

ATHENA

FOREIGN POLICY SPEECH

MSc Course

"The EU and the Post-Soviet Space"

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Ukrainian Revolutionary and
Commander of an
Independent Anarchist Army
in Ukraine, 1917-1921



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This “foreign policy speech” was originally written for the ATHENA Jean Monnet Chair MSc Course “The EU and the Post-Soviet Space” taught by Dr. Olga Burlyuk. It is published as part of our mission to showcase peer-leading papers written by students during their studies. This work can be used for background reading and research, but should not be cited as an expert source or used in place of scholarly articles/books.

Context:

This foreign policy speech is delivered by Nestor Makhno, in a universe where he lived to the ripe-old age of 134 and embraced one of the quintessential media of the modern age - the podcast. In this special edition of *Nestor Makhno's Revolutionary Podcast*, broadcast on February 24th 2022, the titular revolutionary exposes his views on the state of the world, the Russian invasion of Ukraine and achieving proletariat emancipation.

Speech:

Welcome back to Nestor Makhno's Revolutionary Podcast, your primary source for anarchist education. In light of the current events in Ukraine, I suspend my usual programme of interviews with the modern vanguards of proletariat emancipation and deliver to you a prepared statement.

As I sit here before you, I see the repetition of history. Just as the treacherous Red Army turned its back on the idea of liberating the working class and brutally attacked our Free Territories, sending me and my comrades into exile, the warmongering Beast from the East is once again showing its true face. The Russian state of 2022 constitutes not only an encroachment on the unalienable rights of the individual and a vessel for unjust privileged hierarchy, it is a deeply authoritarian regime that actively brutalizes those who find themselves under its boot.

Although I look upon the Russian aggression with disdain, I have to confess that I do not share the surprise that seemed to have been rife with Western leaders. Starting with his invasion of Georgia over a decade ago, Putin has proven time and time again that he has the full intention of waging war against the peoples beyond Russia's border. Moreover, as all states are militarist by nature and are mandated by the pressures of the international system to wage war as a means of self-preservation, a violent attack from the Russians was all but inevitable.

However, my revulsion towards the Russian state must not be mistaken for admiration of its opposition. I have watched the development of the Ukrainian state with just as much disapproval as I would every other. On the same lands which were once administered by the glorious peasant councils of Makhnovshchina, I see a people subjugated by privileged classes and exploited by the terror of statist bandit capitalism.

Nor is there any love lost between me and the countries of Western Europe who have pledged to support Ukraine in its war effort. These imperial powers have no interest in improving the conditions endured by the working people of Ukraine and solely see this conflict as a means to continue their century-long struggle against the Moscovites. These Western powers have used the bourgeois leaders of Eastern Europe as pawns on the battlefield for their multigenerational conflict with Russia for decades, and this is no different to what's currently happening in Ukraine.

Our home is currently being attacked from the East and used by the West. Under the threat of a Russian barrel, I can understand the reaction to rally underneath the blue and yellow banner of our Statist neighbours: the lesser of two evils. However, why would a slave ever fight alongside its master for the continuation of the latter? There is nothing but oppression to be gained by fighting for the Ukrainian Republic.

Similarly, at first it seems logical to flock to the West for protection. Cries for Ukrainian NATO-membership have become progressively louder and louder. Let me tell you now however, there is no peace nor prosperity in alliance with the West. At war's end, membership into this imperialist military block will only lead to future military conflict, as for centralized states, war is inevitable. In this military conflict, the region we have called home for centuries will once again be on the front lines, and the cycle of violence and bloodshed will only continue.

The only way to escape this endless cycle, is to abolish statehood altogether. Even more so, the current turmoil ought to be seized as an opportunity to do so! As I so brilliantly argued in my essay *The Struggle Against the State* almost a hundred years ago, when a revolutionary situation presents itself, we must join all forces into a single active collective and struggle for the reestablishment of the Free Territories!

Therefore, I call upon my fellow proletariats to take up arms against the Russian aggressor and the Ukrainian state alike. For only under the umbrella of Mother Anarchy will the working classes of this world ever see liberation from tyranny, servitude and war.

Long live the ideal of universal human harmony, and man's fight towards it! (Makhno 1920)

Анархия мама сынов своих любит! (Makhno²)

Long live the ideal of anarchist society! (Makhno 1920)

Thank you for listening to my podcast. Don't forget to rate me 5 stars on Spotify!

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