

(Un?)obvious notes for our Western colleagues

Anna Gritsenko

6 March 2022

I am stressed so much that I have difficulties in writing more than a paragraph at once, but I'll try to explain.

- The threat of Putinism, like that of Hitlerism in its time, doesn't meet a truly resolute response from Western democracies. However, the very fact that Putinism is evil is so obvious that he has even fewer allies than Hitler had. Even Switzerland refrained from its neutrality and since even Hitler had countries in the Axis who wished to join him. Now even Belarus, the official ally, is reluctant to join.
- Expressing solidarity to Ukrainians and Russians at the same time is the 'all lives matter' approach. Only by giving birth in a moisty basement under cluster munition shelling can a Ukrainian woman understand the pain which a Russian feels about the inability to buy a teddy shark in IKEA! Implying Russians need your support no less than Ukrainians effectively dehumanizes Ukrainians. • Expressing solidarity to Ukrainians and Russians at the same time is the 'all lives matter' approach. Only by giving birth in a moisty basement under cluster munition shelling can a Ukrainian woman understand the pain which a Russian feels about the inability to buy a teddy shark in IKEA! Implying Russians need your support no less than Ukrainians effectively dehumanizes Ukrainians.
- When you speak about Russians who do not support Putin you should understand that in politics, support, neutrality, and kitchen opposition (when only your mom, cat and ash tray know you're in opposition) work effectively the same. Only practical activities matter. No, writing a post that they're ashamed of their government is not enough, words do not resurrect and do not rebuild settlements leveled to the ground.
- If Ukrainians can stop tanks with bare hands, then Russians can protest baton-equipped police. Especially when half of this police is in Ukraine now. Telling this to Russians does not dehumanize them. - Eating, sleeping, entertaining is in no way specific to homo sapiens, however the ability to self-organize politically is. By addressing Russians to organize and protest Ukrainians are humanizing those who has effectively dehumanized themselves.

- Even when Russians show active disagreement with the regime, it doesn't necessarily apply to the 'Ukrainian question'. Lots of people who are openly anti-Putin share pro-Putin vision and employ pro-Putin tropes when it comes to Ukrainians.
- If you ever try to talk about dialogue, I kindly ask you to shut up forever. Imagine suggesting dialogue to the residents of Warsaw ghetto. Here's how residents of Kharkiv, Mariupol, Volnovakha, Hostomel, Irpin, Bucha are feeling at this very moment.- If you ever try to think Ukrainians are over-generalizing, please check your privilege when you have never been hated for your nationality by LGBTQ+ kids! They will never say anything discriminatory towards gays, trans folks, black folks, but when it comes to Ukrainians they send hate as effectively as ultranationalist.
- Forget about 'Russians have no access to independent media'. This can be true for old women in the villages, but young, educated and English-speaking people can at any moment use Google to search for independent opinions in English! Also please google 'Gleichschaltung'.- Colonialism is not only about the relationship between English and Caribbean or Indian people! Please employ the optics you are so proud to own!
- This war has been going on for eight years already. The data of Ukrainian casualties before 24.02.2022 accounts for 14,000. All these years Russian had a credit of trust that they are civilized, that they belong to a great culture. All these years they enjoyed recognition, support, understanding, visibility of their opinions, all services like PayPal, all new arrivals of goods. All the gravity of blame was on Ukraine. Everyone was interested in the far-right in Ukraine, but nobody – in the far-right in Russia. Now Russian credit of trust is over. They are morally bankrupt.

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