



The power of
words

Vladimir Putin's dictionary

Ukrainians are

- Insects
- Nazis
- A gang of drug addicted
- “We will seek to demilitarise and denazify Ukraine”



“In Donbass there has been a GENOCIDE” (18.03.22)

Speech dated 21st February

<http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67828>

“I made a decision to carry out a **special military operation**”

<http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67843>

MILITARY
OPERATIONS



WAR



CARNAGE



Change words and you change the perception

Can cancelling a word
deny reality?

Война

WARS start and are justified with a new set of words

When we want to harm people it is always easy if we see them as NOT HUMAN,
This makes us feel less guilty



DEHUMANISATION always starts with language and allows you to DISENGAGE from what is morally right

When you call your enemies «criminals», «killers», «terrorists» you are DEHUMANISING them.

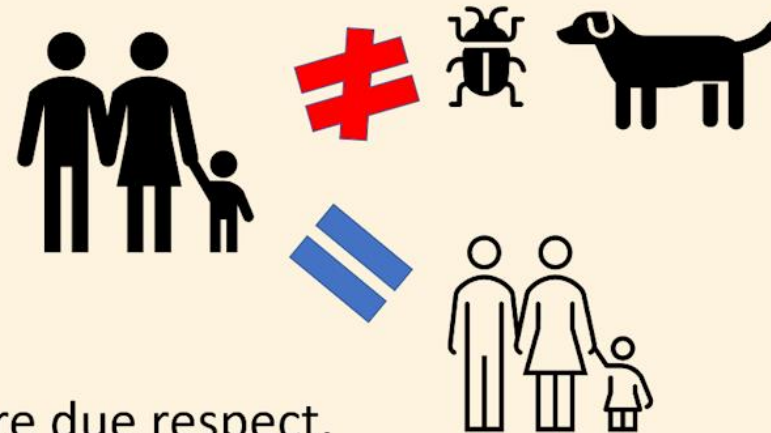
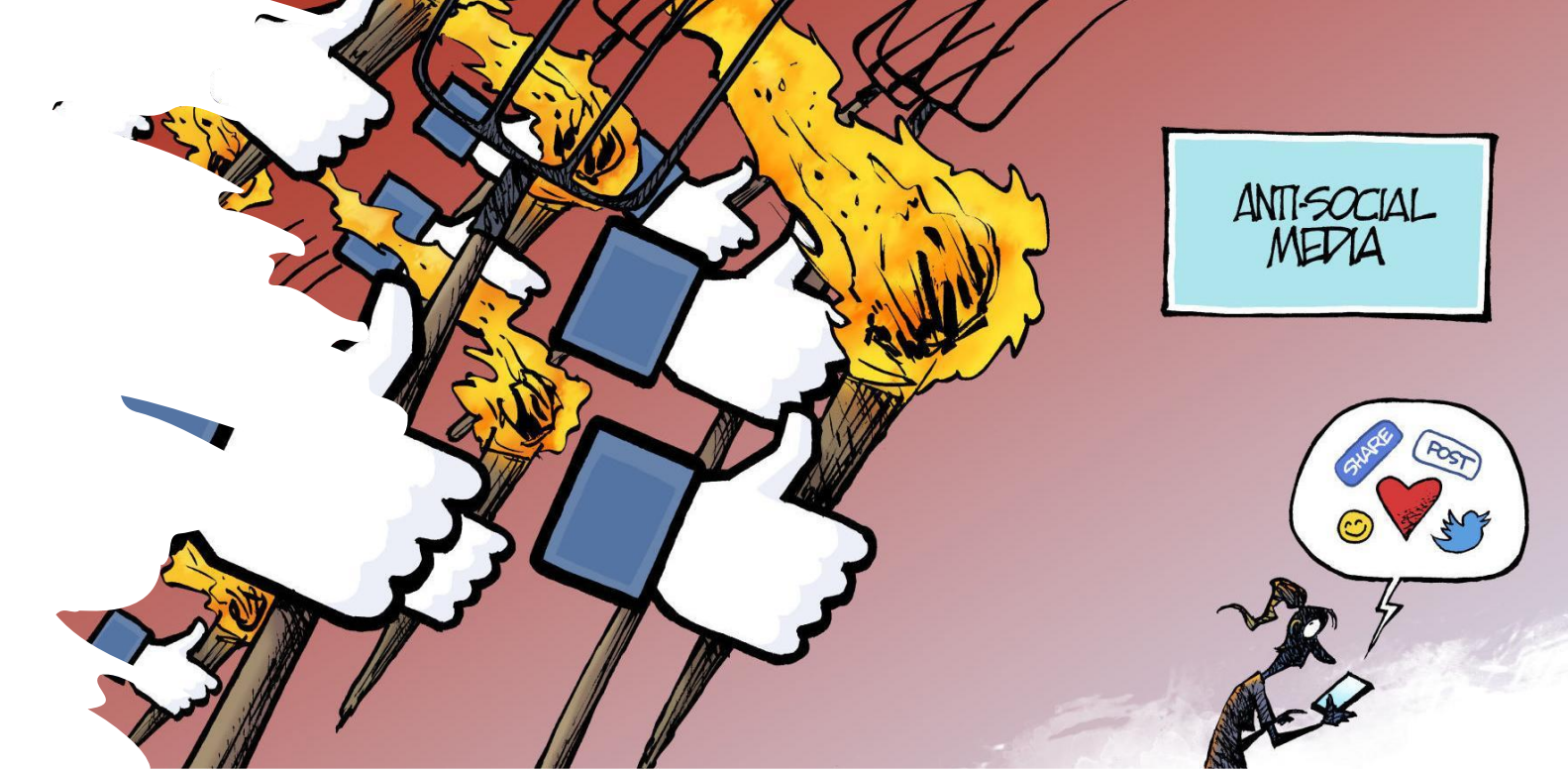
Examples in history

Dehumanizing always starts with language, often followed by **images**. We see this throughout history:

- During the Holocaust, Nazis described Jews as *Untermenschen*—subhuman. They called Jews rats and depicted them as disease-carrying rodents in everything from military pamphlets to children's books.
- Hutus involved in the Rwanda genocide called Tutsis cockroaches.
- Indigenous people are often referred to as savages.
- Serbs called Bosnians aliens.
- Slave owners throughout history considered slaves subhuman animals.

We can all find plenty of examples

- Today **social media** are the primary platforms for our dehumanizing behavior. On Twitter and Facebook we can rapidly push the people with whom we disagree into the dangerous territory of moral exclusion, with little to no accountability, and often in complete anonymity.



... people are due respect.

- Once we see people on “the other side” of a conflict as morally inferior or unworthy, and even dangerous, the **conflict starts being framed as GOOD versus EVIL.**
- Both **parties come to believe that they must either secure their own victory or face defeat.**
- New goals to punish or destroy the opponent arise, and in some cases more militant leadership comes into power.”

As a matter of fact, in response to Putin’s attacks, also the other side started to escalate in the use of the language

Volodymyr
Zelensky's
dictionary

“I will appeal directly to the nations of the world if the leaders of the world do not make every effort to stop this war,” he said in a video message on Tuesday (March 8th). He paused, and looking directly into the camera, added, “This **genocide.**”

The acts of the Russian invaders will be regarded like those of **Islamic State terrorists,**”
(Zelensky declared this on March 12th when the mayor of the city of Melitopol, Ivan Fedorov, had been abducted)

Joe Biden's dictionary

On Wednesday 16th March, when a reporter asked the US president: "Mr President, after everything we have seen, are you ready to call Putin a war criminal?"

The President replied "no" before being challenged, and then changed his reply: "Did you ask me whether I would tell? Oh, I think he[Putin] **is a war criminal.**"

White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki later said the president had been speaking from his heart after seeing "**barbaric**" images of the violence in Ukraine, rather than making any official declaration.

When we can't find words to speak
with each other we have all lost.

“The more you are losing,
the more you keep on killing.
The more you kill,
the more you die inside.”

Edith Brook

once a war is
started,
some words
are simply
powerless

«Putin must leave Ukraine!»

«Putin must stop the war!»


“This is illegal!”

«It is not acceptable!»

Which impact on reality
will these words have?

Will we get anywhere nearer to a solution
when we say these things?



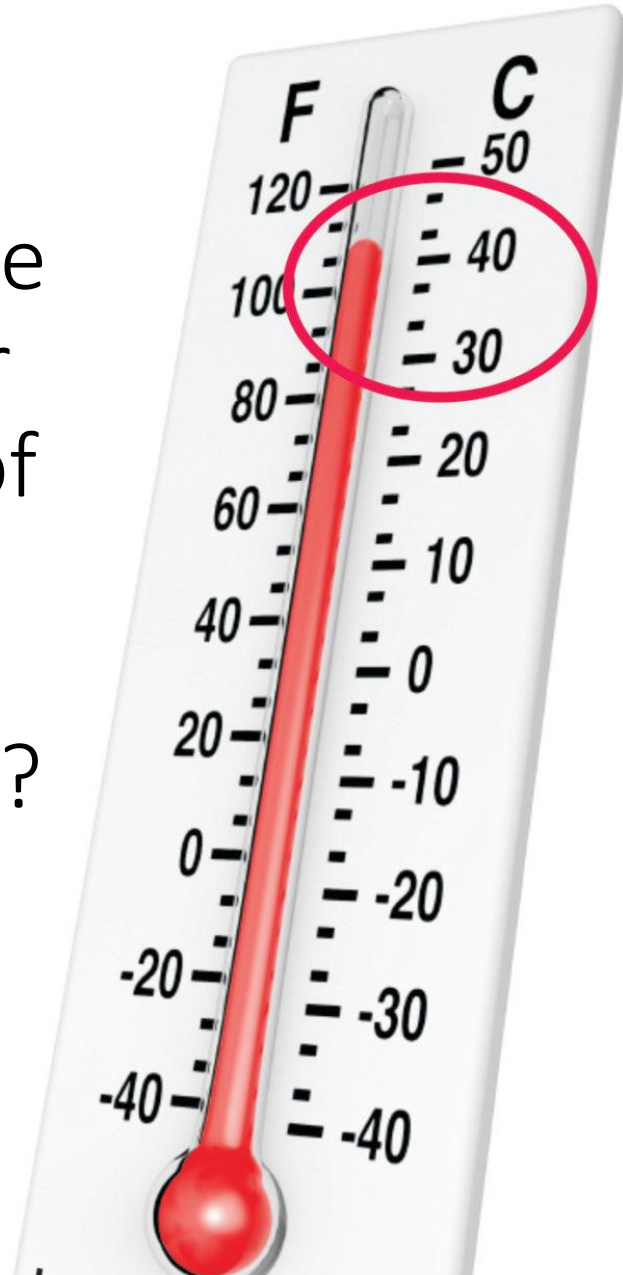


We need to
REVERSE the
process and
bring back
power to **words**

THE REVERS PROCESS,
“the **rehumanization** process,
starts in the same place
dehumanizing started—
with words and images”.

Task 1: HOW FAR IS RECONCILIATION

Are we getting closer or are we moving further from the end of the war?
Are we willing to end the war?



Browse the internet and **look for declarations** from main protagonists (heads of state, prime ministers, decision makers) and try to understand how close/far we are to a solution

Other things we can do...

How can we build a Handy Dictionary to welcome students from Ukraine?

Let's collect information on what is being done in our communities to support refugees and promote peace. Let's start by telling what we know about our cities and schools and then share new ideas.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60855280>

The power of words to move people
How president Zelensky uses speech
to get what he needs

Rethorical speeches – Zelensky quotes Churchill and Shakespeare

<https://www.chroniclive.co.uk/news/uk-news/zelensky-ukraine-speech-shakespeare-churchill-23328832>

Zelensky echoed British war leader Sir Winston Churchill by saying: “We will fight until the end, at sea, in the air. We will continue fighting for our land, whatever the cost.”

The Ukrainian president added: “We will fight in the forest, in the fields, on the shores, in the streets.”

He then shared the wisdom of the Bard and said: “The question for us now is to be or not to be. Oh no, this Shakespearean question. For 13 days this question could have been asked but now I can give you a definitive answer. It’s definitely yes, to be.

08.03.22, Zelensky speaking to the House of Commons (UK)

Rethorical speeches – Zelensky quotes Martin Luther King

<https://edition.cnn.com/2022/03/16/politics/zelensky-speech-national-psyches/index.html>

"'I have a dream' -- these words are known to each of you. Today, I can say: I have a need, I need to protect our sky. I need your decision, your help, which means exactly the same, the same you feel when you hear the words 'I have a dream.' "

For people from Ukraine every day is 9/11.

"I'm addressing the President Biden: You are the leader of the nation, of your great nation. I wish you to be the leader of the world. Being the leader of the world means to be the leader of peace,"

16.03.22, Zelensky speaking to the American Congress

Rethorical speeches – Zelensky speaking in front of the Bundestag

<https://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/promova-prezidenta-ukrayini-volodimira-zelenskogo-u-bundesta-73621>

« When we told you that Nord Stream was a weapon and a preparation for a great war, we heard in response that it was an economy after all. **Economy. Economy.** But it was **cement for a new wall.**

When we asked for preventive sanctions, we appealed to Europe, we appealed to many countries. We turned to you. Sanctions for the aggressor to feel that you are a force. We saw delays. We felt resistance. We understood that you want to continue the **economy. Economy. Economy.**

And now the trade routes between you and the country that has once again brought a brutal war to Europe are **barbed wire over the wall. Over the new wall that divides Europe.**

And you don't see what's behind this wall, and it's between us, between people in Europe.

Former actor, President of the United States Ronald Reagan once said in Berlin: **Tear down this wall!**

And I want to tell you now.

Chancellor Scholz! Tear down this wall.

Give Germany the leadership you deserve. And what your descendants will be proud of. «

16.03.22, Zelensky speaking to the German Parliament

Rethorical speeches – Zelensky speaking in front of the Knesset

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/full-text-ukraine-president-zelenskys-speech-to-israeli-lawmakers/>

«When the Nazi party raided Europe and wanted to destroy everything. Destroy everyone. Wanted to conquer the nations. ... They called it “**the final solution** to the Jewish issue”. You remember that. And I’m sure you will never forget!
But listen to what is sounding now in Moscow. Hear how these words are said again: “Final solution”. But already in relation, so to speak, to us, to the “Ukrainian issue”. «

16.03.22, Zelensky speaking to the Israeli Parliament

Rethorical speeches – Zelensky speaking in front of the French Senate

<https://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/promova-prezidenta-ukrayini-na-spilnomu-zibranni-senatu-naci-73773>

«After weeks of Russian invasion, Mariupol and other Ukrainian cities hit by the occupiers resemble the **ruins of Verdun**. As in the photos of the First World War, which, I'm sure, each and every one of you saw. Ukrainians see that France values freedom as much as it has always been. And you protect it. You remember what it is. **Freedom, equality, brotherhood**. Each of these words is full of power for you! I feel it. Ukrainians feel it.»

23.03.22, Zelensky speaking to the French Senate and Parliament

A word is dead when it is said,
some say. I say it just begins
to live that day.

Emily Dickinson



Useful articles to read on dehumanisation

Decoding dehumanisation

<https://beyondconflictint.org/what-we-do/curent-intitatives/decoding-dehumanization>

The dark psychology of dehumanisation explained

<https://www.vox.com/science-and-health/2017/3/7/14456154/dehumanization-psychology-explained>

The enemy as animal: symmetric dehumanisation during asymmetric warfare

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5528981/>

Emotions in conflict resolutions

<https://www.cairn.info/revue-les-cahiers-internationaux-de-psychologie-sociale-2010-3-page-423.htm>

Know the enemy: better understanding foes can prevent debilitating hatred

<https://www.ausa.org/articles/know-thy-enemy>