

Ukraine : Commons, journal of social criticism

Saturday 11 November 2023, by [LE TRÉHONDAT Patrick](#) (Date first published: 17 May 2023).

One of the paradoxes of the war in Ukraine is that some of us have discovered the existence of an active left and a critical and creative thinking in Ukraine that we (including the author of these lines) have ignored for too many years. Amongst our revelations, Commons, Journal of Social Criticism, is certainly one of the most important and productive places for us to understand the situation in Ukraine — and in the world. It publishes its articles in Ukrainian, English, and Russian. Today Commons is a reference website for critical thinking on the European left. While the site deals with issues specific to Ukraine, it is open to the world. One of its recent initiatives is the “Dialogues of the peripheries”, the objective being that “resistance to the capitalist system should be a way to find alternative solutions for all countries of the global periphery. To this end, we are initiating a common independent dialogue with activists from different regions, from Latin America to East Asia.” I recently had a conversation with the editorial board of Commons.

In addition to its regular publications on its site, Commons has just published a paper edition in English which is also available for free download.

We publish the foreword of the magazine below :

The idea of creating an English-language issue of Commons journal has been discussed for a long time, and it became especially acute in connection with the Russian full-scale invasion and the emerging significant interest in Ukraine among foreign audiences. For various reasons we have been postponing this issue, but the idea came up again during discussions with the editorial staff of the Swedish magazine Glänta, which invited us to a residency in Gothenburg. They offered to help us with printing — we agreed to gather the essential materials.

The war has affected each of us. Some of our friends and relatives were under occupation, captured or killed. One of our editors volunteered to join the army, several of our authors died in action on the frontline, fighting against the aggressor. Some fled the country as refugees and together with those of us who were already abroad — joined various volunteer networks and public discussions about what has been happening. We were struggling to manage and survive — some as refugees, and others staying in Ukraine, all going through the stress and not everybody being able to handle it. Our editor, comrade and dear friend Oleksandr Kravchuk, who was just 37 years old, died in June 2023 in his sleep.

All the while, we have never stopped analyzing the unfolding events. The materials presented here are not original articles written for this issue. They are either selected texts that we have published since the beginning of the full-scale invasion on our website or publications with members of the editorial board on other resources. The main part of the issue is conventionally divided into three blocks. The first contains texts that are our intervention in the Western left’s discussion on Ukraine. The second, most heterogeneous block is devoted to the experiences of war — primarily occupation

and refugeeism, but also the experience of solidarity and mutual support. In this section one can also find texts about the reaction of Ukrainian leftists to the war and on the situation with Ukrainian right-wing radicals. The third and final block contains articles that criticize neoliberal solutions to the country's economic problems, calling for a just and socially oriented post-war reconstruction. The interview immediately following this foreword serves as a short presentation of our journal to a foreign audience.

We would like to thank the Glänta editorial team, without whose assistance this issue would not have been possible. We want to thank Katya Gritseva for the cover and Mariia Boiko for the layout of the journal. Despite the very tight deadlines they did a wonderful job. We want to thank Ira Yatsenko, Lila Badekha and Zhenya Stepko — people from our team, without whom our work over the past year and a half would have been impossible.

We would also like to thank our comrades — trade unionists and left-wing activists from all around the globe, who have supported us during these hard times. We express our gratitude to Medico International and Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung — without their cooperation many of the texts included in this issue would not have been published.

We dedicate this issue to the memory of Ukrainian anthropologist and our author Evheny Osievsky, and to the memory of our editor, friend and comrade Oleksandr Kravchuk, without whose painstaking editorial work most of these texts would not have seen the light of day.

Finally the review specifies:

“Profits from the sales of this journal will go to fundraising initiatives for humanitarian relief and support of leftist and trade-unionist soldiers”

To purchase or download the magazine follow the link below :

<https://commons.com.ua/en/russian-invasion-and-ukrainian-left-struggle/>

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