



## Solidarity Ukraine –issue 50- Number 5 – 5th human sense

### IN THIS ISSUE

Number 5- polysemous

Fifth *column in Russia*

*5 magnificent in Ukraine*

*Fifth sense in Europe*

The Research and Information Institute on Volunteering (iriv) joins in international solidarity for Ukraine attacked by Russia on February 24, 2022. The COVID pandemic has weakened democratic countries. Conspiracy theories and hate speech have exploded. This war in Europe is existential for the European Union. This newsletter is the 5th published in 2026 and the 51st since the beginning of the conflict in Ukraine. May, the fifth month of the year, is important for Europeans. They celebrate both the 1945 armistice and Europe Day . The European Union is based on the deconstruction of a shameful and dramatic past and on the construction of a new chapter to be written for the Old Continent. The number 5 has a very rich

symbolism, religious, spiritual, sensory. Russia is perpetually turning back the clock, and the regime keeps repeating the same mistakes. The sad anniversary of the nuclear disaster at Chernobyl reminds us of it, with its thousands of victims (the number remains unknown) ). Ukraine is its opposite – a country and people, superheroes “5 Magnificent” , fully forward-looking, aware of their identity, confronted with a world of predators. The European Union has awakened from a long blindness, a guilty blindness vis-à-vis Russia, which very early expressed its visceral hostility to European construction. In 1945, Stalin convinced aging leaders at Yalta to tear apart Europe for his own good. The crimes of the USSR were denounced as early as the 1950s by Alexander Solzhenitsyn in "One Day of Ivan Denisovich" and then in his monumental work "Gulag Empire" in the 1970s (1). After Georgia in 2008, the annexation of Crimea in 2014, and finally the attack on Ukraine in 2024, the European Union has finally reacted. The world has changed; powder smells are multiplying. Our fifth sense should alert us.

- 1- Number 5- a polysemous symbolism
- 2- Fifth column in Russia
- 3- 5 Magnificent in Ukraine
- 4- Fifth sense in Europe

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

## Number five – a polysemous symbolism

Religions and spiritualities were inspired by the number 5. In the Bible, 5 means "a few," an undetermined amount. Jesus Christ, during the multiplication of the loaves, takes five loaves; in the market, five sparrows are sold for two sous; the parable mentions the five talents or the five pairs of oxen for the banquet (2). Islam is built on five pillars illustrated by a five-pointed star – the Shahada (profession of faith); Zakat (alms money); the pilgrimage to Mecca; fasting (month of Ramadan); and prayer (done five times a day) (3). In Judaism, the number five corresponds to the Books of the Torah (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy). The number 5 is the spiritual element in a material world, the presence of the divine (the 'hand' of God) in our material world. (4). The Greek philosopher Aristotle added a fifth element, the Ether, to the four traditional elements already described by his predecessor Empedocles - Air, Fire, Water and Earth - at the origin of all life. In Buddhism, they constitute the Godai composed of the Do (earth), the Sui (water), the Ka (fire), the Fu (wind) and the Ku (space or void).

The "Famous Five" is a series of adventure novels for children written by the English author Enid Blyton (5), with a group of four children and their dog Timmy, united like the "five fingers of a hand", discover together life without their parents. The human anatomy is closely related to the number 5 (five fingers of the hand, five toes of the foot). The five senses allow us to "feel" and understand the world around us. They are associated with specific parts of the human body. Hearing is related to the ears, vision to the eyes, touch to the hands and skin in general, taste to the mouth; and olfaction/smell to the nose. According to the Institut du Cerveau (in France), "the main stages of the sensation process are the same: sensory sensors receive information from the outside world, which they "encode" in order to transmit it via specific sensory nerves of the nervous system. (for example, for hearing, the auditory sensory nerve), to a region of the brain responsible for interpreting the signal and converting it into conscious sensation (6). Chanel's "number 5" popular fragrance evokes an enchanting sensory universe, embodied by one of the most glamorous Hollywood stars of her time, Marilyn Monroe. She was associated with the tenure of a US Democratic president, John Fitzgerald Kennedy, in troubled times with the struggle for civil rights in domestic politics and the war in Vietnam for foreign affairs. The military strategies for this conflict, contested on US campuses by students and peace activists, and by former veterans recounting their traumatic experiences, were developed in the White House (Washington). They were implemented in the Pentagon, headquarters of the Ministry of Defense, a curious building with five sides, built during the war by another Democratic president, Frank Delano Roosevelt (1939-1942). Times have changed; the Ministry of Defense has been renamed the "Ministry of War" since January 2025. This is a time for war and conflict; "five out of five messages received" would say the military, with an often elliptical communication.

## « Fifth column » strategy in Russia

This expression, popularized by the film by English director Alfred Hitchcock (7), was first used by the Francoists in their war against the Republicans during the Spanish Civil War. It evokes foreign interference. It is part of the weapons of psychological warfare designed to discredit one's opponents (8). The conspirators use these allusions to a foreign, diffuse and always evil intervention. The manipulation at the heart of the strategy of the "fifth column" has a particular resonance in 2026 with the fortieth anniversary of the tragedy that occurred in Ukraine, at Chernobyl, on April 26, 1986. The reactor of this hypermodern nuclear plant built during the declining Soviet era, a jewel of technology and the ultimate proof of Soviet superiority over the Western world, was imploding. Several documentaries have recalled the stages of the disaster whose extent we still cannot measure – 4,000 or 40,000 victims (with cancers that have appeared since 1986). This drama condemned a European region for 24,000 years. A documentary directed by David Korn-Brzoza accurately traces "seconds of chaos, weeks of improvisation, months of lies, and a catastrophe whose shadow will continue to haunt the world for centuries" (9).

In the midst of the Russo-Ukrainian war, this tragedy is particularly topical – the nuclear plant has become a strategic territory and a place of confrontation." "Between a radioactive past and a tense present", the strategy put in place by the Soviet leaders of 1986 under a progressive era with Michael Gorbachev, man of Glasnost (transparency) and Perestroika (restructuring) has nothing to envy to the Brezhnev years, his predecessor, with the use of the same Soviet methods based on "enemies from within", an occult "fifth column". The first element to be considered is the lightness with which the population was treated, whose health has been directly affected for generations. A May 1st parade was even organized in a highly radioactive area in 1986. The second element in the Chernobyl disaster is the lack of support for the liquidators tasked with fighting the fire in the reactor; they were sent without protection to fight a gigantic and highly toxic blaze. A threatening silence was imposed on them under penalty of being "liquidated" by the intelligence service's agents (KGB). A third element is the denial of Soviet and then Russian leaders from 1986 to 2026. Russian troops invaded Chernobyl at the start of the Ukraine conflict by digging trenches on highly radioactive soil. The trial of 1989 suing the director of the Chernobyl plant, once a national hero, and the engineers who assisted him, totally exonerated the leaders of Moscow whose directives made the situation worse. They did not protect their population, worse they exported to other regions of the USSR the meat of slaughtered radioactive animals, thus contaminating even more Soviets. The contempt for human life that has been widely documented since February 2022 in Ukraine seems to be in the DNA of the leaders in power in Russia and the USSR. In 2026, as in 1986, the decisions are in the hands of the intelligence services (from KGB to FSB). Apparently new people, but same old methods repeated ad nauseam.

## « Five Magnificent » spirit in Ukraine

After the Second World War, a new international order was put in place with an international law intended to avoid another global conflict and pacify a troubled world. The United Nations (UN) has always been disunited, but it has allowed countries with diverse political and cultural sensitivities to meet and exchange. After the Russian attack on his country in 2022, President Zelensky obtained condemnation of Russia by an overwhelming majority of countries. The balance of power and areas of influence have changed since then. The UN is paralyzed by a five-member security council with divergent interests: the United States, France, and the United Kingdom on one side, and China and Russia on the other side. American soft power was decisive in defending freedom and democracy in the world after 1945. Hollywood has been the best soft power of the United States and its allies since World War II, with directors and actors committed against Nazism and fascism from the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 by Japanese nationalists. American science fiction films, series and cartoons have been very convincing communication tools. Generations of teenagers on both sides of the Atlantic have been rocked by the exploits of their superheroes with superhuman powers to save humanity. Strength is not enough; you also need cunning and luck, but above all you must be on the side of Good to win against Evil. Among the Marvel heroes, the "Fantastic Five"—are composed of the Human Torch, his wife Miss Fantastic/Lyja (a Skrull), the Thing, Big Brain (a remote-controlled robotic body) and Psi-Lord (Franklin Richards, Sue and Reed's son) to whom was added the daughter of Spider Man, Spider girl . (10)

What do the "Magnificent five" tell us about the war in Ukraine? President Zelensky and the Ukrainians are fighting an unequal battle with a much larger and increasingly well-equipped Russian army (drones and robots). This asymmetrical war has allowed them to hold on for four years thanks to a courage and inventiveness worthy of Marvel heroes. These "superheroes" of the twenty-first century are fighting for their country but also for a free and democratic Europe. The message of the Marvel's heroes is unchanged. Ukraine's adversaries are as fierce and hostile as those fought by the Magnificent Five. They have all declared a cultural and ideological war against the West. Vladimir Putin's Russia has rallied to its cause the regime of the mullahs (in Iran) at war against the West since 1979. Kim Jong-un's regime in North Korea, the heir to a dynasty that has been decidedly hostile to the West since the Korean War (1950-1953), is supplying Russia with men and ammunition just like Xi Jinping's China. A difference with the American blockbusters of yesteryear - the Western camp was homogeneous and seemed united. But reactionary endogenous forces already present in Western democracies are blurring the message. In the event of a global conflict, if Russia and its allies openly engaged in hostilities against the West, what alliances would there be to defend democracy and freedom? The European far-right that claims to be called "patriots" as their friends in the US are implicit supporters of Russia. But Europe also has other allies – Japan, South Korea, Australia... It's not over yet.. Ukraine and the European Union haven't said their last word.

## Fifth sense in Europe

There is some good news this April 2026 for Europeans. First, the defeat of Hungarian leader Viktor Orbán in Hungary, Russia's (and China's) Trojan horse in the European Union, was magisterial in the national elections. He had received strong support from the American "patriots" (MAGA, an extremist wing of the Republican Party) with Donald Trump and his vice president JD Vance in person sent to Budapest. Orbán was also supported by the "patriots" of Europe (president of the French Rassemblement national with Marine Le Pen and president of the Italian Council with Georgia Meloni). The reactionary international seems to have suffered a crushing defeat. A battle was won by the Democrats but not the war according to analysts, who are very cautious with polls in favor of extremist parties in Europe and public opinion increasingly anxious and sensitive to nationalist speeches, especially in times of war.

A region spared from open conflicts and "hot wars," the European Union has been rearming since 2025. 5% of public budgets should be devoted to military spending. It is highly recommended by Donald Trump if Europeans want the United States to continue participating in NATO and providing an American security guarantee. The support of Europeans during the war in the Middle East (against Iran) in 2026, with French and British flagship ships sent to the Gulf countries, and the involvement of French pilots in the Strait of Hormuz (11), are reassuring factors for the American public. Europeans know how to engage to support their allies ; and they do. An informal summit was held in Cyprus on Thursday, April 23, and Friday, April 24, 2026. The members of the twenty-seven EU countries discussed Article 5 of the NATO treaty. Often compared to Article 42, paragraph 7, of the EEC Treaty, it is a mutual assistance clause in the event of an "armed attack" against one of the EU countries. NATO Article 5 was used only once by France after the terrorist attacks of 13 November 2015 to be able to repatriate French troops deployed outside France. Cyprus was attacked by an Iranian drone in March 2026 (12).

In Cyprus, the 27 approved a €90 billion loan to Ukraine for 2026-2027. It should be definitively approved when the Druzhba pipeline that crosses Ukraine will have delivered the first liters of oil to Hungary and Slovakia whose economy is severely affected by the war. The 27th package of sanctions against Russia, delayed by Hungarian and Slovak obstructions, was also adopted in Cyprus. It targets maritime service providers, the "ghost fleet" of crude oil tankers (several of which have already been boarded), but also dozens of international companies that have continued to work with the military-industrial complex.

With the war in Ukraine since 2022, the European Union knows that the Cold War has singularly warmed up with high-intensity wars approaching. The most convinced Europeans are the ones closest to the front lines - Poland, Finland, the Baltic countries (in Europe) but also Greece and Cyprus (in Mediterranean).. The peace dividend is a thing of the past; Europeans' future must include the possibility of global conflict. A fifth sense is important in geopolitics—knowing how to smell the zeitgeist. Powder scents are becoming clearer in Europe.. *Slava Ukraini* !-

- (1) Jérôme Lambert et Philippe Picard « L'Archipel du Goulag, la révélation », France, 2023- diffusé sur Arte en 2026 - <https://www.arte.tv/fr/videos/112855-000-A/l-archipel-du-goulag-la-revelation/>
- (2) Jérôme Martineau, « Symbolique des chiffres dans la Bible », 4 juin 2018- Le dessin représente une étoile à cinq branches..<https://fr.aleteia.org/2018/06/04/la-symbolique-des-chiffres-dans-la-bible/>
- (3) Source : insee.fr / INSEE - <https://www.insee.fr/ressources/les-cinq-piliers-de-lislam>
- (4) Albert Benhamou « Symbolique juive des nombres » - <https://www.albert-tours-israel.com/post/symbolique-juive-des-nombres>
- (5) Enid Blyton, « Famous five”, London, first book published in 1942 – her work is under critics today with the discovery of a racist spirit in her books - <https://www.babelio.com/auteur/Enid-Blyton/3325>
- (6) Fondation pour la recherche sur le cerveau- <https://www.frcneurodon.org/comprendre-le-cerveau/a-la-decouverte-du-cerveau/les-sens/>
- (7) Alfred Hitchcock “The fifth column”, USA, 1949
- (8) Arnaud Jacomet , définition, Encyclopedia Universalis - <https://www.universalis.fr/encyclopedie/cinquieme-colonne/>
- (9) David Korn-Brzoza, “Tchernobyl, une tragédie sans fin », France 2, mardi 28 avril 2026 - <https://www.france.tv/france-2/tchernobyl-une-tragedie-sans-fin/>
- (10) Marvel World - <https://www.marvel-world.com/encyclopedie-1394-fiche-cinq-fantastiques-les-mc2-biographie.html>
- (11) French fighter pilots aboard Rafales tasked with shooting down Iranian drones in reinforcement of the United States and Israel, France 2, TV journal , 28<sup>th</sup> of April 2026
- (12) Philippe Jacqué « A Chypre, l'UE face aux conflits dans son voisinage », Le Monde 24 avril 2026

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