



Solidarity for Ukraine – 01/02/2023- issue 12 – Valentine’s day

DANS CE NUMERO

from Putin with love

Zelensky’s way

French way

Love words

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 second for 2023 and the 12th since March 2022. We publish a new issue every first day of the month as long as this brutal, total and illegal war lasts. This issue “celebrates” the first anniversary of the conflict. The date is important in a war. The aggressor tries to build a narrative (storytelling) that presents him in his best light, a

«savior» in front of an «enemy» guilty of the worst crimes with precise references to the past (often revisited) but above all by lending him the worst intentions for the future (equally fantasized). The manipulation of public opinion is at stake. A war is waged on three levels – the belligerents (the front), their public opinions (the rear) and the rest of the world (that is “summoned” by the aggressor to take sides). It is not difficult to choose sides in the Ukrainian case. We will question the symbolism of the date, the month of February is supposed to be the month of love..

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* the logo was sdesigned by Caritas Canada in February 2022

The story of a disamour

In the most famous films about the mafia, which feature violent feelings and often negative emotions, the dates are very symbolic for the strokes. Heads of “family” or “clan” carefully choose the moment. In the saga by Francis Ford Coppola’s «*Godfathers*» made in the seventies with a third opus twenty years later, the «great maneuvers» or «actions on the ground» are carefully chosen. In “*The Godfather*” (1972), the film opens on the marriage of Don Corleone’s only daughter, which will have a decisive impact on the future -the son-in-law, disappointed not to have a decisive role in the family, takes revenge on his wife (whom he mistreated) This will provoke the anger of his older brother, and the betrayal of the son-in-law who passes to the opposing camp. The other mafia clans were waiting in ambush, war is declared (1). In the “*Godfather 2*” (1974), another “vendetta” was triggered by the Corleone family at the time of the sister’s son’s baptism, who was decidedly guilty (2). The last opus, «*Godfather 3*» (1990) ends, in blood, in Palermo, with special «Sicilian vespers» - the godfather’s son is killed on the steps of the Opera after having sung the title role of the Opera «*Cavalleria rusticana*» (3).

The Russian president decided to attack in February. He could have chosen February 14, Valentine’s Day. He may have felt that his “love words” would not have been understood. Moreover he had to wait until the end of the Olympic Games on February 20, 2022 to decide to attack on the 24th. The date coincided with another key moment for Vladimir Putin, the Maidan Revolution. On 23 February 2014, the speaker of the Ukrainian Parliament was appointed interim speaker until the presidential election scheduled for 25 May. Ukraine was then divided between the pro-European West, which took power, and the pro-Russian South-East, where pro-Russian self-defence brigades began to form. The prohibition of the Russian language in the 13 regions of the 27 regions of Ukraine serves as a pretext. The Maidan Revolution, in which Western Ukrainians proclaim their desire for independence, freedom, moving closer to the West, and the European Union, was taken as a *casus belli* by Russia, a declaration of “disamour” by Ukrainians. It provoked a covert war, with the occupation of Crimea and Donbass as early as 2014, which finally erupted with the attack of 24 February 2022. The “sentimental” dimension of the conflict may be surprising, but the Russian president acts as a disheartened lover, who has not endured a “loving spite” and seeks revenge for the affront eight years later. Resentment is eternal.

A beautiful love story

The Ukrainian president was first gravely mocked by his Russian counterpart, who called him “my pretty” by promising him the worst outrages. He received and understood his “declaration of love” on February 24, 2022. He did not hide. His formula to U.S. President Joe Biden to exfiltrate him remained famous: “I need ammunition, not a taxi driver”. Volodymyr Zelensky immediately adopted the costume of the Charming Knight ready to defend, at the risk of his life, a Ukraine unjustly and brutally attacked.

The threat is not virtual. The Ukrainian intelligence services, with the support of their allies, have prevented a dozen attacks against the Ukrainian president since the beginning of the conflict. These plots have all been fomented by the infamous Russian private militia, the Wagners, who are responsible for the Russian president’s nefarious work. Volodymyr Zelensky’s visit to Washington on December 21, 2022, the first day of winter and the 300th day of the conflict, is part of Ukraine’s enduring record of bravery. The Western media have detailed the security arrangements put in place to ensure that he arrives safely in Washington for his speech to the US Congress. His journey is yet another burst of brilliance, one more, of a serving knight who gave himself body and soul to his beloved Ukraine. Volodymyr Zelensky has found words since the beginning of the war to reassure her and give her hope. A journalist from the *New York Times* recalled the strategy, both personal and very professional, implemented by the Ukrainian president, symbolized by his final message of 31 December 2022 (4) *“This year began on February 24, when Russia first invaded Ukraine. But we’ll never be afraid again.”* The year was *“our year. The year of Ukraine. The year of the Ukrainians.”* He has tirelessly defended Ukraine throughout his actions among Western public opinion - in a message to the US Congress in March 2022, it brings the Russian attack closer to that against Pearl Harbor in 1941 by Japan allied to Nazi Germany or that of September 2001 against New York by Islamist terrorists. The fight is similar in Ukraine, the defense of democracy. He quotes Shakespeare or Winston Churchill before the British Parliament . The Ukrainian president’s “love words” are far more compelling than those of his Russian counterpart because they are sincere and the love story that has been woven with Ukrainians since his election in 2019 has never wavered.

« Map of the tender - some teachings »

Written by Madeleine de Scudéry in the 17th century, the Map of the Tender is a «topographical representation of conduct and love practice» (5). Its purpose is to guide any candidate to a sentimental experience from the city of the New Friendship to the city of the Tender. Three paths are proposed. The quickest leads to disaster; the other two ways that frame it ensure the «solidity of the future», if it does not «run aground on the pitfall of pride». The author warns us that between the "Sea of Enmity" and the "Lake of Indifference", the "river of inclination" leads straight to the "dangerous sea" and the "Unknown Lands". The 17th century was one of great explorers and discoveries, we know how dangerous the «*Terra incognita*» can sometimes be. We must be wary of seemingly simple and hospitable shores, like sleepy waters. They can reveal many surprises. The Larousse article indicates that this card presented as a board game for very privileged players, sometimes presented as precious or mannered, poses more seriously the problem of the freedom of the individual in the face of love: is it born of chance or impulse? Can it be built or is it just a fatal passion? Preciousness has often been mocked; yet it has sought to "bring men out of selfishness and brutality, to teach them esteem, respect, refinement." It is not so superficial and artificial as it seems.

Form, or style, counts; it is a true message. Vladimir Putin's "love words" to Ukraine were understood as they should be- a charade and a trap. His goal was not to rally his «Ukrainian brothers», to make them free and equal citizens, but to enslave a people; to vassalize a nation, and to suppress a president democratically elected by his fellow citizens. On the other hand, Volodymyr Zelensky's long message of love to his people and his country was perfectly received by the Ukrainians, who all rallied to his «white panache», that of a true Knight of modern times, who showed humility, of courage and self-denial. He did not try to "bludgeon" his fellow citizens, nor to brutalize them, he was able to convince them patiently, by daily messages, an attention of every moment. On December 21, 2022, in his speech to the American Congress, he said that he was not coming to ask for charity from the United States but the means to fight against the Russian oppressor to defend democracy. The difference between Putin and Zelensky is not only on the form but on the substance, which are always closely intertwined

Hymn to love

The French daily newspaper *Le Monde* has published letters written by Russian schoolchildren to their soldiers. They are further proof of the vast propaganda operation at work in Russia where many young people are convinced that the Russian army intervened to free the Ukrainians from the yoke of bloody oppressors. As always, manipulation reverses roles: the aggressor becomes the aggressor. It can be admitted that this official narrative can work in the smaller towns and the more remote countryside, which have access to information only through television which is in the hands of nationalist propagandists in the pay of the Kremlin. But in the days of Internet 3.0 and Generation Z, especially in big cities, this propaganda worthy of the Soviet Union can no longer function. The Russian population will not be fooled indefinitely, as will the Russian-speaking Ukrainian population, some of which has remained loyal to Russia.

The generation gap is clear between a Russian regime in the hands of aging or younger caciques but equally nationalistic and fanatical, caricatures of the past versus a Ukrainian government led by a young team, not only by age but also in spirit and the newness of the missions they had to undertake. On the Russian side, the old songs and records stripped of autocrats trained in the times of the USSR; on the Ukrainian side, the modern techniques that «blues» (for war) knew how to handle with intelligence and dexterity. The New York Times reporter recalled how the Ukrainian president has continually encouraged his people by saying that a large part of the world supported him and still does “Ukrainians surprised. Ukrainians are applauded. Ukrainians are an inspiration.” His message of love not only conquered Ukraine, but the entire democratic world.

To the Ukrainian President, we wish to dedicate on this anniversary month the words of a great lover, Edith Piaf, who was inspired by his lost love, Marcel Cerdan, the most beautiful hymn to love ever composed (7):

*“The blue sky may well collapse
And the Earth may well fall
I don't care if you love me
I don't care about the whole world»*

- 1- [CNN, 22/12/2022. - https://edition.cnn.com/2022/12/22/europe/putin-uses-word-war-fighting-ukraine-russia-intl-hnk/index.html](https://edition.cnn.com/2022/12/22/europe/putin-uses-word-war-fighting-ukraine-russia-intl-hnk/index.html)
- 2- Michael D. Regan, Michael Gold et Mihir Zaveri, “28 Dead in ‘Once in a Generation’ Blizzard in Western New York”, 26 décembre 2022 - <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/26/nyregion/blizzard-storm-snow-deaths.html>
- 3- Stéphane Courtois historian and Olivier Védrine, specialising in Russia and geopolitics, special edition dedicated to Ukraine on the occasion of the American visit of president Zelensky in Washington, French TV channel BFM, 21st of December 2022 ; 20h
- 4- 4000 cruise missiles fired by Russia on Ukraine from February to December 2022 according to Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Chmyhal, interviewed by the newspaper Le Monde on December 13, 2022
- 5- Piotr Smolar, Le Monde, 23rd of December 2022 & François Clémenceau, Journal du Dimanche, 24th of December 2022
- 6- including 1 billion in the form of arms donated to Kiev from the US Army’s stockpile, quickly deliverable; 850 million in orders to the Defence industry - La Croix avec l’Afp, 21 décembre 2022
- 7- Julien Bouissou et Philippe Ricard, « Kiev obtient une aide d’urgence de ses alliés », Le Monde, 15 décembre 2022
- 8- In France, the Centre for research & Observation on conditions of life (CREDOC) created in 2018 an observatory of vulnerabilities; inflation experienced by households, especially the most modest ones, increases the “feeling of vulnerability”
- 9- Martin Luther King, discours prononcé en 1963 - http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xqig5z_martin-luther-king-i-have-a-dream-sous-titres-francais_news
- 10- Sarah Repucci and Amy Slipowitz, “The Global Expansion of Authoritarian Rule” in « Freedom in the world 2022”, Freedom House , February 2022 - https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/FIW_2022_PDF_Booklet_Digital_Final_Web.pdf
- 11- Institute quoted by Gilles Paris, a journalist specialising in Geopolitics « L’autocratisation résiste dans le monde », Le Monde, jeudi 22 décembre 2022
- 12- Bruce Springsteen, song from his album (2008) « Working on a dream”- <https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-d&q=tomorrow+never+knows+springsteen#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:871f0186,vid:9e3kD4a4W6o>

Useful contacts

If you wish to support Ukraine, please find below a selection of associations & NGOs - **Source** : <https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/actualites/A15542>

Support Ukraine – a platform available on - <https://www.supportukraine.co/>

Croix-Rouge Française - French Red Cross for financial donations, in support of the Ukrainian Red Cross, to the International Committee of the Red Cross - <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 - appeals for emergency donations to Ukraine - <https://don.secourspopulaire.fr/ukraine/~mon-don>

Protection civile - a call for donations to finance other needs (defibrillators, respirators, generators, etc.) - <https://don.protection-civile.org/soutenir>

Fondation de France - Appeals for generosity to support the hundreds of thousands of people affected by the conflict in Poland and Romania - <https://dons.fondationdefrance.org/solidarite-avec-les-ukrainiens/~mon-don?>

Agence des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés - Level 3 emergency situation for the Ukraine crisis, the highest. UNHCR has strengthened its operations in Ukraine and neighbouring countries, to support it, you can donate: Donner.unhcr.org - https://donner.unhcr.org/fr/fr-fr/urgence-ukraine?_cv=1

Unicef - an urgent need for funding to meet the basic needs of children To donate on the website Unicef.fr - https://don.unicef.fr/b/mon-don?cid=322&_cv=1

ONG Care International - an online emergency donation form to Ukraine to provide emergency assistance to populations and refugees.- https://soutenir.carefrance.org/mon-don/~mon-don?ns_ira_cr_arg=IyMjIyMjIyMjIyMjIyMjIyMjIyMjIyMjIyMjIyMjIyMjIyMjIyPkJ6HFA1Y69SN8wBpGdbU49oyB0t9PJwOohrrNCWZ1E1xvYyuCP14dJQ2nrY0C9CFXInHRxueOqPBpQ7tkkn%2F&private_server_time=1672227862538&cid=13&_cv=1

L'ONG française ACTED organizes humanitarian convoys for Ukraine

association Solidarités International – raising funds to send convoys of food and basic necessities, distributing water and meals to refugees - https://dons.solidarites.org/b/mon-don?cid=880&_cv=1

Plan International, in Poland, Romania and Moldova, to provide material and psychosocial assistance to young Ukrainians and their families, and solicit donations to do so. - <https://formulaire.plan-international.fr/urgence-ukraine/~mon-don>

L'Aide médicale et caritative France-Ukraine - sending humanitarian aid convoys, care for the wounded, exchanges of medical know-how, psychological assistance and organising holiday camps for

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