



## Solidarity for Ukraine – 01/08/2023- issue 18 – *Papa Tango Charlie*

### IN THIS ISSUE

C for communication

B for brutal

P for persistent

E for eloquent

Useful contacts

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 8th for 2023 and the 18<sup>th</sup> since the beginning of the war in Ukraine. Communication, like cinema, is both an art and a technique. Between Vladimir Putin and Volodymyr Zelensky, a dialogue of the deaf has been established since the departure, which logically led to a coup de force by the Russian president in February 2022, convinced that his Ukrainian counterpart did not understand his message. But is

it that sure? Is it not exactly the opposite: Russia, which did not understand the communication, maybe confused at first, but increasingly clear of Ukraine ? Far from hesitating and doubting, it has asserted itself over the years – it refuses the Russian Diktat, to submit and to carry out itself, and suggests a dialogue “between equals”. In the Bible, the fight between David and Goliath has been full of surprises (1). Unexpectedly this was not the champion of the Philistines who won but David who was not the strongest, but the most determined because he was in his right. In the international aeronautical alphabet, each letter is represented by a word: A for Alpha, B for Bravo, etc (2). Papa Tango Charlie means “P- T – C”. This coding was created to avoid ambiguity or confusion when communicating, especially between aircraft and control tower. What is the alphabet of Russian-Ukrainian communication?

- 1- C for communication
- 2- B for brutal
- 3- P for persistent
- 4- E for eloquent

\* the logo was designed for Caritas Canada in February 2022

## C for communication

During the Second World War, an interesting episode occurred in Yugoslavia invaded by fascist troops. The Yugoslav partisans had set up with great ingenuity a mobile radio transmitter. The Italian military tried in vain to find it, unsuccessfully. The messages of the resistance continued to be broadcasted, causing bitter defeats to Mussolini's troops. Exasperated, the Italians found the parade: they suppressed all the radio stations of Yugoslav homes. When you can't suppress the broadcast, you attack the reception. This tragic comic episode of war perfectly reflects the pattern of a communication: a transmitter, a message, a receiver. Things became more complex in Western countries when they went from the Gutenberg galaxy (civilization of the written word) according to the Canadian sociologist Marshall McLuhan (3) to the Marconi galaxy, civilization of the oral (audiovisual). The written culture was based on reason, new (audiovisual) media appeal to emotion. They are extensions of our senses – the radio of hearing (audio), the television of sight and hearing (audiovisual), the book or the journal of sight (visual), the computer of sight then of hearing with access to the Internet. This is the meaning of his famous axiom-«the medium is the message». In the age of social networks, all senses are solicited, which increases the possibility that they are easily abused.

Specialists in propaganda, now called disinformation or cyberwar, know this, and play it. The image, supported by sound, is the battlefield of the modern form of war, at a distance, with sometimes subtle means, at other times frankly rudimentary – such as the anti-French videos dispatched by the Wagner militia in Africa.

Interpersonal communication between individuals also follows the same pattern- a sender sends a message to a receiver. We're either in the transmitter position or the receiver one. Communication problems are numerous and have different origins. A first explanation is related to the message which is not sufficiently clear; when it is repeated several times, several years, always in the same direction, it is rather unlikely that it lacks clarity. A second explanation is related to the messenger. An interlocutor can be quite convinced on the substance but very sceptical on the form. If the message is delivered by one or more persons with whom the "current" does not pass, the communication is blurred, sometimes confusing or even conflicting. Several explanations can be put forward. It is sometimes said that love at first sight is due to a chemical phenomenon, mutual attraction between human beings who are on the same page. The same pattern occurs in social relations, some human beings who get along with others do not agree with each other. Human chemistry is not an exact science. Yet if we carefully study the relationships that a human being has with his/her fellow human beings, whether they are family, friendly or social, it is rather unlikely that they are long mistaken. A first time can be missed but a series of failures questions the communication strategy: is it the fault of the receiver who would be systematically resistant to messages and messengers? Or on the contrary, does the problem come from the transmitter, who strives to use messengers who are unsuitable for the receiver?

## B for brutal

«*Barking at the wrong tree*» is a telling idiomatic expression – the Russian president has been barking since he came to power, without any success with Ukraine. It is hard not to have understood his message. His communication was clear, even expeditious, in the same sense-comply or you will be «crushed», terms used by Russia.

We know the long series of wars started by Vladimir Putin: Chechnya (in 2000) was the first act. He promised the necessarily “terrorist” Chechens he would “go till the toilet to get them”. The crudity of the language had been carefully chosen. The British documentary «Putin, the spy turned president» (4) showed that the Moscow attacks were not perpetrated by Chechens but mounted by the Russian secret services.

The war in Georgia (since 2008) is a second Putin «coup». The attack against an independent country in the middle of the Beijing Summer Olympics reminds us of the Russian aggression against Ukraine just after the Winter Olympics in China in 2022. Former Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili, who returned to his country, was imprisoned in 2021 and subjected to the same brutal and inhumane treatment as another famous opponent of Russian power, Alexander Navalny (5)

The war in Syria (since 2013) is a third act. The American refusal to intervene against the Syrian tyrant who used chemical weapons against his population, despite the «red line» for the Westerners, was a signal for the Russian president who drew closer to Iran and China by supporting Bashar Al Assad. Russian army systematically destroyed, under a deluge of missiles, Syrian cities accused of harbouring «terrorists» according to Syrian propaganda. Wagner’s first militiamen appeared on the Syrian battlefield before expanding their field of intervention in Africa and committing a long series of abuses (in the DRC, Mali, etc.).

The war in Crimea and Donbass (since 2014) has seen Wagner’s “little green men” gain weight with Putin’s “cooker” Yevgeni Prigozhin at their head. The outcome of the fighting was the annexation of Ukrainian territories that logically led to the war in Ukraine in 2022. All the elements that had been tested in previous conflicts are gathered - bludgeoning of untruths about Ukraine which would be a country to “denazify”; deluges of missiles on the country (several hundred thousand) ; terror against the population with war crimes already under investigation by the International Criminal Tribunal; Bucha massacre; bombs dropped on an opera house that housed children and civilians; rape and abuse against the civilian population; execution of a Ukrainian soldier taken prisoner whose video was posted on social networks and that President Zelensky made national hero on March 13, 2023- Oleksandr Matsiyevsky.

Putin’s brutal communication was stopped. It was short-circuited by an even more extreme brutality, that of Prigozhin, whose mutiny in June 2023 showed that the «creature» had turned against his «master”- Putin turned into Dr Frankenstein (6).

## P for persistent

“In the East, nothing new,” the Ukrainian president must say, as the message delivered by his Russian counterpart is repetitive, redundant, without nuance and without possible negotiation. “Take it or leave it”. Volodymyr Zelensky tried the first years of his mandate (2019-2022) to understand the situation and the conflict with Russia that he had inherited, Crimea and Donbass under Russian control since 2014. He met with his Russian counterpart only once, on 9 December 2019 in Paris, for peace talks. German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Emmanuel Macron acted as intermediaries, in a «Normandy format» inaugurated by François Hollande and his German counterpart, after hours of negotiations with Vladimir Putin, the Minsk agreements were supposed to bring peace to Ukraine (7).

President Zelensky tried to decode all the messages coming from Russia that were neither reassuring, nor constructive, nor encouraging. Several elements alerted him to the intentions of his Russian counterpart. It is clearly not an “*inter pares*” dialogue. Refusing a direct meeting is a sign. It is better to speak to God than to his Saints. It is rather difficult to know what a person who refuses to meet you wants and to recognize you as a partner. You can only get lost in conjecture. The intermediaries chosen is telling on the intentions of those who send them. When they deliver a simplistic message, communication is obscure and can discourage. Dialogue of the deaf is implicitly sterile.

The way of communicating is a message in itself. If communication is one-way from the outset, a balance of power is established. You’re not a legitimate counterpart. You will be asked to execute orders without flinching and without being able to bring your experience or skills. Even if you start with a very favourable opinion about a person or an organization that has a recognized reputation, contacts with emissaries sent on very special missions are revealing. If these emissaries do not present themselves as such, and play as a bonus the confusion in a most primary way, or display a facade of «friendship»; and if the same method is repeated several times, doubt sets in. Communication does not exist any longer; it is meaningless.

Volodymyr Zelenski knew Russia where he had success with his series «The Servant of the People». His grandfather had been a courageous officer in the Red Army against Nazi Germany. His family was well known. He could hope to be listened to carefully and be considered as a legitimate interlocutor. That was not the case. Vladimir Putin has consistently ignored him. The Ukrainian president has sought, and found, interlocutors who have recognized his full value - in the United States, in Western Europe, and even in Turkey which has agreed to play the “good offices”.

## E for eloquent

To get along, you must be on the same page, literally and figuratively. A popular expression to express interference that distorts a good communication evokes a «fried on the line» as in the times of the Soviet Union, where personalities or anonymous people were listened to by the secret services or the political police. One is very circumspect, and one is easily unnatural when one knows one is being watched, with the risk of being trapped by «listeners» who can use everything you say against you. This was clearly the case with Volodymir Zelensky who was misunderstood since the beginning.

A German TV film «Point blank» (8) tells the authentic story of an academic recruited by the East German political police, the Stasi. This German academic was the last sentenced to death executed by the GDR for «high treason». In East Berlin, at the turn of the 1980s, Franz Walter, a researcher in anthropology, promised a fine career at the University, accepted what he believed to be an unexpected opportunity: to resume in the near future a prestigious chair at the University in exchange for his collaboration with the Ministry of State Security – the Stasi. He is trapped by exceptional conditions - a brand new functional apartment, the ability to travel easily to the West. His first assignment was to investigate a former acquaintance, a star footballer who had passed to the West leaving his wife in the GDR. Franz Walter was quick disappointed by the nasty methods used by his colleagues – sexual machinations, blackmail and the use of false documents. It is too late to step back as he is already compromised, the regime’s grip is closing on him. This TV film is reminiscent of the book by George Orwell ‘1984’ (9) that took place in the Soviet Union in 1948. Putin’s Russia has not changed and applies the same brutal and coercive methods.

The difference between a dictatorship and a democracy is the existence of counter-powers. Human nature is the same in all latitudes and regimes. Under a dictatorship, the worst individuals take advantage of the situation and abuse with impunity the powers they can claim. The Prigozhin unsuccessful rebellion in June 2023 is an edifying example. In a democracy, there are also abuses, mistakes and failures made by the most sensitive public services. Fortunately, they are closely monitored. Officers are assessed and their work is cross assessed. The drafters of the American Constitution instituted in 1787 a presidential regime organized according to a strict separation of the three powers (executive, legislative and judicial) inspired by Locke (1632-1704) and Montesquieu (1689-1755) which is tempered by the existence of reciprocal means of control and action designed in accordance with the doctrine of "checks and balances" (10). Volodymir Zelensky, refusing the Russian diktat and valiantly resisting with the support of his Western allies, is the living symbol that these “checks and balances” work on the international scene. The messenger is eloquent; his journey and his commitment speak for themselves. He knew how to be the man of the situation. Message well received from his western allies.

*Papa Tango Charlie – from Kiev to Moscow ....*

- (1) David and Goliath- <https://www.lejourduseigneur.com/videos/la-bible-animee-david-et-goliath-31> téléchargé le 15 mars 2023
- (2) How it flies - <https://www.commentcavole.com/allo-papa-tango-charlie/> downloaded on the 15<sup>th</sup> of March 2023
- (3) Mac Luhan (Marshall) 1962 « The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man” Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- (4) Nick Green (2020) “Putine, a spy become president », London: BBC, broadcasted in February 2023 on French public TV France 5
- (5) Bernard -Henri Levy “Mikheïl Saakachvili ne doit pas mourir”, La Règle du Jeu- 6 March 2023- <https://laregledujeu.org/2023/03/06/39098/mikheil-saakachvili-ne-doit-pas-mourir/>
- (6) Mary Shelley (1831) , « Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus”, Londres: Lackington, Hughes,
- (7) the Jean Jaurès Foundation, as part of its partnership “Ukraine is our neighbour”, has published a text, produced by the Euromaidanpress site in 2018 and updated, detailing the content of these agreements and the progress of their application. <https://www.jean-jaures.org/publication/tout-ce-qu'il-faut-savoir-sur-les-accords-de-minsk-en-22-questions/>
- (8) Franziska Stünkel (2021), « Point blank », Germany, ZDF, broadcasted on French-German public TV Arte March 2023- <https://www.arte.tv/fr/videos/077292-000-A/a-bout-portant/>
- (9) George Orwell (1949) « 1984 - *Nineteen Eighty-Four*”, Londres : Secker & Warburg
- (10) Article published by public platform “Vie publique” in July 2018 on the separation of powers in the United States of America -<https://www.vie-publique.fr/parole-dexpert/270289-la-separation-des-pouvoirs>





orphan children – HelloAsso -

<https://www.helloasso.com/associations/aide%20medicale%20caritative%20france%20ukraine/collectes/aider-ukraine-amcurgence-help-ukraine/don>

**Le Comité d'aide médicale Ukraine** - refugees in transit in the west of the country, and raises funds, medicines and equipment for accommodation and care through its French partners, the association SAFE and the organization FONDEMOS.- <http://www.cam-z.org/en/news/121/>

**JeVeuxAider.gouv.fr** is the public platform for volunteerism - a dedicated page Mobilizing for Ukraine . <https://www.jeveuxaider.gouv.fr/engagement/benevolat-ukraine/>

**Les Banques alimentaires** - emergency assistance to be provided at Ukraine's borders in border countries hosting refugees.- <https://www.banquealimentaire.org/urgence-ukraine>

**La Protection Civile et l'Association des maires de France** have established a list (camp beds, sleeping bags, wipes, preserves, haemostatic dressings, antiseptic solutions, etc.).

**L'Association des maires de France** has set up collection sites throughout France. The Mayors of France call for solidarity with Ukraine . Many cities in France organize collections of basic necessities - <https://www.amf.asso.fr/documents-les-maires-france-appellent-la-solidarite-avec-lukraine/41122>

**La plateforme officielle** « *Je m'engage pour l'Ukraine* » launched on March 8, 2022 by the government to support French people wishing to host Ukrainians refugees and welcomed in France.

Associations, foundations, companies and local authorities can use an online form to inform their hosting capacity.- <https://www.demarches-simplifiees.fr/commencer/hebergement-personne-morale-ukraine>

**Bibliothèque sans frontière (BSF)** - Since the beginning of the Russian offensive in Ukraine, BSF has been mobilizing and deploying emergency solutions for the reception and integration of refugee populations throughout Europe. «Bonjour France» is an innovative and totally free smartphone app that offers accelerated French learning from Ukrainian, available since October 19, 2022. –

<https://www.bibliosansfrontieres.org/2022/10/14/bsf-lance-bonjour-france-une-application-innovante-dapprentissage-du-francais-pour-les-refugies-ukrainiens/>

The 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/> - **Source** : French catholic conference of the archbishops