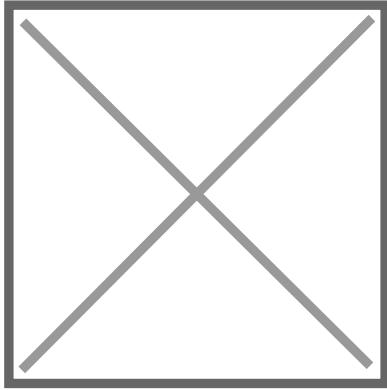




Breaking News: In 2022, White Men Keep Playing Chess with the World

Description

I remember learning about imperialism and colonialism in my high school History classes.

My teacher was one of my favorites; she would often ask us to imagine ourselves at a certain period of history, thinking about what we would have done. Or maybe that's how I remember it because we bonded over the fact that during WWII, her and I wouldn't have had a choice at all. Back then, I had so many feelings about History, especially when learning about the Second World War and the Cold War. I was horrified — of course, partly because I would have been part of the most vulnerable ones to hide, partly because I couldn't imagine how a single human being could have so much power over others. Why couldn't we stop the killing of so many people sooner? Why did it have to start to begin with? Wasn't it when we started counting dollars spent besides lives lost? Wasn't the 20th century the start of a new era, where we started realizing how costly wars were?

Post World War II was also a time in History when people all over the world revolted against imperialist powers. Colonial rule was ending; countries that had been occupied were becoming independent again. During my classes, I learned about what colonizers had left to those people around the world: useful languages and modernization. It was good. My own passport privilege is a result of colonization. We didn't really learn about the destructive part of it all, the loss of culture, the abandonment after it. Now countries were free again, and that was enough.

At the time, I don't think I felt as heartbroken to hear about the lives and cultures of people destroyed in the name of power as I have been over the past few years learning about Indigenous peoples. Back then, I was so relieved that I wasn't living at that time in History, and that we had moved forward so much. There were no threats of nuclear bombs looming over us and people all over the world had recovered their right to — self-determine, — as stated in the Charter of the United Nations (ironically signed by the Soviet Union, then replaced by Russia as a permanent member of the Security Council! I mean, what the actual fuck? Yes, yes, Ely-from-the present questioned what's in this bracket).

Today, every day I wake up feeling like I'm in my History class again. NATO shows up in the news, and the Western world is meeting to think about what the next best move will be. Like a game of chess.

What has changed though is that, over the past few years, I have said goodbye to the naive high school me who was taught History from a White people's perspective. Colonialism and imperialism have left marks on our world only privileged White people think do not exist anymore. Worst of all, we still live in a system where it is possible for one single person, one single White man, to change the destiny of millions of others and alter the world order. Where one single White man can decide he will destroy everything if he can't have what he wants.

default watermark

One of the reasons this war is hitting hard for me is because Ukraine was the first country I visited on my summer I was 18, I packed my backpack and went to visit the capital city and stayed in Poltava to volunteer

remember landing in Kyiv like it was yesterday. It had a big impact on me, as any trip will during those for is also a European war, happening mostly to White people, and to people I know.

We still live in a world where White men can throw tantrums and play power games that kill, wipe out entire villages from the map, and destroy cultures. And they still use the same old, tired narrative: I have come to save you. Only I can save you. **It's White mansplaining at world level.** I guess what's changed now is that public opinion sees it's wrong. People drive to the borders and give openly: their time, their money for food and blankets, their #StandWithUkraine hashtags. Right now everyone seems to finally see how awful it must be to stand in the cold with your kids in your arms, waiting to get to safety, your men left to fight.

This has to be only the beginning. This is only where we continue to wake up to everything that is wrong in the world, and this is how we gather and commit to breaking the system. If we truly live in the modern world, we must demand that every single being on this planet live in safety and free to be who they are. This is where we tap into our human hearts to see the horrors people today and for the past centuries have been experiencing. This is where we start caring with our hearts, not just intellectually understanding the powers at play. This is where we start looking for diversity in our unity, where we stop asking each other to fit in molds no one likes. This is where we stand with Ukrainians today and as long as it is needed. This is where we stand with Black lives and fight against animal cruelty and defend trans people. This is where we keep using our hashtags for Syrians and Afghans and every refugee of war on this planet.

In 2022, they are still all the same fight. They're about self-determination and the right for every human being to have a decent, happy, free life. War is NOT the problem but a symptom of a broken system that relies on dangerous power balance, just like the climate crisis is a symptom of a world where productivity is the compass that steers our world in the name of economic growth. I can't believe we're still here. Or can I?

As we hope that our politicians (at the top of a world that signed a Charter for Human Rights no one actually respects) put an end to this nightmare of a war in Ukraine now, let's remember that peace is not what we're looking for. Revolution is what we need, and with revolution and system change, peace must be an inherent part of our natural equilibrium. Don't ask me how to do this, let's roll up our sleeves and do it together. At the risk of sounding like I have spent too much time watching the Hunger Games, this is where we, together, keep remembering who the real enemy is.

Imperialism and colonialism in 2022, welcome to the fucking new chapter. How will we decide it should end this time?

Category

1. Social Responsibility

Tags

1. break the system
2. colonialism
3. decolonize
4. imperialism
5. ukraine war

Date Created

March 9, 2022

Author

elytheglobetrotter

default watermark