

Comes the first anniversary of the barbaric Russian war against Ukraine - Canada must do better, faster, including in armaments

Thursday 16 February 2023, by [BONHOMME Marc](#) (Date first published: 6 February 2023).

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We do not live in a world without war, far from it. Intense in Ukraine, Burma, Yemen, just yesterday in Ethiopia, the “most deadly of the 21st century” with its 600,000 dead according to Amnesty International, they are latent and endless in Palestine, Syria, Kurdistan, South Sudan that only the Pope seems not to forget, in the Sahel, in the east of Congo-Kinshasa with several million deaths for decades. However, they do not all have the same political and economic weight. What characterizes the Ukrainian war, and isolates it from the lot,

- It is located in Europe, while the others are in what used to be called the Third World;
- That it only concerns “white” peoples, unlike the others, with a few very partial exceptions;
- That it directly concerns a great power that gets involved tooth and nail and not marginally like France in the Sahel and Russia in Syria ... but more and more by its mercenaries in Africa;
- That it is only a “traditional” war between States and not a civil war or an increasingly hybrid one such as in Yemen (Saudi Arabia), in Ethiopia (Eritrea), in the Sahel (France, Russia), in Syria (Russia, Iran, Lebanon);
- That it synthesizes the great wars of the twentieth century, whether global (great powers invading neighboring countries) or colonial, although these wars concerned non-bordering countries of the so-called Third World;
- That it has an impact on the world economy of which it disrupts the energy and food markets but especially those of the dependent countries;
- Last but not least, that it kicks the balance in the transformation of global geopolitics, perking up NATO, weakening the CSTO, shaking the China-Russia rapprochement, tearing apart the BRICS alliances and company, bringing US attention back to Europe after it struggled to extricate itself from the Middle East to focus on the Indo-Pacific.

For the first time since Vietnam, popular support for a liberation war is on the

agenda

For better or for worse, this war has touched the hearts of so-called Western peoples and the strategic interests of their governments. With good reason, it has been denounced that “white” peoples and governments only care about their fellow human beings, especially Europeans for those who are Europeans. This, however, is only one side of the coin. Because finally, especially in Europe, an international question, particularly of war and peace, interferes within the major and popular political concerns, moreover emphasizing the solidarity with the fight of national liberation of a people invaded by an imperialist power. We hadn’t seen that since the Vietnam War, where American “boys” risked their lives, even if that time the US was more concerned than Europe. (The wars in the former Yugoslavia were certainly at the center of the news but they did not involve “boots on the ground” by the imperialist countries except for very passive blue helmets.)

Of course, this time the “bad guys” are not the US, the dominant imperialism, but Russia, a secondary imperialism desperately fighting for its place in the imperialist pecking order. The loss of their Ukrainian colony, tsarist then Stalinist, as important for Russia as Quebec is for Canada, would reduce it in the long term, following its deindustrialization except for armament, to a power of fossil energy whose days are now numbered with renewable energies becoming more profitable than fossil fuels. The oligarchs, led by Putin, who shovel their capital out of Russia, thereby jeopardizing capital accumulation in Russia, were not mistaken.

A Russian defeat would be one of global imperialism, pushing for global democratization

On the other hand, to imagine that a Russian victory would play into the hands of the US is to fail to grasp that a Russian defeat would be first and foremost a world victory of the peoples against the imperialist coterie, which is much more crucial than the reinforcement of US imperialism at the expense of Russia. The defeat of US imperialism by both the Iraqi and Afghan peoples, after that of Vietnam in the past, would be consolidated by that of Russian imperialism. That the Iraqi and Afghan regimes have nothing democratic about them, and worse still — adding to this, if you will, the neo-Stalinist consolidation of Vietnam — demonstrates the barbaric consequences of imperialist wars and forgets to note that a country without the threat of invasion creates the political conditions favorable to a popular settling of scores against its national ruling classes.

A Russian defeat would increase the chances of democratization both of Russia, on the way to a fascistic dictatorship, and of Ukraine, a very neoliberal democracy whose defeat would open the door to the domination of revengeful ultra-nationalism. (The myth of a fascist Ukraine following a fascist revolt in 2014, stemming from Russian propaganda, ignores the paltry electoral score of Ukrainian fascist parties since then, as well as the very real conquest in 2014 by Russian henchmen of Crimea and part of the Donbass, which earned Russia a slap on the wrist and Ukraine modest US support.) Should we add that the longer the war drags on, for lack of massive all-out backing of Ukraine and not because of the illusory absence of capitulation-negotiations which would reinforce Russian warmongering, the greater the suffering and the greater the risk of slippage.

Unlike the Vietnam War, both Canada and the US support the Ukrainian government which has itself, particularly its president, the support of most of the population despite the regime’s inherent corruption and pro-oligarch bias. and anti-union, which of course weakens its anti-imperialist national unity. Just like the Ukrainian left, the western left and democrats must support the Ukrainian resistance and critically its government until the total rejection of the Russian army outside Ukraine unless the Ukrainian people and government decide otherwise given the human and

material cost of Russian barbarism determined to obliterate Ukraine and for whom negotiating would only be to gain time which is not currently on its agenda.

Canadian support lags behind that of the US tempted by Munich-style half-way pacifism

Canada has so far received [1] around 150,000 refugees from Ukraine compared to an acceptance of over 500,000 out of an application of over 800,000. And there are also quite a few people from Burma, Yemen, Syria, especially after the devastating earthquake that struck Turkey as well Syria, who would need a Canadian refuge. We must ask to do better and faster in addition to demanding the cancellation of the foreign debt, starting with the Canadian one, and not just a moratorium on repayment. It is not a loan of two billion dollars [2] that should have been made, and more, but a donation. Ditto for the Burmese democratic resistance. The pressure of the large Ukrainian minority in Canada and the increasingly pronounced alignment of junior Canadian imperialism with that of the hegemonic United States ensure that Canadian support for Ukraine is among the highest in terms of GDP [3], except for the traumatized countries bordering on Russia and which consider NATO as a unavoidable insurance policy. The fact remains that the military support, given that Canada does not need its military hardware except for adventures as junior partners of US imperialism in Afghanistan and elsewhere, could be much more than a little more than \$1 billion and four Leopard-2 tanks, while Canada has about twenty.

For many Canadian and Quebec progressives, steeped in pacifism or obsessed with the US-NATO, which alone would be Evil incarnate, military support for Ukraine is anathema. A way of saying that Ukraine should allow itself to be crushed and then live under the boot of Russia which, encouraged as Hitler was by the Munich Accords, would pursue its territorial conquests more vigorously to reconstitute the tsarist-Stalinist empire. The danger of nuclear war would be increased tenfold. Moreover, the Canadian-American hesitations to support the Ukrainian war effort more strongly, at the same level as the USSR and Mao's China had supported Vietnam, have little to do with the danger of nuclear war, as present during the Vietnam War, as with the fear of the possible political consequences of a victory of the Ukrainian people both vis-à-vis Ukraine and Russia, which could set the whole plain on fire. It is also the same fear that minimizes support for the Burmese resistance by imperialist and neighboring countries despite this resistance being strictly democratic.

Marc Bonhomme, February 6, 2023

www.marcbonhomme.com; bonmarc videotron.ca

Footnotes

[1] Government of Canada, Ukraine immigration measures: Key figures:
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/immigrate-canada/ukraine-measures/key-figures.html>

[2] Government of Canada, Canada Provides Additional Financial Support to Ukraine:
<https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/news/2022/05/canada-provides-additional-financial-support-to-ukraine.html>

[3] Pierre Breteau, Quels sont les pays qui ont le plus aidé l'Ukraine financièrement depuis le début de la guerre ?, Le Monde, 22/12/22:

https://www.lemonde.fr/les-decodeurs/article/2022/12/21/quels-sont-les-pays-qui-ont-le-plus-aide-l-ukraine-financierement-depuis-le-debut-de-la-guerre_6126677_4355774.html