

## NEO-ORWELLISM AS A THREAT TO GLOBAL DEMOCRACY

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### Summary

The article highlights the problem of “neo-Orwellism” as a new form of dictatorship of state power over man. It is emphasized that neo-Orwellism is a system of methods, ways, means, etc., which are used by modern totalitarian power to subjugate a person and dominate him. Especially dangerous for the democratic world is Putinism, which has carried out large-scale aggression against sovereign Ukraine, which has chosen a democratic path of development, and which now threatens aggression against the Baltic states, other sovereign EU states, Moldova, Georgia, etc. It is argued that Putinism, as a regime repressive against a person and a people, has its origins in the historical past of Russia, the imperial essence of which has been preserved to this day.

It is emphasized that Putinists violate all international norms and principles, use especially cruel methods and ways to subjugate people: from fear and mass murder to nuclear blackmail. The Moscow Nazis are especially successful in using information bombing, myth-making, ignorance as a tool of subjugation, double thinking, language, etc.

It is found that neo-Orwellism in the form of Putinism has spread very intensively in European countries and the United States. In these countries, a significant part of the population lives with private interest, indifferent to the fate of democracy and its values, partly unable to deeply understand modern international and domestic problems, therefore they are a good basis for the spread of neo-Orwellism.

**Key words:** neo-Orwellism, ruscism, totalitarianism, dictatorship, democracy, human rights, fear, blackmail, myth-making, double thinking.

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### 1. Introduction

The relevance of the topic should not cause much doubt, at least among those of our contemporaries who are familiar with the work of George Orwell “1984” and its leading ideas. Recent events related to the Russian-Ukrainian war and related processes clearly show that the threat of world dictatorship, autocracy, that is, anti-democracy is not far-fetched, but real. Many famous people of our time, including Enn Epplbaum (*Applebaum, 2023*), Bernar-Anry Levi (*Levie, 2022*), Timothy Snyder (*Snyder, 2023*), Francis Fukuyama (*Fukuyama, 2022*), M. Ryabchuk (*Ryabchuk, 2022*), O. Zhupansky (*Zhupansky, 2023*) etc. They say and write that processes are taking place on a global scale that show that world democracy is losing ground, the space for its spread is narrowing and curtailing. The established idea that lulled many of our contemporaries, the idea of the inevitable progress of the democratic world, its victory over the world of autocracy and anti-democracy, is going bankrupt.

The last 5–6 decades of relative peace in the world have lulled the vigilance of a number of world leaders and just thinking people who have forgotten that the world is developing

unevenly, that it can not only progress, but also regress, that its development is unstable, uncertain and unpredictable, and that this development can be characterized by such bifurcations, which can result in irreversible, dangerous, completely uncontrollable processes not just in any one area. and in general in human existence. UJ. Orwell's protagonist Winston somewhere secretly believes that the proles, that is, silent, ignorant, inert people, will awaken and consciously (*Orwell, 2023*). overcome the totalitarian social system. But, it turns out, the proles have never been interested in this problem, they are not able to think of it.

Once upon a time, Soviet and Chinese communism demonstrated impressive possibilities for the revival of the Eastern despotic socio-cultural system on the basis of industrial production, etc. The experience of the fascist regimes in Germany and Italy made it possible to see that, under certain conditions, societies that asserted the Western path of development could lose immunity against the temptation of totalitarianism. Today, the Chinese and Putin regimes are also demonstrating impressive opportunities for the revival of the same Eastern despotic socio-cultural system on the basis of post-industrial production (*Zhupansky, 2023*), (*Applebaum, 2023*), (*Levie, 2022*).

It seems that the proles of our time, whether in China, or Belarus, or Iran, or in the United States, etc., being preoccupied with their private lives, also do not think much about making the current world more democratic and just. There are quite a lot of problems in today's world, and not only in Asia, but also in America, European countries, not to mention African ones, which all depend on those who will give them something to survive. That is, the current dictatorships and autocracies have a considerable base for increasing neo-Orwellization in order to weaken democracy and their world dominance.

## **2. The essence of neo-Orwellism and the peculiarities of its implementation in Ukraine and Europe**

Neo-Orwellism is modern Orwellism, that is, the dictatorship of power over man, which is exercised in all possible ways and means. In the 1990s, when the totalitarian USSR with its repressions and extermination of tens of millions of people and nations went down in history, it seemed that Orwellism in Europe was impossible, to say the least. But it turned out to be very tenacious due to a number of factors, it was revived, restored and well spread in the modern world. If in the past the government set itself the goal of streamlining social relations, improving them – history knows the names of many reformers, then Orwellism and now neo-Orwellism do not have such a goal. Neo-Orwellism as a mode of autocracy has its own peculiarities of manifestation in different countries, but its essence is the same – the elevation of power over man and manipulation of man for the sake of assertion, spread in space and continuation of power in time.

In his work, George Orwell has clearly shown that the purpose of power is power itself (*Orwell, 2023*). And, in order for it to live, assert, and spread, all possible ways and means are suitable, including brute physical force, torture and torture, the destruction of people and entire nations. Neo-Orwellism, as a misanthropic ideology and practice, does not disdain any means. The hybrid war against modern man was not started by the authorities today and it continues, gaining momentum. One of Orwell's characters, O'Brien, figuratively called power a shoe that forever crushes the human face. To press forever is the essence of power. Modern society is very mechanistic, despiritualized as a result of the rapid development of science and the rationalization of human existence (*Zhupansky, 2023*). Neo-Orwellism is an intensification

of this mechanism and despiritualization, because it allows the authorities, regardless of where exactly, to spread their influence on people, to turn them into puppets.

And this is done in various ways – from the use of outright violence, brute physical force, torture, torture, etc., as Putin's Russia is doing now, to a variety of all kinds of other non-violent means and methods. Ideological means are used especially successfully today. Myths are successfully used about: “Great Russia” and its “great culture”, “Great Russian army”, which is, as it were, “the second army of the world”, “great the Russian language”, along with others, apparently small and insignificant.

Dontsov once wrote about “Ukrainian hermaphroditism”, about this duality of the Ukrainian mentality, the tossing and turning of such a dual-minded, Russified Ukrainian person between Ukraine and Russia, and noted that this greatly interferes with the assertion of the national identity of both the people and individuals. This duality became a factor in the weakness of the national liberation movement (*Dontsov, 2005*).

The permeation of Ukrainian politics, culture, and science with Russophilism lasted for centuries, which led to the political, economic and cultural dominance of the Russian government in Ukraine, the continuation of the colonial history of Ukrainians up to the present time (*Bratasyuk, 2019*). After the collapse of the USSR and the proclamation of Ukrainian independence, the formation of the Russian Federation, Russian ideological violence continued and was accompanied by murders of leading Ukrainian figures, repressions against the population, ecocide, linguocide, etc. (*Ryabchuk, 2022*), (*Zaharchenko, 2019*).

The myths created in the Kremlin have proven to be surprisingly tenacious and capable of spreading. The social base for this ideological bleble was quite extensive – the type of “red man” (S. Aleksievich) numbered millions of citizens who had significant experience of living in a totalitarian state, did not know how to live in conditions of freedom, they had a destroyed instinct of self-preservation, because they used to live in eternal fear, they were not ready to take care of themselves, because they were used to the fact that all the necessary benefits of life are “provided” by the state. They were nostalgic for the USSR, did not perceive Ukraine as an independent state, sought the revival of socialism, so they made a political choice in favor of pro-Russian forces.

These Russified proles were not interested in the future of Ukraine, their children, they lived in the moment, they cared only about their own private interests. It was easy to manipulate them – Soviet education did not teach them to think, to see the depth of problems. These people did not identify themselves as Ukrainians, so the “Russian world”, relying on them, flourished in post-totalitarian Ukraine. “Fraternal Russia” beautifully demonstrated its dominant role in all spheres of Ukrainian life, humiliating everything Ukrainian, displacing it in various directions. There was so much Russified Ukraine in the 1990s and 2000s that it all ended with two Maidans, which weakened, but did not eradicate the “Russian world” on our territory. And only now, with the full-scale invasion and the selfless bloody struggle of Ukrainians for their freedom, we cherish the hope for the final liberation (*Bratasyuk, 2019*), (*Bratasyuk, Bratasyuk V., Hryshchuk, 2022*).

Russian neo-Orwellism is special in comparison with neo-Orwellism, for example, in Western countries. It is infinitely cruel, ruthless, no less than the Soviet totalitarian, it is bloody, frankly misanthropic. He has no brakes, Putin disregards all kinds of international law, he is not stopped even by his own human sacrifices, of which there are now hundreds of thousands and of which there are more and more. He cynically deceives his proles in today's Russia with the myth of the “special military operation”, which is aimed at exterminating “Nazis and Banderites” in Ukraine. He disseminates his “doctrine” about Ukraine which “Lenin invented” and which is

“an error on the political map of the world.” And, since Ukraine is an accident, it should not exist, it should be destroyed as a sovereign state, and thereby return the “primordial Russian lands” to the Kremlin. This dope pours from all channels and television screens, it permeates all Russian politics, culture, science, etc. And, since the Russian “soviet” never really said goodbye to the USSR, it was not difficult to turn it into Putin's puppets, into a swamp that rots deeper and deeper, poisoning everything around.

The Kremlin's fascists have done a good job trying to spread the ideas of the “Russian world” in Europe and in the world as a whole. The Kremlin has invested hundreds of billions of dollars in the European economy, and Russian artists, politicians, and publicists have long since become “one of their own” there. They convinced Europe that Russia is a “safe country” and that it is necessary to be friends with it, to trade, to cooperate, and so on. Europeans have internalized this myth so well that they have completely lost their sense of self-preservation, they have neglected this instinct. Now, as the newspaper “Bild” writes in an article about the Kremlin's strategy in terms of attacking European countries in the next decade, the German government should immediately focus on explaining and mobilizing German citizens in terms of defense and defense, because the country's population, hypnotized by material well-being and ideological lulling, turned out to be completely unprepared to defend itself in the event of Moscow's aggression. The government of Sweden urged the population, postponing the preoccupation with private daily affairs, to immediately start taking care of security, since time is short, some 6–8 years. These examples confirm the opinion expressed not so long ago by O. Zabuzhko that Russia had conquered Europe, that Europe had turned out to be completely Russified (*Zabuzhko, 2022*).

This Russification of Europe has led to a large degree of inattention to Ukraine, which until recently Europeans did not know at all, except perhaps for total Ukrainian corruption. For the sake of fairness, it should be noted that Ukrainian political and cultural diplomacy has completely failed this ideological work. Now Ukrainians need to make every effort to remedy this situation, to overcome this Moscow's neo-Orwellism.

### **3. Methods and tools for the spread of neo-Orwellism in the modern world**

Neo-Orwellism is spreading to other Western countries and the EU (*Zabuzhko, 2022*). In the United States, presidential candidate Donald Trump, known for his ties with Vladimir Putin, is spreading the myth of the need to revive “Greater America”, which should be the number one state in the world, to dictate to others how to live, because under the current President it seems to have lost its position as such a superpower. He won the presidential election last term with this myth because the American pros supported his ideas of isolating the country from the rest of the world, withdrawing it from a number of international treaties, building a wall on the border with Mexico, and so on. America, supposedly, should think only about Americans, the rest of the world should not interest it. The fate of world democracy is also, it seems, a secondary matter. Analysts warn that Donald Trump, with his populism, which appeals to unthinking, short-sighted Americans, could destroy the United States as a state that is a stronghold of democracy in the world.

Today's world is divided, unfriendly (*Zhupansky, 2023*), (*Snyder, 2023*), as we see in the example of different reactions of different states to Russian aggression. This disunity fuels totalitarian regimes and weakens the democratic camp. Democratic countries need to overcome it, not strengthen it, so D. Trump's coming to power again is unlikely to be positive in this regard.

At present, the problem of determining a system of spiritual and ethical values acceptable to all mankind remains unresolved, without which there is a real possibility of restoring totalitarian regimes and global wars.

The myth of “Greater Hungary”, which should include part of Ukrainian territory on the map, is spread by Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán. He is a great sympathizer of Putin, so he prevents Ukraine from overcoming racist aggression in every possible way. His imperial thinking finds, unfortunately, support among part of the country's population. Viktor Orbán spreads the myth among his fellow citizens and European politicians that Russia is invincible, and Ukraine will lose the war in any case. Putin's cheap gas and other handouts from the Kremlin turned out to be more important for V. Orbán and his supporters than European values. When leaders like Viktor Orbán appear in an EU country, if they can freely disseminate their racist views, it is a good indication that neo-Orwellism is real and effective.

In the last parliamentary elections, voters in Slovakia also preferred a pro-Moscow political force led by Fico, who is now acting in tandem with V. Orbán against Ukraine. Left-wing forces won the elections in Bulgaria. These examples eloquently testify to the fact that in the EU countries, European values are leveled by private group interest, unfortunately. The disunity of the European and world community, the isolation of Ukraine is neo-Orwellism, what the Kremlin really needs is its tactics.

He bribes, blackmails, deceives, threatens, and this, unfortunately, finds support in European countries, and not only among the authorities, but also among the population. The blockade of borders by Polish, Slovak, Romanian farmers is nothing more than another manifestation of neo-Orwellism. These farmers do not care that Ukraine is a country at war, that there is a brutal bloodshed, that hundreds of Ukrainians die every day defending European values, being in fact the human shield of Europe, protecting them, these farmers, their families. The newly elected Prime Minister of Poland D. Tusk was right to say that as long as Ukrainians are fighting racism, Poland is safe. The same was said by President of Poland A. Duda at the celebration of the anniversary of the creation of the Polish army in 2023. He stressed that if someone does not understand this, then they do not understand anything at all. However, as we can see, many Poles involved in the blockade of the borders do not understand this or do not want to understand it.

The disunity of people, their preoccupation only with their own private and indifference to the universal, universal – this is neo-Orwellism, which in our case is needed by the Moscow authorities and their friends to carry out their plans.

Putin provoked a crisis in the Middle East by pushing the Houthis to attack Israel. The Arab world, joining the Houthisid, opposed Israel, the United States and because it will be weaker and easier to conquer.

In addition to myths, fear is used as a tool of autocracy. “Now you're starting to see what kind of world we're creating? It is the complete opposite of those stupid hedonistic formations that the ancient reformers imagined. A world of fear, betrayal and torture, a world where you crush people and where they crush you, a world that will become not less, but MORE merciless – this is how we see the way of its improvement. Progress in our world will mean progress towards more pain /.../ Our civilization is based on hate.. In our world there will be no other emotions than fear, rage, triumph and self-deprecation. We will destroy everything else – everything. We have already begun to destroy the usual way of thinking...” – this is how O'Brien tells Winston about the ways of creating a new world (*Orwell, 2023*). This was done in the totalitarian era by the omnipresent KGB, and this is what Putinists are trying to do today in the occupied territories of Ukraine, in Belarus, in Russia, and beyond.



The axis of evil Tehran – Pyongyang – Moscow dreams of world domination, and for this it is necessary to overcome the unity of the modern world, especially the democratic one. Anything that creates fear is acceptable: wars large and small, blackmail by Russian attack on NATO countries, missiles, mass murders, bullying, humiliation, kidnapping of Ukrainian children, twisted distorted logic, etc., all the way up to nuclear blackmail. With the help of fear, they paralyze the will of states and people, their ability to resist, to protest, to fight. And this tactic has its consequences. For example, it was precisely because of the collective West's fear of Putin's nuclear blackmail that the Ukrainians did not receive the appropriate amount of weapons in the summer of 2023 and lost the chance of a successful counteroffensive against the Russians. The same can be said about the USA, which, out of fear of the disintegration of Russia, trying to prevent this disintegration, significantly delayed the supply of weapons, slowing down the Ukrainian offensive against the enemy. And the consequence of the prolongation of military operations is the death of thousands of people, which could not have happened if it were not for the fear that Moscow managed to spread.

It is impossible not to remember communist China, where the violation of human rights is total, where fear of the authorities, suspicion and espionage are the norm of life.

Unfortunately, the Ukrainian government also demonstrates from time to time that it does not mind violating people's rights, departing from the principles and values of democracy (*Elnikova, 2015*), (*Sokolenko, 2013*), (*Pilgun, Roschuk, 2012*), (*Bratasyuk, Bratasyuk, Hryshchuk, 2022*), (*Bratasiuk, Yaremko, 2023*), (*Golovaty, 2016*), Recent events related to the persecution of journalists from the Bigus.ua channel, journalist Yu. Nikolov, businessman Mazepa, intelligence officer R. Chervinskyi, etc. for their statements against the authorities eloquently testify to this. The world mass media spoke very critically about these actions of the Ukrainian authorities. But the aggressive-obedient majority in the world chooses not democratic values, but their pragmatic interest, indifferent and inert, it contributes to the spread of dictatorships and the collapse of world democracy. And there are more than 80% of such people in different countries in different periods, unfortunately (*Zhupansky, 2023*). In Orwell's work, the government cultivates people's mistrust of each other, disunity, loneliness, spreads fear, using violence with the help of the slogan "Ignorance is strength!" (*Orwell, 2023*). This can be observed in a number of modern countries. The myth-making of the current autocratic regimes, which worked and continues to work against democracy, was mentioned above. The West, thanks to the myth of a democratic and humanistic Russia, did not perceive Russia as a threat at all, as an imperialist state dangerous for itself. Today, it would be naive to doubt that Russia is an empire, albeit a medieval one. This is an empire, predatory, aggressive, merciless, which seeks to spread itself to all corners of the world by means of violence.

In addition to myths, modern autocracy makes good use of doublethink as a tool to control people's minds, to manipulate them. When a person does not have a clear position, it is much easier to manipulate him than when this clarity is present in a person's mind (*Orwell, 2023*), (*Bratasyuk, 2019*), (*Ozhohan, Derevianko, Karchevska, Pavlova, Pashyna, 2023*), (*Houghton, Ensaios, 2018*), (*Waite, 2015*). Double thinking is well used by the Putin regime. Everyone knows the narrative about a brotherly Ukraine, a younger sister, about the friendship of three peoples, and now, in contrast to it, it is claimed that Ukrainians are Nazis and Bandera people, an enemy people who must disappear from the world map. And the mission of the Putin regime is to destroy Ukrainians as a nation. They got themselves confused in this double thinking: Putin's main ideologue Simonyan agreed that Ukrainians are the enemy, they must be destroyed, but it is impossible to count how many people in Kyiv, or Odesa, or even in Lviv keep the Russian tricolor under their pillow or in their arms. So with whom to fight?

Not long ago, Russia positioned itself as a fighter for peace throughout the world, declared war an evil, and very recently we hear from racist leaders that only war against Ukrainians and not only, but also against the Baltic nations, Poles, Finns, etc. is a necessity for Russians. because they need to return their “originally Russian lands”. “War is peace!” because, having destroyed the “Ukrainian Nazis”, the Russians will be able to live happily.

A person with a split consciousness, after a little thought, can believe in the second statement and send a son or husband to the front to return “originally Russian lands”. In the same way, thousands of people in today's Europe choose what to believe: is Russia an enemy, an empire, a threat to Europeans, or does it really need to restore historical justice? – That's why there are protests in European cities against the provision of weapons to Ukraine.

Or: Ukrainians are victims of aggression, they need to be helped to defend themselves and fight. And right there: Ukrainians are a threat to European manufacturers, it is necessary to block their access to the European market, in particular, Polish or Hungarian, Bulgarian or Slovak. Recent events prove that double thinking is an effective means of influencing the masses. Doublethink is not fiction, it is our reality, it is a means of satisfying someone's ambitions. This is a means of creating ignorance among the general public about the real state of affairs. It is especially dangerous today, because the Internet and social networks greatly contribute to the information bombardment of the population in various countries. Many low-quality shows, entertainment channels, pseudo-intellectual programs, etc. are swallowed by a person of the excessive consumer type.

Various means of information are very intensively used to manipulate people's consciousness in modern Ukraine as well. Ukrainian television is filled with low quality programs. Something like “Kvartal-95” or “Diesel – Show” is swallowed by our TV viewers every day. The whole country is fed up with the monotonous “Single Marathon”, but the authorities continue to finance this project because someone is interested in receiving this very considerable amount of money.

In one interview, the Ukrainian writer O. Zabuzhko noted that, as her Polish writer colleagues claim, Polish television has not aired deeply intellectual programs with the participation of famous Polish writers and writers for a long time, unfortunately. This also applies to other European countries (*Zabuzhko, 2022*). Of course, such a state of affairs dulls people, produces mass ignorance of the real state of affairs.

#### 4. Conclusions

All of the above allows us to draw a number of conclusions, namely:

– modern events in the world, especially Russia's aggression against sovereign Ukraine, the war in the Middle East, the activation of dictatorial regimes testify that the fate of world democracy is in danger and the consolidation of all democratic nations and their governments is necessary for its protection;

– Neo-Orwellism is modern Orwellism, that is, the dictatorship of power over a person, which is carried out by all possible ways and means. Neo-Orwellianism, as a mode of existence of autocracy, has its own characteristics of manifestation in different countries, but its essence is the same – exaltation of power over man and manipulation of man for the sake of assertion, spread in space and continuation of power in time;

– the goal of power is power itself, all means and methods are suitable for its strengthening and continuation over time: from ideological bombing to unlimited brutal violence and nuclear blackmail;

– in modern Ukraine, the social base for the spread of neo-Orwellianism became supporters of the “Russian world”, i.e. the united Ukrainian government, united Ukrainians and ethnic Russians, whose number in the state was quite significant, which was greatly facilitated by the former Soviet totalitarian regime;

– Neo-Orwellism spread very intensively and is spreading in European countries and the USA. Current Europe is very effectively “processed” by the Moscow regime, as well as American countries, especially the USA. In these countries, a large part of the population lives closed in their private world, taken over by private interest, indifferent to the fate of democracy and its values, partly unable to deeply understand modern international and domestic problems, therefore it is a good basis for the spread of neo-Orwellianism;

– particularly effective means of spreading neo-Orwellism in the modern world are the use of: violence, intimidation, separation of people and nations, use of double thinking, information bombardment, language, ignorance as a way of manipulating people's consciousness, etc. In the modern world, Putin's regime is the most expressive embodiment of neo-Orwellianism.

Neo-Orwellianism as a mode of power domination over man is a global problem of our time, as it poses a real threat to democratic values and a democratic way of life. All thinking people and their governments must now consolidate their efforts to overcome this extremely dangerous global problem of the modern world.

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