

RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN WAR IN THE LIGHT OF POSTCOLONIALISM

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POLICY
RESEARCH

ABSTRACT

Modern Russian-Ukrainian war is post-colonial in nature and caused by the imperial aspirations of today's Russia. The current situation of Ukraine and Russia can be considered complex configurations of dependence. Russia is primarily concerned with reintegrating the former imperial legacy into the Soviet state-political structure. Study shows, how the Western interpretation of Ukraine's history is unique in the context of post-colonial studies. Dialectical analysis is carried out on the Russian justification of modern warfare considering the Soviet and imperial legacies. Russia's war against Ukraine aims to change the post-Soviet space's dependent position and modify the global order following the demise of the USSR, it is noteworthy that this war has an anti-globalist tendency. It is emphasized that for Ukrainians the war is existential, since modern Russia de facto does not recognize either Ukraine as a state or Ukrainian identity.

Keywords: Russian-Ukrainian war, modern Russia, post-colonialism, anti-colonialism, anti-globalism, imperial syndrome, justification discourse.

ISSN (E): 3006-7030 (P) : 3006-7022

INTRODUCTION

Examining the Russian-Ukrainian War through the lens of postcolonialism helps highlight the long-lasting effects of imperialism and colonial processes in Eastern Europe. The conflict started in 2014 with Russia's annexation of Crimea and intensified with the invasion in 2022. This conflict's historical background and underlying power disparities can be understood through the lens of postcolonial theory, which challenges the cultural, political, and economic effects of colonialism. Russia's attempts to regain control over Ukraine, a country that has fought for freedom and a sense of identity in the post-Soviet era, can be understood as a manifestation of the war. Based on a historical narrative of regional hegemony and cultural dominance, this perspective emphasizes the conflict between Russia's neo-imperial ambitions and Ukraine's yearning for sovereignty and self-determination. By using this perspective, the conflict becomes

more than just a geopolitical struggle; it also becomes a deeply felt struggle for historical memory, identity, and the right to self-governance.

Putin's Justification for defence of Sovereignty

Current Russian military actions in Ukraine have a historical context. Ukraine has remained part of Russia for hundreds of years. The joint history of the two nations dates back more than a millennium, to a period when Kyiv served as the capital of the first Slavic State (Kyivan Rus), the cradle of both Russia and Ukraine. P. Struve, a seminal figure in the intellectual history of Russia in general, a former socialist, liberal, and liberal conservative from Russia, wrote his well-known book "Concept of Great Russia " in 1908. As Russia's political climate changed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, his ideas changed as well. It appears ridiculous for many reasons to compare Russian President Vladimir Putin's historical

address to the people of Ukraine in 2014, with the writings of the P. Struve. Nevertheless, despite the passage of more than a century, the two writings exhibit an unexpected amount of agreement in viewpoint about the Ukrainian issue.

This similarity is not coincidental; rather, it represents the general Russian perspective regarding Ukraine. The picture of Ukraine in both narratives can be sufficiently compared, if we consider the historical perspective, which is presented practically as an essential imperative of the contemporary Russian-Ukrainian war. Of course, the issues surrounding "Ukrainianism" took a secondary position in the attention given to P. Struve's reception as a very prolific writer. His unfavourable response, however, was sparked by the question of linguistic and cultural autonomy as well as the potential independence of "Ukrainianism", which became more and more popular in public discourse in the Romanov empire following the 1905 revolution.

As P. Struve puts it, "Ukrainian particularism" is dangerous from the start if it transcends regional and local differences. Given that it is the language of Great Russian statehood, universities, and economic culture, such particularism essentially contradicts all-Russian culture, which is superior. As a result, the author asserts that the concept of "All-Russian supremacy" is a defining and significant concept in the domains of culture and sovereignty. P. Struve deny the existence of the Ukrainian nation and even of an indigenous national culture. P. Struve's views on "Ukrainian particularism" as a hostile factor since it deviates from the dominant historical tendencies. The Russian conservative even claimed that "no political coup will be able to destroy this unity". Thus, another fundamental idea was formulated "all-Russian unity". In the end, the ideas of "supremacy" and "unity" created a discourse justifying the ideological struggle against "Ukrainianism". The mentioned ideas of P. Struve, albeit in a modified form, can be clearly traced in the thoughts expressed by Putin.

The latter eliminated its territories and split Ukraine for decades at the price of its own interests and missed chances, either due to irreversible "stupidity" or the extraordinary "Ukrainophile" of the Soviet leaders. The

historical depiction of Ukraine as a collection of "quasi-state entities" that have consistently been backed by the adversaries of Imperial / Red / Modern Russia, on the other hand, accurately captures the notion of great-power Russian domination. Furthermore, as a politonym and ethnonym, the head of the Kremlin finds the word Ukraine offensive and would be happy to replace it with "Malo Rossiya" / "Mala Rus". A powerful and unambiguous witness that, at one point, made Russian supremacy clear to the entire globe.

In general, there is no need to remark on the concept regarding the purported unity of the Russian and Ukrainian peoples. It completely aligns with P. Struve's perspective, as both writers endeavour to demonstrate that Ukrainians represent a historical and cultural "misunderstanding". For example, notwithstanding affirmative passages concerning nations' right to autonomous existence, the concept of unity in Russian texts implies that Ukrainian identity is essentially not acknowledged. As a result, Ukraine is seen by Russia as an unfriendly, artificial national-state project that was inspired from the outside and is destined to collapse.

It makes sense that P. Struve's demand for a fierce battle against "Ukrainianism" would eventually become a contemporary Putin catchphrase emphasising the need to face the false "threat of anti-Russia". Such a directive justified imperial persecution and repression against Ukrainians before the start of the 20th century, and it continues to justify Russian attack on Ukrainian territory, which has already been the scene of multiple war crimes. Therefore, there are good reasons to believe that this is the Russian elite's old-new imperial syndrome, which is certainly still present today and has moved into a new phase.

Narratives of Sovereignty and Superiority

The Pillars of Russian imperialism is domination, forced or, more accurately, contrived all Russian solidarity in the shape of the menacing notion. On the other side Ukrainian experts, identifying the imperial cancer afflicting the Russian leadership and, by extension, society, is not a novel concept. When the Ukrainian issue came to the fore on the

social and political scene, Russian democracy seemed to vanish out of thin air, according to an informal but aptly symbolic assessment that scientists had shared back in the Soviet era.

It was very difficult for Russian scientists, writers, and administrators to acknowledge, even casually, that Ukrainian history differs from Russian history, as the American historian M. von Hagen aptly states. Since it existed in some form during both the Soviet and imperial eras of Russia, this cultural stratum of Russian ideas is therefore well-known; it was just clothed in the infamous ideological directives and ceremonial party formalities that were considered, class and attire. However, understanding the true causes and nature of the current, ten-year-old Russian-Ukrainian confrontation requires concentrating attention on the imperial syndrome and its historical and cultural elements. Particularly after it de facto became the largest on February 24, 2022, following Putin's Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

The world system is currently experiencing its worst crisis since 1991 because of this war, and it is becoming more and more synchronised with other crises such as those involving food, energy, migration, security, humanitarian aid, transportation, and logistics. The present globalisation of the globe has also been completely challenged by the new phase of the Russian-Ukrainian war, which is unlikely to develop in accordance with the conventional models of access to technologies, information, markets, finance, raw materials, and other resources.

Russia's flagrant transgressions of both statutory and unwritten rules demonstrate how the war is continuously pushing mankind closer to the Third World Catastrophe, even if most European leaders would prefer to keep it contained within Ukrainian borders. Simultaneously, the contemporary conflict is intricately linked to the historical narratives of Russia and Ukraine, as historical narratives have been prominent in propaganda, media, and ideological practices. They have even been raised to the status of major trends in Putin's regime's state policy. The reconceptualized contours of the imperial past, as if simply "imported" from earlier centuries,

contrast sharply with the modern historical time and its post-industrial, global, informational layers of being that permeate almost all everyday practices. These days, they provide a thorough defence and sanctification of Russia's military invasion of Ukraine.

The scale of the temporal disorder is such that it produces a bizarre impression of the existence of Putin's Russia in some "parallel reality", constructed and fuelled by historical allusions that are continuously broadcast to the present. In a certain sense, the production of this reality appears as a confrontation with the information and media openness of the global world, that is, it generates clear and solid anti-globalist meanings. The nature of such a temporal conflict is largely defined by the nature of the conflict, which many intellectuals have properly referred to as a belated or postponed war since 2014.

It appears that different socio-cultural conditions, political situations, and geopolitical arrangements may have led to the start of the Russian-Ukrainian war in the early 1990s. Furthermore, historical Russian-Ukrainian narratives of the 1917–1921 Ukrainian Revolution are occasionally used to link the contemporary conflict with those historical versions. Because of this, the imperial and Soviet legacies dominate the historical retrospective and are crucial in justifying the war as well as denying the existence of the Ukrainian project and Ukrainian identity in general. A ludicrous ideology about "Ukrainian Nazis" in Kyiv, for instance, is a modern manifestation of the Soviet-Russian fiction about the so-called Great Patriotic War, which defies both formal logic and basic common sense.

In the context of the early 21st century, this wild Soviet and imperial antiquated, blends with a variety of contemporary media, informational, communication, and manipulation techniques with the goal of completely destabilising and destroying the international order as well as the state of Ukraine. Within the confines of such practices, for instance, liberal epistemological, intellectual, cultural models, strategies, and concepts associated with the relativism of multiculturalism or postmodernism are twisted in a flexible way, leading to a complete erosion of the democratic worldview, universal human

values, fundamental cultural and ethical meanings, and so on, in addition to various distortions and rearrangements. Since 2014, the deliberate, deliberate, and widespread dispersion of these diverse hazards has been appropriately referred to as hybrid effects and threats.

Rationale for Russia's Neo-Imperial Growth

The hybrid war reached a new phase on February 24, 2022, when open neo-imperial expansion began with the goal of destroying Ukraine, completely erasing Ukrainian identity, and toppling the post-Soviet world order. Many well-known European politicians have attempted to steer their relations with Putin's Russia by using standards and strategies based on certain Realpolitik principles, but these have been an absolute disaster as the Russian side has only used them as platforms and channels for the creation of hybrid threats and destructive influences. From this angle, the old-new discourse that defends Russia's animosity towards Ukraine and "Ukrainianness" raises issues and draws comparisons that force a thorough re-examination of the Soviet and imperial legacies, particularly the damaging and sometimes lethal part they played in the emergence of modern warfare.

It goes without saying that this topic will be explored soon from a variety of disciplinary and professionals. Among these, conceptual suggestions and research approaches from the fields of imperial history and post-colonial studies should be given careful consideration. These are the scientific formats that enable us to share with the academic community our understanding of the nature of the current Russian-Ukrainian war as well as its historical foundations within the customs and traditions of Western socio-humanitarian studies. When considering the composition of modern empires, one of the pioneers of postcolonial studies, E. Said, observed that "Russia swallowed all the lands and peoples adjacent to its borders". This casual comment from a Palestinian-American scholar (E. Said almost ignored the Romanov empire in his research) helps to explain some of the complexities surrounding how the West has interpreted Ukrainian history. Regretfully, the latter was frequently seen in one or more aspects

of Russian history. Considerable developments have also taken place in this field throughout the last thirty years, such as the well-known discussion that began in the middle of the 1990s thanks to the thought-provoking study of M. von Hagen. Even so, Ukrainian historical narratives are nevertheless frequently viewed in the context of Russian ones, for instance, as "confused or interwoven history".

Naturally, the centuries-long relationship between the histories of Russia and Ukraine creates certain coverage contexts, but it also gives rise to a lot of distortions, especially in the field of post-colonial studies and works on totalitarian and imperial history. They are mostly brought on by an unclear understanding of Ukraine's and Ukrainians' role in Soviet and Russian imperial endeavours. The main issue is how hard it is to distinguish Ukraine's dependent, enslaved status within the USSR from the Romanov empire. The evident differences between the oppressed political state, the Ukrainian national culture constrained by imperial bounds, the pressure of Russian acculturation on Ukrainian society, and the acceptable economic chances are the first things we take into consideration. For instance, the sub-Russian Ukrainian area was included in the 1890s observations made by Kyiv economist M. Yasnopolskyi regarding the excessive load and glaring disparity in the allocation of income and expenses between the capital's centres and the local periphery. The scientist also made a comparison between these disparities and the circumstances facing Western European metropolises and their colonies elsewhere.

Many Ukrainian writers who were disciples of M. Yasnopolsky at the start of the 20th century drew attention to the notable difference between state revenue and expenditure in the sub-Russian Ukrainian provinces, viewing it as an act of extortion by the imperial authority. Later, similar concepts made their way into the platforms of a few political parties in Ukraine. The conflict surrounding the cultural, spiritual, and political subjugation of Ukrainians in the Romanov empire was especially poignant against such a disorganised economic and social backdrop. For instance, we should not forget the aphoristic remark made by M. Drahomanov, who

categorically referred to the period of Ukrainian history during the imperial era as “The Lost Time”. The fact that other Ukrainian thinkers defined the Russian Ukraine's complicated dependency structure not in a colonial sense but rather in terms of language and culture, and then later politics and socioeconomics, contributed to the situation.

To comprehend the multiple oppressions and long-term bans of the imperial authority, there were early reflections on the cultural and linguistic persecution of Ukrainians in the Romanov empire. The latter had a long history of infamous demonstrative and even symbolic milestones, like the government veto of 1914 regarding the celebration of T. Shevchenko's 100th anniversary, the forced unification of Greek Catholics with the Orthodox Church in 1839, the Valuev circular of 1863, the Edict of Ems in 1876, and many others. The initial comparisons between the Russian Ukraine's oppressed state and the outside territories of the major colonial powers served as the basis for these analogies, albeit they were primarily cyclical and metaphorical.

As an illustration, M. Hrushevskiy contrasted the state of the colonies in 1908 with that of Ukraine in his travel notes: "Up until now, Ukraine was only an anonymous, not even known by name supplier of raw products, human power - whether in the physical form of a slave or in the form various semi-finished products, — a distant colony, the same as African or American colonies, only with a less pronounced physiognomy (here and further in the article our italics." For instance, in his book "History of Ukraine-Rus" defended the views regarding the "horrible cultural and economic impoverishment of the Ukrainian population under the denationalising regime" and the harmful consequences of centralist and assimilationist policies in the 1910 review of the situation of Ukrainians in the Russian Empire.

The Little Russia

The Russian Empire's typological ranking among the world's major empires at the time is a significant component of this issue. Russia was a "colonising and semi-colonial state" because to its unique economic and cultural linkages to the Western European empires, according to M. von Hagen, who claimed that Russia inhabited an

intermediate position between the models of the British and Ottoman empires. The British historian E. Hobsbawm held a similar opinion, arguing that "the tsarist empire was rather a coloniser than a colony" in a political sense. Determining the precise nature of the dependency between the provinces that of sub-Russian Ukraine belonged to and the imperial centre is made considerably more difficult by this hazy understanding of the Romanov empire. Ultimately, it is important to pay attention to the role that Ukrainians officially referred to as “Little Russians” were given in the Russian imperial enterprise. One of the main components of the imperial theory of "three Russian nationalities" was Little Russia. The term "Little Russia" was first used in the middle of the 17th century, predating the titles of Russian tsars. Later, it was employed to refer to the three groups of Russians, Belarusians, and All-Russians. In the end, it introduced and solidified an imperial mental map that spatially delimited Ukrainian territories as Russian/ Russian, so appropriating Ukrainian cultural and historical legacy.

As a result of this capture, Little Russia came to be recognised by the Russian great-power consciousness as its “indispensable and primordial” land. This is the source of both Putin's infamous notion of "a single people" and P. Struve's thesis regarding the alleged unity of Russia. However, Little Russianism was the main and prevailing trend in Russian acculturation. As a result, the Ukrainian aristocracy was integrated into the administration, imperial structures, and official hierarchy, thereby becoming a part of the all-Russian metropolis. In fact, the Ukrainian identity was lost in this way, and Little Russian "hybrid" projections took its place.

Simultaneously, there were other methods of acculturation and appropriation of Ukrainian space, most notably the notorious “Novorossiya”. Naturally, Russian philosophy at the turn of the 19th and 20th century defined some attempts to modernise the imperial project as an all-Russian or all-Russian enterprise. Except for the recognition of local or regional traits, none of the Russian proposals at the time offered any compromises on the Ukrainian question. As the revolutionary events of 1917 – 1918 plainly

revealed, many Russian socialists, liberals, democrats, and even more so conservatives and nationalists were poisoned by imperial layers of mind, as if by metastases of an incurable disease.

Ukrainian aspirations for Nationalism

The ideals of the proletarian revolution and the world federation of free peoples were swiftly pushed to the periphery by the eternal guidelines of the Russian great state, as demonstrated by the recent allies and associates of Ukrainian socialists and democrats during that romantic period of revolutionary thought. However, the Little Russian complex also contributed to the development of a particular viewpoint in how the West saw the history of Ukraine. It is appropriate to note at this point that socio-humanists were among the pioneers of postcolonial studies in the West.

At first seem, this strategy provided more appropriate instrumental opportunities while broadening and diversifying the political, social, and cultural domain of historical research. Nonetheless, the purported neutrality frequently resulted in the manipulation of the actual situation in the Russian Ukraine, namely its degree of reliance on the Romanov empire. For instance, the process of forming the Little Russian identity because of the forceful and violent acculturation of Russians, which was based on institutionalised social and political constraints, oppression, repression, and socialisation models imposed in the imperial service, as well as prevailing ideological trends, political and cultural patterns, and daily behavioural algorithms, was disregarded. Career plans and personal experiences that marginalised, destroyed, or replaced Ukrainian identity.

A new intellectual and cultural vista was opened by the First World War (1914–1918) and the Ukrainian Revolution (1917–1921), which allowed this issue to be examined in the framework of colonial meanings and contexts. The leaders of Ukrainian national communism, S. Mazlakh (Robsman) and V. Shakhray, declared in 1919 that "the relations and economic ties between Russia and Ukraine have mainly the

character of the relations and economic ties of modern great states with their own colonies". Similarly, V. Vynnychenko stressed that "the brutal, semi-savage, predatory imperialism of Russia behaved with its colonial nations in the most primitive way: strangled by the throat and took away everything it needed, and to stretch this way of "influence" of the metropolis for as long as possible, all national consciousness and culture were knocked out with a fist and an all-Russian" culture.

M. Pokrovsky's idea of the Moscow state's unifying function was met by a barrage of invectives from the Ukrainian side. For instance, the historian V. Sukhino-Khomenko asserted that the idea of the "unification of nationalities" within the Russian state took the place of M. Pokrovsky's ideas for the union of colonial countries near the imperialist metropolis. Generally speaking, at least a few dozen Ukrainian writers thought about how to label Ukraine's reliance on imperial Russia as colonial during the 1920s and the early 1930s. Unfortunately, the critique of M. Pokrovsky's school was debunked at the start of the 1930s, and the imperial heritage was replaced by a similar class and party theme that took on formal elements. It was announced as early as 1934 that educational compendiums on concrete history, in which the Russian state was given a key role, would replace social science experiments on the Marxist bedrock in the spirit of M. Pokrovsky's so-called sociological epochs.

All early modern history (then defined as the history of feudalism) was interpreted considering Ukraine's accession to tsarist Russia as a "lesser calamity" following the government jury commission's 1937 decision on the best textbook on USSR history. This decision established and legitimised a new official concept. As a result, the materialist and class discourses in historical representations progressively gave way to declaratory or ceremonial allusions, and the historical significance of the Russian and Muscovy regions was primarily depicted as progressive. Furthermore, the rhetoric of the great Russian people was established in 1937, enforcing continuity with the imperial Russian big-state traditions. The Great Power / Great Russian narrative was only introduced gradually after the

Second World War. The creation of a shared Russian-Soviet past for all USSR peoples was momentarily put on hold due to the demands and difficulties of the Great War. After all, actions that would express the "will" of the USSR's peoples were dictated now by the logic of military-political expediency. For instance, the Soviet leadership said in January 1944 that the Union republics would have more rights in the areas of defence and international affairs.

These rights were later partially realised in the shape of fictitious republican people's commissars. Though, this choice only had an ideologically charged propaganda effect. Instead, the USSR/SSR as a union republic occupied an unambiguously subordinate position within the Soviet project during the post-war years of mass canonization of the "great Russian people" as the victorious people, the people-leader and the people-founder of the Russian state and the Soviet Union, "the bearer of human progress", "the first socialist nation", "constructive communism", and so on. This is evidenced by the centralised architecture of the party nomenclature, the union and republican authorities, and the significant demographic losses of Ukrainians because of the deliberate and consistent implementation of state policy. Naturally, Ukrainians were heavily involved in local and central party administrations, as well as power structures, just like during the tsarist era.

Distorting Ukrainian history and identity

Russian acculturation and socialisation processes were mostly created by the Soviet effort; they differed in ideological orientation but had a similar aim. On the other hand, the party's programme was distinguished by a great deal of creativity around social engineering, which was deliberately coupled with significant socio-cultural catastrophes that devastated the traditional underpinnings of national existence. The process began with the creation of a new individual who was intended to represent the "screw" of the totalitarian system and legitimise the existence of the "great" and "single" quasi-community, the Soviet people. The outcome of this legitimization was the total denationalisation, Sovietization, and fusion of national histories and

cultures, chiefly Ukrainian past and culture. This legitimization surprisingly resembled/imitated the formal components of the old imperial programme (Russian supremacy, cultural unity, historical justification).

A new official canon for the production and portrayal of the "History of the Ukrainian SSR" as an essential component of the Russian Soviet past was formed by the party's "Pereyaslav theses" in 1954. The idea of Ukraine's reunification with Russia, which was portrayed as the ultimate and unqualified meaning of pre-revolutionary history, supplanted the pre-war notion of Ukraine joining tsarist Russia as a "lesser evil". Thus, if in a tainted form, the ancient imperial heritage was at last legitimised. The discourses of the "great Russian people" and "friendship of peoples", rapidly supplanted the old class rhetoric, which depicted tsarist Russia as a "prison of peoples." Since then, the Soviet totalitarian project has not only rather naturally included great-power and imperial components, but these elements have also determined its essence and even its exterior qualities.

It is no coincidence that the Soviet Union was perceived by the West for a long time as an "Evil Empire". Note that the issue of interpreting and classifying Ukraine's dependence on the Russian Empire as colonial resurfaced during the brief liberalisation of the Soviet regime, following the official anti-colonialism campaign directed against Western nations, the former great empires in Western historiography and the diaspora, Ukrainian historians known as revisionists or nonconformists were represented in this discourse. One of their most prominent examples is an article by O. Luhova, in which the author defended the claim that Ukraine had all the signs of colonial dependence on Russian tsarism. The author's reasoning was founded on well-known findings on the political and economic reliance of Ukrainian territories under the Romanov empire, but she also made a point of highlighting the steps taken by the government to ensure the ongoing unification of Ukrainians. The imperial approach erased not only the past, but also the future of the Ukrainian people, as was stressed in the final conclusions. It was destined to fail as a nation. However, the period of liberalisation in the

Ukrainian SSR came to an end at the start of the 1970s, and historians from Ukraine were compelled to resume discussions within the framework of the official canon of historiography. It was not until the post-Soviet era that this problem could be fully understood and developed. Large-scale, multidimensional conceptualizations of several historical eras that were either outside the purview of Soviet historiography or not considered within it at all, such as the Holodomor of 1932–1933, the Ukrainian National Revolution of 1648 – 1676, the national revival or long 19th century, emerged over the course of three decades. The most recent conceptualizations were put forth for the 1917 – 1921 Ukrainian Revolution, the Soviet era, and contemporary Ukraine. First and foremost, it concerns how Soviet totalitarianism is portrayed in the context of the long 20th century in Ukrainian history, where the country's independence is portrayed as a period of struggle against the difficulties and paradoxes of the post-totalitarian transition.

The Institute of History of Ukraine of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine prepared three major books of the academic publication on Ukraine. Essays on history, which was published through "Akademperiodika" and featured development and testing of this concept. As per the research conducted by I. Lysiak-Rudnytskyi, the building of the Ukrainian diaspora started much earlier. This creation of separate identity has been recognised and most recently reflected in the writings of contemporary historians. Thus, theoretical ideas about the division of national history into totalitarian and imperial rule during 19th and 20th century enable us to better reevaluate the circumstances and patterns of reliance of Ukraine under both regimes as well as comprehend the historical roots, scope, and requirements of the contemporary conflict.

We believe that the idea of two long centuries allow us to take a closer look at this problem and to pay closer attention to the ways that Ukrainian dependence on Soviet and imperial projects has changed and evolved from a comparative to a post-colonial standpoint. After all, Putin's Russia was built on a foundation of old imperial rudiments mixed with totalitarianism, as demonstrated by its attempts to destroy

contemporary Ukraine. Ultimately, the world faces grave problems as Ukraine enters the tenth year of the Russian-Ukrainian War. The conflict compels us to consider the major questions of the past, present, and future of Russia and Ukraine. Particularly considering that Western politicians, journalists, diplomats, philosophers, and scientists have been emphasising for decades how important it is to hear, listen to, and consider the interests of post-Soviet Russia. The world may now listen and see Putin's Russia in all its glory by monitoring the Russian missile attacks over Ukraine and hearing to the air raid sirens that sound every day.

Russian Society reaction on Ukrainian Aggression

The war against Ukraine has been made possible by the silent and frequently open periplectic posture of the Russian society, which gives rise to its collective culpability. It is evident that the purpose of modern Russia is unquestionably neo-imperial. The cost of having such knowledge and understanding of the world is paid in Ukrainian blood every minute. The origin of Putin's Russia's neo-imperial priorities, which shape its political, economic, social, and cultural decisions, strategies, actions, and even the justification for the current aggression, conceals the nature of the modern Russian-Ukrainian war in the Soviet and old imperial past. We believe that there are at least a few compelling arguments for classifying the current Russian-Ukrainian conflict as post-colonial, even if it clearly has an anti-colonial bent.

First off, the way that Putin's Russia has denied Ukraine the right to exist as a state is consistent with the methods used by the former colonial powers to deal with colonised nations and peoples, who were seen as artificial, illusory, and ghostly, and thus purportedly in need of "real management" and "guardianship". Rather, metropolises were viewed as real, strong, and constructive, endowed from the outset with the authority to use force and the capacity to alter the course of history. According to this interpretation, Russia views Ukraine as simply its territory, namely "Novorossiia" and "Malo Rossiia", which it must reclaim for the empire.

Let us take Putin's infamous "failed state" as an example, which was expressed in numerous ways by Russian politicians, government officials, scientists, artists, journalists, and other cultural figures as well as, on a more mundane level, by the unrelenting stream of candid opinions from regular Russians. Second, Little Russian, New Russian, and other hybrid constructs that must be forcefully assimilated into the so-called Russian measure ("one nation") are intended to completely supplant the Ukrainian identity, which is completely ignored by modern Russia. From Russia's perspective of neo-imperial supremacy, such a state strategy broadly aims to destroy the very significant foundation for Ukrainianness existence.

It expresses how empires felt about the people and lands they had colonised. Thirdly, the Putin administration created and is waging the current war on the grounds of revanchism and anti-globalism. The Russian objective for this war is to exclude or even exclude the Ukrainian people and their country from the global world order and reinstate their subordinate place in the post-Soviet area that they lost with the fall of the USSR. The main context for the Russian-Ukrainian war is Russia's attempt to carry out a new delineation of the world, at least the post-Soviet areas, in response to an acute crisis or even the destruction of the modern world order. This attempt includes the liquidation of Ukraine as a state, the complete blurring of identity, the continuous merging of culture, economic subordination, and all-Russian models of socialisation.

Conclusion

It is no accident that Moscow's political language is increasingly expressing the concept that Russians in Ukraine are against the West as a whole. In a cruel twist of historical fate, Ukraine ended up at the centre of one of the biggest and most dangerous socio-cultural divides in the contemporary world, where the most recent anti-globalism struggles were intricately entwined with historical grudges stemming from Soviet and imperial references as well as neo-imperial goals. As a result, the current conflict between Russia and Ukraine is not only about Putin's Russia but also about making a final break with the Soviet

and imperial past. It also has the potential to provide a genuine post-colonial solution to the conflicts and issues facing the post-Soviet realm. For Ukraine, this is the reason the current conflict is crucial. This is a struggle for the freedom of state and country because it must resolve Hamlet's dilemma: should one exist or not? It bears a clear parallel to the American War of Independence (1775 – 1783) in this regard, but it obviously differs greatly from historical periods, geopolitical locations, and social and ethnocultural macro contexts and prerequisites. Lastly, it is essential to list more fundamental queries that came up following February 24, 2022. Will the conflict between Russia and Ukraine become a crisis for democracy everywhere? Will ties with neo-imperial Russia eventually adopt the more pragmatic variants of Western Realpolitik? The exact responses to these crucial concerns and difficulties will decide how the global globe is configured, which in turn will shape the course of recent European history.

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