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War in Ukraine

# The Ukrainian drama and the Russian roulette

- Debate - 2022 - Ukraine -

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**The powerlessness in which one finds oneself at a given moment, a powerlessness which must never be considered as definitive, cannot dispense one from remaining faithful to oneself, nor can it excuse capitulation to the enemy, whatever mask he may take on. And the most important enemy remains the administrative, police and military apparatus; not the one on the other side, which is our enemy only insofar as it is the enemy of our brothers, but the one who claims to be our defender and makes slaves of us. In any circumstance, the worst possible betrayal is always to accept subordination to this apparatus and to trample underfoot, in order to serve it, in oneself and in others, all human values.**

**Simone Weil, *Réflexions sur la guerre*, 1933**

**(quoted in Daniel Bensaïd, *Contes et légendes de la guerre éthique*, Ed. Textuel, Paris, 1999)**

I

For the last two and a half months Europe has been experiencing the most serious war crisis since the end of the Second World War. [1] Many years of the rise of neo-liberalism and social demolition, the resurgence of reactionary values linked to ethnicist nationalism or religious fanaticism, the new rise of the “military Keynesianism» [2] of the great powers and, last but not least, the eclipse of the socialist imaginary among the broad masses, have created the socio-political and ideological conditions for the current tragedy. The criminal, imperialist and atrocious invasion that Vladimir Putin launched on 24 February (which will go down in history as one of the most sinister and ignominious dates in the contemporary world, along with 28 July 1914, 1 September 1939 or 9 August 1945) deserves the unanimous condemnation and repudiation of anyone who considers himself not only a Marxist, anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist, but even a defender of the inalienable right of peoples to decide their future or of the most elementary ideas of the Enlightenment. The position to be adopted in the face of it must be unequivocal: stop the aggression immediately, the withdrawal of the troops of the Russian Federation, support for the Ukrainian resistance (military and civilian) against imperialist aggression and solidarity with the victims and refugees and no less determined support for the Russian opposition to the war. In my opinion this orientation must be the political basis for the left in general, and the anti-capitalist left in particular, both in Europe and in the world. Putin’s action is not only criminal and catastrophic for Ukraine, but also suicidal and extraordinarily dangerous for Russia itself [3], for Europe as a whole and for the whole world.

### **Guidance despite propaganda**

There is a broad consensus that in any war one of the first victims is the truth and that, if any rigorous analysis in normal situations must already be able to penetrate a huge layer of abstractions, prejudices and falsehoods that shroud and conceal capitalist social relations, in times of war the cloak of propaganda, falsehoods, misinformation, demagoguery and exaggerations that accompany military combat makes it necessary to redouble the effort to develop critique in the sense of the young Marx: to lift all the veils that conceal the social relations prevailing in society. War propaganda, the prolongation of warfare by other means, to paraphrase Clausewitz, is a weapon used by all sides: attackers and defenders, allies of the attackers and allies of the defenders. It would be extremely dangerous, but in my opinion a reflex as disastrous as it is common on the left, to adapt to the propaganda of either side in the name of fighting the propaganda of their adversaries. This observation does not in any way imply that there are aggressors

and aggressed in this war, but to affirm that only the truth is revolutionary and that the duty of solidarity must never lead to the abandonment of a critical approach.

### Understanding in order to act... judiciously

In a parliamentary debate on terrorism in the French National Assembly in early 2016, Manuel Valls famously said: “For these enemies [referring to the Islamic State after the attacks of 13 and 14 November 2015 in Paris] there can be no explanation, because explaining is already a bit like apologising. [4] Such a statement perfectly illustrates the reactionary and liberticidal ideological use of the psychological impact and shock that traumatic situations provoke for peoples [5], as Naomi Klein analysed. [6] It is a political necessity of the first order to prevent our rage and impotence in the face of the suffering and destruction that this war is causing, our support for the Ukrainian people and our dismay and indignation at the death of Ukrainian soldiers and civilians and the no less tragic death of Russian soldiers from leading us to adapt to the media and government propaganda of Western countries and to demonise and caricature the retro-nationalist and neo-pietist Bonaparte [7] that Putin is or, worse, the Russian people themselves. As Daniel Bensaïd, whose absence is so keenly felt at critical times like the present, often reminded us, “before judging, one must understand». And I would add that to act consciously it is even more important to understand, furthermore, that to try to understand is also to begin to act. In these times of repeated shocks – securitarian, economic, climatic, health, and now military –, it is also necessary to remember that the demagogic inference à la Valls of reducing understanding to justification is unacceptable. In this contribution to the debate on the left, I have no claim to any brainwave but, more modestly, to warn of the danger of making fundamental ideological concessions in the face of the Manichean atmosphere that is being created in many countries [8], to shed some light on what I believe to be geopolitical and historical evidence despite the atmosphere of intellectual intimidation that is being created by a number of politicians [9] and journalists [10], and to remind that, in the face of the radical change of era we are living through, in which we will have to resist unexpected twists and turns, great pressures and work against the tide, making certain statements, with, in my opinion, astonishing joy and indolence, can haunt us and seriously undermine our political credibility for years and even decades to come.

## II Shared responsibilities

But many Russian democrats also feared that NATO expansion would leave Russia outside Europe, politically ostracised and deemed unworthy of being part of the institutional framework of European civilisation. Cultural insecurity added to political fears, making NATO expansion seem like the culmination of the old Western policy of isolating Russia, leaving it alone in the world and vulnerable to its many enemies. Moreover, Russian democrats simply failed to grasp either the depth of Central Europeans’ resentment of Moscow’s half-century of domination or their desire to be part of a larger Euro-Atlantic system.

*Zbigniew Brzezinski, The Great World Chessboard. American Supremacy and its Geostrategic Imperatives, 1997.*

Before the outbreak of war, when Putin’s pressure to build up a huge combat force along Ukraine’s borders made it clear that something serious would happen but it was impossible to determine what exactly would happen, the political current in which I’m active adopted, despite considerable initial reluctance, a statement [11] warning that what was taking place was not theatre, but a risk of imminent war, and emphasised the historical background, on the context of geo-economic and geopolitical instability that presided over the tensions of the moment – making the situation particularly dangerous –, on the role of both the reconstruction of Russian imperialism and the thirty years of NATO’s cornering of Russia [12] that has helped to fuel it and, last but not least, called on progressive and pacifist

forces to mobilise pre-emptively against a more than likely armed conflict. [13] To place the responsibility for the Treaty of Versailles (with its exclusive blaming of Germany for the Great War, its economic suffocation by reparations and some territorial losses) on feeding the nationalist resentment of Weimar Germany against the left and the Entente (and in particular Clemenceau's France) is not to justify Nazism, but to understand that it was not only to blame within Germany but also outside. To recall today the humiliations imposed by the capitalist countries on the former USSR, their complicity in their mafia like and oligarchic plunder (suffered by both Russia and Ukraine), its support for such scarcely liberal-democratic and humanitarian actions as Yeltsin's bombing of the Supreme Soviet in 1993 – then the first fully elected parliament in the country's history– to crown an authoritarian capitalist restoration or its benevolence towards the "anti-terrorist" assaults by Yeltsin (1994-1996) and Putin [14] (1999-2009) against Chechnya in the name of the "defence of the West"... is not to justify the despotic militarism of a Great Russian Bonaparte like Putin, but to analyse the shared responsibilities for its genesis.

### Solidarity with the Ukrainian people... with open eyes

"The nineties: never again!"

#### *Russian popular adage*

Nor can it be forgotten that the chaotic dismemberment of the Soviet Union – perpetrated against the will of the majority of its population, as expressed in a referendum held shortly before– by the most pro-capitalist sectors of the main republics of the USSR, in what Poch de Feliu aptly calls the "Belavezha contubernium" [15] led to a dramatic economic collapse in all the former Soviet republics (crowned by the financial crash of 1998 [16]), but particularly acute in Ukraine, which, together with the internal division of the post-Soviet Ukrainian oligarchies, has had dire consequences for that country (the only former Soviet republic that today still has a lower GDP per capita than in the times of the USSR) and particularly destabilising. [17] The fact that one sector was oriented towards Moscow and the other towards the European Union constituted a fragile political" [18], economic and cultural balance in a very diverse and historically tormented country (living up to its name: "borderland", a great plain in dispute between rival empires and powers since the Middle Ages). This balance was broken after the 2014 revolt, when Yanukovich withdrew from the protocol on relations with the European Union when the latter blackmailed him into breaking off all trade relations with Russia in order to move closer to the EU. [19] The withdrawal from the agreement triggered the genuine democratic and anti-oligarchic revolt that would lead to the Euromaidan. As is well known, the development of the movement will see an increase in police repression culminating, during the night of 22 February 2014, in a massacre that will kill more than 60 people (both protesters and riot police) by snipers on a rooftop. To this day, the perpetrators of the massacre have still not been identified, not least because the new authorities never launched an investigation into the events. [20] Moreover, in addition to being nationalist, they were pro-NATO and openly anti-Russian. Unfortunately, the Poroshenko government trampled on some cultural and civil rights of the Russian-speaking population, imposed decommunisation laws in 2015 – including a ban on the communist party [21] – a force that had 14% electoral support at the time despite being dominated by an oligarchic faction, as, by the way, are all the major parties in the country, and made a national hero out of the former pro-Nazi ultranationalist – and, in Cold War times, CIA protégé for launching an anti-Soviet guerrilla war in Western Ukraine– Stepan Bandera [22], who had created military units that would fight side by side with the Wehrmacht when it began its invasion of the USSR in 1941. The advent of this change of government, with an increasing marginalisation of progressive forces at the hands of liberal parties, Western-funded NGOs and, last but not least, the far right militia embryos – that had gained prestige from the Maidan clashes and which had managed to integrate themselves into the repressive and military apparatus of the Ukrainian state and place several of their members in certain key ministries– in turn provoked a revolt of the population opposed to the severing of relations with Russia and fearful of the growth of Ukrainian ultra-nationalism. It is important to point out that, although fortunately the electoral weight of the Ukrainian ultra-right is less than in other countries, there are nevertheless two very worrying dynamics: there is an enormous porosity between this sector and

the liberal sectors (there is no “cordon sanitaire” type of prevention towards them in the mainstream, however hypocritical it may be in other countries) and they have managed to make some of their slogans part of the “common sense” (in the Gramscian sense) of a large part of the population of Western Ukraine. [23] In this context, the population opposed to the anti-Russian turn also suffered bloody repression at the hands of far-right sectors with the full acquiescence of the repressive apparatus: the death of 46 “Anti-Maidan” demonstrators burned alive with impunity at the headquarters of the Odessa trade unions, where they had tried to protect themselves from an attack with Molotov cocktails by ultra-nationalist football hooligans and ultra-right groups such as Pravy Sektor and Svoboda [24], the embryo of what was to become the Azov Battalion, was the pretext for the proclamation of the breakaway Donbas republics and the seizure of the Crimean peninsula by Kremlin forces. It is well known that the Donbas war had already cost 14,000 deaths before the Putin-ordered invasion. [25] The fact that so far there have been no serious official investigations into the Maidan or Odessa massacres, or the human rights violations that have taken place in the Donbas (generally ignored by the mainstream Western media) says very little for Petro Poroshenko’s oligarchic and ultra-nationalist government and his collaborators such as the anti-Russian, pro-NATO former Georgian president with strong connections to the US state apparatus, Mikheil Saakashvili. [26] With the participation in the war of military units such as the Azov battalion, composed almost exclusively of neo-Nazis with US military assistance and training, on the one hand, and of mercenaries and no less sinister extreme right-wing and Stalinist groups directed by the Kremlin, on the other, through the manipulation of the anti-Maidan revolt by Russian military intelligence, it seems to me undeniable that there has been an intense inter-imperialist dispute over the last eight years for geopolitical and geo-economic control of the country, as Achim Engelberg rightly points out. [27] Despite the signing of the Minsk agreements in 2015, the area was never fully pacified and, contrary to what had been agreed, the Kiev government refused to grant any special status to these regions that could defuse the conflict – both because of growing anti-Russian nationalism and threats from the far right against anyone who dared to implement them.

Although the election by a large majority in April 2019 of Volodymyr Zelensky – a more moderate Ukrainian nationalist, Russian-speaking and of Jewish origin with a supposedly anti-oligarchic programme [28] more respectful of the country’s diversity and conciliatory in relation to the Donbas conflict [29]– raised hopes of improvement, his programme included the desire to integrate Ukraine into NATO and the demand for the return of Crimea to Ukraine, in the knowledge that both demands would inevitably increase tension with Russia.

All the facts recounted so far are indispensable for assessing the chain of phenomena preceding the invasion of 24 February and necessary to accurately characterise the ongoing war. Our duty of unconditional solidarity with the victims of the war in no way obliges us to forget that what has happened in Ukraine since 2014 has not strengthened progressive values in that country and that its successive governments have not been conspicuous for their respect for minorities, nor have they developed policies that would consolidate, in my opinion, sovereignty, national cohesion and an independent international policy. [30]

In turn, Russia has undoubtedly lost influence in Ukraine since 2014 and is unable to counteract politically and economically the growing Western penetration in the country – the Kremlin lacks the “soft power” of Western imperialism in general and American imperialism in particular and has no economically attractive model of society to offer (corrupt extractivism), politically (“copycat democracy” and de facto autocracy) and socially (a society with inequalities almost equivalent to those of the United States)– which partly explains why its relations with Ukraine have shifted towards coercive diplomacy in 2021 first and the military adventure launched on 24 February – as catastrophic for Russia or more than it is for Ukraine itself... in the vain illusion of achieving these goals. All this is undisputed, but it is no less true that Russia, in turn, had considered Ukraine’s NATO membership a casus belli for years. [31] When on 22 December 2014 the Kiev Rada (parliament) decided that Ukraine would abandon its non-aligned status and begin its rapprochement with NATO, in my view it was inevitable that relations with Russia [32] would deteriorate and, in so doing, the new post-Maidan elites, encouraged in this decision by Washington and reinforced by the growing ultra-nationalist influence, were adopting a collision course that undeniably also bears their share of responsibility for not having averted the current catastrophe.

Having said all this, Putin's discourse to justify his invasion by appealing to an imminent danger to Russia's security and proclaiming that the aims of his "military-technical operation" are to "rid Ukraine of a gang of drug addicts and to demilitarise and denazify" the country is of course absurd and delusional. Moreover, as is well known, Putin did not lack time to attack the figure of Lenin, not only for having led the first triumphant workers' and peasants' revolution in history, but also for having helped to create a union of socialist republics capable of breaking with the long tradition of national oppression under tsarism and establishing a framework of cooperation between peoples united by a common political project based on internationalism and the right of nationalities to self-determination. [\[33\]](#)

### III Russians out, Americans in, Germans down!

Given that Putin's main demand is the guarantee that NATO would not accept more, and in particular Ukraine or Georgia, there would obviously have been no motivation for the current crisis if there had been no expansion of the Atlantic Alliance after the end of the Cold War or if the expansion had taken place in accordance with the construction of a security structure in Europe that included Russia.

*Jack Matlock, former US Ambassador to Russia [\[34\]](#), 15 February 22.]*

The well-known quote by Lord Ismay (NATO's first Secretary General) that opens this section is a good description of NATO's strategic objectives. In essence, it is still relevant today, provided that the allusion to the Germans is extended to the European Union as a whole. Let me explain. As I said above, the shock of the war, the media campaign that celebrates the war of good (the defence of civilisation and European "values" by the Ukrainians [\[35\]](#)) in their fight against evil (the "Asian barbarism" represented by the Russians) and a neo-macarthyst atmosphere against intellectual and political dissidence leads certain sectors of the left to hide a fundamental factor in the current crisis, namely that, just as Putin and his neo-Tsarist delusions are solely responsible for the invasion of Ukraine, it is no less true that the extension of NATO to the East and the false closure of the Cold War, as well as the systematic refusal to heed Russia's diplomatic requests over the last thirty years by Western chancelleries in general and the US in particular, bear a large part of the responsibility for having dynamited any possible political architecture of peace in Europe. It has always been more convenient for European contradictions (economic crisis and North-South inequalities and debt crisis in the EU, rise of reactionary populism, migration crisis, Brexit, etc...) and, particularly, for Euro-American relations to systematically exclude Russia from the European concert [\[36\]](#), since they never ceased to define it as an enemy state of NATO. If there is one argument made by Gilbert Achcar in his debate with Stathis Kouvelakis [\[37\]](#) that I find totally untenable, it is to characterise the ongoing imperial war in the same way as Western interventions such as the conquest of Iraq by the United States in 2003. [\[38\]](#) It is not comparable for several reasons: it does not have an economic motivation comparable to the former – controlling huge energy resources with the competitive advantages it brings in relation to rival economic blocs is not comparable to the grain potential or rare minerals (such as lithium) that Ukraine may have – nor the same geopolitical significance – Ukraine's proximity to Russia does not have the same significance when the possibility of stationing weapons of mass destruction aimed at Russia is very real, unlike Iraq's imaginary weapons of mass destruction (more than 10,000 kilometres from the US borders), which, when they existed, were, by the way, supplied by the United States and Donald Rumsfeld himself in the 1980s to crush the Iran of the Islamic revolution. In my view, the fight against NATO as an imperialist military alliance must rest with the Ukrainian people. But I also believe that the question of whether or not to join NATO cannot be reduced solely to a democratic problem. In this case, it should be added that, if the neighbouring state believes – with a greater or lesser degree of justification, it hardly matters – that such membership poses an "existential danger", I think it is reasonable to at least take this into account and at least consider the need to ensure, as NATO itself states in theory in its "principles", that any enlargement is not detrimental to the legitimate security



requirements of another state. That NATO governments blatantly disregard this should surprise no one. What would be far more disturbing is if left-wing and anti-imperialist militants saw things more or less the same way and dismissed any nuance as crass Kremlin propaganda.

Let us imagine for a moment the situation, not entirely out of the question after Brexit and the context of instability and political, economic, social and democratic crisis it has opened up in the United Kingdom [39], that Scotland (a nation which, despite major conflicts, has shared a state with England and Wales for more than three centuries, i.e. is a "sister nation" for the majority of the population) holds a referendum against the will of Downing Street, after considerable political and financial support from Russia for the pro-independence parties, proclaims independence by the narrowest of margins and pursues a policy of *fait accompli* without reaching any agreement on an agreed separation with the UK, something that most Britons would experience as a major trauma and a tremendous humiliation in one of the most difficult political contexts in their history. Major internal conflicts, border disputes and very considerable economic and tariff dislocations would be quite likely. Nor would it be out of the question that London would support and finance the more Unionist regions of the new Scotland. That scenario in itself would create major tensions between London and Edinburgh. Now imagine for a moment that, in the face of such tensions, Edinburgh accepted million-dollar loans from Russia and China and received state-of-the-art military advisers and weapons systems from the Kremlin. And that in the face of London's protests it is argued on the left that they are not legitimate, as the Scots' right to self-determination must be supported and Downing Street's demands to prevent the installation of hostile offensive weapons in the neighbouring country are not acceptable given Britain's record of imperialist interventions around the world. Now let us go one step further, suppose that given the increased tension with Britain and in gratitude for the financial and military support provided, the newly independent Scotland decided to cede the use of the former British Polaris nuclear submarine base on the Clyde to the Russian nuclear submarine fleet in the Baltic and that Russia justified this takeover by saying that it was not against Britain's security, but was a measure to help protect the security of the US southern border from the instability generated by migration flows from Mexico. [40] It is highly likely that the London authorities not only would not appreciate the Russian sense of humour, but would probably take it as an unacceptable provocation and issue some kind of ultimatum to the Scots. To argue that safeguarding England's national security along its borders is not legitimate because of its undisputed imperial past (and present...) and its long history of wars of national oppression against Scotland would, in my view, be demagogic to say the least. I think the reasonable position would be to seek a denuclearised future for Scotland and some kind of status of neutrality agreed with Downing Street and the great powers, such as Austria and Finland – two perfectly democratic and sovereign countries – have enjoyed since the end of the Second World War, regardless of England's evident history of national oppression and imperial past. Well, just as a serious Scottish and international left, while rejecting that great powers dictate the defence policy of small nations, would envisage such a scenario for a hypothetical independent Scotland, it would seem to me a major political and intellectual catastrophe if the demagoguery-laden and cynical propaganda narrative propagated by NATO in relation to the events, not imaginary hypotheses, in Ukraine since at least 2014, were to catch on the left. [41]

Certainly, the view of NATO in different parts of Europe varies according to the particular history of each country. [42] It is not the same in Portugal, where the supposed defence of freedoms against totalitarianism proclaimed by NATO did not prevent the Salazar dictatorship from joining; in Italy, where the black terrorism of the NATO-linked strategy of tension was intended to prevent a Communist electoral victory by any means necessary; or in countries that have suffered NATO-sponsored coups such as the 1967 Greek colonels' coup or the 1980 Evren coup in Turkey [43].... as in the countries of Eastern Europe, which were subjected to Stalinist rule for almost fifty years, where the fall of the USSR opened up horizons of freedom and material well-being thanks to the European "dream" and NATO's promise of "protection" from the Russian bear. This is well understood in Spain, where the most intelligent sectors of the bourgeoisie that had sponsored Francoism understood that a liberal regime integrated into Europe was indispensable for the recomposition of bourgeois hegemony in the country and a much safer system for managing the capitalist crisis and the austerity policies that inevitably accompanied the struggle to recover the rates of profit lost by capital in the 1970s. Here too the blackmail of accepting NATO membership was used as a necessary toll on our journey towards European democratic and social rights. Nevertheless, and admitting that these were different times, the survival of a class-conscious and revolutionary left made it possible to wage a determined pacifist struggle against

the military blocs and against the exterminist logic (in E.P. Thompson's expression) of nuclear armament without, however, ceasing to support the revolutionary armed struggle in Central America, for instance. I say all this because probably in Europe today there is also a very clear correlation between the organisational and ideological state of the anti-capitalist left and our judgement of NATO. In the current political situation this is not a secondary debate, since it has a decisive influence on the analysis of the most serious military conflict that has shaken the continent since World War Two and conditions the alliances on the left and the tasks of solidarity and the struggle for peace in this phase. It is extremely worrying that a section of the European anti-capitalist left has adapted its discourse to the sympathies for NATO coming from the practically non-existent political left in the countries of Eastern Europe, the region with the most reactionary governments on the continent after Putin's and which are most openly encouraging direct NATO intervention in the conflict, in particular Poland and Lithuania. [44] In my opinion this position not only does not help to raise the level of political consciousness and develop a class left in these countries, which continue to suffer the consequences of the social and ideological devastation of Stalinism, but also seriously distorts the analysis of the nature of the ongoing conflict and contributes to the discrediting of a European left that will have to resist a new militarist, austeritarian and liberticidal rise across the continent.

**Geopolitics, like the force of gravity, operates even if it is invisible.**

"Good politics consists in making people believe that they are free."

*Napoleon Bonaparte*

Geopolitics exists and so do the correlations of forces between imperialist powers, even if no vote has been taken in the UN. [45] As is well known, power struggles between great powers considerably condition international relations over long historical periods and impose dynamics that inevitably limit the range of democratic options that peoples can adopt. This fact forces us to understand that emancipation struggles are always overdetermined by inter-imperialist struggles, in the same way that the force of gravity exists independently of our opinion of Isaac Newton, for example. I say this because Europe and the world, but especially Ukraine, Russia and the rest of the former Soviet republics, are paying dearly for the false closure of the Cold War. As in other historical contexts, the attitude of the victorious powers has drastically shaped the dynamics of a long historical period. Let us look at some examples of this. The powers that defeated the Napoleonic Empire in 1814 were prudent enough to roughly respect France's territorial integrity, to integrate the country into the Congress of Vienna and to avoid irreversible humiliations that would lead to an explosion of the European concert, which, despite a few brief and localised conflicts, was able to preserve a fairly stable balance in the system of states and avoid major wars in the century leading up to the Great War of 1914-18. However, the Diktat of Versailles imposed draconian conditions on Germany (exclusive guilt for the conflict, significant territorial losses and economic suffocation through unpayable war reparations) that would lay the groundwork for a great German militarist revenge, which would take the form of the imperial project of Nazism. After the apocalyptic outcome of the Second World War, the Allies who had defeated the Axis sought to ensure Germany's economic development, prevent its marginalisation from the UN system, and even wrote off its foreign debt in 1953; indeed, they accepted its leading role, through its partnership with France, in promoting the project of European integration. [46] The German case after 1945 contrasts dramatically with the mistreatment suffered, first of all by the Soviet Union in the time of Lenin and Trotsky, when all the imperialist powers succeeded, with their intervention during the civil war, if not the complete collapse they desired of the revolutionary experience of the Bolsheviks, at least to impose a physical, economic and moral destruction that would contribute decisively to laying the foundations for the anti-democratic and bureaucratic involution of Stalinism and which would radically and quite irreversibly reduce the attractiveness of the Soviet Revolution as an alternative society among the bulk of the popular classes of the developed capitalist countries.... until its final collapse under the combined pressure of the arms race and chronic economic inefficiency and the consequent continuing stagnation of the material living conditions of the population. Finally, with Perestroika in the USSR, the goodwill and pacifist and reformist generosity shown by Gorbachev not



only failed to elicit any reciprocation from the Western powers in the days of “cold peace” [47], but was perceived as a great opportunity to complete a project of global domination and as a sign of weakness that deserved only gestures of contempt and arrogance. As is well known, the revival of Russian imperialist nationalism represented by Putin and his impotent protests and grumbings systematically ignored in NATO chancelleries are not unrelated to this historical sequence.

**Let's fight our own imperialism in times of peace, leave it out of the equation in times of war!**

### On NATO's role

To recall that the humanitarian sensitivity of the United States (and Europe) is highly selective, that it supported the massacres of the Indonesian regime in 1965, engineered the Chilean coup d'état in 1973, supported the representation of the Red Khemers in the UN until 1988 (!), supported Saddam Hussein against Iran, equipped the Turkish army at friendly prices, framed the contra in Central America and trained the Colombian sicarios, is not enough to exclude a good deed. But it is enough to question the reasons for such an exceptional 'ethic', its why, its how and its goals.

*Daniel Bensaïd, Contes et légendes de la guerre étique, 1999.*

While this war raises more than a few distressing questions and troubling unknowns, it nevertheless allows us to retain some certainties.

The first is that, however it ends, this war is in itself a great opportunity for NATO in general [48], and for the United States in particular [49], from every conceivable point of view. And I think it would be particularly disturbing if this reasoning were not shared by what remains of the left in Europe:

a) After long years of enlargement to the East [50], of intervention in the internal affairs of Georgia and Ukraine, after the installation of anti-missile shields in Romania, Poland and Spain (justified by the nuclear threat posed by... Iran, sic!) and of increasingly intense denunciations against the autocrat in the Kremlin, it has succeeded in launching Russia into an armed conflict that operates as a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy of an organisation that needs conflict in Europe to justify its existence, expand and (re)weld its internal cohesion.

b) It provides an outlet for one of the great bargains shared by each and every imperialist power [51] (including, of course, Russia and China), which is a major boost to the military-industrial complex. In a recent article, which in my view is confusing and grossly understates NATO's responsibility for the outbreak of war in Ukraine [52], Pierre Rousset and Mark Johnson argue: “We see no contradiction between calling for reduction of military spending in NATO countries and supply of weapons to Ukraine. In fact, donation of weapons to Ukraine without increasing military budgets in NATO countries would contribute to the reduction of the NATO stock of weapons. Of course, this will only have a limited effect, since the NATO countries are providing Ukraine with mostly older weapon series, particularly the Soviet-era weapons still in use or in storage by the NATO members in the east of the EU.” [53] I think the least that can be said about this statement is that the shipment of outdated Cold War-era weaponry is entirely anecdotal and would only have to do with deliveries from the former GDR or Poland, a totally marginal part of overall Western military assistance. If we analyse the shipments sent by the United States [54] and the United Kingdom, for example, we will see that they are state-of-the-art weapons fresh from their factories and, even if they seem free for Ukraine (from an economic point of view, since of course they are never free from a political point of view, as the authors of the article know very well), they are certainly not free from the point of view of the fabulous transfer of

public resources originating in the exploitation of labour towards the private capitalist profit that characterises the military-industrial complexes. [55] While recognising that the Western left is no one to tell the Ukrainians where to get the weapons they need to defend themselves against Putin's invasion, it is no less true that a number of key political problems are posed for the left in the Western imperialist countries:

1. To bother to ask, at the very least, whether the arms shipments to Ukraine by our class enemies are pursuing the same objectives that we defend ourselves.
2. To ask what are the short and medium term strategic implications of this apparent tactical confluence with our own governments' military intervention initiatives (even if only by proxy) in the war? [56]
3. To ask whether it is true, as the authors argue, that there is no contradiction between supporting arms shipments and opposing the remilitarisation of capitalist states on the backs of the popular classes after 45 years of neoliberal austerity and a background of socio-environmental and health collapse.

My opinion is that, in the terrain of concrete political struggle and in the body-to-body struggle to defend a coherent policy, in the political debates that constitute a dividing line (yes or no to NATO membership, yes or no to Maastricht, yes or no to the invasion of Iraq, yes or no to the European Constitutional Treaty, yes or no to NATO's proxy intervention against Russia in Ukraine...) there is never room for nuances, as they are not relevant beyond tiny politicised minorities or highly intellectualised milieus. I think the most likely reaction from the representatives of the holy union who proclaim that "Europe is at war", as a despicable apparatchik like Josep Borrell said at the beginning of the crisis, will be something along the lines of "how dare you oppose our governments increasing their military spending to defend us from the Russian expansionist threat when you supported NATO sending weapons to Ukraine? Why on earth do you support the Ukrainians having the means to defend themselves and we don't?" I think the left would be badly placed and lose credibility if we were to subscribe to Rousset and Johnson's position.

I do not pretend to have all the answers on this, but I do think it is pertinent and necessary to raise certain questions and to remember that at times like the present we must be extremely cautious in what we say, as one false step can haunt us for years or decades to come. [57]

c) It perpetuates NATO as the main instrument of US domination of the European continent [58], breaks any logic of economic collaboration between the EU and Russia (and most particularly Nord Stream 2; a strategic objective of the Biden Administration, which apparently has personal gas interests in Ukraine). NATO's current reinforcement is comparable only to that enabled by the wars that led to the break-up of the former Yugoslavia [59], most notably the 1999 Kosovo war and the bombing of Serbia – the first great wake-up call to post-Soviet Russia about how NATO's liberal cosmopolitanism upheld human rights. These conflicts were not only a great birthday present for NATO as it celebrated its 50th anniversary and re-legitimised itself after the end of the Cold War, but also to outline a new strategic doctrine that transcended its supposedly "defensive" character and its original North Atlantic geographic scope to initiate the globalisation of its sphere of action and increasingly openly adopt the role of a true global gendarme – which would undoubtedly preside until last August over its 20 years of brilliant struggle [60] for national emancipation, democracy, social progress, sustainable development and the emancipation of women in Afghanistan. [61]

d) It will give a boost to the US economy (hydrocarbons, cereals, arms, etc.) and generate phenomenal macroeconomic chaos in the European Union, which will also have to deal with the humanitarian consequences of the conflict. [62]

e) It will allow for a new arms race in Europe [63] – starting with a revival of German militarism, which, after the

drastic increase in its military budget it has just approved, will become the continent's main military power for the first time since the Third Reich, which should be of great concern to any democrat with elementary notions of contemporary history—, a more than likely strategic and tactical nuclear redeployment of both Russia and NATO and, above all, it makes it clear that European foreign policy is not run by Paris, Berlin or Brussels, but by Washington. It will be great fun to watch the continuation of the tussle between the European Commission and the Polish and Hungarian governments over whether or not European law takes precedence over national law – regarding women's and LGBTIQ rights. Warsaw and Budapest, home to the most right-wing governments in Europe, second only to Putin's own, are displaying a histrionics sharpened by the warmongering excitement that sweeps through European chancelleries at the smell of blood spilled by the Russian bear. The Polish government seems possessed by a Pilsudskian revival: prominent Polish leaders are seriously considering a military occupation of western Ukraine. The Hungarian government, with markedly Horthyian features, has witnessed one of the most comical spectacles of the dreadful drama we are living through: Viktor Orban feverishly deleting his tweets in praise of, and selfies with, Vladimir Putin... as hastily as other European far right goliards of the ilk of Le Pen or Salvini. [64]

f) Last but not least: the return of the political culture of the Cold War, i.e. the proputinism of Stalinist and populist sectors of the extreme right (what we have historically called "campism", what, paraphrasing August Bebel, we judge the "anti-imperialism of fools"), and the enthusiasm for the defence of the "free world" à la BHL [65], from social democracy to some well-meaning but no less misguided sectors of the anti-capitalist left, affected by what I cannot resist calling, in the expression of a friend, "altercampism".

### On "campism" and internationalism

In the tradition of revolutionary Marxism, the notion of "campism" has been used to characterise those currents on the left which have excused the reactionary nature of certain regimes in the name of their supposed antagonism towards Western imperialism in general, and US imperialism in particular, and their good relations with the supposed "homelands of socialism" of the 20th century, first the Stalinist USSR and later Maoist China, or both. In the campist view, the main vector in the advance towards socialism was understood to be the antagonism between the blocs rather than the international class struggle, hence class analysis was applied, at best, only to the Western capitalist countries and such an examination was avoided in order to investigate the contradictions of the "socialist camp". [66] However, the revolutionary Marxist tradition normally recognised the survival of social gains in the post-revolutionary countries which obliged a critical defence of their right to exist against an economically and militarily superior capitalist imperialism in the name of the perspective of the extension of the revolutionary project on a world level. This tradition was thus able to distinguish between a primary enemy – imperialist states playing an openly counter-revolutionary role in the international arena– and a secondary enemy – bureaucracies that were reactionary insofar as they blocked the transition to socialism, authoritarian insofar as they prevented the emergence of a socialist democracy and conservative insofar as they held back the world revolution and sought peaceful coexistence with the capitalist bloc. Today, fortunately, the campist sectors are much more marginal on the social and political left than in the past. [67] However, the notion of "campism" is also being used in a much more imprecise way to discredit sectors which are unequivocally revolutionary Marxists and which have no qualms about denouncing the counter-revolutionary and imperialist role of Putin's Russia and its allies for the simple reason that we are still able to make the distinction between a dominant global imperialism – that represented by NATO, which concentrates approximately 56% of the world military budget – and an imperialism which, despite being more aggressive as the ongoing conflict reveals, despite its delusions of grandeur, is regional in character and far less powerful – that of Russia, a state with a GDP smaller than that of Italy and a military expenditure which represents 3% of the world military budget – and we believe that support for Ukrainian resistance to the invasion (and support for Russian resistance to the war) does not oblige us to support NATO's intervention in Ukraine. [68] I believe that the accusation is not only unfair and slanderous, but also reveals a simplistic and inconsistent analysis of the current conflict.

## IV Let's get to the heart of the debate: how to

## characterise the ongoing war?

I personally have written against simplistic interpretations of Euromaidan, which part of the Western Left mistakenly saw as a coup supported by the West, just as the separatist republics in Donbas were seen as proto-socialist states, while in reality they are puppets of a very non-socialist Russian regime. But discussing the guilt of Western leftists as Putin's useful idiots in this moment is very damaging to the Left. The debate over underestimating Russian imperialism is important, but it should not be conducted in moments of high emotions and using moral blackmail [...] The Left needs offensive arguments. We must not agree to a ban on discussions about the complicity of NATO and the post-Maidan regime in Ukraine, about the reasons for not implementing the Minsk Agreement, or on NATO–Russia relations. That would mean capitulation – especially in Eastern Europe, where in the coming era of neo-McCarthyism, it might no longer be possible to put forward even basic left-wing arguments without being accused of being a Russian spy.

*Volodymyr Ishchenko, Ukrainian socialist intellectual, 14 March 2022*

[\[69\]](#)

There are essentially three characterisations.

The first is to understand and excuse Putin's invasion in the name of the necessary "multilateralism" in international relations, an invasion that would be exclusively a legitimate defensive reflex of Russia in the face of the geostrategic encirclement to which it has been subjected by the West in general and NATO in particular. While it is true that there has been some ambiguity in certain anti-war movements and certain campist sections of the US left, for example, this view is only explicitly shared by some states in the Global South [\[70\]](#), for a wide range of reasons, and by unrepresentative far-right and paleo-Stalinist groups. Those who excuse the invasion ignore Ukraine's long history of national oppression by first Tsarism and then Stalinist domination and refuse to condemn Putin's ethnicist imperialism, forgetting that Ukraine agreed in the 1994 Bucharest Memorandum to cede its nuclear arsenal to Russia in exchange for a guarantee of its territorial integrity, that NATO's eastward enlargement has made Ukraine the scapegoat for all the resentment it has generated in Russia in general and the Kremlin in particular, and that the invasion launched on 24 February crushes the Ukrainian people's right to self-determination and aims to rebuild an area of influence manu militari, as recent Russian actions such as the military intervention against the popular anti-oligarchic revolt in Kazakhstan have also demonstrated.

The second correctly argues that Putin's invasion must be condemned and the military and civilian resistance of the Ukrainian people against the invasion supported, insists on the fact that an exclusively pacifist position would be tantamount to compelling the Ukrainian people to a revolutionary defeatism complicit with Putin's aims, and maintains that the Ukrainian state is entitled to receive military aid from abroad, wherever it may come from. Broadly speaking, this is the position argued by Gilbert Achcar, insisting on the idea that the defeat of Putin's invasion attempt is positive insofar as it discourages other capitalist powers from initiating imperial aggression of the same kind, while recognising that NATO's intervention imposes a relationship of vassalage on a hypothetical victorious Ukraine, which would be preferable to the "subjugation» and "total colonisation» that a Putin victory would impose.

Finally, there are a number of Marxist authors such as Alex Callinicos [\[71\]](#), Claudio Katz [\[72\]](#) or Stathis Kouvelakis [\[73\]](#), to name but the most prominent, who argue with different nuances and accents that, despite their condemnation of the Russian imperialist invasion, it is not possible to understand this current conflict without a clear understanding of the current conflict, it is not possible to understand this current conflict detached from a struggle between a global and still highly hegemonic imperialism, despite its increasing decline, led by the United States and channelled through the military alliance it leads, NATO [\[74\]](#), which has been responsible for most of the imperial wars in the

world since the end of the Cold War... and a much weaker, economically, technologically and financially dependent and unequivocally regional imperialism such as Russia, which, faced with the obstacles to its initial Westernist pretensions (not only Yeltsin's, but also Putin's, who called for Russia's accession to NATO), has sought to rebuild an area of influence in some former Soviet republics and to fight for the political subordination of countries it considers key to its own security, as in the present case, largely in the face of successive eastward enlargements of NATO. Despite the respective nuances of their analyses, they agree that, regardless of the open debate about the kind of support to be given to the Ukrainian people, under no circumstances should NATO's proxy intervention in the conflict and the accompanying revival of European militarism in general, and German militarism in particular, be supported.

Well, in my opinion, we are witnessing a war of national liberation of a nation historically oppressed by the Great Russian nationalism of Tsarism first, and very badly battered by Stalinist domination afterwards, which is defending itself against an ultra-reactionary ethno-nationalist aggression and an imperialism that claims to have global weight, but which, due to its own economic, financial and technological reality, is unable to transcend its regional character. But I believe that such aggression, as well as the Putinist imperial agenda, are incomprehensible if they are abstracted from their relation to the effects of the false closure of the Cold War by its winners (Western imperialism in general and US imperialism in particular) and the immense social humiliation of capitalist restoration in the former Soviet Union, the oligarchic plunder of the Yeltsin era and the reconstruction of a strong state based on the disciplining of these oligarchies, on social passivity and on a growing authoritarianism (with notorious proto-fascist traits since the invasion began) by Putin in the last 20 years. For all these reasons, the ongoing war is dialectically related to, and strongly conditioned by, the insomniac geopolitical struggle for control of Ukraine between essentially the United States, on the one hand, and the Russian Federation, on the other, which is becoming increasingly evident in the form of a proxy war by NATO against Russia (with not a few of its officials making increasingly explicit declarations to this effect). [75] The situation therefore forces us to differentiate between the legitimate aims of Ukrainian resistance to the invasion, which we fully support – the survival of their country and a just peace, and those of the intervention of the NATO countries that are arming it – to prolong the war as much as possible for the sake of the military industry and general remilitarisation and to weaken first Russia and then China [76], the only two obstacles to Washington's undisputed world hegemony [77] – and which they are trying to impose on the former, thereby reducing their political autonomy. From this characterisation, in my opinion, three tasks for the Western left emerge: a) it must support, as far as it can, both politically and materially the resistance of the Ukrainian people and their struggle for survival as a nation, b) it must support the revolutionary defeatism of the Russian opposition to the war and, last but not least, c) it must oppose NATO's objective, which is fundamentally that of Washington - who really rules in its midst - in this war: to prolong it as long as possible, ignoring its cost in lives and material destruction, while knowing that it is aggravating three major dangers of the situation in order of importance:

- That the delivery of increasingly lethal weapons will lead to an escalation that degenerates into open war between Russia and NATO.

That, eventually, in a scenario of the collapse of the Ukrainian state and economy and the strengthening of ultra-nationalist currents through the dynamics of a protracted war, open the door to the proliferation of armed ultra-right-wing currents (due to their significant endogenous strength and the arrival from around the world of thousands of volunteer fighters – as well as mercenaries– with similar ideologies) that endanger democracy in Ukraine and contribute powerfully to the destabilisation of the region and beyond – in the way that the Mujahedin-USSR conflict was a springboard for Al Qaeda or that of Iraq (2003-) and Syria (2011-) for Daesh– , in turn sowing, as in the past, the seeds of new wars and terrorist plagues with their consequent liberticidal effects. [78] In this respect it would be a grave mistake to underestimate the extent to which Putin's invasion, and episodes such as the numantine resistance in Mariupol by neo-Nazi fighters, has re-legitimised neo-fascism in Ukraine, Europe and the world.

- Nor can a chaotic fall of Putin's ultra-reactionary Bonapartism, brought about more by an external military defeat than by a domestic political defeat, be ruled out, given the relative weakness of the socialist opposition in the current



phase, as opening the door to an openly fascist movement in Russia, with all that this entails in the case of a nuclear power.

### Neither pacifism... nor militarism!

These fundamental questions often have to be detailed and explained with the help of concrete examples, according to the course of events and the mood of the masses. A further distinction must be made between the pacifism of the diplomat, the teacher, the journalist, and that of the carpenter, the farm labourer or the housewife. In the first case, their pacifism is merely a screen for imperialism; in the second, a confused expression of their distrust of it. [...] Pacifism and bourgeois patriotism are full of deception. In pacifism, and even in the patriotism of the oppressed, there is a mixture of elements which, on the one hand, reflect their hatred of destruction and war and, on the other hand, impel them towards what they consider to be their own good. These elements must be correctly understood in order to draw the right conclusions. These two forms of pacifism and patriotism have to be contrasted head-on.

*Leon Trotsky,  
The Transitional Program, 1938.*

Some have reproached the eminently pacifist approach of a significant part of the left and social movements. [79] I personally believe that an exclusively pacifist vision is not enough in the face of brutal imperialist aggression such as that which the Ukrainian people are currently suffering. The Ukrainian resistance – as surprising to the Kremlin as it is to NATO [80] – has undoubtedly thwarted Putin's initial plans to impose a puppet government in Kiev with a lightning operation intended to emulate Khrushchev's and Brezhnev's interventions in Budapest (1956) and Prague (1968), respectively. It is true that the combined effect of Ukrainian armed resistance and citizen resistance has managed to stop the first strike. There is also no doubt that the invasion is proving to be a nightmare for the Russian army. [81] Ukrainian sources gave recent figures of Russian casualties in excess of 20,000 soldiers in two months of war [82]; we must bear in mind that the USSR lost 15,000 in Afghanistan in ten years... Even if there is a propaganda element, the enormity of the Russian military setback is undeniable. The invading army has reacted by increasing the use of terror against the civilian population because of its own impotence to achieve its main strategic objectives. Having said all this, I believe that the arms issue is being overplayed with regard to the Ukrainian resistance – even in the debate among the left– and incidentally is being used by Western governments to bury far more effective measures to stop the Russian war machine: namely, a generalised boycott of Russian hydrocarbon exports, which should also act as a powerful lever to accelerate the energy transition. What is the problem? That, beyond the undeniable logistical and economic problems it would generate, it is infinitely less lucrative and clashes with the interests of the arms industry, the backbone of the US economy above all.

Let us return to the arms debate. I think it is one thing to say that the Western left is not in a position to tell the Ukrainians where they should get the weapons they need to defend themselves, and quite another to explicitly support NATO arms deliveries, a gesture which is also completely gratuitous, insofar as there is no boycott against Ukraine in terms of arms purchases, quite the contrary: although it does not dare, for the moment, to make a direct military intervention, a great opportunity has arisen for Western imperialism to intervene in favour of its own interests – military, political and economic – in this conflict. [83] The inferiority – in my opinion quantitative, rather than qualitative – of the Ukrainian resistance's weapons is exaggerated in order to avoid the political side of the problem. I think it is obvious that in this war there is a tragic pairing in which we have to weigh the situation as rationally as possible and try to control the inevitable emotional impact it produces. The inevitable trade-off is a quick peace with concessions to the enemy that limits destruction and death as much as possible, which inevitably entails the achievement of some objectives by the invading forces, i.e. a quicker peace at the cost of a resulting more unjust



political situation. The other option, the prioritisation of the continuation of the armed struggle by the Ukrainians, at the price of an ever-increasing level of destruction and death, may be a “just war”, but it does not seem to me to be a desirable scenario for Ukraine, Russia or Europe.

Finally, what would not seem reasonable to me is that those of us who believe that it is desirable for the Ukrainian resistance to try to combine various forms of struggle, to make up for its relative military inferiority with boldness and political independence instead of accepting the militaristic logic imposed on it by NATO [84] and trying to reach a reasonable political solution as soon as possible, even if it is a compromise, should be accused of complicity with Putin, because we believe that continuing the war at all costs will hardly prevent a profound deterioration in the humanitarian, economic and political situation in Ukraine. [85] While it is true that not just any peace is acceptable to the Ukrainian people, this should not lead us to underestimate the enormous dangers of the conflict becoming chronic and bogged down. [86] I have no doubt that the scenario of a Slavic Afghanistan for the Russians is enormously appetising [87] and excites the imagination of Washington strategists [88], for whom the risk of economic collapse as a result of the war is much lower than that of the EU and who, moreover, are not directly affected by the humanitarian drama it is generating... In short, as Victoria Nuland, Obama’s head of Eurasian policy, would say in the leaked conversation with the US ambassador in Kiev in which they discussed which possible ministers would be most suitable for the post-Maidan government: Fuck the EU!

I think that if we do not take all this into account, it is normal that we tend to overlook the specific objectives of the proxy military intervention being carried out by NATO [89], which in my opinion are none other than the defeat or at least the maximum military weakening of Russia on the backs of the Ukrainian people who put the dead and the fall of Putin by all means (as Biden openly proclaimed in his visit to Poland at the end of March) except a direct military intervention [90], which would certainly imply a general conflagration and a more than likely nuclear annihilation. There are plenty of examples of “humanitarian» interventions that have not been discussed again as soon as the US had achieved its own objectives. [91]

## **V Putin will lose this war [92], but Ukraine is hardly going to “win” it.**

Everything points to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, in which Putin – believing to take advantage of a moment of weakness and division in NATO after its humiliating withdrawal from Kabul last August– has in fact followed in Saddam Hussein’s footsteps in 1990 by falling face first into a trap, is going to be a major failure for the Kremlin, comparable only to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in the 1980s [93] that precipitated the collapse of the USSR, and it is by no means out of the question that it will have a very similar outcome for the Russian regime. [94] Since the French Revolution, it has only been possible to win wars that have a minimum of political legitimacy and military viability, both tactically and strategically. Putin may end up winning many battles, but it is clear that his more than likely initial political objective – to create a Kremlin-friendly puppet regime by mistakenly relying on the passivity or acquiescence of the Russian-speaking Ukrainian population– has already been completely ruled out by both the unexpected Ukrainian resistance and the folly of the political and intelligence judgement guiding the invasion. The unrealistic nature of such an adventure reveals considerable confusion on Putin’s part and a glaring contradiction between his own propaganda discourse and reality. Moreover, as death and destruction grows, most of Putin’s alternative strategic objectives will become increasingly unfeasible without an exponential growth in violence, which in turn dramatically conditions any stable medium and long-term political outcome. If this invasion has crystallised one thing, it is the Ukrainian national consciousness and its will to persist as a nation for centuries to come (on the optimistic assumption that the future of the species can aspire to be measured with this temporal unit, given the state of the world).

**“My agenda is very simple. It has only three items on it: weapons, weapons and weapons” [95]**

While I regret to differ with this stellar statement by Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba, I would like to refocus on the political crux of the war. Just as it was very difficult to reach a conflict-avoiding compromise when the Zelensky government refused to reconsider Ukraine's military alliances and to seek some kind of specific status for Crimea and the Donbas that would prevent war, it is going to be much more complicated now. I said earlier that it was not at all unreasonable to have worked towards a specific status of neutrality for Ukraine in which a treaty with the major powers would have ensured its security and provided guarantees against invasions such as the one that has finally taken place. Now the scenario of Austrian or Finnish-style neutrality seems, if not to have vanished completely, at least to have been considerably distanced by the intensification of the war. I fear that from now on the political outcome of the war will be somewhere between a Hungarian (1956) or Czechoslovak (1968) scenario – politically despotic but also neo-colonial and economically extractivist– and something like the partition of the Korean Peninsula since 1953 – a broken up country, ultra-militarised, despotic in the north and authoritarian in the south, and the constant scene of repeated provocations between the two sides, both with conventional and nuclear weapons– or to no less dangerous disputes such as Kashmir. The third alternative, a mixture of chronification of the war, military escalation and the collapse of Ukrainian society, could have a wide range of disastrous outcomes. One, increasingly unlikely, would be the outbreak of open war between Russia and NATO, an eventuality that enthusiasts for NATO arms deliveries also seriously underestimate, in my view. [96] Another could be the collapse of the Ukrainian state and the proliferation of uncontrollable and heavily armed ultra-nationalist right-wing extremist militias practising a kind of irregular warfare. [97] I believe that the Afghan case of the 1980s, first, and the Syrian and Iraqi cases, more recently, are important warnings of the real danger of reactionary movements heavily armed by foreign powers in a context of state collapse. [98] Finally, it is also important to bear in mind that what might be called the economic consequences of peace and the reconstruction bill, whether or not war reparations are demanded from Russia, will logically increase as the war drags on and dramatically accentuate Ukraine's economic dependence in the future....

### **There are never exclusively military solutions to essentially political problems**

Imagine how many weapons we have. How many veterans we have... We have the largest number of Javelins (portable missile launchers) on the European continent. Only the British perhaps have more. The potential of these armed forces will immediately become a problem for those who want to make trouble for us.

*Yevhen Karas, leader of the neo-Nazi organisation C14. [99]*

Back to the nodal political problem: what real room for negotiation does Zelenskiy have to develop an autonomous policy and to reach some decent compromise to end the war? In my view, his growing dependence on financial support and the political logic imposed by Western arms deliveries on the one hand, and the radicalisation of Ukrainian nationalism and its openly far-right wing on the other, undermine his room for manoeuvre considerably and increasingly. How else to interpret the assassination of two Ukrainian generals, the elimination by the secret services of a member of the Ukrainian negotiating delegation or the death threats against Zelenskiy himself in case he makes any concessions to reach a compromise with the invading forces? [100] An eventual total defeat of Putin on the battlefield, which seems less likely to me since NATO's increased intervention may provoke a patriotic backlash in Russia and because the Russian autocrat is capable of escalating the war into a confrontation with NATO with incalculable consequences if cornered [101], could in turn lead to an extraordinarily dangerous scenario of civil war in Russia itself and then the door would be wide open for a steppe Hitler. If, on the other hand, after the mobilisations of the youth and the middle classes since 2018, there were, through the combined effect of an accelerated degradation of living conditions and the arrival of their children in the coffin of war, an awakening of the popular sectors and the working class who have so far preferred the security of Putin's authoritarianism and paternalism to the chaos of the 1990s, there could be a revolutionary fall of Putin by the Russian people, which would open a much more promising scenario for the left in that gigantic country. Whatever happens, it seems to me that the prolongation of the war increases the likelihood of increasingly cataclysmic scenarios, and it is well known that the old ultraleft prejudice of

“the worse... the better” is almost never confirmed.

## VI Europe in the Ukrainian mirror

Let us dwell for a moment on what this war tells us about Europe. First of all, it reveals a scandalous hypocrisy with regard to the refugee issue. Of course, we can only welcome the willingness to welcome, educate, regularise and provide aid to all Ukrainian refugees, but it is revolting to see the double standards of this warm welcome when it is reserved exclusively for white, Christian and blond, blue-eyed people (“they are just like us” celebrated many Western media correspondents, highlighting the racism underlying the prejudice refugee = dark-haired, dark-eyed, Muslim). Especially coming from institutions that delegate to Turkey and Morocco the repression of migration and the arrival of refugees – who to a large extent are fleeing imperialist wars mostly waged by the West (and which, unsurprisingly, tend to enjoy much less media coverage), not to mention the prominent involvement of Russia too, in the case of Syria– so that the media spotlight on human rights violations is shifted to other countries, in exchange for important geopolitical concessions: intervention in Kurdistan and Syria for some, definitive colonisation and provincialisation à la Trump of Western Sahara (which has gone virtually unnoticed in the Western media, being too busy with the benefits of arms shipments to Ukraine) for others, after years of colonisation war, with express agreement of the exmetropolis – led by the “most progressive government in history”– and Scholz’s “social democratic» Germany. This is when thousands and thousands of refugees are not left to die in the huge mass grave that the leaders of sweet, civilised Europe have turned the Mediterranean into.

Secondly, one cannot lose sight of the aforementioned atmosphere of remilitarisation, neo-macarthyst intimidation of dissidence and demands for new sacrifices from the popular classes in times of war, which Miguel Urbán rightly denounced in the aforementioned press tribune. [\[102\]](#)

Third, it is deeply disturbing that the closure of Russian media outlets such as Sputnik and Russia Today (RT), accused of propagating the Kremlin’s fake news, has gone virtually unnoticed and generated little public debate. It is true that the Russian media system is particularly subservient to power and participates in the blatant propagandistic intoxication of Putin’s reactionary populism, which is not unrelated to that of Trump or Johnson. Having said that, does anyone minimally critical and informed not believe that the accusation of propaganda can also be extended to CNN, the BBC or TV5 Monde, to cite just a few prominent examples? [\[103\]](#) Without going any further, in the UK for years the Tory governments have been purging the BBC of serious journalists while pressuring judges to deport Julian Assange to the United States to serve life imprisonment for leaking information about war crimes perpetrated by their military, sending an unequivocal message to critical and independent journalism. What seems to me even more serious in this case is that media outlets are being shut down without even court orders. Regardless of the fact that fake news undoubtedly exists, I believe that this is an attack on the right to information and a danger to democracy in European countries. As a former journalist, foreign correspondent of a well-known liberal Catalan newspaper, explained very well, the further away from home you work, the more freedom there is for a critical journalist, and the closer you get, the more your job is in danger. [\[104\]](#) I think this also applies to some critical journalists who have just been fired from RT, for example, although the spread of fake news by these media is also often confirmed. Another affair related to the war and freedom of speech and press is the imprisonment of the Basque journalist Pablo González for two months in Poland on charges of espionage on behalf of Russia, without any known action on his behalf by the Spanish government. [\[105\]](#) I think it is not difficult to imagine what would be said in the European chancelleries if all this were happening in Cuba or Venezuela...

In short, the EU’s support for the outlawing of the twelve allegedly pro-Russian and mainly left-wing parties decided by Zelenskiy by decree on 20 March seems to me to be extraordinarily serious. [\[106\]](#) How is it possible to support the umpteenth restriction of democratic rights in Ukraine since 2014 when what that country needs is to preserve political pluralism to the maximum, to encourage debate and criticism and to encourage the mobilisation of citizens to

address not only the problems of resistance today, but also the political, social and economic aspects of the reconstruction of their country in the interests of the many tomorrow. In short, this logic of exceptionality that subverts the norm, which has been in place in the world since at least 11 September 2001 [107], is a very disturbing warning of the liberticidal logics of the already turbulent world scene that this war is only radicalising. [108]

## VII Uncertain outcomes and a radical change of epoch

Inflation and shortage will bring about other changes in Europe. The further deterioration of the living conditions of the social majority that will be added to the consequences of the 2008 crisis and the pandemic, who will benefit electorally? In Spain we have a fairly clear scenario in this respect, in the rest of the EU each country has its own. Which regimes will manage the general deterioration of welfare in the different countries of Europe? It seems that not only Russia, and of course Ukraine, but all of us will lose out with the “regime changes” that the war determines.

*Rafael Poch de Feliu, “Cambios de régimen” [109]*

Despite the hypotheses outlined in the previous section, it is currently very difficult to envisage the outcome of the conflict. Putin seems determined to go all the way at any cost. As the war intensifies, international tension will only increase, as will NATO's and the EU's willingness to wage proxy war by trying to steer Ukrainian military resistance to their own advantage on the one hand, and destabilise Russian society by tightening economic sanctions on the other. [110] In this dynamic, it is much more difficult to imagine a negotiated solution than a generalisation of the conflict to other countries with the enormous risk of degenerating into a global conflagration. [111] Moreover, if, as has been confirmed, US intelligence was right in predicting that Putin would launch the invasion (a decision that, according to these same sources, he did not take until February), if the Americans really wanted to avoid conflict, why did they not take any initiative to that end at the time, instead of limiting themselves to “megaphone diplomacy” [112] and leaking the invasion plans to the press? This question has not been asked by anyone in the mainstream Western media, and in my view it raises the hypothesis that not only did the United States at least, and perhaps also the United Kingdom [113], do nothing to prevent war, but that, on the contrary, there are already strong evidence that they had an interest in encouraging it, given the current situation.

But, to return to the present situation, resulting from the combination of the actions and omissions outlined above, in my view any minor incident (or accident) between Russian and NATO ground, naval or air forces not only in the vicinity of Ukraine, but in any of the areas of the world where they are deployed and where there is a risk of physical contact – (Black Sea, Baltic, North Pacific, Mediterranean, Middle East, Sahel, etc.) – could spiral out of control at any time. [114] Today there are no channels for managing tension between military blocs as there were during the Cold War, and any accident or miscalculation could quickly spiral out of control and into an infernal spiral in the strict sense of the word. [115] This is undoubtedly the most dangerous juncture humanity has experienced since the Cuban missile crisis of October 1962.

Moreover, the insistence of Western foreign ministries on the war crimes committed by the occupying troops – which will surely be confirmed in the future by independent investigations and which occur in most imperialist wars but which, like the invocations of human rights, are only denounced in the case of enemy states [116] – also seeks to prevent any negotiated solution by appealing to the impossibility of sitting down to negotiate with war criminals and implicitly implying that there is no way out other than the total destruction of the regime they lead.

All this obliges us to put all our efforts into mobilising citizens against the Russian invasion and in support of the Ukrainian resistance, but also, and at the same time, to denounce the role of NATO and to become aware of the danger posed by military blocs and the arms race. Undoubtedly, 24 February 2022 inaugurated a radical and dramatic historical turning point [117], characterised by new economic turbulence [118] in addition to the deep-seated crisis that we have been experiencing since 2008 and which has already been deepened by the coronavirus, by the dynamics of remilitarisation [119] and strengthening of NATO – with new risks associated with a hypothetical enlargement to include Sweden and Finland – , a new subordination of the EU to the militarist logic of Washington, a McCarthyist atmosphere of criminalisation of dissidence, a strengthening of neo-fascism... Not to mention a more than likely new deployment of strategic and tactical nuclear weapons in Europe comparable to that which took place during the second cold war in the 1980s and the aforementioned danger that at any moment this new situation could degenerate into a clash between nuclear powers in which each and every one of them would lose. [120] Last but not least, this war is diverting attention from the most serious problems and the most urgent challenges facing humankind at the moment: the fight against global warming, the explosion of inequalities and the growing global threat of the far right. In the face of such an adverse panorama, the first thing to do, as Rosa Luxemburg reminded us, is to take the big picture, keep calm and keep a faint smile on your face.

## VIII What kind of solidarity?

This is, of course, another century, and the left is in a far weaker position, with far less influence on the course of events. By the same token, it is much more vulnerable to being swept along or swept aside by a militarized great-power confrontation it played no role in creating. Some of the old tools – internationalism, class solidarity, a fierce and uncompromising analytical clarity– will be needed to rearm the left against this new round of inter-imperial contention: against the powerful, against both their wars and their peace.

*Tony Wood, op cit.*

Undoubtedly solidarity with the Ukrainian people in general and with the left-wing people in particular who are resisting Putin's invasion is the priority of the moment, without forgetting the paramount importance of supporting the Russian anti-war movement. That is why the political current in which I'm active focuses its support on the two main twinned anti-capitalist and internationalist organisations in both countries, Sotsialnyi Rukh in Ukraine and the Russian Socialist Movement. [121]

Undoubtedly, the two most positive elements of the ongoing terrible drama are the mass mobilisation for national defence in Ukraine against the brutality of the Putinist invasion and a no less admirable mobilisation of the Russian anti-war and socialist movement, which is suffering very harsh repression. That said, as in the time of the Maidan, the Ukrainian left, despite being in the process of recomposition, is obliged to fight in a very adverse context and in a climate of intense anti-Marxism. This leads me to think that, on the left, those sectors that place more emphasis on the Ukrainian arms shortages also tend to exaggerate the progressive potential of the situation, speaking of an imaginary process of "self-organisation». In my opinion, the enormous Ukrainian popular mobilisation for national defence and the solidarity-based deployment of mutual aid in neighbourhoods and localities is not yet crystallising forms of self-organisation. To say this is not to belittle its importance, but simply to nuance the characteristics of its dynamics. Citizen mobilisation is being organised along the lines of the Civil Defence Service that the Churchill government set up in the UK at the beginning of the Second World War, i.e., framed by the government and within the framework of the state. The phenomena of popular self-organisation occur in contexts of mass self-activity which, although desirable, do not occur at the moment, largely because they normally respond to a logic of political autonomy vis-à-vis the institutions. What is more, self-organisation usually implies the capacity to supply, through



organisations created from the struggle, everyday popular needs that a crisis of the state and/or the economy cannot satisfy in a normal way. This would undoubtedly be a desirable scenario, especially if it were to take place in a dynamic of developing progressive values that would contradict, if not antagonise, the right-wing line of the Zelenskiy government. Nevertheless, I believe that a scenario of the war becoming chronic is unlikely to strengthen the left and, more worryingly, will probably instead increase the power of the far right in a context, which cannot be ruled out, of crisis or state bankruptcy. It therefore seems to me vital not to confuse reality and desire and to concentrate on gathering as many political and material resources as possible to strengthen the socialist left in both Ukraine and Russia, to provide them with the logistical means at our disposal and also to try to involve the social and trade union fabric of the various countries in strengthening their counterparts.

A second crucial aspect is the demand on the European Union to take in, not only non-male refugees, old people and children fleeing Ukraine, but also Russian defectors, Russian exiles fleeing Putin's repression and, last but not least, Ukrainian conscientious objectors who, for whatever reasons, do not voluntarily join the armed defence of their country. I believe that this package is fundamental for the European anti-capitalist left.

Another very important axis of solidarity with the Ukrainian people is the abolition of their foreign debt, something that European governments try to silence with their ham-fisted insistence on miraculous arms deliveries, which would supposedly solve all problems. Logically, another of the historical paradoxes we are experiencing is that, while in the Maidan in 2014 Molotov cocktails were flying, romanticised by the global press, in pursuit of incorporation into the European dream... in Athens the cocktails, considered terrorist in this case, were flying to denounce the nightmare of the impositions of Central European capital, which demanded Greece's social suicide on the altar of debt repayment. It is very likely that in the aftermath of the conflict Ukraine will also suffer the European debt nightmare, with its correlate of further cuts, privatisations and economic colonisation. Despite its love affair with Zelensky, I believe that the EU's current refusal to abolish Ukraine's debt is a sure sign of this.

A fourth axis that seems to me essential is to target sanctions, not against the people – against the Russian people... and indirectly against the whole of the popular classes throughout the world, by the way – but against the Russian oligarchy, but also against the Ukrainian and international oligarchy that plunders countries, supports reactionary populism and destroys the social gains of two centuries of the workers' movement. Attacking exclusively the Russian oligarchy is hypocritical if it is not extended to the whole of the transnational oligarchy (that famous 1% that Occupy Wall Street activists talked about), which requires a global attack on tax havens and a register of offshore fortunes hidden in the world, something that is, of course, strongly opposed by the European elites. Moreover, it is a scandal that the vast majority of countries that have uncritically applied Washington's dictates against the Russian Federation in the field of sanctions for the most part coincide with governments that refuse to implement the measures promoted for years by the BDS campaign against the State of Israel. [\[122\]](#) Linked to this, but with an even greater impact on curbing Putin's war machine, is the aforementioned measure of decreeing a generalised boycott of Russian hydrocarbons and using it as an emergency lever to accelerate the energy transition through huge investments of resources in renewable energies guided by the demands of the climate emergency we are experiencing around the world.

Finally, I believe that one last duty of solidarity, but not a minor one, is for the European left to remain true to itself and never to confuse its enemies or its struggle.

*Barcelona, 12 May 2022*

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PS:



## The Ukrainian drama and the Russian roulette

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[1] <https://cxtx.es/es/20220301/Politica/38974/Noam-Chomsky-guerra-Ucrania-Rusia-Putin-EEUU-OTAN-geopolitica-Polychroniou.htm>

[2] Vid. this editorial note by the *Monthly Review* [https://monthlyreview.org/2022/03/07/mr-073-11-2022-04\\_0/](https://monthlyreview.org/2022/03/07/mr-073-11-2022-04_0/)

[3] Vid. Rafael Poch, "[Hacia una quiebra de Rusia](#)".

[4] [https://elpais.com/elpais/2016/03/07/eps/1457353410\\_506770.html](https://elpais.com/elpais/2016/03/07/eps/1457353410_506770.html).

[5] A friend was reminding this rather poetically not long ago: <https://vientosur.info/ucrania-y-la-doctrina-del-shock/>

[6] *La doctrina del shock. El auge del capitalismo del desastre*, Ed. Planeta, Barcelona, 2012

[7] <https://newleftreview.org/issues/ii94/articles/perry-anderson-incommensurate-russia>

[8] <https://www.elsaltodiario.com/opinion/richard-seymour-guerra-ucrania-beligerantes>.

[9] <https://cxtx.es/es/20220301/Firmas/39043/ucrania-rusia-guerra-bbc-jonathan-cook-gaza-palestina-israel-doble-rasero.htm>.

[10] <https://jacobinlat.com/2022/03/14/los-ataques-orwellianos-contra-los-criticos-de-la-otan/>

[11] Here "[Against NATO and Russian military escalation in Eastern Europe](#)".

[12] Vid. <https://jacobinlat.com/2022/03/16/la-eterna-marcha-hacia-el-este/>

[13] A very balanced, complete and synthetic article immediately after the invasion is the following by Valerio Arcady: <https://jacobinlat.com/2022/02/28/ucrania-ni-putin-ni-la-otan-son-inocentes/>

[14] Who, in exchange, would support George W. Bush's "War on terror" since 9/11.

[15] Vid. Rafael Poch de Feliu, *Entender la Rusia de Putin*, Ed. Akal, Madrid, 2018, p. 83.

[16] The pro-capitalist shock therapy, widespread impoverishment and economic humiliations inflicted by Geoffrey Sachs are well described in Cédric Durand, "[Cold peace](#)".

[17] This article by Volodymyr Ishchenko, one of Ukraine's leading Marxist intellectuals, is also very illuminating in this respect: "[A Ukrainian Sociologist Explains Why Everything You Know About Ukraine Is Probably Wrong](#)".

[18] Vid <https://rafaelpoch.com/2022/02/15/haciendo-memoria/>

[19] <https://rafaelpoch.com/2022/02/02/reventando-el-polvorin-ucraniano/>

[20] Although the perpetrators have not been cleared, at the very least it is known that the shots came from a building controlled by protesters – not Yanukovich's police. Princeton University professor emeritus and author of the leading biography on Bukharin, Stephen Cohen *War With Russia: From Putin & Ukraine to Trump & Russiagate* Hot Books, 2019, considers it all but proven that the shots were fired by Pravi Sektor shooters. The same thesis is held by University of Ottawa political scientist Ivan Katchanovski in a documented study: "[The 'Snipers' Massacre' on](#)

[the Maidan in Ukraine](#)”

This massacre led to the fall of Yanukovich and the rise to power of governments that were no less oligarchic and, unfortunately, able to stir up a radicalising Ukrainian nationalism to cover up the fact that the Maidan revolt was incapable of introducing egalitarian structural changes and meaningful democratic deepening. [Vid. [“Towards the Abyss”](#)].

[21] See this Amnesty International report on the subject:

<https://www.amnesty.org/es/latest/news/2015/12/ukraine-communist-party-ban-decisive-blow-for-freedom-of-speech-in-the-country/>

[22] There has even been a logic of historical revisionism – very similar, by the way, to that which exists in Putin’s Russia– which has led to the censorship of works such as Stalingrad, by the eminent British military historian Anthony Beevor, who is not at all suspected of sympathising with the USSR and even less with Putin. Here Beevor reflects on his case and more generally on the dangers of historical revisionism and the judicialisation of historiography: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2018/feb/03/antony-beevor-stalingrad-ukraine-ban-censorship>

[23] Vid. Tony Wood’s recent article: <https://newleftreview.org/issues/ii133/articles/tony-wood-matrix-of-war>

[24] Fortunately there is a fairly conclusive report on the facts by the Council of Europe: <https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2016/01/19/odes-j16.html>

[25] Milosevic’s repression of Kosovar Albanians in 1999, which in my view was much more limited, and the creation of the KLA (UÇK)– as we know today– with some sections coming from organised crime and in part under the umbrella of the CIA, was a sufficient pretext for NATO to launch its first military attack on European soil after the Cold War.

[26] Let us not forget that Saakashvili’s role in Georgia’s failed attempt to recover South Ossetia militarily and to incorporate the former Soviet republic into NATO was a key turning point in the deterioration of relations with Russia and the reconstruction of a regional imperialism by the Kremlin. See Poch, op. cit., p. 108.

[27] <https://www.eurozine.com/caught-in-the-geopolitical-crossfire/#anchor-footnote-6>

[28] Nevertheless, there are strong enough indications to doubt the honesty of Zelenski’s anti-oligarchic fight, vid:

<https://www.theguardian.com/news/2021/oct/03/revealed-anti-oligarch-ukrainian-president-offshore-connections-volodymyr-zelenskiy>

[29] However, let us not lose sight of the fact that he is a staunch supporter of Western imperialism. This open letter from Palestine reminds us of two fundamental things: firstly, the extreme hypocrisy and double standards of Western imperialism in the face of occupations by “friendly” governments, and secondly, that it is no less a comedian who presides over the terrible tragedy of the Ukrainian people:

<https://vientosur.info/paralelismos-entre-la-ocupacion-de-ucrania-y-la-de-palestina/>. This statement by the Palestinian BDS National Committee on sanctions against Russia and the scandalous hypocrisy they often exude is also highly recommendable:

<https://rafaelpoch.com/2022/03/27/la-respuesta-del-occidente-ante-invasion-rusa-demuestra-que-no-hay-excusas-para-rechazar-el-bds-contra-la-ocupacion-israeli/>

[30] In this regard, see the following interview with Volodymyr Ishchenko, one of the country’s leading left-wing intellectuals: Vid:

<https://rafaelpoch.com/2022/03/26/esta-guerra-no-era-inevitable/#more-923>

[31] Vid. Tariq Ali, “News from Natoland” <https://newleftreview.org/sidecar/posts/news-from-natoland>

[32] It is true that Putin uses the NATO issue as a propaganda tool to legitimise his own reactionary imperial agenda (as David Ost rightly argues: <https://vientosur.info/rusia-ucrania-la-otan-y-la-izquierda/>), but neither can Putin’s growing imperial aggression be understood in isolation from the expansion of NATO. In my view, the outbreak of this war now is not exclusively the result of either an outburst or a miscalculation of the international balance of power on Putin’s part, but the culmination of an inter-imperialist struggle for political, economic and military control over Ukraine that goes back to at least 2014.

[33] Interesting article by Kessler on this subject:

[https://jacobinlat.com/2022/02/27/las-fantasias-antibolcheviques-de-putin-podrian-ser-su-perdicion/?fbclid=IwAR1vAajatyEEsv6GOvgohV\\_kulDgY](https://jacobinlat.com/2022/02/27/las-fantasias-antibolcheviques-de-putin-podrian-ser-su-perdicion/?fbclid=IwAR1vAajatyEEsv6GOvgohV_kulDgY)

[1hWK4pPGDnfEbEQQYidMG25GKDY\\_PU](#)

[34] <https://responsiblestatecraft.org/2022/02/15/the-origins-of-the-ukraine-crisis-and-how-conflict-can-be-avoided/>

[35] Slavoj Žižek reminded us of the nauseating hypocrisy of the enthusiasm of EU governments and institutions for the reception of Ukrainian refugees, which we certainly support, when they are responsible for a real genocide, with their necropolitics in pursuit of fortress Europe, by turning the Mediterranean for years into a huge mass grave of refugees from the Middle East and North Africa, mostly fleeing from wars and inequalities caused by Western imperialism:

<https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/europe-unequal-treatment-of-refugees-exposed-by-ukraine-by-slavoj-zizek-2022-03/spanish>

[36] Marco d'Eramo (<https://newleftreview.org/sidecar/posts/216>) is right when he argues that the EU has not known how to have any other relationship with Russia than to turn its back on it, given its size, military potential and Eurasian nature, factors that have always generated an identity panic in the EU, similar to the contradictions it has historically generated in its relationship with Turkey.

[37] All texts can be found here: <https://vientosur.info/debate-la-guerra-en-ucrania-y-el-antiimperialismo/>

[38] In which 1700 troops sent by the then Ukrainian President Kuchma on a "stabilisation" mission took part, cf. Tony Wood, cit.

[39] Vid. Perry Anderson, "¿Ukania perpetua?" <https://newleftreview.es/issues/125/articles/ukania-perpetua-translation.pdf>

[40] Indeed, according to the aforementioned conservative analyst Robert Kaplan (cit.), a scenario of political-military destabilisation on the southern border of the United States is an eventuality that cannot be ruled out in the coming years.

[41] While the Putinist propaganda that takes for granted that Ukraine is not a viable state and that assimilates Ukraine's intention to join NATO to an immediate danger to Russia's security and thus tries to legitimise a criminal and imperialist invasion must be unambiguously condemned, it is no less true that the Americans had installed important military complexes in the country, such as the naval base at Ochakiv (<https://navalpost.com/u-s-plan-to-modernize-naval-base-at-ukraine/>) or the base at Yavoriv ([https://www.clarin.com/mundo/guerra-rusia-ucrania-base-unidos-entrenando-27-000-soldados-ucranianos\\_0\\_hPJr7DjiY1.html](https://www.clarin.com/mundo/guerra-rusia-ucrania-base-unidos-entrenando-27-000-soldados-ucranianos_0_hPJr7DjiY1.html)). Moreover, according to Noam Chomsky, what seems to have precipitated the current crisis is a protocol of military relations with the United States that seemed to considerably accelerate the prospect of incorporating Ukraine into NATO, as can be seen in the Joint Statement on the US-Ukraine Strategic Partnership signed by the White House on 1 September 2021:

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/09/01/joint-statement-on-the-u-s-ukraine-strategic-partnership/>.

[42] Vid. Perry Anderson, *The New Old World*, Verso, London, 2011

[43] Vid. <https://vientosur.info/otan-control-geopolitico-soberanias-limitadas-e-involucion-politica/> and Daniele Ganser's book, *Los ejércitos secretos de la OTAN, la Operación Gladio y el terrorismo en Europa Occidental*, Ed. El Viejo Topo, Barcelona, 2010.

[44] I think this explains why this manifesto of solidarity with Ukraine makes no mention of NATO when referring to the ongoing war (English | European Solidarity Network with Ukraine ([ukraine-solidarity.eu](http://ukraine-solidarity.eu))). I believe that this initiative is both very limited in terms of building international solidarity and very inconsistent in terms of characterising the conflict. Consequently, organisations such as Anticapitalistas, which has explicitly approved that it will not participate in any initiative that does not condemn both the single responsible for the war (Putin) and the main organisation responsible for dynamising peace (NATO), declined to sign it. Its promoters preferred to secure the membership of the openly Atlanticist and pro-nuclear Polish organisation Razem, which believes that Poland's membership of NATO is not enough and therefore advocates the creation of a Euro-army within NATO to reinforce "defence tasks" ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Left\\_Together](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Left_Together)).... Accession, as I was saying, was achieved at the price of removing all critical references to NATO from the manifesto.

[45] I believe that books like *La venganza de la geografía* (RBA editores, Barcelona, 2013) and *El retorno del mundo de Marco Polo* (RBA editoriales, Barcelona, 2019), by an author as little suspected of being Putin's friend as Robert Kaplan, one of the greatest exponents of the realist current in international relations, illustrate very well that all states are paranoid about their security vis-à-vis other states and, as Manuel Vázquez Montalbán used to say about the USSR in which the former KGB agent Vladimir Putin was trained, and which can no doubt be extended to the

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Russia he currently presides, "the worst thing that can happen to a paranoid person is to be persecuted".

[46] Juan Carlos Pereira, *Historia de las relaciones internacionales contemporáneas*, Ed. Ariel, Barcelona, 2009.

[47] As Cédric Durand puts it: <https://newleftreview.org/sidecar/posts/cold-peace>

[48] That in this war it appears to broad sectors as an organisation defending the weak against the strong, as Franco Turigliatto rightly points out: <https://anticapitalista.org/2022/03/20/contro-le-aggressioni-imperialiste-per-il-ritiro-delle-truppe-russe-dallucraina/>

[49] I fully agree with many of Wolfgang Streeck's thoughts in a recent article: <https://www.elsaltodiario.com/carta-desde-europa/wolfgang-streeck-guerra-ucrania-todos-perdedores>

[50] It cannot be stressed enough that NATO's declaration after its Bucharest summit in April 2008, announcing that Georgia and Ukraine would join the organisation, with the United States playing a major role in this, was undoubtedly a real turning point in the accelerated deterioration of relations between the West and Russia after the end of the Cold War and one of the most powerful incentives for Russia to try to rebuild an area of influence in the region and thus hinder these plans. A promise that, in addition, lacking a concrete timeframe, made these countries a target for possible Russian retaliation. The Russo-Georgian war that broke out a few months later already foreshadowed the script of the current Ukrainian drama. Russia had changed its policy, but Washington remained on autopilot. From that dust, this is the mud. See Tony Wood, cit.

[51] This is acknowledged by Achcar himself (<https://vientosur.info/para-los-fabricantes-de-armas-la-guerra-en-ucrania-es-un-gran-negocio/>), but he skips over a fundamental issue, namely that NATO's intervention in Ukraine, with the delivery of "defensive weapons", which the author supports, is the main immediate link between the Russian invasion and the revival of the Western military industry, regardless of the obvious propagandistic exaggerations about Russian military might that he rightly points out.

[52] As Noam Chomsky (<https://www.sinpermiso.info/textos/centremonos-en-evitar-una-guerra-nuclear-en-lugar-de-debatir-sobre-la-guerra-justa-entrevista-a-noam>) rightly points out, it seems that it was the following document (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/09/01/joint-statement-on-the-u-s-ukraine-strategic-partnership/>), the US-Ukraine strategic partnership that paved the way for Ukraine's integration into NATO, that acted as the trigger for the crisis.

[53] See "[In this hour of great danger, in solidarity with the Ukrainian resistance, let's rebuild the international anti-war movement](#)".

[54] In this documentation the US government (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/03/16/fact-sheet-on-u-s-security-assistance-for-ukraine/>) only details the contents of the latest arms shipment to Ukraine, logically not counting all recent shipments prior to the invasion or in the years prior to the outbreak of this crisis.

[55] For a detailed account of US, NATO and EU arms shipments see this report from the British House of Commons: <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9477/CBP-9477.pdf>.

[56] It has been said that opposition to NATO is, in the Spanish state, a question of "identity" (<https://newpol.org/no-to-nato-or-the-identity-crisis-of-the-spanish-left/>). Certainly, there may be people who display a primary anti-Americanism typical of other times and, indeed, a campist view that ranks the degree of progressivism of each state according to its level of antagonism with the United States; undoubtedly others use their rejection of NATO to differentiate themselves and cover up disastrous decisions such as joining governments of class collaboration and loyal management of the system.... but in my opinion —and I think this is an idea shared by the bulk of the alternative left and the local social movements— the need to oppose NATO is based on one evidence: it is, not the only, but the main and most powerful armed wing of world capitalism and therefore a counter-revolutionary power structure which, like any military organisation, is offensive in nature, however much it systematically proclaims the contrary. Moreover, its offensive nature has been amply demonstrated by its interventions in the Balkans, Libya and Afghanistan since the end of the Cold War. I fear that if this is lost sight of in countries like France I do not foresee a very promising future for its left-wing forces.

[57] The militants of Anticapitalistas have the honour to count among our ranks Miguel Urbán, one of the only 15 MEPs who voted against a European Parliament resolution that took advantage of the public shock of the invasion to launch a programme of militarist revival and neo-imperialist aggressiveness, duly greased with an atmosphere of sacred union and adorned, in turn, with a wrapper of beautiful solidarity proclamations. Here you can read the justification of their voting orientation:

[https://www.eldiario.es/euroblog/parlamento-europeo-vota-caminar-senderos-gloria\\_132\\_8833235.html](https://www.eldiario.es/euroblog/parlamento-europeo-vota-caminar-senderos-gloria_132_8833235.html)

[58] This is brilliantly set out in one of the capital works on geopolitics written by a leading figure in US foreign policy and the great architect of the Afghan trap that sank the USSR in the 1980s: Zbigniew Brzezinski, *El gran tablero mundial. La supremacía estadounidense y sus imperativos geoestratégicos*, Ed. Paidós, Barcelona, 1997. A key text for understanding the dynamics of Longue Durée in international politics in general and US politics in particular. Leandros Fischer <https://www.contretemps.eu/guerre-ukraine-critique-imperialisme-gauche-allemande/> also recalls it from left-wing positions inspired by Liebknecht's maxim, "the enemy is at home".

[59] Vid. Peter Gowan, *La apuesta por la globalización. La geoeconomía y la geopolítica del imperialismo euro-estadounidense*, Ed. Akal, Madrid, 2000.

[60] I can't resist recommending the film by Australian director and screenwriter David Michôd, "War Machine", a hilarious satire of this period, based on real events, in my opinion comparable to the classics of the genre by filmmakers such as E. Lubitsch, B. Wilder or S. Kubrick, a brilliant exception that confirms the rule of the generally poor quality of Netflix film productions.

[61] For a concise factual account of NATO's strategic evolution by a veteran peace activist, see <https://blogs.publico.es/cronicas-insumisas/2022/03/01/la-guerra-de-ucrania-responsabilidades-asimetricas/>.

[62] I think this article by Francisco Louçã hits the nail on the head in this regard and corroborates that dynamiting the Nord Stream2 project was a strategic objective of the Biden Administration: <https://www.contretemps.eu/ukraine-russie-strategie-sanctions-victoire-usa/>

[63] Here is an interesting article on the social underdevelopment and the prostration of the workers' movement brought about by a hypertrophied military-industrial complex, as in the case of the United States, and how NATO's imperialist and counter-revolutionary role has accentuated this dynamic: <https://blogs.publico.es/vicenc-navarro/2022/03/14/causas-y-consecuencias-de-la-guerra-en-ucrania/>

[64] Vid. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/26/world/europe/russia-putin-matteo-salvini-marine-le-pen.html>

[65] Bernard-Henri Lévy, a repentant enfant terrible of '68 who is the great icon of narcissistic intellectual imposture, strongly promoted by the French media system due to his exaltation of Atlanticist liberal imperialism (and Zionism) and his frivolity and left-wing conformism.

[66] Vid. Daniel Bensaïd, *Trotskismos*, Sylone Editorial, Barcelona, 2015.

[67] In an open letter (<https://www.sinpermiso.info/texts/a-letter-from-kyiv-to-the-western-left>), Taras Bilous correctly denounced the Western left that blamed the crisis only on Western imperialism, rightly recalled that Russia in 2014 violated the Bucharest protocol by which Ukraine ceded its nuclear weapons to Russia in exchange for guarantees of its territorial integrity, and made a number of normal and reasonable considerations from the point of view of the Ukrainian left, which will no doubt have had a strong influence on comrades who tend to generalise the label "campist" to everyone who still thinks it is vital to understand the role of Western imperialism and not reduce this conflict exclusively to a war of national liberation. However, when Taras Bolous makes an analogy with the 2003 US invasion of Iraq he forgets that no one on the Western left and anti-war movement thought to campaign for arms to be sent to Iraq, a sovereign state despite being a dictatorship, to prevent the 2003 US invasion. Nor does it mention what in my view is the political core of the current armed conflict, although it certainly did not involve an immediate risk for Russia, let alone a justification for an invasion that is undoubtedly criminal and condemnable from all points of view: the decision of the Ukrainian Rada to abandon in 2014 its status as a non-aligned country and to incorporate even in the 2019 Constitution – something that is not found in any other country in the world – its vocation to join NATO, the only policy – the status of neutrality – that guaranteed the sovereignty, national cohesion and medium and long-term viability of Ukraine in a context of inter-imperialist tensions exacerbated by the crisis of US imperialism, the rise of China and the ethno-nationalist turn of Putin's regime since 2008. By this I am not saying that a people necessarily deserve the politicians they have, but I am saying that a significant part of the left has been inaudible to the undeniable risks of Ukraine becoming an instrument of NATO imperialism against Russia, as had already happened with Kosovo in 1999 to justify NATO's "humanitarian" war against

Serbia.

[68] In this recent article (<http://www.europe-solidaire.org/spip.php?article62130>) Gilbert Achcar is quite categorical in his assertion that the only effective support for the Ukrainian people inexorably involves support for NATO's indirect intervention in Ukraine. Moreover, he makes opposition to NATO's proxy intervention into an equivalence —forgetting that any arms shipment is subject to conditionalities (to begin with, being in the political antipodes of the Vietnamese revolutionaries of the 1960s and 1970s or the Syrian revolutionaries of 2011), just to refer to a couple of analogies that he often uses) and pursues its own objectives that do not necessarily coincide with those of the subjects that request them— and the denial of the Ukrainian people's right to arm themselves in general (which I support without the need to support NATO's agency).

[69] <https://www.rosalux.de/en/news/id/46153/stopping-the-war-is-the-absolute-priority>

[70] This article by Paul Martial, in addition to reminding us of the food risks for Africa of the deepening economic crisis caused by this war (in addition to the very serious effects of COVID on the continent), illustrates very well the causes of anti-Western and anti-NATO resentment in Africa and the sympathy aroused by any government that challenges the Euro-American hegemony: "[Food crisis in Africa](#)"

[71] Here is the debate between Achcar and Callinicos:

<https://socialistworker.co.uk/long-reads/ukraine-and-anti-imperialism-gilbert-achcar-and-alex-callinicos-debate/>

[72]

<https://puntodevistainternacional.org/que-nos-dice-la-invasion-de-ucrania-por-rusia-sobre-el-imperialismo-del-siglo-xxi-entrevista-a-claudio-katz/>

and Ucraina: diagnósticos y controversias - Jacobin América Latina (jacobinlat.com)

[73] Here you can read the controversy between Achcar and Kouvelakis: <https://vientosur.info/debate-la-guerra-en-ucrania-y-el-antiimperialismo/>

[74] For some recent data on the military power that NATO represents, see. C. Serfati: <http://www.europe-solidaire.org/spip.php?article61628>

[75] In a recent article, the American historian Adam Tooze compared the "Ukraine Democracy Defense Lend-Lease Act of 2022" just passed by the US Congress to the one that Rousevelt put in place to sustain the Anglo-Soviet war effort against the Third Reich prior to the US entry into World War II, both in terms of the volume of military aid involved, the logic of proxy warfare it represents, and the implications it may have in terms of escalation and the danger of direct confrontation. See:

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/may/04/us-lend-lease-act-ukraine-1941-second-world-war>

[76] In this article, Francis Fukuyama, the great propagandist of the "end of history", is crystal clear on the subject:

<https://www.americanpurpose.com/blog/fukuyama/preparing-for-defeat/>

[77] There is increasing documentary confirmation, including from the establishment press, that there is a real proxy war being waged by NATO against Russia. This article calculates that US military support for Ukraine is already more than the average annual cost of the occupation of Afghanistan in budgetary terms and that such escalation is showing clear signs of the growing danger of sliding into a general war: La guerra de Putin en Ucrania entra en una espiral internacional de consecuencias imprevisibles | Internacional | EL PAÍS (elpais.com)-

[78] I think this eventuality is very well developed by this article:

<https://www.lamarea.com/2022/04/22/el-peligro-de-ignorar-a-la-ultraderecha-en-ucrania/>

[79] This is the position of E. Balibar (<http://www.europe-solidaire.org/spip.php?article61676>), D. Tanuro (

<http://www.europe-solidaire.org/spip.php?article61771>) or C. Samary (

<https://vientosur.info/por-que-no-he-firmado-el-manifiesto-feminista-contra-la-guerra-en-ucrania/>).

[80] The Americans estimated that the Russian invasion would be completed in only three to four days, underestimating the strength of the Ukrainian army and exaggerating Russia's war potential. Vid:

<https://newleftreview.org/issues/ii133/articles/volodymyr-ishchenko-towards-the-abys>



## The Ukrainian drama and the Russian roulette

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[81] This interview with Anthony Beevor is illustrative of the military errors and weaknesses that the Russian army is demonstrating:

<https://www.spiegel.de/international/world/british-historian-antony-beevor-putin-wants-to-be-feared-like-stalin-and-hitler-a-93a32290-fa50-425b-9cc0-5c6d2f6c9ba6>

[82] <https://www.publico.es/internacional/conocer-numero-muertos-guerra-ucrania.html#md=modulo-portada-fila-de-modulos:2x3:mm=mobile-big>

[83] What I would find most serious in all this is if one were to believe that the aims of NATO's arms deliveries to Ukraine coincide with those of the anti-imperialist left, when it accepts the logic of the lesser evil (Ukraine's vassalage by the West) in order to avoid the greater evil (its total subjugation to Russia).

[84] Former CIA chief Leon Panetta has explicitly acknowledged that the United States is waging a proxy war against Russia in Ukraine: Vid.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-03-25/nato-us-in-proxy-war-with-russia-biden-next-move-crucial/100937196>

[85] It is good to remember that both the Spanish Republicans during the civil war—who, by the way, did suffer a boycott by the “Western democracies” of their right to arm themselves, when France and Britain set up the farce of the Non-Intervention Committee—and the Vietnamese revolutionaries paid a very high price for Soviet military aid: the one constrained to curb and repress the social revolution (especially in Barcelona and Aragon) and impose a kind of “people’s democracy” *avant la lettre*, the other suffering the capitulating diplomatic manoeuvres of the Kremlin, starting with the partition of the country in 1953. No financial or military support is neutral and exempt from political subordination. Only figures of the stature of Ho Chi Minh or Tito – who liberated Yugoslavia from the Nazis by his own means, linking national liberation and social revolution, moving skilfully in the Stalin-Churchill struggle and resisting pressure from both – had the stature and audacity to limit it as much as possible in defence of their national and class interests. I have reasonable doubts that Zelensky, though undoubtedly a brave and gutsy patriot (as, incidentally, Churchill was in the “darkest hour” of May-June 1940), will show any remotely comparable political independence, for a start because he is nevertheless a pro-imperialist bourgeois politician, even if some friends tend to forget it.

[86] I therefore fully subscribe to Volodymyr Ishchenko's position in this interview: “Stopping the War Is the Absolute Priority”

<https://www.rosalux.de/en/news/id/46153/stopping-the-war-is-the-absolute-priority>

[87] To which Hillary Clinton explicitly appealed on MSNBC News on 28 February.

[88] In Rafael Poch de Feliu's view, the current war is in fact resolving an old establishment divide by overcoming the old dichotomy of "against Russia or against China" in favour of the following solution: "Russia first, China next". Vid:

<https://cxtx.es/es/20220401/Firmas/39377/Rafael-Poch-Estados-Unidos-rusia-invasion-Ucrania-guerra-Finlandia-Guerra-de-Invierno.htm>

[89] The direct intervention of US military intelligence in the conflict to provide information to liquidate a dozen Russian generals has already been officially acknowledged. See <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/04/us/politics/russia-generals-killed-ukraine.html>

[90] At the moment, it seems that a coup against Putin is unfeasible in the short term, as the Russian oligarchy lacks the means to carry it out, and it seems that Putin's system of control has proven its resilience at this level. This article by Ilya Matveev is recommended:

<https://studies.aljazeera.net/en/analyses/ukrainian-invasion-implications-putin%E2%80%99s-power#a17>

[91] The betrayal of the Kurds fighting Daesh in Syria is still fresh when, after years of military and intelligence collaboration, manipulation and unkept promises, the Americans suddenly withdrew and left them at the mercy of the Turkish army. Vid. Traicionados por Estados Unidos, los kurdos fueron clave para encontrar al jefe del Estado Islámico - The New York Times (nytimes.com)

[92] This was Patrick Cockburn's view at the beginning of the war and he believes there is a good chance that it will escalate into a conflict with NATO: <https://www.counterpunch.org/2022/03/07/even-if-russia-captures-kyiv-putin-has-already-been-defeated-after-starting-unwinnable-war/>

[93] For an analysis of the origins of the current drama, see the article by this rising star of the New Left Review, which, given its quality, promises to set the family flag very high when it comes to intellectual milestones on the left:

<https://novaramedia.com/2022/03/03/in-ukraine-rival-worldviews-led-to-unnecessary-war/>

[94] Harari, the popular Israeli author of Sapiens and Homo deus, predicted Russia's defeat early on in the conflict:

[https://www.eldiario.es/internacional/theguardian/vladimir-putin-perdido-guerra\\_129\\_8790058.html](https://www.eldiario.es/internacional/theguardian/vladimir-putin-perdido-guerra_129_8790058.html).

[95] <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-61020567>

[96] In this war the problem of the strong influence of far-right tendencies is no longer exclusively Ukrainian. The arrival of thousands of volunteers, mainly ex-military and ex-police (or even serving civil servants) from all over the world is also militarily reinforcing and providing a training ground for international neo-fascism. This does not disqualify the Ukrainian resistance from the outset and, for the time being, it remains a limited problem, but we cannot lose sight of the fact that in the event of a collapse of the Ukrainian state, this war could have a very powerful effect on the proliferation of an armed international ultra-right in a similar way to how the war in Afghanistan (1979-1989) catapulted Al-Qaeda terrorism around the world and the wars in Iraq (since 2003) and Syria (since 2011) have been the political, military and economic springboard for the development of the Islamic State. This article by Miquel Ramos reviews the role of the Ukrainian far right since the Maidan (<https://blogs.publico.es/dominiopublico/42714/el-polvorin-neonazi-en-ucrania/>) and even explores its connections with groups that participated in the Trumpist assault on Capitol Hill, to the alarm of the FBI.... Here it is argued that the chronification of war is the best scenario for the strengthening of ultra-nationalist tendencies (<https://novaramedia.com/2022/02/22/the-far-right-is-using-the-situation-in-ukraine-to-cement-its-power/>), here there is a review the role of neo-Nazi militias (<https://vientosur.info/la-verdad-sobre-las-milicias-de-extrema-derecha/>) and here the risks posed by the arrival of thousands of foreign volunteers are addressed (<https://www.newtral.es/voluntarios-extranjeros-ucrania/20220321/>).

[97] This article by Branko Marcetic seems to me to be quite conclusive in this respect and emphasises the impossibility of controlling – as several US military officials acknowledge – the fate of the weapons with which 20 imperialist countries have been flooding Ukraine for months:

<https://jacobinmag.com/2022/04/united-states-military-aid-ukraine-war-weapons>

[98] This accurate contribution by a group of exiled Syrian revolutionaries, with which I fully agree (<https://vientosur.info/diez-lecciones-de-siria/>), unfortunately fails to address two key issues in my view. First, the West's refusal to militarily support the democratic revolution at the beginning of the civil war in Syria, which contrasts with the arming of Zelensky's pro-Western neoliberal regime, demonstrating that, regardless of the fact that Ukraine has every right to resist Putin's invasion, NATO will never arm any actor that does not openly defend NATO's interests. Secondly, he does not elaborate on the fact that the growth of Jihadism during the Syrian civil war also had a lot to do with the financial and military support it received from reactionary states such as Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Turkey and, let us not forget, from the CIA and MI6 until practically the Daesh attacks in Paris and Saint-Denis (as Patrick Cockburn denounced at the time <https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/13930125001019/MI6-he-CIA-and-Trkey39-s-Rqe-Game-in-Syria>).

[99] <https://www.lamarea.com/2022/04/22/el-peligro-de-ignorar-a-la-ultraderecha-en-ucrania/>

[100] In this respect, I quite agree with Branko Marcetic's analysis:

<https://www.jacobinmag.com/2022/03/left-antiwar-policy-ukraine-russian-invasion-war-levitz-liberal-interventionism>

[101] In this article, a former CIA analyst specialising in Russia wonders how the ongoing war might end. Some of his hypotheses could not be more disturbing: <https://responsiblestatecraft.org/2022/04/29/how-will-the-war-in-ukraine-end/>

[102] [https://www.eldiario.es/euroblog/parlamento-europeo-vota-caminar-senderos-gloria\\_132\\_8833235.html](https://www.eldiario.es/euroblog/parlamento-europeo-vota-caminar-senderos-gloria_132_8833235.html)

[103] I can only agree with many of the arguments of Russian journalist Inna Afinogenova, a former RT employee and now undoubtedly critical of the Russian government and unequivocally opposed to the invasion of Ukraine, about propaganda in all major media: Donde está Inna Afinogenova y qué le pasó - YouTube

[104] This interview by Pablo Iglesias with Rafael Poch de Feliu is very interesting: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yTxNH-QgDC8>

[105] <https://www.rtve.es/noticias/20220323/periodista-espionaje-polonia-prision-provisional/2321582.shtml>

[106]

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<https://www.europapress.es/internacional/noticia-bruselas-enmarca-suspension-partidos-opositores-ucrania-ley-marcial-plena-invasion-rusa-2022-0322154330.html>; [https://www.eldiario.es/internacional/ultima-hora-invasion-rusa-ucrania-directo\\_6\\_8846082\\_1086968.html](https://www.eldiario.es/internacional/ultima-hora-invasion-rusa-ucrania-directo_6_8846082_1086968.html). Incidentally, not only have the 12 parties been outlawed, but it seems that there has also been an alarming increase in the number of searches and arrests of bloggers and activists from the left and the opposition to Zelensky. Moreover, as our friends from Sotsialnyi Rukh remind us, since 2014, parties that support neutralism or are simply unenthusiastic about the EU and NATO have also been disqualified as "pro-Russian". Vid: <https://www.contretemps.eu/ukraine-zelensky-interdiction-partis-pro-russes/>. Statement of Sotsialnyi Rukh in English <https://fourth.international/index.php/en/europe/437>

[107] Vid. Daniel Bensaïd, *Elogio de la política profana*, Ed. Península, Barcelona, 2009.

[108] Vid. <https://vientosur.info/la-tormenta-perfecta-ya-esta-aqui/>

[109] <https://ctxt.es/es/20220301/Firmas/39208/Rafael-Poch-Estados-Unidos-Regimen-Rusia-modelo-gobierno.htm>

[110] Incidentally, one of the main risks for US imperialism in this conflict is the potential weakening of the dollar as a safe haven currency through seizures of Russian assets abroad. See <https://rafaelpoch.com/2022/03/25/el-suicidio-del-dolar-ii/>

[111] Recent newspaper articles already refer to a dynamic of "spillover" of the war and the risk of it spreading to Transnistria in the coming days: <https://elpais.com/opinion/2022-05-02/desbordamiento-belico.html>

[112] Vid. <https://newleftreview.org/issues/ii133/articles/volodymyr-ishchenko-towards-the-abyss>

[113] On 26 April James Heapey, the British Secretary of State for Defence, told the Ukrainians to extend the war to Russian territory. Vid Marco d'Eramo: Vid: <https://newleftreview.org/sidecar/posts/radioactive-righteousness>

[114] Leading analysts, such as Chomsky, have long warned of the grave danger we face: <https://www.sinpermiso.info/textos/centremonos-en-evitar-una-guerra-nuclear-en-lugar-de-debatir-sobre-la-guerra-justa-entrevista-a-noam>.

[115] Indeed, Marco d'Eramo argues that the great powers are sleepwalking towards the abyss in a way that is very reminiscent of the antecedent of the Great War of 1914. op cit.

[116] Vid. Marco d'Eramo, op cit.

[117] For a synthetic and passionately ironic characterisation of this epochal change, see these notes by Mike Davis, in which there is no lack of a refined sense of humour: <https://newleftreview.org/sidecar/posts/thanatos-triumphant>

[118] Francisco Louçã argues that we are witnessing the beginning of the end of globalisation at the hand of war and sanctions: "The global financial network is fragmenting, with the additional risk of blocking energy and food supplies. There will be two internet, two systems of payment and trade, two economies that will collide: as 10 countries have 75% of the production of all minerals, the borders of these worlds will cross them. After globalisation, we have entered the time of infinite war." Vid: <https://www.sinpermiso.info/textos/es-realmente-el-fin-de-la-globalizacion>

[119] According to the SIPRI yearbook, global military spending already increased by 0.7% in 2021 despite the pandemic. Remilitarisation policies in 2022 could reach levels far higher than those of the Cold War: [https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2021-09/yb21\\_summary\\_esp.pdf](https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2021-09/yb21_summary_esp.pdf)

[120] Vid. Poch <https://rafaelpoch.com/2022/03/24/el-gran-peligro/>

[121] I would like to use this article to urge readers to support our campaign for financial support to the Ukrainian and Russian anti-capitalist left: <https://www.anticapitalistas.org/comunicados/campana-de-solidaridad-con-las-socialistas-de-ucrania-y-rusia/>

[122] <https://bdsmovement.net/es/news/la-respuesta-del-occidente-ante-invasi%C3%B3n-rusa-demuestra-que-no-hay-excusas-para-rechazar-el-bds>