



IV566 - March 2022

Corsica - the stone in Macron's shoe

31 March 2022, by **Antoine Larrache, Desideriu Ramelet-Stuart**

How can we understand, in a few words, the revolt that is being expressed in Corsica?

It's a movement that comes from way back. For seven years, in Corsica, the territorial majority, which manages the Corsican Assembly, has been part of the nationalist movement. Not in the sense in which it can be understood in France, of course, but in the nationalist sense, in the sense of the right to self-determination of the Corsican people. There were new elections, last December, where this majority obtained 70% of the votes. This is out of the ordinary, and shows that the Corsican people have an out of the ordinary support for this desire for self-determination. And in the face of this, the [French] state's response is the same, that is to say a denial of democracy, whatever the demand expressed, whether it be linguistic, cultural, the basic rights of political prisoners, etc. So it's a situation which is very heavy, including for activists who are rather reformist, and who

are, in a way, the most damaged in the affair, because they played the game of dialogue, of democracy, and finally they were humiliated.

All this is no longer acceptable to young people. And this provocation of too much, that is to say the categorical refusal to lift the DPS status [detainee under special surveillance] for Yvan Colonna, and to expose him to risks and finally to an assassination attempt [1], was the straw that broke the camel's back. It was the trigger, but afterwards there are obviously deeper roots.

You are one of those who explain that the revolt in Corsica is not only due to the fatal attack on Yvan Colonna [2] and therefore to the Corsican national question, but also to the social situation and in particular to the very precarious situation of young people, the absence of prospects. Can you tell us more?

The democratic question and the social questions are two sides of the same struggle. The Corsican people cannot influence their own destiny and decisions. I'll take a very simple

example: when the Corsican Assembly votes to put an end to the creation of very large supermarkets, the regional prefect cancels this vote. In reality, European capitalism assigns Corsica to be a vast consumer zone, with an extraordinary rate of large surfaces per square kilometre. Corsica is a country that has a nourishing land, that has always had a fairly strong self-sufficient culture, but that today depends 93% on imports from outside. And that, obviously, at the economic and social level, creates very strong disparities. The wealth gap is currently at the same level as in the 19th century, there is mass impoverishment, particularly among young people, women are even more affected, it is impossible to find housing because of speculation, etc. All of this is a burden on the economy.

All this is a daily burden. So when you combine democratic oppression, colonial oppression and capitalist oppression, at the end of the day there's too much, young people are fed up and today they're making it known, and very violently.

This interview can be found in full on video on the NPA [website](#).

Hunger threatens more than 4 million Haitians

30 March 2022, by **Inter Press Service**

Inflation, conflicts marked by criminal groups and disasters caused by natural phenomena are compounded by persistent political instability, which has increased since the assassination of then President Jovenel Moïse on 7 July 2021.

According to the latest estimates of the WFP's Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) - which ranks the severity and extent of food insecurity and malnutrition - on a scale of five, some 4.5 million Haitians, or more than 40% of the country's 11 million inhabitants, are hungry. And of these, it is estimated that more than 1.3 million will be in the emergency phase of the Integrated Food Security Phase (IPC) classification between March and June 2022.

IPC Phase 4 results in extremely low household food consumption due to reduced access to staple foods, as prices rise and incomes remain very low.

For some families, the current economic crisis is characterised by a

weakening of the currency (the gourde) against the US dollar, rampant inflation and rising fuel prices in recent months.

The "Ukraine crisis" [Putin's Russian-led war] may soon worsen Haiti's food security as world prices for the food the country must import rise.

In addition, the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, such as droughts, floods and storms, are having a detrimental effect on crops, infrastructure and agricultural assets, affecting the livelihoods of rural populations.

According to the National Food Security Coordination, the monthly cost of the basic minimum food basket (rice, wheat flour, maize, beans, sugar and vegetable oil) has risen from US\$20 to US\$30. In two years, the price of bread has increased fivefold.

In parts of the south of the island, hit by a powerful earthquake on 14 August, and where the emergency response was limited, the situation has

deteriorated. The north of the country, covering only 27,750 square kilometres, is suffering the consequences of heavy flooding in late January.

In response to the humanitarian emergency, the WFP said it expects to help 1.7 million people this year, after successfully providing food and other assistance to 1.3 million Haitians in 2021.

The UN agency is also undertaking initiatives to increase people's resilience and social protection, with activities that can provide some income and reduce the effects and risks of disasters among communities.

Assets that can be mobilised for communities include road rehabilitation, soil and water conservation, irrigation canals and complementary activities to strengthen local food production, agricultural practices, nutrition and gender reduction, WFP said. [3]

Adapted from Inter Press 22 March 2022

Between War and Terror: A Letter from Russia

29 March 2022, by **Oxana Timofeeva**

Formally, only one-person pickets are allowed, but their participants are usually immediately detained by the police. For this reason, people often simply agree to face the risk of arrest together and come out onto the streets at the same time. On the

morning of February 24, only a few hours after Russian forces crossed over into Ukrainian territory, people realized that something monstrous and intolerable was underway. One after another they began to write on social media that it was time to take a

"big walk." The very same evening, people came out into the streets with the slogan "No to War!"

On the first day, it was terrifying. Nobody knew what kind of reaction to expect from the police, or which

degree of violence they would employ. After a week of protesting, it seems to me that people are no longer afraid. The situation in our society is so catastrophic that people realize they already have nothing to lose. This is why many are ready to take the risk—they are unafraid of going to jail, of losing their jobs or their entire lives. Something must be done to finally end this war, for which we feel guilt, shame, alarm, and horror.

People are learning about digital security, creating networks of solidarity to circumvent official censorship, bans, and internet blocks. They make factsheets for those under arrest, Telegram channels for quickly exchanging information to coordinate meetings, legal help, and material support for those caught in the clutches of the police. Recently, however, some of the Western sanctions have impeded the coordination of protest and opposition actions. For example, Visa and MasterCard's departure from Russia means that people cannot even download paid VPN software. In other words, they risk being cut off from communication at any given moment.

The protesters include people of different ages and professions. Student and feminist initiatives deserve special mention. Feminists have it especially hard. They were subject to repressions and bullying before the war, as the Russian ideology of militarism is primarily a patriarchal one. On March 6, for example, the biggest protest action took place. 5,000 were arrested and held without access to legal counsel. The police use electroshock weapons, take away people's telephones, and sometimes subject people to torture.

There are also more moderate forms of protest—for example, the "quiet picket." People use anti-war symbols in everyday life, on their clothing, and so on. Some paste stickers or hand out leaflets—which is also very dangerous. In some cases, the police find people

pasting stickers through footage from surveillance cameras, which are now all over the place. So basically, we are not giving up, but there are few of us, and even the largest mass protests remain invisible to most. The major independent magazines, newspapers, and internet resources have closed down, and state mass media are the only ones left standing, pumping out militaristic propaganda 24/7. We do not have enough resources to make the Russian peace movement visible in the country and abroad. We need help so that protestors can feel that their risks and efforts are not made in vain.

How has the so-called intelligentsia reacted to these events? Many are leaving or have already left. Many dropped everything and just left for nowhere—whoever could do so moved to Europe, many others have gone to the former USSR countries that are still destinations for Russian planes: Kazakhstan, Armenia, Uzbekistan, or countries that admit Russians without visas: Turkey, for example. People are fleeing Russia, trying to bring their families and children with them, because they have no illusions about there being any future at home. Most of my friends are already abroad, and their hearts are breaking. Those who stay behind and who don't have hope or strength to fight close up and fall into depression; some take to drink, others consider suicide. I've thought of that, too. I'm worried about my friends in Russia whose homes are being searched by the police; I'm worried to death about my relatives and friends in Ukraine. I feel direct physical terror and horror; my hands are shaking. The only thing that helps is to find them all and to try to do something.

We are now caught in the crossfire. Our country's foreign policy is war; its domestic policy is terror. These two things did not befall us suddenly, but gestated over the years, starting from the very moment that Putin came to power in 2000. He had no

unambiguous ideology, but a goal: to hold onto power by any means. The two time-tested tools to do so were repression and military operations. Old activists and dissidents remember how the OMON fighters would have been among those opposing Putin's policies for the longest time. In the 2010s, the presidential elections were finally turned into a farce—no matter how we voted, Putin would win anyway due to massive election fraud. The machine of political repression gathered momentum; police violence grew widespread, and new political prisoners emerged. The state also resorted to another effective means of quashing internal dissent with a violent, grandly corrupt administrative system—namely, so-called military operations.

Putin first became president in the wake of the war in Chechnya, which resulted in Russia's domination of the territory at a massive cost to human life. He came with war. Aggressive foreign policy is the most powerful ideological argument, ensuring the support of a large portion of the population. Starting wars helps the regime to hold onto its electorate, and even if our country winds up totally isolated, impoverished, and destroyed—and this will happen very soon—there will be plenty of people who will honestly vote for Putin in the 2024 elections. It was in view of those elections that Russia's constitution was amended in 2020, making a lifelong presidency possible for Putin. Many among the liberal intelligentsia began distancing themselves from Putin's policies in 2010, when open repression and limits of personal freedom began. But the problem lay elsewhere. As a colleague has written on Facebook (I won't name him for security reasons), while we thought we were fighting Stalinism, we raised a fascist of our own.

16 March 2022

Translated from the Russian by David Riff for [e-flux Notes](#).

Biden Buoyed Up by U.S. Role in Ukraine, Despite Economic Issues

28 March 2022, by **Dan La Botz**

Wartime presidents often improve in the polls, at least initially, and Biden is seen as one. If not directly involved, the U.S. has become not only a backer but also a supplier of Ukraine. Biden and the U.S. Congress are supporting Ukraine in many ways, including sanctions against Russian banking, commerce, oil and gas. In addition, the U.S. Congress passed a new \$13.6 billion aid bill for humanitarian assistance, military supplies, and U.S. troop deployments and intelligence. The U.S. has now deployed 14,000 additional troops to Europe, bringing the total in Europe to 100,000. The CIA, which has been training Ukrainian soldiers since 2015, appear to be sending American veterans to Ukraine as trainers and fighters.

In a recent poll, 87% of Americans blame Russian president Vladimir Putin for the war, 81% support sanctions against Russia, while a large majority agree with oppose a no-fly zone because it could lead to war. Some 75% of Americans want to do whatever possible for Ukraine will avoiding a direct U.S. war with Russia. And 81% of Democrats, 40% of independents, and 10% of Republicans

approve Biden's handling of the Ukraine issue.

U.S. sanctions and other measures could affect the U.S. economy. Since Russia is a major producer of oil and grain it is almost certain that prices for those and some other commodities will rise. The U.S. economy is already showing some effect of its support for Ukraine coming on top of the more than two-year long COVID pandemic that devastated the economy. While many COVID restrictions have been dropped and millions have returned to work the things have not gone back to normal and the U.S. role in the conflict in Ukraine will cause more issues.

Many states, cities, and school districts have dropped COVID masking requirements, even though only 65.8 percent of all Americans have been vaccinated. We still have over 1,100 people per day dying, bringing us to total of about 974,000 total COVID deaths. A new COVID variant called BA.2 is rapidly spreading, and many health experts fear yet another wave of COVID, though what its effect on the U.S. economy could be is unclear.

Inflation is now the big issue. A year

ago, inflation was at 1.7%—today it is 7.9%, driven by rising costs for housing, food and fuel. Since Biden became president prices have risen across all sectors: housing by 18.8%; rents by 17.6%; food prices by 5% in the first quarter of 2022; and gasoline prices from about \$3.00 a gallon to \$5.00 a gallon. Because of inflation, the U.S. Federal Reserve Bank has increased interest rates from 0.25% to 0.50%, and indicated that it expects to lift rates as many as six times this year. Rising interest rates generally lead to less consumer and business spending and can lead to falling stock prices.

Given these conditions, one might expect to see workers begin to take action, but in a period of insecurity—COVID and war—working people are cautious, and so far, there is no major upsurge. Union organizing drives are taking place at Amazon warehouses and at Starbucks coffee shops, and they seem to be gaining traction, with some small strikes and protests and union representation elections scheduled. Perhaps this is a beginning.

24 March 2022

The pipeline of shame in Uganda

27 March 2022, by **Paul Martial**

Hilda Flavia Nakabuye of Fridays for Future Uganda, which brings together thousands of young people in English-speaking Africa in the fight against global warming, Diana Nabiruma of AFIEGO (Africa Institute for Energy Governance), an NGO supporting

environmental struggles, and Maxwell Athuhura of the Tasha Research Institute, explained the dangers of this project to around a hundred participants in Paris. They pointed out that this goes against the reduction of fossil fuels agreed by France at

COP26.

Yes, the lake is on

fire!

Total's aim is to exploit a billion-barrel oil deposit discovered in 2006 near Lake Albert. A lake that is vital for almost 45 million people. For the French multinational, this means no less than 400 drillings. The EACOP (East Africa Crude Oil Pipeline) project is to transport oil through a pipeline heated to 50 degrees over nearly 1,500 kilometres, from Uganda to the port of Tanga in Tanzania.

Maxwell Athuhura explains that this work involves the eviction of almost 100,000 people from their land. A process that has already begun, mostly by force. He himself has been arrested and jailed twice without any court decision. The evicted villagers receive such low compensation that they cannot buy other land. Sometimes, some are still waiting for their compensation. In Tanzania, the land belongs to the state, which avoids any compensation process.

Although the French multinational claims to be reassuring for wildlife, the start of operations belies these claims. In Uganda some species are endangered, such as the Rothschild's

giraffe. Diana Nabiruma explains: "They are trying to capture them to transfer them to other natural parks that are not impacted by the oil project" and "the elephants, because of the shrinking of their territory, are now encroaching on and destroying the villagers' crop fields". The work causes continuous dust emissions that invade the villages and disturb the birds. The construction of asphalt roads, which are hot during the day, prevents the movement of reptiles. It is therefore a major disturbance of the ecosystem and a challenge to the harmonious coexistence between humans and nature.

Natixis, MPs, Macron's advisors and the... Pope

Between Ugandan and French organisations such as Survie, Friends of the Earth, 350.org and many others, a coalition has been formed to prevent such a project from happening. Although this fight seems to be David against Goliath, significant successes have been achieved. Firstly, Total's relative financial isolation: for example, all the French banks refused

to participate in this project, with the exception of Natixis, which has not yet made its decision and which should receive a visit from the Ugandan delegation. At the legal level, there too, a step victory was achieved. On the basis of the 2007 law which aims to "prevent serious violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms, the health and safety of persons and the environment", the Court of Cassation confirmed that the competent court could not be the Commercial Court to decide on such fundamental issues.

Juliette Renaud of Friends of the Earth explains that "the one million signatures against the project have strengthened the legitimacy of our fight". Meetings have been held with the various UN rapporteurs, but also with French MPs. Meetings are planned with Macron and Le Drian's advisors. Finally, an appointment has been made with the Pope in the next few days. Let's hope that his prayers and the mobilisations in France and Uganda will bring about a miracle: that, as Hilda Flavia Nakabuye says, "the power of the people is stronger than the people in power".

25 March 2022

Racism under Covid-19 in Japan

26 March 2022, by Karen Yamanaka

After the 6th wave of Covid-19 in Japan, Japanese racist attacks on people with different races or ethnicity have become more intense. And infection of exclusive antagonism has also spread to ordinary Japanese. Several restaurants in Yokohama Chinatown, Japan's largest Chinatown, had received letters stating, "Chinese people are garbage! Get out of Japan soon!" Hospitals that accepted virus-infected persons on cruise ships from abroad were flooded with protest calls saying, "Don't spend taxes on foreigners" and "Keep foreigners out of Japan." And the phones became unusable. The attacks on Koreans in

Japan (Korean-Japanese), which were traditionally the targets of the most racist attacks in Japan, were also fierce. Every time the relationship between Japan and their home country (North/South Korea) deteriorates, the contradiction has been directed toward Korean women and children.

After the 6th wave of Covid-19, the government agency started to report that amusement facilities were the major cause of Covid-19 infection. After the government's report, racist attacks were directed at the amusement facilities which were mainly run by Korean-Japanese. The

racists said "The Japanese version of "Kristallnacht" is near." The persecution of foreigners in Japan today is government-made racism deliberately created. Seriously, government-made racism has traditionally existed in Japan for about 100 years. And the main leaders of the persecution were the ordinary Japanese, who were inspired by the government's publicity.

In the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923, about 6,000 Koreans were killed by discrimination, prejudice, and groundless rumor intentionally created by Japanese

government [<https://nationalpost.com/opinion/how-an-iron-wall-has-slowly-but-surely-made-the-state-of-israel-invincible>] as a mediator, which regulates its dealings with us until our complete defeat.

On the other hand, the struggle and victory of your people, even with the destruction of much of your country and the displacement of scores of Ukrainians, would give hope to other peoples struggling against oppression and erasure, rekindling our hopes for

return and liberation. To this end, I urge you to stop supporting our oppressors.

22 March 2022

Source *Middle East Eye*.

We Are Palestinians, and We Refuse to Leave Our Homeland

24 March 2022, by **Salah Hamouri**

In 2011, I was released from Israeli prison as part of the prisoner exchange that saw the liberation of more than 1,027 Palestinians from Israel's colonial system of punitive imprisonment. Having been incarcerated for nine years, from age nineteen, I was now keen to get on with my life, to study, have a family, to catch up on the years that the occupation authorities had taken from me. Little did I realize, my release was only the start of an ordeal in which I was to become a testing ground for Israel's escalating and ceaseless attacks on Palestinians.

After my release, I traveled to France, my mother's home country, to meet with those who had campaigned tirelessly for my freedom. In France, my imprisonment had become something of a cause célèbre on the Left, and I met numerous public figures and politicians who had spoken out on my behalf. It was there I also met Elsa Lefort, the woman I was to marry and who was to become the mother of my two children. On my return to Palestine, I switched my studies from sociology to law, hoping to become a lawyer and defend those who, like myself, were held prisoner by the Israeli occupation. I began to see how, despite the crushing weight of Israel's brutal colonial regime, I might carve out a life for myself in my home city of al-Quds (Jerusalem).

But Israel had other plans. In 2015, the military commander of the West Bank, Nitzan Alon (trained by the

French military), banned me from entering the West Bank from Jerusalem, a move that prevented me from sitting my legal exams. The following year, my pregnant wife was stopped at the airport en route to our family home in Jerusalem, interrogated by Israeli police, and then deported to France. In 2017, I was rearrested and held for thirteen months without trial. In 2020, I was also subject to incarceration for nine weeks before being "conditionally" released on vague terms.

Outside prison, too, the noose has continued to tighten. In 2018, the Israeli parliament passed the "breach of allegiance" law, whose very name attests to its draconian intentions. The law gives the Israeli interior ministry the power to strip Palestinians in Jerusalem of the precarious "residency" status that determines our rights in the city. Since 2020, I have been fighting this attempt to expel me from Jerusalem in the Israeli courts, and now find myself on the verge of deportation in what the International Federation for Human Rights has deemed a concerted campaign of "judicial harassment." This has included me being prevented from traveling to France to see my wife, except for a two-week pass I was given to witness the birth of my second child in April 2021. Forced From Our Homes

The harassment I've experienced is just one part of a far broader and intensifying concerted effort to

weaken and disable Palestinian civil society. Last year, Israel classified some of the best-known Palestinian human rights groups as terrorist organizations, including the prisoner rights organization I work for, Addameer. Their offices have been routinely raided, equipment confiscated, staff arrested, and pressure placed on donors to end their support. At the end of last year, I discovered that my phone had been targeted with Pegasus spyware, and that myself and five other NGO staff were having all their phone data monitored by Israel.

These actions are directed toward one single aim: forcing me to leave Palestine. Since its inception, the Zionist movement has been committed to expelling as many Palestinians as possible from our land. The history books attest to lively debate at Zionist conferences about the best means of encouraging Palestinian departure. In the 1948 Palestinian Nakba, arguments for "forcible expulsion" decisively won the day, and more than 750,000 Palestinians were forced from their homes.

Ever since, Israel has contrived increasingly intricate methods for inducing us to leave. This is most evident in my home city of Jerusalem, which today lies directly in the crosshairs of Israeli city planners who intend to transform Palestinians into an isolated minority with no rights and no presence. The expulsion of Palestinian families from Sheikh

Jarrah — highlighted again by the demolition of the Salhiya family home at 5 AM on the coldest day of the year — is merely the most well-known incident of ethnic cleansing, with similar initiatives taking place all over the city.

Refusing to Bow Our Heads

Growing up in Jerusalem amid this extreme injustice compelled me to protest, to find a way to resist. As a child I witnessed house demolitions and arrests, and saw daily the harassment of families by Israeli soldiers at the nearby Israeli checkpoint. Even from a young age I knew that I could not sit by and do nothing, and threw myself into political activism. At age sixteen I was shot in the leg and arrested for five months simply for distributing flyers and being a member of a student union. I was arrested again in 2004 and held for five months under “administrative detention,” an old British law that allows for prolonged arrest without trial.

I was again arrested in 2005, accused of attempting to assassinate a far-right Israeli politician, something that Israeli police could not substantiate; no weapons, no plan, and no physical evidence was ever presented, only the testimony of others derived under torture by the Israeli police. Knowing I

would likely be sentenced regardless of the merits of the case, I struck a plea bargain for seven years. At the time, I was offered the alternative of fifteen years’ exile in France; but knowing Israel’s intentions to deport me, I refused.

Everything Israel’s apartheid regime has done is aimed at silencing me and encouraging me to give up and leave the country, as they do with any Palestinian who refuses to bow their head and submit to ethnic cleansing. Israeli authorities are creating a bespoke plan of harassment for each politically active person, arresting and harassing them, and where this doesn’t work, stripping them of their IDs or health insurance and targeting their family and businesses. They target those that speak out in order to weaken our collective resistance and to more easily expel us.

My own story demonstrates that the Israeli regime is absolutely ruthless, operating with a calculated cruelty that knows no limits. Our family’s enforced separation is intended to inflict suffering, to deny my children a father and the experiences and joys of growing up in their homeland with the love of my extended family. Interactions with my children are limited to stolen moments over video

call, attempts to forge and maintain a connection despite the distance.

This isn’t what I want for my children. But it is better they know that I fought for justice rather than passively accepting ethnic cleansing, better that I do all I can to remain steadfast in our land than acquiesce to Israel’s harassment. I am continuing with my struggle because I want all Palestinians to live with freedom and dignity, and I know this will not come without a fight, without sacrifice on the part of those willing to take a stand.

Last year, Palestinians rose in the thousands to defend Jerusalem, sparking an uprising that spread throughout all Palestinians communities in rejection of Israeli colonization. A new generation repeated its commitment to carry forward the struggle for justice, for liberation and for the rights of Palestinian refugees living for decades in exile. As our people have not given up, neither can I, and neither can the millions around the world who support Palestine, and whose commitment to our cause is more important now than ever before.

6 March 2022

Source [Jacobin](#).

War against Ukraine: a disaster for Africa too

23 March 2022, by **Paul Martial**

As the site of the *Madagascar Tribune* points out, there was an incessant parade of Russian and Western diplomats at the presidential palace in Anosy. [8] The goal was to try to influence Madagascar during the vote at the United Nations General Assembly on March 2 concerning the condemnation of the invasion of Ukraine. In the end, the Big Island joined the 17 African countries that abstained. Although it was expected that Mali and the Central African Republic would refuse to condemn

Russia, which is now their leading military partner, more surprising was the vote in the same direction of Senegal, Togo, Cameroon, and the Republic of the Congo, and the non-participation in the ballot of Burkina Faso and Guinea. Traditionally these countries were in symbiosis with France, the former colonial power. As for the International Organization of La Francophonie (OIF), considered the armed wing of French diplomacy, it refused to take a position. This illustrates the specific crisis of tricolor

imperialism in Africa.

Fed up with the West

The fact that half of the countries of the continent refuse to condemn Russia reveals a certain resentment vis-à-vis the West. Some even speak of revenge against NATO, which had attacked Libya to bring down the Gaddafi regime, which benefited from a popularity that was usurped,

certainly, but very real. It was annoying to see a significant mobilization for Ukraine, which has never been appropriate for wars as deadly as those of Sudan, Ethiopia or Cameroon. For some, it is a kind of satisfaction to see a man capable of opposing the power of the European Union and the USA. Moreover, the scandalous behaviour of the treatment of African and Asian refugees from Ukraine and the differentiated reception between Ukrainians and other refugees have laid bare racism in Europe. This is how some of the African leaders have stuck to the feelings of their people, especially since many countries now maintain commercial and military relations with both Russia and Western countries or are preparing to do so.

A major economic risk

This shows a prudence that is very appropriate, because the economic

crisis is likely to hit the continent hard. Already, African economies are struggling to emerge from the health crisis linked to Covid-19. The decline in global demand leading to lower demand for raw materials, the virtual shutdown of tourism, the weakening of global value chains, and the nearly 40 per cent reduction in FDI (foreign direct investment) have weakened the economic health of African countries.

The war provoked by Putin will have consequences for all African countries, even if they will be differentiated. Oil and gas producing countries such as Nigeria, Angola and Algeria will benefit from the rise in prices, but they risk being quickly overtaken by the shortage of agricultural products because they are major importers of foodstuffs. The other agriculture-oriented African countries will be affected by extremely large increases in the price of energy. In any case, given the weakness of the treasuries of the countries of the continent, the shocks are likely to be violent for the

populations.

Already the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) points out that more than thirty African countries are already in a situation of food tension. The causes are multiple. These may be conflicts such as in the Central African Republic, in Niger, in Chad, in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), in Ethiopia, in South Sudan. Climate disturbances lead to droughts - this is the case in Kenya, Somalia, in the south of Madagascar - torrential rains as in Burundi, Djibouti, Congo or cyclones experienced by Mozambique and the Eastern region of Madagascar.

The World Food Programme (WFP) sounded the alarm on the food stress situation in April for many countries. The risk today with the war initiated by Putin is a large-scale famine in Africa.

*Translated by **International Viewpoint** from the weekly [Anticapitaliste](#).*

Xi, please ask Putin to withdraw his troops

22 March 2022, by **Au Loong-Yu**

Foreign Minister Wang Yi did mention this in his five points setting out China's position on the Ukraine issue on the second day of Russia's invasion. Yet China continues to refuse to recognise that Russia's action in Ukraine is an invasion. Could this failure in defending both the Bandung and the UN principles be explained by Wang's second point which reads "given NATO's five consecutive rounds of eastward expansion, Russia's legitimate security demands ought to be taken seriously and properly addressed"?

No, it can't. NATO's expansion in itself is unjust. It should have disbanded itself a long time ago after the fall of the Soviet Union. Yet Russia has no right to invade Ukraine in response to NATO's failure. This is the language of imperialists, the doctrine of "might

makes right", not the language of the UN charter, not to mention "socialism" which until today the CCP claims to subscribe to.

And it is counterproductive even with regard to the long term interests of the Russian Empire. For an empire to sustain itself for any length of time, on top of military might it has to develop some kind of cultural hegemony, but this is the kind of resource that Putin could not provide. After his army was bogged down in Ukraine someone made an online picture showing a funny looking sword-waving warrior with the words "Putin's fatal mistake was to send slaves to liberate free people". This may be an overstatement but it does capture the feeling not only of Ukrainians but also people around the world. In spite of all the flaws of liberal democracy, it is

still a lesser evil when compared to autocracy in general and to Putin's version in particular. The EU has its own oligarchy but it has to tolerate a vibrant social movement which is a check on it. In contrast, Putin and his oligarchy are free of all restraints, hence his gangs could successfully plunder the country in an amazingly short period of time. But this comes with a price. Putin's autocracy is invading a sovereign state, one which has repeatedly thrown out its autocrats through protests and elections. This contrast hugely delegitimises his regime. And doubly so when it is a neighbour of Russia; one which has had such a long intertwining relation with the latter. No wonder his invasion not only triggers strong resistance from Ukraine but also among people across

the world. The more the invasion is bogged down the higher risk for Russia.

Just less than a month from the Winter Olympics in Beijing when Xi and Putin met to forge their “partnership of no limits”, the Russian invasion proved that there is a limit for Beijing after all. Despite offering strong propaganda support Beijing until now has practically remained neutral with regard to Putin’s war, and has abstained from the UN’s vote criticising Russia. Its banks even follow the US sanctions on Russia.

If Beijing refrains from directly supporting its Russian partner’s war effort it is only because of its pragmatism – China has long ago integrated into global capitalism and hence has to take warnings from the West very seriously. In the longer term, this may change, however, because in terms of core values Beijing now shares Putin’s idea of nation-building and its arrogance towards smaller nations along their periphery as well. If NATO is evil then any partnership between the present governments of China and Russia would not be anything better.

In his [two speeches](#) (first in July 2021, and then in February 2022) Putin attacked Lenin and his Bolshevik party’s position of self-determination for minorities, including Ukraine, as betraying [the principle](#) that “Russians and Ukrainians were one people – a single whole”. In his second speech, he argued that for the Bolsheviks to allow Ukraine independence was “to

transfer to newly formed, and often arbitrarily formed, administrative units – union republics – huge territories that often had nothing to do with them at all.”

We do not need to lecture our readers about the fact that all present nation-states have been recent human constructs and are hence “arbitrarily formed” in different degrees. Both the Republic of China and the People’s Republic of China fall into this category as well – one after the other they shared the same semi-fictional idea of *zhonghuaminzu* (“the Chinese nation”), where Han Chinese is dominant not only in numbers but also in all areas of the state and social power at the expense of the minorities. Where the CCP once differed from the KMT was in the fact that the former had adopted the Bolshevik program of self-determination for the minorities in its first two decades after it was founded in 1921, only abandoning it afterwards. When the PRC was founded in 1949 the party would only allow autonomy for Tibet and Xinjiang and many other minorities. The latter would soon find out that this version of “autonomy” was only meant to be “administrative autonomous”, not anything close to “political autonomy”. Since then circulating Lenin’s writings on self-determination has been a punishable crime. The founder of the Tibetan Communist Party, [Phuntsok Wangyal](#), was thrown into prison for twenty years because of this (and other charges).

For any thinking Chinese person, there could not be any “partnership of no limits” with the successor to Tsarist Russia – the Putin government. Even talking about this is a betrayal of the historic interest of the Chinese who were once victims of Russian imperialism. If the Chinese government has started talking about this, it is only because it also increasingly shares Putin’s idea of empire building, hence its hatred towards any mention of national self-determination.

The most recent example is the party media in Hong Kong [attacking](#) those college students who had launched a signature campaign in support of Ukraine, equating the latter’s support for national self-determination as “anti-China and stirring up trouble in Hong Kong”. Soon this attack was rebutted. A co-thinker of the signature campaign wrote in [an essay](#) that “the college students are neither anti-China nor anti-Russia. What the statement (of the campaign) said is that they stand with all those oppressed by those in power, no matter where the oppressed are – be they in China, or Russia, or the UK, or the US.” The article then goes on to remind the CCP how it once upheld the principle of national self-determinism and since then had betrayed it. No wonder the party has to revise its history on a regular basis so that it has continuous control over the future – precisely what George Orwell foretold.

Source: 20 Mar 2022 [Anti*capitalist Resistance](#).

Six FAQs on Anti-Imperialism Today and the War in Ukraine

21 March 2022, by [Gilbert Achcar](#)

Question 1: Is the “Global South” supporting Russia?

Let’s look at the facts. Consider first the left in the Global South where

there have been contrasted positions. In the Arabic-speaking part of the world from which I come, the only "left" parties to have supported the Russian invasion are those that supported the bloodthirsty regime of Bashar al-Assad, under Russian protectorate. The two main communist parties in the region, those of Iraq and Sudan, unequivocally condemned the Russian invasion, while also denouncing (as it should be) the policy of US imperialism. In its statement, the Sudanese CP, after denouncing the conflicts between imperialist forces, "condemns the Russian invasion of Ukraine and demands the immediate withdrawal of Russian forces from this country while condemning the continuation by the US-led imperialist alliance of its policy of stirring up tensions and war, and threatening world peace and security." The Sudanese Communists are well placed to know the truth about imperialism from Russia, the only one of the great powers that openly supports the putschists in their country.

As for Global South states, in the UN General Assembly vote on condemning the Russian invasion, thirty-five of them abstained. All states located in the Global North either voted for the resolution (all Western and allied countries) or against (Russia itself and Belarus). However, it does not take much insight to realize that among the 141 countries that voted for the resolution, there were far more than 35 states from the same global South. It is therefore not a "North-South divide," but a cleavage between friends and/or clients of Western imperialism, on the one hand, and friends and/or clients of Russian imperialism, on the other. And since most of the latter are also friends and/or clients of Western imperialisms, they preferred to abstain rather than add their votes to those of the five states that voted against the resolution, which are, in addition to the two already noted, North Korea, Syria, and Eritrea.

It is true that the two most populated countries located in the Global South: China - itself the subject of debate as to its imperialist nature, which shows how simplistic the North-South scheme is in politics - and the Indian

government of the fascist Narendra Modi cozied up to Russia. But among the countries that voted for the UN resolution, we find states such as AMLO's Mexico, the Taliban's Afghanistan, Bolsonaro's Brazil (yet Putin's admirer), the generals' Myanmar (covered by Beijing), and Duterte's Philippines.

Question 2: Wouldn't Ukraine's standing up against the Russian invasion benefit NATO?

The first thing to say is "so what?" Our support to peoples fighting imperialism shouldn't depend on which imperialist side is backing them. Otherwise, by the same logic, justice should be sacrificed to the supreme battle against the "Western bloc," as some argue in neo-campist pseudo-left circles. For my part, I wrote that a Russian success - an outcome that unfortunately still remains a real possibility - "would embolden US imperialism itself and its allies to continue their own aggressive behavior." Indeed, the United States and its Western allies have already benefited enormously from Putin's action. They should be warmly grateful to the Russian autocrat.

A successful Russian takeover of Ukraine would encourage the United States to return to the path of conquering the world by force in a context of exacerbation of the new colonial division of the world and worsening of global antagonisms, while a Russian failure - adding to the US failures in Iraq and Afghanistan - would reinforce what is called in Washington the "Vietnam syndrome." Moreover, it seems quite obvious to me that a Russian victory would considerably strengthen warmongering and the push towards increased military spending in NATO countries, which has already gotten off to a flying start, while a Russian defeat would offer much better conditions for our battle for general

disarmament and the dissolution of NATO.

If Ukraine were to succeed in rejecting the Russian yoke, it is more than likely that it would be vassalized to Western powers. But the point is that, if it fails to do so, it will be enserfed to Russia. And you don't have to be a qualified medievalist to know that the condition of a vassal is incomparably preferable to that of a serf!

Question 3: How can we radical anti-imperialists support a resistance that is led by a rightwing bourgeois government?

Should we support a people that resists against an over-armed imperialist invasion only if its resistance is led by communists and not by a bourgeois government? This is a very old ultra-left position on the national question, which Lenin rightfully combatted in his time. A just struggle against national oppression, let alone foreign occupation, must be supported regardless of the nature of its leadership: if this fight is just, it implies that the population concerned actively participates in it and deserves support, regardless of the nature of its leadership.

It is certainly not the Ukrainian capitalists who are mobilizing en masse with the Ukrainian armed forces in the form of an improvised national guard and new-style "pétroleuses," but the working people of Ukraine. And in their fight against Great Russian imperialism, led by an autocratic and oligarchic ultra-reactionary government in Moscow that presides over the destinies of one of the most unequal countries on the planet, the Ukrainian people deserve our full support. This certainly does not imply that we cannot criticize the Kyiv government.

Question 4: Isn't the ongoing war an inter-imperialist war?

If any war where each side is supported by an imperialist rival were called an inter-imperialist war, then all the wars of our time would be inter-imperialist, since as a rule, it is enough for one of the rival imperialisms to support one side for the other to support the opposite side. An inter-imperialist war is not that. It is a direct war, and not one by proxy, between two powers, each of which seeks to invade the territorial and (neo)colonial domain of the other, as was very clearly the First World War. It is a "war of rapine" on both sides, as Lenin liked to call it.

To describe the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, in which the latter country has no ambition, let alone intention, of seizing Russian territory, and in which Russia has the stated intention of subjugating Ukraine and seizing much of its territory - to call this conflict inter-imperialist, rather than an imperialist war of invasion, is an extreme distortion of reality.

The primary, most immediate, function of the supply of arms to Ukraine is therefore that it helps it oppose its enslavement, even if, on the other hand, it wishes its vassalization in the belief that it is the only guarantee of its freedom. We must, of course, also oppose its vassalization, but for the time being, the most urgent need must be addressed.

Of course, the direct entry into war of the other imperialist camp would transform the current conflict into a true inter-imperialist war, in the correct sense of the concept, a type of war to which we are categorically hostile. For now, NATO members are declaring that they will not cross the red line of sending troops to fight the Russian armed forces on Ukrainian soil, or shooting down Russian planes in Ukrainian airspace - despite

Volodymyr Zelensky's exhortations. This is because they rightly fear a fatal spiral, skeptical, as they have become, about the rationality of Putin who did not hesitate to brandish the nuclear threat from the outset.

Question 5: Can we support Western arms deliveries to Ukraine?

Since the Ukrainians' fight against the Russian invasion is just, it is quite right to help them defend themselves against an enemy far superior in numbers and armament. That is why we are without hesitation in favor of the delivery of defensive weapons to the Ukrainian resistance. But what does this mean?

An example: we are certainly in favor of delivering anti-aircraft missiles, portable and otherwise, to the Ukrainian resistance. To oppose it would be to say that Ukrainians only have to choose between, on the one hand, being massacred and seeing their cities destroyed by the Russian air force, without having the means they need to defend themselves, or, on the other hand, fleeing their country. At the same time, however, we must not only oppose the irresponsible idea of imposing a no-fly zone over Ukraine or part of its territory; we must also oppose the delivery of air fighters to Ukraine that Zelensky has been demanding. Fighters are not strictly defensive weaponry, and their supply to Ukraine would actually risk significantly aggravating Russian bombing.

In short, we are in favor of the supply to Ukraine of anti-aircraft and anti-tank weapons, as well as all the armaments indispensable for the defense of a territory. To deny Ukraine these deliveries is simply to be guilty of failure to assist a people in danger! We have called for the delivery of such defensive weapons to the Syrian opposition in the past. The United

States refused and even prevented its local allies from handing them over to the Syrians, in part because of the Israeli veto. We know what the consequences were.

Question 6: What should be our attitude toward Western sanctions inflicted upon Russia?

I wrote in my Memorandum:

Western powers have decided a whole set of new sanctions against the Russian state for its invasion of Ukraine. Some of these may indeed curtail the ability of Putin's autocratic regime to fund its war machine, others may be harmful to the Russian population without much affecting the regime or its oligarchic cronies. Our opposition to the Russian aggression combined with our mistrust of Western imperialist governments means that we should neither support the latter's sanctions, nor demand that they be lifted.

Another way to translate this is to say that we are in favor of sanctions that affect Russia's ability to wage war as well as its oligarchs, but not those that affect its population. The latter formulation is correct in principle, but it would then have to be translated concretely. However, we do not have the means to examine the impact of the full range of sanctions already imposed by the Western powers on Russia, which is why I suggested that we should neither support the sanctions, nor demand that they be lifted as long as Russia's criminal invasion is going on.

19 March 2022

Source [*New Politics*](#).

Manifesto of the “Socialists Against War” Coalition

20 March 2022, by **Socialists Against War**

This time the Kremlin elders were in the minority. Most Russians do not want fratricidal war, even among those who still trust the Russian authorities. They close their eyes so as not to see the world drawn by propagandists fell apart. They still hope that what is happening is not a war, especially not aggressive, but a “special operation” designed to “liberate” the Ukrainian people. Terrible footage of brutal bombing and shelling of cities will soon destroy these myths. And then even Putin’s most loyal voters will say: we did not give you consent to carry out this unjust war!

But already now, tens of millions of people across the country are horrified and disgusted by what Putin’s administration is doing. These are people of different beliefs. Most of them are not liberals at all, as propagandists claim. Among them there are a lot of left-wing, socialist or communist people. And of course, these people – the majority of our people – are sincere patriots of our Motherland.

We are told falsely that the opponents of this war are hypocrites. That they are not against war, but only in support of the West. It’s a lie. We have never been supporters of the United States and its imperialist policy. When Ukrainian troops shelled Donetsk and Lugansk, we were not silent. Let’s not remain silent even now that Kharkiv, Kiev and Odessa are bombed on the orders of Putin and his camarilla.

There are many reasons to fight against this war. For us, supporters of social justice, equality and freedom,

several of them are especially important.

- It’s an unfair, war of conquest. There was no and there is no such threat to the Russian state for which it was necessary to send our soldiers to kill and die. Today they don’t “release anyone.” They don’t help any people’s movement. It’s just that the regular army is smashing peaceful Ukrainian cities by order of a handful of billionaires who dream of maintaining their power over Russia forever.

- This war leads to innumerable disasters for our peoples. Both Ukrainians and Russians pay dearly for it with their blood. But even far away in the rear, poverty, inflation, unemployment will affect everyone. The bills will be paid not by oligarchs and officials, but by poor teachers, workers, pensioners and the unemployed. Many of us will have nothing to feed the children.

- This war will reduce Ukraine to ruins and Russia into one big prison. Opposition media are already closed. People are thrown behind bars for leaflets, harmless pickets, even for posts on social networks. Soon the Russians will have only one choice: between prison and the military registration and enlistment office. The war brings with it a dictatorship that living generations have not yet seen.

- This war significantly increases all risks and threats to our country. Even those Ukrainians who sympathized with Russia a week ago now enroll in the militia to fight our troops. With his aggression, Putin nullified all the crimes of Ukrainian nationalists, all

the intrigues of American and NATO hawks. Putin gave them such arguments that new missiles and military bases would almost certainly appear along the perimeter of our borders.

- Finally, the struggle for peace is a patriotic duty of every Russian. Not only because we are the keepers of the memory of the most terrible war in history. But also because this war threatens the integrity and very existence of Russia.

Putin is trying to tightly link his own destiny with the fate of our country. If he succeeds, his inevitable defeat will be the defeat of the whole nation. And then the fate of post-war Germany can really wait for us: occupation, territorial partition, cult of collective guilt.

There is only one way to prevent these disasters. The war must be stopped by ourselves – men and women of Russia. This country belongs to us, not a handful of mad old people with palaces and yachts. It’s time to get it back. Our enemies are not in Kiev and Odessa, but in Moscow. It’s time to kick them out of there. War is not Russia. War is Putin and his regime. Therefore, we, the Russian Socialists and Communists, are against this criminal war. We want to stop her to save Russia.

No intervention!

No dictatorship!

No poverty!

Source [New Politics](#), 18 March 2022

“We have always favoured the construction of unitary initiatives”

19 March 2022, by Uraz Aydin

Coming from another political tradition you have decided to continue your fight in the TIP. What was your process of joining like, how were you received?

We had already campaigned with TIP comrades on various occasions. Already in the United Socialist Party (BSP) of 1994, then in the Freedom and Solidarity Party (ÖDP); then in the Unified Movement of June formed following the Gezi revolt, then in the platform of support for the HDP “The Palace will collapse, The People will win” around the November 2015 elections and in the United Labour Coordination with the aim of forming workers’ assemblies in the factories in 2017. For more than a year we have also been engaged together with some other revolutionary currents in the “Solidarity of urban workers” in order to organize the most precarious areas of the tertiary sector.

We have always favoured the construction of unitary initiatives and tried to make them permanent with the prospect of leading to the formation of political entities. We are obliged to look for ways to fight together, without of course forgetting what separates us at the level of strategic divergences in the history of the international workers’ movement, but without making these unsurpassable borders. We do not defend this out of a fetishism of unity but because we believe that the radical left needs a pluralist recomposition in order to contribute to the construction of a mass revolutionary party that would take root among the working masses and become a decisive actor in the class struggle. This is what we have tried to do in the BSP, in the ÖDP and today in the TIP. So, it is not because we abandon any part of our heritage and our goals, but it is precisely because

the TIP corresponds to our perspective of organizational construction that we join it.

However, I would like to make it clear that this is not a party-building strategy we defend only for Turkey – which probably has one of the most divided revolutionary movements in the world – but an international strategy. The Fourth International, of which we are a part, has set itself the objective of contributing to a unitary, democratic and pluralistic recomposition of the revolutionary left, in virtually all the countries where it has found the means to do so. Moreover, as an International we also believe that we are only one of the elements of a broad, pluralistic International where different revolutionary currents would participate on anti-capitalist, feminist and ecological bases. We have thus learned from different experiences of groupings and unitary constructions, with remarkably diverse organizational forms, some have worked and managed to become political forces – in relative terms of course – others not. It is in such a perspective that we have embarked on unitary experiences that are still present in countries such as Portugal, Brazil, Denmark, Russia, Pakistan, France and soon in Greece where a unitary anti-capitalist movement is about to be founded.

Returning to our integration into the TIP, the fact that it is open to the participation of activists from other currents has been important, but it is of course agreement on political tasks – even if we have different historical references – that has been decisive. In this regard, it was important for the TIP to arouse the interest of the workers by placing the class struggle at the centre of its struggle, and for it to be in solidarity with the struggle of

the Kurdish people, as any left party should do – but which some do not.

Shortly after joining the TIP, the Preparatory Conference for the “Intervention Congress” was held. The congress process will end on 13 February. The conference delegation launched an appeal to the public: “Come, let’s take charge of the destiny of our country”. What did you think was the significance of this conference?

I think our comrades who have been involved in party building from the very beginning would appreciate it better, but as someone who has followed the evolution of the party with interest, I saw it as a conference where the TIP reorganized its organizational structure and political strategy in terms of a political turning point that will be highly likely to be tumultuous. To refer to its name, it could perhaps be referred to as a conference in which a party which has tended to be a focus of attraction for the workers and the oppressed, manifested its willingness to intervene in history according to the needs, demands and aspirations of those at the bottom. However, apart from the question of the intervention, my impression of the conference was that it was also part of a construction process. The Workers’ Party of Turkey has managed to impose itself in a brief time, showing that it was a candidate to be an active actor in the class struggle and has taken substantial steps in this direction. However, I absolutely agree with what the spokesperson and deputy for the party Erkan Baş said, “we are growing, it is important to grow, of course, but the main thing is to get organized”. Therefore, in my opinion, this conference stressed the importance of conducting both a political

intervention and organizational construction, never considering construction as complete, and making it permanent in the interventions required by the conjuncture and, of course, in mass struggles.

How do you think the conference went?

Personally, I found it extremely exciting. First of all, the fact that it took place in days when a series of workers' resistance activities and strikes arose one after the other created an enthusiastic atmosphere at the conference. For me, especially the youth of the delegation was really surprising. Although the TIP stands out for its interventions in the workers' struggle, the speeches of young feminists, LGBTI+, disability rights defenders and vegan activists at the podium and their willingness to include the demands of their struggle in the party's agenda was impressive. It was also worth seeing the enthusiasm in the room when a comrade from the Kurdish region, an employee of an electricity distribution company, addressed his greetings to the political prisoners and to Selahattin Demirtaş (former HDP spokesperson imprisoned for over five years) at the end of his speech.

I probably last attended a big congress about 15 years ago, that of the ÖDP, a party that could be considered significant (according to our own measures). It was the congress of a party that tended to lose or even amputate its pluralism, a party that preferred to consolidate itself within the limits of a single political affiliation. It is a party that we worked hard for over many years, that we have not hesitated to criticize while continuing to build it, and it was a really painful experience. Now, years later, I have just attended a conference where a completely different language, even several languages were present; some

struggles, which were still very weak at the time, expressed themselves with confidence in terms of the strength they acquired, and where criticism and self-criticism were not lacking. It was also important for me to meet a number of people I know from my generation, from the student movement of the 90s, or from different struggles and political circles, here in the ranks of the Workers' Party of Turkey.

What do the resolutions passed at the conference mean to you?

There are a few points that stand out or that I think need to be highlighted. First of all, there is a sense of "self-confidence in construction" in resolutions, which is a good thing. Especially in the passage stating: "The doors of our party are open to all our fellow citizens who want to add their voice to ours and fight the regime of the Palace and the capitalist order that created it, whatever their political tradition, or the parties for which they voted. We will learn with you, we will grow with you, we will walk to power with you. Your place is ready within the Workers' Party of Turkey. We invite you to take your seat."

Of course, there is a will to overthrow this regime and beyond, to settle these accounts with the capitalist order, but it seems that there is a strengthened will because it has aroused much more interest than was hoped for when the party was created. Faced with the support it enjoys, coming not only from already revolutionary individuals and from different currents of the socialist movement, but also from people from other sides of the political spectrum, workers, women and youth, it tends to open its ranks even more to participation. At least that's how I read it. This, of course, creates fertile ground for the deepening of a pluralistic political culture.

The leaders of the TIP have been saying for a while that they are in

favour of a third alliance against that of the two bourgeois camps, that of Erdogan and that of the opposition. There is talk of a popular alliance that would be formed with the HDP and, if possible, with other parties of the radical left in view of the presidential and parliamentary elections scheduled for 2023. This invitation is renewed here, and more broadly, it is addressed to all social movements. I think that our parliamentary deputy comrades, of course, with the efforts of all the militants who carry the burden of the party, have established a good relationship between parliament and the street. And I am of the opinion that the desire to bring the actors of the various social struggles to the assembly - through its own lists of candidates - is a very coherent perspective, of course, as long as the organic link with the base is preserved and that it strengthens the struggles in the street.

And lately, it is often repeated that politics is made with force. It's true. But revolutionary politics, class politics, is also made with faith. I speak, of course, of an age-old faith. Having faith in something that surpasses us, that transcends the individual, faith in a collective goal, in a set of values, is the spiritual fuel of revolutionary struggle. Marxists such as Lucien Goldmann or Daniel Bensaïd were particularly concerned by this question. Thus, although the idea of socialism has today been undermined by a series of defeats, making it credible again as a libertarian, egalitarian and democratic alternative; offering a vision of an emancipated future where people govern themselves; making desirable a society where everyone would work less and benefit from more time to realize themselves... this is an indispensable element of revolutionary strategy. The orientation of the conference to use elections as a tool and to make socialism the demand of millions of people is important to me in this respect.

The war in Ukraine and the dilemmas of the Western left

18 March 2022, by **Daria Saburova**

I am not a specialist, in the academic sense of the word, either on Russian-Ukrainian relations or on geopolitical issues. I am doing a thesis in philosophy. But I was born in Kiev, where I lived for 20 years before arriving in France. My family is at present in Ukraine. My mother left Kiev on February 28, but many friends and relatives of friends still remain in the capital, either because they are responsible for the elderly and sick, or because they have made the choice to defend their city and help those who have remained there. Other friends have already fled and are preparing to apply for asylum in Poland, Germany or France. Since the first day of the invasion, I have mainly followed local news, via the Ukrainian media and various Telegram channels, or directly via the testimonies of my relatives. This is one of the reasons why I decided to write this text, in order to talk about the extent of the destruction, the living and survival conditions of the people on the ground today, and the networks of solidarity and resistance in which the Ukrainian population is massively involved.

After the failure of the blitzkrieg, the Russian military intensified the bombing of urban centres, including Kharkiv, Mariupol and Kiev, without sparing residential neighbourhoods and civilian infrastructure such as schools and hospitals. What is happening looks more and more like a punitive war. Images of the northwestern suburbs of Kiev can attest to this: Irpin, Borodyanka, Bucha, Gostomel, as well as several villages along the Kiev-Zhytomyr road are already half destroyed. In these suburbs, where fighting is ongoing, people have been without electricity, heating and the grid since the early days of the war. They have to spend several days in a row in cold and damp cellars, unsuitable for protection

against the “Grad” or “Iskander” missiles used by the Russian army. The situation is absolutely dramatic. Even the Red Cross does not venture into the territories where Russian military vehicles are stationed and circulate. Last week, a first agreement on “humanitarian corridors” was reached between the two sides. But the ceasefire is barely respected by the Russian army. The military regularly shoots at the cars of civilians who are trying to flee these combat zones individually. On 6 March, a family walking to one of the evacuation buses was shot dead in Irpin. The safest way to leave the capital remains for the moment the train leaving from the central station. However, the station has also already been damaged by an explosion just in front of it on Wednesday 2 March. Driving is becoming more and more dangerous, and petrol is becoming scarce: Russian soldiers have already destroyed several oil depots, especially in the Kiev region, and priority is now given to the needs of the army. At the moment, evacuation trains run regularly, but they are crowded and people pile up, four people on seats meant for two, or are even forced to travel standing or sitting on the ground for more than ten hours. At Lviv station, where refugees are waiting for trains to Poland, the situation is becoming increasingly tense. Coming by road, you have to wait up to 24 hours to cross the Polish border.

But it is in the besieged city of Mariupol — a Russian-speaking city in the south of the Donetsk administrative region — that the hypocrisy of the “special operation” to liberate these territories from the yoke of the “Kiev Nazis” is revealed in all its extreme brutality. This city, which currently has 360,000 inhabitants, is suffering massive

bombings that have already killed at least 1500 civilians. They are starting to be buried in a mass grave. The city’s inhabitants are completely cut off from all means of communication, water, electricity and heating. Humanitarian aid cannot get access to it and humanitarian corridors remain uncertain. A Telegram channel has begun tracking people who are alive, so that families and friends can have information about their loved ones, whom they have not been able to reach for nine days.

But if Kiev, Kharkiv, Mariupol and other cities are resisting the Russian army although it has a very clear military advantage, it is because, in the face of this invasion, a vast popular mobilization has risen that goes far beyond the state apparatuses, even in the Russian-speaking cities that should, according to the logic of both Putin and a certain Western left, welcome the liberation army with open arms. This mobilization takes many forms: in Energodar and other cities, unarmed people go out to form human chains to prevent the advance of Russian tanks; in the already occupied cities, in Kherson and Melitopol, there have been large demonstrations protesting against the invader. In other cities, territorial defence groups and self-organized solidarity groups ensure the security of and supplies to the population. In the words of a friend who stayed in Kiev, everyone is in one way or another involved in solidarity groups via thousands of specialized Telegram channels: it is a question of organizing distribution points and the delivery of food, medicine or other basic necessities, especially to isolated and the most fragile people; of finding or offering accommodation; of requesting or indicating the availability of places in cars to evacuate people to Western Ukraine. Each city offers a list of

places (churches, gyms, restaurants) that can accommodate refugees and people in transit free of charge. The Telegram channel "Help to Leave" now has 94,000 members, drivers and passengers combined. All these initiatives are horizontal and do not depend on the state: a symptom both of the bankruptcy of the Ukrainian state, caught off guard by a war of such magnitude, but also of the surge of solidarity and resistance of the Ukrainian people in the face of the invader.

In this situation, I have been really struck by the persistent inability of a good part of our comrades in France and elsewhere to overcome a vision of the world where the power ultimately responsible for all wars is the United States and NATO. This is why many analyses of the situation in Ukraine are surprisingly about something else: it is a question of going back to the "root causes" that are quite distant, historically and geographically. Such a geopolitical approach partly masks the lack of knowledge of the political and social processes of the post-Soviet space, fuelling in particular the idea that, basically, all oligarchic governments in this part of the world are equal, regardless of the degree of repression they inflict on their own population and the populations of neighbouring states. It is in the name of this simplistic view of complex realities that Ukrainians are practically invited to capitulate, either directly or — more indirectly and under the guise of revolutionary antimilitarism — by opposing any military aid to Ukraine provided by NATO member countries. While addressing the Ukrainians with an internationalist salute, it is thus suggested that they should accept the military occupation and a government imposed by Putin.

Certainly, since the invasion, few comrades allow themselves to deny that we are dealing with a military aggression fuelled by Russia's imperialist pretensions. But the campist positions nevertheless remain evident in different positions through the order in which the arguments are presented (yes, the unacceptable aggression of Ukraine by Russia, but nevertheless, the encirclement of Russia by NATO), and which continue

to support the image of Russia as a subordinate and essentially reactive imperialist power. Last Saturday, in the Facebook announcement of the "peace" demonstration organized by the NPA youth sector, separate from the large demonstration of support for the Ukrainian people that was taking place in Place de la République, we could read that Russia's military invasion of Ukraine was Russia's reaction to NATO's aggressive policy. We could read that the organizers support those who "in Ukraine and in Russia", "fight against the war". However, the Ukrainians are not fighting against the war: they are, in spite of themselves, at war with Russia. Is this anything other than an invitation to capitulation?

When the war broke out, given the overwhelming pre-eminence of the Russian forces, I myself hoped that Kiev would be occupied within 48 hours, so that at least the price to pay for a certain defeat would be as low as possible. But I was, and, I think, we were all, stunned by the resistance of the Ukrainian army and people. It is important to make the comrades understand that what is happening today does not concern only neo-Nazis, nor even the Ukrainian capitalist state, nor the Western imperialist states. My anarchist, socialist and feminist friends join solidarity groups, organize collections for the Ukrainian army, mobilize in territorial defense groups. The population as a whole seems very determined to defend the simple right to live in peace in their country, a country where protesting and publicly expressing divergent positions has become perhaps more complicated in recent years, but not impossible, as is the case in Russia.

We must certainly not turn a blind eye to the bleak prospects for all possible outcomes of this war. As a Russian-speaking Ukrainian and Marxist, I have watched with concern the political developments in my country since 2014, from the removal of Lenin's statues and decommunization laws to the proliferation of far-right paramilitary groups and the war in Donbass. Putin's war in Ukraine is likely to sharply accentuate these tendencies and anti-Russian sentiments in all spheres of life. All

wars, all movements of what has been called "national liberation" carry such dangers. Preventing the advance of a foolish nationalism that seeks to erase multilingualism and the Soviet legacy in Ukraine, making difficult the development in that country of anti-capitalist, feminist and ecological movements, will be the future task of the Ukrainian and international left. But at this moment, we have to show total solidarity with the Ukrainian resistance against the invader. Solidarity with Ukraine is at the same time solidarity with the voices in Russia that are rising louder and louder against the war and against the government. Along with the repression, political and social fractures in Russia will intensify. The Russian government wants to hide from its population the images of the bombings of the civilian districts of Kiev, Kharkiv and Mariupol, but how long will it be able to do so? Whatever the outcome of this war, I am increasingly convinced that Ukraine will be the downfall of Putin.

Certainly, the Western left is faced with serious dilemmas with this invasion. I will address only two of them here: how to support the Ukrainian resistance — and this implies, in my opinion inevitably, support for the delivery of weapons and other equipment to the Ukrainian army, given the incomparable superiority of the Russian army — while generally denouncing the arms industry, the announced increase in military budgets etc.? How can we support Ukrainian refugees and rejoice in the momentum of civil society towards them, while recalling the treatment inflicted for decades on non-white refugees fleeing conflicts that do not directly affect the European continent, without sinking into a posture that consists, from the position of a Western activist, in pointing the finger at the "privileged refugee"?

Among the arguments used on the left to oppose the delivery of weapons are three main categories. The first, it seems, is the concern to limit the conflict to Ukraine. The left, like the right, is afraid to provoke Russia into extending the conflict, admitting half-heartedly that the West could legitimately sacrifice Ukraine to

preserve peace in the “civilized world”. Despite great statements of support, the United States itself remains very cautious on this issue, refusing not only the granting of the No-fly zone, which would accept that Western coalition planes shooting down Russian planes, but also the delivery of fighter jets requested by the Ukrainian government. Indeed, it seems more than prudent to make a clear distinction between the direct involvement of NATO countries in the war against Russia and the delivery of defensive weapons to the Ukrainian army. On the side of the invader, Belarus is already explicitly participating in the war in Ukraine, without this provoking the West into crossing the red line. But it must also be taken into account that any intervention by the West, including in the form of economic sanctions, already described by Putin as a “declaration of war”, could serve as a pretext for an expansion of the conflict, if that were the intention.

The second argument is to counterpose the diplomatic solution to the military solution, a discourse for peace to the warmongering discourse. It seems to be forgotten that the process of negotiations with the occupying forces currently depends, to a very large extent, on the balance of power in the military field. Moreover, the lack of knowledge of the issues surrounding Crimea and Donbass, and of the real historical circumstances in which local populations had to express their right to self-determination — with active Russian interference

through the occupation of Crimea and the disinformation campaign regarding the alleged intentions of the “Nazi government” in Kiev to exterminate the Russian-speaking populations in Donbass, not to mention the non-transparent nature of the referendums — makes acceptable to some comrades the conditions under which Russia says it is ready to come seriously to the negotiating table. As long as Russia refuses to withdraw its troops, the protection of the civilian population also depends, above all, on the defensive capabilities of the Ukrainian army.

Finally, there is a fear about the recipients of Western military aid, given the existence of a far-right “Azov” brigade within the Ukrainian army. Their armament rightly raises serious concerns. But this is still to reduce the resistance of an entire people to its very minority fringe, with a few thousand fighters, and to refuse to see that Ukrainian society is a society just as complex as any other, with interwoven heterogeneous social, cultural and political identities. When we talk about arming the Ukrainian resistance, we must think above all of the needs of the territorial defense groups resulting from the general mobilization, as well as the need to protect the civilian population with weapons to shoot down rockets and air raids that target them. In short, an abstract antimilitarist position must give way to a concrete movement for peace in Ukraine, which takes into account both the military and non-military needs of the Ukrainian

resistance. The longer it lasts, and the stronger it becomes, the more likely the peace movement in Russia and abroad is to succeed.

On the question of refugees, the comrades rightly point to the hypocrisy and racist double standards of Europe;. The Polish border, where thousands of people suffered inhuman treatment only a few months ago, is now becoming one of its most blatant symbols. Unlike our adversaries who seek to discriminate between good and bad refugees, it is for us a question of reaffirming our support for all the resistances and victims of the imperialist powers, building on the Ukrainian precedent to demand that the opening of borders and “temporary protection” become the norm for all people seeking asylum in European countries, regardless of their nationality, skin colour or proximity of the conflict to European borders. And we will still have to ensure that, vis-à-vis the Ukrainians themselves, the grand declarations do not become, after a few weeks, mere empty formulas, and that the promised aid allows sustainable installation in dignified conditions.

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This text was written from Daria Saburova’s contribution in the discussion “War in Ukraine: what stakes, what internationalism?” (in French “[Guerre en Ukraine : quels enjeux, quel internationalisme ?](#)”) on 6 March 2022. Translated by **International Viewpoint** from [Contretemps](#).

“Global Britain ”, “AUKUS”, etc. Anglosphere supremacism and the promised wars in the China Sea

17 March 2022, by **Thierry Labica**

The end of summer 2021 was marked by two major military and diplomatic crises: the hasty departure of

American and British troops from Afghanistan and Australia’s breach of the contract (worth 55 billion euros)

signed in 2016 with France for the construction of twelve submarines. The first of these two events inflicted

on the first military power an ultimate humiliation after twenty years of blindness and devastation. Its British deputy, meanwhile, exemplified its incomparable sense of tradition by adding a new Afghan rout to a long and lamentable imperial and warlike history in that country. But the episode was the occasion for an additional confirmation: British global power policy – so crucially displayed, however, in the immediately post-Brexit period – remains very largely at the mercy of American strategic choices, whatever were the pleas of Boris Johnson (and Tony Blair) against the evacuation decision.

A dual military-diplomatic crisis

The second episode was, to a certain extent, a counterpoint to the first: the breach of the contract between Australia and France was the real birth certificate of a new security pact between Australia (A), the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (US): AUKUS. For the United States and Australia, this new alliance adds an (additional) military dimension to their "dialogue" already underway within the framework of the "Quad", an informal partnership formed in 2007 (and reactivated in 2017) involving the US, Australia, India and Japan in a new scenario of encirclement of China.

For post-Brexit Britain, the interest is threefold. First, the renegotiation of the contract offers significant industrial benefits for the Rolls Royce factories and for the arms giant, BAE Systems. Secondly, this partnership seems to open up new possibilities for the Johnson government after the disappointments of recent years and the absence of any serious opening for the great trade agreement between the United Kingdom and the United States, so desired and announced by Johnson (neither Biden nor Trump before him seem to have taken any interest in such a project). Finally, and above all, with the AUKUS, the great post-Brexit redeployment project of British power policy seems to be taking a little more shape: "Global Britain".

"Global Britain"

"Global Britain" is first of all the title of an official British government document, published in March 2021: "Global Britain in a Competitive Age: the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy". The Prime Minister presents in it his project for the United Kingdom by 2030: "Global Britain" announces a historic shift in foreign policy towards South-East Asia and the so-called "Indo-Pacific" zone [9], centred on a set of military priorities (with a strong increase in the defence budget [10]) defined above all in reaction to the growing role played by China in the region and in the world. According to Global Britain, "we will be the European partner with the largest and most integrated presence in the Indo-Pacific, committed for the long term, based on close and deep bilateral and multilateral partnerships." [11]

The leaders of the British state can now present themselves as proud restorers of a primary national historical vocation which the incapacitating tutelage of the EU had supposedly thwarted since the accession of the United Kingdom to the European Community in 1973. At the end of 2016, only a few months after the EU referendum, Boris Johnson, then Minister of Foreign Affairs, put it precisely in these terms in a speech delivered in Manama (Bahrain): by deciding to withdraw from its bases beyond Suez at the late 1960s, the Labour government of the day had made the mistake of giving up Britain's prestige and status as a global power; in 1972, just a year after withdrawing from the great naval and air force base of Singapore – the supreme symbol of British imperial and military influence in the world – Great Britain had signed its adhesion to the EEC, the supreme symbol of national capitulation, according to the current defenders of "Global Britain". [12]

As Mehdi Boussebaa has clearly shown, "Global Britain" has become an expression that we see widely circulating in political, media and academic discourse. [13] This expression is also inseparable from

another, the real slogan of this strategy: "East of Suez" is now the watchword of a vision of intense militarism bathed in the amber gleams of a perfectly senile imperial nostalgia, costly and already deadly (given the massive British logistical contribution to the Saudi war in Yemen – where France, of course, is not to be outdone). But all this is hardly surprising if we think of the mental world that this generation of politicians has, for many of them, inherited from their passage through Eton (the maximum version of British school elitism), where the exaltation of the imperialist heroism of yesteryear remains regularly on the curriculum. [14]

The break with Europe is thus meant to have opened the moment for a general redeployment beginning with a reconstruction of the strategic positions of yesteryear, in the Arabian peninsula to begin with.

In Bahrain in 2018 (i.e., 47 years after its withdrawal from the base it had in Bahrain until 1971), Britain has reopened a permanent military base, for £40m. The base can now accommodate 500 soldiers, sailors and pilots. This facility (Mina Salman Port) has been designed to be the Royal Navy's largest operations centre outside the UK.

In September 2020, the British Ministry of Defence announced an investment of £23.8 million for the expansion of the port of Duqm, in Oman, the capacity of which was thus to be tripled, according to the Ministry of Defence, "to facilitate Royal Navy deployments in the Indian Ocean". Nothing new about that, when we take into account the long history linking the two monarchies and the degree of penetration of British power in the administration of this largely vassalized country. [15] But it remains to be seen how big will be the scale of this logistical network between Oman and the base in Brunei [16], passing through Diego Garcia, a British territory in the Indian Ocean, leased to the United States, which has installed there one of its main military bases in the world (of which, by the way, there are around 800 in 80 countries, among which several hundred are lined up opposite China). [17]

AUKUS, latest version of imperialist alliances in Southeast Asia

This now allows us to grasp the importance of a third event during the summer of 2021, which was not discussed in France. Between May and September, the British Carrier Strike Group (CSG), comprising an

aircraft carrier, seven warships and a nuclear submarine, sailed from the English coast to the South China Sea, Japan, South Korea, then Guam, returning to Portsmouth in December. The CSG (in conjunction with a US strike group) thus visited forty countries and organized dozens of joint military exercises in a demonstration of military and diplomatic alliances, in the name of attachment to "our democratic values ", to "the rule of law" and to an "international rules-based order" in the face of a Chinese power presented as the negation of all that.

This naval expedition, which did not fail to arouse expressions of the most grandiloquent nationalism, showed in practice what "Global Britain " could mean "east of Suez". In addition to its important diplomatic dimension, its staging provided first of all a counterpoint to the prolonged failure in Afghanistan and then to the humiliation of the exit from it. Let us also think about the advertising vocation of the CSG, a travelling showcase for a state which happens to be the second arms seller in the world [