

DEFEATISM AND ANTIMILITARISM



**ONLY POSSIBLE CLASS
RESPONSE TO THE WAR IN
UKRAINE**

We present here our translation of the text “Defeatism and antimilitarism: Only possible class response to the war in Ukraine” written by “Centro di documentazione contro la guerra” originally published in June 2023 in Italian on their website:

<https://centrodidocumentazionecontrolaguerra.noblogs.org/files/2023/06/Disfattismo-e-antimilitarismo.pdf>

We consider this text to be one of the clearest expressions of the revolutionary defeatism in the current anti-war movement. We would like to especially underline several very strong points, that the comrades are developing in this text:

- The insistence on the necessity to organize practical actions on the “home front” of “our own” camp, like blocking the deliveries of the military material to the front.*
- The insistence on an uncompromising stance opposing both sides of the inter-imperialist war in Ukraine and defending the third camp of revolutionary defeatism even against the pacifist calls of the social-democratic forces.*
- The insistence on the fact that “War in Ukraine” is not just one of many wars, but has a central place in the forming global military confrontation between two opposing blocks. The recently unfolding war in the Middle East, centered on the relentless slaughter of the proletarians in “Gaza” seems to becoming the second such a place.*

Class War ★ November 2023

We have been arguing this since Feb. 24, 2022, regarding the ongoing war on the Ukrainian plains it is necessary to resolutely take side without wavering or sophistical distinctions: Against Russian imperialism, against U.S./Europe/NATO imperialism, against Ukrainian capitalism. With Ukrainian and Russian proletarians, against the prospect of inter-capitalist, world war, opened with the “proxy” war in Ukraine, against the barbarism of the present.

AGAINST RUSSIAN IMPERIALISM

Russia bears the “main responsibility” for the outbreak of the war, at some point in the “confrontation-competition” with the U.S./Europe – and on Ukrainian territory, at least since 2014 after Maidan Square, with the local pro-Western bourgeois sector – it chose to directly move to war operations.

Russia, not only since Feb. 24, 2022, has been playing a reactionary role against its own as well as the international proletariat, first and foremost in the former Soviet and Central Asian area. One need only to recall the repressive intervention of its army against the struggling proletariat in Kazakhstan in early 2022.

Russia is a thoroughly capitalist country and an imperialist power, ruled by “right-wing” forces, intimately linked to the ultra-backward Orthodox patriarchy in Moscow and siding with the worst assortment of international reaction, competing with and opposing the Western bloc led by the U.S.¹ The political and military management of this opposition to the Western “bloc” is structurally reactionary and anti-proletarian, without any trace of any “objective anti-imperialism”².

¹ To the “nostalgic,” the forgetful and the seekers of improbable “objective” anti-imperialism of the Putin & co. clique, let us remind you that in Russia there is a very heavy capitalist exploitation of wage labor, a continuous impoverishment contrasted with a swirling increase in wealth for a very small sector of the population. The country lacks the slightest rules of political and trade union agility for the proletariat, police repression against the oppressed is the norm of daily life. Russia’s ruling class, state apparatuses, and Putin & co.’s political organizations are pervaded by positions and sentiments, as they used to say, “big Russian chauvinists,” which the decades-long years of Stalinism and Khrushchevism have transmitted to this day. The so-called “Communist” Party of Russia currently is the second largest party in the Duma, after Putin’s United Russia, also supports the reactionary war in Ukraine and calls for persecution of opponents to the war. If that were not enough, the Russians, jointly with the U.S., endorse Turkish military attacks on the Kurds in Rojava and Assad and Erdogan’s ruthless repression of the Kurds and Syrian refugees massed in tent camps on the borders between the two countries.

² It should not be forgotten that Russian capitalism, until now, has done great business with Western capitalisms, but that a part of its bourgeoisie still continues to do so, despite sanctions, by sharing in the excess

The Russian proletariat's only function is to act as "cannon fodder" for this war; we here must support its initiatives of defeatism and of rupture with its own imperialism, its attempts to oppose the ongoing conflict.

AGAINST THE IMPERIALIST BLOC U.S./EUROPE/NATO

The U.S. and with varying degrees of divergent interests, the various Western allies (Europeans in a first place) behind them and NATO, present themselves as the advocates of freedom and democracy, defending Ukraine's right to exist, well assisted by the moves of Putin, now presented with the role of "enemy number 1"³.

In reality, "U.S. and friends" have long been engaged in deep economic, political and military penetration into this sort of "backyard" of the defunct Soviet state capitalism that was Eastern Europe⁴. Enlargement that has always been experienced by Russian capitalism as an "encirclement," gradually becoming more suffocating and threatening, and to which it had already responded also militarily with the interventions in Georgia (2008) and Crimea (2014); with support for the pro-Russian separatists in the Donbas (2014); with a renewed military presence in "hot" areas such as Syria, Libya, and the Sahel; as well as by eroding the Western monopoly of arms sales among NATO allies by placing its own S-400 missiles in Turkey⁵.

profits generated by futures and sanctions enforcement measures on energy commodities (the price of which had been rising since before the war in Ukraine).

³ It is the "remake" of the film already seen with the two war expeditions in Iraq (1990-1991 and 2003-2011); with the aggression against Serbia (1999); with the war, the 20-year occupation and abandonment of Afghanistan (2001-2021); with the unsuccessful "Restore Hope" military expedition in Somalia (2003); with the dethronement of Gaddafi in Libya (2011);... the perennial "tragicomedy", not always "produced" by the UN, in any case long since reduced to a cover-up forum for its own nefarious deeds, to be used or discarded according to convenience, of the "good guys" (!!) who, dispensing bombs left and right, announce the good news of liberation from the enemy of the moment. Lesson, let it be said incidentally, taken up by Russia, which from the U.S. "and friends" has learned not to call wars by their own name, but to use oxymorons such as "humanitarian war," so it immediately christened Russia's invasion with a "neutral" name such as: "special military operation."

⁴ NATO memberships, by date: 1949 Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Great Britain, U.S.; 1952 Greece, Turkey; 1955 Germany; 1982 Spain; 1999 Czechia, Hungary, Poland; 2004 Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia; 2009 Albania, Croatia; 2017 Montenegro; 2020 North Macedonia; 2022 Sweden and Finland applied for membership (by signing an agreement with Turkey to hand over Kurds they had taken as refugees: Trilateral Memorandum, 28-6-2022, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_197251.htm); pending remain the accession of Georgia and, of course, Ukraine.

⁵ The US, for this purchase, "sanctioned" Turkey by excluding it from the already planned supply of F35 fighter jets. Roberto Bongiorno, Turkey buys Russian missiles, US retaliation: halt to F-35 supply, *Il Sole 24 Ore*, 3-4-

The U.S., European and NATO policy of “encirclement” of Russia,⁶ and the Russian responses to it, are both reactionary, there is not one that is more “severe” than the other, they should all be opposed, starting with that of “our” Italian imperialism.

AGAINST UKRAINIAN CAPITALISM

The role of “attacked,” “invaded,” and/or “aggressor,” “invader,” does not in itself allow one to define the class nature of a state’s politics. It is its mode of production, its politics and its choices that will show it to us.

The Zelensky regime is radically antiproletarian. Like its predecessors, anti or pro-Russian, it has safeguarded the interests of the local bourgeoisie, fostered the penetration of Western finance and industry into the country, and contributed to the increased exploitation of the Ukrainian proletariat. Proletariat increasingly impoverished and forced in large numbers to emigrate; in its female component to make up as caregivers, underpaid and off the books, for the destruction of welfare in the West; in its male component to supply cheap labor to European construction sites.

By siding with the Western bloc, demanding entry into the EU and NATO, Ukraine ended up being the proverbial pot of earthenware between the two opposing iron blocs. The Ukrainian proletariat, all Ukrainians, were dragged into fighting a “proxy war”, dying on the front lines or under bombing not for the freedom of Ukraine, but for the clash of economic and political interests between the two blocs.

Not only that, the Zelensky regime, with the endorsement of Western governments, is using the war to suppress freedoms and labor-political rights of the workers to the maximum, to prosecute with “summary” trials the oppositions (under the guise of “collusion” with the Russian enemy)⁷.

2019, <https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/la-turchia-compra-missili-russi-ritorsione-usa-alt-forniture-f-35--ABaX1HkB> [in Italian].

⁶ Which cannot be fully understood in its concrete dynamics unless we also consider its contradictory elements, such as the non-complete accession of Germany and France, as well as the prolongation of the “confrontation-competition” on a global scale launched by the Biden administration against China.

⁷ News in Italian from time to time on the: Telegram Channel <https://t.me/matrioskainfo>; or Scaglione Fulvio, Lights and Shadows of the Zelenskyy Leader, in Limes No. 10/2022 “All Another World.”

From the beginning of the war Zelensky got rid of all “naïve” forms of self-organization of resistance to the Russian invader, dismembering them and framing them within the ranks of the state military forces, dispersing the opponents and supporters of the “resistance to fight Russian imperialism” into different departments and battlefronts.

The Ukrainian proletariat has nothing to gain from participating in this war.

We here must support their, now undoubtedly limited, attempts at defeatism and desertion, at refusing subordination to the Holy Union to drive out the invader.

AGAINST THE PROSPECT OF GLOBAL INTER-CAPITALIST WAR, WORLD WAR OPENED WITH THE “PROXY” WAR IN UKRAINE

The war in Ukraine is not a politically and geographically delimited conflict; on the contrary, it is a product of the “new world disorder” and marks the opening of the possibility that the current general crisis of capitalism will have as its epilogue a global inter-capitalist conflict, a World War III.

Inter-capitalist balances have long been undergoing a centrifugal pull, generated by the course of its general crisis, which has now irreversibly undermined the old order born from the Yalta Accords in 1945, hinged on the U.S. as the hub of the entire global economy and as the leading economic, political, and military power.

A direct competitor, a pretender to the throne as humanity’s No. 1 enemy, with the political, economic and military power that was the U.S. is yet to be seen. But from Europe all the way to the farthest East passing through Africa, U.S. primacy is increasingly being resented and increasingly being questioned. The “multipolarity” is the current form by which the reactionary inter-capitalist struggle is expressed.

With the disastrous retreat from Afghanistan, the end of U.S. dominance, which they do not want to give up peacefully, has been established, and the rupture of the pre-existing system of equilibrium is no longer repairable. The war in Ukraine is the first concrete expression of this process⁸.

⁸ On the topic of the “new world disorder” and the path to World War III: meeting on 11-05-2022 The New World Disorder. The war that is there and the war to come, with Sandro Moiso [audio in Italian] (war in Ukraine); meeting on 3-3-2023 Has the next World War come to the countdown? One year after the beginning

A PROCESS TOWARD THE GLOBAL WAR

A process, indeed, which therefore has its accelerations and counter-trends, and of which we are certainly not yet in a position to determine the “witching zero hour” but whose manifestation must be understood.

If one does not want to do so, if one wants to claim that there is “one of many wars” in Ukraine, one only has to accept the fairy tale, that NATO and Italy itself are not involved in the ongoing war in Ukraine, that supplying weapons of all kinds and in quantities never seen in the last fifty years is not participating in the war, that sending drones from Sigonella [an Italian Air Force base in Sicily, translator’s note] to the Black Sea is not collaboration in the war. But if we accept this, then we can also hold true that the Russian invasion of Ukraine is just “a special military operation” against fascism and Nazism, that the war will never leave the borders of the Ukrainian plains.

Today we do not know how long it may be until a World War III, but we cannot trust that this will not occur because war production is far less than it was in World War II (true fact), but war does not break out upon reaching either an absolute x amount of war material or a y percentage of war production in total production.

Much less can we hope that the process will be blocked by economic interests, that multinational corporations will prevent the slide into eventual global conflict so as not to lose their profits, that we are faced with a little theater whose strings are pulled by the war industry and that the latter can interrupt the spiral toward global war at will.

Nor can it be forgotten that with “Strategic Conception 2022” NATO has identified Russia and China as the two enemies to be defeated, reiterating particularly for the latter, the themes of “Democrat” Biden’s election program. The war with Russia is ongoing in Ukraine, the possible war with China is heralded by the Taiwan issue, pulled out of the hat after more than fifty years of hibernation⁹.

of the conflict in Ukraine, we open a discussion to reason about the war advancing in the “new world disorder.” With Sandro Moiso and Viscount Grisi [audio in Italian].

⁹ NATO 2022: Strategic Concept. https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2022/6/pdf/290622-strategic-concept.pdf.

Meanwhile, already now NATO forces on the eastern front have quadrupled in size to 40,000 soldiers, and the rapid response force has been increased from 40,000 to 300,000, and the U.S. military presence in Europe has risen from 80,000 to 100,000 soldiers¹⁰.

There are those who argue that this is just vulgar propaganda; we think instead that these form the backbone line on which the prospect of global war is being shaped and that the war in Ukraine is its first circuit. Therefore, even more so, the only possible position with respect to the ongoing war can only be defeatism. Otherwise, willingly or unwillingly, one either stands by, or sides with one of the war fronts, helping to reinforce the premises of the framing of the proletariat in the future world war.

THE NUCLEAR DANGER AND THE WAR IN UKRAINE

More and more “signs” are emerging from the current war that we cannot rule out the possibility that the barbarity of war waged by capitalism will slide into nuclear war as well. In order to deny it, because of the horror inherent in the thing itself, many cling to the idea that the international bourgeoisie would not be willing to take the risk of the elimination of the human species, of nuclear holocaust. That is to say, staying with the main atomic device holders, should we trust the Biden, Putin, Sunak, Macron, Netanyahu or even the Xi Jinping, Modi?

But already NATO’s nuclear deterrence strategy alone, is conceived as a possible response option, which the adversary must perceive as powerful, but whose actual scope it must not be able to understand. It contains in itself an element of chance, an implicit indeterminacy of the limit beyond which one cannot go, which is not fixed, but variable left to the situation. Add to this, then, that with the “Strategic Concept 2010,” NATO has eliminated the U.S. monopoly of nuclear response, also involving some other countries in the alliance, including Italy, which hold atomic weapons and the launchers to launch them. So, there is no more this exclusive monopoly.

From Russia and the U.S. we increasingly hear the nuclear danger being evoked as a possible result of escalation of retaliation related to the war in Ukraine, undoubtedly much of this claim may be propaganda; but since the time of the

¹⁰ ISPI, A year of war in Ukraine: 12 charts to understand how the world has changed, 20-2-2023, <https://www.ispionline.it/it/pubblicazione/un-anno-di-guerra-in-ucraina-12-grafici-per-capire-come-e-cambiato-il-mondo-116428> [in Italian].

first Western invasion of Iraq (1990) the use of tactical nuclear missiles, which should allow nuclear power to be kept at an “acceptable” (sic!, for whom?) level, is increasingly being “cleared” and presented as a possibility in the making¹¹.

Today we do not know if and when nuclear devices will be used, but we know they could be! Capitalism has achieved for the first time in history the technical capacity to destroy the entire planet with nuclear warfare; it is placing an ultimatum not only on the proletariat, but on all humanity: the survival of the human species is closely linked to the elimination of capitalism as a (a)social system. One more argument for defeatism against all policies of war, to be conducted jointly with the Ukrainian and Russian proletarians, against the barbarism of such a present.

THE HABITUATION TO WAR

Given the above premises, it must be admitted that more than a year after the start of the war in Ukraine, in Italy, but also in the other countries of the U.S. bloc, Europe, NATO, even in those like France, which have more social conflict than Italy, there has not been the development of a mass mobilization against the war, let alone a stable, lasting, active movement.

We cannot explain the overall trade unionist and political backwardness of the proletariat by a single cause, but remaining in the specific field of war, we can say that it is partly attributable to a long process of “habitation” to war itself, to which the masses in Western countries have been “trained” through the nearly 30-year management of the “permanent war” waged in the peripheries, which began with the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan.

War has always been made to live as “distant,” a kind of evening news video game listened to distractedly during dinner, absolutely anesthetized by the materiality of physical destruction and death, of the horror inherent in the barbarity of war, in the operations of “our” military. The small number of Western casualties, the absence of a daily media ritual of coffins returning from war wrapped in the national flag, contributed to the “credibility” of the

¹¹ By way of example only: Royer Jean-Marc, Vers l’emploi de l’arme nucléaire en Europe ? Carnets de Guerre #4, Lundi Matin, 3-10-2022, <https://lundi.am/Vers-l-emploi-de-l-arme-nucleaire-en-Europe> [in French]; Fabio Mini, Europe at War, PaperFirst, 2023; Mazzeo Antonio, Starting today in European skies NATO nuclear warfare air exercises, Foreign Pages, 17-10-2022, <https://pagineesteri.it/2022/10/17/primopiano/da-oggi-nei-cieli-europei-esercitazioni-aeree-della-nato-di-guerra-nucleare/> [in Italian]; Mussetti Mirko, Why a Russian missile became Ukrainian, Limes, no. 12, December 2022.

deception that... the war was not there and that Italian imperialism was not participating in it, while the Italian armed forces are engaged in dozens of theaters, starting with Kosovo, Bosnia, Iraq, Lebanon, etc.

Language too has been bent to the needs of regime propaganda, with the flood of oxymorons and definitions, often invented by rulers of the institutional “left,” such as former British Prime Minister Tony Blair or the oft-times French minister (with both the left and the right) Bernard Kouchner, such as “humanitarian war,” “peace mission,” “police operation against terrorism,” ..., aimed at making the word “war” disappear, with the ready help of the media all, on this unanimously “embedded” without the need for the stick or the carrot.

The war is thus made to “disappear,” and no one now hardly seems to notice the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, while everyone continues with the usual trance of daily life punctuated by work, study, vacations, turning their heads the other way.

THE WAR IN UKRAINE IS NOT ONE OF “MANY” WARS

Even in the camp of what used to be called the “extra-parliamentary left” and in the ranks of grassroots unionism the habituation has taken root, since February 24, 2022, everyone has declared themselves against the war and there have been more initiatives, but it has been one among many things for which one “must” mobilize, a “war like any other.” Indeed, we see conferences, coalitions, etc., addressing numerous issues of capitalist militarism: from the role of ENI, to military serfdom, from the war industry to the presence of the military in schools, and so on, but without taking sides and intervening preemptively on the war in Ukraine, without continuously linking these issues to the ongoing conflict.

Thus a “curious” paradox is realized, Italy is in fact at war (providing weapons, training and bases for activities related to war operations), but anti-militarist intervention focuses on other issues, perhaps even calling for Italy’s exit from NATO... while we are engaged in the conflict together with NATO¹².

Let’s take just one example to try to make our point by May 1 in 2023 (not saying 2022!) one year after the start of the war and Italy’s participation in it should have been at least on the national level a deadline for coordination against the

¹² Of course, these are all issues that need to be addressed today, they should not be put aside, but they can only be subordinated to the war that is there, even if it does not seem like it.

conflict in Ukraine (wishful thinking!). Instead at the political and trade union level each did their own initiative separately.

Of course everyone has put the denunciation of the war at the end of their communiqués, but it is a matter of “ritualism,” because they wearily continue with the usual grind, repeating like a mantra always the same things, the claims and slogans that have been hurled against militarism for years, as if the Ukraine conflict did not represent a turning point in the rupture of the balance between states and in the evolution of the general crisis of capitalism and they did not have to come to terms with the novelty of the situation, of the process toward global war that has opened.

This *modus operandi* has also resulted in a failure to provide solidarity and support for the (undoubtedly a minority) Russian, Belarusian and Ukrainian forces opposed to the war. With few exceptions, even the mere popularization of the existence of phenomena of opposition to the war, however pacifist and “inconsistent” from the point of view of class struggle they might have been, was mostly a monopoly of the regime media, which however reported, only some of what was happening in Russia. It should be remembered that “democratic” Europe does not grant political asylum to Ukrainians and Russians who refuse to fight in Ukraine¹³.

We know very well that political problems are not solved on the basis of one’s own wishes and wills, but in this situation the effort, political and organizational, must be directed toward regrouping and coordinating those who oppose the war in Ukraine, to try to succeed in stabilizing permanent forms of opposition to the war, first and foremost to the Italian government’s bellicose policy (supported by the institutional opposition). And a class struggle based anti-militarism can only be defeatist against all contenders in the war in Ukraine.

¹³ Alessandra Fabbretti, From Russian objectors appeal: “EU gives asylum to those who say ‘no’ to war,” *Dire*, 12/14/2022, <https://www.dire.it/14-12-2022/848939-dagli-obiettori-russi-lappello-lue-dia-lasilo-a-chi-dice-no-alla-guerra/> [in Italian]. “In Ukraine, there are about 5,000 young Ukrainians who have declared themselves conscientious objectors and would like to perform civilian service as an alternative to service in arms, but the martial law in place denies them this. Some of them are already facing criminal proceedings. According to the NGO Un Ponte per, there are 971 people indicted for choosing not to enlist and fight, based on Article 336 of the Ukrainian Criminal Code, which regulates military conscription.” from: *Protecting Defectors*, *Atlas Wars*, 12/27/2022. The article also provides news about Russian and Belorussian defectors. <https://www.atlanteguerre.it/proteggere-i-disertori/> [in Italian]. With all due respect for those who risk their lives, however, we must say that in a country at war to claim conscientious objection under the illusion that it can be accommodated means a total misunderstanding of the mechanisms and purposes of capitalist militarism.

OPPOSING THE INTERVENTIONISM OF ITALIAN IMPERIALISM

The Meloni government, in full agreement with its Draghi predecessor, is actively participating in the Ukrainian conflict, continuing to allocate billions of euros in funding, send weapons and instructors, and support NATO. One of her goals is also to have Italian industries and banks participate as protagonists in the grand scramble of the “reconstruction of Ukraine.” In addition, Meloni and her “Brother of Italy” defense minister Crosetto plan to increase the military spending by billions more, so as not to lose ground in the rearmament race to France, Germany and other competing powers; and to hand contracts to Leonardo, Fincantieri and the hundreds of industries linked to the national “military-industrial complex.”

This warmongering policy costs and will always cost more; it weighs on the shoulders of the workers and produces poverty; it will lead to “giving one’s life for the homeland,” the logical landing place of the government’s God Family Homeland; it increasingly complicates, by turning them into war missions, the conduct of Italian “peace missions” in the most dangerous areas of the Euro-Mediterranean theater (Bosnia, Iraq, Lebanon), which is the vital zone of influence of Italo-imperialism and is inextricably linked to the events of the Ukrainian war.

“ANTI-MILITARISM,” “INTERNATIONALISM,” OR... PARTICIPATION IN THE WAR IN UKRAINE?

If the first problem we have is that of broadening opposition to the war by first breaking the mechanism of habituation, the second is the “kind” of positions that are circulating.

In the antiwar protests there are both calls for peace based on a “humanitarian, moral” rejection of war, and positions that nominally call for peace but simultaneously support in substance participation in the war by endorsing the delivery of arms to Ukraine. The entire European and international “institutional” left, which has long found in NATO “a protective umbrella”¹⁴,

¹⁴ An expression coined in 1976 by Enrico Berlinguer, secretary of the PCI, in the process of the party’s shift from political subordination to Russian state capitalism to subordination to Italian and Western liberal capitalism.

whether in government or opposition, and the trade unionist world has irreversibly aligned itself on the latter, de facto warmongering position.

In this way in the “name of peace” the enlargement of war is prepared and the proletariat is framed by the logic of war, its necessity, its inevitability, to defend freedom and democracy. In this way the “frontlist” tradition that sent the proletariat to slaughter in the first two world wars is resumed and adapted to “modernity,” it is again reaffirmed that a prospect of social emancipation, of “communism” is unthinkable, nonviable.

We have to unfortunately note that a number of anarchist and socialist forces, especially from the Slavic area, have ended up converging on this kind of pro-war approach, choosing to participate and fight in the war in Ukraine against the Russians. They came to the choice of “armed resistance” either by supporting Ukraine’s right to defense and self-determination or by arguing that the main enemy to be beaten is Russian “imperialism,” whose defeat on the ground would bring down the main reactionary force. Many of them think that by participating in war operations they will have greater credibility among the Ukrainian population and a chance to play a role in the postwar period.

All supporters of these theses who participate in the fighting must do so embedded in the various Ukrainian military and logistical forces – today there is no independent military structure of the “armed resistance” – and scrolling through the news published by these forces, several of them have fallen in battle.

We do not intend to go into the point-by-point merits of these positions here; those who are interested can read a very interesting paper by a group of anarchists from the Czech Republic, “Anarchist Antimilitarism and Myths about the War in Ukraine.”¹⁵ We only emphasize that these positions contribute to the framing of the proletariat in the war fronts, to depriving it of any attempt at class autonomy, and are somewhat mirroring of those who believe that Russia should be supported (sic!), because this would weaken Western imperialism, especially U.S. (sic!). Those who want to know them can find some indications in this note¹⁶.

¹⁵ <https://www.autistici.org/tridnivalka/antimilitarismus-anarchist-antimilitarism-and-myths-about-the-war-in-ukraine/>

¹⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/sinistraperlucraina>, <https://t.me/matrioskainfo>, <https://t.me/quisiamainguerra> [in Italian], <https://lundi.am/UKRAINE-ces-anarchistes-s-organisent-face-a-la-guerre> [in French].

We think, on the contrary, that a key political task today in fighting the war in Ukraine is to block Western arms supplies, thus counteracting the policy of continuation and widening of the war, the increasing danger of sliding further and further into a global inter-capitalist conflict. Beware this claim must be closely linked to defeatism against all contenders in the conflict, because this claim is also being advanced by forces that support the Russians in the conflict and masquerade it as a break with the policy of the Italian government!

We would like to reiterate that defeatism is neither an abstract claim nor a goal that can be claimed only in the midst of a war, as was concretely the case in Russia in 1917. The defeatist perspective, the class autonomy of the proletariat from the war fronts, must be reconstructed from today, agitated, explained, made comprehensible. The proletariat, the broader masses, have been “trained” for more than a century in the politics of war participation, frontism, national defense.

The rupture of the sacred union of war or the illusion of military but not political alliance, must be prepared beforehand.

In conclusion, for us today the broadest effort is needed to impose class opposition to the war in Ukraine at the center of the political struggle, to affirm proletarian internationalism against any nationalism, to build a network of international relations with all anti-war forces, particularly Russian and Ukrainian, to stir among workers and youngsters strikes, demonstrations and actions to demand an immediate halt to the war actions, to force Russia to renounce the invasion, Ukraine to stop conducting the “proxy war” and the U.S., European, NATO bloc to stop supplying weapons and prolonging the conflict, with the aim of ending the massacre of Russian and Ukrainian proletarians and youth and to oppose the warmongering policy of the Italian state.

It is necessary to multiply initiatives, from conferences to demonstrations, for the affirmation of a defeatist position and for the understanding of how in current events the possibility of a Third World War has opened up. Social and labor struggles must also be linked to this horizon of war and catastrophe that threatens the existence of the human species itself.

Milan, 5-6-2023

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