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Max Ščur
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2023

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The Knuto-Soviet Empire

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The Russian war against Ukraine is the key part of Putin's (and Lukashenko's) project of restoration of the Russian-Soviet (allow me to say Knuto-Soviet) empire. Everyone familiar with the history of this Empire (Tzarism, Stalinism, Brezhnevism, and now Putinism) and of its colonized nations, or who, like me, was even born in the Empire, has every reason to freak out and to do everything imaginable to prevent its restoration (or, even better, to be instrumental in its disintegration). More so, this time the Empire is totally stripped of any shadow of a progressivist social ideology, which has been replaced by a Russian nationalist-chauvinist-revanchist-traditionalist-sexist (that is, classic right-wing) trash of a discourse. This, combined with Russia's natural and human resources and nuclear weapons, makes this ideology by far the most dangerous form of present-day fascism, which every sound leftist is morally obliged to fight – albeit sometimes in an unpleasant alliance with one's political adversaries, which was also the case in WWII.

The fact that the Empire dresses itself up (for the Western intellectuals) as a colony fighting Western colonialism is a genuinely funny moment in the history of propaganda. However,

a similar rhetoric was previously used by the Nazi (and the Japanese) imperialists. Just as the Nazis blamed the collapse of the Knuto-German empire on Jews, not on their own Prussian WWI militarism, the Russian fascists blame the collapse of their Knuto-Soviet empire on the “collective West”, not on their own bankrupt state capitalism (or state fossil capitalism, to be precise). In both cases, we are dealing with a form of historical identity crisis, delusion of grandeur, and denial of a painful reality. In both cases, we have a big nation pretending to be not just a part of the Western world (which both Germany and Russia undoubtedly are), but a full-scale “civilization” with their own “peculiar, authentic, non-decadent” values. Well, it was a propaganda myth serving the elites in the German case, and it is a propaganda myth serving the elites in the Russian one.

As for the two main anarchist approaches to the war, the anti-Western and the pro-Ukrainian, I think that the core problem here is actually the very definition of imperialism. To my knowledge, the anti-Western approach is historically based on the Marxist-Leninist concept of imperialism as “the last stage of (liberal) capitalism” which is somehow “inherent” only to the West; and the pro-Ukrainian one draws from the Bakunist critique of imperialism(s), for example, in *Statism and Anarchy* (1873). Unless there will finally be a serious anarchist deconstruction of Marxist theory, there will always be a Marxist tendency in anarchism, especially in the West, where Marxism never was a state ideology, unlike in Eastern Europe and post-Soviet countries. Besides, as the heir of the Knuto-Soviet empire, the Russian fascist state traditionally supports and will always support (directly or indirectly) Western Marxist proponents of Lenin’s definition of *imperialism*, using them as “useful idiots” (another Lenin phrase) in its hybrid war for world domination, regardless of whether or not they call themselves anarchists.