



Solidarity Ukraine – 01/09/2022- issue 7 - a question of time

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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 24 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 newsletter is the 6th issue since the 1st of March 2022. We will publish a new issue every first day of the month as long as this brutal, total and illegal war lasts. The psychological profile of Russian President Vladimir Putin is well known - a cynical and brutal character, he knows only the balance of power. When he appeared on the international

scene in 2001, he did not have such an image. In Slovenia, in June 2001, US President George W. Bush looked at him in the eyes and saw “his soul” . (1) In the legend of Faust, inspired by a German folk tale of the Middle Ages, popularized by Goethe in the 19th century (2), the hero is a man admired by the people for his wisdom and profound knowledge. Yet overwhelmed by the insignificance of his knowledge and always dissatisfied, he decides to sign a pact with the Devil who undertakes to initiate him to earthly pleasures and serve him faithfully in this world; in exchange Faust will deliver his soul to him in the afterlife. Has the Russian president signed such a deal with the devil? To understand it, you must go back to his learning years and identify a breaking point – we suggest a three-step waltz.

- 1- Flowers' time
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* logo designed by Caritas Canada in February 2022

Flowers' time (3)

The Russian president was born under Stalin. The Soviet Union (USSR) had emerged strengthened from the Second World War, with a Europe divided into two blocs- the Western democracies with the United States of America and its allies opposed to the Eastern countries, “popular democracies” under theegis of the USSR.

Military alliances reflect these blocs. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), founded in 1949, composed of 30 countries from Europe and North America, opposes the Warsaw Pact countries, signed by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), Albania (until 1968), Bulgaria, Romania, Poland, Hungary, the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and the Czechoslovak Republic; the GDR was not present at the signing but joined the pact in 1956 (4).

These genuinely different political regimes have as corollary opposite economic systems on everything. The Western economies are based on liberalism- freedom of movement (capital, goods & services, people), the market law (price created by the supply and demand confrontation), with a law adapted to protect initiative, enterprise and property. Eastern economies were planned - a single centre of decision-making that organized everything from production to distribution, nationalization (collective or state ownership of enterprises, no private ownership) and an arbitrarily fixed price (no market law). An economic disaster.

Each model has tried to give an idyllic picture of its system. The Western world is not perfect. Information freely flows; media pluralism (public and private) allows citizens to form their opinions by comparing opposing perspectives. Individual and public freedoms are guaranteed by a state of law, *a sine qua non* condition for democracy, with a separation of powers suggested by Montesquieu (5) - executive (government), legislative (parliament) and judicial (qualified magistrates who ensure fair trials with well-trained lawyers to defend their fellow citizens).

In the Eastern Bloc, information is official, which gives the advantage of not thinking too much, a single message is much simpler to integrate by citizens. Individual and public freedoms are not an issue since the party takes in charge the whole life of individuals from birth to death, with a guaranteed job for life. It is not useful to travel too much except for meeting with national communist parties, to reassure oneself on the effectiveness and strength of the regime that mobilizes millions of individuals. Official parades and party congresses prove the popularity of the regime, and that its power to protect its fellow citizens from the dangers of the Western world.

This «perfect» world, this «flowers' time» is very well described by British writer George Orwell in 1984 (6). He very well knew the USSR and the Stalinist regime – his hero works in the service of propaganda and has some doubts on the limits of the system; caught up by the “Police of Thought”, he ends up liking «Big brother». « *All is well in the Brave New world ...* » (7)

Cherries'time (8)

President Vladimir Putin grew up in this «perfect» world. The Slavic soul is nostalgic - of a blessed epoch that only existed in the official history textbooks; of a USSR that stretched as far as the eye could see with the unconditional but sometimes constrained support of its satellite countries. The faith of the Russian president, when he was a child then a teenager, must not have been much shaken by Budapest in 1956 or Prague in 1968 . Soviet tanks intervened in the Hungarian and Czechoslovakian streets to «pacify» citizens abused by the deceptive sirens of the Western world. These interventions must have strengthened his belief in the invulnerability of the USSR

Vladimir Putin had a patriotic spirit and decided very young to serve his homeland by joining the intelligence services (KGB then FSB). Their reputation is as legendary as those of its lifelong opponents - the American CIA or British MI6 (SIS in the first place). The exploits of the American agency have been popularized by the talent of Hollywood writers and directors. The British service was very well described by «spy novelists» with more nuances, and ambiguities than their American colleagues across the Atlantic. Their presentation may have given rise to doubt. In his novels, John Le Carré insists on the littleness and treachery of the British intelligence services in post-war years. The existential questions of his hero may justify rallies to the opposing camp, unthinkable in a Hollywood film. Another British spy novelist, Ted Allbeury subtly explained the most famous betrayal, Kim Philby's one, both agent of British and Russian intelligence services, who left to the USSR (9).. The hero of the novel, in charge of investigating Philby's past, explains his behaviour by three reasons: « *You saw what the Nazis were doing and were going to do. You saw what was happening in England. The unemployment. The indifference. The failure of socialism. And lastly because you are a romantic* ».

President Vladimir Putin is also a romantic. He was conquered by the image sent back from the USSR and its intelligence services by the United States- they often inspired terror especially at the time of McCarthyism and under the Republican presidencies with a primary anti-communism (for instance under Reagan's mandates). British novelists suggested a more romantic image of USSR— they knew more about the faults of British society than the Soviet reality. The USSR did not leave indifferent, the KGB inspired respect. Internationally recognized, their reputation extended beyond European or American borders. The USSR existed, it was feared, it had to be reckoned with it and its devoted servants. Vladimir Putin was not only convinced by the official speech delivered by his country but by the image of «greatness» that he received from British literature or Hollywood films. The mirror effect is even more decisive when the image is sent back to you by your opponents. If the Americans and the British were impressed, a young Russian patriot thirsting for greatness could only adhere to the cause. The Russian president was the first “groupie” of the Soviet national narrative.

Crying time (10)

The mirror broke with the implosion of the USSR in 1991. The process began with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. The KGB officer Putin was stationed in East Germany (GDR) at the time, in the front row to watch his world collapse, as an irony of History. The following ten years (1991-2001) were challenging. The USSR disappeared from the international scene, its satellite countries took their independence one after the other, Russia no longer worried anyone. For Vladimir Putin, the United States and the Western bloc have forgotten them, abandoned them, «despised» them. He conceived a personal resentment.

However, the Russian president elected in 2001, first presented a friendly face. He suggested a “historic” rapprochement at a summer press conference where he stated that Russia did not see “NATO as a hostile organization”. He even considered a membership. (1) In September 2001, after the terrorist attacks of 9/11 in New York, he suggested before the German Parliament «a common front, from Chechnya to Al-Qaeda, against the jihadists». He meant to be a member of the international coalition against terrorism. More and more tough against its opponents internally, especially in the fierce repression carried out in Chechnya (massacres and war crimes, Grozny razed), the Russian president looked friendly on the international scene.

Several elements in Europe and the Middle East provoked a Russian mistrust towards the United States and the Western world. The so-called “colour revolutions”- pink in Georgia in 2003 and orange in Ukraine in 2004, were led by pro-Western leaders. They were perceived as attacks against the Russian world - «*Rusky mir*» (1). The suspicion is aggravated by the accession of 7 new countries to NATO, former satellites of the USSR in 2004 - Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. The American intervention in Iraq in 2003 with the support of the United Kingdom, based on a lie (11) discredited the Western bloc – this was the evidence that the “democratic truth” was biased. The Russian side intended to impose its own truth. At a press conference at the end of 2007, Vladimir Putin gave a virulent speech against the United States, unprecedented since the fall of the USSR, which was a surprise for western chancelleries.

Hostilities were definitely declared in 2008 when the Russian army intervened in August to support the separatists of South Ossetia and Abkhazia against the Georgian government. The war lasted only four days after an international mediation (led by the French president); but the Georgian territory was cut by 20%. The 2011 Arab Springs and the treatment of Libyan leader Gaddafi were seen as other demonstrations of “Western impunity” for the Russian President (1). He chose to support the Assad regime in Syria. The demonstrations that break out in several Russian cities in 2012 were for him the striking proof of the hand of the Westerners, paranoia settled, and a repression fell against the opponents in Russia.

Time and nothing else (12)

The war really started in Ukraine in 2014 after the current president suggested an agreement with the European Union. Pro-European demonstrators were bloodily repressed in February 2014 during the Maïdan revolution against pro-Russian opponents. Vladimir Putin again denounced a Western plot. In the aftermath, it annexed Crimea, taking NATO and the United States by surprise, which found incredulous the instrumentalization of pro-Russian separatists who won the referendum. After the Sochi Olympic Games (the same month), to the glory of its leader and sportsmen, Russia is caught «by euphoria, nationalist intoxication», a «rediscovered pride». In September 2014, the Minsk agreements were signed by Ukraine to normalize the situation in Donbass with a biased mediation of Russia, and those of Germany and France -the Normandy format was inaugurated on this occasion. The war in Donbass killed 14,000 people between February 2014 and February 2022. It was an instrument of permanent destabilization of Russia in Europe; a sword of Damocles

Timing is important in war times. It is probably not a coincidence that Vladimir Putin attacked Ukraine in February 2022, precisely eight years after the Maidan Revolution and the Beijing Olympics, when the Russian president declared his willingness to fight alongside the Chinese president, another democrat, against the West in a Sino-Russian declaration that suggested a new world democratic model for the 21st century, a new «era» (13).

But this time, the Russian president was taken to his own game. U.S. President Joe Biden, who was vice President in 2014, took on the opposite side of the Obama administration's strategy - anticipating the conflict, publicly denouncing the great Russian manoeuvres at Ukraine's borders (real-time information from US services), sanctioning Russia's economic and financial interests and massively supporting Ukraine (14)

Time played in favour of Vladimir Putin's for twenty years (2001-2021) against Western democracies that believed themselves as being invulnerable and probably eternal after the fall of the Berlin Wall. But the wheel turned; the United States and the Western bloc finally woke up from a deep sleep. The awakening was abrupt, but time reversed.

Vladimir Putin has indeed recreated a Cold War. He should remember that the USSR did not win. To quote one of the most famous "spy writer," Ian Fleming, the father of agent 007 :“Only diamonds are forever”.

- (1) Piotr Smolar « Russie-Occident-Vingt ans de radicalisation », Le Monde, dimanche 6 et lundi 7 mars 2022
- (2) Johann Wolfgang von Goethe « *Faust* », *Francfort sur Main*, 1808 & 1832.
- (3) “Le Temps des Fleurs», 1968, song by the French singer Dalida; the French lyrics were written by Eddy Marnay, the melody is taken from the Russian love song "Dorogoi dlinnoyu", composed by Boris Fomin en 1924- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yGm8Dgd_3cU
- (4) Warsaw Pact, Instrument of the Cold War, Geo file - <https://www.geo.fr/histoire/pacte-de-varsovie-instrument-de-la-guerre-froide-202161>
- (5) Montesquieu (Charles de Secondat de) « De l'esprit des lois », Genève, 1748.
- (6) George Orwell « 1984 », London, 1948
- (7) Aldous Huxley, « Brave New World », London, 1932.
- (8) Jean-Baptiste Clément and Auguste Renard, 1866, " **Le Temps des Cerises** ", a love song that also evokes the civil war in Paris known as the “Commune” in 1871 brutally repressed in blood - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F9zsVscFOJg>
- (9) Ted Allbeury, 1981 « « The other Side of Silence », London: Panther Books , Granada Publishing- . The conclusions of the British agent (hero of the book) in charge of investigating are much more nuanced than the sulphurous legend lent to Kim Philby, and his death in Moscow
- (10)« Le temps des pleurs », 1966, song by French singer Claude François, taken from his album « J'attendrai »- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hoq-7ASLmNw>
- (11) mass destruction weapons supposedly in the hands of Saddam Hussein that have never been proven and resulted in the suicide of a British expert who had to sign the official report attesting of their existence under pressure from his government (led by Tony Blair).
- (12)« Le temps et rien d'autre » by Charles Aznavour's in his album “le temps”, 1965- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ISSZYTPhqVo>
- (13) Sylvie Kauffmann « Moscou-Pékin, une amitié « sans limites », Le Monde, jeudi 10 février 2022
- (14) the United States has spent nearly 43 billion euros since January 2022, including nearly 24 billion in military aid (56% of the total)- the Kiel Institute for the World Economy cited by French newspaper Le Monde – July 2022
- (15) Ian Fleming « *Diamonds are for ever* », London, 1956

Useful Contacts

To help Ukraine, here is a list of associations & NGOs published on the site [Support Ukraine](#)

Croix-Rouge Française - [Croix-Rouge française](#) pour des dons financiers, en soutien de la Croix-Rouge ukrainienne, au Comité International de la Croix-Rouge

Médecins sans frontières - [fonds d'urgence](#) dans les pays limitrophes de l'Ukraine et cherchent à faire entrer du matériel médical et du personnel.

Secours populaire - lance un appel aux [dons d'urgence à l'Ukraine](#) .

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](#) pour soutenir les centaines de milliers de personnes affectées par le conflit en Pologne et en Roumanie

Agence des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés - situation d'urgence de niveau 3 pour la crise en Ukraine, le plus élevé. L'UNHCR a renforcé ses opérations en Ukraine et dans les pays voisins, pour la soutenir, vous pouvez faire un don : site Donner.unhcr.org

Unicef - un besoin urgent de financement pour répondre aux besoins essentiels des enfants
Pour faire un [don sur le site Unicef.fr](#) .

ONG Care International - un [formulaire en ligne de dons d'urgence à l'Ukraine](#) pour apporter une aide d'urgence aux populations et aux réfugiés.

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

association Solidarités International – une [collecte des fonds](#) pour envoyer des convois de vivres et biens de première nécessité, distribuer de l'eau et des repas aux réfugiés

Plan International, en Pologne, Roumanie et Moldavie, pour apporter aide matérielle et psychosociale aux jeunes ukrainiens et à leur famille, et [sollicite des dons](#) pour ce faire.

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](#) ;

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.](#)

JeVeuxAider.gouv.fr est la plateforme publique du bénévolat, - une page dédiée [Mobilisons-nous pour l'Ukraine](#) .

Les Banques alimentaires - une [aide d'urgence à apporter aux frontières de l'Ukraine](#), dans les pays frontaliers accueillant des réfugiés.

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

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.

Les associations, fondations, entreprises et collectivités territoriales peuvent utiliser ce [formulaire en ligne](#) pour renseigner leur capacité d'hébergement.

Source : <https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/actualites/A15542>

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