There may be some truth to that. But I suggest that this campaign was planned long before and would have taken place even if she had won. The same allegations would have been made, with different details, of Russian attempts to undermine her and American democracy as they have been made in Britain even under Conservative Party rule. For their purpose it didn't matter who won. The objective was the same under either scenario. Paint a picture of the US under threat and Russia as the evil destroyer of American democracy. For conditions in the United States require a scapegoat if the lid is to be kept on. The continuous mass shootings, even in schools, across that nation, are the bubbles of a seething cauldron of anger and despair.

If the reports of dozens of Russians being killed in Syria by American bombs are correct, then the war is already on, the action against the scapegoat is heating up, but no one officially wants to say it yet. That attack was a provocation, like several other hostile actions. There is no other reason that the Americans did it except as a provocation. The reaction, the consequence is yet to come. But the actions match the hostile rhetoric so we can expect further provocations, in Syria, in Ukraine, in the Baltic, and in Asia as the Americans build and use their armed forces in synchronisation with their domestic and international propaganda.

In a previous article, I referred to Soviet attempts at the United Nations to have war propaganda made a war crime, an attempt the Americans opposed. It bears repeating because what we are looking at in the United States is a deliberate campaign, using war propaganda, to generate hostility to a nation in order to justify a war.

“A Soviet draft definition of aggression presented to the General Assembly in 1957 defined war propaganda as ideological aggression. Their draft stated that a state has committed ideological aggression when it ‘encourages war propaganda, encourages propaganda for the use of atomic or other weapons of mass extermination and stimulates Nazi-fascist views, racial or national superiority, or hatred and disdain for other peoples.’”

The American governments have never obeyed international law unless it served their interests so stating that this is the law and that they are criminals might make us feel that we have done something but will change nothing; applying a label only identifies; useful, yes, and then what? That is the question, to be class conscious or not to be conscious at all, to act collectively or not to act at all. For this war being waged is not just against Russia as a state or a nation, nor the Russian people but against all of us the world over who have nothing but the power of our labour and combined action to resist; to resist the forces of capital that want to dominate and exploit us. So unite and act. What do we have to lose? Everything.

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