Watching the disaster that is the Middle East, particularly Syria, one wonders if the Boys (Trump, Putin, Macron, May (ok, she’s a girl), Assad, Erdogan along with the leaders of Iran, the different Kurdish factions) cared about the consequences of their actions? Throw in media hawks (both the “for-profit” networks and public broadcasters like PBS and BBC) and one sees the destruction of Syria and other parts of the Middle East. Meanwhile the leaders and major media keep goading each other about looking with their responses to each other’s acts of nationalism or other questionable practices?

We live in the 21st Century and people’s lives should matter. Governments should serve people, not just claim to provide protection! The 20th Century provided us with examples of what peace and non-violence can accomplish (along with some of the most destructive wars in world history).

For the first 15 months of the Trump presidency we all lived in fear of nuclear war as there were two “tough” guys Trump and Kim Jong-un testing weapons and threatening to obliterate the other. The abusive bantering was supposed to make each leader look tough, instead made each look like a reckless fool! “Tough talk” is nothing more than fear mongering with hopes of maintaining power and control over those being governed.

At the time of this writing, North Korea is claiming to be willing to “denuclearize” their military as it prepares for talks with the USA. Trump has been expressing a willingness to talk, but still continues to threaten to walk out of the talks.

Europe’s Plea To Save Iran Nuclear Deal

Trump has replaced a couple of his foreign affairs people with nuclear hawks ( Bolton and Pompeo), who are openly hostile to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPA), more commonly referred to as the Iran Nuclear Agreement, that effectively keeps Iran out of the nuclear arms race for a decade or more.

JCPA is one of the few bright spots in the Mideast. It reduces the number of toys the boys in the Mideast have to play with. Europe’s leaders realize the wisdom of restricting nuclear weapons, but the Trump administration likes to have nuclear toys.

Let’s hope the pressure from the leaders of other countries will be effective. Meanwhile, we need to continue to send emails and letters educating the political leaders of this country that keeping nukes out of Iran is a good idea! DS

And Then There Was Paul Ryan

Peace on the Korean peninsula is still not a sure thing. If the USA were not involved protecting and promoting its sphere of influence around the Pacific, peace would probably be a reality. If a peaceful resolution is achieved, Trump will undoubtedly claim his “tough talk” brought on the result. Realistically, the economic sanctions imposed on North Korea decades earlier and recent diplomatic efforts by the relatively new South Korean government were far more valuable to the peace process. Add to that the great differences in individual’s wealth between the two Koreas along with the damage done to North Korea’s nuclear testing sites by nucleartesting, as is reported by some sources.

Fortunately in Korea, the major powers (China, Russia, Japan and maybe Trump’s USA) don’t want to risk massive destruction. In the Middle East, there is oil and gas reserves, lots of poor people and it is much closer to centers of power. Wealthy nations want to exploit the petroleum, but do not care much about the people living there. This has allowed some tyrants to exist (Assad and Iraq’s Hussein) as long as they do not pose much of a threat to western hegemony. The Middle East has become a place to test weapons, wage destructive battles and to serve as a target for corporate manipulation.

The demolition of countries like Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Yemen and others provide a testing ground for modern day military weapons and a source of cheap labor in the form of refugees. This is all good for the corporate bottom line. All good reasons to take the toys from the boys! DS

Words for thought

“I tell the kids, somebody’s gotta win, somebody’s gotta lose. Just don’t fight about it. Just try to get better.” – Yogi Berra
Ardenne Bunde

One Socialist comrade described Ardenne Bunde; “was such a sweet lady, and so full of drive.” Ardenne was a long-time Socialist and activist. Ardenne was always there to support working people and oppressed people throughout the world. She was very active in supporting Cuban rights as well as justice for others in Central and South America.

Ardenne passed away recently after an active life as a schoolteacher, union member, translator/interpreter (she was fluent in both German and Spanish).

Ardenne will be missed by many, memorial services will be held on Saturday May 12 at 10:30 a.m. (the Church will open at 9:30). The services will be at St. Sebastian’s Catholic Church (5400 W. Highland Blvd in Milwaukee).

Dues Time!

It is time to pay 2017 dues to the Socialist Party of Wisconsin. Dues are $10/year (members with limited incomes may pay dues as low as $5/year.). Make checks payable to the Socialist Party of Wisconsin.

Note the Different Meeting Place!

For May, we will be meeting at the Eastside Library of the Milwaukee Public Library System. We will return to the Washington Park Library in June.

The Failure Of Pragmatism!

How Much Longer Can We Pay Dues As Low As $5/year.?

due to suppress voting power. In

Many of us complain about the influence of money on our political system. There can be no question that money (and those who have it) has way too much influence. We treat corporations as though they are people. The US Supreme Court in Buckley v Valeo ruled that money represented one’s ability to speak, giving those with more money more rights than those power than those with less.

In a democratic society, the power to vote should offset some if not all of the power of the dollar. Unfortunately, those with money have used their influence to suppress voting power. In the USA, originally, this was done by denying women the right to vote, denying people of color (and those who did not own property), Most of these restrictions have been lifted, but new ones have been implemented.

Voters need government issued voter id cards, felons cannot vote, access to voting locations get restricted, staffing at voting places may be restricted. There are other impediments adopted to make voting more difficult for some people.

The biggest obstacle to voting is the lack of competition, which results in a lack of choices. The two party system has provided a limited number of choices and results in coalitions of groups, which usually means that those with the most money can dominate the parties.

2016 was one of the few years when non-elites gained control of a major political party and were largely responsible for winning an election. Unfortunately, they were manipulated by Trump for his own benefits.

2016 also witnessed a strong showing by Bernie Sanders in the Democratic Party. Recognizing the dominance of the two-party system Sanders, a lifelong socialist, ran as Democrat. This year as Sanders seeks another term in the US Senate; he is running as an independent candidate. There are many Sanders supporters within the Democratic Party. The Sanders supporters have been active within the Democratic Party and have helped the Democrats win several off-year elections. The Democratic Party has been bragging about their successes and looking forward to changing the political landscape in the USA. Unfortunately when one looks at the victorious Democratic candidates, they all seem to be more establishment Democrats, who are less committed to change and more committed to pacifying those who want real change.

While removing Trump from office is a good thing, and seems to be the pragmatic option, it will only return us to the lesser of two evils instead of the evil of two lessers.

If one wants real change they should support a political system that offers more than elephants and donkeys, we should also be able to choose ducks, zebras, lions, tigers, and alligators. We need to end the single-member representative district system (or as the British call it first-past-the-post) and adopt multi member districts that use proportional representation to choose elected representatives.

To learn more about proportional representation check out the Fair-Vote website: http://www.fairvote.org/!

DS