

RESIST! AGAINST WHOM AND WHY?

Debate - 29 September 4:30 p.m. – 6 p.m. – Plenary



Bertrand Badie, Kléber Arhou, Eve Minault and Fabrice Rousselot

Universal resistances

'From the struggle of Breton mayors against the State to protest against the deterioration of their retirement homes to that of an Iranian mother whose daughter has been executed, resistance is diverse and varied', began Fabrice Rousselot as he opened the conference. The discussions were guided by three episodes from an INA web series, representing three different types of resistance: that of people, that of women and finally, that of environmentalists.

The first film pointed out how resistance enables people to defend themselves against invaders, who want to dominate them, symbolically or militarily. The images show old men and women in Ukraine ready to defend themselves from the start of the Russian invasion in February 2022. This resistance enabled the Ukrainians to recapture much of the territory they had lost. But many lost their lives, sometimes in monstrous conditions. In 1940, France was also called upon to resist the German occupiers by General De Gaulle. Once

liberated, France, in turn, saw resistance groups organised against it to claim their right to independence. The film showed that this resistance continues to exist in the four corners of the globe, as in Iraqi Kurdistan in 2014.

Bertrand Badie sees an extraordinary similarity between these forms of resistance, despite their extremely varied situations: **'They show that, deep within every human being, there is an absolute free-**

MODERATOR:

Fabrice Rousselot, Editorial Director, The Conversation France

SPEAKERS:

Eve Minault, director of the web series, Résister ! Contre qui et pourquoi? produced by INA.

Kléber Arhou, Director of the Caen Memorial.

Bertrand Badie, Professor Emeritus at Sciences Po, a specialist in international relations.

dom which, combined with individual inventiveness, is capable of routing an entire army, like elderly Ukrainian women throwing balls of wool into the carburetors of Russian tanks. Then there's the pride of doing something oneself that the collective or political community to which one belongs is not capable of doing, and the idea that we would no longer be fully human if we allowed ourselves to be deprived of our rights', added the professor, who was joined by Kléber Arhou on one point: While history is too often told as the story of great leaders, the resistance, on the contrary, reveals the encounter of the individual, the anonymous person, with history.



Kléber Arhou and Eve Minault

In resistance, the most important thing is not victory or defeat, but the effect it has on transforming human mentalities, albeit quietly

Bertrand Badie

The film shows that each individual, courageously committed, is convinced that democracy is not immanent. **'It can die by force of arms, by the ballot box, but also by silence, which is a form of complicity. That's why the images show first and foremost a commitment to expressing oneself**, noted Eve Minault. The director nevertheless reminded us that we need to identify what we want to talk about and what we can talk about. To create a montage that is historically accurate without being overly influenced by your own vision of things, you also have to consider the point of showing certain images, always

bearing in mind who is filming and what political subconscious is driving this.

'Can we evaluate resistance on the basis of its success or failure?' asked Fabrice Rousselot. **'As soon as there is resistance, there is victory'**, replied Bertrand Badie, using the example of the failed Arab Spring. While teaching in Cairo at the time of the Tahrir Square revolution, he saw his students emancipate themselves from fear, prejudice and imposed traditions. **'In resistance, the most important thing is not victory or defeat, but the effect it has on transforming human mentalities, albeit quietly. A single ticket to freedom!**' he exclaimed. Added to this is the contagious dimension of freedom and courage, which is all the more potent today, with images travelling around the world in a matter of minutes.

The second episode focused on women's struggles. Having won the right to vote in many countries in the 20th century, women are gradually making societies more egalitarian. It's a struggle that must be constantly renewed. In 2022 alone, the US Supreme Court decided to give states

the right to legislate – and therefore ban – the right to abortion, just a few months before a wave of anger broke out in Iran, following the death of the young woman, Mahsa Amini. Iranian women then vociferously demanded the right to dress as they pleased. Wave after wave, movements for women's rights are part of a never-ending process. Witness the #MeToo movement, launched in 2017, calling for an end to sexist violence. Today's universal struggles echo those of yesterday.

The strength of women today lies in the fact that they are fighting not just for their rights but also against the very essence of arbitrary domination

Bertrand Badie

Once again, Bertrand Badie noted similarities between very different situations. Firstly, a feeling of humiliation linked to an awareness of centuries of hidden domination. Secondly, an objectivisation of the female cause around the right to control one's own body. *'Finally, there's a desire to impose a marker of political domination on women. In Iran, an unveiled woman is a direct challenge to Ayatollah Khamenei. The strength of women today lies in the fact that they are fighting not just for their rights but also against the very essence of arbitrary domination'*, was the analysis of the international relations specialist.



Watch the full debate on YouTube

Kléber Arhoul noted that with #MeToo, a voice was set free, sweeping all other voices into its wake. Bertrand Badie was delighted that the movement was illustrated in the film by processions of demonstrators. After all, demonstrating means making visible in the public arena a phenomenon that is intimate in nature, taking resistance to a higher level.

Resistance to government inaction on climate change is also moving up a notch. The third episode served to remind us that climate change is generating new forms of conflict, making communities more vulnerable and exacerbating inequalities. From Kenyan biologist, Vangari Muta Maathai's fight against deforestation in 1977, to Vandana Shiva's struggle in India for food sovereignty based on the principles of sustainable agriculture, preserving our resources is becoming a fundamental issue. That's why more and more citizens are occupying places of power and the media in the hope of galvanising as many people as possible, by adopting the codes of civil disobedience used in the struggles for women's rights and certain independence movements.

Kléber Arhoul expressed his disappointment that, despite the warnings issued by the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) nearly 20 years ago, no coherent global policy has been implemented. However, there are still glimmers of hope, thanks to the many initiatives around the world. Bertrand Badie noted that this is the first resistance that unites the whole of humanity, with national security taking second place to the global interest. Eve Minault remarked that the demonstrations filmed in the series reveal an admission of powerlessness. This feeling was reinforced by the shocking images of burning forests and collapsing icebergs. Bertrand Badie concluded: *'We now need to translate this growing public awareness into concrete and difficult, collective decisions'*.

ART AND CULTURE OF RESISTANCE IN UKRAINE

29 September, 4:30 p.m. – 6 p.m. – Auditorium



Ed Vulliamy and Cécile Hennion

Cécile Hennion introduced the speakers. The two artists were not physically present, but took part via video conference: one in exile in the United States, the other in Kiev. The moderator pointed out the major issues surrounding art, which, in times of war, can be both spoils of war and something to be destroyed. She emphasised the vigour of the artistic movement in Ukraine. The first question addressed was that of the role of artists, who take over from journalists who have run out of words, to describe the evils and emotions of war.

Iryna Tsilyk points out that the culture of resistance is inherent in Ukrainian culture, and that artists have always played their part in these struggles. After pointing out that the war with Russia began in 2014 – with the invasion of the Donbass – she said that her husband, who is also an artist and, like many other artists, joined the front line in 2015, is still there. With all the artists on the front line – not to mention those who died there, such as Wassyl Slipak, a singer at the Paris Opera, who died in 2016, and

We are losing our greatest talents

Iryna Tsilyk

Volodymyr Vakoulenko, who was killed in 2022 – Ukrainian culture has come to a standstill, she asserted. *'We are losing our greatest talents. Survivors feel an even greater responsibility to collect testimonies and disseminate them throughout the world,'* she said, expressing her hope that this conference would allow the creation of bridges between people.

MODERATOR:

Cécile Hennion, Senior reporter for the newspaper, 'Le Monde'

SPEAKERS:

Lesia Khomenko, Ukrainian artist

Iryna Tsilyk, Ukrainian artist

Ed Vulliamy, British journalist and writer.