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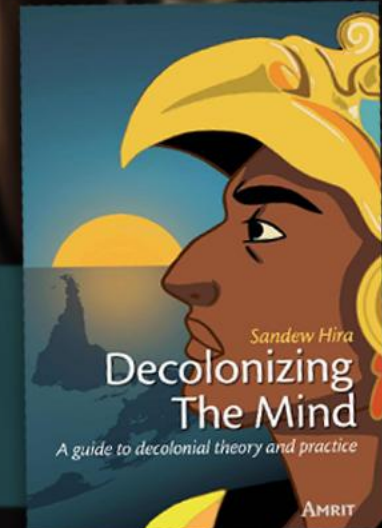
## What is decolonial theory?

The background, nature, strength and weaknesses of decolonial theory and practice

# The current narratives about civilization: Russia



Decolonizing The Mind,  
the final frontier of colonialism  
with Sandew Hira



#020

11-12-2023

# The war in Palestine and Ukraine

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- ❑ Learning from others: my visit to London Islamophobia conference of IHRC
- ❑ Since begin of Gaza war 100 IOF soldiers killed, tot since Oct. 7 is 425, 5,000 wounded. Over 18,000 Palestinians killed overwhelming majority women and children; 49,500 wounded.
- ❑ Dec. 6: Putin visits Saudi Arabia and UAE
- ❑ Iran's President Due in Moscow on Dec. 7
- ❑ Russia, Iran sign declaration to counter US sanctions
- ❑ EU 'Overpaid' €185 Bln for Gas Due to Russia Sanctions: Russia Gets Richer While West Bleeds Trillions in Funding Ukraine Amid Failed Sanctions
- ❑ Russian oil price cap policy has largely failed

# Hamas and Fatah

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- ❑ Fatah Official Jibril Rajoub possible successor to President Abbas: *The October 7 Attack Was Not Terror But A Natural Reaction To The Israeli Occupation; This Attack Was Nothing Compared To The Explosion Expected In the West Bank*
- ❑ On reconciliation between Fatah and Hamas: *"I say to everyone that blood is thicker than water. Hamas is and will remain part of the [Palestinian] national fabric, part of the [Palestinian] struggle and the Palestinian political fabric. This campaign [i.e., the Gaza war] will be a springboard for attaining Palestinian national unity, with one people, one leadership and one goal: the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with complete sovereignty over all the Palestinian territories."*

# Conclusions from the Ukraine relevant for Palestine

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- ❑ War is fought on the battlefield and media is just an instrument of war, it is not objective
- ❑ NATO/USA has lost in Ukraine (militarily, politically, economically, globally), yet the losers are in denial
- ❑ In Palestine Israel and the USA will loose, and they will be in denial because of the colonization of the mind

# Sputnik news: Zelenski will soon be out

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The Russian Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) has received information that the West is actively engaged in discussions regarding the need to replace President Zelensky, said Sergey Naryshkin, Director of the Foreign Intelligence Service of Russia.

Among the numerous possible reasons for the current situation are Zelensky's military failures, widespread corruption, and his inability to effectively navigate the ongoing conflict in a way that aligns with Washington's interests.

The West is considering a number of candidates as potential successors to Zelensky, including Valery Zaluzhny (Commander-in-Chief of the Ukrainian Armed Forces), Kyrylo Budanov (head of Ukraine's military intelligence), Andrii Yermak (head of the Office of the President of Ukraine), Alexey Arestovich (former advisor to the Office of the President of Ukraine) or Vitali Klitschko (mayor of Kiev), the SVR reported.

# Topics

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- ❑ History of the Russian revolution
- ❑ Theory of Eurasianism
- ❑ Putin's theoretical evolution to a civilization state

# History of the Russian revolution

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- ❑ 1861: Tsar Alexander II abolished feudalism in Russia (England in 1066, France in 1789)
- ❑ 1917: Russian population 175 million (10% working class)
- ❑ Russian revolution: political, economic, social and cultural
- ❑ Cultural revolution: Church weddings were abolished and civil partnership was introduced. Divorce was a matter of choice. Abortion was legalized. Homosexuality was decriminalized and gay marriage was legalized.

# Soviet economic system

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- ❑ 1921: establishment of the State General Planning Commission Gosplan
- ❑ 1928: first five-year plan:
  - ❑ The means of production is in the hands of the state
  - ❑ Prices of goods and services are determined by the central plan
  - ❑ State-owned firms have an account at the central bank. There is no free flow of money. Money designed to buy materials and semifinished products cannot be used to pay wages; money for wages cannot be used for materials
  - ❑ Planning agency decides on where, how and how much to invest
  - ❑ The state ensures every worker has a job based on their qualification. The educational system and the job market are integrated, so people who get an education are sure that they get a job. The state determines the wages.



# The results of central planning

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Michael Ellman: *“The socialist planning system had a number of important achievements to its credit. It introduced mass production into Soviet industry. It greatly increased the output of a number of key industrial sectors, such as oil and steel. It produced a huge number of weapons necessary to emerge victorious from World War II. It provided full employment. It produced the world’s first earth satellite. It invested heavily in human capital. Its educational system (except in the social sciences) was good by international standards, and produced large numbers of qualified people. During the 1950s the USSR enjoyed a golden age with growth rates much in excess of those in the USA or UK.”*

# If the results were so positive, then why did the system collapse in 1991?

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- ❑ Since 1980's: Long shopping lines, empty store windows, broken-down cars, deteriorating living standards became part and parcel of the life of an average Soviet citizen.
- ❑ Within the elites, discussions on the economic and political system led to challenging basic assumptions about the Soviet system.
  - ❑ Should central planning be abandoned in favor of decentralized management of the economy?
  - ❑ Should prices, profit, credits and other market instruments be introduced into the economy?
  - ❑ Should workers participation in the management of firms be introduced?

# Mikhail Gorbachev (1985 gen. secr. CP)

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- ❑ Perestroika: restructuring of the economy and society
- ❑ Glasnost opening up society up to public discussion and political participation
- ❑ End to Cold War
  - ❑ Sign the arms control INF treaty for the elimination of intermediate range and shorter-range missiles in 1987.
  - ❑ In 1989, he withdrew the Soviet army from Afghanistan which the USSR had invaded in 1979 to support the communist government of that country.
  - ❑ He withdrew support for Cuba and the Nicaraguan Sandinistas and for the liberation movements in Angola and Ethiopia.

Glasnost opened the door to questioning the whole legacy of the Russian revolution, including its theoretical foundation: Marxism

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*Martin Malia: "What had begun as a limited process of filling in factual blank spots of the Stalin era had led to a flood of candor in which not only were the myths of the long decades of Stalin and Brezhnev swept away, but the very foundations of Sovietism - the economic theories of Marx and even the political practices of Lenin - were discredited. By 1988 Marxism-Leninism was a shambles."*

In 1987, for the first time all kinds of organizations began to rise, independent of the party, that brought important discussion into the public domain: ecology, democratization, political reform. Some people began to argue for the establishment of political parties outside the Communist Party. A new civil society arose. On 1 July 1988, the 19th Party Conference adopted the proposal to create a new supreme legislative body called the Congress of People's Deputies of the Soviet Union and thus separated the party from the state. The Congress would be a new legislative body.

# The Congress held its first session from 25 May – 9 June 1989.

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Martin Malia: *“As the days went by, speaker after speaker attacked one or another vice of the system: the inefficiency of the economy; the widespread poverty of the country; the corruption of the Party; the scandal of hospitals without running hot water and health care without medicines; the inadequacies of education; the misconduct of the army in Afghanistan and Georgia; and finally, in one astounding outburst, the role of the KGB as an “underground empire” exercising “comprehensive control over society.... When the twelve days of the Congress were finished, the Soviet Union was a new country. The work of desacralizing the system, begun by glasnost, was now completed. Millions of people had heard their private thoughts uttered in public; individuals saw that the evils they had observed in their own little corner of the system were common to the whole Union. And everyone now knew it was possible to say the boldest things without fear of retribution. So intense was the public’s interest in the Congress that industrial production dropped 20 percent during the televised coverage of the proceedings.”*

# The national question

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The Soviet Union was a Federal Union consisting of fifteen Soviet Republics: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldavia, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan. Initially, these ethnic republics had the right to secession from the Soviet Union, but under Stalin nationalist sentiments were ruthlessly suppressed. The sentiments aroused by glasnost unleashed new demands for independence. In 1991, the USSR would dissolve into fifteen separate states.

# Social movement in Eastern Europe

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- ❑ East Germany
  - ❑ November 9, 1989: fall of the Berlin Wall
  - ❑ October 3, 1990: East and West Germany were reunited as one state
- ❑ Hungary: social struggle in 1989 led to free elections in May 1990: Communists lost.
- ❑ Czechoslovakia: demonstration brought down communist government on November 17, 1989.

# The demise of the Russian Communist Party

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- ❑ 1989 after first Congress: workers on strikes for economic reason, but soon put the demand: end to leading role of Communist Party
- ❑ In Congress Boris Yeltsin formed a caucus with a concrete program: end the leading role of the Communist Party and introduce a multiparty system, private property, and a market economy
- ❑ June 12, 1991, Yeltsin won 57% of the popular vote in the presidential elections for the Russian republic, the largest republic of the Soviet Union.



# The demise of the Soviet Union

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- ❑ On November 6, 1991, Yeltsin issued a decree banning all Communist Party activities on Russian soil.
- ❑ In December, Russia, Ukraine and Belarus declared that the Soviet Union no longer existed.
- ❑ On December 16, 1991, the Supreme Soviet officially declared that the Soviet Union had ceased to exist.

# From Perestroika to Catastroika

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- Paul Klebnikov: *“When Yeltsin’s government freed prices, it unleashed hyperinflation, which instantly impoverished the majority of the population. The introduction of the free market did not produce a more efficient economy - it produced relentless economic decline. Privatization enriched only a small number of insiders. The country was being looted and destroyed by the new property owners.”*
- 1996: Yeltsin barely wins presidential elections. 1999: Yeltsin steps down and appoint Vladimir Putin as his successor.

# Comparison of reform in China and Soviet Union

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On May 15, 1989, the Soviet president Michael Gorbachev arrived in Beijing, shortly after mass student demonstrations began in Tiananmen Square. Some students saw Gorbachev as an exemplary leader for change. In a speech in Beijing, Gorbachev argued that *“economic reform will not work unless supported by a radical transformation of the political system.”* History proved him wrong. It was the other way around. Political reform is not needed if the lives of people improve dramatically through radical economic transformation.

# Putin's rise to power with stiff competition

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- ❑ March 26, 2000 Putin (United Russia Party) won the presidential elections with just 53% of the votes. His main competitor, Gennady Zyuganov from the Communist Party got 29.5%.
- ❑ March 14, 2004 Putin was reelected with 72% of the votes, while Nikolay Kharitonov of the Communist Party got 14%.
- ❑ The Russian Constitution has a two-term limit for presidential candidates. In 2008 Dmitry Medvedev ran for United Russia and won with 71% of the votes, while Zyuganov got 18%. Putin was appointed as Prime Minister of Russia, thus maintaining his political influence. In 2008 the presidential term was extended from four to six years starting with the 2012 elections.
- ❑ In 2012 Putin ran again and won with 64% of the votes. Zyuganov got 17%.
- ❑ In 2018 Putin won the presidential elections with 78% of the votes, while Pavel Grudinin from the Communist Party got 12%. The next presidential elections will be held in 2024.

# Why Putin's support has grown

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- ❑ Economic policy: Russian economy grew from US\$ 1 trillion (GDP/PPP) in 2000 to US\$ 4.7 trillion in 2021, average of 22% per year.
- ❑ Security:
  - ❑ End US supported terrorism from Chechnya, securing peace in 2009.
  - ❑ Defeat US supported ISIS in Syria 2015-2019
  - ❑ NATO expansion to the east surrounding Russia and the war in Ukraine supported by the population after 14,000 Russian speaking Ukrainians have been killed in the Donbass region

# The ideological basis for political reform

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- ❑ Soviet Union: Marxism-Leninism is dead end.
- ❑ China: Socialism with Chinese characteristics
- ❑ Russia: in search of an identity

# Alexander Dugin: Eurasianism

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*“Eurasianism is an ideological and social-political current born within the environment of the first wave of Russian emigration, unified by the concept of Russian culture as a non-European phenomenon, and presenting — among the various cultures of the world — an original combination of Western and Eastern features; as a consequence, Russian culture belongs to both East and West, and at the same time cannot be reduced either to the former nor to the latter... Eurasianism viewed Russian culture not as simply a component of European civilization, but also as an original civilization, encompassing the experience not only of the West but also — to the same extent — of the East. The Russian people, from this perspective, must not be placed either among the European nor among the Asian peoples; it belongs to a completely unique Eurasian community.”*

*“The Eurasian project was developed in the form of a political philosophy on the basis of the multipolarity of civilizations, anti-imperialism, anti-modernism and on the structure of Russia itself. This last was defined in terms of the principles of the Slavophiles, along with the important addition of a positive evaluation of the cultural elements which had been borrowed by the Russians from Asiatic societies beginning with the period of the Mongols.”*

The "First-Wave" of emigration (1919-1939) was a community born outside Russia's borders and formed in part from the remains of the White army, expelled from Russia in the final days of the Civil War in 1919

# Dugin on civilization

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*“The primary concern of Eurasianist philosophy is civilization. There are different civilizations, not only one. Each of them has its own structure that defines the elements of which it consists, and which gives them meaning and coherence. We cannot apply the rules and structure we find in one such structure to those we find in other civilization — not in a diachronic or a synchronic way. Each civilizational structure possesses its own sense of time and its own space. They are thus incomparable with one another. Every human society belongs to a particular civilization and should be studied only in accordance with its own criteria.”*



# Nikolai Trubetzkoy (1890-1938): *The Legacy of Genghis Khan and other essays on Russia's identity*

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Genghis Khan was the bearer of an important, positive idea, and the desire to create and organize, not the desire to destroy, was predominant in his activities. He was religious, but he did not force one religion upon his people. There were Buddhists, Muslims, Christians, Shamanists in his administration. He supported infrastructures for the different religions. Genghis Khan made a distinction between two types of people: traitors and people with moral conviction. When he conquered a place, those who betrayed their king were executed, and those who defended him with conviction were set free. His administration was to be filled only with people from the second category. In defining the historical essence of the Russian state, he identified it with the nucleus of Genghis Khan's empire. Eurasia is a geographically, ethnographically and economically integrated system whose political unification was historically inevitable. Genghis Khan was the first to accomplish this unification.

# Putin's evaluation of the Soviet experiment

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*“For almost three-fourths of the outgoing century Russia lived under the sign of the implementation of the communist doctrine. It would be a mistake not to see and, even more so, to deny the unquestionable achievements of those times. But it would be an even bigger mistake not to realize the outrageous price our country and its people had to pay for that Bolshevist experiment. What is more, [it would be a mistake] not to understand its historic futility. Communism and the power of Soviets did not make Russia a prosperous country with a dynamically developing society and free people. Communism vividly demonstrated its inaptitude for sound self-development, dooming our country to a steady lag behind economically advanced countries. It was a road to a blind alley, which is far away from the mainstream of civilization.” [meaning Western civilization in 1999]*

# Putin view on civilization (2020)

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- ❑ *“Russia is not just a country, it’s really a separate civilization.”*
- ❑ The basis of the Russian civilization is the Russian Orthodox Church.
- ❑ *"This faith has always accompanied us. It strengthened when our country, our people face hardships. There were very tough years of militant atheism, when priests were destroyed, temples were ruined. But at the same time a new religion was created. In fact, the Communist ideology is very similar to Christianity. Freedom, brotherhood, equality, justice - it’s all enshrined in the Holy Writ. And what about the moral code of the builder of Communism. This is a primitive excerpt from the Bible; nothing new was invented. Look, Lenin was put in a mausoleum. In what way is it different from the relics of saints for Orthodox Christians, just for Christians?"*

# Putin view on economics

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*A responsible Russian entrepreneur is a true citizen of Russia who understands its interests and acts in its interests, does not hide assets in offshore accounts, but registers companies here, in our country, and does not become dependent on foreign authorities.*

*I am sure that the greater number of our businessmen share these values; the stronger Russia will be, the stronger our economy will become, the faster life around us will improve, and, of course, the greater standing in society and respect entrepreneurs will enjoy.*

*I propose considering the annual publication of non-financial reporting by major enterprises, which will focus on what a particular company has done for society, for a particular village, town, region, or the country. I am aware of the fact that the vast majority, almost all companies, have such social programmes, but they are known to a limited number of people. Let all of society learn about them. This will benefit everyone and will be a good example for everyone.*

# Putin and colonialism (2022)

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*“It is worth reminding the West that it began its colonial policy back in the Middle Ages, followed by the worldwide slave trade, the genocide of Indian tribes in America, the plunder of India and Africa, the wars of England and France against China, as a result of which it was forced to open its ports to the opium trade. What they did was get entire nations hooked on drugs and purposefully exterminated entire ethnic groups for the sake of grabbing land and resources, hunting people like animals. This is contrary to human nature, truth, freedom and justice.*

*While we – we are proud that in the 20th century our country led the anti-colonial movement, which opened up opportunities for many peoples around the world to make progress, reduce poverty and inequality, and defeat hunger and disease.”*

# Putin and colonialism (2023)

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*“From our perspective, civilisation is a multifaceted concept subject to various interpretations. There was once an outwardly colonial interpretation whereby there was a “civilised world” serving as a model for the rest, and everyone was supposed to conform to those standards. Those who disagreed were to be coerced into this “civilisation” by the truncheon of the “enlightened” master. These times, as I said, are now in the past, and our understanding of civilisation is quite different.”*

# Putin on multiculturalism (2023)

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*Our state was built around values of multiethnic harmony. This is the bedrock foundation underlying our consolidation, which is only getting stronger in the face of external aggressions and threats. Our adversaries, that I mentioned earlier, people with neo-colonial mindsets – halfwits, in fact – are unable to realise that diversity makes us stronger.*

*It is not by chance – I want to emphasize this – that almost all the peoples of Russia have joined the ranks of the fighters in the special military operation or volunteered to help on the home front. As of now, representatives of over a hundred ethnic groups living in Russia have been decorated with high military awards.*

*The amendments to the Constitution, including those made thanks to your contribution, colleagues, have formalised the protection of the cultural identity of all peoples of Russia and the preservation of our country's language and ethnocultural diversity. It is important that this is based on our common values and principles, and on the firm belief that we are all different.*

# Russia's role in world history (2023)

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*Our fight for sovereignty and justice is, without exaggeration, one of national liberation, because we are upholding the security and well-being of our people, and our supreme historical right to be Russia – a strong independent power, a civilisation state. It is our country, it is the Russian world that has blocked the way of those who aspired to world domination and exceptionalism, as it has happened many times in history.*

*We are now fighting not just for Russia's freedom but for the freedom of the whole world. We can frankly say that the dictatorship of one hegemon is becoming decrepit. We see it, and everyone sees it now. It is getting out of control and is simply dangerous for others. This is now clear to the global majority. But again, it is our country that is now at the forefront of building a fairer world order. And I would like to stress this: without a sovereign and strong Russia, no lasting and stable international system is possible.*



# Putin 31 october 2023: The connection between Ukraine and Palestine

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*We must clearly understand who is really behind the tragedy of the peoples of the Middle East and other regions of the world, who is organizing the deadly chaos, and who benefits from it. The United States as a world superpower even based on trends in the global economy, is weakening, they are losing their positions. The American world, with one hegemon, is collapsing, disappearing, gradually but steadily becoming a thing of the past. But the United States does not want to put up with this.*

*Today Russia is not only actively participating in the formation of a new, fairer, multipolar world with equal rights and opportunities for all countries and civilizations.*

*To be where the fate of Russia, but also the whole world, is being decided, including the future of the Palestinian people.*

# Next episode: the Indian narrative

- Hinduism, Buddhism and other narratives
- Hindutva

**2** **What is decolonial theory?**  
The background, nature, strength and weaknesses of decolonial theory and practice

**The current narratives about civilization:  
India**

Decolonizing The Mind,  
the final frontier of colonialism  
with Sandew Hira

Sandew Hira  
Decolonizing  
The Mind  
A guide to decolonial theory and practice  
AMRIT

#021  
18-12-2023

The graphic features a background image of a man in a white shirt and glasses smiling, and a larger image of a man shouting with his fist raised in a crowd. A small book cover for 'Decolonizing The Mind' is visible in the bottom right corner.

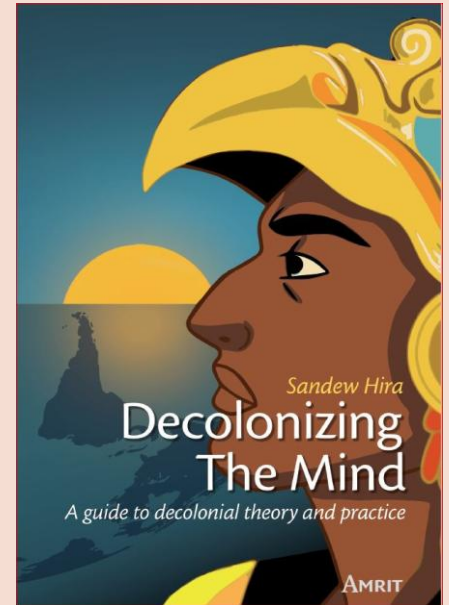
# Agenda

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1. Saturday December 16, 18.00 PM Amsterdam time. Zoom meeting on DTM with Argentinian hard scientists
2. Want to attend: [mathnetwork@din.today](mailto:mathnetwork@din.today)

# Source in the DTM book

- Index: Russia
- Download the PDF of the PowerPoint on [www.sandewhira.com](http://www.sandewhira.com)



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**SANDEW HIRA**  
Author. Activist. Decolonial Thinker.

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