

POWDER KEG UKRAINE - a series of discussions about the war

Politico-cultural *Grand café Utopie* – in collaboration with the *Haagse Mug* - is inviting you for a series of discussion evenings, regarding the war in Ukraine in April and May. With speakers from the Netherlands and abroad, we address the question of how the war impacts old certainties.

With the Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24, the world seems to have changed fundamentally. Hot wars - whether or not fought with European troops and weapons - were a far from our bed show and war refugees, who were looking for protection, were often kept out of the EU by all means. Also the classical military defence was strongly reduced; and it had been transferred into use for intervention warfare.

Now the Russian army has invaded a neighbouring country with old-fashioned imperialist rhetoric, and it is causing unimaginable suffering. While many Ukrainians defend themselves and their country, others are fleeing head over heels and they can count on solidarity from Europeans. Meanwhile, the violence of war and chaos in Ukraine increases every day.

What seemed yesterday indisputable certainties, today these certainties appear to be in doubt: free trade, the supply of energy and fuels, validity of international agreements, European migration policy, or the priority of cooperation and diplomacy over power politics and military violence. Even the threat of nuclear war hangs over Europe like a sword of Damokles.

A thousand and one questions arise.

- What does the war mean for the reception of refugees in Europe and the Netherlands?
- Is this war different from the one in Syria, Afghanistan or Yemen, for example?
- What does the war do to ideas on anti-militarism, pacifism and human rights?
- Are arms deliveries to warzones permissible or not, and why?
- Does the war lead to disorientation and speechlessness here, or to action and commitment?
- What consequences will the war have for global resources, energy and climate policy?
- What images and voices, stories and concepts do (social) media and politics present about this war?

De Haagse Mug and *Grand café Utopie* want to open a space for these and other questions with the *Powder Keg Ukraine series*. Come and join the conversation!

The programm:

Tuesday, April 19th, 8.00 PM (English language)

The Effect of Propaganda in Russian Society

(by Sergey Golubok, human rights lawyer from St. Petersburg)

The effect of Kremlin-sponsored propaganda is heavily underestimated, both by Russians and the international audience. It is not only waging wars but literally destroying families and driving people to extremes. Why is it so efficient? What makes it popular? Why is it still working?

Sergey Golubok is an international human rights lawyer, a member of the St Petersburg Bar Association and the European Criminal Bar Association. He represents clients before the European Court of Human Rights and other international institutions in cases against the Russian Federation and some other States. He has been living in Russia in 2011-2022.

Wednesday, April 20th, 8.00 PM (Dutch language)

In Search of De-escalation and an End to Violence

(by Wendela de Vries from *Stop Arms Trade*)

To end the violence in Ukraine the West must do whatever it takes to de-escalate. In order to prevent the war turning into a nuclear war, whether accidentally or intentionally. And to make room for negotiations. The announced increase of the military budgets are pretty much the opposite of de-escalation.

Wendela de Vries works for Stop Arms Trade that conducts research about arms trade, weapon deployment and the weaponry lobby. Wendela advocates conflict prevention, diplomacy and disarmament.

Thursday, April 28th, 8.00 PM (Dutch language)

The Impact of the War on Global Food Security

(by Frans van der Steen St. Lokaal Voedsel Den Haag)

Russian tanks and rockets prevent the harvesting of wheat, corn, soja and sunflowerseeds. Fields, grain silos and harbours are under attack. In the rich West this leads to higher food prices but not to major shortages. In poor countries, that much more depend on food imports, this leads to increasing hunger and probable uprisings. The war will confront us with the worldwide lack of food security.

Frans van der Steen is chair of the Foundation Lokaal Voedsel Den Haag and has been chair of the Food&Agriculture section of the Association of Environment Professionals. He is active on the field of food security.

Tuesday, May 3rd, 8.00 PM (Dutch language)

Pacifism in Times of hot War

(by Mari Beks van Onkruitvergaatniet)

What does this war do to us and what remains of pacifist ideas? How can we support the Ukrainians and what lessons can be learned? Are there lessons to be learned for the action methods of current (climate-)activists?

Mari Beks is an anti-militarist and initiator of Onkruit. He rejects responding to the invasion with military force as this will only lead to more destruction. Mari does empathize with the resistance of the citizens in Ukraine and wants to support it wholeheartedly. Frits ter Kuile will also take part in the discussion. He is a conscientious objector, peace activist and affiliated with the Catholic Workers.

Tuesday, May 10th, 8.00 PM (English language)

The announced, yet unexpected War in my Country

(by Sergii Shevchenko, Ukrainian IT specialist living in The Hague)

The invasion by Russia did not come by surprise after the wars in Chechnya, Transnistria, Georgia, Crimea and eastern Ukraine. Sergii saw this invasion coming, especially after the Orange Revolution and the Maidan Uprising. Ukraine has developed strongly - especially in the cities - while Russia is sinking deep away into revanchism, in the grips of an all dominating repressive state.

Sergii Shevchenko is from Kharkiv, he works in IT and has been living now in The Hague for 5 years with his partner, who is from Crimea. As a volunteer he sends humanitarian aid and protective equipment to Ukraine.

Wednesday May 11th, 8.00 PM (Dutch language)

Solidarity with Refugees

(by Chris Keulemans, journalist and writer)

The arrival of Ukrainian refugees does not lead to a better understanding of refugees from other war zones. Instead, it leads to a razor-sharp dichotomy between good and unwanted (war) refugees and to a marginalization of asylum seekers and status holders from the Global South. Is that inevitable? Or can the experience of war in Europe lead to more empathy and a more humane asylum policy also for non-Western victims of war and violence?

Chris Keulemans is a traveling writer, based in Amsterdam-North. He was chairman of the Amsterdam Refugee Support Center for a long time. In recent years he visited Kyiv, Dnipro and Lviv as a coach for new cultural centers in these cities, on behalf of the Trans Europe Halles network. In March he traveled for two weeks along the Polish borders with Ukraine and Belarus.