

# **We are not just fighting for Ukraine, or why Russia has nothing to offer us**

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**Today, when the war is in its third month and the entire Ukrainian nation has rallied to defend its homeland, it is important not to forget that this war has different dimensions. It is not only a war for independence, for our land, for the protection of our loved ones. It is also a war for the worldview and world order, where Russia simply has nothing to offer us.**

Under the mask of the “Russian world”.

Russia has nothing to offer us. Neither spiritually, nor politically, nor economically, nor in any other dimension, including the “Slavic unity”, which is also called the “Russian world”. After all, paradoxically, while accusing Ukrainians of an infestation of nationalism, “Slavic unity” in the eyes of Russians is still the same nationalism, only of the Kremlin’s spill.

Yes, Ukrainian nationalists are not all intellectuals. Among them, there are quite a few people with radical views and demands. And let us be honest, sometimes their actions have gone far beyond the rights and freedoms established by a democratic State. And, of course, the victims of radical nationalists had the right to be outraged and to demand punishment for the perpetrators. And the state, if it is democratic, must not only hear these demands but also protect those who have suffered.

It is precisely these problems inherent in the young state of Ukraine that the occupiers have embraced, claiming they are coming with a “special operation” to free our country from nationalists. Although none of us asked them to do so.

In return, they ask us to fall in love with the “Russian world”. But what is this “Russian world” but another propaganda slogan of the occupants, which replaces the rampant Russian chauvinism and nationalism? “The Russian world” is a world order established exclusively by the Kremlin, and exclusively by Putin.

In this world order, Slavs-Ukrainians cannot have their own culture or their own political rights, except those that will be allowed by their “big brother”. In this “Russian world” Ukrainians must turn into peaceful villagers who have no right to protest, let alone revolt against injustice.

This “Russian world” has nothing to do with Europe’s modern civilizational choice. Though Putin’s Russia worked very hard to prove its Europeanness and to restore the former Russian influence in European politics. And there was a moment when he almost succeeded. Until, by his aggression against Ukraine, Putin stripped himself of his mask, exposing the savagery of the regime he had established. Because the whole modern architecture of European politics and security is based on slightly different principles than those proclaimed by Putin’s Russia.

Freedom is not only a right but also a duty.

We have been talking so much about freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of political

parties and other freedoms that we have almost forgotten the true meaning of that freedom. For what it really means is not just our right to express our opinions, or the right to form political parties or trade unions. True freedom is the inalienable right of the people to protest and sometimes to revolt.

The right of people to rebel against tyranny and injustice is the foundation of any free nation. All of these rights, and many others, are enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In recent years Ukrainians have repeatedly proved that they are ready to use these rights to protect their freedoms.

And even now, in times of occupation, Ukrainians in Kherson, Melitopol, Berdyansk and other cities are proving daily that nothing will break their desire for true freedom. They come out to protest even when the occupiers threaten them with weapons, arrests and reprisals.

I remember Moscow in August 1991 during the coup d'état, and how millions of Muscovites took to the streets with their bare hands to stop the tanks. It was thanks to their protest that the putschists' plan to reverse the democratisation of Russia failed.

But, where is this Moscow and these Muscovites today? There aren't any. Yes, there were isolated protests, small actions and rallies involving hundreds or even thousands of people, which were easily stifled by Putin's regime without resorting to much violence. But that freedom-loving, metropolitan Moscow no longer exists. Nor is there a freedom-loving St. Petersburg, or free Russia in general.

Over these decades, Putin's **propaganda** has poisoned even the thought of freedom and the right to protest in the minds of Russians. Not to mention the right to revolt, which the Russian regime represents as nothing short of universal evil.

And so it appears that the "Russian world" offered to us is nothing but obedient slavery to which Ukrainians, who have tasted real freedom, will never agree.

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**P.S.**

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