



Solidarity Ukraine – issue 34- Holy family

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The Institute for Research and Information on Volunteering (iriv) is associated to the international solidarity for Ukraine attacked by Russia on 24th February 2022. After a pandemic that has weakened democratic countries with the disturbing rise of conspiracy theories and hate speech on social networks, we do hope this war in Europe will be an opportunity to reflect on a new solidarity, among European and international allies. This issue is the 12th one for 2024 and the 34th since the beginning of the war in Ukraine.... The only thing we are almost sure is that Christmas is on December 25th. Religious celebration associated with the birth of Jesus Christ, it has long ago become secularized becoming a festive moment for all families, whether they are Christian or not, religious or not. Santa Claus was created for

commercial purposes at the end of the 19th century (1). The shortest day of the year, which corresponds to the winter solstice, is worthily celebrated with a brilliant idea of Christianity, to associate the birth of Christ with the lengthening of the day - the light illuminates the souls. Families since immemorial times have always been the place of joy but also of dramas and melodramas. In a first point, we will mention contemporary mythical families that display a «wonderful image of happiness» - is it real or fake? Is it dangerous? In the following points, we will compare the family spirit in the House of Russia and in Ukraine, which decided to freely join “Family” Europe. In a final point we will ask about the planetary family constellation in the West at the beginning of a new year. Disunity reigns together with worries on the future- a very disunited Western family

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* logo designed by Caritas Canada in February 2022

Happy families

Marcel Proust, a French writer, wrote in his “Recherche du temps perdu” that one is “easily convinced by the happiness of others” (2). Like Santa Claus, who accompanied the beginning and rise of department stores, evoking a modern Horn of Plenty, famous families have fed myths by a real or rewritten history that has accompanied the history of capitalism in Europe and the United States. An illusion of unity has been forged with an intention not always disinterested, sometimes even worrying.

The Windsors opened the ball in England with the coronation of young Queen Elizabeth II on the 2nd of June 1953 at Westminster Abbey, London. The ceremony was first broadcast live on five European TV channels (3). First time for television, still in its infancy (50,000 receivers in France); TV audience exceeds radio in the UK. Eurovision was born in 1954. "Before the Common Market, it already abolished borders and united national audiences on spectacular issues. This mass culture, of which it will become an essential vector, is both national and European with programs tailored to each audience but inspired by the same recipes: information, games, sports, variety, drama.” (3) The Royals contribute to soft power in the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth and amateur countries with highly creative spin-off products. The various protagonists of the family deliberately maintain storytelling – the marriage and then sentimental disappointments of the princes and princesses have been a staple in the chronicle and have fueled the reputation of the «firm». The popular success of “The Crown” has not negated the impact of the Royals on public opinion (4). After the Brexit their popularity is unchanged.

Naomi Oreskes, an American science historian (5), explained how the true story of the Ingalls family in the American series “The Little House on the Prairie” enchanted millions of children and adolescents in the 1970s worldwide. It was rewritten by Laura Ingalls' daughter, Rose Wilder Lane, a free-market activist and close to Republican president Herbert Hoover. Her family history has become a propaganda work to show that the first communities of settlers in the American West have succeeded in settling down “in hostile environments by the strength of their will alone, the cohesion of their family nucleus”. This perspective is wrong: the federal state heavily contributed to the installation of the first white settlers, plundering Indian lands. This example illustrates “market fundamentalism”, an expression suggested by George Soros, a financier and philanthropist, who denounced this approach. A new form of economic “evangelism” has gradually imposed itself in the United States in the 20th century, alongside religious fundamentalism, with the Evangelicals.

If English Windsors, Monegasque Grimaldis, together with other princely families, evoke a harmless «happy news», fundamentalist propaganda, on the contrary, is very dangerous.

Family Russia

Vladimir Putin used the family argument to justify his aggression against Ukraine. Russia, Belarus and Ukraine would be part of the same family – a Russian “Holy Trinity”. Membership begins with a strategy proven by authoritarian regimes to re-elect single or almost single candidates (6). The more authoritarian or even totalitarian the regime, the more the vote becomes a plebiscite. In the USSR, one gets “100% of votes for the single candidate” according to French and Russian researcher and other Galia Ackerman. From one election to another, “the percentage of votes for Putin grows.” There are several strategies to guide the votes. The first is to vote on categories where voting is not secret (military, state-owned company officials, patients in hospitals...). A second way is the “administrative resource” (6) - carousels, ballot stuffing.... A third way is to buy votes – gifts to voters, "meals, chocolates or some other little gift." or campaign promises, “build a children’s playground” or “improve the lot of retirees”. Galia Ackerman points out that support for Putin remains quite high, a “natural” vote between 60% and 70% depending on the region. One last way is to suppress competition by assassinating opponents (such as Alexei Navalny in February 2024) or sending them out with a bid or administratively disqualifying them (invalid applications).

The Russian opinion, acquired in Family Russia, is not enough. The year 2024 was sensitive with many strategic elections around the world. Influence strategies are extreme in countries that can be won by the Putin regime - in Georgia (in October 2024) or Romania (in November 2024), pro-Russian parties or candidates have won or have been well placed, using questionable methods to direct voters' votes (ballot stuffing in Georgia, vote manipulation in Romania for the Tik Tok candidate). Propaganda is maximum. A sophisticated arsenal is aimed at the western world. Viginum, a French organization fighting against foreign digital interference, speaks of "hostile information maneuvers" by Russia (7). The organization identified about 200 "information portals" used to disseminate pro-Russian propaganda targeting Kiev supporters in Europe. This network has been dubbed "Portal Kombat". Most of the sites (147) belong to the "historical ecosystem", sites created since 2013 targeting "Russian and Ukrainian audiences". The "-news.ru" ecosystem includes 41 "sites of interest" created between April and December 2022, intended for Russian-speaking audiences in Ukraine. Founded in June 2023, five more recent sites belong to the "Pravda ecosystem", a Russian word that means "truth". They are directly targeting western countries that have publicly shown their support for Ukraine: France, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Poland, Spain, the UK and the US. In Africa, the African initiative agency took over the revenues of the Wagner Group and multiplied the disinformation operations (8) A repentant of Wagner explained the methods used in Central African Republic, later duplicated in the countries of the Sahel, which have become openly against the Western World in 2024 (9)

A tormented family spirit in Europe

With the Orange Revolution of 2004, then Maidan in 2014, Ukraine wanted to attach itself to the House of Europe- heading West, to get away from the threat coming from the East (10). The war has revealed the return of a Russian imperialism «which justifies all monstrosities». The greatest instability is now coming from the West with the election of Donald Trump on the 5th of November 2024, who promised to settle things «in 24 hours» in Ukraine. Openly pro-Russian, the Republican president has for symbolic vice-president Elon Musk, who has become the indispensable man present in all important discussions, defending his own interests in countries strategic to his business such as Tesla in China, an ally of Russia. The billionaire openly mocked President Zelenski and continues to spread hateful and conspiratorial speech on X.

“Family Europe” is the safest option for Ukraine, provided that European leaders move to a war economy and succeed in convincing their public opinion. Two fronts are to be fought in the information war: against the Russian propaganda machine and against the «internal enemies» among democracies. Defending European values means in the first place finding insidious supporters of the Russian regime, driven by a speech that is apparently pacifist but often conspiratorial and insidiously hateful. To counter the Russian machine of disinformation, in Russia and in Russian-speaking territories, the NGO Reporters Without Borders (RSF) launched in March 2024 “Svoboda”, a satellite package with ten independent Russian-speaking channels and radios (11). Svoboda means “freedom” in Russian. The aim is to “reverse the logic of propaganda and offer a Russian-speaking audience access to television and radio channels where independent, serious, fact-based journalism prevails” in the spirit of Radio Free Europe during the cold war against Soviet propaganda. The project is a “pioneering initiative for the right to information in Russia,” which began in March 2022 when Jim Philipoff, a Ukrainian media owner, has requested that Eutelsat would replace the Russian satellite NTV and TriKolor in Ukraine. He obtained the support of the Diderot Committee in Europe (composed of journalist, researchers...).

Another essential front is to flush out the pro-Russian influence in the West. Anne Deysine (12), a French expert on American political and legal issues, warned of the violations of freedom of expression under the first amendment of the US constitution which “has long been interpreted in a broad, even absolutist manner.” by a Supreme Court that has become highly reactionary. It is possible to “lie, profess racist or anti-Semitic words under the protective umbrella of the First Amendment”. The only limit is defamation. According to French historian in medias David Colon, Elon Musk, owner of X, “embodies better than anyone else the new dynamic between influencers, algorithms and digital crowds” (13). For Elon Musk, “citizen journalism” is “a weapon of mass destruction of the factual reality”. The group of Vincent Bolloré, a French billionaire, in Europe and Africa, is another threat for democracy. His TV channel CNews is a caricatural copy of the American TV channel Fox news with the same reactionary spirit, defending extremist theories and candidates with the same deleterious effects on opinion. (14)

Disunited families in the Western World

NATO has a new Secretary General, Mark Rutte, since 1st of October 2024. In January 2024, NATO launched the operation “Stedfast Defender 24”, its largest series of military exercises in Europe since the end of the Cold War (15). They lasted until May 2024. These major exercises mobilized 90,000 men from 32 countries with 1,100 armoured vehicles, including 166 tanks. They were deployed in Poland, Norway, Romania, Finland, Slovakia, Greece and Sweden. The American General Randolph Staudenraus, chief of the operations of the NATO military command, stressed the importance of the event, the largest since the “Regorger exercise” in 1988 in which 125,000 men were deployed. Stedfast Defender 24 implements the new NATO defense plans, decided after the annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014 and adopted at the Vilnius summit (in July 2023). NATO military officials in their scenarios are designating Russia as the enemy. But what about “on day one”, according to Donald Trump’s fetish expression?

The greatest threat to families is disunity as instability is used by their enemies. The most frightening danger is always within the family. The «economic fundamentalism» was heralded by Ronald Reagan, cited as an example by Donald Trump and the economic circles that support him, including Elon Musk. Science historians Naomi Oreskes (Harvard University) and Erik Conway (NASA) have broken the propaganda machine of the most extreme and reactionary circles. They present a very distorted view of the market which uses the same springs as climate skepticism (5). According to Valentine Zuber, a French historian, Donald Trump wants to «unravel and rewrite the liberal theory that is at the basis of the American political system». He means to challenge “the international human rights system”, confirming the “illiberal slippage” of his first term (16). Protectionist and isolationist, American president evokes the possibility to leave NATO. The internal dissensions in Europe, the instability of the Franco-German duo, no longer a «couple», aggravates things (17). The chaotic political contexts in France and Germany, with shifting majorities sources of instability, explain the confusion and disastrous communication in Europe. The fundamental point of disagreement concerns the strategic military culture, which is the fruit of their histories (18). Germany insists on the NATO relationship and its anchoring with the US (and so NATO) but it is undermined by the uncertainty raised by the election of Donald Trump. France is advocating European sovereignty if the American ally would be missing. Countries in the Eastern part of Europe, on the front line, are arming themselves.

Dramas and melodramas are part of family history. This is not a matter of “strategic ambiguity” but of real existential anxiety, which became more pronounced in 2024. The greatest gift that children of diverse and varied Western democracies could ask Santa Claus in 2024 would be for their families to reconcile and move forward together in 2025. “Large family, happy family », sings the song (19), under the condition that they get along in the same direction...

- (1) In 1863 « Harper's Illustrated weekly », a newspaper in New York suggested a Santa Claus in a suit with white fur and wearing a wide leather belt. The designer Thomas NAST was the author.
- (2) Marcel Proust, « La recherche du temps perdu », Paris : Grasset et Gallimard, 1913-1927
- (3) France archives- https://francearchives.gouv.fr/fr/pages_histoire/39906 téléchargé le 11 mars 2024
- (4) Peter Morgan « The Crown », TV series (UK) – between 2016 and 2023
<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt4786824/>
- (5) Naomi Oreskes « La cause majeure du déni climatique est le fondamentalisme de marché », entretien de Stéphane Foucart, « Le Monde », 5 mars 2024
- (6) Galia Ackerman: «Pour que le régime en Russie change, il faut sa défaite totale en Ukraine», propos recueillis par Maria de França le 28 février 2024 dans un entretien fleuve accordé à la revue en ligne « La Règle du jeu »,
<https://laregledujeu.org/2024/03/06/40138/galia-ackerman-pour-que-le-regime-en-russie-change-il-faut-sa-defaite-totale-en-ukraine/>
- (7) Viginum, France info avec AFP - France Télévisions - Publié le 13/02/2024 12:03 Mis à jour le 16/02/2024 10:57 - https://www.francetvinfo.fr/monde/europe/manifestations-en-ukraine/ce-que-l-on-sait-de-portal-kombat-le-reseau-de-sites-de-desinformation-pro-russes-denonce-par-la-france_6362980.html
- (8) Thomas Eydoux et Morgane Le Cam, « La propagande russe en Afrique se réorganise », Le Monde, samedi 9 mars 2024
- (9) Morgane Le Cam « Les confessions d'un repentir de Wagner en Centrafrique », Le Monde, 22 novembre 2024
- (10) Editorial du Monde « Les nouveaux enjeux de la guerre », 24 février 2024
- (11) Philippe Jacqué « Svoboda, un bouquet satellitaire pour contrer la propagande du Kremlin », Le monde 7 mars 2024
- (12) Anne Deysine « Aux Etats-Unis, la liberté d'expression est devenue un danger pour la démocratie », Le Monde idées, 6 mars 2024
- (13) David Colon « Elon Musk, apôtre du postjournalisme », Le Monde Idées, 20 novembre 2024
- (14) Far right candidates Eric Zeymour in 2022 and Jordan Bardella in 2024; channels Canal Plus and Cnews, a radio station (Europe 1), a press group (Le Journal du Dimanche, Paris Match...) and an edition group bought from the Lagardère group
- (15) Cédric Pietralunga « L'OTAN renoue avec les manœuvres militaires d'ampleur », Le Monde, 10 & 11, 03, 2024
- (16) Valentine Zuber , Tribune , Le Monde Idées, 17 & 18 novembre 2024
- (17) Editorial « France-Allemagne : le devoir d'agir à l'unisson », 10 & 11/03/2024
- (18) Philippe Ricard « Ukraine : ambiguïté et confusion stratégique », Le Monde, 8/03/2024
- (19) French band , « Les Négresses vertes », France, 1991

Newsletter written on Monday, March 11 and updated on Friday, November 29, 2024

Useful contacts

We mean to share the following contacts

- 1- National Union of Journalists of Ukraine- [HTTPS://NUJU.ORG.UA/](https://nuju.org.ua/)
- 2- Ukrainian Parish of Saint Volodymyr –Paris – paroisse.st.volodymyr@gmail.com
- 3- Catholic Mission of the Polish Church in France also suggests the following link:<https://mission-catholique-polonaise.pl/polska-we-francji/pere-brzys-la-mcp-lance-une-initiative-nationale-pour-aider-lukraine/>

A list of associations & ONG - **Source** : <https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/actualites/A15542>

Support Ukraine — <https://www.supportukraine.co/>

Croix-Rouge Française - [Croix-Rouge française Redcross - https://www.croix-rouge.fr/Nos-actions/Action-internationale/Rechercher-un-programme/LA-CROIX-ROUGE-FRANCAISE-EN-UKRAINE](https://www.croix-rouge.fr/Nos-actions/Action-internationale/Rechercher-un-programme/LA-CROIX-ROUGE-FRANCAISE-EN-UKRAINE)

Médecins sans frontières - emergency funds in countries bordering Ukraine and seeking to bring in medical equipment and personnel. - <https://soutenir.msf.fr/faire-un-don/~mon-don>

Secours populaire – a call for support .- <https://don.secourspopulaire.fr/ukraine/~mon-don>

Protection civile - un appel aux dons pour financer d'autres besoins (défibrillateurs, respirateurs, groupes électrogènes, etc.) : <https://don.protection-civile.org/soutenir>

Fondation de France - lance un [appel à la générosité](https://dons.fondationdefrance.org/solidarite-avec-les-ukrainiens/~mon-don?) pour soutenir les centaines de milliers de personnes affectées par le conflit en Pologne et en Roumanie - - <https://dons.fondationdefrance.org/solidarite-avec-les-ukrainiens/~mon-don?>

Agence des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés - situation d'urgence de niveau 3 pour la crise en Ukraine, le plus élevé.: https://donner.unhcr.org/fr/fr-fr/urgence-ukraine?_cv=1

Unicef - un besoin urgent de financement pour répondre aux besoins essentiels des enfants Pour faire un don sur le site Unicef.fr - https://don.unicef.fr/b/mon-don?cid=322&_cv=1

ONG Care International - un [formulaire en ligne de dons d'urgence à l'Ukraine](https://soutenir.carefrance.org/) pour apporter une aide d'urgence aux populations et aux réfugiés - .- <https://soutenir.carefrance.org/>

L'ONG française ACTED organise des convois humanitaires pour l'Ukraine

association Solidarités International –pour envoyer des convois de vivres et biens de première nécessité, distribuer de l'eau et des repas aux réfugiés - https://dons.solidarites.org/b/mon-don?cid=880&_cv=1

Plan International, pour apporter aide matérielle et psychosociale aux jeunes ukrainiens et à leur famille, et [sollicite des dons](https://formulaire.plan-international.fr/urgence-ukraine/~mon-don) pour ce faire.- <https://formulaire.plan-international.fr/urgence-ukraine/~mon-don>

L'Aide médicale et caritative France-Ukraine - envoi de convois d'aide humanitaire, des soins aux blessés, des échanges de savoir-faire médical, une aide psychologique et organise des colonies de vacances pour les enfants orphelins - [HelloAsso](https://www.helloasso.com/associations/aide%20medicale%20caritative%20france%20ukraine/collectes/aider-ukraine-amurgence-help-ukraine/don) - <https://www.helloasso.com/associations/aide%20medicale%20caritative%20france%20ukraine/collectes/aider-ukraine-amurgence-help-ukraine/don>

Le Comité d'aide médicale Ukraine - réfugiés en transit dans l'ouest du pays, et collecte fonds, médicaments et équipements pour l'hébergement et les soins via ses partenaires français, l'association SAFE et l'organisation FONDEMOS. - <http://www.cam-z.org/en/news/121/>

JeVeuxAider.gouv.fr est la plateforme publique du bénévolat, - une page dédiée [Mobilisons-nous pour l'Ukraine](https://www.jeveuxaider.gouv.fr/engagement/benevolat-ukraine/) .- <https://www.jeveuxaider.gouv.fr/engagement/benevolat-ukraine/>

Les Banques alimentaires - une [aide d'urgence à apporter aux frontières de l'Ukraine](https://www.banquealimentaire.org/urgence-ukraine), dans les pays frontaliers accueillant des réfugiés - <https://www.banquealimentaire.org/urgence-ukraine>

La Protection Civile et l'Association des maires de France ont établi une [liste](#) (lits de camps, sacs de couchage, lingettes, conserves, pansements hémostatiques, solutions antiseptiques ...).

L'Association des maires de France a dressé les [lieux de collecte](#) à travers toute la France. Les Maires de France appellent à la [solidarité avec l'Ukraine](#) . De nombreuses villes de France organisent des collectes de produits de première nécessité - <https://www.amf.asso.fr/documents-les-maires-france-appellent-la-solidarite-avec-lukraine/41122>

La plateforme officielle « [Je m'engage pour l'Ukraine](#) » lancée le 8 mars 2022 par le gouvernement pour accompagner les Français souhaitant héberger chez eux des Ukrainiens réfugiés et accueillis en France.- <https://parrainage.refugies.info/>

Les associations, fondations, entreprises et collectivités territoriales peuvent utiliser ce [formulaire en ligne](https://www.demarches-simplifiees.fr/commencer/hebergement-personne-morale-ukraine) pour renseigner leur capacité d'hébergement.- <https://www.demarches-simplifiees.fr/commencer/hebergement-personne-morale-ukraine>

Bibliothèque sans frontière (BSF) - elle mobilise et déploie, partout en Europe, des solutions d'urgence pour l'accueil et l'intégration des populations réfugiées. - <https://www.bibliosansfrontieres.org/2022/10/14/bsf-lance-bonjour-france-une-application-innovante-dapprentissage-du-francais-pour-les-refugies-ukrainiens/>