

“Comrade President Lula, will you leave in history the memory of a leader who says stop to Vladimir Putin?”

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In an open letter to “Le Monde”, the economist and former green MEP Alain Lipietz questions the President of Brazil on his position regarding the war in Ukraine and invites him not to fight the wrong battle.

Mr. President Lula, dear comrade,

We met in 1984 at the headquarters of the metal workers’ union in Sao Bernardo. You took me to a restaurant and told me about your life as the son of an immigrant from the Northeast. I immediately trusted that one day you would be president of your great country. Twenty years later, in Cuzco (Peru), at your invitation, I was the only foreign guest to sponsor the birth of the South American Community of Nations, in my capacity as president of the European Parliament’s delegation for the Andean Community.

Today you are starting a third term in office, after a victory over the terrible Jair Bolsonaro, enemy of the planet and of human rights. We, people of the left and European ecologists, welcomed this victory as much as Joe Biden’s victory over Donald Trump, and for the same reasons. That is why I am astonished to hear you reproach this same President Joe Biden for “encouraging the continuation of the war in Ukraine” by helping the magnificent resistance of the Ukrainian people against the Russian invader, who repeats that he only conceives of one peace: the one ratifying the conquest of five regions of Ukraine. All these regions, including Crimea, had voted for the independence of Ukraine...

I know perfectly well that Brazil has voted for all the United Nations resolutions against this aggression, in favor of restoring the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. But what contribution is Brazil making, under your leadership, to push Russia to respect this verdict, i.e. to evacuate these five regions without delay and to recognize the Ukrainian people’s freedom to choose their friendships and alliances in a sovereign manner?

No economic sanctions

So far, Brazil refuses to supply arms to this small country, which does not have an arms industry. It even refuses to apply simple economic sanctions to the country that outrageously violates international law, whose troops loot, rape, execute, torture, steal thousands of children, and whose bombings voluntarily deprived an entire people of heat and electricity during the Ukrainian winter.

You could say: “This is a European affair, it’s none of our business.” But you speak up, you criticize not the invader but the country that helps the most the invaded country, reproaching it in short for delaying the capitulation of Ukraine! You could say: “I want to be able to mediate in future peace negotiations. Don’t worry: through Turkey or the Secretary General of the United Nations, the

dialogue between Ukraine and Russia has never ceased to exchange prisoners, to ensure the delivery of wheat across the Black Sea...

It may be difficult to praise the action of the United States, when the Brazilian people were subjected from 1964 to 1985 to the military dictatorship, as were their neighbors Chile, Argentina and others, within the framework of Operation Condor directed undercover by the CIA. To be on the same "side" as the United States. But you know that it is not the countries that make up the "camps", but the workers, the democrats, the feminists, the ecologists, against those who exploit, oppress, plunder. A country belongs to a "camp" only by the color of its government. And Russia under Putin is in the "camp" of Bolsonaro, Médici, Videla, Galtieri, Pinochet, etc.

In the years 1965-1985 we demonstrated in Europe against the coups d'état in Brazil, Argentina, Chile, we welcomed refugees in our countries, we looked for work for them, and for those who resisted there: weapons, money. And now you criticize those who help the resistance of a martyred people? What will you tell us then, if Bolsonaro's emulators organize a new golpe in Brazil? That we should "condemn the golpe" but not "help" the resistance and the overthrown legal government, because that would be slowing down the march towards the peace of the cemeteries? Your former comrades in the leadership of the Donbass metalworkers' union have been on the front lines since 2014 in the face of Russian aggression. Almost half of them have already given their lives for their homeland. Do you think they refuse the weapons that the European states and the United States are supplying them?

The United States, as well as the United Kingdom and France, support the Ukrainian resistance (by delivering arms, hospital blocks, electric generators, etc.) for a simple reason: these countries know that they are obliged to do so by the international commitments they have made and which guarantee relative world peace. They know that in the long run it would be more expensive to "do nothing".

Hallucinating felony

In 1994, in the Budapest Memorandum, Ukraine gave up all its nuclear weapons in exchange for the "guarantee of its territorial integrity and sovereignty" by the Russian Federation, the United States and the United Kingdom, soon joined by China and France. This guarantee was confirmed on December 4, 2009. And, in an astonishing act of felony, it is one of these signatories, Russia, that is now invading Ukraine!

Who will believe that the "international guarantee" is a sufficient and superior protection to nuclear armament, if the whole world does not stand up against the aggressor with rigorous worldwide economic sanctions until he withdraws his troops? With, in this case, this consequence: nuclear proliferation and the appalling risks it entails. Is Brazil indifferent to this issue?

Today, the Russian aggression puts all the governments and all the peoples of the world against the wall. Just as in 1936-1939 the non-intervention in the face of Franco's pronunciamiento [seizure of power by a fraction of the army], the aggression of Ethiopia, the dismantling of Czechoslovakia led straight to world war by encouraging fascist excesses, so the non-intervention of those who condemn but do nothing, or even commercially help the aggressor, leads us straight to a new world war. Because Vladimir Putin does not hide it: he wants to reconstitute the great Russian Empire of Catherine II and Stalin. After Ukraine, it will be Georgia, Moldavia, the Baltic States, Poland, Finland, etc. And these countries have understood this, and are also helping the Ukrainian resistance to the extent that they can.

Comrade President Lula, will you leave in history the memory of the leader of a major country who

knew in time to say to Vladimir Putin: "Stop! Back off" and took measures to help force him to do so? Or, on the contrary, the one who will have said: "Let Putin annex what he has already conquered, and still as much as he wants and can..."?

From the man, from the comrade I knew, I expect only the first answer. And may it come as soon as possible, Mr. President.

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