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Solutions from the left

Ideas for the post-war reconstruction

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11 March 2022

This war that is affecting everyone has also united Ukrainians of completely different views. At the frontline and in the volunteer rear, in hospitals and in the diaspora – Ukrainian liberals, socialists, nationalists, anarchists, fascists, and above all people without ideological affiliation – are fighting imperialism. This is happening not because national identity is more important than a worldview, but because the ontological danger hangs over everyone equally. We all understand that if Ukraine is defeated, Putinism will destroy the very possibility of ideological distinctions, obliging us to follow its necrophilic truths.

However, we leftists should continue to look a step ahead and, in addition to our anti-imperialist struggle today, think about structural steps that could ensure the security of the Ukrainian economy. Martial law and left-wing economic initiatives coexist harmoniously because these ideas can be effective in the short-term, and war in return legitimizes them even in the eyes of people who do not share them in peacetime. The ideas that will be voiced here are not radical for wartime. Most of them have already been mentioned in the Ukrainian

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Retrieved on 14th March 2022 from www.nihilist.li

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discourse: some at the level of parliament, some at the level of petitions.

- The first proposal **to nationalize all Russian assets in the territory of Ukraine** has already been passed by the Ukrainian Parliament. However, it is worth noting that since most of the confiscated assets were owned for commercial purposes by the holders, most of them are profitable. The Left must defend public ownership of all confiscated assets that can be profitable while in this form of ownership.
- **Restructuring of external debt.** It's no secret that in the post-war period, we will face an enormous necessity of subsidies for the reconstruction of strategic and infrastructure facilities and various social programs. To avoid attracting investments through regular privatization, in addition to direct assistance from the West, it will be necessary to release such a significant part of budget funds as they go to pay off foreign debt. Given the extraordinary nature of the situation in which Ukraine finds itself, for the Western world, such a step will not be a manifestation of some extreme generosity but an utterly normal demonstration of solidarity, which is not limited to words and actions with excessive caution.
- **Development of complex projects for the reconstruction of urban infrastructure.** In addition to budget funding and grants from international partners, another thing we can do is to create a fund sponsored by wealthy Ukrainian entrepreneurs and corporations. We should hold on to the collective aggravation of the sense of justice and develop it comprehensively in the postwar period. In particular this will give us rhetorical space to argue why the reconstruction of infrastructure should also be the responsibility of wealthy members of

society, and not solely depend on Russian reparations and budgetary funds. In addition to funding sources, it is necessary to articulate the role of urban planning in the reconstruction of infrastructure. This is the moment when urbanism can finally take on the image of a necessary and practical discipline in the eyes of society.

- **Public regulation of rental prices** is a necessary solution to the housing crisis that has arisen due to internal migration. The implementation of this idea is possible at the level of local communities and administrations. In addition, in the context of the wartime housing crisis, some politicians who are far from the ideas of public control over economic processes are voicing this idea. However, our position should be that such measures should continue after the end of hostile actions because, given the devastating consequences caused by Russian aggression, a housing crisis will befall Ukrainian society for many years after the victory.

The ideas presented here are quite obvious steps for the post-war period but are barely discussed seriously in ordinary peacetime. The Ukrainian war of liberation against the imperialist regime, in addition to terrible destruction, also carries a temporary fervor of solidarity. One of the main tasks of the Left must be to create a transit to peacetime that will allow us to preserve and cultivate the values that have made themselves known in times of crisis. We failed to do so in 2014, so we must not waste this chance in 2022.