

Weekly Commentary 16 – April 2023

The Philosophical Aspects of the Russo-Ukrainian War

Too often, we are immersed with minutiae on the conflict in Europe between Russia and Ukraine, so much so that we tend to miss the big picture. We scrutinize every speech made on both sides, and we certainly follow the propaganda on the outcome of the fighting. We generally end up seeing the trees rather than the forest.

Last week, there were a couple of articles in social media (both were published by Medium, an online journal) that enable us to see the big picture. One of each side of the divide. The first one is by a noted thinker, Nassim Nicholas Taleb, the man most famous for coining the risk management idea called “black swan risks”. Here is his piece.

A Clash of Two Systems

The war in Ukraine is a confrontation between two systems, one modern, legalistic, decentralized and multicephalous; the other archaic, nationalistic, centralized and monocephalous

Offensive vs. Defensive Nationalism

This conflict shows a harmful confusion, among the Russians and their supporters, between the state as a nation in the ethnic sense and the state as an administrative entity.

A state that wants to base its legitimacy on cultural unity must be small; it is otherwise doomed to meet the hostility of others. A Francophone Swiss citizen, although culturally linked to his or her language, does not aspire to belong to France, and France does not try to invade French-speaking Switzerland under this pretext. Further, national identities can change quickly: Francophone Belgians have a different identity from French people. France itself went through an operation of internal colonialism to destroy Provençal, Languedoc, Picard, Savoyard, Breton, and other cultures and eradicate their languages under a centralized identity. Nationality is never defined and never fixed; administration is.

Cultural unity can make sense, but only in the form of something reduced such as a city-state –I would even go so far as to say that a state only works well in this way. In this case, nationalism is defensive — Catalan, Basque or Christian Lebanese — but in the case of a large state like Russia, nationalism becomes offensive. Notice that under the Pax Romana or the Pax Ottomana, there were no large states, but city-states gathered in an empire whose role was distant. But there is loose empire and rigid nation-state like empire, the latter being represented by Russia .

Coordination for Mafia-don Like Protection

There are now two imperial models: either a heavy model, like that of Russia, or a coordination of states on the model of NATO. We will see which one will emerge victorious from the current conflict.

This war not only pits Ukraine and Russia against it, it is a confrontation between two systems, one modern, decentralized and multicephalous, the other archaic, centralized and autocephalous. Ukraine wants to belong to the liberal system: while being Slavic-speaking, like Poland, it wants to be part of the West.

What is it that We Call the West?

*What we call “the West” is not a spiritual entity, but an administrative system first and last. It is not an ethno-geographical ensemble, but a legal and institutional system: it includes Japan, S. Korea, and Taiwan. **It mixes the thalassocratic Phoenician world of network-based trade and that of Adam Smith, based on individual rights and freedom to transact, under the constraint of social progress.** In the United States, the difference between Democrats and Republicans is minor when seen from a different century. Both sides want social progress, but at different rates of growth.*

On the other hand, nationalism requires the All-Mighty Centralized –worse, Hegelian — State, and one that curates cultural life to weed out individual variations.

Nationalism is often linked to a spiritual dimension — represented in the Patriarch of Moscow via the Russian-Slavo-Orthodox model –which horrifies me as an Orthodox myself. Moreover, this alleged proximity between Ukraine and Russia is questionable: Crimea has been Russian since Catherine II, and Stalin has russified it by displacing the Tatars. It is easy to say that Ukraine is the soul of Russia because it comes from the Rus’ of Kiev, but it can just as well be said that it is the Golden Horde of the sons of Genghis Khan.

And even if, spiritually, Ukraine were part of Russia, it would not mean that Ukrainians would not have the right to join the Western system. They could be emotionally Slavic but administratively organized in a Western system and militarily protected through an alliance between Westerners — which even includes, I remind you, Turkey. Putin cannot understand this, nor some specialists in international relations who are sometimes called “realists” — I am thinking, for example, of John Mearsheimer.

States vs Individuals

These sloppy thinkers such as Mearsheimer and similar handwavers conflate states with individual interests; they believe that there is only a balance of power between powers — for Mearsheimer, Putin is only reacting to undue progress by the West on its ground. But the reality is quite different: what Ukrainians want is to be part of what I would call an international “benign” order, which works well because it is self-correcting, and where the balance of power can exist but remain harmless. Putin and the “realists” are the wrong century, they do not think in terms of systems or in terms of individuals. They suffer from what I call the “Westphalia Syndrome” — the reification of states as natural and fixed Platonic entities.

Solzhenitsyn

Solzhenitsyn clearly saw the diabolical aspect of communist society, but believed that Western society was just as harmful. But being naturally multicentric, the West aims to be like Switzerland — it’s bottom-top oriented in spite of occasional concentration. Furthermore, the “West” is evolving; it does not have fixed centers of authority. Certainly, there are disproportionate influences in the West, as

today's Google and yesterday's General Motors, but Google or General Motors are not the center of it — these multinationals do not even control themselves.

Multinationals tend to go bust — in fact they are more likely to fold than your family run business.

This model tends to “antifragility” — a concept present in my books that refers to a property of systems that strengthen when exposed to stressors, shocks or volatility. Russia cannot be what I call “antifragile”.

An Error Correction Mechanism

A stable system requires a decentralized and multicephalous organization, which makes it possible to correct errors and avoid the deleterious effects of certain risks by confining them to the local level. After the 1918 war, the French destroyed Syria by centralizing it. Conversely, when the new Germany was formed, the French insisted that it be federal under the illusion that it would weaken it. Deprived of a center of gravity, Germany no longer thought of waging war, but of making... money. Butter, it turns out, works better than guns. Germany became an economic power thanks to federalism — and it appears to be natural as it spent its history in fragmented states before the Prussian takeover. For Russia, such a decentralized organization would be impossible: if let go of ballast, it would immediately find itself facing the secession of 20 small states — Chechnya, Ingushetia, Bashkiria... It therefore tightens the screw in the other direction.

The interest of the Western world is that it is a multicephalous model, made of contracts that allows regional autonomy under global coordination; Russia is an autocephalous system, which thinks only in a balance of power. Look at the West: is there a center? No. If there were one, moreover, he would be in Kiev today. And if you want to destroy the West, how many bombs do you need? If you destroy Washington, London and Paris will remain. But if you destroy the palace where Putin is, it's something else.

The stability of a decentralized system is much better than that of a centralized system. As such, I am pleasantly surprised by the reaction of the Western world, which was done so, organically. I thought the West could not face Putin, because a fight between an autocrat and employees seemed lost to me in advance, but it seems that the aggregation of our actions is beginning to bear fruit.

Alas, the EU is Centralized a bit too much...

Subsidiarity was not respected, hence the departure of the United Kingdom. But the appropriate model is that of NATO, which exists in the area where organized joint action is necessary — military reaction — while letting countries do what they want under constraint not to attack each other. And I am grateful to the European Union for having succeeded in starting the concept of nation to think more in terms of regional coordination.

How can Russia enter the modern world?

Only if it fragments into separate states. Some Russian groups have always been irredentist, the Cossacks, the Kulaks (localist farmers), and the Siberians. There are also many minorities. More

broadly, because of this Westphalia complex, it is forgotten that the Russians do not necessarily have the same interests as Russia. National interests are abstract things, and people end up believing in them even when they conflict with those of those populations they encompass.

Orthodoxy and Minor Patriarchs

The Patriarch of Moscow was also Patriarch of Ukraine. But in the Orthodox world, whenever an ethnic or language division occurs, a “minor patriarch” is appointed in the country that has become independent — this is the case in Serbia, Bulgaria, Romania. This is why the Patriarch of Constantinople, the most important, assented to the request that the Metropolitan of Kiev becomes a minor patriarch in 2019. Because of this separation, the Russian Orthodox Church felt amputated. The Patriarch of Moscow, Cyril, supports Putin. The Patriarch of Antioch, close to Assad, does the same.

*This also confirms, if it were still needed, the absurdity of Samuel Huntington’s ideas in *The Clash of Civilizations*. Not only is his book full of pseudo-mathematical reasoning (causing Serge Lang to blackball him at the Academy of Sciences), but, like other “realists”, his obstinacy to think in geopolitical and identity centers leads him to conclude that Ukraine belongs to the Russian domain. But one can be Orthodox in New York!*

Multicephaly did not help in 2014

It takes a while for a collective and distributed system to react. It takes a lot of sheep to fight a wolf, and in 2014 we were too few sheep.

People want to be able to trade together in Adam Smith’s world. This false debate reminds me of the opposition between Napoleon and the English.

Napoleon vs the English Shopkeeper

*All the English initially wanted was for their products to arrive safely. Napoleon’s views did not interest them. **While Napoleon thought in terms of the glory of France, they thought of the wallet of the English shop owner.** But the English grocer won and, with the Phoenician trader, it was he who made the modern world — the Anglo-Phoenician world of mercantile cosmopolitanism. This is what means, for example, that today Germans are more interested in exporting cars than in Germany’s geographic expansion.*

Moreover, it amuses me to hear some people talk about “American cultural imperialism”. Do you think that in the morning, when they wake up, Americans think about exporting their music and food? It’s simply that on the other side of the planet, young people prefer to eat hamburgers.

I am not Against Modernity; I am for its Improvement

The modern liberal system makes mistakes, yes. But when I criticize it, I don’t aim at destroy it, but at improving it. And it is a good system because it is self-correcting. I criticize naive Western interventions because I think about their consequences: I was against the war in Iraq, and experience

justified my fears; I am against intervention in Syria, because if we get rid of Assad, we do not know what will replace him; I have nothing against Brexit, because if the British think they can manage to be part of our system without depending on the Brussels bureaucratic machinery, it is their right.

*The problem posed by a benign system like ours is **its transparency, which causes perceptual distortions**: Tocqueville understood that equality seems all the stronger when it is reduced; similarly, a system seems all the more dysfunctional when it is transparent. Hence my attacks on someone like Edward Snowden and his acolytes, who exploit this paradox to attack the West for the benefit of Russian plotters.*

Pseudo-Libertarianism Inviting Tyranny

I have trouble with many people, often naïve libertarians, who think I'm like them because they like my books. But some of these want to destroy our system rather than improve it: many are full of resentment.

They do not realize that the alternative to our messy system is tyranny: a mafia-don like state (Lybia today, Lebanon during the civil war) or an autocracy. And these idiots call themselves libertarian!

This is the case of Snowden and his followers. He is an impostor. If I told you about an organization in Ryad that defends women in France against male oppression, you would laugh at me. Well, Snowden claims to defend the Americans against Google's tyranny while operating from ... Moscow!

On Twitter, I ended up noticing that in this naïve libertarian or rather, pseudo-libertarian, ecosystem, which includes bitcoin enthusiasts, people who, like Snowden, see Covid-19 as a pretext for some dark entity to exert control over the population. This even includes anti-vaccine activists. We are at the very heart of disinformation: the goal of the Russian Disinformation Program here is to create mistrust between citizens and authorities, and to exploit everything that can bring dissension. Disinformation proceeds according to Stalin's assumed quote: "The death of a man is a tragedy. The death of a million men is a statistic." These activists, for example, magnify tiny dysfunctions of the Covid-19 vaccines.

How I Found Out About Disinformation

I began to spot Twitter accounts called "Linda", pro-Trump who, in protesting against inflation, used the sign of the ruble instead of the dollar. When the same people support both Canadian truck drivers and Vladimir Putin, there is a problem. In a way, I came to defend Ukraine because the same fools who attacked me on Covid also defended Putin.

It is still disturbing that libertarians come to defend an autocrat!

Libertarians are controlled by Russia because in general, they are naïve people who only have first-order thoughts — they do not know how to consider the consequences of certain actions. This is what distinguishes them from classic liberals.

They do not realize that destroying the current system invites tyranny.

The Long Peace

We didn't wait for this war to realize that Pinker was wrong about the decline of violence. There is no such a thing as Long Peace, largely because the past was not as violent as Pinker claims. My colleagues and I refuted Pinker's calculations in our research. His errors come in particular from the fact that some data he uses overestimate the number of deaths in past conflicts. Pinker wants to play the guardian of modern liberal thought, but it is the American BHL: he knows nothing about his subject.

Moreover, even if this conflict ends well, it will have shown that it is enough for a state to have nuclear weapons to cause a disaster. However, in today's world, it is not acceptable for a leader to conquer another territory simply because he owns the atomic bomb. This principle must be destroyed.

Which brings us to the next risk, China. Certainly, it has not escaped the modern world as much as Russia, and it is closely linked commercially to the West. But it also has imperial tendencies. The best thing would therefore be for it too to decentralize to escape the yoke of Beijing. Taiwan and Hong Kong outperform China, so consider more of those!

Ending the Ukrainian War

If you give Putin even one finger, he will have won the war. Russia's leadership must therefore be humiliated, and the only way is for it to retreat. We need a repetition of the 1905 Russo-Japanese war. In this case, Putin will be overthrown from the inside, because, historically, people who accept autocracies do not like the weak. A weak Putin is no longer Putin — just as a nice, tactful, and thoughtful Trump would no longer be Trump. For this to continue, it takes a lot of suckers to keep feeding the narrative — and if the suckers begin to doubt the story, it will be the beginning of the end.

That was Mr Taleb's pro-Western view. It is easy to find that kind of opinion in English language media. But since the author is who he is – the one who articulated the concept of the “black swan” in risk management, his view cannot be ignored. He is a noted thinker, with best sellers to his name. But for him to call J Mearsheimer a “sloppy thinker” just because he is on the other side of the debate is not congenial. For a leading light at the University of Chicago, Mearsheimer has been getting the issues right since the late 1990s. Where were his critics back then? Everything that Mearsheimer has predicted would happen in Ukraine has happened, and that's no mean feat. For that alone, he should be paid attention to, and not be called a “sloppy thinker”. So I think Nicholas Taleb has overstepped the bounds of intellectual criticism.

Overall, I think that Taleb's article above is not beyond criticism itself. First of all, it is entirely philosophical and does not take into account the realities of implementation. The western ideal that he holds so dearly, apparent from his words, does not work out quite like that. All he admits to is that the western system can be “messy”; except that the “mess” is not of the nature of a minor traffic jam, but of a multi-car accident on a massive highway. In America, the heart of the western system, is not even politically functional, with the main two political parties disagreeing on how to bring the country forward on everything. This has led to slow economic growth, the largest and

ever-growing debt in its history, the surrender of a massive lead in industrialization and technology to China, a foreign policy that depends entirely on a strong military or economic sanctions to coax and cajole other countries to toe its line (if the system is so attractive, why is this necessary?) gun violence domestically, the inability to provide free higher education and health care to its citizens, the high incidence of drug abuse that has no parallel anywhere else in the world, the absurd inequality of wealth and income, and basically a political system where the skills needed to get elected are very far removed from the skills for governing the country by those elected. My major problem with the western system is the last one, which seems to have escaped attention from Mr Taleb. While the political elite has very strong skills to win elections (mostly by telling untruths because the truths are too difficult for the ordinary population to understand) they don't have the skills to run a government. That is the most damning thing about the western system, and people everywhere in the rest of the world are watching and learning why they must go a different path. And a different model of governance.

The failure of free market economics has also been neglected in Mr Taleb's coverage of the merits of the western system. If it works so well, why did the US end up losing its entire industrial sector to the rest of the world, especially China? It is because the Adam Smith invisible hand, which he so admires, grasps as much gains as possible for the entrepreneurial class, leaving the working class woefully stagnated. At the country level, manufacturing according to Adam Smith principles would best be done when costs (especially labour) are lowest and that's why we have the broken industrial economy we have in the US today. Worse still, Adam Smith's invisible hand cannot escape criticism for not taking into account the externalities of production anywhere on earth and it is leading the planet to doomsday. The pure free market system needs government to guide it along, to balance the different needs of societies and of the planet itself. Everybody knows that by now, and wants a change.

Of course, Mr Taleb has his strongest words for Russia and Mr Putin. He does not concede the world view as described by Mearsheimer, but how about the views in the other article I found, written by a less famous person, but who makes points that cannot be ignored. This is a Joe Brunoli, an American, who wrote the following article for Medium:

Russophobia and the West's "Final Solution"

Was Putin's Foreign Minister right to compare Russians today with the Jews of WWII?

When Sergei Lavrov gave his yearly press conference recently, he caused quite a ruckus when he said the following:

Like Napoleon, who mobilised nearly all of Europe against the Russian Empire, and Hitler, who occupied the majority of European countries and hurled them at the Soviet Union, the United States has created a coalition of nearly all European member states of NATO and the EU and is using Ukraine to wage a proxy war against Russia with the old aim of finally solving the "Russian question", like Hitler, who sought a final solution to the "Jewish question."

The reaction was swift and full of righteous indignation. How dare Lavrov compare today's Russians with the Jewish victims of the Holocaust?

Israel [condemned the remarks](#). "Any comparison or relating current events with Hitler's final solution plan for the extermination of the Jewish People distorts the historical truth, desecrates the memory of those who perished and the survivors and should be strongly rejected," said the Foreign Ministry. [Germany and France](#) also criticised Lavrov's comments.

Still — this was not the first time Lavrov got into hot water talking about Jews, however. In May 2022, while explaining Russia's goal of "de-Nazification" in Ukraine despite the fact that President Zelensky is Jewish, [Lavrov asserted](#) that "Hitler also had Jewish origins, so it doesn't mean anything".

That remark [REALLY caused an uproar](#) — so much so that Vladimir Putin felt he had to [apologise](#) to the Israeli PM.

But this time, Putin and Lavrov seem to be on the same page.

"Today they are trying to cancel a thousand-year-old country," [Putin said](#) in March 2022 during a televised meeting with Russian winners of culture-related prizes.

"I am talking about the progressive discrimination against everything connected with Russia, about this trend that is unfolding in a number of Western states, with the full connivance and sometimes with the encouragement of Western elites," Putin added.

*Putin did not apologise for the recent remarks by his Foreign Minister — most likely because of the fact that **LAVROV HAS A POINT**.*

In fact, the West has fallen victim to an odious religion of blind Russophobia, fuelled — and led — by the Nazi-led nationalist forces in Ukraine, the West's proxy in their war against Russia, and the standard bearer in the Western "crusade" to wipe out all things Russian and to even destroy the Russian state itself.

In their headlong rush to condemn Russia and "stand with Ukraine", the West has allowed itself to become radicalised and racist, demanding that all things Russian be erased from global culture.

Is Russophobia like Anti-Semitism? No.

Let's be clear: Lavrov is not equating Russophobia with anti-Semitism.

Anti-Semitism has existed for thousands of years — for as long as there have been Jews, there has been anti-Semitism.

Rather, Lavrov is saying specifically that the West is doing what the Nazis did in WWII. Namely, they are seeking to eradicate Russian culture, Russian history, Russian influence and even Russia itself from the world.

To understand the validity of Lavrov's point, we need to explore the increasingly virulent phenomenon of Russophobia and how it compares to the Nazi efforts to "erase" Jews from the world.

Is Russophobia like Nazism? Yes.

First, we must acknowledge that the Nazis were not just out to exterminate the Jews. A major part of Hitler's Nazi philosophy was a fundamental conviction that, like Jews, the Russians and other Slavs were also Untermenschen (sub-humans) deserving of eradication.

That anti-Russian Nazi element is today alive and well and living in the hearts of many Ukrainians. Indeed, Nazism — the original, Hitler-worshipping flavour — forms one of the keystones of Ukrainian Nationalism, which preaches that Ukrainians can only realise their own destiny when they have "eliminated" their enemies, including Jewish and Russian Untermenschen.

Stepan Bandera, leader of the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists, was [made a national hero](#) in Ukraine in 2018. Bandera, who led the OUN during and after WWII, was famous for his hatred of Russians.

"The total and supreme victory of Ukrainian nationalism will take place when the Russian empire ceases to exist" — Stepan Bandera

*[Andriy Biletsky](#), founder of the "ultranationalist" Azov Battalion who went on to become [a member of Ukraine's Parliament](#), is a modern day standard bearer for the Bandera movement. In 2010 he [gave a speech](#) in which he said that the mission of Ukraine was to **"lead the white races of the world in a final crusade ... against Semite-led Untermenschen"**.*

That crusade began in the Donbas in 2014, with the systematic slaughter of Russian-speaking Ukrainians.

A UN investigation found that the Azov Regiment operating in the Donbas participated in the [looting of civilian homes and targeted civilian areas](#) between September 2014 and February 2015.

Another OHCHR report documented an [instance of rape and torture](#) perpetrated by the Azovs on ethnic Russian Ukrainians in the Donbas.

To say that what we now call Russophobia is similar to Nazism is, in fact incorrect: Russophobia was and is an intrinsic part of Nazism — and vice versa. Especially in Ukraine.

Making Russians “the Other”

A big part of Nazi anti-Jewish propaganda was to portray Jews as being different from Germans and other Europeans, and above all not belonging in European society. In Nazi Germany, Jews were cast as being not just non-European, but as being something “other” than human.

This process, often called “otherization”, has also been used against many groups, such as indigenous people, LGBTQ, people of colour, even people of different religious sects (Catholics and Protestants in Ireland).

Otherization leads to alienation and fear of the unknown. Casting a group of people as “The Other” makes it all the more easy to hate them.

“Kill a Commie for Christ”

Modern Russophobia has its roots in the “Red Scare” days of the Cold War.

The US, for example, went to great lengths to emphasise its “moral superiority” over the “heathen atheist” Soviets by adding God everywhere. For example, in 1954 the US Congress voted to [add the phrase “under God”](#) to the Pledge of Allegiance that is recited by US schoolchildren every day.

In 1956, two years after having injected God into the pledge, Eisenhower signed a law that made “In God We Trust” [the official motto](#) of the United States. The US started printing and minting money with the phrase “In God We Trust” the following year.

And yet, even as Americans lived in fear of Soviet nukes; even as the USSR invaded Afghanistan; even as Reagan decried the USSR as the “Evil Empire”, the Bolshoi Ballet was still the hottest ticket in town when it toured the USA, and American children still enjoyed the fairy-tale beauty of The Nutcracker. Yes — Tchaikovsky was still played; Tolstoy was still taught; Prokofiev’s iconic “Peter and the Wolf” provided screen music for countless American films.

It took the collapse of the Soviet Union and the rise of a hubristic American hegemon to make possible the current campaign to completely eradicate all things Russian from our lives.

Russians as violent criminals

When the atheistic, communist USSR fell in the 1990’s, the West had to find another way to demonise Russians.

Enter the Russian Mob.

Playing on the well-established “godless” meme of Russian culture, the West and Hollywood cultivated a non-stop parade of grotesque caricatures, depicting Russians as soulless, mindlessly violent criminals. The “Russian Mafia” became a wellspring of Hollywood memes for decades.

*In western films, Russian mob bosses are often depicted as “Ex-KGB” —this trope literally provides a continuity of demonisation, showing the evolution of Russians **from evil KGB killers to evil mafia killers**.*

A popular TV show, “Stranger Things” takes place during the Cold War and features [evil Russian soldiers](#).

The hit TV show [The Americans](#) portrayed Russian sleeper agents pretending to be a “normal” American family — just with a lot of spying, assassination and deadly violence.

*During the Cold War, the Soviets were portrayed as ruthless, but at least sometimes they were professional and often patriotic. Indeed, it was usually the Soviet system that was portrayed as the enemy. That godless, evil, corrupt, degenerate **communist system** that had “enslaved the unfortunate Russian people” and sent so many to the Gulags.*

*After the fall of the USSR, Russia could no longer be criticised for its evil economic system and degenerate lack of religion. So the decision was made to attack **the Russians themselves**.*

*Yes, Russians were now capitalist (like us), yes, they had a strong religious element in their society (like us), so it is no longer the Russian system that is at fault — it has to be the Russian **people** who are evil, corrupt, degenerate and violent.*

The West convinced their people that the Russians were innately treacherous and deadly. They could NEVER be trusted, and they only wanted to kill and destroy.

In short, the Russians did not “share our values”.

Removing the Russians from Europe

The idea behind the current sanctions regime was not just to destroy Russia financially and economically, but to isolate Russians from the rest of the world, and make them The Other.

The past decades of bombardment with cultural tropes portraying Russians as mindless, soulless, violent criminals certainly helped this effort.

*By September 2022, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen’s rhetoric towards Russia was openly “otherizing” — if not outright racist. In her [State of the Union address](#), she declared: “We will also propose additional bans on providing **European** services to Russia, and a prohibition for EU nationals to sit on governing bodies of Russian state-owned enterprises”.*

“Russia should not benefit from European knowledge and expertise”, she snarled.

Clearly, to [borrow the framing](#) of European Commission VP Josep Borrell, Russia was not part of the European “Garden”, but rather part of the non-European “[Jungle](#)”.

It's Germany 1933 all over again

The Nazis sought to remove everything Jewish from European and Western culture. They carried out targeted programs of [boycotts, property seizures and other methods](#) to systematically destroy and impoverish Jews:

The Sturmabteilung (SA) ran boycott and picketing campaigns targeting Jewish businesses that reduced their customers, sales and revenue. The Nazis exerted pressure on suppliers or wholesalers that left many Jewish businesses without stock. From 1936, the allocation of raw materials was regulated by the Nazi regime, which naturally denied them to Jewish companies. Nazis and Nazi sympathisers in local government often raised rates and rentals on Jewish stores and offices.

Also on March 7, two weeks before Russian troops crossed the Ukrainian frontier, the Washington Post published an [extensive exposé](#) on “Anti-Russian hate in Europe”:

*“Across Europe, people who have no involvement with the war are being targeted and **removed from positions,**” said Aleksandra Lewicki, a sociologist at the University of Sussex. “There’s a sense of a clear enemy, it’s Russians, from all walks of life, who are being **targeted by racist hate crimes** and derogatory comments”.*

The article goes on to describe a situation similar to what existed for German Jews in the 1930's:

A receptionist at another Russian restaurant in London, who asked not to be named for fear of further abuse, said his place is receiving 30 to 40 hate messages a day, mostly from Britons and Americans.

And this was BEFORE the Russians crossed into Ukraine.

CNN published [a video report](#) on how Russian businesses across the USA were being vandalised.

“We’ve had people call and say they would bomb us,” the [owner of a Russian restaurant](#) in California said

The “Most-Sanctioned Country Ever”

On March 7, 2022, two weeks before Putin launched his Special Military Operation in Ukraine, Bloomberg News declared that “[Russia Is Now the World’s Most-Sanctioned Nation](#)”.

The purpose of the Western sanctions was always clear — to punish Russia as a whole, to make life miserable for Russians. As a result of the “unprecedented” Western sanctions, US President Joe Biden crowed, “the Ruble will be rubble”.

European Commission Chief Ursula von der Leyen proudly [declared](#): “We will freeze Russian assets in the EU and stop access of Russian banks to our financial market”.

But the West’s Russophobic campaign did not end with sanctions. It went far beyond. The Great Boycott begins

After the launch of the SMO, Russia needed to be cancelled, and the West responded enthusiastically. Fuelled by 80 years of anti-Russian propaganda, outraged by persistent reports of “Russian hacking” and “election meddling”, and frustrated by incidents of “alleged” poisoning and assassination — none of which could ever be traced conclusively back to Putin, the collective West was ready to rip Russia to bits.

Of course, westerners were already predisposed to think of Russians as criminals and assassins — thanks to that [long and documented history](#) of the Russians being caricatured negatively in western popular culture.

In short: the Nazis portrayed Jews as the masters of money and finance; the West portrays Russians as the masters of crime and violence.

And so, shocked at the sight of blond-haired, blue-eyed war refugees and enraged at reports of Russian war crimes and atrocities, the West embraced an economic and cultural boycott campaign the scale and scope of which had not been seen since Kristallnacht.

Seizing the property of Russians

Like the Nazis did to the Jews in the 1930’s, the West has decided that all private as well as public Russian property is ripe for the taking.

[More than \\$8 billion](#) of Jewish property was stolen by the Nazis between 1933–45. But that number pales next to the enormous sums being stolen from Russians by the western powers.

*It started, of course, with the national wealth and monetary reserves of the Russian Federation. These assets were [frozen](#) by the EU and the US days after the launch of the Russian SMO. Now there are proposals both in the [United States](#) and the [European Union](#) to use the **\$300 billion** in seized Russian state wealth and use it to “rebuild Ukraine”.*

Needless to say, this move is unprecedented.

But it is not just Russian state assets that are being stolen. [Private Russian citizens](#) are also seeing their property and money taken. Italy alone [seized over \\$780 million](#) in private Russian property.

The western nations teamed up to create a special entity called REPO, [Russian Elites, Proxies, and Oligarchs Task Force](#). The nations forming REPO include Australia, Canada, Germany, Italy, France, Japan, the UK, and US, along with the European Commission.

*The REPO mission statement says the countries will assist one another as well as other nations to “find, restrain, freeze, seize, and, where appropriate, confiscate or forfeit the assets of those **individuals and entities** that have been sanctioned in connection with Russia’s premeditated, unjust, and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine and the continuing aggression of the Russian regime”.*

One may well ask how non-state “individuals and entities” can be sanctioned and have their property seized as a response to state actions. The answer is simple: [declare all those individuals to be criminals](#) who acquired their wealth illegally.

Seizing Russian wealth was easily justified because in the West, “everyone knows” that all wealthy Russians are criminals.

Thus it was that the US Treasury Department issued sanctions against, as they said, “[Kremlin Elites, Leaders, Oligarchs, and Family](#)”.

Note the “and Family” part. This means that if your uncle sat on a Russian bank board, guess what? Your US bank account was seized.

What “Standing with Ukraine” REALLY means

Stealing the property of Russians was just the beginning. In their hysterical determination to “Stand with Ukraine”, the West became the puppet and Kiev [became the puppet master](#). Anything the Ukrainians implemented on their own was almost always adopted in the collective West.

People forgot — or simply ignored — the campaign of ethnic cleansing that had been raging in Ukraine since 2014. Ukrainian Nazis and ultranationalists were not just banning the official Russian language; under their campaign of “[derussification](#)” they were cancelling all Russian music, [banning Russian books](#) from libraries — [and even burning them](#).

After Putin launched his SMO, Ukraine demanded that the West follow suit . In December 2022, Oleksandr Tkachenko, Ukraine’s Cultural Minister, [called upon all Westerners](#) to boycott Russian culture.

*Stating that his country is engaged in what he described as “[a civilisational battle over culture and history](#)”, Tkachenko called on the West to “cancel” everything from *The Nutcracker* to *The 1812 Overture*. Russian ballet, symphonies, literature, etc. were all to be banned, and where possible, replaced with Ukrainian works.*

Then, Ukraine started demanding that Russia be banned from all international sporting events.

The West complied.

For example:

- *At the request of Kiev, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) [banned Russian athletes](#) from competing in the Olympics.*
- *Formula One [cancelled](#) the Russian Gran Prix 2024.*
- *[Russians were banned](#) from international film and arts festivals such as Cannes.*
- *FIFA and UEFA [banned Russia](#) from competing in all events.*

But banning Russia from international football competition was not enough. Russians had to be [“erased” from football VIDEO GAMES](#) as well.

EA Sports that it would remove the Russian national team and Russian clubs from its popular FIFA video game series. “EA Sports stands in solidarity with the Ukrainian people and like so many voices across the world of football, calls for peace and an end to the invasion of Ukraine,” the gaming company said.

Such measures are direct analogs of the Nazi campaign to eradicate “Jewishness” from European life.

The West ignores the plight of the Russian “Subhumans”

During the 1930s, as Hitler’s shock troops and street thugs were terrorising and murdering Germany’s Jews, the West turned a mostly blind eye to the atrocities.

The same ignorance was studiously practised by the West with regard to the killing, torture and ethnic cleansing perpetrated on the Ukrainian Russians by Kiev’s Nazi battalions.

TUESDAY, JUNE 3, 2014

Russians are sub-humans in the eyes of the West

by "Juan"

Untermenschen. That is what we are in the eyes of The West. Untermenschen. Subhumans.

A Ukrainian Russian living in the Donbas wrote a blog post using the pseudonym “Juan”. He described the events of 2014 from a victim’s point of view: the murders, the burnings, the bombings, the mayhem, and wrote:

*To this day not a single western government that I am aware of has expressed the slightest sympathy or expressed condolences for the murdered men and women and children in Donbas nor has a single western government asked Kiev to cease the bombardments. **After all, the dead citizens are Untermenschen. WE are Untermenschen.***

The wilful ignorance of the West towards the suffering of the Russians in the Donbas is another similarity between them and the Jews of the Holocaust.

Destroying Russia as a nation

*In Lavrov's press comments, the Russian Foreign Minister accused the West of pursuing "the **old aim** of finally solving the "Russian question".*

What exactly is this aim, and why is it "old"?

Well — let us not forget that during the civil war that followed the Russian Revolution of 1917, the West's intervention on behalf of the White Russians (fighting against the Communist government) involved hundreds of thousands of troops. [America's commitment was 11,000, Britain's 7,500, France's 15,000.](#)

That was 100 years ago.

Operation Unthinkable is no longer unthinkable

Then, in the immediate aftermath of World War II, the Western Allies hatched a plan called [Operation Unthinkable](#), designed to conquer and occupy the war-torn and weakened Soviet Union, with the following stated objective:

"The overall or political object is to impose upon Russia the will of the United States and British Empire" — Operation Unthinkable (1945)

[Report from the British Military leaders](#) to Prime Minister Winston Churchill on the chances of 'Operation Unthinkable' -a surprise attack on the USSR, 22 May 1945

The operation was planned by the Joint Planning Staff and presented to Winston Churchill in May, 1945. The proposed launch date of the operation was July 1, 1945.

Operation Unthinkable's potential success, according to the planners, depended on enlisting the Russian-hating Poles as well as "the re-equipment and re-organisation of German manpower" (i.e., NAZIS):

"Great Britain and the United States [will] have full assistance from the Polish armed forces and can count upon the use of German manpower and what remains of German industrial capacity".

The planning brief concludes that in order to achieve the objective, "the defeat of Russia in a total war will be necessary".

In short, this was [Churchill's plan for World War Three](#), and it ended with the complete defeat and "Occupation of Vital Areas of Russia".

So — the plan revolved around recycling the recently decommissioned Nazis to fight against Russia — again. I wonder what Stalin and his staff thought when they learned about this (and you know they did).

Needless to say, Operation Unthinkable was never implemented. But the great western dream of conquering Russia has always remained — and still informs and shapes western policy towards Russia.

The Final Step in the “Final Solution”: carving up Russia

On February 14, 2023, policymakers, government officials and geopolitical “experts” gathered at the Hudson Institute, just down the street from the White House, for a half day conference to discuss the future of Eurasia.

As these policy potentates took their seats in the hall of one of the US’s greatest Washington think tanks, the air must have crackled with electricity. They were there, after all, on a momentous mission: **to plan for the dissolution of the Russian Federation.**

The Hudson Institute held a seminar on how to carve up Russia {Source: [The Hudson Institute](#)}

The [introductory brief](#) set the tone of the conference:

Because of the Kremlin’s decision to attack Ukraine, Moscow’s once extensive influence across Eurasia has dwindled, and **the war has devastated Russia’s economy, military, and social stability.**

US and allied policymakers need to understand this possibility and prepare for the new Eurasian geopolitical reality that **a fall of the Russian Federation** might bring.

Official US policy: “Decolonizing Russia”

It is not just the private think tanks that are preparing to break up Russia — “decolonizing” Russia is also official US policy. The Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), also known as the U.S. Helsinki Commission, is an independent commission of the U.S. Federal Government.

In June, 2022, the CSCE held its own conference, called simply “[Decolonizing Russia: A Moral and Strategic Imperative](#)”.

Decolonizing Russia: A Moral and Strategic Imperative

Edit description


www.youtube.com

These people believe that the socialist USSR was not a force for “liberation” but rather one for “colonisation”.

Their plans assume that Putin is a deranged megalomaniac trying to “reconstitute the Russian Empire” (or the USSR), and whose days are now numbered.

It's not just the Western Leaders



Westerners in general are now hell bent on destroying Russia — not just western leaders, but random people on social media platforms like [Quora](#). Here is a sadly typical view:



Feb 4

We all know what Russia represents now and always has. It's pure evil. Hopefully this war will finish them.

russia needs to be broken up into smaller areas and administered by western countries for a decade or two.

  Reply ...

A random post on Quora expressing what has now become the “mainstream” view of Russia and Russians.

Why Lavrov is Right

When the Nazis came to power in the 1930's Germany was not a particularly anti-Semitic state. It took the Nazis years to turn ordinary Germans into dogmatic Jew-haters. But after those years of propaganda and brainwashing, the average German on the street knew that the Jew was his enemy, that Jews were The Other; that Jewish art and culture was decadent and corrupt; that Jews were criminal; that Jews had to be removed, eradicated, wiped out; that Jews were Evil.

That same process has been used in the West to create an all-encompassing anti-Russian culture that teaches us that Russians are not like us; that Russian art and literature is corrupt and decadent; that we cannot allow anything or anyone Russian to exist in our society; that Russia itself as it currently exists needs to be dismantled; that the Russians are, as that Quora poster said, “pure evil”.

In other words:

We are told that the Russians are a “problem”, one for which we need a “Final Solution”

— just as Lavrov said.

I did not write either of the two articles above. One was by a well known intellectual, and the other by an ordinary American writer. They take opposite points of view with regards to the war in Ukraine. Which point of view is right or wrong is not for me to judge. But I do think that the Taleb piece is full of biases, and the Brunoli article is a recollection of many things I have read about WW2 over the last fifty years, so I think it is not a bunch of fallacious talking points. As a matter of fact, Mr Brunoli's point about the role of Russians portrayed in popular culture is well taken – in the highly successful John Wick movies, Russians are the bad guys our hero takes on everywhere. What impressions do ordinary people who don't think about history have otherwise?

So I shall leave the thinking to my readers. I have presented two sides of the “forest and not the trees” on the war in Ukraine, not about the battlefield or the economic sanctions but on the two philosophies that claim each side to have the blessing of righteousness. It’s your call.

,

By:

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Fintech Entrepreneur, Money Manager and Blogger

Un-Influencer in a World full of Hubris