On the Uses of Decolonial History for Life[1]

Volodymyr Sklokin
Ukrainian Catholic University
sklokin@ucu.edu.ua

Abstract:
This essay provides arguments in favor of decolonizing the field of Russian and East European Studies, focusing on the eighteenth-century history of Ukrainian-Russian relations. It envisages two directions for decolonization: overcoming the traditional narrative of Russian history and rethinking the basic categories we use to tell the history of the Russian Empire. It argues that we should reconsider a one-sided view of empire as an embodiment of the politics of difference and pay more attention to the early modern policies of acculturation and assimilation that took the form of russification in the Russian Empire. It also emphasizes the need to overcome reductionism, typical of traditional national history. The history of the Ukrainian-Russian encounter in the early modern period cannot be presented as a black-and-white narrative of Russian subjugation and repression and Ukrainian resistance. It was a more complex story that also included a dimension of cultural entanglement with strong mutual influences.

Keywords: *decolonization debate, eighteenth-century history, Ukrainian-Russian encounter, politics of difference, russification, cultural entanglement*

In the opening paragraph of his *On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life*, Friedrich Nietzsche writes: "We need it [history], that is to say, for the sake of life and action, not so as to turn comfortably away from life and action, let alone for the purpose of extenuating the self-seeking life and the base and cowardly action."[2] In wartime Ukraine, in the third year of Russia's brutal full-scale invasion, these lines resonate; it is impossible to perceive history exclusively in a contemplative mode. The dominant feeling is that history, which was used as a pretext and excuse for this unjust war, cannot stay neutral or idle. It should be put to positive use to correct the wrongs and injustices of the past.

From this perspective, I can only welcome the decisions of the journal's editorial board to change its title to the abridged *Vivliofika* and of the *Eighteenth-Century Russian Studies Association* to add the word "empire" to its name. They remove some of the ambiguities inherent in using the word "Russia" in historical writing without additional clarifications.

These decisions should be considered in the context of the decolonization debate that followed Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Thus, they can be seen as a practical step and a response of the professional community to the manipulation of history by Putin in his justification of the war against Ukraine.

Some commentators have already rightly pointed out that consistent decolonization of our field should entail at least two components: overcoming the traditional narrative or so-

[1] This essay was written with the support of the visiting fellowship at the Research-Training Group "Empires" at the Freiburg University in June-July 2024 and the VUIAS/OSUN visiting fellowship at the Institute for Advanced Studies, Central European University (Budapest) in October-November 2024. Some of the ideas developed in the essay were presented at the joint colloquium of the Research-Training Group "Empires" and the Department of Modern East European History at the University of Freiburg on July 2, 2024. I am grateful to the colloquium participants, especially Dietmar Neutatz, Michel Abeßer, and Iannis Carras, for the critical and stimulating comments. Special thanks go to Ostap Sereda, who read the draft version and suggested several ways to improve the text.

[2] Friedrich Nietzsche, "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life," in Friedrich Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditations*, ed. Daniel Breazeale, trans. R. G. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 59.

called "Great Scheme" of Russian history and rethinking the basic categories, such as empire, nation-state, colonialism, imperialism, and Eurasia, that we use to tell the history of the Russian Empire and the USSR.[3] In what follows, I will reflect on what this rethinking might mean for the history of the "long" eighteenth century from the perspective of the Ukrainian-Russian historical encounter.

***

The imperial turn of the 1990s and 2000s contributed to the rethinking and decentering of teaching and studying the history of the Russian Empire. It provided new theoretical impulses and reinvigorated the field. However, despite the apparent advances, one can also observe the lingering impact of the old imperial narratives in contemporary Russian and some segments of Western historical writing.

The imperial knowledge created in the imperial capitals since the early eighteenth century proved effective and attractive and became deeply internalized in academic and non-academic circles in the West. It privileged the "Great Russian" scheme of East European and Eurasian history and marginalized or silenced other perspectives, making other national and regional communities the objects rather than the subjects of history[4].

An important lesson from the ongoing decolonization debate is that we must be cautious with the terms we use to conceptualize the past reality. Let me give just a few examples. The first deals with military history and the Russian Empire's expansion in the south during the "long" eighteenth century. As Clare Griffin rightly underscores, the term "Russo-Turkish wars," widely used to refer to the main episodes of this process, illuminates as much as it hides.[5] It presents imperial powers as the only actors with agency and relegates the Hetmanate and the Crimean Khanate to the objects of this great power confrontation. In reality, the Hetmanate and the Crimean Khanate were also subjects who had their intentions and agency in most of these wars. In the case of the war of 1676-1681, two Cossack Hetmanates – right-bank and left-bank – participated in the warfare and had their competing goals and alliances.[6]

My second example deals with intellectual history. In her recent contribution to the decolonization debate, Yuliya Ilchuk argued that in the case of studies of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, we need to stop treating "Russian culture" as primarily

[3] Andriy Zayarnyuk, "Historians as Enablers? Historiography, Imperialism, and the Legitimization of Russian Aggression," *East/West: Journal of Ukrainian Studies* 9:2 (2022): 191-212; Marina Mogilner, "There Can Be No 'Vne'," *Ab Imperio* 22:4 (2021): 24-26; Martin Schulze Wessel, "The Concept of Empire and German *Sonderwege* in the Historical Debate about Ukraine," *Ab Imperio* 23:1 (2022): 91-100.

[4] Mykola Ryabchuk, "The Toxic Spell of Imperial Knowledge," *Desk Russie* (May 27, 2023), accessed Nov. 5, 2024, (https://desk-russie.info/2023/05/27/the-toxic-spell-of-imperial-knowledge.html; Juliet Johnson, "Decentering Russia: Challenges and Opportunities," *ASEEES NewsNet*, 64:1 (January 2024): 3-8; Susan Smith-Peter, Sean Pollock, "How the Field was Colonized: Russian History's Ukrainian Blind Spot," *Russian History* 50 (2023): 145–156.

[5] Griffin, "Studying War in a Time of War: Russian Imperialism in the Seventeenth and Twenty-First Centuries," *Russian History* 50 (2023): 243-259.

[6] Griffin, "Studying War," 245-246.

an ethnolinguistic phenomenon and instead approach it as a transnational enterprise.[7] During this period, it was created by people of various ethnic backgrounds, and the "fact that they chose to write in the imperial language should not serve as the basis of their cultural citizenship." As possible alternatives, Ilchuk proposes the terms "Russian-language literature of the empire" and "Russophone literature."[8]

I find Ilchuk's call timely and relevant. After 1991, the situation changed compared to imperial and Soviet times, when most Ukrainian or Belarusian intellectuals of the early modern period were designated as Russians, and their contribution to intellectual life was treated as a part of the Russian cultural canon. However, adding ethnic affiliations, such as Ukrainian, Belarusian, German, or Moldavian, does not automatically solve the problem of defining the character of the broader cultural/intellectual phenomena we study. What culture, literature, or philosophy did they contribute to? Ukrainian ethnolinguistic, Russian ethnolinguistic, imperial, transnational, regional, or several of them simultaneously?

Some scholars reacted negatively to the renationalization of the former imperial cultural space in the historical writing of the post-Soviet period. For instance, the authors of a recent survey of the history of eighteenth-century philosophy in the Russian Empire write about the "deplorable consequences of wars for historical legacy, when works of all authors of non-Russian ethnic background are moved beyond the sphere of studies of Russian philosophy, as well as authors who were not Russian thinkers being characterized as such."[9] They then argue that the discourse of nationalism belongs to the later age of nineteenth-century Romanticism and call for a delicate attitude to the "intellectual legacy of Russian multiethnic culture." Their solution is not to use ethnic terminology in writing a history of philosophy.[10]

This approach seems problematic both from the general perspective of writing an intellectual history and from a more specific perspective of writing the history of the Russian Empire. Regarding the first dimension, unlike the preceding notion of the history of ideas, the new intellectual history emphasizes the role of various contexts in which ideas are created, developed, and received. So, it is unclear why we should disregard ethnic or cultural background that might influence the ideas of the intellectuals we study.

When we move to writing an intellectual history of the eighteenth-century Russian Empire, the challenges only mount. What are the ramifications of applying this approach in a book entitled "The Intellectual Culture of the Age of the Enlightenment in Russia," in which the authors declare that they study the "intellectual legacy of Russian multiethnic culture?" The result is that even if we drop ethnic identifications and intellectuals/philosophers mentioned in the book are not called explicitly Russians, it is implicitly assumed that all of them contributed to the making of multiethnic Russian culture/philosophy, and, in this way, they acquire Russian cultural identity in the ethnolinguistic sense.

However, Tat'iana Artem'eva and Mikhail Mikeshin do not consistently follow their declared approach. Throughout their book they often call the intellectuals they write about "Russian thinkers" or "Russian philosophers," regardless of their ethnic origin. For instance, Iakiv Kozelskii, a scion of the Cossack Starshyna family from the Hetmanate, who studied at Kyiv-Mohyla Academy and St. Petersburg Academic University, worked and lived both in St.

[7] Yuliya Ilchuk, "From Russian Literature to Russian-Language Literature of the Empire," *Ab Imperio* 23:2 (2022): 85-89.
[8] Ilchuk, *From Russian Literature*, 86.
[9] T. V. Artem'eva & M. I. Mikeshin, *Intellektual'naia kul'tura epokhi Prosveshcheniia v Rossii* (St. Petersburg: Politekhnika Servis, 2020), 5.
[10] Artem'eva & Mikeshin, *Intellektual'naia kul'tura*, 5.

Petersburg and Ukraine, figures in the book as a "Russian author" (*rossiiskii avtor*) and a "brilliant Russian enlightener" (*zamechatel'nyi russkii prosvetitel'*) without even mentioning his Ukrainian background.[11]

A similar problem can be encountered in contemporary Western historical writing. Let me illustrate this situation with the example of Gary Hamburg's *Russia's Path Toward Enlightenment*, a major recent overview of early modern Muscovite and Russian imperial intellectual history.[12] This erudite, and, in many respects, insightful book demonstrates the challenges of going beyond the traditional scheme of Russian history and the limitations of sticking to the ethnolinguistic understanding of Russian culture in the eighteenth century.

Hamburg's survey of early modern intellectual history is primarily a series of portraits of individual thinkers. Unlike Artem'eva and Mikeshin, Hamburg pays more systematic attention to the ethnic and cultural background of his protagonists. So, in *Russia's Path Toward Enlightenment*, Stefan Iavorskii figures as a "Ukrainian" churchman and Feofan Prokopovych as "the Ukrainian-born theologian."[13] However, this does not significantly change the general picture of Russian intellectual life because the book works with the ethnolinguistic concept of Russian culture and relies on the continuity of Russian (intellectual) history from Kyivan Rus' via Muscovy to imperial Russia of the eighteenth century.

Thus, in Hamburg's narrative, "Kievan polity"/"Old Russia" was populated by "early Russians" or "old Russians." Russian culture and identity were defined by Orthodox Christianity, a fact that explains the strong interplay of religious and political ideas in the early modern period. This culture and identity were characterized by "openness and fixity," they evolved and adapted to external influences starting from the "Kievan" period but retained some basic characteristics untill the end of the eighteenth century.[14]

When Ukraine or Belarus appear in this coherent picture in the mid-seventeenth or early eighteenth centuries, together with such figures as Simeon Polotskii, Stefan Iavorskii, or Feofan Prokopovych, it remains unclear where they came from and what role they played. The only explanation the book provides is that these people were "educated in the Church schools on Muscovy's so-called 'western periphery' (the former territory of the Polish-Lithuanian state), moved to Russia proper where they came to occupy high positions in the Russian Church and court."[15] So, Ukraine and Belarus relegated to the status of "western periphery" of "Russia proper," which transmits some Western influences on Russia. Again, Ukraine appears here not as a subject but as an object of history, as a passive medium of cultural contact between Russia and the West.

However, if we want to understand how the Orthodox Enlightenment developed in the Russian Empire and how the imperial or Synodal Orthodox Church came into being and was shaped by the Catholic, Protestant, and Enlightenment influences, we need to examine Ukraine in the second half of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries as separate cultural spaces that had agency of their own and searched for a "third way" between the Catholic and Protestant West, on the one hand, and Orthodox Muscovy, on the other.[16]

---

[11] Artem'eva & Mikeshin, *Intellektual'naia kul'tura*, 75, 101.
[12] G. M. Hamburg, *Russia's Path Toward Enlightenment: Faith, Politics, and Reason, 1500-1801* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016).
[13] Hamburg, *Russia's Path*, 229, 237.
[14] Hamburg, *Russia's Path*, 15, 20.
[15] Hamburg, *Russia's Path*, 182.
[16] Natalia Yakovenko, "Ukrains'ka kul'tura XVII st. iak poshuk 'tret'oho shliakhu'," in *Shliakh u chotyry stolittia: materialy mizhnarodnoi naukovoi konferentsii "Ad fontes – Do dzherel" do 400-ï richnytsi zasnuvannia Kyivo-Mohylians'koi akademii*, ed. Natalia Yakovenko (Kyiv: NaUKMA, 2016), 12-23. In this article, Yakovenko writes

From this perspective, a more productive approach to the study of the intellectual transformations in the Russian Empire during the "long" eighteenth century was adopted by Andrey Ivanov.[17] He begins his illuminating monograph on the impact of the Reformation and Enlightenment on Russian Orthodoxy with a chapter dealing with the Ukrainian religious and cultural context of the seventeenth century, which, in his view, was decisive for the development of the imperial Church in the next century.[18] The book's first half is devoted to the debates between Ukrainian philo-Catholic and philo-Protestant clergy during the first half of the eighteenth century that shaped the reformed Synodal Church and the rise of the religious Enlightenment in the empire.

Similarly, any comprehensive study of the rise and development of the secular Enlightenment in the Russian Empire must consider the contribution of German scholars and scientists who also had agency of their own and whose ideas and activities significantly shaped the intellectual and cultural landscape of the empire. In both cases, the imperial Russian culture created by these religious and secular intellectuals during the eighteenth century was much closer to the transnational understanding emphasized by Ilchuk than an ethnolinguistic phenomenon.

***

Let us move to the second dimension of the decolonization effort, which involves rethinking the basic concepts we use to write about the Russian imperial past. Here, Putin's justifications for the war against Ukraine can become our starting point.

Putin's numerous references to history, the emphasis on the close cultural proximity between Russians and Ukrainians, and his claim that they are actually "one people" prompted some colleagues to argue that this war was provoked not so much by Russian imperialism but rather by Russian nationalism. Such a view fits nicely into the paradigm of new imperial history, which sees the politics of difference as the central element of the concept of empire.[19] In this understanding, the opposite of empire is a nation-state that promotes not difference but sameness among its population.[20] These ideas became so deeply entrenched that some erudite scholars can now seriously question the fact that during the nineteenth century the Habsburg Monarchy was an empire based on the premise that its bureaucratic elite sought to achieve "administrative uniformity, rule of law, and inclusive citizenship," that is, something opposite to the imperial politics of difference.[21]

about "Ukrainian culture" in the singular, but taking into account the complex regional division of Ukraine during the "long" eighteenth century (only in the Russian Empire did three Ukrainian Cossack autonomies exist), it would be more logical to use the plural form: "Ukrainian cultures" and "Ukrainian spaces."

[17] Andrey V. Ivanov, *A Spiritual Revolution: The Impact of Reformation and Enlightenment in Orthodox Russia* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2020).

[18] The chapter is entitled "Russian Orthodoxy on the Eve of the Reforms: The Ukrainian Context, 1654-1712." See Ivanov, *A Spiritual Revolution*, 25-40.

[19] Jane Burbank & Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011).

[20] Peter A. Blitstein, "Nation and Empire in Soviet History, 1917–1953," *Ab Imperio* 7:1 (2006): 201.

[21] Tomasz Hen-Konarski, "Beyond Empire: In Search of New Tools for the Description of the Austrian Monarchy," *Ukrainian Historical Review/Український історичний огляд* 3 (2024): 15-63.

Putin's war against Ukraine and its justification remind us of some basics concerning empires and imperial situation. It shows that empire always begins with the metropole's claim to dominance, which can be rejected or accepted by the population of a country/region designated for subjugation.[22] This claim—and the ensuing unequal power relations between the metropole and subjugated periphery—were often achieved and maintained through conquest and violence. And, finally, that empires, and not only nineteenth-century nationalizing empires, maintained and promoted both difference and sameness. It means that we should pay more attention to the early modern policies of acculturation and assimilation that took the form of russification in the Russian Empire.[23]

Russian imperial studies have actively discussed the phenomenon and policies of russification, but primarily in the context of nineteenth—and twentieth-century history.[24] Most scholars tended to downplay its role in the early modern period, focusing primarily on so-called "administrative russification."[25] There is a need to correct this imbalance and explore the role and consequences of the policy of cultural russification, which the imperial government had discussed and pursed at least since the reign of Peter I, with the intention of merging Ukrainians with Russians.[26]

---

[22] Marc Beissinger, "Situating Empire," *Ab Imperio* 6:3 (2005): 89-95.

[23] In the eighteenth century, the word *obrusenie* (russification) as well as the words *sliianie* (merging), *smeshenie* (mixing), and *sblizhenie* (convergence) were used in the Russian Empire to refer to the processes of acculturation and assimilation.

[24] Edward C. Thaden, "Russification in Tsarist Russia," in *Interpreting History: Collective Essays on Russia's Relations with Europe*, ed. Edward C. Thaden & Marianna Forster Thaden (New York: Boulder, 1990), 211–220; Alexei Miller, "Russification or Russifications?" in Alexei Miller, *The Romanov Empire and Nationalism* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2008), 45-67; Theodore Weeks, "Managing Empire: Tsarist Nationalities Policy," in *The Cambridge History of Russia*, vol. 2. Imperial Russia, 1689-1917, ed. Dominic Lieven (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 27-44; Darius Staliūnas, "Between Russification and Divide and Rule: Russian Nationality Policy in the Western Borderlands in mid-19th Century," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, 55:3 (2007): 357-373.

[25] Miller, "Russification or Russifications," 57; Edward C. Thaden, "Introduction," in *Russification in the Baltic Provinces and Finland, 1855–1914,* ed. Edward C. Thaden (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 7–9.

[26] The Kolomak Articles of 1687 were probably the first Muscovite official document that spoke about merging Ukrainians/Little-Russians and Russians/Great-Russians through intermarriages. It encouraged newly elected Hetman Mazepa "'to unite by every method and means the Little-Russian people with the Great-Russian people and to lead them by intermarriage and other measures to an indestructible and firm harmony": Kolomak Articles, *Internet Encyclopedia of Ukraine*, accessed November 5, 2024, https://www.encyclopediaofukraine.com/display.asp?linkpath=pages%5CK%5CO%5CKolomakArticles.htm. Similar stipulations were repeated in the official documents and policy proposals during the eighteenth century. For instance, in 1714 Fedor Saltykov urged Peter I to promote marriages between ethnic Russian nobles and the *Cossack Starshyna* and wealthy people from the Hetmanate "to mix (*smeshat'*) that people [Ukrainians] with the Russian people in ranks, mores, and qualities […] to take slowly away the freedom of their rule from them and to appoint there Russian superiors but not immediately." The expected result was the improvement of the condition of Ukrainians but, at the same time, the disappearance of their political subjectivity and cultural separateness. Ukrainians had to be literary "incarnated in Russian people" (*voplotitsia v Rossiiskoi narod*). Interestingly, in justifying his proposal, Saltykov referred to the successful examples of similar assimilatory policies implemented by England in Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. See Nikolai Pavlov-Silvanskii, *Proekty reform v zapiskakh sovremennikov Petra Velikago. Opyt izucheniia russkikh proektov i neizdannye ikh teksty* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia V. Kirshbauma, 1897), 18-19. These examples demonstrate that the focus of early modern Russification can allow us better to grasp the dynamic of Russian imperial rule in Ukraine and to discern what Rory Finnin called *a dialectic of imperial possession* – a structure of relations in which the Little Russian/Ukrainian distinctiveness and the bond between them and their land were first asserted (in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries) by the metropole, but were later ruptured and reconfigured in the nineteenth century. See Rory Finnin, *Blood of Others: Stalin's Crimean Atrocity and the Poetics of Solidarity* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2022), 28-29.

The Ukrainian case was not unique in this regard. The recent cutting-edge studies demonstrate that the Muscovite/Russian government, like the English or French imperial governments, carried out policies aimed at acculturation and assimilation in the early modern period.[27] These policies intensified in the eighteenth century with the emergence of civilizing discourse and a new understanding of imperial mission. But even before this turning point of the Petrine epoch, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Muscovite concept of subjecthood did not really distinguish between the subjecthood of ethnic Muscovites/Russians and of those peoples who became subjects as a result of imperial expansion, which made the switch to acculturation or assimilation much easier.[28] From this perspective, Putin's obsessive denial of Ukraine's separateness can be seen not as an aberration but as a manifestation of a certain structural logic of Russian imperialism that can be traced back to the late medieval and early modern eras.

Having written this, I want to emphasize that my call to focus more on early modern russification does not mean that we should return to some simplified version of national history that reduces the Ukrainian-Russian encounter to a black-and-white narrative of Russian subjugation and repression and Ukrainian resistance. It was a more complex and multidimensional story. Russification was part of this narrative, but we can also speak about the Ukrainian-Russian cultural entanglement characterized by mutual influences. This entanglement was especially evident during the "long" eighteenth century when Ruthenians/Ukrainians/Little Russians actively tried to negotiate imperial rule. Some of them started to refer to the legacy of Kyivan Rus, which was allegedly something they had in common with ethnic Russians, and to claim the status of stakeholders of a newly emergent Westernized Russian Empire.

What analytical language should we use to conceptualize this dimension of the Ukrainian-Russian encounter? In my view, to explore this sphere we can rely on concepts, such as the *cultural "contact zone,"* which was initially developed by literary scholar Mary Louise Pratt to conceptualize the encounter between Spanish conquerors and indigenous peoples in early modern Latin America and adapted to the Ukrainian case by Ulrich Schmid and Edita Bojanowska.[29] Schmid and Bojanowska applied it primarily to literary history but it can be used more broadly. Returning to the topics addressed in the first part of this essay, the concept of *cultural "contact zone"* can serve as a perfect analytical perspective to examine the making of the Synodal Church and the rise of religious reform and Orthodox Enlightenment in the eighteenth-century Russian Empire.

In summary, the decolonization/de-imperialization/decentering of our field is long overdue and opens up the prospects for its positive renewal. It has an obvious theoretical benefit because it encourages us to rethink our categories and methodologies and brings us closer to a more adequate understanding of the past. It also matters practically. Without consistent academic mastering of the unmastered Russian imperial past, it is futile to hope for a successful de-imperialization and democratization inside Russia and decolonization in

---

[27] Ricarda Vulpius, *Die Geburt des Russländischen Imperiums. Herrschaftskonzepte und -praktiken im 18. Jahrhundert* (Cologne-Weimar-Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2020); Saliha Belmessous, *Assimilation and Empire: Uniformity in French and British Colonies, 1541-1954* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Jane Ohlmeyer, *Making Empire: Ireland, Imperialism, and the Early Modern World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023).

[28] Vulpius, *Die Geburt des Russländischen Imperiums*, 80.

[29] Mary Louise Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone," *Profession* 91 (1991): 33–40; Edyta M. Bojanowska, *Nikolai Gogol: Between Ukrainian and Russian Nationalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007); Ulrich Schmid, "Contact Zone vs. Postcolonial Condition: On the Relevance of a Concept from Latin American Studies for Research on Ukraine," In *Cossacks in Jamaica, Ukraine at the Antipodes. Essays in Honor of Marko Pavlyshyn*, eds. Alessandro Achilli, Serhy Yekelchyk, Dmytro Yesypenko (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2020): 554-572.

its former subjugated peripheries and colonies. Decolonial history deepens our understanding of the imperial past. Still, we need it primarily "for life and action" in the present, hoping to avoid further death and destruction in the future.