



THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT AND THE TUMULT OF OUR TIME

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1. Is Operation Z (The Invasion Of Ukraine) Explicable By “Putin Is Evil?”

I cannot agree with what seems to be the dominant explanation in the West that the Russian invasion of Ukraine occurred because Putin is evil. The ‘explanation’ is usually accompanied by claims that Putin is a megalomaniac and a Russian criminal; that his rulership lacks all legitimacy; that Ukrainians are the victims of his overriding ambition to restore Russia’s imperial place in the world; and that Putin is pushing the world to the brink of a third world war and hence must be stopped.

“What are we going to do about Putin?” as an old friend, in her late sixties, full of existential distress and brimming with moral fervor, exclaimed at a recent lunch. The same sentiments have also been repeated by scholars I admire deeply and have often found common cause with, in this very magazine. Thus, in an email chain I am part of, a historian, whom I consider one of the finest of our times, wrote in support of Ryszard Legutko’s condemnation of Putin in the European Parliament that he spoke “for all of us.” Given that I have recently written very enthusiastically on Legutko’s book on freedom [here in the *Postil*](#), as well as having written an open letter condemning his appalling treatment at the hands of his fellow colleagues and students at his university, I wish that I did see things like him. But I cannot unsee what I see, and what I see comes from my readings and thought gathered over my adult life as a university teacher, where amongst other things, I taught International Relations.

Likewise, the very friend who introduced me to the *Postil*, and whose writings I have also applauded [in these pages](#), Zbigniew Janowski, sent me his essay, “[Ukraine And The West’s National Interest](#),” about the Ukraine war for comment. That and the request by another friend to share my take on this war have led me to set out my considerations.

War today is mass death, and horrific suffering, but I find all of the above “diagnosis,” to put it mildly, not only lacking in analytical seriousness but contributing to the mindset that has cried out in support of what—each and every time—have turned out to be disastrous military interventions which have only added chaos in regions which were bad enough before the toppling of regimes said to be guilty of “killing their own people”—a turn of phrase that people utter with such seriousness, as if its very formulation gives the situation a special kind of moral significance that we might otherwise be silly enough to conflate with any other kind of mass killing.

Thus, it is now that the people wanting to line up to morally address this geopolitical tragedy—why I

formulate it thus shall become evident—have mostly been silent on Libya, Syria, and Yemen. Many, though far from all, who want NATO to “teach Putin a lesson” (said at the same lunch, where the woman’s husband squared up, “Putin is a bully who must be taught a lesson”) had also supported the Afghanistan and Iraq wars. I confess to having been ambivalent back then—in the case of Iraq, at least when it seemed that the CIA had definite proof about the WMD’s; and now seeing I was utterly wrong to believe that these operations were, at best, anything more than massive strategic blunders (leaving aside the whole “blood for oil” dimensions) that made things far worse than they were—and has only highlighted the deficiencies of the armed forces of the West.

This “essay”—if essay it be—is really a collection of considerations that bring together aspects of the tumult of the times which most would think irrelevant—and they are certainly irrelevant to the narrative-thematics mentioned above—but which for me are critical for any serious response to the war. It is a response that eschews the search for a single cause—because, like everything historically important, such searches are as futile as they are distracting and wrong-headed. That means that it is also not a search for moral culpability as such—for as is very evident to me and as I shall lay out, there is plenty of culpability to go around—though it does seem that plenty of people, including journalists, are either ignorant of, or silent about, all matter of circumstances and players that are pertinent to the disaster of this war. Geopolitical questions are never adequately answered by “He did it!” And yes of course Putin ordered the invasion. But the question that must always be posed to an event is: How has the “who” come to be doing the “what?” And what exactly does the “what” involve?

My observations and concerns are also not the response of a specialist on Ukrainian or Russian politics—I read neither language. Though area specialists are not always very good guides to anything—how many Sovietologists foresaw the end of the USSR? What I think is also not from my own first-hand experience on the ground, but it comes from open sources, some of which are provided by first-hand witnesses to the event taking place—even though it is ever more difficult to dig up information, as the internet has become increasingly algorithmically colonized by those who think they should dictate what is genuine information and what is misinformation—as if they would know.

Not only do I have no stake in thinking what I think, but I would really like to be convinced that I am not seeing clearly, that I am missing some essential evidence that would make me change my mind—as opposed to seeing that what people are presenting as evidence/facts are an admixture of dubious psycho-politics, and the ham-fisted application by analogy of historical facts to contemporary contingencies which require consideration of other historical and geopolitical facts rather than

reminisces about the Russian empire and the “Russian soul,” and appeals to abstract moral and political ideals that have nothing to do with these or any other circumstances or characters.

I am well aware that many will just think that I and others who see things like me are moral pariahs or conspiracy theorists, and stooges of the evil Vladimir Putin—but the idea that someone who is trying to understand something and who disagrees with a particular diagnosis is a mere puppet of someone else (in this case Putin), and that he is spreading misinformation, and should be censored or denounced, is a symptom of what we have lost in the West—our minds along with our souls. It is much more comfortable to think that this issue is a clear-cut case of good and evil, and we all need to sing along with the rousing, feel-good moral crescendos of denunciation that are taking place wherever friends meet for a meal or drink.

Let me also say that what I present below is indicative not only of a disagreement I have with political “friends,” but also with people whose views I generally consider utterly stupid and contemptible and who are also all yelling to the rooftops that Putin is evil, and Zelensky a hero or saint.

Such people include the US triumvirate (Biden, Harris, Pelosi) who are the “leaders” of the “free world;” and the owners of the media/tech universe; and the ant-like army of mindless academicians and journalists who constitute the Greek chorus to those in power.

It is certainly possible to agree with scoundrels and imbeciles because they may be correct on a particular issue; but in the tumult of our times, it is noteworthy that almost every issue of importance is a matter of life and death, and ends up being one more reason to sort out those who are “enemies” of humankind from the self-proclaimed good, the true and the beautiful. I guess that I must be an enemy of humankind (on multiple fronts) because I hesitate to believe any of the things that have enabled the technocratic global elite. And it is fairly obvious that no matter what the crisis, it is pretty well the same bevy of benignly-beaming countenances who all know how to set us right: ranging from the benign philanthropic crew patenting vaccines like Bill Gates, or hedge fund meddlers in the political fate of nations like George Soros, or the sweat-shirted “geniats” (I know I made that word up but it fits) at the helm of the platforms of global communication and censorship, those royal founts-of-wisdom and virtue, Charlie, Harry and Meghan, and the rest of the good, true and beautiful crew of pied pipers, court jesters, and acrobats, to the glum-drum-hum-drum-dumb-dumb ring-a-ding-zing-a-ling fun-loving types (imagine a group so interesting and hip that Klauss Schwab is their role model, and whose best bet for getting laid is attending a Davos meeting). This last lot may seem to be relatively innocuous in

the greater scheme of things, with their grey suits and with their blurred pasty faces, and clear blue-sky minds. But they are responsible for enough hot air to make us wonder if there really is another thirty years before we all burn to death, not to mention their devastating destruction of the world's forests so they can print up their detailed plans. You got to hand it to them, though, they have come up with perfect their plan of ridding the planet of six billion people—they are going to bore everyone to death. I confess the above lot are the real reason I can't get into Darwin's theory of evolution.

As much as the whole gang in a sane world would be players in some Aristophanean farce, we are living in a Western cold civil war and issues that people generally treat as separate are not separate at all. For while the issues that cause division vary from climate to biology to virology, the sociology of race, ethnicity, to political theology and to domestic politics and geopolitics—the pitch and consequence is the same: families and friends, classes and nations turn against each other with ferocity; and the West is in a phase of ideological divisiveness, reminiscent of the political chaos in the post-First World War period. Putin cannot be blamed for any of this. In this civil war, the technocratic lords and their minions are winning in the West (I am sure though that their victory though will be pyrrhic). There are plenty of indications that the “glorious future” (of Western developed societies) will be one of total surveillance. All matters, from climate to environmental issues, to everything social, political, and economic will be in the hands and minds of specialists.

Thinkers of the left (Marcuse in *One Dimensional Man*) and the right (Heidegger in too many places to mention) envisaged and warned against this almost a century ago. Now one does not need to be a philosopher to make sense of the future, as it takes shape before our eyes, and we witness the transformation of politics into the mere administration of things, including humanity, as Saint-Simon initially formulated it. Food, water and air—all of life—become the “things” to be treated as part of one great calculable planning and trading system by the global oligarchs, political elite and technocrats working on behalf of their version of the good of human kind.

These considerations are neither fanciful, nor off-point. On the contrary, the idea that what is happening in Ukraine can even be remotely considered apart from what else is happening in the Western world strikes me as mad—or, in less polemic terms, methodologically deficient.

2. The Bigger Picture, Or The Great Contestation Of Our Time

The political contestation today that matters in the Western world, and thereby impacts upon the entire

planet—and the only one that is really about making the future—is between those who are with a program of global leadership and compliance to the narratives of rights, sustainability, censorship, population control, and the complete technocratization of life, and those who oppose it. The lines of division are not lines that most people are even conscious of (which is typical of people in a phase of an event whose meaning is yet to become known even to the inside players—i.e., the makers of it). But in our age of crisis building upon crisis, the lines always come down to more or less the same people, providing the same methods, for the same kinds of solutions—and all based in moral principles that are ostensibly and fortuitously congruent with “the science,” and which will supposedly lead to a more equal and emancipate world (even though they actually lead to a world of greater conformity and compliance, greater censorship and control and an unprecedented scale of inequality). On this last point, consider how Western COVID policies have impacted on the economies of impoverished countries.

The Ukraine war is one more component of an assemblage of a technocratic globalist world outlook that has multiple open organs of articulation and instantiation. This outlook is widely publicized and broadly crafted. It is not a conspiracy, if one means that there is a plan that is hatched secretly and well executed. The plan—and the vocabulary in which it is formulated—is publicly aired in multiple forums from the UN to the World Economic Forum, from corporate CEOs to NGOs, from newspapers and television stations, and in university and primary school class-rooms.

If, however, one means that a group of players seeks to impose their will upon others to control the direction of resources and the organization and administration of life is a conspiracy—stated thus, then all politics is a conspiracy. Those who believe that “the science,” and hence a technocratic elite, are both necessary to solve the problems of the species and the planet then have to accept that the consequences of implementation are and will be extremely violent. It is very understandable why people think that population control, green energy, universal income etc. are very good outcomes, just as it is very understandable why peasants and workers in Russia and China thought that the solution of communism would be a very good thing. The problem with their position is not only what the world will be like if it arrives to where it is being led (see above), but the horrific costs involved in getting from this world to that future “world.” Those who are challenging this globalist vision believe that this arrival can only be achieved by a level of destruction, and domination that will make the totalitarianism of the twentieth century seem but a prelude to a greater horror.

The “to come” is the messianic formulation that a number of philosophers have used to invoke this

future, which will ostensibly emancipate every oppressed group. It is just a fancy name for what Marxists-Leninist used to call "the glorious future" and the "New Man." Its greatest obstacle is not (as endlessly repeated) the privilege and prejudices of dominators who ideologically indoctrinate the dominated—but traditions which give most people a thicker identity than the thinner ones of race, ethnicity (the very issue that has been the tinderbox in Ukraine), gender, sexuality—all distorted and self-serving ideas of intellectuals who advocate the globalist "view" of emancipation and personhood. The victims of these ideas are primarily the working classes.

Amongst the intelligentsia, it is a tiny and insignificant group of outcasts who are coming to see that any allegiances to the old alliances of left and right (liberal-conservative) have not the slightest relevance at all—because states, corporations and NGOs are equally culpable, being fully integrated into the program, which is (to use a term of that Parisian enthusiast of "nomad thinking," [Gilles Deleuze](#)) rhizomic in its "logic" and evolution, rather than arboreal. This program is a contagion in which the makers of "the future" act in concert, without even realizing what it is that they are making or what the program even is. This too is simply the way events generally transpire, and how we all live, i.e., mostly unaware of what we are doing whilst we do it. It is global in the variety of interests, ideological preferences and types of people that are drawn into its epicentre.

Those who are being drawn in, come from every corner of the globe, and one should not underestimate the attractive "goods" that are promised—prosperity, which given the technological potential unlocked by the fusion of global forces, resources and techniques, enable the chosen ones to live as gods (no wonder the dream is to find technologies to defeat not only sickness but death itself), and pleasure, including the most intense sexual pleasures and array of pleasurable possibilities (the most widely cited philosopher of our time, Michel Foucault, was both prophet and avatar of this new "higher" type).

In most traditional societies those who seek to live their lives pursuing such pleasures have been either outlawed outright, though mostly left to seek their pleasures in hidden, draped and private spaces. But to fabricate entire life identities around a sexual act or preference, so that it becomes a means for the complete overturning of traditional institutions and the touchstone of value is insane, not least because it cannot create the same kinds of *sacrificial bonds of solidarity* that enable societies to persist over long period of times.

Lest anyone think I am overstating the significance of sexual identity politics, consider the public head

of MI6, who came out saying at the very beginning of the Ukraine war that the real difference between Russia and the West is to be seen in how they respectively respond to LGBTQ rights.

Like pretty well every political leader in the non-Western world, not to mention the Islamic world (is it Islamophobic to mention that rainbow flags do not fly atop government buildings in Islamic countries?), Putin does not want to allow sexual identity/diversity politics to flourish in Russia; and it is one reason he is hated so much by liberals in the Western world.

I am reminded of a book I once reviewed, [*God in the Tumult of the Global Square*](#), where the authors are completely flummoxed by the fact that the Russian Orthodox contingent were not on board with the other delegates at an interfaith conference that denounced critics of gay clerics—but the fact was that the Russians simply valued the importance of traditional sexual values in social formation more than individual sexual orientation, rights and choices. To think that Putin cares about private homosexual acts, because he is a nasty/pasty homophobe and who encourages the persecution of gay people, is to either be willfully misleading or to fail to see the very different point that Putin has made very clear in a number of speeches: Western sexual (and all styles of identity) politics is destructive to the traditions of Church and family; and after some seventy years of communist social destruction and another ten or so years of mayhem, Putin—and his support base—will do all in their power to resist what they see as a Western trojan horse.

With respect to the role of sexual identity politics in the dismantling and reconstruction of social institutions—and hence *what the West now stands for*—it is significant that the argument in favour of decriminalisation of homosexuality was based upon the sanctity of privacy. Had the matter of sexual preference and pleasure been solely a matter of private concern, it would not have posed any threat to the role of the family as such.

However, to put the pursuit and open celebration of sexual desire at the centre of our drives and needs, as Freud and the generation that came of age in the 1960s did, and now our pedagogues do, is to place appetite against traditions—all traditions—and thereby create the clearing in which we live today; and the consequences of which are also relevant to this war.

For this combination is the great attractor-force of the West today; and it is particularly attractive to the young, wealthy and vital; and it is as just as attractive to the more well-heeled Chinese, as it is to Russians, as it is to Ukrainians, as it is to the majority of middle class youth with prospects and spending

power in Western lands, as it is, indeed, to those Polish students and philosophy professors who denounced Ryszard Legutko for having the temerity to see through the destructive nature of implanting a surveillance unit (of the sort that pretty well all Western universities now have) at his university to ensure that "diversity" (of sexual styles of pleasure and identities formed around those pleasures) will be protected.

That its attractiveness—and more generally the attractiveness of a life dedicated to slaking one's desires and searching for comfort—is a mere veneer and false promise of emancipation is all too evident in the widespread despondency and social decay in the richest society the world has ever seen—drug dependency, broken marriages, abandoned or single mothers struggling to raise their children, abandoned and run away children, race conflicts, suicide rates and the widespread use of opiates to transport their users out of the pain and despair of everyday life. This is the end of the line of what the more philosophical of readers might recall was Descartes' great vision of us becoming lords and masters of nature, viz. an eternal, *comfortable* life (achievable through advances in medicine).

Given this reality, is it also any wonder that given what they know through their own empty experiences of hooks-ups without love and serial monogamy, the youth and their teachers, who have been caught up in this pursuit of the pleasure-principle and its equation with life's very meaning, as well as the most important feature of all in one's identity, there is a search for a spiritual purpose that might redeem this morass of sadness, and despair that dwells within the surface phantasmagoria of opulence, infantilism, and eroticism.

That search, though, is undertaken by souls already brainwashed and broken and all they can do is plea for more of the same cause—they want more equity, more social justice so all on the planet may share their opulence and self-indulgence, and emptiness. These empty zombified people find their greatest spiritual core in demanding ever more service to the idols that have malformed them. Their prayers and rituals, their band of solidarity, their most genuinely joyful act is the moral outrage that they express at anyone who deviates from thinking and talking about the world that would lead others away from their gods. Their gods are (as Kant would say of the God that reason itself conjures) the "mere ideas" of their own "moral freedom," which is their power to form absolutes that all must obey because—so they truly believe—all (except the ideologically deformed) want what they want: they call this "social justice."

It is not only to do with sexual pleasure, but also with the divvying-up of material resources and ensuring no identity group is more privileged than another. The people who love this way have no idea

what they are really doing. They are slaves of the gods of sexual indulgence, "social justice," intersectionality, etc. and imagine they are the elite/priests selecting who will be fit to be on board the ark of the future.

What we are living through is the apogee of modern ambition and technology. Its roots combine the enlightened and romantic thinkers of the modern age. This apogee involves tearing out all other forms of sociality and encountering. But its adherents believe that they are involved in redeeming the best of traditions and people that have been silenced by history (cf. Walter Benjamin on the redemption of the oppressed). This is all advanced through an appeal to rights, anti-domination/ emancipation, equity—and an inability to consciously understand the sacrificial requirements of any kind of society; though they do unconsciously understand that they must sacrifice others (largely those who do not agree with them about their socio-political objectives or processes) to realize their dream.

That premodern societies were generally sacrificial orders is something they simply know nothing of—their moral fantasies require they speak of tribal societies as egalitarian and democratic. The Australian author and faux aboriginal man Bruce Pascoe has written a book that has received many prestigious awards and is taught in schools around the country and which claims that Australian aborigines were agrarian, settled people who lived in large towns, in a country that was the first and largest democracy. He is also a professor at Australia's most prestigious university—the University of Melbourne. It is not the fact that he ignores the hardships of tribal life, the wars and feuds between tribes, the severity of punishments for acts of transgression, and the existential precariousness which was so great that there were numerous reports by nineteenth century authors of cannibalism; but that he depicts that world as a kind of model of what the future can and should be, if we but get our story straight and find common ground.

The symptoms of the deranged thinking of Western societies are endless—and although imbecilic thinking as the order of the day is recognized by various authors who generally badge themselves as "conservatives"—what is far less common is to identify these very bad ideas with the globalist project that is enabled, in conjunction with what is basically a sexually woke diverse Walt Disney view of the world, in which the United States and its entertainment industries provide the cultural leadership that mainstream politicians, corporations, and all the other leader types disseminate.

I am surprised that so few of my friends see the connections between the attacks upon tradition and the brainlessness and heartlessness of the woke world and the globalist forces that are not incidental

to the Ukraine war—and while I cannot account for what they see, or why they don't see it, I think that as astute as many of their critical writings of the modern spiritual and political crisis are, they are duped by the phantasm of a West that is no more, if ever it was; and the adequacy of the political vocabulary and the categories of distinction it deploys to understand the current circumstance.

It is not that I support Putin as if he and the Russians are to be likened to a team I follow, but I am very sure that much of what I am seeing is seen by Putin, as it is by a philosopher, Alexander Dugin, whose thought is gaining increasing exposure as the true source of Putin's evil thoughts—as if apart from Dugin's *Taking over the World for Dummies*, Putin's library might resemble Pelossi's bookshelf, and he does not have enough information-flow just by observing the world he is in. Is it being a Putin lackey to suggest if there were a test in political history and geo-politics Putin might blow away any world western leader including Boris, who one would expect to fare well in the Classics bit, but not so great in the final question, "What is going on now and what are you going to do about it?"

Apart from the ridiculousness of this cartoonish division of the world into this hybrid monster (supposedly knowing about Dugin is a sign that one really understands the mechanics of evil coming out of Russia) and the innocent rest, what I am seeing is not something I want to see—nor is it something that I think Putin and Dugin want to see. Or to say it another way—if one looks at speeches or [writings by Dugin](#) and Putin, it is clear that they see the West in its death throes—last October Putin likened the West under the dominion of identity politics to Russia under communism, and (in spite of Putin really being a commie) that was not praise.

When Putin rebukes the West for being an "Empire of Lies" (I take up the problem of widespread Western lies—and the matter of "Russian lies" is simply not relevant to the lies of the West)—I do not know how one can deny that he has seen the rottenness that has become simply part of the day-to-day reality in the West—the fabrication, denunciation and persecution now usual in the West. I do not consider someone either wrong or an enemy, if they show me a character flaw; and I cannot see how the West can begin to heal the rifts that threaten to break it other than by addressing the lies that its elite states about itself, its opponents, and the world at large.

3. International Relations 101: The Russian-Ukraine War

International conflicts are driven by all manner of reasons, from conflict over resources, to ideological or faith-driven decisions, to prestige. Often wars are the explosive resolutions of entanglements that

have occurred over protracted periods of time and past decisions which cannot be unmade without tragic collisions. The history of nations and their interests are not, at least for the most part, as in one's own life, the result of principles and wisdom, but of circumstances that involve our own and our forefathers' oversights, missteps, sins and crimes, as well as our and their better judgments and qualities.

In spite of the Western media coverage of this war as a clear-cut case of good vs. evil, I find the position of those who depart from that narrative more compelling. There is John Mearsheimer, International Relations Professor, who, [for many years, has been warning](#) that the United States and NATO have been creating an intolerable geopolitical threat to Russia that would [result in war](#).

There is the former UN weapons inspector [Scott Ritter](#) whose time in active service in the first Iraq war gave him important insights into the regime of Saddam Hussein and why the claims being made about Hussein's army and the weapons of mass destruction were false.

There is Jacques Baud who has an [important essay](#) in the *Postil*; and Colonel Douglas McGregor, who [sums up the situation](#) in terms of whether the USA has a legitimate and genuine national interest in what is a regional conflict.

As counter positions to the mainstream, I have also found [21st Century Wire](#), [Patrick Henningsen](#) podcasts, [UK Column](#), [George Galloway](#), [Lee Stranahan](#), [the Duran](#), [Richard Medhurst](#), the [Grayzone](#) to be amongst those I tune into quite regularly and find informative. Anyone familiar with these podcasts and figures will know they fall on opposing sides on some important issues about states and markets—i.e., the left and right. But, as I state above, anyone who thinks that the demarcation between left-right, liberal-conservative, is living in a “literary reality.”

The analyses the aforementioned people provide comes from people challenging the mainstream media line (oozing out of our screens, earbuds and pages) that anything that does not support the Ukrainian cause and narrative is Russian propaganda. The most basic lesson one learns in International Politics is that peoples have different stakes to protect, and live in different “worlds” and they generally wish to protect their livelihoods and ways of being in the world—that is, people have different *interests*; and the word *interest* is synonymous with the how and why of life lived within a particular place and time. That is why it is important not just to listen to what Zelensky and the Ukrainians are saying and what we believe them to be doing, but also to what Putin and the Russians are saying and doing.

Putin has said that the invasion is to de-Nazify Ukraine—i.e., destroy the ultra-ethnic nationalist elite whose insignificant electoral representation is no indication of its social and institutional influence, and end NATO expansion.

None of the criticisms I have read against these claims takes these words seriously, though plenty try and deny that there is a neo-Nazi problem; or that the US ever conceded it would stop NATO expansion (a claim Putin often makes); or that there is any reason why Russia should be fazed by NATO expansion. I cannot take these “critical” claims seriously; and in any case, the issue is not what you or I think about how Putin should react to the number of neo-Nazis in Ukraine and the power they have garnered institutionally in pressing their interests, or about NATO expansion—what matters is how Putin and the Russian government think—and it would be wise to commence with the proposition that what they think is what they say, and if there is a mismatch between their words and deeds then interpret accordingly. I don’t think there is a mismatch. What I do see is a lot of people not listening, or not taking their words seriously.

On the matter of Russian expansion, I am inclined to defer to two figures who did foresee where NATO expansion into the East would lead, as they strongly advised against ignoring Russia’s concerns about that expansion—the architect of the US Cold War policy, George Kennan and the former ambassador to Ukraine, and career ambassador, and former ambassador to the Russian Federation William Burns. A similar position has also been aired by Peter Ford, a former UK ambassador to Syria, who has first-hand experience of that ongoing debacle of supplying arms to jihadists who were supposedly our *friends* and who helped in the creation of ISIS.

But NATO expansion aside, the immediate occasion of the invasion was the mass positioning of Ukrainian troops and the imminent threat of even greater escalation by the Ukrainians of border disputes arising out of the Maidan. The establishment of the Donetsk People’s Republic and the Luhansk People’s Republic, like the secession of Crimea, are the direct result of attacks upon Russian-speaking Ukrainians. Though, if the Western media is to be believed, the escalation of violence against Russian-speakers, like everything else that Russians say, was mere propaganda and it was simply an open-and-shut case of invasion.

In the Donbas, a civil war has cost many thousands of lives (14000 is the common number bandied around), most of which are Russian-speakers. This too has received scant (albeit occasional) Western media attention, though [Patrick Lancaster](#) has been living there and reporting on this unknown civil war

for eight years.

What people like John Mearsheimer have been seeing and saying since the Maidan is that while this was happening the expansion of NATO and its direct support for the Ukrainian military was akin to building a massive dynamite factory beside a nitroglycerine plant—very reminiscent of the events transpiring in the Balkans prior to the outbreak of the First World War. And as with anyone investigating the causes of the Great War, it is extremely unhelpful to break the conflict down into moral bites and depict the players involved in purely moral culpability-terms, in a manner that befits school children (“Please Sir, it was the Germans and the blank cheque they gave to the Austro-Hungarians that caused it” was the answer of British schoolchildren to the “test” question: Who caused the World War).

Moralistic approaches to political history and current geopolitical circumstances are the means for avoiding rather than solving complex geopolitical antagonisms. Such antagonisms are only resolved through war (yes, sadly, it is the means of last resolve) and statecraft.

Statecraft and international diplomacy require having honed one's mind to deal with the generation and culmination and impact of specific contingencies, actors, and historical and current forces, as well as perceived national interests; and how to deal with limited available choices of action quickly. The reduction of such complexities to normative principles is a scandal that only discloses a fundamental arrogance and ignorance within the modern liberal mind, that to be sure has gone a long way in helping the US become a hegemon, but a hegemon which inevitably leaves ruin as its monument, and causes far many more deaths than it saves.

Further, far from bringing the nations together, as the creators of the League of Nations and United Nations hoped to do, it has simultaneously devalued the international currency of norms by making it seem nothing more than a smokescreen of a particular way of being and acting in the world, which is no less violent and no more benign than the ways of other nations who not only have their own problems to deal with but, when their interests come into collision with the Western democracies, face putative measures; from ruination of their economies to invasion and a scale of warfare that makes what is happening in Kiev look like a soldiers' picnic. (Consider how many died in the first 24 hours of the invasions of Iraq with the reported death toll in Ukraine—shock and awe.)

None of the enemies of the US fail to note that the representatives of the United States, and more generally the defenders of a liberal hegemonic international order, in international forums, deploy the

moral philosophy of deontology—the rectitude of principle [i.e., Human Rights] is all important—whilst blithely embracing consequentialism on every occasion when that order and national interest is threatened (provided said order can marshal enough resources to defeat the threat).

For US and NATO interventionism (as is invariably the case with any player considering the option of initiating war) is very much driven by strategic realities; whereas poor Mr. Zelensky is a genuinely tragic figure wading in waters that he was never prepared for. Caught twixt ethnic-nationalists, who think him a clown, and oligarchs, who use him as a puppet, and portrayed by the Western media as the saintly statesman of the hour (much like *Time*'s list of the world's 100 most influential people in 2019 included that other genius of statecraft, AOC). If poll reports are to be believed, he has managed to claw back popularity amongst Western Ukrainians who had initially voted in droves for him, before thinking they had one more turkey, but who seem now eager to buy the message that Ukrainian freedom is worth armed resistance against Russia.

But forgive me if I am somewhat sceptical—what I see is that a huge number of Ukrainians have the very good sense to simply want to get out of the place. And while the Ukrainian army is sizable and well-armed, there are also reports of the government distributing tens of thousands of assault rifles to civilians. This is, as the Russian media and government rightly point out, in breach of international law, requiring the clear demarcation between civilians and combatants. While the Western media has no problem finding stories about unwilling Russian troops, we are supposed to believe that Ukrainians still in Kiev, one and all, are noble, patriotic freedom fighters. Sorry, but I grew up a long time ago, and in spite of the absurd, albeit widespread depiction within anti-Russian media, of Russia as the USSR and Nazi German redux, such analogies do not hold up to even the most cursory of examinations.

There have also been stories coming out of Mariupol of Ukrainian soldiers using civilians as human shields. Like all inconvenient stories about the war they are immediately denied, without investigation by Western journalists and said to be Russian propaganda. But, I ask, why would the non-combatants want to stay in the city, and why would the battalions that Russian soldiers are intent on destroying not be prepared to save themselves at any cost? The military tactics of the Russians do indicate that the objectives of Russia are what Putin says they are—to demilitarize Ukraine and not simply erase it. Thus, it seems plausible that any captured Ukrainian soldier found to have links with the Azov battalion or any other ethnic ultra-nationalist Ukrainian group will in all likelihood be executed immediately.

Whatever we say about Zelensky, he was as incapable of building peace in Ukraine as he was in

reducing corruption. In spite of all the media hoopla he receives for his courage in standing up to a tyrant, and speeches that look like they come from US hack-tv drama writers, he was no statesman. He is either truly child-like or has so little knowledge of relatively recent history that he really thought that Russia would simply standby and wait for the Minsk agreements to continually be ignored and watch as Ukrainian forces were got ready to launch a final defeat of the Russian-speaking resistance in the Donbas.

If, by the way, anyone thinks that ethnic-nationalist militias killing Russian first language speakers with impunity, and infiltrating the various institutions of Ukraine, including the military is untrue, which is now the Western media default position, you should go back and read/watch reports in the *Guardian* and BBC when they were not just outlets of propaganda. You might also turn to a paper, put out by the Institute for European, Russian and Eurasian Studies at George Washington University just last September, by Oleksiy Kuzmenko, ["Far Right Group Made its Home in Ukraine's Major Western Military Training Hub."](#) And if you do not think providing a *de facto*, if not *de jure*, front for NATO's strategic advancement, and threatening Russia with nuclear war, is not brinkmanship, I hazard to guess what would be.

In any case, Mr. Zelensky has had the kind of lesson in geopolitics that those who had the temerity to defy the United States have often had to learn to their peril. And while the United States and other European Nations desist from direct military involvement at least for the moment—though engaging in the now widely accepted practice of asset-seizures of Russian nationals (the future consequences of this policy bode very ill indeed for the world's economy generally, as well as a future peace, or even the West's economic power and credibility) as well as the sackings of Russians from all manner of jobs, from teaching to the arts—Mr. Zelensky berates the West for not being brave enough to have a full scale war.

As for the innocence of Saint Zelensky, I have said he is a tragic figure. But as he calls ever more desperately to bring the entire world into war, I cannot see him as anything other than a man who has stumbled blindly into this like a drunk with a match in the aforementioned nitroglycerine factory, panicking for his own survival; or, I will grant him this, possibly a place in the pantheon of the nation's heroes, right alongside [Stepan Bandera](#), that anti-Soviet Nazi ally and mass-murderer of Jews, Poles, and Russians.

If Western journalists stopped for a moment and realized that Putin does not care what they think of his

actions, but he understands Russia and the events and figures within Russia's historical memory. Putin understands that when President Yushenko posthumously awarded the medal of Hero of the Ukraine in 2010 to Bandera, and when the extremely crooked and much-hated President Pyotr Poroshenko, who emerged out of the Maidan, signed a law in 2015 glorifying the neo-fascist OUN and the UPA, this was a signal of support to Bandera neo-Nazi supporters and an acknowledgment of the need for the support of this influential power block.

Gone are the days when I, at least, could trust anything I see on the BBC. And yet again this prejudice I have developed was confirmed not just to be sheer prejudice, when a friend of mine sent me today a BBC report about how insignificant the Azov battalion and other neo-Nazi groups are in Ukraine and hence Putin was—yet again—telling lies that the roving intrepid BBC journalist was exposing. The “exposure” consisted of loosely tossing around some figures and speaking with Ukrainians who said: No there was no Neo-Nazi problem, there were hardly any of them; and in any case, they were good fighters, and their ideology was personal—akin to being a Seventh Day Adventist. One person who provided important evidence to discredit mad bad Vlad was good old Honest Poroshenko himself—who merely had to roll his eyes when asked of the existence of Ukrainian neo-Nazis.

I make no secret of the fact I think Joe Biden an idiot, but he is not such an idiot that he really thinks that Americans who have just presided over a humiliating debacle in Afghanistan want to start rounding up their kids, who are busily studying sexual and racial identity inflected subjects so they can go hook up with what and who they want, in the hope they may make themselves more virtuous, if they don't have enough people to denounce or de-platform, by finding a riot in the summer, that is, if some unfortunate black person fulfils their dreams and gets caught in the cross-fire of police panic.

Perhaps Zelensky simply does not understand the elite priorities of the US, from its president to its woke military higher ups, which is to turn the entire world into something that highly sexualised, irresponsible teens want and understand, which certainly does not include dying for anything, let alone other people's freedom. Moreover, on the ground, none knows where Ukraine is, and Kiev is a style of chicken dinner. They don't really want to see their little “It,” who is doing so well at college, come back home in a coffin. Heck, one even might recall one of the major reasons why Trump got elected; that is, as Joe now stumbles around airing threats of the sort that seemed to work well enough when he had deal with that bum Corn Pop—and Vlad is just another bum after all. But for all that, Joe is not so gone (yet) that he doesn't know that taking the US into a war would not really help him get re-elected.

The heroic leader Zelensky, as he is portrayed in the West, looks like he is in an all-or-nothing situation. And the millions of dollars he has stashed away overseas, thanks to his former media mogul boss, oligarch—and all-round gangster—political backer, also the former employer of Hunter Biden, Ihor Kolomoyskyi (yes, he was the real owner of Burisma) won't help him much. In the midst of a country mired in corruption (a little more of which anon), Zelensky, like his predecessor, has been completely played by the US and the EU for their own interests.

Unfortunately, the Ukrainians, who are caught in the midst of the horrors, are learning what I think is the kind of thing anyone learns about in IR or IP classes 101, at least those classes that (admittedly becoming rare) are not taught by some eager beaver social justice warrior reducing geopolitics to race, class and gender. (If you think I am joking, check out how big a field feminist International Relations is now.)

In a world where one would not be denounced as a traitor or apologist of evil for thinking about national interests, International Politics teachers, when trying to understand Russia's position and role in this event, would, I think, typically (and I have seen a number of people more or less raise this same example) ask their students to imagine that the US has returned large parts of land annexed by Texas and California in the 19th century to Mexico.

Imagine then that the predominantly English-speaking groups within those territories found themselves disputing about regional resource extraction and distribution with Spanish-speaking groups, most of whom lived on the other side of the country. Then these ethnic tensions culminated in a coup, partly enabled by Chinese meddling in internal affairs. The regions that had formerly been parts of Texas and California became embroiled in a civil war.

The Texan and Californian Mexicans were being continuously bombed by the Mexican government—they were hearing true stories of the government closing down media outlets sympathetic to their cause, and forbidding the English language being taught in Mexican schools—just as the English did with the Irish and Welsh (and has been done in Quebec).

Then China wanted to put rockets on Mexican soil, and were sending in troops on the ground to train Mexican troops; and then the Mexican President said he wanted to build up the country's nuclear capacity as well as have a more formal security alliance with China which it was desperate to join with other allies of China.

If a student in discussing this scenario were to pipe up and say, "The US President not only should, but would accept all this, and that any President who took military action to intervene on behalf of the persecuted ethnic Anglo-Americans and push back against Chinese meddling in its sphere of influence, would be proof of him being an evil megalomaniac"—any IR teacher would be thinking, "I have completely failed this student—he (sorry, I meant it) has no clue."

But this all is meant to sound reasonable when we just insert the words "Putin," "Russia," "Ukraine" and the "USA." It reminds me of how our educated elite think it perfectly acceptable to say that "white men are exploiters, thieves, privileged, undeserving etc.," but were the "white men" replaced with "Jews," "women," "blacks," there would be mass outrage.

The thinking that ignores geopolitical "realities" (and they are realities because of forces that have accrued over a protracted period of time; they are delicately poised; and the failure of statesmen to balance them come with massive consequences)—enables mass death. And in spite of the voluntarist metaphysical tendency that has completely seized the Western mind, these realities do not wilt under the glare of a moral(izing), that is to say, hypocritical, conscience.

It seems just yesterday, when journalists could not line up quickly enough to denounce George Bush, and prior to that Ronald Regan for being warmongers. Then at least they acknowledged (or at least a substantial number did) that the "neo-con" idea of "regime change" was deranged. Though when the Obama administration weighed in with tremendous enthusiasm for the "Arab Spring," in what was really another variant of the same fantasy—a world of liberal democracies, all singing from the "International Community" hymn book, it should have been obvious to any thoughtful people that very few Western journalists were able to think with any real clarity outside of the safe partisan parameters that they had picked up in their training and developed in conversation with others from the same background. So it was that they easily drifted into rebooting the Cold War in order to topple that other monster Trump; and now they find themselves in that battle with the monster Putin.

Irrespective of journalists intermittently opposing US interventions, at times the US has been a mere spoiler, providing arms, training etc. At other times it has been a direct intervener—and the results have always been the same—mass death and utter disaster. I think the United States not only stood for something worth defending during the Cold War, and that Reagan (ridiculed by most of the intellectual elite) and his administration were right to break away from the Washington consensus that the Cold War was permanent, and unwinnable, and that Regan had taken the world to the brink of a world

war—when in fact he was canny, and had good advisers, and took action at the right time – though if any forethought were given to the immediate aftermath, nothing good came to pass.

But this is not the Cold War. Russia is not the USSR; and the America of today has no unified spiritual core, or even a unified political purpose. Thinking that joining forces against Putin will magically produce such purpose is magical thinking. Unfortunately, the amount of magical thinking that the US has produced since the end of the Cold War has been endless (not that it was not doing some before then—e.g., whoever took over in Iran had to be better than the Shah; supporting the mujahedeen in Afghanistan against the Russians would lead to something good, etc.).

In concluding this section, I should also add that I can easily imagine that if I were a Ukrainian “first language” person living in Kiev, I would have been amongst the tens or hundreds of thousands flooding the square and streets in 2014, demanding that my interests be met, and that the President sign on to the association agreement that the EU was dangling, as a way to draw the country further into its sphere of influence. I may even have become so inflamed by the event that I may have found myself joining one of the nationalist militias, with heroes who sided with the Nazis because I would have realized that just standing in the streets, singing songs and chanting does not topple governments.

I most likely would have been full of rage that the Russians, who had promised independence, were still pulling the strings of the government, and that it was impossible to trust the good will of an ethnic group who had starved millions of my countrymen to death just as I would not feel ashamed that I had ancestors who threw their lot in with Hitler, because say what you like about Hitler, he killed a lot of Russians. Being part of such a group, I may well have beat up, or if things got really out of hand, even killed Russian-speaking Ukrainians that wanted to continue to oppress me and my family by keeping us as prisoners. Now, I would desperately want the West to come and save me, and hate Putin and see him as the cause of the panic and suffering that makes me want to flee the country.

But I am not that person—and nor am I a Russian-speaking Ukrainian from the Donbas who has also seen hospitals and schools bombed, who has lost family members since the Maidan, and whose prayers of being defended have been answered with the incursion of Russian forces. The war in the Donbas, and the bombing, shelling and shooting, as Russian forces surround major cities in their goal of toppling the government, demilitarising the country and rounding up, imprisoning, and killing members of the ethnic nationalist militias are all related to the Maidan—just as the Maidan is the consequence, not just of the enormous number of spontaneous protestors, US/ EU and Western money-meddling,

but of the *Homodor*, and that massive crime, because of the triumph of Bolshevism. All that too is an important aspect of the part played by the likes of *Stephen Bandera* in the holocaust. The strands of these entanglements go back a long way, and the event of this war is an outbreak of forces that have been incubating and developing through the entanglement. Saying, "Yes but Putin started it" is, quite frankly, not a serious matter for consideration.

4. "A Thug In The Kremlin?" Or, Comparative Politics 101

If International Politics/International Relations brings with it a perspective that transports us away from what we want and what principles we think should prevail, Comparative Politics also forces us to put aside moral judgments which reach for absolutes that are also "mere ideas" and ask—just or good, in comparison to what? It was Aristotle who initially developed this as a basic procedure of Political Science, when he departed from his teacher, Plato, on the question of whether identifying the good in itself was the appropriate standard for appraising the conditions and problems of states and their constitutions.

Aristotle's morphological approach to reality in general, though a handicap for those wanting to study the mechanics of nature, has remained as central to the development of Political Science as his discovery of Logic was to that discipline and philosophy more broadly. He saw that all living bodies have their own dynamics and pathologies. He invented the idea (albeit Plato had prepared the ground) that the Political Scientist was a diagnostician whose task was, inter alia, to tap into the strengths and weaknesses of the particular state and constitution under examination (Aristotle is reported to have collected and studied almost 160 constitutions), which led him to the conclusion that potentialities for the good of the community within states very much depended upon their circumstances. This did not mean that he did not distinguish between better and worse regimes, or that he did not acknowledge the importance of justice as a communal good. But he realized that certain goods must already be in place if others are to be achieved. And that takes time.

The history of political philosophy can roughly be broken down into two schools—one consists of thinkers like Aristotle, such as Montesquieu, Burke, and in some important ways G.W.F. Hegel, and de Tocqueville, who are driven by the comparative method which takes account of historical and social conditions which dictate the choices available to statesmen and peoples. The other school takes its bearing from norms, rational principles, arguments and ideal standards, Plato is their founder; and its modern exponents include John Locke, Jean Jacques Rousseau (who in his less known and better

political observations drops it), Immanuel Kant, J.G. Fichte, the neo-Hegelians and (once one unveils the fog and contradictions of historical materialism) Marxist-Leninists, John Rawls, and (also once one gets through the thicket of fog) the post-structuralists—and George Bush and the neo-cons, Barack Obama and the liberal world order more generally.

As you can see, this second group is ideologically very diverse (hence I suppose some clown in university administration can satisfy themselves that this would be a good thing—hell, there is even a black guy in the list, and plenty of feminist theorists to fill the bill). Unfortunately, their position is built upon inferences rather than detailed knowledge of circumstance, which is also why their position is a great platform for making noble-sounding speeches; but when it comes to political action is either irrelevant (the cause of very bad decisions and inevitable failure to get the outcomes that accord with the principles, which inevitably leads to charges of outright hypocrisy), or catastrophic. This latter method, if method it really be, is easy to grasp once one adopts a first principle, an unassailable idea, which, of course, can be done with greater (as in Immanuel Kant or J.G. Fichte) or lesser sophistication, like the mainstream Western journalists and commentariat reporting on this war.

In keeping with this 'idea-ist' (sic.) approach, most arguments and reports about the war are framed as ethico-political denunciations of Russia—and the idea that if some fact harms the war effort of our team it must be Russian propaganda—and I have no doubt that this essay will be dismissed by many who skim it as pure Russian propaganda ...oh well, this is the world we now live in.

The denunciations tend to assume one or both of the following: (a) Russia is a tyranny while the West is the font of freedom; and (b) Ukraine is really like the West both culturally and politically.

I might be more tempted to go along with this if I really believed that the West still stood for freedom, or even anything more noble than the decay, infantilism, indulgence, material grasping, and spiritual emptiness that I see devouring it. (Alert—just because Putin and Xi see this does not make them wrong, nor me their lackey in saying it.) The West no longer even stands for freedom of thought, let alone freedom of expression—the only things that might eventually enable it to get to a better, even if far from perfect, place. As for Ukraine and democracy, and Russia and their lack thereof...let's do some comparison.

First, let us briefly consider "the money"—that variable which is so widely used to identify a people's welfare—as in GDP per capita. In Ukraine, the official GDP per capita in 2020 was \$(US) 3,800 (adjusted

for ppp \$12, 100). In Russia, in 2020, GDP per capita had declined by some 30 percent, since its peak in 2013, but it was still over \$10, 000, and rendered in ppp almost \$ (US) 26,500.

Figures such as these never tell the whole story, but I think it symptomatic of a fact that I think is indisputable—since the demise of the Soviet Union there has never been a government in the Ukraine that has not been plagued by corruption, or, and this follows inexorably from the scale of the country's corruption, that has managed to retain great popular support. Nor one that has been able to sufficiently rein in the power of the oligarchs that Ukraine could achieve even a moderate level of economic well being.

Before addressing Russia's "authoritarian government," I will state another fact that I think will not appeal to people whose image of Putin comes exclusively from Western main-stream media outlets. Putin has the kind of support base in the population that Western politicians only dream of, and the reason for that is not primarily because he is a thug/criminal/stand-over merchant.

The circumstances and challenges in Ukraine and Russia, in the aftermath of communism, were somewhat similar, though Ukraine was economically the poorer, with GDP per capita being \$ (US) 1257 - but had halved by 2000; in 1993 Russia's was a tad over \$ (US) 3000, and had almost halved by 2000. The geographical distribution of resources in the country had created what many might consider a very undesirable state of things—the West was more dependent upon the East for its wealth, which is also why the Crimea and the Donbas were not just a matter of national pride for the various governments operating out of Kiev.

By the turn of the millennium the GDP per capita of both had roughly halved. Then, in the Putin years there came astonishing growth in Russia, around 10 percent until 2014. This was the kind of growth which is impossible to retain for protracted periods; and not only did it slow, with a combination of sanctions and a drop in oil prices, there was a steep decline. And though it has risen since 2014, it is still not back to the figures of 2010. But compared to the previous decade substantial improvements had been made in the material conditions of most Russians.

In Ukraine the take off point occurs around the same time, but the rise is far less substantial, also followed by decline and moderate rise. Also noteworthy is the telling figure that in 2021 remittances made up 12 percent of GDP in Ukraine, foreign direct investment (FDI) in 2021 was a third of that—estimates at the beginning of the war, based upon the large outflow of refugees, were that

remittances would increase by 8 percent. Yes, that increase in remittances as a percentage of GDP may be laid at the door of the Russians, but the figure of 2021 is the kind of figure that one associates with a country with economic opportunities which make leaving a smart economic move.

The other important part of the story is corruption. We hear much of Putin and his Russian oligarch cronies in the West—but I am astonished how poorly informed are most people, who are otherwise well educated, about oligarchs in Ukraine and the problems of corrupt government. As with Russia, state assets were dissolved into vouchers, and the vouchers were bought at bargain basement prices, or simply stolen by those with the know-how or muscle to do so.

[Katya Gorchinskaya's six part report](#), "A Brief History of Corruption" identifies the major players and plays which have left Ukrainians amongst Europe's poorest and most corrupt nations. It begins with President Kravchuk, the first to hold power in post-Soviet Ukraine, presiding over the economic privatisation and resource gobbling.

Amongst those doing the gobbling were two Ukrainian Prime Ministers, one of whom would be successfully prosecuted in the US for money-laundering, fraud and extortion; another, Yulia Tymoshenko, would become the attractive poster face—along with Victor Yushchenko—of the Orange Revolution. Tymoshenko would eventually be prosecuted for a range of crimes, from embezzlement to involvement in the murder of another oligarch, Yevhen Shcherban, with Yushchenko himself being a witness against her.

Tymoshenko was found guilty of profiting from gas contracts signed with Russia. Although she found support amongst European human rights organizations (Yushchenko begged to differ with their defence of her). During the 1990s she and her family had made their fortunes in energy and controlled the United Energy Systems of Ukraine (UESU). It was Ukraine's largest gas trader, "supplying gas from Russia's Gazprom to seven of Ukraine's large industrial and agricultural regions."

While the initial distribution of vouchers had initially enabled the oligarchs' rise to power, Gorchinskaya sees the biggest asset grab as the work of politicians in 1998. As she writes: "The list of parliamentarians reads like the yellow pages of Ukraine's future oligarchy."

Politics and corruption are common bed-fellows. I hazard the obvious conjecture: the difference

between them and Russian and Western politicians, who have made spectacular amounts of money after decades of public service, is that in Ukraine and Russia there was a brief moment of a bonanza round of assets available to them that made the usual grift seem like child's play.

The scandals surrounding every President in the Ukraine parliament are easily discovered, and I don't need to enter into more detail. In any case the headline from a piece in the *Guardian* in February 2015 sums it all up: ["Welcome to Ukraine, the most corrupt nation in Europe."](#) It showed the West what everyone who lived there knew—that in spite of the victory over the Russian stooge/crook Yanukovich, in spite of the deaths, the noble speeches, the visits of US and European dignitaries, and promises of support, in spite of the flags, songs, international media coverage Ukraine was an economic and crime ridden dump—with magnificent scenery and a capital as beautiful as any city in the world. The article also pointed out that while "officials from the general prosecutor's office, who were interviewed by Reuters, claimed that between 2010 and 2014, officials were stealing a fifth of the country's national output every year," nothing had improved.

Later that same year, a writer in *Forbes* magazine wrote a piece ["Corruption is Killing Ukraine's Economy."](#) As with Poroshenko, Zelensky, like the Presidents before him, was elected on the promise of ending corruption—though he also indicated he was the man to mend fences with Russia. He didn't, and he wasn't.

It is not simply the corruption I wish to underscore; it is that since the dismantling of the Soviet Union Ukraine has had two "revolutions," and achieved nothing other than an outright civil war and a war with a great power. I don't know how anyone who is impartial and not blinded by the patriotic fog and fervour accompanying the avoidance of the basics of international diplomacy can see it otherwise. And need I say that none of these problems—with the obvious exception of the war itself—can be traced back to Putin.

Turning to Russia, everyone of a certain age will recall that between the end of the Soviet Union and the Yeltsin years, Russia and the fall-out from its empire were in free-fall. Yeltsin had gone from being a hero of the people to a corrupt drunken buffoon. Oligarchs had taken over all the most important resources; and gangsters simply took over apartments; and the streets were not safe. The poverty was widespread and wretched.

And the reality of post-Soviet Russia made the drab days of Brezhnev and Andropov look like the

golden years.

While people in the West were still celebrating Gorbachev and talking about him being a great man who changed the course of history, most Russians cursed him for creating the havoc they were living through. One cannot begin to understand Putin's popularity if one does not concede the hell of Russia in the Yeltsin years—captured in videos of the period by images of the extremes of the old and recently rendered destitute standing on the streets huddled around a fire in the snow and ice with their knickknacks and baubles and pleading eyes; or the new phenomenon of Russian prostitution for export—the international sex trade really takes off with the end of communism—and the oligarchs and mafia with their great fur-coats, cruising by in their convoys of Western cars, and armies of protection. Stalin would not have allowed this, they reasoned. And you can say what you will about him, but he not only dressed with moderation, but he never draped his great big fur coats with gold chains, while pushing aside beggars on the way to the night club to snort blow and be blown by a girl who had drifted into the city to make some money.

Western journalists seem to think that when Putin speaks of the most terrible event being the end of the Soviet Union, that he is saying he loved communism. That is nonsense. He saw a once respected leading world power, a power, that for all its shockingness did export resources and training to those who fought on its side and from whom it saw geopolitical strategic advantage—I don't want to get all maudlin about a system and regime that was ultimately a massive mass-murdering experiment and monstrous disaster (in no small part paid for by Western capitalists, as Anthony Sutton meticulously demonstrated). But I think to see that it was not only all for nothing; that whatever slim achievements it had made (and it would have made far more had it just been left to the autocrats prior to the Bolsheviks) had vanished along with the Soviet Union. In its place was a beggarly, broken state, of utter disorder— nothing resembling the Western commercialized sheen and shine images that one might have seen on television – but then again the sprawling tents of the homeless and junkies in Portland and San Francisco today bespeak a world resembling a similar kind of corruption, and ineptitude that Yeltsin and his mates were tolerating in Russia.

It is an odd thought, I know. But maybe what Putin said was rhetorically done for political purpose. But irrespective whether he is a "murdering swine," as old an friend, Political Science ex-colleague, and mentor has posted on Facebook, Putin understood the rage of the humiliated, of a people who had been tricked out of the relative security—with all its scarcity—that the communist state provided, and thrown out of work and onto the streets. And he could see, as could the rest of the population, that all

of this chaos was facilitated by the IMF and the Harvard Russian Project crew.

Moreover, aside from ex-party officials and their friends with their on-the-ground advantage and the armed to the teeth "wise guys" snapping up for peanuts, resources (energy and media/communications being prime targets) worth billions and conning Russians out of, when not simply stealing, the vouchers, which were supposedly designed to distribute Soviet assets to "the people"—were Western grifters (like Bill Browder discussed below). It was a free for all in free-fall.

And on top of this were the Chechnyan terrorists and their bombs, deliberately killing innocent school children as well as adults. What made matters even worse was that Chechnyan rebels had been trained and funded by the CIA. That is a fact that Western journalists no doubt would like to put down to Russian propaganda. By the way, and lest I am sounding like the kind of left-wingers I usually take issue with for their blindness to the nature of markets, I have never been anti-everything the US does to protect its interests. But the incompetence of the US as a military and strategic power has become increasingly breathtaking, and its funding of such groups has brought nothing but havoc and understandable hatred of the West.

And, then, in the midst of this, Putin, who had been working for the mayor of Saint-Petersburg, facilitating foreign investments, and suspected of masterminding a kick-back scheme worth tens of millions of dollars, receiving a PhD for a work that had, in part at least, been plagiarised, were it even written by him, looked like just another junior on the grift "yes man" political operator had been given the nod by Yeltsin and backed by the oligarch Berezovsky, who came to regret misreading Putin's character till the end of his life. Though, almost every Western documentary or biography depict Putin with the same sneering disbelief that this little jump-start still has power and struts around the world stage killing people, while great philanthropists and lovers of liberty like Berezovsky himself or Khodorkovsky were banished so that Putin could get nearly all of the pie.

In any case, not long after the tap on the shoulder Putin took on the oligarchs. Or, more precisely, sided with one bunch of oligarchs against another. It is fanciful to think that any political leader in Russia would have been able to survive without finding factional support amongst oligarchs—men whose control extended to "armies" to do their bidding, protect their wealth, and trade (from arms running, to sex and drug trafficking, to gas and information). I think even the moralising denouncers of Putin don't doubt that the level of criminality and the scale of violence of Russia's oligarchy, and that that had touched ever part of Russia's social fibre.

Quiz question: How would you have stopped it?

The manner in which the oligarchs accumulated their wealth as well as the tactics they deployed in defending it were all carried out in a manner befitting the kinds of weapons, financial conduits and systems, goods and services demand and supplies and political racketeering that are as mod con as mod con can possibly be: international banks laundered their money; politicians did their bidding by making deals and enacting laws that benefit them; shipping, planes and transport systems moved the girls and drugs, and immigrants with enough money to pay for their forged passports and relocation. Their computers and codes, and bank accounts in far-away lands, their hotels and majestic villas, clubs and casinos, private jets and helicopters, and yachts, their weapons and preferred drugs may have spoken of the unprecedented quality of the spoils of ill-gotten gain. But the motivation and operation were not really different from ancient tribes, or ancient and modern nations or empires seizing land and resources from enemies, or lords and kings providing their protection in return for services rendered (protection included their preparedness to not simply take everything from those they might crush were their offers of protection refused, to fighting off others desirous of those lands), or the cattle barons and robber barons, or the mafia, or those like Joe Kennedy who made a fortune out of prohibition. We accept that no one running for the presidency in the United States could be successful without finding wealthy political donors—or, at least, being an extremely rich person. But as with state foundations, the older the money the more likely it was to be founded in blood.

The way politics and wealth form a bond may vary by location, but the bond is universal, and the difference between what counts as corruption tends to also be bound up with merely how things gets done, and the wealthy get to keep their wealth and pay others to help them acquire more, and enact processes that assist their political preferences and priorities. "Not that there is anything wrong with that"—but journalists in the West tend to sleep at the wheel when it comes to following up leads that might bring down those who represent their political interests. People in far-away lands whose doings may safely be reported—even if the doings, as in the case of Putin, often (albeit not always) come from sources who also have their interests, which involve being rid of Putin.

In any case, the influence of oligarchs is no less decisive in the United States than it is in Russia. Yes, there is a rule of law, but while we may find exceptions, money generally still makes the laws.

The decisive difference between the West now and the Russia in which Putin came to power and outplayed his enemies is not in the role played by those who have the greatest wealth/control of the

nations resources, it is in the *timing*: the violence and usurpation which provided the original sources of great wealth occurred generations back (not that long really in the USA, generally longer in the UK). And then—yes, I am really happy to go left when it is true—there was the piracy, the slavery, the colonialism. And of course it is not all in the past, where modern US "interventions" fit may vary, energy (and I don't mean solar and wind farms) is a major factor in the West's strategic and geopolitical decisions involving the Middle East.

This is not to make the false argument that therefore private property and capital should be eliminated, or that property is theft and all wealth ill-gotten, but commercial society is a late arrival, and where and whenever it arrives its existence requires historical and social preparedness provided by power, plunder, and protection rackets. Would that it were not so. But this is the problem with those who want to denounce Putin as if he were somehow an evil anomaly amongst those who really held power – it is so, and has ever been so. The desire it not be so is behind the ridiculous romanticization of indigenous life that originally afflicted Rousseau and now the infantilized moralizing West and its children.

The people Putin went after were amongst, or would become, the richest, the most influential people on the planet—not only financially, but also in terms of the importance of the resources they controlled for shaping the world; the other two most famous examples, apart from Berezovsky, being the media magnate Vladimir Gusinsky, who would go on to pose as a kind of religious and spiritual beacon by becoming the Vice-President of the World Jewish Congress (a gesture that would give all the Russian anti-Semites evidence to sit alongside their copies of *The Protocols of Elders of Zion*; he had previously cofounded and become President of the Russian Jewish Congress), and the banker, energy magnate, convicted, imprisoned and then pardoned criminal, Mikhail Khodorkovsky.

Like Berzovsky, they spend much time in exile, screaming loudly about Putin's unprecedented wickedness (comparable, so they said to... yes, of course, who else? Adolf Hitler) to a media ready to quote them on the latest body or scandal that could be attributed to Putin and his henchmen. It seemed that Putin had nothing better than do to send out armed assassins all over the globe to silence all his critics and political opponents, because he was not only completely paranoid but his whole view of the world was picked up from KAOS in *Get Smart*.

Khodorkovsky has been lauded as a man of great principle by standing to face trial. This did present him with the opportunity to portray himself as a political martyr, going to prison for his belief in the sanctity of human rights and the future of democracy. The West lapped it up and lauds him still. I have

a bridge with a spectacular harbour view to sell you at a discount price of ten million dollars if you actually believe Khodorkovsky has turned his life around to become a human rights activist from being a gangster and in all likelihood a murderer. It would be interesting to actually do a comparative body count between them if we could locate them.

As we skim over Putin and his "autocratic" government, let us keep before us what I consider the one issue that is both indisputable and all important—Putin drastically improved the lives of most Russians. No matter how much more peaceful and prosperous the Russians may have been under the political leadership of Tony Blair, or Boris Johnson, or Joe Biden, or George Bush Jr, or Bill Clinton—does anyone seriously think these men have the kind of competence that would mend a fallen state? Putin was the guy at the head who turned things round. If we were doing moral examinations of politicians, I am happy to concede that Vladimir would probably have to get an F—though among Western moral paragons, I don't see any who would get a Pass in those circumstances.

But, but...surely, they are better than him? Well, that depends whether you think that having salvaged and then ridding a state of enemies that threaten to bring it back into chaos is a crime (I assume much of which I read is true; though, as the next piece/section shows Western media has manufactured such a long and egregious litany of lies that I simply cannot be sure of anything it reports). Here too is a question—and it is the kind of question that political leaders in times of social crisis and havoc have to confront, and I will pose it by way of a historical case.

Given what we know about Russia's rapid advances and modernization and economic growth just prior to the Great War, and given what we know about the scale of murder inflicted by the Bolsheviks, did the Czar's failure of will (and that of his generals) contribute to the tens of millions who died after? The answer is not difficult—yes it did. Posed so starkly, the issue of the sheer ability to stomach the infliction of more violence upon "one's own people" (there's that phrase again) is irrelevant. Perhaps the failure of will came from a sense of moral horror at what world the Tzar was making and the choices he had to make, or perhaps it came from an inability to see who and what this new elite political elite were.

In any case, he relinquished power, to be sure not quite to those as violently wilful as Lenin, but still to those who themselves were not strong enough to do anything but pass the power that they had not come by legitimately to those with political wills of steel, though recall Lenin's famous phrase that "found power lying in the streets and simply picked it up." They were capable of killing more "of their own people" in a few months than the Czars had killed in a century. In short, tens of millions of lives

might have been saved had the autocracy in Russia been prepared to kill more people, possibly hundreds of thousands more, possibly millions. In any case, the gap between body counts would have been huge, and the autocracy would have also spared Russia not only from the gulags but communism itself—which as an old joke goes was the longest way of getting from capitalism to capitalism.

Unlike philosophers in their classrooms and studies, rulers in times of great crisis, stand at crossroads where the alternate paths to the future, each with its own trials and troubles awaiting, are completely covered by the fog of the present— the consequences may be untold millions of deaths; the choice maybe—as it was for the Czar, then, as I think it is for Putin, certainly as I think he sees it. It is a choice between steeling one's political will even though the circumstances of the time offer only differences in the amount of blood to be shed. And there is simply no way of knowing for sure how much blood there must be and where it will end.

Academicians in the main and journalists are generally utterly lacking in seriousness on such matters—in part that is because the academicians make their observations in the safe sequestered 'play' spaces which wall out reality—only in such a place so partitioned from the problems of the real could people dream up the ideas of trigger warning, safe spaces, and micro-aggression. Unlike the news hosts at home, those journalists who enter the fray, as opposed to those hanging out in hotel bars waiting for a story to send in, tend to report a very different story to the propaganda oozing out at home.

When rulers get it wrong they are but stepping names toward players and events which are recorded on account of the scale of their horror. The horrific event prevented, though, remains invisible, so the statesman who is successful in preventing the event rarely is recognized (Kennedy is one of the few perhaps who is renowned for a successful preventative call—but that call was on a palpably visible enemy with immediate consequence that were not hard to imagine). This is the situation of Putin now toward Ukraine, and it is another reason why the various moral denouncements bespeak a smugness and assuredness that comes from the safeness of the study or newsroom.

When considering Putin's actual body count, on any possible measure—including the Chechen War which he can be credited with winning, and this one which is fading day by day from the West's interests (Will Smith punching Chris Rock seems to be the big story of the moment), we can say without equivocation the numbers pale into insignificance when compared to the untold millions of dead in the Iraq and Afghan wars, in Yemen, and Syria, and in the bombing of Belgrade. My point was primarily that

to believe that Putin has done more evil than the motley crew who rule over us, and who we are supposed to consider to be morally superior to Putin. That Putin is Hitler and our leaders are saints? In the case of the Bushes, Clinton, Blair et. al. they have achieved nothing; they have saved no people' they have left behind more ruin. This is not even a moral judgment; it is merely a statement of fact that these men made disastrous geopolitical choices, that they, not Putin, are largely responsible for why China, Russia, Iran, etc. do not want to be part of the international order. Need I say they are all globalists? That their regime change dream/drive was a grotesque fantasy? And I am supposed to believe that Putin's hostility to NATO is unwarranted? That he is really Hitler?

I know there were plenty of journalists who criticized the Bushes and Blair (Clinton bombing of Serbia not so much), though they generally cheered on Trump's swift response to Assad supposedly using chemical weapons in Syria (I think Trump was really played on that one—[see reports from Vanessa Beeley](#)). But it is one thing to be anti-war on some moral principle because you have a conscience, as opposed to being the person dealing with the fate of nations. There the question is never answered by the principle: war is evil, therefore I should abolish the army along with prisons, and while at it take a knee. It is only answered by an ability that is a gift of few and is completely uncanny: knowing in spite of all the fog, all the hostility (consider Churchill), that one is right and that action must be taken. And when the action is taken, it must be successful. I may have seen the Afghan and Iraq Wars very differently if they were fought for people that shared a common sense of spiritual purpose with their "liberators" (which they never did) and if they really did assist in nation-building, which it did not know how to do because there was neither common purpose nor real plan.

Of the War in Ukraine I cannot be sure that Putin will come out well—I have no crystal ball; but it is not all in his hands. He has calculated that the West will not respond with nuclear weapons, or act in such a way that he sees that there is no other alternative. He shares common purpose with the breakaway republics and Crimea—it seems that as long as Ukraine becomes a buffer state, and does what that requires then war will stop. But that is no easy matter for those Ukrainians who since the Maidan have been able to fuel their dreams of a new nation devoid of its Russian presence and past, who have exercise influence in institutions they will no longer have: they either have to retreat back into the obscurity of every-day life, and hope they are not informed upon, or face imprisonment if not execution. They have much to fight for. But so does Russia.

Both the matters of Putin's rise to power and this war and its meaning also serve to remind us of the importance of an idea that seems largely lost to the modern imagination with that entirely false "theolo-

philosophical" doctrine that human beings are basically good. The untruth of this proposition has bought in its train the psychological malformation of so many modern youth who believing in their original innocence believe that all the sins of their forefather can be washed away by moral pronouncements and denunciations of the forefathers who helped accrue the ill-gotten gains that have contributed to the wealth of the nation in general, and their global "privilege."

The culture wars, which as I have indicated are but a prelude to blood wars, are an example of what befalls a people when it fails to see what it is doing because of its ambition and pride. Had the children of the 1960s not believed in their own perfectness, and in their own innocence what we are living through in the West may not have come to pass. This sense of innocence and the existential privilege that has come from the doing of their forefathers is a major factor in the shallowness of their perspective on every serious subject, including this one. They are a generation for whom moral decisions and appraisals on each and every topic come as natural as breathing.

And this generation has entered swiftly into the fray: Ukrainian flags abound on social media; anti-Russian sentiments and slogans along with pro-Ukrainian and anti-Russian podcasts are everywhere. Mainstream media has finally found a topic where even Fox and CNN and the rest find complete common cause—sanctifying Zelensky/Ukraine; demonizing Putin/Russia. Making an eternal enemy of Russia will be on the head of this generation who holds power, but knows not how to exercise it, and a younger generation who only want to pull the nature of power ever more in a direction that makes the United States even more hateful to its enemies. All in all, it is done by a powerful idiocracy who do not know where they are heading, nor about what they speak—but they do know what pronoun they should be addressed by.

When considering Ukraine, we saw that it was one failed political leader after another; and to state what I think is obvious but which goes against the consensus of the moment, Zelensky is by far the worst because of his recklessness and failure to preserve the peace—which is one of the key variables of evaluation of political leadership.

Last year I reviewed a book by Grigory Yavlinsky, [*The Putin System: An Opposing View*](#). Yavlinsky argues his case against Putin, methodically and comprehensively (and without screaming, "But he is a murderer"). It is a serious enough case about the benefits to be had by Russia going West; and the book's economic analysis highlights weaknesses in the Russian economy in general, and Putin's role in its mismanagement. Though I think the weak part of the book is his understanding of politics, Yavlinsky

is not only an Economics Professor, but he has been a political candidate. In his attempt to gain political office, he managed to get less than 2 percent of the vote. At one stage in his book, Yavlinsky concedes that given its recent past and the sentiments and priorities of Russians, he thinks that Russia must continue for the immediate future with what he considers to be its mistaken economic and political policies, until it inevitably comes to its senses.

Given Russia's conditions after the dismantling of the Soviet Union, and the state of the institutions still in operation, and the mentality of Russia's population—and the crooks running the place—had it not been Putin it would have had to have been someone of much the same ilk who would have risen to power, if there were to be secure stability in Russia. If not Putin—Khodorkovsky? Would he have been a better political leader? Would someone more like the Ukrainian ineffectual and corrupt politicians be better?

Putin emerged out of the failed state—and the problems that he faced were not of his own making. Were his choices the best? I doubt that any politician would make the best choices. Even if it were the case that Putin may be guilty of all accusations against him—from plundering state funds to murder—in his political fights with oligarchs controlling media and energy and banks, I think it very understandable why the majority of Russians are prepared to look past the accusations levelled at him, and, Western media to the contrary, not think that they would be better off under the kind of "democracy" that a Khodorkovsky might engineer.

One might respond, but without an open society how would you know? And my only response is—an "open society" is a neat phrase, for each and every society has as much openness as its culture, institutional development, and social historicity, and political ruling class have.

After what I have witnessed in the West in the time of COVID, the mass destruction of small businesses here in Australia, the destruction of the livelihoods and right to protest by truckers in Canada, the toleration of mass burnings, and looting in the United State, on the one hand, with, what a mere few years back, would have been unimaginable with the draconian and haphazard treatment, charges and sentences of some of the January 6 protestors and rioters, and the extent of censorship and corporate and state control over speech.

And just as in Russia, large numbers of people support authoritarian decisions which they think suits their interests. To claim that the West is an "open society" is hard to take seriously. We live in a society

that once was fairly open, but is now closing up, second by second, right before our eyes, Russians live in a society whose brief period of openness was one of plunder, assassinations and general mayhem.

Failed states don't and indeed cannot simply turn into democracies—as if democracies, that are not just nominal facades for oligarchical vote-buying, election-rigging, paramilitaries, etc., are not themselves the result of the evolution of a sufficiently widespread dispersion of power blocks and class resource pooling. Consider how the working-class democratic parties evolved at the end of the 19th and early 20th centuries. The damage that liberal democracies are now doing to themselves is shocking. But the damage the United States and its allies have done in countries, where the choice was not and could not have been between democracy and non-democracy but between one strong man or another, is even more shocking in the sheer number of deaths that it has facilitated, along with the battles and wars still raging.

Finally, failed states inevitably break down into war-lordism, and the securing of strong foundations is the result of the formation of bonds of social, economic, cultural, and political solidarity. These need time. Until then, the struggle between the warlords continues; and I do not deny for a second this is not happening—on the contrary, it is because it is happening that Russia—and countries with histories extremely different from the West, including Ukraine—will continue to get low scores on human rights and various other indices of freedom.

But to acknowledge that Putin has strong control over the media is not to say that the West should be spending billions trying to destabilize this regime. Yes Putin controls a media landscape formerly controlled by oligarchs wanting to destroy him (as now do Western media oligarchs). Prior to Trump's election I would have agreed the United States safeguarded freedom of expression that made it a free country which Russia is not. When people now want to end this kind of equivocation and bluntly ask: where would you rather live? Leaving aside the obvious wealth gap between my country and Russia and the standard of living I enjoy here in Australia—which is a matter of very different political and economic histories—when it comes to where I would feel freer, I think it is really is a matter of what the issue is.

I believe that were I still employed by an Australian university and this paper came to light, I would most definitely lose my job. Indeed, certainly in Anglo speaking Western countries, there are now a far greater array of topics—all of which connect with a globalising-technocratic-identity based view of life—which now require strict conformity and compliance than I think is the case in Russia. But it is not

only freedom of speech that has been lost.

Indeed, with the help of corporations, government reach has extended into ever space once considered part of one's private property, extending from one's bank account to one's own body. Is it really any wonder why there is such a very large number of writings claiming the Pandemic was a "Plandemic?" Certainly, there is overwhelming evidence that the Bill Gates Foundation was preparing itself for a pandemic that would require a vaccine to stop it – and Peter McCulloch has plausibly asked why were so many resources put into vaccines rather than in the study of preventative methods and cures. Certainly, there are questions about the source of COVID. And the answer to anyone who want to dig away is: "You are a conspiracy theorist."

Once upon a time when there was an old left (which I have always thought had more going for it in terms of critiquing geopolitical overreach, military overread, corporate criminality etcetera than identity progressivism), it was considered reasonable to ask questions about the machinations of corporations and the state. In today's world, merely asking such questions in the West is evidence of being the dupe and purveyor of a conspiracy theory. Is this not a degree of mind control far beyond anything that occurs in Russia?

Russia, under Putin, is an obstacle to globalism and hence to the *raison d'être* of what the West has become (not what it is becoming, but what it is in essence now) for one main reason: it refuses to follow the globalist technocratic dream—as with China, where it is technocratic it is not globalist. That Russia has been seen by the United States Government as a patient in need of the cure of Westernization has never been a secret, but Victoria Nuland put a figure on the amount spent on the "cure" in 2015 when she said: "The United States alone has spent more than \$20 billion dollars since 1992 to help Russia strengthen and open its economy."

Would anyone other than a "factchecker" seriously think that a substantial amount of that money was not used for "regime change?" Which brings me to the final part of this lengthy essay—the lies. As Putin famously quipped the West is an "empire of lies." I wish it were not so.

4. The Empire Of Lies

We are presently confronted with all sorts of images and reports about the war which are meant to

convince that Russia is being outfought; the Russian state on the brink of regime change; its brutality almost beyond measure as it targets civilians and schools and hospitals; its soldiers despondent and on the verge of revolt; and that Russia indulges in false flag operations and sells fake news to its people; defeat is imminent.

Other sources, some of which I have mentioned above, tell a very different story, a story in which the Ukrainians are providing plenty of fake images and false narratives, lots of "wag the dog" to Western media outlets. These sources are inevitably countered with "that's just Russian propaganda." It is "us" versus "them," and "they" are liars. The biggest lie thus far concerns the West and which the media, working in conjunction with politicians, have tried to cover. It has to do with the US funded biolabs operating in Ukraine.

A report in the [Daily Mail](#) (a real rag, I grant, but one that occasionally goes against the grain of consensus) reported yesterday that Hunter Biden's laptop (remember that suppressed story that was supposed to be Russian disinformation, but, as anyone who digs around knows, was not) seems to confirm the claim that Hunter Biden [helped finance](#) a US military "bioweapons" research program in Ukraine. And there we were all thinking that between the coke, the hookers, that stuff with Beau's widow, and some other fishy stuff that really riled up some family members about Hunter's sexual transgressions, and the graft that Hunter was not up to much at all, except perhaps convincing his pop that blacks needed free crack pipes.

Whether this connection turns out to be true or not is not the main issue though, because whatever Hunter did to get the money for sitting on the board at Burisma (in any case most of those who knew what was on his laptop though was far less of a scandal than the Biden China money), the evidence for the existence of US funded biolabs is overwhelming—nothing less than official US documents. Their existence confirms the investigations of Dilyana Gaytandzhieva, [who in 2018 reported](#) that "The US Army regularly produces deadly viruses, bacteria and toxins in direct convention on the prohibition of Biological Weapons."

Victoria Nuland—now the current Under Secretary of State—[blew her chance](#) Marco Rubio offered when fishing for her to give an unequivocal denial about the labs, when she said that it would be a very dangerous thing if the research from the labs were to fall into Russian hands. Honestly, it just goes to show what a brainless bunch are running this shitshow. Maybe they are just as dumb on Putin's team. I have no clue. But let's go back to the lies and murk surrounding the event that kicked off the Ukrainian civil war, the Maidan—or, for those wanting the whole thing to have amounted to something noble, "The

Revolution of Dignity."

Whatever one calls it and however one views it—the Maidan created far more problems than it solved. It was not really a step into Europe. You will recall that the EU had all manner of looming problems, including the rumbling discontents that led to Brexit; and the EU was in no position to embrace a country of such poverty, with such a sizable population. It was also not the 1980s, and, Russia aside, there was no Soviet empire, which was a serious threat as opposed to a fabricated one.

There were still consequences from the financial crisis, a debt problem spearheaded by Greece (who were starting to depict their German EU masters as Nazis), and Central and Eastern Europeans were often ungrateful and difficult members for an organization that had made Germany the geopolitical hegemon of Western Europe (even *Mutti* was such a sweetie, how could anyone question her *führerschaftliche*—sorry we must use the English now—leadership skills). And that was not even taking into account the inevitable Russian response, which was also why, in spite of all the love between Ukraine and NATO, it is true, as critics of Russia's invasion say, Ukraine was not, de jure at least, invited into NATO. It did oust one corrupt President only to replace him with another, and it raised the wrath of Russia, led to the secession of the Crimea (some prefer the word "invasion," which I think is simply a misuse of a good word), and created an ongoing Civil War; as well the carrying out of various acts of persecution and media censorship of Russian-speaking media outlets. If that is a success, I don't know what failure would be like.

In any case, if the Maidan were a "Revolution of Dignity," it is difficult to see in what exactly that "Dignity" consisted of? Getting some bundles of money from foreign governments and foreign NGOs, money that disappeared into the vast coffers of the oligarchs and their political cronies? Yes, we have [pictures of Victoria Nuland](#), then the assistant secretary of state for European and Eurasian Affairs, and (at last check) wife of leading Republican neo-con, Robert Kagan (please tell me there is no swamp or political ruling class), handing out coffee and cookies, or sandwiches to the protestors in 2014. So maybe some people got something substantial out of it. But, in the main, what was acquired were slogans and a public image of a nation of "heroes" fighting for their "dignity."

The event itself had many layers and players. The West primarily saw pictures of the floods of protestors "spontaneously" (as if any protest does not require communication, organization and when, it is protracted in nature, funding) seeking to overthrow an elected government—even if a corrupt one. But if the sheer scale of public protest were the critical issue, would any Western government that has

had to deal with widespread protests have survived? Maggie Thatcher at the time of the Falklands War or the poll tax? Macron with the Yellow Vests? Trump or Biden with everyone on the other side? Trudeau with the truckers, etc.? Was Yanukovych really more vicious in suppressing the protestors than Trudeau or Macron? How one answers that very much depends on who one thinks was doing the sniping at the protestors that moved the event into another level of international outrage.

Given that most Westerners knew nothing about the event except what they had seen flickering on their screens, or possibly even read with more diligence in their daily newspapers, the answer was they did not know very much. And in the murky far-away land, the idea that the American government and George Soros, and neo-Nazis played an important role in the event was rarely reported by the mainstream media—and a year or two later even the main stream media released a trickle of stories about the [pernicious institutional influence](#) of the Azov Battalion.

But at the time of the Maidan, there was generally little interest in a media landscape still having a love-fest with Obama, and even less interest in a story that would expose a winner of the Nobel Prize for peace as the instigator of a coup. [As for Soros](#), one is immediately consigned to the loony bin marked “conspiracy theorist,” if one merely mentions his name and his financing of the various front organizations he uses around the world to assist in his—very publicly expressed—endgame of creating “an open society.” Some of you may know how he likes to credit the philosopher Karl Popper for his vision and philosophy—poor Karl.

The Soros money-trail is important in the story, which does not mean that the hundreds of thousands of protestors were simply conjured out of thin air and were merely summoned by the dosh: yes the overwhelming number of the protestors were there spontaneously expressing their political will—some though, especially those involved in organizational tactics were on the pay roll. Events like these are occasions for interested players to seek to get their way. Though, invariably the instigators trying to direct the course of history get way, way more than they bargained for—“Hey, we wanted you to kill the Ruskies, Osama, not blow up our Twin Towers you ungrateful #&%^&%^!”

The following is from the Open Society web site, about one of its organizations, the [International Renaissance Foundation](#), in Ukraine: “By 1994, the International Renaissance Foundation was the biggest international donor in the country, with an annual budget of roughly \$12 million for projects that ranged from retraining tens of thousands of decommissioned soldiers to the creation of a contemporary arts center in Kyiv. In the early 2000s, the foundation oriented itself around European

integration, while mobilizing resources to help those affected by conflict after Russia's invasion and illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014. Over its lifetime, the foundation has supported more than 18,000 projects, benefiting millions of people."

Now, consider again the problems of GDP per capita, corruption, the oligarchs, and the neo-Nazis in Ukraine and ask: Has this foundation achieved anything of lasting value in the country? If your answer is yes, let me raise the bridge-sale prospect again. Also, what exactly does "mobilizing resources" mean? For a man dedicated to creating a more open society, there sure is lots of murk here.

There is plenty of information out there on Soros, though algorithms now make the digging harder. But one can commence with just going through his organizations, investigating what they do, and hunting around to see who are involved. Lee Stranahan, former *Huntington Post* and then *Breitbart* journalist, and now at *Sputnik News*, has done a lot of that digging on Soros and his organizations, and Ukraine, as well as the fake Russia narrative and Ukraine's role in it. I suggest you dig it up and see for yourselves whether it is just Russian propaganda—his sources are open and checkable.

When the Maidan broke out, one genuinely intrepid journalist who was on the ground, and had a track record of uncovering stories, and not merely repeating what was picked up in press releases and official pronouncements. He had previously broken the Iran-Contra story and blown the lid on the involvement of the CIA in cocaine trafficking. He was Robert Parry (1949-2018). He could scarcely believe the misinformation and outright lies, the sheer propaganda that Western media was publishing. He was there watching it all unfold and wrote regular reports. This is from one the piece "[Phony 'Corruption' Excuse for Ukraine Coup](#)" (2016):

If Ukraine becomes a flashpoint for World War III with Russia, the American people might rue the day that their government pressed for the 2014 overthrow of Ukraine's allegedly corrupt (though elected) president in favour of a coup regime led by Ukrainian lawmakers who now report amassing, on average, more than \$1 million each, much of it as cash.

The *New York Times*, which served as virtually a press agent for the coup in February 2014, took note of this apparent corruption among the U.S.-favoured post-coup officials, albeit deep inside a story that itself was deep inside the newspaper (page A8). The lead angle was a bemused observation that Ukraine's officialdom lacked faith in the country's own banks (thus explaining why so much cash)."

There have since been other accounts of the event, most notably the documentaries directed by Igor Lopatonok and produced by Oliver Stone; [Ukraine on Fire](#) (that had briefly been de-platformed but now carries the "offensive/ inappropriate" warning, but is available on Rumble) that appeared in 2016; [Revealing Ukraine](#) (carries the "offensive/ inappropriate" warning on You Tube; see it on Rumble) in 2018; and most recently, [The Everlasting Present. Ukraine: 30 Years of InDependence](#) (sic.) There are numerous comments posted on You Tube saying that Lopatonok's films are all Russian propaganda bs—though none supply any evidence to prove this.

That there was US meddling is impossible to refute, given Nuland's [infamous conversation](#) with US ambassador to the Ukraine about who was the right man for the top job; and [McCain standing alongside](#) Svoboda (the neo-Nazi political party) leader Oleh Tyahnybok, as well as dining with other Neo-Nazis and addressing protestors in the square. Why? For "freedom" and "dignity," of course.

Back to International Relations 101. Imagine, would the US not have seen the presence of a major Russian political figure publicly encouraging revolt in a country in its sphere as a sign of interference and aggression? Oh, and let's not forget what was known back in 2016 for those who were following closely that Ukraine played a leading part in the whole Russia-gate lie—a suspicious man might think the Democrats were calling in favours. But how could that possibly be, the Democrats are the moral paragons?

To anyone unfamiliar with the role of Ukraine in what has been the great big porky pie of the Russian meddling in the 2016 US election, as told to the US public by the establishment media, and embellished by congressional hearings, false documents involving urinating prostitutes (apparently to pleasure one of the world's most famous germaphobe), false testimonies of FBI and CIA agents, false FISA warrants, the spying of one regime upon a potential and then elected president and his team, and books about Trump being cultivated by the Russians, spawning a report—that it seems its overseer, Robert Mueller, did not even read very carefully—a report that came up with... nothing. Well, OK, it came up with the conclusion that the President may have obstructed justice, not bad given how that led to the imprisonment of retired lieutenant general Michael Flynn. But even that didn't work.

Trump, for many including me, is the most important president since the Second World War, even more so than Regan in one all-important way: it was during his term that the divide within the United States of America reached a breaking-point of no return. I can agree with the never-Trumpers that such a man being elected was a sign of moral decay, though unlike them I agreed with his supporters that

his greatest virtue, amongst countless vices, private and public, was his utter refusal to cower in the face of endless adversity. And then there is the issue of the 2016 two-horse race: one candidate had made a fortune out of shonky real estate deals, and fleecing gullible students and investors; the other had started her fortune by a legal, property flip scam preying on retirees who could not meet the small print requirements, which allowed her and Bill and other cronies to take back and resell the assets—that, and all the stuff in Clinton Cash, of trading political influence for dosh.

There was simply no other position that one could take once he was elected than being against him, or not so much for him, but against those who were against him because they could not abide by the usual protocols of truth and decency, and the most fundamental requirement for the persistence of democracy, acceptance of electoral defeat. An anti-democratic virus swept through the media, the courts, the Senate and Congress, and ate into friendships and families. The Cold Civil War had begun, and its centre was exaggerated fears, and lies.

I have never been interested in Trump's hyperbole, which was part and parcel of his character, and the common way of all politicians (though he had a pretty clever way, as Scott Adams observed, of coming up with sling-shots to hit his enemies—"crooked Hilary," "Lying Ted," etc.) and which were often treated as literal directives/claims ("drink the disinfectant and be cured of COVID"). And the lies that were obviously lies (like how Stormy Daniels was not paid to keep her mouth shut), as opposed to what the media said were lies but weren't—were the kinds of things that only mattered in a world where there were some common core values and national commitments. I was more sympathetic to the plight of his regionally located working-class supporters, who had been getting the raw deal of globalization and who were treated as stupid because they objected to the urban smarties, stars, and monied people telling them what to think and accept as normal and desirable—and ensuring their wages were never going to go up. It wasn't the lies about Trump as such that I found so reprehensible, it was the lies enabling the rapid and destructive impact of a ruling class whose faux compassion, spiritual emptiness and self-indulgent sense of its own rectitude and entitlement to rule not only the United States of America but the rest of the planet, was destroying what had once been seen as the global centre of creative ingenuity, enterprise and independent-mindedness.

And at the centre of those lies were the universities that had originally crafted and inculcated these lies in their more highfalutin versions, and the mainstream media whose lies about the "facts" were as flies to the sandpaper of a nihilistic and stupid mindset. Their lies led to what we have now: a mainstream media that is but a megaphone of the globalist world that they, like their employers and most of the

political and global capitalist class, share. One will, of course, recall, that of all Trump's promises (one he did not fulfil), the key to his platform and support base was, "build the wall." The national labor-capital nexus (that had by the way been a key plank of the Democrats even in the 1990s)—as opposed to global capital-labour (that had been the Republican rallying position)—meant nothing, if there were no nation, and if capital flow paid no heed to the labour of citizens.

Victor David Hanson, whom I admire so much, but disagree with so deeply about this war, was absolutely right to see the issue of citizenship and its loss at the heart of Trump and his victory and defeat. Angelo Codevilla, another International Relations expert, initially someone rather contemptuous of Trump before seeing what the issue really had become, saw that this was a kind of last stand for the republic (this idea is mocked in the television drama *The Succession*, which is the kind of clever confused irrelevance that feasts the mind of a dying culture).

Open borders was the desired end that the Democrats could not present as policy in government, but could do all in their power to enable whilst in opposition, was ever a way of bringing about the end of citizenship. The power to bestow citizenship has always been the prerogative of peoples and their government (and it still is the official Democrat position). But this was the issue that defined Trump as a racist, and thus made of him and his supporters something less than human—and it was the issue that the media and their masters most lied about.

The initial big piece of deceit—the concealment of information, just prior to the election—was the suppression of Hilary Clinton's private email server, which meant there would never be a public record of how she combined official affairs of state with private fund-raising. History has a funny way of repeating itself—just prior to the 2020 election, there was another story crying out for reporting that journalists wanted to know nothing about. That was Hunter Biden's missing laptop-story, a story that just keeps leaking out. Here though what is an important part of the repetition with a difference was the part that has direct bearing on how the current war is being sold in the West as a war of Western freedom and truthfulness versus those lying deceitful Russian conquerors. Not only did the journalists not follow up on the missing laptop by going and investigating and reporting the startling materials it contained, they accepted a completely concocted story—a lie by any other name—that it was a Russian false-flag/piece of disinformation.

This lie that had the authority behind it of a pack of liars in the intelligence and military services, whose task in a normal democracy was to serve the administration of the elected president. But by 2020, lies

were unquestionable truth: Trump supported and did not condemn white supremacists in Charlottesville; Justice Kavanaugh was a rapist; the Floyd riots of 2020 were not violent, the expressions of grief for a martyr to justice; Kyle Rittenhouse was a white supremacist; the January 6 riot of 2021 was an "insurrection" and there was no hidden Antifa presence. Indeed, there were so many lies that even leftist journalists like Matt Taibbi, Glenn Greenwald, Jimmy Dore, (and ex-Bernie supporter) Tim Pool could not bear the toxic sludge.

But the lies and deceptions, as I have indicated, were not only coming from the media, nor from politicians, who one expects to lie so they can gain/retain power. The fact that the term "deep-state" became so widely used by podcasters and journalists who were critical of the political misbehaviour and lies, including those of high-ranking CIA and FBI, was a symptom of the scale of the problem—and not, as the mainstream journalists would have it that it was all proof of the widespread influence of the crazy conspiracy whack-job Q Anon.

The feverishness of the mindset of the elite reached such extraordinary levels of panic that the highest officials in the intelligence agencies and army thought it their duty to protect the people from the man that the people had voted into office by withholding information, leaking confidential memos, or bald-facedly lying to him. The chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Milley, of his own initiative, assured his Chinese counterpart that if ordered to attack China by the President, he would not do so. In normal times this would have been called what it was—treason. But this was a time when generals and admirals could not line up quickly enough to publicly defy their commander-in-chief.

It was also, and still is, a time so completely crazed that its ruling class appointed a man to the most important military position in the world, and chief military advisor to the most powerful man in the world, who is so stupid that he not only cannot see what anyone other than a complete brainwashed nincompoop can—that critical race theory is just a pile of half-baked truths and total bollocks that rival in historical nuance any primary school book the Nazis or communist had their kiddies read—but that he thought the armed forces should also get down and study it. Heck, why stop at burning and looting stores and cities, let's take the peaceful protests into base camps.

After 2016 what now was evident to all was that the media, the academy, the deep state, schools, and the majority of those presiding over US political and legal institutions had all allied themselves with one political party. And while they were happy to hand out the megaphones to the never-Trumpers, who never understood what was going on in the world—Trump is evil/ Putin is evil/Hitler is evil, ergo....

Together they all conspired (oh, there's that word again!) in the complete destruction of the independence of these institutions, as well as their essential function within the preservation of liberty and democracy.

So arrogant and blind to their own admixture of uncontrollable ambition, and the limits of their intelligence and knowledge were they that it seems none of the Democrats, whether politicians, professors, judges, journalists or other leading professions thought to get together with their pals and ask: did the people vote for that philandering clownish scam artist fraud because we were total rubbish? Had they asked the question and sought to stop being "total" rubbish—instead, of being mere rubbish like Trump's Team, they doubled down. And as Molly Ball infamously let the cat out of the bag, formed "a well-funded cabal of powerful people, ranging across industries and ideologies, working together behind the scenes to influence perceptions, change rules and laws, steer media coverage and control the flow of information."

Instead of looking at their own failings to connect with such a substantial part of the American people, by thoughtfully exploring how they might assist in making the USA a far less sorry and stupid place than it is today, they denounced anyone who didn't think like them. They didn't ask the question because they just wanted to save their own pathetic asses so they could continue to "lead" the charge in the destruction of very basic common sense and decency. These people—irrespective of their race, gender, sexual proclivity, limb "able-ness"—are to the end of democracy what the French frock-wearing puff-powder-wig lot in 1788 were to the end of the "ancient regime." And they then had the temerity to dream up the term "white privilege" to abuse and crush the political voices of people who struggle to put food on the table and pay school bills, and the shameless cunning to paint the whites who voted against them as white supremacists along with the blacks and peoples of colour as their brainwashed lackeys.

And to rub the noses of the people whose hatred they could never fathom, they engineered the electoral victory of Joe Biden - did they really think the white trash and their Uncle Tom allies, who were so desperate to stop the social break down, and economic decline that they were living in that they voted for Trump, did not notice that the Du Pont family and their man Biden, and most of the whole zillionaire crowd backing the Democrats and a whole bunch of Democrat leaders—Pelossi, Schumer, Schiff etc.etc. were as wealthy as they were white. And making Harris VP was also a real strike against privilege.

One can hear them sitting round deciding who would be Joe's back up, and provide the true face of diversity: "Yeah, yeah, we know her family had piles of money. Ok, so she is not really (US) black. Come on man/ sorry I meant ZI is black enough—the people will love her, especially when she cracks up. And you know out there is some poor starry-eyed black child brought up in a crack-house (yeah, we should give them a free crack pipe—I know that was Hunter's idea)—thinking she too could be in the White House just like Obama and now Kamala. We need to get hold of Harvey. Sorry, he's preoccupied at the moment, I mean Steve to make a biopic her—and throw in an ending in which the kid is President. Hey, pass the blow, Joe." "Yeah," the more profound among them reflected, "but it's us—or Hitler."

From the moment that Trump won the election, and celebrities, many of whom years earlier had schmoozed up to him in their talk-shows and parties, even encouraged him to run for politics, began to tell everyone that he was a tyrant. And just in case people didn't get it, a production of Julius Caesar—with Caesar made to appear like Trump—was put on in Central Park, where the audience would feel great that a living replica of the "tyrant" had been stabbed to death. Surely, he was a tyrant, even that Yale historian Timothy Snyder (before he became a regular on the political talk show circuit, he had been a serious professor of history) had written a book saying the same thing—and to prove it he pointed out that back in the 1930s American fascists wanted to make America great again too, and so Trump was just like Benito Mussolini. Trump was such a tyrant that there were calls for his impeachment, before he had enacted any policies—and to repeat, there was not a single policy that was not previously part of the consensus of all Western democracies.

And as for wanting to cooperate Russia, hadn't it been Bernie Sanders who flew off to a have his honeymoon in the USSR (you've got to hand it to Bernie; he really knows how to sweep a girl off her feet) to establish sister city relations with a Russian city, and wasn't it Obama who, thinking he was off mic told the then President Medvedev that he would have more "flexibility in dealing with Russia after the election"? But when Trump wanted to do that – well shebang. That was bigger than World War Three. And how could anyone let Trump be in charge of the nuclear button. It didn't matter what the issue anything that Trump did was a source of utter hysteria, though generally it was things he didn't do but that people said he had done that led those more suited to politics actually having something to do with reality to describe what was happening around them as Trump Derangement Syndrome—an adaptation of the term that Krauthammer (a former Mondale Democrat, and stolid anti-Trump Republican commentator) had coined for Bush.

The Director of the FBI, who spied, leaked, and lied, thought it was perfectly reasonable to set the ball

rolling for all those other treasonous intelligence and military leaders to show their contempt for the nation's President (and thus by implication all those who voted for him. He went on TV to say how proud he was of his daughter and wife joining the pussy-hatted protest that occurred immediately upon Trump taking office.

Robert de Niro, in his 70s and not in terrific shape, though I suspect completely coked up, went on TV thinking he was really Jake LaMotta and said he was gonna punch Trump's lights out. In the mix of this Walpurgis night some could just not get the pitch-and-madness of the mood quite right—poor Kathy Griffin pulled up a wax severed head of Trump dripping blood—as if she had saved the country by beheading the tyrant. But there was some tut-tutting that this was just a little too much—and she boo-hooed about the unfairness of it all: why had she just not called for his assassination like other celebrities and journalists?

One would think that if Putin really were hell-bent on destroying the West, this must have been the moment. There would have been no better time than the 2020 summer race riots for him to have walked and said, "OK, hands up," while Milley and the generals and the boys from intel were in a study group parsing the more highfalutin texts of Judith Butler and Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw so they could better understand how to lead the nation and free those people who at the moment were busy burning down neighbourhoods. If you think I get hot under the collar about the imbecility of all this please check out Karen Kennedy. She is a lady of wrathful truth, the likes of which gives one a flicker of hope.

Given the lies and sheer scale of abuse of power, the blatant refusal to play by any rule book that would enable power not only to be transferred legitimately but accepted by those administering and executing the elected government's power (this would be part of any 101 Introduction to Political Science course dealing with democracy)—is it really any wonder that there are so many people who simply do not trust a word that the media reports—about anything?

Question: how many times does someone have to lie to you before you stop listening?

But it was that one big fat mother of all lies that was the most reckless of the lot, one that not only succeeded in breaking any trust between those who want to make completely different futures, in which there is no longer any place for their opponents, but of making an enemy of Russia, when there was absolutely no need to. I won't go into the mechanics of the lie, but there was a huge amount of

coverage in the "off Broadway" media, which in those days was easy to discover, for anyone who wanted to wander into the narrower streets of information gathering and dissemination, which Google, DuckDuckGo and YouTube now want to eliminate in the way Amazon's aim is to ensure that there are no towns with bricks-and-mortar stores competing with them.

People who found their news there found some really interesting and talented people. Far cleverer, in the main, than what was offered up as commentary on the television. Has anyone ever though Rachel Maddow, Don Lemon, the gaggle that do the View (Whoopi's still there, the she's so smart that she can see that the holocaust had nothing to with racism), Anderson Cooper have ever once said anything that was remotely insightful? Well, sadly, yes—which shows yet again why Xi and Vlad don't want anything to do with the world these people are trying to make. In any case, you only have to look at this bunch and pretty much all the other self-righteous airheads on the main networks to understand why millions of people tune into Stephen Crowder, Jordan Peterson, Joe Rogan, just to a name few of the more famous youtubers whose very existence has caused thousands of heart attacks and aneurisms among those who are addicted to mainstream media misinformation.

The old media modes had become outmoded, and losing money hand over fist. Their commercial model has been in trouble for quite a while, and they had to take a stand to distinguish what they did as truth from what citizen journalists, and podcasters did was... that was "conspiracy theory", or misinformation. The mainstream media could provide the fact-checkers, that is people who came from the mainstream media, to establish what truth was really truth, which was what they and their mates said it was. Shortly after Biden took office the *New York Times* called for a "truth commission" and "reality Czar." That was when all the search engines and YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, etc. became the de facto "truth commission"—many like Sascha Baron Cohen (who has turned into the Manhattan version of his creation Ali G, though with more self-righteousness and half the brain power) think it is nowhere near enough.

How crazy could things get in the USA , and the rest of the West is just a heartbeat behind usually? So crazy that the ruling political class' version of new normal is what Rachel Levine or Sam Brinton represent. While it is a sackable offense in some environments, possibly a crime of hate speech, to say this, to take them and their fantasies of self-creation seriously is something that just can't be done by most people because it is completely silly—that's not being transphobic, that's merely reflexive "insaneo-phobia."

But don't take my word for it, Joe, please just have them visit India, China, Africa, and a bunch of Muslim countries to discuss any topic they have expertise in. Or, to make it even easier and cheaper (they will only need one-way tickets), send them to speak with the Taliban government in Afghanistan where they can deliver Anthony Blinken's message of disappointment in their lack of diversity since kicking out the infidel—they could also bring presents, such as little rainbow flags, or signed copies of books like Cemetery Boys. He might also want to send the Squad along with them in case they still fail to realize just how diverse the US government really is. And while they are at it, they might just inform their various counterparts of their preferred pronouns—and whisper in their ear that they don't like to be called women, but "birthing people," and they like to choose their own "bathrooms."

If Vlad or Xi ever really get serious about taking over the planet, their biggest obstacle will be to actually stop rolling around the ground laughing at the countless examples of what has befallen what was once the greatest military power on earth.

What has also befallen the elite of the Western world is a complete inability to distinguish fact from fantasy—and because they think everybody else, except the very stupid and ignorant, think like them. Most of them don't even realize that they resort to lying when enabling the common self-deluding stories does not suffice. What they, or someone who thinks like them, says is true—that is the real meaning of "trust the science." Which is why they will eventually have to change every search engine algorithm and de-platform anything or anyone they do not agree with; or if they are feeling that maybe the plebs should have some peanuts, just issue warnings saying that what they are watching or reading has been "deemed to be offensive as inappropriate for some viewers."

Yes, that is truly what now greets anyone wanting to watch documentaries that deviate from the consensus as laid down by this unofficial "reality czar." This is what came out of the Trump years—nothing Trump did came anywhere near the destruction of the very possibility of cultivating independence of mind or even providing an environment for "higher learning." Trump had his agenda and goals, agree or not, but they did not require the complete and total control of which pronouns had to be used, or of what thoughts might be expressed on a range of topics.

Trump connected with a group of people who wanted what he promised—even if he did not deliver that much. Though, I have never seen a presidency fighting on so many fronts, including within the administration itself which was just another front for the civil war. But he did not entrench a panoply of formulae and observances, as commandeering as any divine scripture might mandate, that are as

brainless as any ideas have ever been 'thought up' and yet the themselves are precisely the requisite "stuff" for brainwashing a society of infantilism, imbecility and indulgence.

No one was easier to dupe than the elite of the United States—well, OK, New Zealand and Australia punched way above their weight in believing whatever was required. And that is how it was possible to get people in the United States to buy the big lie of Trump being a Russian plant.

When the Russia-lie was being spread, it was not hard to uncover. Anyone who went hunting around on their computer quickly found that the lie had been exposed as soon as it had been hatched.

The hatching involves numerous players that go back to Hilary's campaign, and the Steele dossier—but they are just the start of it. The scope and scale and mechanics, which became a kind of obsession of mine through 2016 to 2018 is too intricate to repeat here. Of course, because it is wide-ranging and was deliberate—even though it was mostly spread by idiot journalists and talk show hosts who couldn't wait to tell it because this was going to bring Trump down and show the world what a scheming crook he is—it can easily be made to be a conspiracy theory. But what else can one call a bunch of people using their political and economic influence in back room deals, conversations, plans, tactics and deeds that they conceal from public viewing—other than a conspiracy?

My point is not that the Republicans don't and didn't conspire to have their way in this or other elections. It is that the mainstream media stopped investigating anything that would harm their "team," which is why people who still believed in the New York Times being a bastion of impartial truth, or that CNN was a candid and critical source of absolutely reliable information believed the big lie they were being told, and did not bother to follow through to uncover information about (off the top of my head) GPS fusion, Glenn Simpson, Christopher Steele, the *Penn Quarterly*, money connections between the Hilary campaign and/or organizations connected with the disinformation trail from Khodorkovsky and Soros—who themselves are pals and cronies as with each other as well as Hilary.

Everyone knew about the infamous Trump tower meeting, but who is Natalia Veselnitskaya, and what exactly did she want to tell the Trump campaign about (hint the [Magnitsky Act](#) has a lot to do with it, and Don Jr., had little time or capacity to grasp its significance)? Or who is Alexandra Chalupa and what role did she play? These people are just a tiny tip of the story. It was such a dizzying tale in terms of who did exactly what that it was much easier to just say, "Nah, that's a conspiracy theory."

The fact that FBI and CIA agents had been proven to have conspired against the president did not lead any reporters from the big print media to ask, "But what is being claimed here and what is happening exactly?" Given that it was also the media moguls who hated Trump and, most pertinently the anti-globalist direction he was trying to revive (even Rupert did not like him), reporters in most mainstream media (Fox was not all pro-Trump, but it was the one mainstream outlet where pro-Trumpers could tune into hosts expressing their views and concerns) simply did their bidding and skewed the news so that everything globalist was very good, and everything MAGA/populist was very, very bad.

I spoke earlier about IR requiring an understanding of interests—that also involves, in any serious analysis, placing oneself in the picture and identifying one's own interests, so that one can see the limit of one's own place in the world and start to comprehend that of others. Any sense of that, which is to say any sense that might have elevated an understanding of the political circumstances, issues, and choices of the hour by asking where the media and its owners and reporters fitted into the larger good of the country's future was never asked by mainstream reporters themselves.

Thus, ignorance spawned arrogance on a monstrous scale—in part because of the amplificatory nature of the technologies which we now deploy to express our better or worse hearts and minds and souls. The better, more creative part led to the emergence of "citizen journalists" who were not aligned to old power-structures, and who were beholden only to their own sense of what they saw and wished for. It was to the media what the Reformation was to Christendom, but unfortunately there was no equivalent to the reforms, and reinvigoration of Catholicism that was the Counter-Reformation.

Thus, they never even tried to expose the players and machinations involved in a conspiracy infinitely bigger than Watergate (yes, back then one could say that people who conspired to spy on their political opponents had conspired to spy on their political opponents), and possibly even more intricate than the WMDs being a lie, belief in which probably had more to do with CIA incompetence, and a failure to vet sources (because of the desire to get the answer they wanted). They were happy to garner favour with their bosses and repeat whatever someone who was in on it or would benefit from it (the entire Democrat machine—which also, happily, included most reporters) told them.

The lie, though, was spotted very early on by a number of former intelligence officials aware of the technology involved in early parts of the hatching—people like William Binney, and Ray McGovern, who really hated Trump, but who did a ton of stuff having to do with servers and downloads and deliberately misleading server "prints." Others followed the trails of many of the players—Lee Stranahan

was right up there—which is why he turns up again in the documentary about Ukraine in 2018; so were journalists from the Epoch Times. There were also some writers from the Hill—of course, there were far more than I can now recall.

The politics of those doing the exposing varied and the aforementioned leftist journalists also joined in: what they saw and what I saw went far beyond divisions concerning policy. It was horror at the recklessness of what the rulers of commerce, technology, ideas, were doing—it was nothing less than a threat to world peace. Putin had, as if from nowhere become the evilest man on the planet. So much so that even Fox presenters, who hated the Democrats and who night after night denounced and brought on guests exposing the lie, made sure that they established their anti-Putin bona fides.

All this created a completely unnecessary enemy of a man they knew next to nothing about; whose sphere of influence and, more importantly, whose geopolitical priorities were on the other side of the world. And it had done so at a time when people, who only a few years earlier were complaining about their political opponents, now spoke of the coming civil war, or the prospect of state secession. It had succeeded in completely breaking up the spirit of the nation, and with it contributed hugely to the cracks and fractures in the rest of the Western world, produced by the same polarised forces and elite mindset.

Need I repeat the obvious—this had nothing to do with Putin.

I have no way of knowing whether the intention, dated back to before 2014, was always to provoke Russia into a war, as an excuse to try and bring its economy down and bog Russia in another, albeit closer to home, dispute that might eventually bring down that “crook Putin.” I would not put it past them. It has all the hallmarks of other great disastrous plans. In any case, the fact is that the claim was a lie that the majority of those who voted for the Democrats still think is the truth. And none of the journalists/ talk show people who spread it have ever apologized for misinformation—and of course YouTube, Twitter, Facebook don't censor the people who continue to tell this Russia lie—a lie which rebooted the Cold War.

One of the people who could barely believe the scale of the “Russia stole the election” lie and who saw that this was an act of madness that would have a disastrous impact upon US/Russian relations was the former Soviet expert and historian (and, incidentally, a Democrat who utterly disliked Trump) Stephen Cohen. He went from being a regular commentator on Russian affairs at CNN to persona non-

grata, after initially trying to explain why the expansion of NATO was a bad thing and why what the West was reporting about Ukraine in 2014 was also wrong.

To make matters worse for himself, Cohen had publicly expressed his doubts about some of the crimes that the West had blamed on Putin. He pointed out that even the family of Anna Politkovskaya, (author of *Putin's Russia: Life in a Failing Democracy*), who were personal friends of his, were certain it was Chechen gangsters not Putin behind her death. Cohen also drew attention to the fact that the other death the media always present as an open-and-shut case of a Putin assassination, Litvenenko, was most likely not one of his either—which was also what Litvenenko's father said. But the climate was and remains such that any claim can be made about Putin, which involves oodles of cash and bodies, must be true.

Speaking of which, enter William Browder, self-proclaimed Number 1 enemy of Putin. As he tells the story, Putin can't sleep at night scheming and plotting to get Browder. One wonders how Putin manages to run a country, in between the schemes and dreams of revenge and the poker games with his cronies. Browder is a best-selling author of two books, *Red Notice, A True Story of High Finance, Murder, and One Man's Fight for Justice*, and (for those who found the previous title just a little too bland) *Freezing Order : A True Story of Russian Money Laundering, State-Sponsored Murder, and Surviving Vladimir Putin's Wrath*. He is also a regular commentator on all the media outlets (Fox loves him), where he pontificates on all things Putin, including the war. According to him, he knows Putin's mind inside out; he knows where the bodies are buried, and where the cash is stashed. Oh, and he is also a serial liar, hence he fits right into our story and the media empire of lies.

Browder, the grandson of Earl Browder, the general secretary of the US communist party, made a fortune by sweeping up the assets for a fraction of their real prices in the country his grandfather had seen as the future land of hope and plenty. When Bill visited that future in those Wild West days of the 1990s, he had his hopes fulfilled and got plenty. He set up an "investment" company and made so much money that he made himself an Irish citizen (cheaper taxes—America, the land of free enterprise, demands that if its overseas citizens are working, then any gap between the tax paid to their country of residence and the United States must go to Uncle Sam). He was also done for tax evasion in Russia.

In his meeting with Trump in 2018, it was Browder whom Putin was talking about when he spoke of 400 million dollars illegally being sent from Russia to the Clinton campaign. *Politifact*, in the typical ham-fisted manner that is meant to pass as genuine factchecking, does a meticulously stupid piece wanting

to disprove the claim by focusing upon publicly declared monies that were donated to the Clintons. It does not address the really important part, that the 400 millions dollars were unpaid taxes on profits made by Browder's company. *Politifact* also assumes Putin must be lying because Browder and the Clintons (who like Putin are also said have buried bodies (see the View's response to Norm MacDonald on that one). But even saying that is a conspiracy theory, while everything you think you know about bad Vlad must be true) would be incapable of finding ways to launder the money—that is evil Vlad's specialty.

Though Trump probably did not pick it up, Putin was referring to the money and the event that is at the centre not only of Browder's Red Notice, but the impetus behind an Act that had already set Russia and the US on a path of serious conflict, the Magnitsky Act, a bi-partisan Bill that came into being under the Obama regime in 2012. It allowed for the freezing and confiscation of assets of those deemed to be violators of human rights—funnily enough, at the time of its implementation, all Russians, and all on the wrong side of Putin versus Khodorkovsky, Lebedev and the other 'victims' of Putin's grand larceny and persecution. Though, what is really funny, is that this bunch of extremely wealthy Russians had managed to get an Irishman to lobby on their behalf. Moreover, however much wealth they had lost, had not made them paupers. The idea that maybe they were just tax frauds never seemed to bother anyone – anyway what right did Putin have to prosecute anyone for tax evasion? It was introduced by Benjamin Cardin and John McCain.

One might recall that back in 2008, when he was running for President, all sorts of dirt had been dug up by the Democrats to the effect McCain had done a lot of singing in the Vietnam cage. The hatred of Vietnam toward McCain blocking their efforts to recover and bring home missing and dead service men is still intense. Trump's notorious quip about preferring heroes who hadn't been captured was his nod to the Vets. Dan Bongino from Fox—very anti-Putin—also claimed that Russia-got-Trump-elected elected was a replay of a plan initially hatched back in 2007 in case McCain got in. That might be true or complete nonsense. I have read his book, but not checked his sources; but if true, I don't think that they would have needed to unload that fabrication because McCain had already become very tight with what the Democrats were brewing up in terms of foreign policy (which was not that different from the neo-con derangement syndrome stuff). He was also sidling up to Browder and Khodorkovsky (who also pushed for the bill) by using his political influence to join the task of taking Putin down. Apart from his stint in the Maidan, Browder's (and McCain's) success in crafting and implementing The Act, which was initially limited to the USA and Russian nationals, has since been adopted in the EU, Canada and several other countries. Need I say it, Browder may be a liar, but he is a very powerful man.

One would be very naïve to underestimate the importance of the Magnitsky Act in the straining of international relations between the Western world and Russia, though as it turns out it was but a prelude to the present decision by the US government to freeze assets and impose sanctions on Russia because of its invasion. But I should just mention that we get into some pretty murky stuff when we start looking at US political legislation and Russia.

First, isn't it weird that the US would introduce legislation instigated by an Irish citizen who has no government position? Browder, by the way is also a business associate of Mikhail Khodorkovsky and isn't it also interesting that it was Joe Biden who introduced S.Res.322—"A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate on the trial, sentencing and imprisonment of Mikhail Khodorkovsky and Platon Lebedev."

Back in 2010, Hilary was also very vocally denouncing Russia for finding poor Mikhail and other oligarchs guilty of plundering the country—tax fraud was a topic near and dear to her heart, as was the cause of saving and recruiting billionaire clients for hers and Bill's noble Foundation. Is it really far-fetched to believe that people as wealthy as Khodorkovsky and Lebedev, would be buying power and influence in the US government and leaving money trails so that politicians will help them bring down their enemy? Like Browder, Khodorkovsky is also talking to anyone who will listen and publishing about Putin's tyranny and how this war will lead to regime collapse and overthrow—he is calling for demonstrations against the war, and using his considerable media machine influence to prepare Russians for him—or his man— as the next leader of Russia.

Whether orchestrated or not, the players who are intent on taking down Putin stand the most to benefit from Ukraine being in civil war; or, as now, outright war with Russia. Anyone who knows the least bit about the region and its history knows that the fate of Russia is inextricably tied to that of Ukraine (another thing Putin has stated repeatedly). And the US interference in the Maidan was above all a means of destabilizing the region in order to curb the power of Putin, and dismantle the reach of the regime—and, gain is it far-fetched to think that the stated objectives of Putin's oligarch enemies, regime change, might not be what is the real end-game?

Maybe Khodorkovsky and co. have been trying to spell out the strategy for Joe in ways that he could say it without looking like he was saying it, yet making sure it was being said. If that sounds convoluted, it is because it is and Joe's recent summersaults around the matter of "regime change" sure sounded convoluted. Besides, crafting legislation to redress the wrongs done to two non-American citizens, Joe

also took such a personal interest in Ukraine that he threatened to withhold a billion dollars in military aid if the Ukrainian President did not change his prosecutor in the case against Burisma who also happened to employ his son. Joe's smirking *braggadocio*, as he recounts the tale to fawning journalists is available for all to see on YouTube—and again the factchecking on this is as laughable as the idea that Hunter's lost laptop is a Russian fabrication. Intrigue and murk? I think so.

But what any of us know, who are not actually in the game, is little. Still, there are questions aplenty that need to be asked, and our mainstream reporters are not asking them; and given the connection between the Magnitsky Act and the timing of the Maidan, questions about the Irish man behind an Act that has spread around the globe, and was the prelude to what is now a proxy weapons war and outright economic war against Russia, are definitely worth asking.

One person who ended up [digging into that story](#) through his firsthand acquaintance with Browder was the Russian filmmaker Andrei Nekrasov, a friend and sometime collaborator with Politkovskaya. His CV also includes a string of critical documentaries on Putin and the FSB. Nekrasov was so inspired by Browder's first book, he decided to do a feature film of it. But as work on the film progressed, he came to the realization that Browder's fiction wagged the tail of any truth the dog might have had. Nekrasov had intended to tell the story of Browder's heroism in the face of rogue officials robbing the titles of his business and murdering his lawyer, Sergei Magnitsky. In the making, it transformed into a documentary about Browder's lies.

Nekrasov's loss of faith in the Browder story started with his attempt to recreate the scene in the cell in which Magnitsky had ostensibly been murdered—and which he had received official access to—and discovered that the details, beginning with the size of the cell and number of police involved in the murder, could not possibly have been true. As he gathered more evidence, he reluctantly concluded that the official report about the cause of Magnitsky's death (natural causes from a pre-existing health condition) was probably accurate. One would think any journalist familiar with how the Magnitsky Act had come into being and has been sold, and what it has meant to US (now Western) Russian relations, might be interested in following up on the fact that the martyr to the story was not, in fact, a martyr. Nor, as it turns out, is another claim about Magnitsky, a claim that is repeated wherever and to whomever Browder tells his story, was Sergei Magnitsky Moscow's finest lawyer – he wasn't a lawyer at all but an accountant – assisting Browder in tax fraud.

Watch the numerous videos of Browder's talks and see how scripted they are. Also note the way in

which the pauses and asides come with rehearsed regularity. They are not the gestures and manners of speech of a man whose mind is flooded by the associations that have come from persecution, whose feelings go into turmoil whenever these painful memories come up. They are the manners and gestures of a calculative man, a man who once he has plotted out the story sticks rigidly to the script, lest someone notice the loose threads that may unravel it. Note too, if you can watch this movie that Browder has attempted to banish from ever being publicly shown, like Khodorkovsky he can go from sweet charmer to deadly harmer in the blink of an eye. He is a bully as well as a liar; and as the film unfolds—it begins as a film about the making of the film—Nekrasov is on the receiving end of Browder's early threatening glares and stares when he seeks clarification about the anomalies in Browder's story—that also include the location and nature of this great corporation that he has built up.

The film then explosively addresses the centre-piece of Browder's claim about the raiding and seizure of the deeds of registration and ownership when Nekrasov tracks down the ostensible policeman, supposedly living a life like Browder himself and his friend Mikhail, but who drives an old bomb and lives in a very modest flat, closer to what Browder's "business dwellings" look like than the swanky places Browder lives in. (The film is worth watching just for the comedy of the scene where Nekrasov "discovers" the exact location of this billion-dollar plus operation, and the "staff" running it).

None with an open mind could watch this film, [*The Magnitsky Act: Behind the Scenes*](#) (available only through a website of that name) and think that Browder's story was anything other than fake—unless one is either on Browder's payroll or a hack journalist. The film was denounced as a piece of "agit-prop" by the Washington Post.

For further information discrediting claims that Bill Browder was an innocent victim of crooked Putin, and that he is a great example of Western enterprise and moral courage apart from Lee Stranahan's many podcasts on the topic, Lucy Komisar written major exposés of Browder's porky pies.

If Browder is, as he and his publishers, love to tell us, Putin's Number 1 enemy, it might be worth pausing on the claim: that the Number 1 enemy of Putin are Western lies; and in the broader picture that is also the case for Ukrainians now fleeing a country in which those who have told the lies to induce the war are nowhere to be seen. I might have been pretty scathing of Zelensky, but anyone who has been deceived this badly and who is living in the midst of such a horror—including those who were previously left to suffer in media silence—deserved our pity, and for us to at least try and speak some truth.

Conclusion

I may very well have lost readers on the way through these thickets thinking it is a mere ramble and haphazard rummage and roaming. My digressions about the craziness of our times are intended to highlight the relationships between the events and interests that either are essential to understand the war's background, foreground, or what is at stake in it. I have merely scratched the surface. I know how little I know—there is so much more than main players know, that we don't, as well as so much more that they don't know- like how it will all play out in the immediate and distant future.

I have attempted to express why I cannot help but see this war as but one more "item" in a world divided between those seeking to fabricate a technocratic future and those who fear the mind-numbing conformity and spiritless nature that is required for its creation, as well as the vacuity of its destination. This would be truly an end of history, and an end of man—to use formulae from two ostensibly opposed enablers of this brave new world.

The forces at work both in the making and in the reaction are great; and as I have said throughout, most of those involved do not see exactly what they are doing or making. Hence too it is not unreasonable to fear the explosive consequences that are ever the inevitable accompaniment of great and rapid demographic upheaval through mass waves of immigration and the swift juxtaposition of different cultures.

I mentioned Karl Popper's influence on George Soros; and to those who think they are being clever by not seeing how powerful this man is, all I can say is read up. Leaving aside Popper's contribution to the philosophy of science and more generally how knowledge is best gathered and developed for the benefit of society, his great omission, which tends to be an oversight of most liberals, certainly of those in the "idea-ist" camp, is a failure to give sufficient importance to traditions. That is Soros' failure, and the failure of globalists more generally. The failure is generally hidden, as I have also said, by a dialectical web of enlightened progressivism and Disney-styled romanticism, which wants Muslims, Confucian based tradition, tribal peoples, Hindus, Orthodox and all the world to live like Western, sexually-fluid undergraduates, celebrities and the mega rich. How this horrible stupidity plays, has already been seen in the disastrous attempts at regime change that the US and NATO have precipitated.

It is also being played out in Western Europe between an "indigenous" population, itself deeply divided between those who wish to trade the traditions of millennia for the globalist one depicted above, and a

much more recent group of migrants whose appeals and spiritual commitments come from an entirely different set of circumstances and historical memory—these people themselves have their own divisions and pressures coming from the overspill and fallout of conflicts coming out of their former lands.

The problems back in their homelands are many, as are the causes, but the West's collaboration in their making is something that intensifies the hatred of the West from people and organizations which hope that they may escape the intolerable present by leaping back into the past and hanging on ever more tightly. Only by living ever more faithfully to the stricture of their traditions can they escape the cursed world that they dwell within and they see as caused by the Western devils, whose own worlds are very hell.

This problem, like all serious political problems, is not a moral problem—morals certainly won't solve it. It is Europe's inevitable problem. The US, on the other hand, has made for itself another problem, the problem of racial strife. Race is a dangerous genie, when combined with seeing people primarily as racial types, and the world as a place in which there are only the privileged and the oppressed; and when the privileged themselves teach that they are not deserving of their privilege, then they are welcoming their demise. Again, none of my objections to critical race theory are to some kind of moral ideal standard—it is simply to see that the ideas behind it, and identity politics generally, are as stupid as the implications are deadly. Throw in open borders and the rest of the craziness I have touched upon—it is definitely “Good Night Irene.”

I repeat. I do not like what I see. Please convince me otherwise. But I will add one last thing. In any time or place, where serious matters are being discussed, if you are ever tempted, please pause before you reach for the kinds of platitudinous formulae that seem to be manufactured by Globalist Inc. for nincompoops—they who gave you such gems of thoughtlessness as “99 percent of scientists agree that...”; “trust the science;” “our X strives for excellence;” “we are committed to diversity;” “the discredited claim that;” “conspiracy theorists hold that”—and so on. Such formulae, stupid as they all are, do serve a purpose—to stop people asking awkward questions which might destabilize the consensus required by globalizing technocrats and their minions to bring us all into their future, with them doing the leading. To such formulae we can add: “This war has happened because of the evil Putin;” “We must stop this evil madman;” and “That is just Russian propaganda.”

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Featured image: "Diogenes searching for an Honest Man," by Jan Victors, ca. 17th century.

