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## RASHISTIC IDEOLOGY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN WAR

**Abstract.** The article attempts to provide a socio-cultural understanding of the ideology of racism in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war. The very concept of "racism" has appeared in Ukraine quite recently and is defined, according to Wikipedia, as an ideology. It was found that the core of this ideology was the concept of the "Russian World", which consists in the destruction of other civilizations with a highly developed culture based on superiority over others. In other words, the "Russian World" is an ideology of destroying civilizations superior to the Russian one and imposing its own barbarism, where there is no place for humanity, which is reflected in the destructive war of all those who oppose Russian totalitarianism. It is established that this Russian imperial ideology has been formed over the centuries and is based on such traits of mentality as: arrogance, domination, psychological inclination to permissiveness and robbery, servile submission to authority in various forms, abnormal patience, religious fanaticism, etc.

It was found out that the Verkhovna Rada Committee on Humanitarian and Information Policy proposed to introduce the term "rashism" to define the ideology built in Russia, which is

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reflected in the military actions of the Russian army in Ukraine and the attitude of Russian society to this war. The Committee's appeal is addressed to Ukrainian scholars, journalists, political scientists, and the entire civil society to popularize and recognize the term "racism" at the national and international levels with further definition and inclusion of this term in the official terminology dictionaries of the Ukrainian language. It is determined that racism is a type of political regime, as well as a radical authoritarian anti-human ideology, characterized by a strong cult of personality, militarism, totalitarianism, designed to unite lands through hybrid wars or complete destruction.

It is the embodiment of racist, xenophobic, chauvinistic, populist ideology, which, despite its obvious anti-democratic nature, is supported by the majority of the Russian population and is implemented in Russia's aggressive and criminal foreign policy. The concept of "rashism" has a lot in common with totalitarianism as a political regime aimed at achieving complete state control over all spheres of public and private life. This is the main concept that underlies racism as a phenomenon.

**Keywords:** *ideology, rashism, war, "Russian world".*

**Introduction.** The aggressive war launched by Russia against Ukraine on February 24, 2022 (although we understand that the war began much earlier and deeper) has shown the inhuman nature of Putin's "special operation to destroy Ukrainians", which has become a new type of ruthless war. It is not an accidental phenomenon, but a consequence of the implementation of the terminally ill ideology of the "Russian world" in which there is no place for an independent Ukraine. Therefore, the "special operation" is not against the armed forces of the state, but against humanity, civilians, the younger generation and those who have just been born in bomb shelters.

If earlier the war had an understandable purpose, namely, the destruction of the military power of the state, the defeat of the army, and the coercion of the government to surrender, now the aimless destruction of cultural sites, medical facilities, maternity hospitals, and kindergartens shows the "new barbarism" of the Russian invaders, for whom EVIL has become a commonplace.

The danger of this war is that it poses an existential threat to Ukraine, calls into question our country's democratic path to the European community, destroying the "fragility of being" of every person, although it is already exposed to natural and man-made threats, epidemics and catastrophic climate change.

Inspired by the ideologues of the "Russian world", which is supposed to protect everyone who enters the Russian humanitarian space and shares imperial values, this war should be the last gasp of Russian colonial policy, which threatens all post-Soviet countries and has aggressive intentions for the entire democratic world.

Therefore, in our opinion, the socio-cultural understanding of the ideology of racism in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war, in which a difficult path to full de-occupation is to be taken, is relevant and in demand. All of the above has led to the choice of this research topic.

**Analysis of recent research and publications.** Among the few Western analysts who have devoted their research to the study of the ideology of racism, it is worth mentioning, first of all, T. Snyder, an American historian and writer, professor at Yale University, a specialist in the history of Eastern Europe, with his characterization of Russian fascism as "schizofascism". He provided a justification for the existence of the term "racism" and its content. A. Piontkovsky, Russian mathematician, journalist, and politician, believes that racism is the fascism of the Putin era. Such Russians are: M. Feygin, I. Yakovenko, G. Pavlovskiy, I. Eidman, S. Belkovskiy.

A whole range of Ukrainian analysts has now emerged among Ukrainian scholars who study the problems of racism and war. These are professors O. Kostenko, M. Pidchiachyi, O. Hryni, I. Losev, S. Grabovsky, I. Grabovska, and others. The chauvinistic, racist, xenophobic, anti-liberal features of Russian fascism and its genocidal practices are emphasized by such domestic researchers as V. Viatrovych, O. Kryvdyk, O. Kudrin, L. Yakubova, S. Datsyuk, A. Drobovych, O. Hryniv, O. Kostenko, P. Oleshchuk, and O. Romanchuk.

However, the subject field of research on the problem of racist ideology has not yet been fully formed.

**The purpose of the article** is to identify and analyze the features of racist ideology and its social manifestations in Ukrainian society.

**Formulation of the main material.** Until the twentieth century, researchers either developed practical issues of warfare or focused on understanding spiritual and moral rather than ideological problems associated with the phenomenon of war.

As an independent scientific problem, war began to be actively studied in the mid-twentieth and early twenty-first centuries by a system of sciences figuratively called "polemology". Indeed, in the twenty-first century, war, being a socially conditioned phenomenon, is undergoing significant changes. All this makes it necessary for researchers to comprehend the foundations of war as a social, political and cultural phenomenon.

Another issue of current interest to contemporary analysts is the problem of the relationship between ideology and war in terms of clarifying the role of these phenomena in society and the peculiarities of their mutual influence. The analysis of this problem is of great importance not only from the ideological but also from the methodological point of view. After all, ideology as a system of ideas, theories, and views that reflect the interests of certain social forces (states, classes, nations, etc.) makes it possible to identify the essence, causes, nature, and consequences of any war.

Soviet analysts, in particular T. Kondratkov, nevertheless believed that it was the aggressive militaristic ideology attributed to imperialism that led to war, while, as M. Tsiurupa rightly notes, militaristic ideologies are characteristic of totalitarian societies such as fascist, nationalist, hegemonic states – Russia, the DPRK, China (Tsiurupa, 2020).

For modern scientific and ideological-political analysis, first of all, we note that the term "racism" has recently appeared in Wikipedia and is defined as an ideology. And at a press conference on April 23, 2022, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in his speech that this concept would go down in history and be studied in history textbooks by our children (<https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/>).

The Verkhovna Rada Committee on Humanitarian and Information Policy proposed to introduce the term "racism" to define the ideology built in Russia, which is reflected in the military actions of the Russian army in Ukraine and the attitude of Russian society to this war. The Committee's appeal is addressed to Ukrainian scholars, journalists, political scientists, and the entire civil society to popularize and recognize the term "racism" at the national and international levels with the subsequent definition and inclusion of this term in the official terminological dictionaries of the Ukrainian language (<https://www.rada.gov.ua/news/razom/222804.html>).

It is well known that any tension grows from an elementary clash of

interests in human relations, and even more so if they arise in the coordinates of different state ideological systems. Historically, Ukraine and Russia have created fundamentally different ideologies, which is evidence of a completely opposite choice of civilizational direction.

The first type of ideology is associated with the values that have shaped the Western world since antiquity, including freedom and the establishment of legal and social institutions in partnership with international like-minded people. The second is based on the preference for passivity in civic life, and one-man leadership designed to lead the country to supremacy over the rest of the world by force. It is the second path that Russia has chosen.

If we look at the war that Russia has unleashed on the territory of Ukraine, it can be defined as a transition from the "hybrid war" unleashed since 2014, in which, according to the "Gerasimov Doctrine", the ratio of military means of force to peaceful means was 1:4, to a war "to destroy Ukrainians" (Tsyurupa, 2018).

The war was started without any significant reason for the world community, despite the worldwide recognition of human rights, the rights of any ethnic, religious group, any minority to life and decent existence, and even more so, despite the criminal punishment for any manifestation of genocide in politics (even for calls for it) as a crime against humanity. Russians use and continue the shameful practice of all traditional forms of genocide. In this case, it is Russia's desire to subjugate our country with the help of political, economic, and informational tools, support for separatism and terrorism up to acts of state terrorism, building pseudo-state entities as a hybrid ideal project of state-building, etc.

For example, a well-known Ukrainian scholar and politician O. Sych, defining the essence of racist ideology, points out that "... at the same time, culturally backward, barbaric Muscovy has historically always carried out aggressive expansion against countries that were much more advanced in cultural development. Today's ideology of racism is based on this historical experience of Muscovy. That is why the core of the ideology of racism is the preservation of cultural backwardness and the destruction of developed civilizations" (<https://www.blitz.if.ua/news/>).

The beginning of this war can be traced back to 100 years ago. It was then that the attack on our book, the Ukrainian language, the loss of the national school, etc. began. Unfortunately, there are many such cases... We should also recall Russia's desire to annex Kievan Rus, which Soviet historiography has always spoken of as a common source, a common cradle of the three fraternal peoples along the Dnipro, that is, Ukrainian, Russian, and Belarusian. Therefore, it is not surprising that Russian literature refers to the "Russian world" as a cultural and historical idea of an international and interstate community based on involvement with Russia and devotion to the Russian language and culture of the spiritual world. At the same time, the word "world" includes the meaning "the whole world" and "all people" (<https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/>).

Therefore, it is not surprising that, despite the fact that Soviet historiography has always spoken of a common cradle of the three fraternal Ukrainian, Russian and Belarusian peoples, today we have the so-called truth from Putin that there is only one nation, that is, he has even begun to refute Soviet historiography and invented his own, a new historical mythology of the

"greatness" of the USSR, the return of russian territory to 1917, that Ukrainians today do not know that Ukraine was part of the Soviet Union, and he is even beginning to refute what happened under Stalin, and he himself allegedly supports the ideology and revives the Soviet Union, and without Ukraine, this empire is no longer conceivable.

Thus, the russian imperial ideology has been formed over the centuries and is based on such traits of mentality as: arrogance, domination, psychological inclination to permissiveness and robbery, servile submission to authority in various forms, abnormal patience, religious fanaticism, etc. (Tsyurupa, 2022).

If we look at when the ideology of racism emerges in relation to a certain theory of the "russian world" and when it begins to be actively introduced in the territories and spread through the 5<sup>th</sup> column, including in Ukraine, it has been going on for 20 years.

When Putin came to power in 2000, we did not yet call his political ideology racism, because it was not defined at its core. In 2007, TIME magazine used the term "Putinism" in ideological and political terms as a brutal regime with a democratic facade. Already then, attention should have been drawn to the ruthless treatment of his own and "outsiders" in the two Chechen wars, hundreds of frozen bodies in refrigerated trucks in Rostov-on-Don, lying for years. Unconscious women were shot in the Moscow theater complex, etc.

The inhumanity and cruelty were increasing, and it is difficult to say whether it has reached its peak in the occupied territories. Back in 2012, we did not use this concept in the sense that we use it today. That is, the ideology of the "russian world" was mentioned, then we talked about Putin's authoritarianism, and today all of this has merged into a single phenomenon of racism.

What do we mean by racism today? Why is it a phenomenon of the same type as fascism, nationalism, and Stalinism? These concepts have a lot in common with totalitarianism as a political regime aimed at achieving complete (total) state control over all spheres of public and private life. This is the basic concept that underlies racism as a phenomenon.

The name "racism" was actually coined by Ukrainians. Rashism is a type of political regime, as well as a radical authoritarian anti-human ideology, characterized by a strong cult of personality, militarism, and totalitarianism designed to unite lands through hybrid wars or complete destruction.

The core of this ideology is the concept of the "russian world", which consists in the destruction of other civilizations with a highly developed culture based on animalism toward others. In other words, the "russian world" is an ideology of destroying civilizations superior to russia's and imposing its own barbarism, where there is no place for the human, only for animalism, which is reflected in the destructive war of all those who oppose totalitarianism and russia's "selfishness". According to the russian philosopher I. Ilyina: "russia is the worst, vomitously vile country in the history of the world. By the method of selection, it has bred terrible moral degenerates, in whom the very concepts of Good and Evil are turned inside out. Throughout its history, this nation has been wallowing in shit and at the same time wants to drown the whole world in it" (<https://www.facebook.com/golos.ua/>).

Therefore, we believe with certainty that the ideology of racism does not build an empire, as it believes, but in practice takes away land and kills people.

To illustrate another specific feature of racism, we should recall Vladimir

Gundyayev (Patriarch Kirill), who blessed the Russian army, which is generally impossible within the framework of religion. In racism, Russian Orthodoxy does not just bless war and murder, does not just sanctify weapons, but actually provides a basis for this ideology. Gundyayev joined the ideology of the "Russian world", which, by the way, in our opinion, is the basis of the ideology of Russian Orthodoxy, and he emphasized the concept of "catechism". Catechism is an idea that is being introduced in Russian Orthodoxy, and its representatives believe that Russia is destined to save the world from Armageddon, or decline, and this idea is being imposed on the Russian community. V. Vyatkovich also points this out in his interview: "Rashism, unlike communism or even Nazism, is combined with a state religion, in this particular case, Russian Orthodoxy. This is what distinguishes it from other ideological systems" (<https://cdvr.org.ua/>).

**Conclusions.** Therefore, it follows from the above that racism is a syncretism of Russian Nazism, Orthodoxy and psychotraumatizing nostalgia for the USSR, which has become an imperial identity. And the "Russian world" is not so much a new ideology as another modification of old imperial models. The internal political dimensions of this ideology are: suppression of all democratic rights and freedoms of citizens, imitation of the democratic process; formation of the cult of the "leader"; creation of a type of state administration characterized by corporatism, placement of exclusively "their" personnel in leading positions in the state apparatus and big business; neglect of economic and social interests of the vast majority of the population in the name of "Russia's greatness"; use of the security forces to persecute the opposition; introduction of a system of state propaganda.

In foreign policy, the characteristic features of "Rashism" are the following: total violation, abuse and manipulation of international law; committing acts of armed aggression, terrorism, genocide and other crimes against humanity; direct interference in the internal affairs of other countries; use of new methods of warfare, in particular, cyber attacks; protection of authoritarian regimes in the world; nuclear terrorism, etc.

Thus, based on this analysis, we can define racism as the embodiment of racist, xenophobic, chauvinistic, populist ideology, which, despite its obvious anti-democratic nature, is supported by the majority of the Russian population and is implemented in Russia's aggressive and criminal foreign policy. Therefore, in our opinion, it should be condemned as a hateful ideology and practice.

*Conflict of Interest and other Ethics Statements*

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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### РАШИСТСЬКА ІДЕОЛОГІЯ В КОНТЕКСТІ РОСІЙСЬКО-УКРАЇНСЬКОЇ ВІЙНИ

**Анотація.** У статті здійснено спробу соціокультурного осмислення ідеології рашизму в умовах російсько-української війни. Саме поняття «рашизм» появилось в Україні зовсім нещодавно й визначається, згідно Вікіпедії, як ідеологія. Виявлено, що серцевиною цієї ідеології стала концепція «русского міра», що полягає у знищенні інших цивілізацій з високо розвинутою культурою, яка ґрунтується на зверхності стосовно інших. Тобто «русській мір» – це ідеологія руйнації цивілізацій вищих за російську і нав'язування свого варварства, де немає місця людському, що відображається в нищівній війні всіх, хто проти тоталітаризму росії.

Встановлено, що ця російська імперська ідеологія формувалася протягом століть і має своїм підґрунтям такі риси ментальності, як: зверхність, домінування, психологічний нахил до всюдозволеності й грабіжництва, раболіпне підкорення перед владою у різноманітних формах, аномальна терплячість, релігійний фанатизм тощо. З'ясовано, що Комітет Верховної Ради України з питань гуманітарної та інформаційної політики запропонував ввести термін «рашизм» для загального визначення ідеології, вибудованої в росії, що відображається в військових діях російської армії в Україні та ставленні російського суспільства до цієї війни. Звернення Комітету адресовано до українських науковців, журналістів, політологів, усього громадянського суспільства щодо популяризації та визнання терміну «рашизм» на національному та міжнародному рівнях з подальшим визначенням і внесенням цього терміну до офіційних термінологічних словників української мови.

Визначено, що рашизм – це різновид політичного режиму, а також радикальна авторитарна антилюдяна ідеологія, характерними ознаками якої є сильний культ особи, мілітаризм, тоталітаризм, призначений для об'єднання земель через проведення гібридних війн або повної руйнації. Це – уособлення расистської, ксенофобської, шовіністичної, популістської ідеології, що, попри свій очевидний антидемократизм, підтримується більшістю російського населення і реалізується в агресивній та злочинній зовнішньополітичній діяльності росії. В понятті «рашизм» є багато чого спільного з тоталітаризмом як політичним режимом, спрямованим на досягнення цілковитого контролю держави над усіма сферами суспільного та приватного життя. Саме це й є основним концептом, який лежить в основі рашизму як феномену.

**Ключові слова:** ідеологія, рашизм, війна, «русській мір».

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