



# POLAND-UKRAINE COLLECTIVE MEETING REPORT

## 18-19 October 2022 – LUBLIN - POLAND

emmaüs

EUROPE

### Participants

Grzegorz Hadjuk, Robert Opoka, Tomasz Grzegorzek, **Brat Albert, Poland**  
Marta Walkiewicz, Zbigniew Draskowski, Ela Guc, **Lublin, Poland**  
Grazyna Moskal, Cédric Marrec, **Rzeszów, Poland**  
Father André Savka Maryana Grinyuk, **Nasha Khata, Ukraine**  
Oksana Buchkovska, **Oselya, Ukraine**  
Solvita Fibiga, Victoria Fibiga, **Amis 3, Latvia**  
Arūnė Bernatonytė, **MPFSC, Lithuania**  
Nika Siprak Wending, Ivan Caleta, **CNZD, Croatia**  
Odilia Bertkhout, Herbert Bitter, **Haarzuilens, Netherlands**  
Anu Lähde, **Helsinki, Finland**  
Maryse Faure, **Chalon s/Saône, France**  
Catherine Marchand, Elena Azra, Brigitte Boussuges, **Longjumeau, France**

Philippe Grember, **Tourcoing, France**  
Christian Calmejane, Gérard Gineste, **Montauban, France**  
Pascal Louvet, **Annemasse, France**  
Colette Laurent, Bénédicte Roumain, **Emmaüs Indre, France**  
Alexis Nicolas, **Berne s/Oise, France**  
Christophe Pauvel, **Emmaus Solidarité, France**  
Annick Berthier, Stéphane Puechberty, **Emmaus France**  
Pierre Dubois, **France**  
Dominique Nave, Bernard Dumoulin, **Emmaüs Mutualisation Rhône-Alpes, France**  
Irène Meunier, **Roanne, France**  
Hélène Perrot, **Emmaus International Secretariat**  
Emmanuel Rabourdin, **Emmaus Europe Secretariat**

The documents are available online:

[https://www.dropbox.com/sh/9tp5zltik6cxoc0/AABZ55A3I0ca2kD\\_qu2D3yGAa?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/9tp5zltik6cxoc0/AABZ55A3I0ca2kD_qu2D3yGAa?dl=0)

*Zbigniew welcomed all the participants and spoke about the socio-political situation in the region, particularly in Poland. Please refer to Appendix 1 to read his introduction.*

### **UKRAINE – IMPACT AND ISSUES**

Several questions arose from the discussion about the situation in Ukraine and Poland:

- *Could EE fund the purchase of a minivan, needed by Nasha Khata to run their initiatives on a day-to-day basis?*

The Regional Council of Emmaus Europe (RCEE), meeting on 20-23 October in Lublin, voted to approve funding of €15K to enable the group to buy a minivan.

- *Is EE able to fund the freight costs of the humanitarian loads sent directly to Ukraine?*

The RCEE decided to uphold its decision taken in April 2020: the freight costs of the humanitarian convoys to Ukraine will only be paid in very exceptional circumstances. The funds donated to the Ukraine fund should first and foremost be used to support our Polish and Ukrainian groups on a monthly basis with their direct support work with displaced people and refugees.

For the record, the freight costs of the humanitarian loads sent by the Polish Emmaus groups to the Emmaus groups in Ukraine are paid by EE.

Emmaus France (EF) is going to suggest to the French regions that they jointly fund the humanitarian convoys sent to Poland and Ukraine, using as an example the regional convoy sent by the Occitania region, at the instigation of Emmaus 82.

- *The idea of arranging humanitarian convoys from France direct to Ukraine will be examined.*

However, it looks difficult: Ukrainian hauliers are the only companies to cross the Ukrainian border, and generally do not wish to travel further than Poland.

- *EE will continue to provide funding for the groups in Poland and Emmaus Oselya in Ukraine, funding all their work with displaced people and refugees. Nasha Khata (Ukraine) will be financially supported for its monthly operating costs and its work with displaced people, as has been the case since the start of the war.*
- *EE will pass on the Ukrainian groups' winter needs: winter clothing, shoes, blankets, backup heating units...*

This session enabled each group working with refugees to take the floor.

Father André, the Nasha Khata leader, took the floor to describe the horror of the war and the strength and resilience of the Ukrainian people. He thanked the Emmaus movement for its support, which he can feel from Drohobych, and emphasized the aid provided by the Polish groups. Currently, over 50 people are living in the community, and the group is providing support to displaced people (lost ID documents, help with administrative formalities, etc). The association is also supporting people with disabilities and injured people.

Oksana, Emmaus Oselya, went back over the aid provided to displaced people since March: 427 people have used or are using the services provided by the centre, 82 people have been housed, food, medicines and clothing are being distributed, showers provided. Oksana also spoke about the construction of the centre, which got underway in August, using funds from the Ukraine Fund. These funds were donated by the entire Emmaus movement rallying round.

*The EE Regional Council voted for the budget to be extended by €40K to enable Oselya to complete the building work on the new centre before winter starts. This increase is the result of a rise in the cost of building materials. This further tranche increases the funding provided by the Ukraine Fund to build the centre to €240K, to which Emmaus France's funding of €45K should be added, making for a total of €285,000.*

The Polish Emmaus groups are supporting and accommodating refugees: places have been created in the communities, funding has been given to families who have welcomed refugees into their homes, and some accommodation centres are being supplied by Emmaus with furniture (beds, blankets) and foodstuffs. For the record, close to 3.5 million refugees are living in Poland.

CNZD in Croatia has opened two centres using EE's funding: an information centre and a children's centre.

In Georgia, Emmaus GEO has handed out over 500 hygiene kits to refugees thanks to the support of the Ukraine Fund.

Emmaus Solidarity in France opened three support and accommodation centres in Paris between early March and late April. One centre is currently still open, offering 200 accommodation places.

## **WORLD ASSEMBLY, ANNUAL SALES, OTHER ITEMS**

Hélène gave a brief overview of the outcomes of the World Assembly held in Piriápolis in Uruguay. The resolutions taken were set out and explained in detail. *The World Assembly document can be found in Appendix 2.*

The world assembly is held every four years and brings together the movement's 425 groups. The assembly is the opportunity to elect Emmaus International's chair and decide on policy directions.

The 2020 WA was postponed and took place in two stages, an online meeting on 30/11/21-02/12/21, and then the in-person meeting in Uruguay in May 2022.

It was the second World Assembly held outside Europe, and the first in South America (except for a previous failed attempt). Uruguay is a historic place for the movement following Abbé Pierre's shipwreck. The WA enabled the spotlight to be placed on the region's groups and their work.

## **2023 REGIONAL ASSEMBLY: CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIC PLAN**

The participants got together in small groups and discussed the four ideas put forward by the EE Regional Executive to address the challenges in Europe at the local, national and European levels over the 2023-2026 period.

Four discussion points:

- Democracy and peace
- Green revolution: our behaviour and external awareness-raising.
- Global & local: welcoming migrants, quality, encouraging global exchanges.
- Ancient and modern: new economic contexts, vulnerable communities, handing over to new generations.

### **Group 1**

#### **1) Migration movements in Europe**

In an increasingly unstable political context in Europe, with a rise in extremism, and population movements (South-North and now East-West), we need to work on the impacts in the Emmaus groups: Will we need to choose between communities wanting shelter and support? The challenges are different for different communities – integration, learning the language, etc. This also raises the issue of relations between the different communities we house. These population movements, and the resulting issues, will be accentuated by the climate emergency.

- ➔ The EE conference in December will enable us to address these issues.
- ➔ The Emmaus Movement must bolster its advocacy work, based on its experience of offering shelter and support in the groups.
- ➔ In terms of welcoming new communities: we need to offer training about the history and values of the Emmaus movement: what is a community? What is a committee of friends? Train and inform the people joining us.

## 2) Income-generating activities at the European level (France and EU)

The Emmaus movement needs to consider a different model in order to develop reuse. It is important that we adapt to the new EU legislation enacted every year.

### 3) Inflation has brought new customers to the Emmaus charity shops

How to welcome these new customers? Is there an opportunity to raise their awareness about Emmaus' remit and values?

### 4) How can we more effectively protest (substandard housing, homelessness)?

Our self-sufficiency is a strength and enables us to highlight issues. State funding makes this undertaking more complicated.

→ If we develop ancillary activities supported by the authorities: how can we then highlight issues?

→ The different cultures within our groups in the European Union are also a challenge: how can we highlight problems at the movement level, European group level?

## Group 2

- 1) Increase in the number of people coming to Emmaus who have mental health issues. The Emmaus groups are increasingly replacing the State in terms of caring for these communities: we must flag up the issue to the authorities in order to obtain funding.
- 2) Need to raise awareness about reasons for shopping at Emmaus and the impact it has.
- 3) Communication: two topics need developing using resources to be displayed/for awareness raising in the shops:
  - What is the Emmaus Movement worldwide?
  - Provide reliable information on the impact of taking in refugees from an economic standpoint.

## Group 3

- 1) Need to strengthen communication between the groups.
- 2) Lack of young people involved in Emmaus: the result of a lack of new solutions/activities, and our attachment to our "long-standing values". We need to adapt to these new challenges.
- 3) Lack of group-to-group knowledge: Croatia learnt that the Lithuanian group MPFSC undertook the same sort of work.
- 4) Need to once again arrange international work camps, exchanges of practices, exchanges of information etc.  
→ Idea: publish information about each group on Emmaus' website. That would enable the groups to identify other groups in order to work together.
- 5) Keyword: **Awareness**. Local awareness, environmental awareness, awareness of migration issues...

## CONTAINERS: SHORT, MEDIUM AND LONG-TERM ISSUES

*The participants split up into groups to consider the Container Programme challenges caused by the increase in prices and major economic shifts.*

### Groups 1 and 2

- Traditional lorryloads: offset the rise in fuel costs by better loading and improved quality goods.
- Paying for convoys: payment for shared containers needs to be harmonised. Some recipient groups pay the haulage costs, others do not.

- Differentiate between the different types of goods sent: humanitarian and traditional loads (second-hand goods): opt for funding rather than shipping humanitarian goods. Conclusion: The container programme and shipment of containers remain vital at the present time, in the absence of any other solutions.

### **Group 3**

*Main issue: do everything possible to achieve independence / economic self-sufficiency*

This is a difficult goal for groups in Eastern Europe to achieve, because of the low-quality donated goods. We are unable to sell these goods.

Good practice: create a database of actual needs in order not to receive useless donations. Sending money is not good practice: it leads to a lack of transparency.

## **SOLIDARITY: SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION ABOUT THE SOLIDARITY PROGRAMMES**

The three projects supported in 2022, put forward by EE, amount to €45K, and were funded using the budget provided by EI and generated by the solidarity sales. This form of support, harmonised this year by EE and EI, was discussed by the Collective participants.

Most of the participants felt that it was important to maintain the European solidarity programme spearheaded by EE: it enables people to know how the funds have been used, and motivates the companions, as they can see which projects were supported thanks to their efforts.

This also raises the issue of the annual sales, now a statutory obligation in addition to the payment of membership dues, and group-to-group relations. The importance of transparency in group-to-group solidarity was highlighted by Zbigniew and Pascal. However, this solidarity can jeopardise friendships between the groups.

Some members feel that the time elapsed between the funding application and the disbursement of funding is too long, and the annual sales mechanism is not enough to meet the sometimes urgent needs of the groups.

However, the importance of holding an annual sale was reiterated: it helps harmonise solidarity and ensures that donations are more fairly shared out.

Reminder of the groups supported in 2022

- *Nova Generacija*, Bosnia-Herzegovina: €5K
- *Emmaus GEO*, Georgia: €20K
- *Iasi*, Romania. €20K

A detailed description of the work of each group is available in Dropbox.

Poland		
Emmaus Brat Albert	Emmaus Lublin	Emmaus Rzeszów
<p><b>Group format:</b> Residential and working community; second-hand goods collection, repair and sale. Development of services (building work, removals).</p> <p><b>Activities:</b> Carpentry and specialises in restoring old furniture.</p> <p><i>“Our group’s peaceful life has changed considerably since the start of the war. Several waves of Ukrainians have arrived. The companions “encouraged us” to welcome people to the two communities in Krakow and Nowy Sacz, and to undertake outreach work. We were out on the streets for many weeks, several nights, handing out drinks, sandwiches, and hot food, before the State took over. During the first months, the State was not able to respond to the first wave of refugees, with the only aid being provided by volunteers. We are currently very worried about the coming winter: in Krakow, there is an outright ban on using wood for heating. We are forced to use gas heating, and gas prices have increased 10-fold.”</i></p> <p><b>Solidarity programme:</b> We have received five convoys this year. And we are calling on everyone for help, as things are deteriorating.</p>	<p><b>Group format:</b> 36 companions in four community houses.</p> <p><b>Activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Second-hand goods collection and sale.</li> <li>- Production and services workshops, woodworking, concrete for building street furniture for parks and gardens... (Cooperative)</li> <li>- Pizzeria/kebabs, salads</li> </ul> <p><b>Three different entities:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Entre nous: Craft therapy workshop for people with disabilities. Three people take part and are not directly involved in Emmaus’ work.</li> <li>2) Emmaus Lublin: companions and shops</li> <li>3) Cooperative</li> </ol> <p><i>Since March, the group has been hosting a large number of Ukrainian refugees, and has been providing funding for families hosting refugees. Five humanitarian trucks have been sent to Oselya, in addition to the other humanitarian loads sent to Poland and Ukraine. The group acts as the hub for humanitarian assistance sent by the Emmaus groups for Oselya and Ukraine.</i></p>	<p><b>Group format:</b> residential community, two charity shops on two sites, in the centre of Rzeszów and the suburbs.</p> <p><i>All of our work has focused on Ukraine since March of this year. We are endeavouring to work with Ukraine and with all the Emmaus groups who help us by sending lorries. We are also supporting a refugee accommodation centre in Poland housing 80-120 people. Thanks to the support of all the European Emmaus groups, we are able to provide the following aid: food, hygiene products and all sorts of goods that we send to the centre or to Ukraine. Soon, the number of people housed at the centre will increase with the advent of winter. We are also providing support to over 10 local families and private individuals who ask us for help. A fourth load was sent to Nasha Khata in Ukraine on 3 November.</i></p>

Ukraine	
Emmaus Oselya	Nasha Khata
<p><b>Group format:</b> residential community with 40 companions, and a total of 49 companions housed in 2022. Seven companions are internally displaced people. Eight companions have voluntarily joined the Ukrainian army. Two companions have found work outside the community.</p> <p><b>Activities:</b> Charity shops, and several initiatives working with internally displaced people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- We have housed some 72-82 refugees.</li> <li>- 427 internally displaced people use the services provided by the centre.</li> <li>- Outreach work: Handing out food, clothes, offering showers, medicines, tea and coffee at our centre.</li> <li>- Five container loads sent by the Emmaus groups.</li> <li>- 474,000kg of clothes received and redistributed.</li> <li>- Rebuilding underway of the social aid centre using the Ukraine Fund.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Group format:</b> residential community, and a house for housing families and offering a better environment to children in education.</p> <p><b>Activities:</b> Two buildings that can house 70 people and two charity shops.</p> <p><b>Impact of the war:</b> <i>“We are housing 50 people over our capacity. Some are staying in the short term, and some in the long term: displaced people and homeless people. We help displaced people in transit and people who have lost their documents: passports and support with administrative formalities. Many injured people and people with disabilities are being housed. We are trying to support them and be there for them.”</i></p>

Latvia	Lithuania
Amis 3	MPFSC - Missing persons' family support centre
<p><b>Group format:</b> Houses five people and charity shop.</p> <p><b>Activities:</b> Paying vulnerable people's healthcare costs.</p> <p><b>Ukraine:</b> Help for several Ukrainian refugees who have travelled to Latvia, set up several help points to provide food, solidarity truck with aid (food, clothing).</p> <p><b>Emmaus shop:</b> Better heating this year (very expensive before, €5K). This improvement has enabled customers to linger in the shop.</p> <p><b>Future plans:</b> Change shop's main door, and renovate the second floor in order to insulate it (lower the ceiling).</p> <p><b>October:</b> Organise a lottery for our customers. Customers are given a ticket when they buy an item priced over €30. The prize on offer was a bike in really good condition. We are doing everything we can to help needy people, and we wish to thank all those who are helping us.</p>	<p><b>Group format and activities:</b> Support for victims of human trafficking and victims of violence. Prevention work with young people, men and women, in different age brackets. Missing persons information page.</p> <p>We have been helping to support 4,000 people over the past two months.</p> <p><b>Ukraine:</b> Hosting 18 refugees. We supply baby food, and we offer financial support to the Ukrainians so that they can buy food. Human trafficking awareness raising advertising spots in different cities. Information in Ukrainian about the dangers of human trafficking.</p> <p><b>Day centre:</b> Our contract term is coming to an end, and unfortunately the council (Vilnius) does not want to renew it. We can keep a bedroom, but we will only have offices, and no centre. <i>The centre was supporting around 30 people per year, including children, and had an Emmaus shop in which the beneficiaries could volunteer and chat to customers. Moreover, social workers, psychologists, lawyers etc work there, and a large number of volunteers help the group.</i></p> <p><i>The MPFSC was set up 25 years ago, at a time when Lithuania was a major transit country for human trafficking. The group has numerous focus areas, particularly support for human trafficking victims, combating gender-based violence, and helping the families of missing children.</i></p>

### *Appendix 1: Zbigniew's opening address about the socio-political context in Poland in light of recent events*

“It is difficult to explain and grasp what is happening in a short address. It is the subject of publications, articles, conferences and discussions on the many different visions of the world. Of course, my opinions are my own, even if I try to keep abreast of the socio-political life of my country and the wider world.

The current situation is the result of a long process, just like revolutions are the result of a long process – revolutions are impossible without a revolutionary situation (Marx). We have been living through a watershed in Poland for seven years, and it is safe to say that it is a historic watershed.

Some 25 years after the fall of communism, following years of continuous economic development, we are experiencing a watershed. Following the reign of the liberal-centrist parties, the nationalist party, an extreme right-wing party, has come to power. This party won the elections with the slogan “*Poland in ruins*”! How could this happen? Poland is a tremendous economic success story; Poland has led the transformation in the countries of Eastern Europe; Poland, with a new and modern road network, new towns, new airports, new stadia, new houses, new opportunities; yet the Polish believed that the slogan “POLAND in ruins” was an accurate description of the situation! It seems irrational!

Following the fall of communism and the Berlin Wall, the first Polish government adopted a liberal political and economic programme. A few months before, the opposition to the former regime was still discussing ideas for the development of Poland, the so-called third way – the pathway between communism and capitalism. However, it was the first Minister of Finance, Professor Leszek Balcerowicz, a liberal, who became the face of the socio-economic changes. I clearly remember that on 1 January 1990, we Polish people woke to a shocking new reality.

Some 22 years ago, I took part in a meeting behind closed doors, in which Lech Wałęsa, Tadeusz Mazowiecki (the very first PM), Leszek Balcerowicz, and the Harvard professor, Jeffrey Sachs, a government economic advisor and advocate of radical economic changes and shock therapy, all took part. At the meeting, everyone recalled the initial period of transformation, and they talked about their mistakes, trying to explain them and justify their actions. However, only Balcerowicz maintained that no mistakes were made, and if he had his time again, he would change nothing.

What happened in the 1990s and subsequent years to make the Polish ultimately deny their own history?

I think that a good example is that of the closure of the state farms. A single decision, a law approved in 1992, put an end to the state farms and closed them down; in a single day, in one go, over 300,000 people, families and children, lost their jobs and income, in the name of liberal laws, in the name of unlocking the country's economic potential, creating new opportunities, etc.



What opportunities were there for people, whose lives and those of their families had for 50 years been enmeshed with the state farms, were generally in the middle of the countryside, often in isolated areas, far from decent schooling, with no profession or “useful” skills? All that was left for them to do was collect mushrooms and blueberries in the woods for three to four months a year.

And this is just one example of many.

After 25 years of radical change, a liberal, Professor Marcin Król, summarised the situation in an article which became famous, entitled “*We were stupid*”. The article is the bitter but honest admission of an exceptional man.

The fall of the Civic Platform government – the liberal-centrist party and its PM, Donald Tusk, in 2015 – and the victory of Jarosław Kaczyński and his nationalist Law and Justice party (PiS), came hot on the heels of the Civic Platform government’s decision to make school compulsory for children from the age of six, and to increase the retirement age, without any public debate.

They did not listen, when a young couple, the Elbanowskis, collected one million signatures in support of a civil motion to organise a referendum on compulsory education for children from the age of six (our constitution requires a minimum of 500,000 signatures). I remember what I thought when the media announced that the government had just thrown one million signatures in the wastepaper bin: **they will pay for that!**

In the October 2015 parliamentary elections, the Law and Justice party prevailed, without obtaining an outright majority. **Poland has been an economic success story, but the poorest people have paid the price!** Maybe the slogan of “Poland in ruins” is easier to understand if applied to the social situation in Poland.

The Law and Justice party revolution got underway immediately. Having won the parliamentary elections following the election of a conservative president (Andrzej Duda) a few months earlier in May 2015, Kaczyński decided that he was entitled to change everything, that his party was sovereign, and that there was no need to respect the opposition, or even the country’s constitution. If truth be told, they applied Putin’s concept of “**sovereign democracy**”. This is a good idea if introducing authoritarian rule...

He made the attorney general his minister of justice.

He declared war on the Constitutional Court and against the country’s constitution. He introduced “his” judges into the Constitutional Court, whose role is to check that draft bills comply with the constitution.

He waged war against other chambers: the Supreme court, the court of registration; he created new bodies, for instance, the disciplinary court, to marginalise independent judges from decision-making. It should be stated that the vast majority of judges made great efforts to protect the independence of the justice system. Unfortunately, the Constitutional Court is only answerable to the Law and Justice party and violates the constitution without any scruples.

**The government needed to have the media in its back pocket** to enable such change without major protest (there were protests, but a demonstration, even when attended by 100,000 people, is not enough). The government controls all the public media outlets; both national and regional. All the public TV and radio programmes, and even regional media outlets, including the press, are in the hands of the Law and Justice party. How was this possible? Revolutionaries and run-of-the-mill and cynical careerists simply had to be put on the Polish Media Council and on the boards of the various media companies. The CEO of the largest Polish fuel company (ORLEN) simply had to be appointed, and this company bought 600 regional newspapers a few months ago. Big personal purges were carried out. Public TV, which tends to be watched by people who are not highly educated, from rural areas and small towns, broadcasts a completely alternative reality. Even today, during the Ukraine War, the government media outlets and the Law and Order party MPs consider the EU as public enemy number one, more than Russia!

Lying, with no inhibitions or limits, is everywhere; dishonesty has become an instrument and a method for Law and Order party MPs and journalists with links to the government.

**In Poland, the State is being taken over by a political party;** this is the only true Polish party, as the other parties are regarded as working for the enemies of Poland.

Donald Tusk is presented in the public media dozens of times a day as a traitor and a servant of Brussels and Berlin. Only Law and Order voters are true Poles, the others are “*second-rate, second-class Poles*”, as Kaczynski said in public.

Revolutionary change is carried out under slogans extolling the greatness and splendour of Poland, sovereignty, independence, defending religion, traditional values, traditional gender roles, and so on. Minorities are being attacked, particularly the LGBT community, and refugees from Africa, the Middle East, and Asia, among others (although not the Ukrainians).

Consequently, the Catholic church in Poland and the clergy are heavily involved in supporting the Law and Order party.

**Because a true Pole is a Catholic!** This dual and exclusive identity has been in existence since the 18<sup>th</sup> century! Only in the past year have some bishops started to distance themselves from direct involvement in politics, albeit rather timidly. The mix of the Catholic church and politics means that social divisions run very deep, as they affect not only political involvement but also religious faith; they are cultural divisions.

The start of the revolution in Poland was shocking, and it remains so. However, it has very quickly become clear that this is not a solely Polish phenomenon. The US voted for Trump, and the UK voted for Brexit. There is Marine Le Pen in France, the Dutch have the Party for Freedom with Geert Wilders, and the Italians have Matteo Salvini. And the Hungarians elected Viktor Orban even earlier.

What are the root causes of this situation in our societies?

**Admittedly, FEAR is a major shared feature of this situation**, caused by rapid social change (the fall of the Berlin Wall, the fall of communism in Russia), economic change (economic globalisation), technological change (internet), cultural change (migration, emancipation of women and minorities). Our poor and poorly-educated planet has not benefited from the changes, but instead is a victim of them, because it does not understand them. Therefore, it seeks simple solutions and strong leaders, capable of opposing all the problems and taking care of the poor, and of showing the way.

**The second major cause of the current turmoil is found in the ideology of liberalism and big business**, which has filled the vacuum left following the demise of the bipolar world, and has used it for its own interests. It was a big scam: the residents of the state farms were deceived, our societies were deceived, the poor countries were deceived. We remember the **Indignados** movement. Never has wealth been so unfairly distributed in so little time.

It is impossible today to exhaustively cover the causes of the current situation, but – this will not come as a surprise – we have created it ourselves. In Poland, we say that we have “*put our hands in the shit*”.

Zbigniew Drazkowski

#### *Appendix 2 – Zbigniew’s address about the war in Ukraine*

“On 24 February of this year, Russia invaded Ukraine. It was a shock for the world, and particularly the West. After all, we had cooperated, we had made money, we had slapped each other’s backs, George Bush had said that Putin was his friend, and that he saw a true democrat when he looked into his eyes... Western politicians were sitting on the boards of Russian businesses. The invasion of Crimea, Donetsk and Luhansk eight years ago, despite the assurance given to Ukraine over 20 years ago, did not change the political situation.

The warnings given by the countries of Eastern Europe were played down and rejected. Westerners believed that our opinions were based on prejudices. I had already had this sort of experience, also in Emmaus.

There is no time to talk more about the war: it is not only a war against Ukraine. The Western world has finally understood – Russia has declared war on the western world. I just want to tell you about “*Russkiy mir*”, a Russian concept, the cornerstone of Russian ideology and policy for several centuries.

Has anyone heard of this concept?

It means “Russian world”, and “*mir*” also means peace. It could be said that the world will not know peace unless it becomes Russian. But it goes further than that. In the 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries, there was a powerful state in Eastern Europe - Kyivan Rus. It

was the most densely populated region of Europe at the time, and Kyiv was the largest city. Following its fall in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the Grand Duchy of Moscow was built on its ruins.

This was when the policy of Ruthenian lands collection and Ruthenian world was implemented, from the 15<sup>th</sup> century onwards. Moscow recognised that it had the right and moral obligation to join together the Slav lands. This is a cornerstone of the Russian myth. Putin has spoken of a three-part nation: Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. However, Ukraine and Belarus are treated like Russian property, and Russia despises the weakest people. Russia also despises the West because the West is weak. Russia's war with Ukraine is a war being fought for history: Russia is taking ownership of Ukraine's history. This is why we sometimes hear irrational rubbish being talked – irrational in our eyes. According to the Russian world philosophy, each patch of earth has been trodden by a Russian soldier – that's Russian world, hence the bitter struggle for influence everywhere.

Moscow's orthodoxy is the only true religion, the only Christian church – the others are the devil's churches. It does not matter that the Soviet Union was atheist and fought religion, believing it was the opium of the people. That is an unimportant historical footnote.

The concept of power – Russian autonomy, is the absolute power of the monarch: nothing has changed here, whether a Tsar or Putin himself is in charge: Putin is an absolute leader, who is not limited by the law, or by anything. “*L'État, c'est moi*” (“I am the state”) said Louis XIV of France, and Putin still believes this..

There has never been democracy in Russia and the country does not understand democracy. Russia despises democracy because it believes in strength. And it is from this strength that it draws a feeling of moral and cultural superiority.

*Russian World* is a Russian geopolitical expansion mechanism, aiming to rebuild the Russian empire.

Do you understand what it would mean for Putin and Russia to lose the war with Ukraine? Total humiliation – and that seems truly terrifying.”

Zbigniew Drazkowski