

**AGAINST
CAPITALIST
WARS**



**AGAINST
CAPITALIST
PEACE**

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AGAINST THE WAR, CLASS WAR!

In Ukraine, the war triggered by the invasion of the country by the Russian army is still raging. Some want to present this war as the glorious resistance of all people of Ukraine against Russian fascism, others as Russia's legitimate response to NATO imperialism.

The truth is that in war it is always the same people who die; those who are too poor to escape, who don't have the money or the connections to escape forced enlistment, forced today to go and line the trenches to defend the interests of yesterday's exploiters, who will exploit them again tomorrow. In short, proletarians – people like you and I who have no other choice in life than to go every day to sell their time and their body to enrich the bosses of all countries. The war rages beyond the borders, those who do not die under the bombs, will suffer the famine caused by the sanctions and the economic repercussions, even thousands of kilometers from the front line.

While part of the Russian state apparatus seems determined to continue the war regardless of the loss of life, the capitalists in power in Ukraine have declared martial law. Those who help themselves in the shops, for food or to supplement the basic necessities of life are severely punished, humiliated, sometimes executed. Those who are still working under the shelling see their wages reduced to nothing in the name of patriotic effort. The Russian capitalists send Russian, Belarusian, Ossetian or Chechen soldiers to die and kill for their profits. Some of the soldiers are conscripts, forcibly enlisted and sent to fight.

In the face of this situation demonstrations have been held in great quantity

and frequency throughout Russia. Belarusian railway workers have sabotaged railway tracks to prevent logistical supplies to the front lines. Workers at the airport in Pisa, Italy, refused to load weapons for Ukraine. Despite the fierce repression, proletarians are rising up against this war which is not theirs.

The Western countries and those of NATO, which after having plundered, invaded, and bombed nearly the whole world in the name of progress and then of democracy, can again pass themselves off as the side of peace and reason.

The Russian state, lagging behind the capitalist economy, is embarking on a war of expansion: a dramatic situation for those who perish beneath the bombardment, but an opportunity for the capitalists! A reorganization of the world energy market is now necessary against the backdrop of a green economy. A forced but welcome plan for European and North American capitalists, since the potential investments and profits are colossal.

This reorganization will go far beyond the energy question, the blocs are being reorganized, the appeal to the nation or to sovereignty is no more than a pretext for the necessary renewal of competition between states threatened by recession, and more importantly between their workers.

The nationalist ideological veneer seeks to galvanize the masses to work even harder and for less pay in order to support the war effort and to make the workers forget that their interests are the same as those on the other side of the trenches.

The Ukrainian migrants are purportedly parceled out hospitably by country and according to their qualifications. In reality, it is a Red Cross tent that will be their waiting area before being transferred into another mode of exploitation.

“We are at war”, it is with this phrase that Macron opened the COVID episode before raising Resilience as the watchword for the nation. In line with

the militaristic discourse produced by States around the world since the beginning of the pandemic, to make us accept another tightening of the belt. Here, like everywhere else, prices are SKYROCKETING! This hike in prices, already well underway before the beginning of the conflict, finds a convenient justification in the confrontation taking place in Ukraine. For those who lead us, we should turn down the thermostat, reduce our consumption of this or that, and continue to work hard while paying two euros a liter for gasoline!

Let's not forget that war between states is the capitalist peace by other means. We do not reclaim peace, which is dear only to democrats because it enables accumulation. Against the horror of this society where everything is based on profit, we want class war!

Against the deadly noise of the bombs, and the media brouhaha that seeks to lead us to the ballot box, let's sharpen our knives, let's take to the streets, the strike, the blockades: let's go on the offensive against exploitation!

A\$AP Revolution

NO TO WAR, KILLING, AND AUTHORITY

War, all kinds of wars, religious and national wars, wars between states and global corporations are all against oppressed people, it attacks their living means, it attacks their will and ability, in order to subjugate them to the will of oppressors, to the will of the authorities, the capitalists.

We are the oppressed, wherever we are, continuously within our social activities, face the various wars of our class enemies, such as political, military, media, ideological and poverty wars.

Unemployment and wage cuts, the war of homelessness and the high price of daily life, the war of sexism, chauvinism, racism and fascism, the wars against the world populations, forced displacements and discrimination and rejection of refugees. Our life is a permanent and a total war.

Russia's war and attack on Ukraine is not a new war, in our opinion, this war is a continuation of the previous wars; the war and genocide of indigenous Americans, Australians, New Zealanders, Canadians, Africans... the war between Iran-Iraq, the invasion of Kuwait, Iraq and Afghanistan, and the conflicts in Syria, Libya, Somalia, etc. like in previous wars, the objective is to control and maintain the contradictions between work and capital, to expand and provide markets for the commodity needs, for experimentations and to develop new weapons, bombs and other military equipment.

However, it is not clear what the outcome of this war would be and where else it will reach; whether it reaches the point of using atomic weapons,

produces more genocides, destroying cities and countries, or not. But what is clear to us is the outcome of the war, as in previous wars, no matter how it ends, it always produces losses of workers and oppressed people on both sides, whether in terms of casualties, in term of social destructions, in terms of creating dissensions and reinforcing the spirit of nationalism and racism, or in terms of destroying unity, cooperation and class solidarity between the workers of both sides, it will always end up harming the oppressed of the world. It will raise the price of supplies by raising the price of oil, Diesel and gas. The consequences of the war, will produce nationalism and racism between the Ukrainians and the Russians.

We know that all kinds of wars are generated by the capitalist system, so we stand against the system itself and the very foundation of the state, we stand against all state agencies, corporations and banks, and we do not support any side of war. At the same time, we express our sympathy and support for the victims of war, for the workers, for the oppressed people of both countries, for our anarchist friends, and libertarians of Ukraine and Russia. Also, from lessons drawn from our experience, we know that we can only end the wars through unity, co-operation, desertion from the battle fronts and by turning our weapons towards the palaces of the rulers, against the interests and sovereignty of the war creators.

No to war, killing, and authority

Yes to the support and struggle of the oppressed revolutionaries against the class domination.

Our war against the rulers and their capitalist corporations is a global social war.

Kurdish-speaking Anarchist Forum

February 25, 2022

**DEMONSTRATIONS
AGAINST
THE MOBILISATION –
GREAT!
GETTING RID
OF CAPITALISM THAT
DEMANDS OUR BLOOD –
EVEN BETTER!**

In an address to the nation from Moscow on Wednesday 21 September, Vladimir Putin announced a partial mobilisation of 300,000 reservists, with a view to launching a new offensive on Ukraine, which first began on 24 February.

This means the war has just reached a new, higher level. The mobilisation of the population is a very serious issue indeed. It means a situation that

has not been seen in Europe for a long time, a war between two European countries. And now, the population will have to be made to accept this decree.

Half a million Russians had already left the country since the invasion of Ukraine on 24 February. Now, the phenomenon has seen an increase since Wednesday's announcement. The sites of airline companies were stormed following Putin's speech. Queues also formed at the border posts with Georgia and Finland overnight. Naturally, this exodus only consists of Russians who have enough money to flee in the first place.

Conscription is also the order of the day in Ukraine. As one Oleksiy told a journalist from Slate, "some people are saying that the government will use this app [Diia, a government app that digitally centralises personal administrative documents] for a massive mobilisation, and then to locate the conscripts precisely and immediately... so no chance of escaping conscription then." Since 24 February, the first and harshest of these restrictions was imposed: from then on, Ukrainian men between the ages of 18 and 60 were no longer allowed to leave the territory. According to the repressive plan, conscription became a new form of punishment: instead of a fine or a prison sentence, those who didn't respect the law were forced instead to go to the recruitment centre. In Russia too, the government now offers prisoners freedom after the war if they accept to sign up to the battalions.

In Russia, Street Demonstrations are a new Fact of Life

Across Russia, the announcement of the mobilisation was met with spontaneous demonstrations throughout the day in 39 cities, notably including Moscow, Saint Petersburg and Yekaterinburg, and at least 1,332 people were arrested on Wednesday. It was one of the most important protests in the country since those that followed the announcement of the offensive on Ukraine.

Protesters chanted "No war!" and "No mobilisation!". In some police ser-

vices, the “Fortress Plan” was put into action to protect police buildings. But the demonstrations have not stopped, and between 24 February and 21 September, arrests have totalled 16,500.

Russians arrested during the demonstrations against the partial mobilisation have now had conscription orders imposed on them during their detention, according to the human rights defence group OVD-Info. In Moscow, a protester was informed that he faced ten years in prison if he refused. According to OVD-Info, at least 1,310 protesters were arrested yesterday (21 September) in Moscow alone. Despite the extreme difficulty of protesting under this regime of terror, demonstrations have taken place all over. “Everyone is scared. I’m for peace and I don’t want to have to shoot. But it’s very dangerous to go out at the moment, otherwise there would have been many more people,” a protester explained in Saint Petersburg.

And now, will we see a reaction by workers, and the population as a whole?

The ruling class fosters no illusions. Russian deserters have been refused by some countries. Jan Lipavský, the Czech minister of Foreign Affairs, declared in a communiqué obtained by the AFP, “I understand that Russians are fleeing from ever more desperate decisions by Putin. But those running because they don't want to fulfil a duty imposed by their own government, they don't meet the criteria for a humanitarian visa.” Finland is currently the only EU member state bordering Russia that is allowing Russian citizens to pass through, even if they have Schengen visas. The imperialist ruling classes may clash in war, but when it comes to reactions against the war and refusals to become their cannon fodder, they are united in refusing to accept those who “don't want to fulfil their [patriotic] duty imposed by their own government.”

Obviously, war is the way of life for a ruling class in crisis. If the populations no longer march to offer their blood, imperialism goes bankrupt. Today as yesterday, the sacrifice of the populations is the inevitable result

of this barbaric way of life. The only force capable of squaring up to the ruling class is the working class, starting with a mass strike. It is only through their struggle that the murderous arms of the rival imperialisms can be paralysed.

This is why we must break our chains to access a better world, against a sinking capitalism which is taking on water on all sides: economic crisis, health crisis, environmental crisis, famine, soaring inflation laying waste to our wages. We must resolutely support the refusal of proletarians on both sides of the current conflict to serve as cannon fodder. The only battle worth fighting is the anti-capitalist class struggle against the descent of society into barbarism.

M.O.

Bilan et Perspectives

22 September 2022

AGAINST FAKE INTERNATIONALISM

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has spread confusion within the ranks of the capitalist left. Some have sided with the Ukrainian resistance, others have blamed it all on NATO, and many have simply remained silent. Whatever the pretence, none of these positions have anything in common with internationalism as we know it.

“Arm Ukraine Now”: A Call for War

A slogan commonly heard at supposedly anti-war demonstrations in Europe and the USA is “Arm Ukraine Now”. The premise being that Russia being the aggressor, Ukraine needs all the military support it can get to defend itself. It is a popular position not least because it is openly encouraged by the capitalist media in the West. And in fact, arming Ukraine is exactly what NATO countries have been doing, even before the Russian invasion started. The UK government has been more keen to send anti-tank missiles, munitions, air defence systems, and other military equipment to Ukraine, than it has been about taking in Ukrainian refugees. The liberals and leftists who argue for sending more arms to Ukraine, even if they genuinely think this will help to end the war, are in reality parroting jingoistic propaganda. Rather than bringing this conflict to an end, both Russia’s aggression and NATO support for Ukraine set up the stage for more generalised war in the near future.

There are others on the left, more discerning about the Ukrainian resistance (which of course also includes the far right), who would like only certain groups to receive donations and equipment. Among the candidates

for such support are alleged “anti-authoritarian” formations which pose with anarchist banners... next to Ukrainian national symbols. A cursory glance reveals that these are volunteer units within the Territorial Defense Forces of the Ukrainian state. So we are not talking here about any autonomous working class resistance, and any comparisons to the Paris Commune (where a section of the National Guard revolted against their superiors and took over the city) or the Makhnovshchina (which acted directly against the emerging Ukrainian state and opposed Ukrainian nationalism) are a complete distortion.

“NATO out of Europe”: Letting Russian Imperialism Off the Hook

On the other hand, we have the usual voices from within the Trotskyist, Stalinist and Maoist camps, for whom imperialism, rather than a stage in capitalist development, generally means only the state policy of the USA. Usually when military conflicts break out, they will take the side of whoever happens to oppose the USA. This is of course a position difficult to express in the current war in Ukraine without appearing like a warmonger. So instead other arguments have been adopted so as not to say the quiet part out loud: Russia has behaved aggressively, but it is not imperialist, it is just reacting to the pressure from NATO. NATO should withdraw from Eastern Europe and then we’ll have peace...

Of course NATO encirclement of Russia is also part of the background to the war in Ukraine. But we live in a capitalist world, no region is safe from competition between nation-states, and no imperialist powers will simply abandon their spoils of war. Russia’s actions have created an environment which necessitates a response from the NATO backed countries. They cannot sit back as their resources and trade partners face aggression, so more and more weapons and soldiers will pour into the region to protect the needs of Western capital. What’s happening now is a continuation of already existing tendencies – the USA has come out victorious from the two previous imperialist world wars but is now facing a new challenge

from China; increasingly Europe is rallying behind the USA and Russia is becoming dependent on China. The lines are being drawn, imperialist line-ups are emerging. This is a battle for world domination, the battleground is everywhere, it is not going away, and no pacifistic appeals to the powers-that-be can solve it.

What “No War but the Class War” Really Means

In 1916, in the midst of the first imperialist world war, one “conscientious objector” imprisoned in Richmond Castle in North Yorkshire wrote on the walls of their cell: “The only war which is worth fighting is the class war. The working class of this country have no quarrel with the working class of Germany or any other country. Socialism stands for internationalism. If the workers of all countries united and refused to fight there would be no war.”

This is the internationalism we see ourselves in the tradition of. It means that, unlike the capitalist left, we do not take the side of any capitalist states, whether they are deemed “progressive” or “reactionary”, whether they happen to be the “aggressors” or the “attacked”. Our solidarity always lies with the global working class, the victims of war, of sanctions, of austerity, everywhere. Imperialist war, the product of the capitalist system, can only be stopped by our class. We may be cogs in the machine, but without us nothing moves. The ruling classes are taking the world down the darkest of paths. It’s time the working class put forward our alternative: a global cooperative commonwealth without national or class divisions, where the principle “from each according to their ability, to each according to their needs”, rather than “war of all against all”, rules the day.

NWBCW Liverpool

26 April 2022

source # <https://nwbcwliverpool.wordpress.com/2022/04/26/against-fake-internationalism/>

THE FALSE “INTERNATIONALISM” OF THE RULING CLASSES AND THEIR MEDIA

The invisibilization of resistance against war and militarism on both sides of the front, as well as the media support for the Ukrainian "international legion", clearly shows what the "internationalism" of the ruling classes and their spokesmen all over the world is all about.

Western and Putinist propaganda go hand in hand in invisibilizing the anti-war response and militarism within Russia

Front page of the site "We are not alone" which collected over 1,162,000 signatures and over 162,000 manifestos from labor and professional groups against the war despite the fact that each signatory is liable to fines and imprisonment. The site was silenced and shut down this morning.

It could not be otherwise. For the European media this is about demonizing Russia. They present it as a monolithic country where "nobody doubts the beloved leader" Putin. They try to eliminate any possible empathy with the Russian soldiers dragged to death and the population crushed by san-

ctions. They do not hesitate to make invisible the fact that over 1,160,000 people and more than 162,000 labor and professional collectives have spoken out publicly in Russia against the war, risking overwhelming fines and years of forced labor.

This exercise in disinformation goes hand in hand with the invisibilization of defections in Ukraine. The media hide the fact that most of the male refugees fleeing to the West are deserters and shamelessly covers up the very existence of a mass of refugees who have fled to Russia and Belarus in the East of the country. Refugees fleeing among other things from the policy of ethnicist terror promoted by the nationalist paramilitaries and encouraged by Zelensky's closest advisors.

Everything indicates that the Zelensky government is not only encouraging the hunt for "deserters", but has embarked, using paramilitaries, on a veritable ethnic cleansing in several regions of the country. But this will not make the front pages. For the European media, everything depends on showing "the unity and courage of the Ukrainian people against Russia".

The Ukrainian "international legion".

Where the disinformation strategy reaches the grotesque is in the famous "international legion" marching to fight in Ukraine..

Presented by the US press as a remake of the "International Brigades", the European press gave them hype from day one and one by one different EU states - the Baltic states, Poland, Czechia, but also the "pacifist" Denmark - authorized their citizens to march to Ukraine to enlist and fight against the Russian army, putting on hold the legislation they had passed against European jihadist volunteers returning from the war in Syria.

But when the media approached the Ukrainian consulates to discover "the volunteers", they did not find the well-meaning stalinist and petty bourgeois students of '36. Despite the tons of sugar-coating in the press it was obvious that the international recruitment was attracting a very different

audience: ultra-right wingers from the gym and ex-mercenaries.

Even worse for the propaganda: paramilitary groups linked to mafia crime such as the Kosovar KLA, whose founders are now on trial for crimes against humanity, were sending whole platoons.

In Germany, alarm bells went off in the state's own repressive apparatus. Apparently, the coordination of international recruitment was being handled by the "Azov regiment", a neo-Nazi paramilitary group theoretically integrated into the structure of the Ukrainian army. And in Berlin they had no better idea than to coordinate with their colleagues in the NPD, a German far-right group under permanent state surveillance that has touched on everything from pogroms against refugees to child pornography to outbreaks of organized terrorism.

Faeser, the German interior minister sounded the alarm by hinting at the obvious: Ukraine is well on its way to becoming a playground for the armed far right. Something similar to what Afghanistan or Syria once were for jihadism.

The "internationalism" of the bourgeoisie

The "internationalism" of the bourgeoisie has never been anything other than the international organization of nationalist factions ready to aggravate the killings.

It is no coincidence that the same people who in Ukraine and Russia give free rein to state terrorism, those who persecute deserters and anti-militarists, are the ones who resort to the worst niches of mafiosi, mercenaries, neo-Nazis and lumpen to "reinforce" their ranks. Putin with the neo-Nazis who until now suppressed strikes in the Donbass and with Kadyrov's Chechen mercenaries. Zelensky with his sinister "International Legion".

As was seen in the Yugoslav wars and in the Donbass, they do it not because they will make a difference in the military balances, but because

they poison the atmosphere with their venom and their ethnicist crimes on the ground, making it difficult for the exploited on both sides to recognize themselves as being in the same situation.

It is literally the opposite of workers' internationalism: [consistent struggle against the causes of war on both sides], the denunciation of militarism and propaganda for the fraternization of the troops.

And this, and not the whitewashing of wannabe slaughterers drawn from the worst of each country as the European press does, is what must be told and spread now.

Workers of all countries, unite, abolish armies, police, war production, borders, wage labor!

NO WAR!

NO PEACE!

Medz Yeghern; Shoa; Naqba, Anfal. Four words brought to us since 1915 to describe the mass annihilation of a people. A holocaust or genocide. The latter word is legal and specific, a compromise with Stalin in 1945 to exclude his mass slaughter of 'opponents' or ethnicities on class or political grounds, from criminal investigation. The accusations of genocide abound on both sides of the war in Ukraine. Mass slaughter is undeniably taking place and the combatants attribute mutual eradication as the evil intent of the other, though the strict legal criteria of distinct and ethnic or cultural group is unlikely to be met. But slaughter is happening as at least 50,000 are now thought to have died in the first hundred days.

A distinct group is the key victim, yet falls outside the clinical legality. That group are people like us, ordinary people without investment in the conflict's course or outcome. The working class on both sides. Families of Russian conscripts are fighting legal battles to get their kids brought back from the front, while 'contract' soldiers are refusing to renew or getting legal advice on how to refuse service on medical grounds. So far Russian state prosecutors have avoided the publicity of actively pursuing these dissidents. It has avoided full mobilisation for similar reasons.

In Ukraine itself with a quarter of it's population displaced, men between the ages of 18-60 are banned from leaving as the state seeks to put a million under arms. Our class continues to be targeted on a wider scale as the consequences of this conflict spread. Turkey is using the joker of its NATO veto over the admission of Sweden and Finland as a screen for its newly

declared offensive against Rojava and the Syrian YPG. It has avoided such a renewed assault until now, but the perpetrator of the 20th century's second genocide, against the Armenians (Germany in Namibia was the first), is emboldened in its settling scores with the Kurds. It's banking on the US sacrificing them to the expansion of the Western alliance.

And it's not just blood and bombs, it's stomachs and food too. 1.6 billion people are now in critical food emergency according to the UN. A fifth of the world's population are being made dispensable to the war aims of this conflict. The African Union's recent plea to Russia to unblock the ports has so far been met only with words, "Russia is always on the side of Africa" says Putin, as bellies rumble, unemployment grows and social unrest spreads.

How much humiliation is too much for Russia, or what should Ukraine be prepared to give away is the current shape of the debate. But the Russian state or the Ukrainian state are distinct from the workers that live in both who are paying the price of this war and will do for years to come.

The more important question for us as revolutionaries and internationalists, is how do we as workers spread opposition to this war and show solidarity with those from our class under fire to die for the vested interest of capital? Defeatism is not pacifism, it can't afford to be – it is an active defence of community and resistance to the idea of a capitalist victory or a capitalist peace.

A peace they envisage, if and when the arms industry and capital allow it to happen, is already being pre-defined as a frozen or ongoing attritional conflict. A relentless profitable mill, grinding the bodies of workers to feed the power of the Western-backed millionaire Zelensky and the kleptocratic dictator Putin. Meanwhile, global capital's arms economy studies the Key Performance Indicator's of their latest tech in real time.

Anarchist Communist Group (ACG)

THE “CAMPAIGN FOR REAL WAR”

That ‘truth is the first casualty of war’ is the first lie amongst many that accompany the slaughter of our class. For war to happen requires truth to have been well buried long in advance. The biggest lie, from which stem all others, is that we, the working class, the fodder of both wage labour and war, have any interests in common with those who order us to fight.

From the Fatherland myth, to the ‘democratic values’ con, the idea that any Russian worker is equal to Putin through patriotism, or that any British worker, by using a ballot box alongside Johnson, shares the same power and influence would be laughable if it wasn’t so deadly. In either state concept the ‘social peace’ we are supposed to prize is the drudgery of work, poverty, vulnerability to hunger and homelessness, under the heel of the laws that protect property, profit and power.

The community of nations following the ‘national interest’ in the rules-based system is a thieves’ kitchen of speculating wheeler dealers: politicians, arms dealers, bankers, shareholders and profiteering planet wreckers protected by laws of their own making. Nothing we prize has been given to us, but wrung out of the rich by bloody class struggle and conceded to us to avert revolution and sustain the illusion of social peace. That ‘peace’ takes our eyes off the jackboot relentlessly hovering over our heads. The lie of freedom.

Freedom, as the old song goes, is another word for nothing left to lose. And yet it is what they call on us to defend on either side of their frontiers, when the prospect of new real estates in the form of fuel, land, investment

and resources – including us – drop from the table of their rules-based international system. The sheep’s clothing falls off to reveal the wolves fighting over a new carcass. Carcasses, the bodies of workers, we who labour, in and out of uniform, people like us, are fooled or coerced to fertilise this new opportunity.

Then, as we can see from Yemen to Ukraine, the sickest lies of all come out. Witness Turkey, which fed ISIS and watched Kobani burn, now acting as honest broker, for humanitarian reasons – from lies to irony! To restrain our disgust and resistance and channel it into the dead-end of sympathy, they mesmerise us with the fictions of war crimes and illegal wars. ‘Banned’; ‘Defensive’ or immoral. Some weapons good, some weapons bad, some bombs virtuous chastisement, some bombs criminal. As if the real issue is a campaign for real war and not against it!

War is the crime! The causes and excuses, the lies! But there is another war, the real war, the class war. We don’t just die, we resist! Ukrainian farmers towing tanks away with tractors, 20,000 arrested protesting in Russian cities and then ‘fragging’, something not talked since the anti-war resistance in Vietnam: Soldiers killing their officers! Whilst sympathetic protest is growing, meaningful organised hostile resistance has yet to really develop. But those seeds, the seeds of class war, the real war to end them all, are also, if tragically, being sewn in fertile ground.

Anarchist Communist Group (ACG)

DON'T FIGHT FOR "YOUR" COUNTRY!

Everybody hates war. Most of all the people who send other people to die on the battlefield. They claim that they abhor it, but alas, they're forced to it by the other side. The other side, which is encroaching on our traditional hunting grounds. The other side, which is invading a "sovereign" nation. We have no choice! We must defend ourselves... Which "we" are you a part of? Relentless propaganda on both sides pushes everyone to pick a side, to become an active participant or cheerleader in the war. Because the other side is truly horrific. And it always is.

The Russian army is accused of war crimes. A strange term, "war crime." A redundant one, really, because war is by definition a crime, the greatest of all crimes. Whatever the goal, the means are always mass murder and destruction. There is no war without atrocious massacres. The term suggests that there are two ways of waging war: a civilized one and a criminal one. If ever there was a difference between the two, it was erased by advances in military technology. Since the early 20th century, the percentage of civilian casualties in wars has grown steadily. In the 19th century American Civil War, military personnel still accounted for more than 90% of total war deaths. In World War I, civilian casualties were 59% of the total. In the second it rose to 63%, and in the Vietnam War to 67%. In the various wars of the 1980s it climbed to 74% and in the 21st century to 90%. Not since World War II have so many people been displaced by war. The difference between combatants and non-combatants, between military and non-military targets, has largely disappeared in contemporary warfare. The greater destructive force each side deploys, the greater the "collateral

damage” to the civilian population. The more the war in Ukraine escalates, the more lives of ordinary Ukrainians are destroyed, the more the country becomes a ruin.

What constitutes a war crime or not then becomes a matter of opinion. Like “terrorism,” which has become a cheap swear word that everyone hurls at the opponent in every conflict, it is an excuse disguised as an accusation. Because “terrorism”, having been defined by mass media and politicians as the greatest of all evils, implies that all means are good to suppress it, and is thus the cut-and-dried excuse for using terror oneself. Likewise, the accusation of ‘war crimes’ justifies the crimes ‘our own’ side commits, which ‘our’ media barely mention, or sometimes not at all. Think of Yemen for example, where the Saudi forces have bombed and starved civilians much worse than the Russian army so far has done in Ukraine. The Saudi air force would hardly have lasted a week without British and American military/technical support and supply of weapons. Is that too “a war for democracy”? This atrocity is ongoing, outside the media spotlights. Move along, nothing to see. No war crimes here.

Modern war

It has often been observed that in wartime the line between propaganda and reporting becomes difficult to perceive. When the Russian army carries out a (failed) missile attack on the television tower in Kyiv, the Western media call it a war crime. But when NATO (successfully) bombed Belgrade’s radio and TV tower in 1999, it was “a legitimate military target.”

That the Russian army’s “special military operations” are criminal has been abundantly proven in Grozny and Aleppo, to name only the most extreme recent examples of cities it reduced to rubble. In Ukraine it has not yet gone this far, perhaps because the pretext for the invasion is that the Ukrainians are a brotherly people who must be liberated. But to achieve its military goals, Russia must step up the war and overwhelm that “brother people” with its superior power of destruction. The logic of war

drives the Russian invasion toward an escalation of devastation.

Let us not pretend that this is a Russian phenomenon. During the Gulf Wars, the Americans bombed shelters (with bombs designed to crush bunkers) in Baghdad resulting in hundreds of civilian deaths. Many more died when fleeing soldiers were massacred from the air on the “highway of death” in 1991. In the wars the West fought in Iraq and Afghanistan, more than 380,000 civilians died. The countless drone attacks that the U.S. military has carried out since then also show no respect for the difference between combatants and non-combatants. Not to mention what Washington’s most loyal vassal Israel has done in Gaza. They are all capable of it. This is modern warfare.

War is the ideal framework for tightening the grip of the state over its citizens. That is abundantly clear now in Russia, where you risk 15 years in prison if you call the war a war, where protests against the war are brutally suppressed, where all media that are not mouthpieces of the Kremlin are silenced. But it points to the weakness of the regime that it needs this naked repression. There is no doubt that this is not the case in Ukraine. There, everyone stands behind Zelensky. That is, as far as we are allowed to know. In the many interviews with Ukrainians on Western media, you never hear someone express opposition or even doubts about the war, although we know, from social media and our own sources, that they do exist. But according to the media, everyone there is willing to die for the nation. Yet Zelensky found it necessary to issue a ban on all men from 18 to 60 years of age from leaving the country. Everyone must remain available as cannon fodder for the homeland. He also found it necessary to ban opposition parties and force all television news channels to combine in “a single information platform of strategic communication” called “United News.” All in the name of the defense of freedom. Of course, the media that call on Ukrainians to kill as many “Russian cockroaches” as possible can continue to spew their poison. Many western media — even papers like the New York Times — chose not to report Zelensky’s authoritarian

measures. The Times' famous motto says "all the news that's fit to print," and this kind of news does not fit the story that this is a war for democracy.

Liars

The Russian and Ukrainian governments both claim the censorship is necessary to protect the population from misinformation. That's another slippery word. Like "war crime" and "terrorism," it is "in the eye of the beholder." Of course, misinformation is teeming in social and other media. But who decides what it is? In Russia, the state decides who can speak and who must remain silent. In the West, that task is largely outsourced to the private sector, the companies that control the mass media and social media platforms. But they too are being prodded by the government. "We will ban the Kremlin's media machine in the EU. The state-owned companies Russia Today and Sputnik and their subsidiaries must no longer be allowed to spread their lies that justify Putin's war. We are developing instruments to ban their toxic and harmful disinformation in Europe," said EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen. And indeed, loyal Russian news channels and other sources that do not follow the pro-Western line are no longer accessible on Facebook and other major social media outlets. But don't call it censorship, that's what the enemy does.

Russians and Westerners each get a very different picture of the war. They are being lied to, especially by what their media choose to show or not show. For example, the Russian viewer sees time and again images of Ukrainians telling them they were beaten and threatened by ultra-nationalists because they spoke Russian and the Western viewer sees time and again mothers saying goodbye with tears in their eyes to their husbands who say they are willing to die for Ukraine. Both kinds of images are presumably real but each side chooses to show what fits in their propaganda narrative.

In the West, the story is about a gritty underdog bravely defending himself against a vicious bully. Of course we cheer for the brave heroes, of course

we help them, of course we wave the yellow blue flag. It's as simple as that.

soo simple

Russia's story is not very sophisticated, it's a grab-all of accusations in the boorish style of the former USSR. Ukraine is suffering under a corrupt, neo-Nazi, genocidal regime. We are not waging war against Ukraine, we are just preventing it from becoming an outpost of NATO, a threat to our homeland. We're fighting for a world without Nazis. With the same kind of transparent pretexts, Russian tanks rolled into Budapest and Prague at the time.

As in every propaganda story, there is a grain of truth. The push of NATO is real. There is an ultra-nationalist current in Ukraine. There are fascist groups like Svoboda and the Azov Battalion (now integrated in the Ukrainian army) that attack gays, feminists, Roma and Russian speakers. Of course, Ukraine is far from the only country where the far right is rearing its ugly head. It does not mean that the political system in Ukraine is fascist. Less so than in Russia at least. And genocidal? What the Russian military did in Syria and Chechnya was immeasurably worse.

Those who want to beat a dog will always find a stick. All states lie when their armies go out. The US as well as Russia. Think of Saddam Hussein's non-existent "weapons of mass destruction" and his non-existent ties to Al Qaeda that were the pretexts for the US invasion of Iraq.

The true story

The true story is called inter-imperialism. For however global the world has become, it is a world based on competition. Commercial competition that becomes military competition, cold and hot war, as circumstances require. Circumstances like loss of power, loss or potential gains of markets, economic crisis. We live in a system that brutally clashes with the needs of humanity. A system at war with the planet, at war with life itself.

Fighting back, defeating the capitalist system, is the only war that makes sense.

The cold war did not end. At most, there was a pause. The Warsaw Pact disappeared but NATO did not. Yeltsin suggested that Russia should also become a member of it but of course that was not possible: the NATO's *raison d'être* was to subdue Russia. A fierce discussion ensued about whether NATO was still needed now that Russia had also become a capitalist democratic country. The question was answered affirmatively in practice. NATO advanced to Russia's borders, breaking earlier promises. Fourteen ex-Warsaw pact countries were integrated in the anti-Russian alliance. American missile bases were installed in Poland and Romania. Capturing Ukraine was the latest phase of that offensive. For profit but even more so to contain Russia. Ukraine did not yet become a NATO member but began to cooperate militarily with the West.

The expansion of NATO meant a huge market expansion for the American (and other Western) arms industry because new members are required to make their arsenals conform to NATO standards. In order to meet these norms Poland's military spending increased with 60% from 2011 to 2020 and Hungary's with 133% from 2014 to 2020. The cash register was ringing. But the NATO expansion was also driven by the realization that Russia, with its military might and especially its nuclear arsenal, remained a potential threat to the *pax americana*. It is still the only country against which the US cannot wage war against without risking quasi-total destruction itself. Just like during the cold war. Which thus did not end. Washington's strategy has remained the same: containment. To contain Russia and to reduce its sphere of influence, to weaken its power without entering into direct conflict with it. During the Cold War, this conflict was fought out with *coup d'états* and national liberation movements. Now Ukraine is the eager volunteer to die for the "free west," led by the "sympathetic" actor and millionaire Zelensky who is so bellicose that, like Che Guevara during the Cuban missile crisis, he wants to escalate the conflict to a world war if

necessary. That would be the risk if his demand for a “no fly zone” — an air war between NATO and Russia — were granted. Like Che, he will not get his way. Direct confrontation remains taboo. That is one reason why drawing parallels with pre-nuclear wars can be misleading.

The enemy can no longer be portrayed as the “communist danger” but that does not make Russia an ordinary capitalist country like ours. The rich there are not capitalists like ours but “oligarchs.” Who are they, these oligarchs? Billionaires who became rich thanks to corruption, exploitation and speculation and who like to show off their fortune in ostentatious luxury consumption. In other words, capitalists. The adage “Behind every great fortune there is a great crime” was not invented in Russia. But there “the great crime” is still quite fresh. The new capitalist class in Russia consists in large part of members of the old capitalist class, people who were factory-directors, party-bosses, bureaucrats in the pseudo-communist USSR, and who made out like bandits when state assets were privatized. The privileged class remained the privileged class, now as private capital owners. But as managers of the state as well. The interests of private capitalists are intertwined with and subject to the state apparatus that Putin seems to have firmly in hand for now.

The disbandment of the old USSR and privatization of the ‘central command’ state-capitalist economy was the result of a crisis caused in the first place by the crushing cost of maintaining an empire and the unwillingness of the working class to work harder for less. But the desire of members of the ruling class to be not only managers of capital but also private owners of capital, with access to the whole world of capital, was an important factor as well.

They plundered the economy while the average standard of living sank like a stone. Russia’s GDP in 1998 was only a little more than a third of what it was in the last year of the USSR. Industrial production had declined 60%. But starting in 1999 the prices of Russia’s main export product,

oil and gas, began to rise. This fueled a recovery which improved living conditions. The state consolidated, with the security apparatus at the center of power. With Putin, an ex-KGB colonel, at the helm, Russia began to reassert itself. The army was rebuilt to such an extent that the arms industry (which employs more than 2.5 million Russians) struggled with overproduction. That army bloodily restored “order” in the interior (Chechnya) in border states (Georgia, Kazakhstan) and outside (Syria).

But in 2015 industrial production was still below the 1990 level. Only the oil and gas sector exceeded pre-privatization production levels. But that year, the oil price began to slide again and so did the Russian economy. GDP fell from \$2.29 trillion in 2013 to \$1.48 trillion in 2020, less than that of Texas.

So the challenge to Russian capital was multifold:

- to defend the market position of its main export-industry, oil and gas;
- to reduce its dependency from it: with its wild price swings and uncertain future, it is an unreliable crutch for a crippled economy;
- to either shrink its overproducing military industry or increase the use of its products;
- to hide the fact that it has nothing to offer to the working class, to distract the proletarians from their miserable conditions, by engaging them in a campaign of national pride against a foreign enemy who is to blame for the deteriorating conditions of survival.

It is a recipe for imperialist aggression.

Ukraine is an attractive booty. It has the world’s largest iron ore reserves, gas and other mineral resources, excellent farmland, industry, shipbuilding, ports... it also has a modern arms industry, a rival to Russia’s, which is one reason why Moscow insists that Ukraine be “demilitarized.” And then there are the pipelines that carry the Russian gas and oil through Ukraine

to western Europe. Of course Russia wants to control them.

Russia provides 45% of the European gas imports through those pipelines, but in recent years the US has nibbled at its market. Russia is the third largest natural gas producer in the world. The US is the largest, and its gas industry has known a prodigious growth, thanks to new and ecologically damaging ways of extracting it (fracking). However, lately it has been struggling with overcapacity and aggressively seeking new markets. Since 2018 its export to most EU-countries and the UK has been growing fast. The exception was Germany, the terminus of the new Nordstream 2 pipeline under the Baltic sea that bypasses Ukraine. It's not in use yet, and as things look now, it might never be used at all. It was German capital's hope for a stable cost-effective energy supply and expanding trade relations with Russia in general. Now Germany is back in the fold, investing in new terminals for receiving liquefied gas from the US. Heavily polluting coal-fired power plants are getting a new lease on life. The EU commission announced a plan to reduce Russian gas imports by two thirds by next winter and end them by 2027. Even though that goal may not be reached entirely, the direction is clear. In as much as the war in Ukraine is a war over the European energy market — and that is clearly part of the picture — the US has already won.

The current war does not come out of the blue. The struggle over Ukraine has been going on since 2008. In 2014, that struggle became a war. Since then, Ukrainians and Russians have been inundated with patriotic war propaganda. Ukrainians have the misfortune of living in the country that neither Moscow nor Washington want to cede to each other. It is reminiscent of King Solomon's judgment: two women both claimed motherhood of a baby. Solomon said: then I will chop the baby in two and give you each half. To which the real mother said: no, give him to her intact. But in the case of baby Ukraine both women say: chop it.

Desert !

Fake news and real news are now so mixed that it is difficult to understand what exactly is happening in Ukraine and Russia. For example, on February 27 we were told that thirteen Ukrainian soldiers on “Snake Island” had chosen to die for the fatherland. “Fuck you,” is how they would have responded to a Russian warship’s demand to surrender. In Ukrainian and all Western media their heroism was praised to the skies. Their statue was already being ordered, so to speak. It was hard to believe. Were those soldiers so intoxicated by propaganda that they embraced a useless death? Like suicide bombers, did they hope to be rewarded in the afterlife? No one benefits from their deaths. They should not be celebrated as heroes but mourned as victims of patriotic insanity.

Fortunately, it turned out pretty quickly that the soldiers had wisely surrendered after all. Whew. Even after they were shown alive and well on Russian TV, many media outlets in the west failed to report it.

Fighting for the homeland is not in the interest of the vast majority of the population of Ukraine. Whatever the advantages of living in a country integrated into NATO and the EU, they do not outweigh the disadvantages of war. When, in a few weeks, months or years, the guns fall silent and the smoke above the bombed cities dissipates, the Ukrainians will have a poisoned country full of ruins and mass graves. And Western countries will likely be less generous with money for reconstruction than they are now with weapons.

Suppose that Ukraine “wins” the war, what will the people there have gained? The “honor of the nation”? Freedom? After the war ends Zelensky and Ukraine’s own “oligarchs” will still be wealthy, but only deep misery awaits ‘ordinary’ Ukrainians.

The best news we’ve heard about the war is that some Russian soldiers are sabotaging their own equipment and are deserting. How many is unclear.

We can only hope that the desertion will become massive. On both sides. That Russian and Ukrainian soldiers fraternize and turn their weapons against their leaders who sent them to their death. That Russian and Ukrainian workers strike against the war. Peace demonstrations alone cannot stop the war if the population continues to endure the war and all its consequences. It becomes possible only when the great mass, the working class, turns against the war. World War I was stopped by the working class's revolt against war, first in Russia in 1917 and a year later in Germany. But that was some time ago. Today there is no atmosphere of mass rebellion in Russia but the disastrous consequences of the war may awaken a sleeping giant.

In both Russia and Ukraine, the gap between rich and poor has increased steeply. In both countries, the “oligarchs” (Putin and Zelensky included) hide fortunes in offshore tax havens and pay little or no taxes. Meanwhile, real average wages in Ukraine have not been raised in twelve years while prices have risen sharply. Social spending has been cut by successive Ukrainian governments from 20% of the budget in 2014 to 13% today. The vast majority of the Ukrainian population was already poor and will be much poorer after the war. Its interests and those of the ruling class are not the same. Just like in Russia. In Ukraine, Russian and Ukrainian soldiers are killing each other for interests that are antagonistic to their own.

A Coincidence?

We don't know how this war will end. Perhaps there will be some kind of compromise that will allow both camps to claim they have won and that in fact is just a breather in anticipation of the next war.

Since the “Great Recession” of 2008, the global economy has been in deep crisis. World profitability fell to near all-time lows. The collapse was only avoided by creating gigantic amounts of money and borrowing heavily from the future. At the turn of the century, global debt stood at \$84 trillion. When the 2008 crisis began, the meter stood at 173 trillion. It has since

risen 71% to 296 trillion by 2021. That's 353% of the total annual income of all countries combined!

Inflation is skyrocketing and there is no plan, no prospect of climbing out of the hole by any "normal" means. Increase or reduce taxes, stimulate or rein in spending, reduce or expand the money supply, nothing works against the crisis of the system which is dependent on growth, on the accumulation of value, yet increasingly incapable to accomplish it. The restoration of favorable conditions for value accumulation requires a devaluation of existing capital, an elimination of "dead wood" on a massive scale.

Is it a coincidence that in the same period of growing economic insecurity and hopeless crisis, global military spending has increased year after year and the number of military conflicts has increased sharply?

Wars are raging and tensions are rising in just about every continent. The US and China accelerated their armament efforts with each other as justification. Global arms spending has increased by 9.3% (in constant dollars) over the past decade and is now topping \$2 trillion annually. The biggest spender by far is the US (778 billion in 2020, an annual increase of 4.4%) dwarfing all others, including Russia (61 billion in 2020, an increase of 2.5%). Total military spending in Europe in 2020 was 16% higher than in 2011. Even the pandemic-triggered recession did not put a brake on the trend. In 2020, while global GDP shrank by 4.4%, global arms spending increased by 3.9% and in 2021 by 3.4%. The war in Ukraine is accelerating the process. Business will boom for arms producers in the coming years.

Europe is once again the locus of a possible world conflagration. But there are important differences from comparable moments in the history of the last century. First: The nuclear factor is putting a brake on escalation. Second difference: the economy is more global than ever. The interests are intertwined. You cannot punish your enemy economically without cutting into your own flesh. Russia is only the eleventh largest economy and its

main export, oil and gas, was largely spared from sanctions for now. While Europe sends weapons en masse to Ukraine to fight Russia, Russian oil and gas continue to flow to Europe through Ukraine. The mutual dependence limits escalation.

But both these brakes on escalation are no ironclad guarantee. The red line which the military powers are supposed not to cross may become a matter of interpretation, especially for the losing side. Russia made public in 2020 a new Presidential directive on nuclear deterrence lowering the nuclear threshold “to avoid the escalation of military actions and the termination of such actions on conditions that are unacceptable to Russia and its allies.” The threshold may be lowered by the use of “dirty bombs” (that combine conventional explosives with radioactive material), chemical or biological weapons. From there an escalation to tactical nuclear weapons may not seem such a big step. And so on. To trust in the sanity of the ruling class to avoid such a course would be foolish.

The intertwining of economic interests is no guarantee either. This is what the present moment makes clear. The war is disastrous for the economies of both Russia and Ukraine. The capitalist class in both countries will make less profit as a result. The world economy as a whole will suffer as well. Especially from the economic sanctions, which have been surprising in their severity. It’s all bad for profit and yet the hunt for profit is what sets it in motion. The war and the sanctions will accelerate and deepen the coming recession which was becoming inevitable anyway. Now the war can be blamed for it. Biden will call it “Putin’s recession”. Putin will blame the West’s economic war on Russia.

The hardening of the sanctions regime after the war would signify a preparation for future conflict. It would mean that, in the current dynamic of capitalism, profits are sacrificed for the sake of winning the war. Being protectionist, the sanctions go against the globalizing tendency of profit-seeking. Trade relations are broken, logistical ties are cut. But in the war

economy they would be reorganized. The targets of the sanctions — Russia, Iran, North Korea and in the future possibly China — may band together against the common enemy. The geostrategic implications of the war will be the subject of another article. The point here is that we cannot trust in globalization to protect us from global war.

But there is a third, crucial difference with pre-world war moments of the past. It is about consciousness. What any ruling class needs to submit its own population to an all out war effort, is the destruction of class consciousness, the atomization of individuals and their unification in the phony community of the nation. Putin isn't there yet. He does not have the Russian people in his pocket like Hitler had the Germans. It's true that despite the numerous protests in Russia against the war, resistance against it remained limited for now. But patriotic manifestations of support for Putin were nowhere to be seen, aside from one mass meeting in which many were pressured by the state to participate. Putin, aside from his military capabilities, cannot escalate the war as Hitler could because his ideological control is too weak. On the other hand, that is why he must escalate: without a victory, he risks falling off his pedestal like the Argentine junta after the Falklands defeat.

Similarly, in most other countries with a tradition of social struggle, ideological control is too weak to drag the population into a large-scale war. But it is being worked on. We are being molded. We are learning to revere soldiers as heroes again, we are learning to cheer for victories on the battlefield again, we are learning to accept that we must make sacrifices for the war effort. And while there are no national solutions to any of our problems — economic crisis, climate disruption, pandemics, impoverishment, etc. — we are learning that there is nothing more beautiful than fighting for borders, dying for the homeland.

Don't let them format you. As Karl Liebknecht concluded his appeal for revolutionary defeatism in 1915: "Enough and more than enough slaugh-

ter! Down with the war instigators here and abroad!

An end to genocide!”

Sanderr – 3/23/2021

Sources of military data: Sipri, IISS, Ruth Leger Sivard. Economic data: IMF, World Bank, Bloomberg News, Macrotrends.

source # <https://libcom.org/article/dont-fight-your-country>

A DEMOCRACY TO DIE FOR

“Russia’s war in Ukraine [is] a fight for global democracy, experts say”^[1]

When the elite speak of freedom and democracy, duck and take cover!

We know this story all too well. Once our ancestors fought and died to liberate Jerusalem for the one true God, then for King and Country, for the Fatherland, for der Fuhrer, Il Duce, Uncle Joe (Stalin) and worst of all for ethnic nationalism. More generally they fought and died in conflicts claiming to be struggles between good and evil. God is always on the side of the soldier. In WWI they fought to “Make the world safe for democracy” and 30,000,000 deaths later some precarious form of democracy was attained; only to be swallowed by competing powers in the next decade, e.g. the Weimar Republic becomes the Third Reich and back to a democratic republic in a few short years. War needs the patriotic banners; the people need the songs and the sound of trumpets that urge them on to perform heroic deeds on the battlefield and to die for a glorious cause “if necessary.” In short, it would seem that the citizens need lies and democracy provides the most seductive deceit of them all.

What is this lie we call democracy and what is its relationship to war?

The very word democracy is shrouded in distortion and mystification. This mystification contends that when true democracy is achieved and the true

sentiments of the people are expressed then the outcome would correspond to humanity's communal nature conceived as the universal ideal for society. As such it is posited as a stepping-stone in the glorious march towards revolution, liberation, freedom and universal progress. History however, paints a very different picture. Democracy is a delicate mechanism of totalitarian rule that can be dialed to the left or right to spawn democracy's authoritarian form. This tyranny and this tyrant are not counter to democracy but rather part of its safety valve. The tyrant is always waiting in the wings, ready to evoke a "state of exception" and assume authoritarian power. When the crisis ends and the world is safe for capitalism, some form of popular tyranny returns claiming to represent the people's will. Democracy and its advocacy is above all the primary locus of class collaboration, the anti-chamber for counter-revolution and war. It is also conceived as a politically neutral form of governance that implements the will of the citizenry, but, not always with a humanitarian outcome.

Even in ancient Athens the democratic form enabled a popular tyranny. For instance, in 462 BCE the Athenian "democratic" Assembly voted to assist the Spartans' repression of a slave revolt. An army of 4000 Athenian Hoplites slaughtered 30,000 Helot slaves. On the Island of Melos during the Peloponnesian war the Athenian "democratic" Assembly voted to kill all men and enslave all women and children on the island because of their refusal to pay tribute. Need we point out that modern democracies have been quite comfortable with brutal colonization, slavery, imperialist war and genocide? There is nothing about democracy that guarantees a peaceful humanitarian outcome. What is the real content of democracy in time of war? It is to forge a national identity where oligarchs, right wing militias, bankers and workers all identify first and foremost with the nation as Ukrainians, as Russians etc.

The democratic machinery serves primarily to modulate the congenital conflict between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in a way that guarantees the permanent asymmetry of power in the favor of capital. To share in

even a miniscule slice of power within the democratic machinery the workers must relinquish their revolutionary impulses. In other words in order to collaborate they must compromise to the point of self-betrayal. In times of war this betrayal becomes a death march into battle.

The best example we have of this form of collaboration was during the pre WWI years in Germany. The German Socialist Party (SPD) was organizing peace marches on the one hand while declaring their assurance that socialists would defend the Nation in the event of war with Russia on the other. Gustav Noske, in a much discussed speech in the Reichstag on March 25, 1907 assured his listeners that in case Germany were attacked, Social Democrats would fight for the country with the same “loyalty and devotion” as the bourgeois parties....” As early as 1907 at the Party Congress of Essen Bebel said: If ever we should really be called upon to defend the fatherland, we will defend it because it is our fatherland, the soil on which we live.

It is not by accident that Ukraine is suddenly lauded as a modern liberal democracy, fighting heroically as the veritable vanguard of international freedom, while the press largely ignores the actual conditions in pre-war Ukraine. The list of Ukrainian oligarchs that have their greedy hands in all sectors of the economy, who have significant control over local and national politics, who employ private armies and share close relations with right wing militias, closely resembles the balance of forces we can see in Putin’s Russia. Is this really an international fight to “make the world safe for democracy” once again! Or is it to make the world safe for the Ukrainian oligarch, the Russian and American imperialist or the everyday kleptocrat?

Defining democracy or delineating its functions is difficult to say the least.

Claude Lefort, along with numerous left social critics, argue that democracy is a revolutionary mode of governing precisely because it posits a “system founded on its own lack of a foundation;” meaning that it expresses

the unmediated will of the people in form and content. But democracy does have a foundation, a foundation that mostly goes unnamed: We call it Money, “the bond of all bonds... that is also the universal agent of separation.[2] Democracy’s great value for Capital is its ability to conceal the ensemble of practices that constitutes the modern mode of production. This is not merely a mode of self-governance it is a mode of subjectivation i.e. shaping and controlling the democratic subject. This control is also a form of self-control one that is perceived positively by the subject. Democratic man sees his chains but is comforted by the fact that he can wave his arms to the right or left and know that the decision was his.

Democracy is a specialized form of political domination deployed as a universal objective value, it is set in place as a political end or ideal for society by an elite whose real power over society is not political at all but is grounded in an all-pervasive economic exploitation.[3]

This definition, borrowed from the journal *Anarchy*, captures the essential nature of democracy and will be expanded in a future text. We will just add here that democracy is not merely a form of political domination; it is also a form of generalized social domination that plays an essential part in the reproduction of capitalism. In other words, the democratic state is a bourgeois state i.e. a capitalist state, not because the bourgeoisie holds the positions of power but because it is itself the political expression of capital with an essential parallel development to the evolution of capitalism. This is to say that the state was and is an essential component of the capitalist mode of production; it makes it possible to own property without actually possessing it or occupying it, to insure that the laws, especially contract laws, are applied equally, to collect taxes, to manage the state debt, to insure the stability of the currency, to maintain the forces of order etc. All political tendencies and economic demands since capitalism became a system of exploitation must operate within this framework irrespective of discursive tendencies, right or left.

This war is not about democracy, it is unambiguously an imperialist war and cannot be supported on any side by the revolutionary left. The western powers will tap into all of the mystifications regarding “freedom,” “democracy,” the “fatherland,” “blood and soil,” the “Nation,” and if none of this works Gods themselves will enter the fight.

When the left worries about the isolation that may result from taking a revolutionary position we should remember Karl Liebknecht who stood alone in the Reichstag on December 2, 1914 and declared.

A speedy peace, a peace without conquests, this is what we must demand.

Only a peace based upon the international solidarity of the working class and on the liberty of all the peoples can be a lasting peace..... I vote against the war credits demanded.

Berlin: December 2, 1914

Today the imperialist swindlers are in control of both warring powers, and no matter who wins this conflict the working class of both countries will lose. Peace will not bring security and permanent warfare will be our future. The only choice today is the same as Rosa Luxemburg so forcefully declared at the outbreak of WWI: Today the choice is not between war and peace, the choice today is between socialism and barbarism.^[4]

B. York - 4/24/2022

[1] - See “ Hostetter, Richard. “The SPD and the General Strike as an Anti-war Weapon, 1905-1914”In 1900 August Babel, one of the co-founders of the German Socialist Party told the Reichstag that “...if it came to a war with Russia... I would be ready, old boy that I am, to shoulder a gun against her.... In the 1906 Party Manual with the line “The Social Democracy recognizes that the nation Cannot be left defenseless.

[2] - Marx, Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts 1844 p.377

[3] - Originally published in Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed #60, Fall/Winter 2005–06, Vol. 23, No. 2.

[4] - (Paraphrase) attributed to Rosa Luxemburg

FOR A NEW ANARCHIST MANIFESTO AGAINST THE WAR

In these months in which the tragedy of war is increasingly brought to international attention by the crisis in Ukraine, the theme of anarchist anti-militarism is more compelling than ever. We see how, already before the Russian invasion of Ukraine, some heavy-handed criticism of our traditional anti-militarism was carried out by some individuals and groups who declare themselves anti-authoritarian, libertarian or anarchist. We have carefully considered these positions in the last few months, and we believe today that we need to clarify our point of view.

Our thoughts first go to our comrades who, more than one century ago, before the tragedy of the First World War, felt the need to affirm that: "*To all the soldiers of all countries who believe they are fighting for justice and liberty, we have to declare that their heroism and their valour will but serve to perpetuate hatred, tyranny, and misery*" (**International Anarchist Manifesto against the War, 1915**).

Like Goldman, Berkman, Malatesta, Schapiro and the others, we believe in the need that the internationalist and solidarity voice of anarchism, together with its principles of universal sisterhood and brotherhood, return to speak to everyone, even more in a world that is increasingly fragmented by national, ethnic and identity hatred.

War stands at the origin of the current social order, based on domination,

exploitation and oppression. This is a key point for the FAI, as it is exposed in the Anarchist Programme which is the theoretical reference of our Federation: *"Not understanding the advantages that could come to everyone from cooperation and solidarity, seeing in every other person a competitor and an enemy, a part of humanity has tried to grab the greatest possible amount of wealth to the detriment of the other. In such a struggle, the strongest, or the most fortunate, ends for winning and variously oppressing and dominating the vanquished"*.

This is why we maintain our position of rejection of all wars and of support to the idea of revolutionary defeatism. By defeatism we mean a revolutionary position before war, which implies that one should fight for the defeat of the government and the ruling classes of their own country, believing that wars are fought for the interests and privileges of the oppressors and exploiters. At the beginning of the twentieth century, and especially during the First World War, some European governments used the charge of "defeatism" to repress any form of dissent, opposition to war, political protest or workers' struggle, which would break the national unity before the enemy. Therefore, defeatism does not accept the suspensions of social struggles that are imposed by governments in times of war through censorship, repression and martial laws. On the contrary, the struggle against the government during wartimes continues, by both sabotaging the war and encouraging social struggles. Defeatism is inserted in an internationalist and revolutionary perspective which aims at provoking the defeat of the imperialism of "our own" countries, and one of its fundamental points is the refusal to support any belligerent party in wars between states and / or imperial blocks.

Dozens of wars are currently being fought, with their load of deaths, destruction, rapes, looting and mass deportation. In the last fifteen years, the crisis of the hegemony system based on globalization has produced a worldwide trend towards authoritarianism and militarization. Globalization as a form of world domination has for a long time ensured a privileged role

in the exploitation of the planet's resources to Anglo-American imperialism, with the support of the privileged classes of various countries. The entry of Russia and China into the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization has shown that the conflicts between these powers do not question the division of society into classes and various hierarchies.

At the FAI Congress that took place in Empoli in June 2022, we issued a statement regarding interpretations of the war in Ukraine, of which we quote a part: *"In the last ten years, a very different scenario has been defined by the intensification of tensions between states, the trade and financial wars, the progressive isolation of markets to a greater or lesser extent, the extension of conflicts which occur partly by proxy, but increasingly in direct form, between worldwide and regional powers in different regions of the world. The capitalist model that was imposed in the last century by US hegemony is still the horizon within which contentions between states take place, but the world is no longer dominated by a single superpower. The US have lost the wars in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria, and compared to a few decades ago their influence in Central and South America, which they used to consider their backyard, has significantly diminished. The AUKUS agreement between Australia, the UK and the US, which reoriented the strategy of these states towards the Pacific with a separate alliance, seemed to challenge the US presence in Europe and the very cohesion, if not existence, of NATO. Thus, Russia's invasion of Ukraine is part of a process of redefining the global balance of power.*

The crisis of this global hegemony is closely linked with the crisis of governmental systems based on social cohesion, due to the cutting of social guarantees and the weakening of consensus mechanisms. In many countries, we have seen the rising of movements that, with different forms and characteristics, question the governments and the agreements between the ruling classes. In this context, the use of force becomes these latter's main instrument for the preservation of power and social order. In this sense, we

have discussed in recent years the growing role of the military in societies. The uprising in Belarus in 2020 and the insurrection in Kazakhstan in January 2022 have shown a serious crisis of consensus within the Russian-led system. In the holding of the OTSC, the military has assumed a key role. The Russian military intervention in Kazakhstan to bloodily crush popular uprisings gave a tragic demonstration of this, and paved the way for the invasion of Ukraine in February. Even in the US, the anti-police riots against racist violence in 2020 led the armed forces leadership to support Biden's installation as president in a prelude to civil war in early 2021, to prevent Trump's violent supremacism from irreparably exasperating the consensus crisis."

The response to the crisis is the increase in military spending and the strengthening of the role of the armed forces in political decisions. Once destroyed the mechanisms of economic and political regulation that established the hierarchy between powers and the flows of profits towards the imperialist metropolises, the ruling classes need war to restore the old domination or to define new ones. In the context of this new world disorder, recourse to war and military missions is growing, in whatever way governments define them in their propaganda.

From Ukraine to Yemen, from Sahel countries to Myanmar, from Afghanistan to Tigray and elsewhere, passing through all the regions where genocides such as the Kurdish one and those of indigenous and Afro-descendant populations are underway, we are all potentially under the bombs and the threat of destruction, repression and authoritarian change. We know well that the revolving doors between so-called democracies and the so-called autocracies can move very quickly, and that the state of war quickly reduces the space for those who want to act for social transformation. We always give our human solidarity to those who suffer and risk their lives being in difficult situations, even if they have ideas and practices that are distant from those we express.

However, social anarchism breaks the current imperial, capitalist, nationalist and authoritarian logics, rejecting the divisions imposed by borders. We do not recognize the concept of territorial integrity or territorial "defence" of a state or any entity that aspires to be like a state because, associated with the principle of territorial sovereignty, these principles inevitably end up to foster nationalist or micro-nationalist perspectives. Whatever the word "nation" means, it hides the division between exploiters and exploited, between oppressors and oppressed.

We reiterate our irrevocable and unambiguous condemnation of the Putinian regime and of its criminal invasion of Ukraine, as well as its ferocious repression of internal dissent. But we also condemn the criminal role of all governments that blow on the flames of this and other conflicts by providing weapons, often making money with these supplies. We strongly oppose NATO, which has long been trying to impose the militarization of social life and the increase of military spending in member countries, and which thanks to Putin has gained new strength after the inglorious end of their aggression in Afghanistan. In the same way, we don't buy the narrative of a war between freedom and dictatorship. From this point of view, Zelensky's Ukraine is truly a small Russia, with an authoritarian government, a circle of oligarchs who plunder the country, acting a repression against all forms of protest and against minorities that the war has made harder. Today Zelensky, in order to remain in power, is making debts and sells his country to the US, the United Kingdom, the European Union in exchange of their military support. Yet, the penetration of Western interests in Ukraine is far from being only due to the Russian invasion of February 24: multinational agri-food companies, many from the United States and one from Russia, control part of the "granary" of Europe and its main commercial port in Odessa since over 10 years.

The consequences of this war are dramatic on both sides of the front. They are disastrous also for the rest of Europe, with the increase in prices due to speculation, the growing militarization and rearmament, the worsening of

the living conditions of millions of proletarians, including fear and violence, which risk to become dangerous tools for authoritarian governments. This situation is once again perceived in Europe, but it actually characterises most regions of the world, paralleling the environmental devastation fostered by the logics of profit, markets and states, which threaten the very life of the planet where we live.

The first commitment of those who oppose the war is the construction and dissemination of mutual aid practices such as networks of solidarity from below to fulfil the immediate needs of the people who suffer most from the consequences of the conflict, being these food or medical support. There is also the need of support networks for those who practice strikes, sabotage, desertion, such as transnational networks for those who hide or flee from or over both sides of the front. In this vein, we reject and fight to deconstruct the patriarchal and domination models imposed by militarism that are endlessly repeated by the war propaganda on official media and on social media as well, where centre stage is always taken the same images of robust and young male fighters.

From various parts it was suggested to take a stand by actually fighting for one of the governments that make this war, as if taking sides for one or the other were inevitable.

Some relics of Marxism think that they can support a minor imperialism in order to defeat the prevailing threat that they identify with the "Western" one. But the strategy of playing with imperialist powers to sharpen their contradictions, like the alliance between workers' movements and nationalist forces that characterized Stalinism between the two world wars and after, led to destroy all revolutionary perspective and to hinder all autonomous action of the exploited and oppressed classes.

Other interpretations follow different approaches, assessing Russian imperialism as a danger for the whole of Europe and beyond. These interpretations are also endorsed by some components of libertarian orientation.

Without questioning the threat posed by Russia's authoritarianism and militarism, we believe that it will not be Russia's military defeat in Ukraine that will prevent an authoritarian turn in Western Europe. The authoritarian social processes that are evidently dominant in Russia and in the OTSC countries are also being acted since years in the European Union, and the war is now giving them a further acceleration. Furthermore, "democracy" is based on the condition of someone's privilege. The vision that presents the European Union as a beacon of democracy, identifying instead Russia, China and their satellites as the heirs of totalitarianism combined with wild capitalism is the quintessence of a Westernism that does not belong to us.

These are our positions, confirming our anti-militarism in an internationalist and revolutionary perspective that should be concretely rooted in social struggles and networks of solidarity, to create collective and libertarian ways out from the vortex of war into which states and world capitalism throw us. This is our contribution to the international anti-war debate. We think that one thing must be clear above all: with or without weapons, to be effective, any fight must be done and organized from below, outside the apparatuses of states, governments and especially outside the armed forces.

Even the belligerent or co-belligerent governments are aware that the war will imply massacres and devastation in the areas directly affected, but also misery, unemployment and hunger in the rest of the world, even in Europe, even in the United States. Governments are aware that the conditions are ripening for an unprecedented social crisis, which is why they are making the brass bands of militarism and nationalism play, to prevent the solidarity of the exploited and oppressed classes.

Since governments are the promoters and beneficiaries of wars, to stop wars, governments must be afraid of popular movements, because the only limit to the whim of each government is the fear that popular movements can instil in it. Opposition to the war is part of our daily commitment, star-

ting from the denunciation and boycott of the productions of death and from the criticism and deconstruction of militarist rhetoric, starting from militarist education and language at all levels. We must stand against all wars and all armies deploying an intersectional strategy that identifies and counters the connections between militarism and other forms of oppression such as patriarchy, racism, capitalism and all kinds of chauvinism, through collective actions as well as personal relationships.

Only the action of the exploited classes can stop the war by boycotting war productions, by refusing to construct, trade and transport weapons and all instruments of death, by participating in the opposition movements to military plants and bases, and by promoting strikes at the national and international level against war and the war economy. The anarchist movement participates in this struggles, in different ways according to the circumstances, by criticising militarist and nationalist ideologies, constructing grass-roots associations and networks from below, practicing direct action, supporting all forms of refusal, desertion and objection to the massacres promoted by capitalism and states.

We are more than ever convinced of the validity of the anarchist principle that means must be consistent with ends. There are no good wars or just wars, and in times of growing nationalist and sovereignist craziness we believe that we must never side in any way with governments or take part in wars between states and imperial blocs. People must never die or kill for territorial sovereignty. Wars are all criminal and armies (including their auxiliary corps) are all instruments of exploitation, patriarchy and more or less "legitimate" state domination over territories and over the bodies of individuals. We do not recognize any of these territorial legitimacies and we are not willing to fight for any of them.

History shows that wars are traditionally fought to hinder the action of the exploited classes for their own emancipation, which is why it is paramount for anarchism to mobilise now against the war, outside and against all mili-

tary institutions. Our strength lies first in the circulation of ideas and in the defence of spaces for the production and circulation of critical thought, promoting the unification of pacifist and anti-militarist movements in a common struggle against governments. The ability of the anarchist movement to be coherent in the fight against war is the way to activate libertarian practices, organization and ideals among the exploited and oppressed classes that are the first to suffer the consequences of wars. On this basis, a new agency will be possible to provide a different solution to the crisis, looking forward to building a libertarian society.

Italian Anarchist Federation - FAI

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INTERNATIONALIST MANIFESTO AGAINST CAPITALIST WAR AND PEACE IN UKRAINE...

“Their wars! Our dead!” It was under this banner that radical proletarians distanced themselves from the pacifist processions organized in the streets of Spain in March 2004 after the massacre attacks in Madrid that left more than 200 dead. They put forward this defeatist motto in response to Spain’s military engagement in Iraq and the “War on Terror” imposed by the world capitalist State and its Spanish branch, thus echoing the many historical manifestations of revolutionary defeatism that punctuate the development of class societies and therefore of class struggle, of class war.

As social-revolutionary proletarians, communists, anarchists..., we have absolutely no material interest in siding in any way with the capitalist State and its democracy, whatever it looks like, with our class enemies, with our exploiters, with those who have always harshly given us back “bullets, machine guns and prison” when we struggle and take to the streets to claim our humanity. And this, regardless of the nature and political orientation of the regime in place in homeland A or homeland B, which are confronting

each other in an interstate conflict for their own interests of conquest and power. We will never express any solidarity with any of our exploiters!

Their interests! Our dead! We do not take a stand for any of the States in conflict, whether one is categorized according to the dominant bourgeois political morality as “the aggressor” and the other as “the aggressed” or vice versa. Their respective interests at stake are exclusively theirs and in total opposition to those of the exploited class, that is, us proletarians; this is why, outside and against all nationalism, all patriotism, all regionalism, all localism, all particularism, we affirm loud and clear our internationalism!

The proletariat, as a revolutionary class, does not show any neutrality towards any of its exploiters who confront each other in the redistribution of their market shares, but on the contrary, it equally rejects them as two sides of the same reality, the world of exploitation of one class by another, and it expresses its deep solidarity with all the sectors of our class that are undergoing the multiplied assaults of one or the other of its historical enemies. But let us be clear, we will never ever deny the proletarians the imperative need to defend themselves against any aggression, repression, torture, massacre...

And here, in the present case, the proletarians in Ukraine no longer have in front of them only their usual, daily enemy, i.e. the “aggressed” Ukrainian State and its local bourgeois (called “oligarchs” to better hide their real class nature, as if they were different from all the other capitalists elsewhere in the world), they do not only have to undergo the attacks of their own bourgeoisie (with wage cuts, layoffs, war economy, repression of the subsequent strike movements), but since February 24th of this year, they also have to face the military offensive of the “aggressor” State of the Russian capitalists with their army, their bombings, their missiles, their daily massacres...

Their Nations! Our dead! And to all the warmongers of the left and far left

of Capital who will once again accuse revolutionaries of being “neutral” and not “taking a stand”, we answer them that it’s quite the contrary that we propose in this manifesto and in our militant activity in general: we take an unwavering stand for the party of the proletariat and the defense of its historical and immediate interests, we stand up for its action of subversion of this world of war and misery, we stand up for the development, the generalization, the coordination and the centralization of the already existing acts of fraternization, desertion, mutiny on both sides of the front, against both belligerents, against both States, against both nations, against both local fractions of the world bourgeoisie... We stand up for the extension of these struggles and their organic connection as moments of a totality with all the struggles that have been happening since several months, everywhere under the black sun of the social dictatorship of Capital, whether in Sri Lanka, Peru, Iran, Ecuador or Libya...

We stand up for the development of the third camp, the only camp that defends the global interests of the proletariat in its immediate and historical struggle against exploitation, wage labor, misery and war. This third camp is that of the internationalist revolutionary proletariat, which opposes all the bourgeois warring camps, it is the camp of our class brothers and sisters who fight for their own interests, which are antagonistic to the interests of all those who defend private property, money and social order that goes with it...

Their peace! Our exploitation! If we categorically reject all bourgeois wars, in which the proletariat serves only as cannon fodder, no matter which camp it is incorporated into, we reject “peace” just as much and with the same force, “peace” which is nothing else than the inverted but complementary moment of “war”. Peace is only a moment of reconstruction between two wars, because war is necessary for Capital to temporarily solve the crises inherent to its mode of production. But war is also the supreme moment of social peace, and the latter is only the materialization of the permanent war waged against our class through the exploitation of

our labor power, the commodification of our lives and the alienation of our existences.

Coming back to Ukraine, we would like to stress here that if we strongly oppose the support of any side in the current war, which is nothing but an interstate war, if we refuse to take sides with one or the other of the bourgeois belligerents, both the “occupied” Ukrainian “aggresed” and the “occupying” Russian “aggressor”, our judgement is different and even antagonistic when analyzing the events that took place just a few weeks before the beginning of the war in Ukraine. We are talking about the military repression in Kazakhstan and the “occupation” of this country by elite troops of the Russian army: one “occupation” is not necessarily equal to another!

Our revolts! Our deaths! Obviously, nobody was shocked, or very few were, by the repression of the workers’ uprising in Kazakhstan last January, and for good reason. Not even in the West, where finally the capitalists understood very quickly that the Russian bourgeoisie, by “invading” Kazakhstan which had become socially out of control, by crushing the revolting proletariat, by restoring through terror the order of big business, the order of international business, was in fact objectively working for the interests of all the capitalists, and therefore also of the multinationals which have their headquarters in the West. Here lies the whole difference in nature between on the one hand the “occupation” of Kazakhstan to repress a social movement that partially endangered the present order of things, the capitalist order, and on the other hand the “occupation” of a part of Ukraine in a conflict that responds to geostrategic interests between different fractions of the same world Capital.

Everybody will easily understand that the proletarian approach to these two types of occupation, and how to take sides, will be totally different. In the case, as in Ukraine, where there are two bourgeois actors who confront each other, to take position and to commit oneself against one of them,

against the “aggressor” (here in this case, the Russian State), but not against the other, the “aggrieved” (the Ukrainian State), comes objectively, and especially in an eminently practical way, whether one likes it or not, in spite of one’s own will, in spite of what one affirms, to commit oneself with and to support the latter, and this all the more so in the absence of any real dynamic of autonomization towards the military structures, the supply structures, which frame this commitment. Because let’s not delude ourselves, there was not before the outbreak of the war, and there is not for the moment, any strong revolutionary movement in Ukraine, sufficiently antagonistic so that it can assert the social power of our class and defend its immediate and historical interests.

On the other hand, in the case of a proletarian uprising in a given region which the bourgeoisie is obliged to repress by the contribution of an “external” intervention force (because of the defeatism which undermines the local forces of repression), the resulting “occupation” takes on a completely different character. Our enemy is our own bourgeoisie, of course, but it is above all the bourgeoisie that we have directly in front of us, the one repressing us, the one bombing us, the one massacring us, the one taking the place of the bourgeois fraction that initially exploited us, the one that substitutes for it. Of course, we understand that against an “aggression”, against an “occupation”, against massacres and repression, the proletarians want to resist, to take up arms, to defend themselves... But as much in Kazakhstan this armed resistance would have for goal to defend the social uprising, to defend an embryo of revolutionary dynamics, as much in Ukraine the resistance of the proletarians, once again if it is limited only to one of the protagonists of the warlike confrontation, risks very quickly to annihilate itself in the arms of the Ukrainian State, of its allies and their bourgeois interests. This is at least what the history of the struggles of our class has always shown us, until proven otherwise... and the historical example of Spain 1936-37 is revealing in this respect since the revolution was sacrificed there in the name of a “lesser evil” to defend, the bourgeois

republic, the anti-fascist popular front, faced with what was represented as “the absolute evil”: fascism.

In Spain yesterday as in Rojava and in Ukraine today, “the people in arms” is not, far from it, the armed proletariat; armed with the weapons of criticism that allow to develop the real criticism with weapons...

We can therefore only salute the proletarians who refuse to position themselves in one or the other of the bourgeois camps in presence and who, on the contrary, affirm their internationalism and organize themselves to oppose the two enemy brothers. Like in the 80’s of the last century when “Iraqi” deserters organized themselves with “Iranian” deserters, during the terrible butchery that lasted eight long years, and when they joined their forces to fight together both bourgeois armies.

Greetings therefore to the proletarian women in Ukraine, both in the western region of Transcarpathia (thus under Ukrainian military administration) and in Donbass, in the “eastern provinces” (thus under Russian military administration), who took to the streets to express their contempt for the “defense of the homeland” and to demand the return of their sons, their brothers, their relatives sent to any of the fronts to defend interests that are not their own.

Greetings to the proletarians in Ukraine who are secretly sheltering Russian soldiers who deserted, at their own risk because when they are arrested, either by the Russian military authorities, or by the Ukrainian ones, they are made to understand where the legal force is in this filthy world, which side and which homeland they have to defend and that no fraternization will be tolerated.

Greetings to the proletarians in Ukraine, who in spite of the compulsory conscription, flee their incorporation in military units by all means at their disposal, legal or not, and thus refuse to sacrifice themselves and to serve under the folds of the Ukrainian national rag.

Greetings to the Russian soldiers who, since the beginning of the “special operations” in Ukraine, have been fleeing the war and its massacres, abandoning tanks and armored vehicles in working order, and seeking their salvation in flight, via networks of solidarity with deserters from both armies.

Greetings also (although the information on this subject is less sure, war of press releases and military propaganda obliges!) to the 600 soldiers of the Russian Marine Corps who refused at the very beginning of the conflict to disembark, thus making scuttle an amphibious landing in the area of Odesa.

Greetings also (with the same reservations) to the Russian soldiers who mutinied and refused to assault Kharkov, also at the very beginning of the conflict.

Greetings to the soldiers of the army of the “Donetsk People’s Republic”, forcibly incorporated and sent to the Mariupol front, who refused to continue to fight, to serve as “cannon fodder” (according to their own expression!), while this time they were sent to defend the neighboring “Lugansk People’s Republic”.

Greetings to the rebels and saboteurs who in the Russian Federation have already burned down dozens of military recruitment offices and other offices of pigs all over the country.

Greetings to the railroad workers in Belarus who have repeatedly sabotaged railroad tracks, which are essential to maintaining the supply lines of the Russian army deployed in Ukraine.

Greetings to the proletarians in Ukraine who, as soon as the first bombings began, started to organize collective looting of stores abandoned by their owners, of supermarkets and shopping malls, as was reported in Melitopol, Mariupol, Kherson and even Kharkov, thus putting forward the satisfaction of their elementary needs of survival against all laws and morals that protect private property.

Greetings to all the proletarians on the Homefront who organize strikes and refuse to offer their labor and their sweat to the war economy, to the economy of social peace, and thus to the economy at all, whether they are conscious of it or not. And finally, greetings to the proletarians, railway workers, dockers... in Europe, in Greece, in England... who refuse to transport military equipment for NATO to Ukraine. Greetings then to all of you who refuse to sacrifice yourselves on the altar of war, misery and homeland!!!

And the day, which we hope is very close, when the proletarians will take to the streets of Moscow and Kiev, and of all the big urban areas of Russia and Ukraine, chanting with one voice “Putin and Zelenski, get out!”, then we will answer in our turn, referring to the comrades who brandished in the streets of Argentina some twenty years ago the motto “¡Que se vayan todos!”, may all of them get out, may them get the hell out, the Biden, Johnson, Macron, Scholz, Sanchez, von der Leyen, Michel, Stoltenberg... all these war and misery mongers... and all of those, absolutely all of those, who are lining up for the political alternation!

But let's be clear: they are only go-betweens in this system of generalized prostitution that is wage labor, the mandatory sale of our labor force. Beyond all the people who embody the social dictatorship of Capital, the latter is above all an impersonal social relation that can be, is and has been reproduced by any element, bourgeois or proletarian, co-opted to do so. So, even if we fully share the joy of the proletarians in Sri Lanka who, after having driven out the incumbent president a few days ago, invaded his presidential palace and dived into his luxury swimming pool, the question we have to ask ourselves is: how to push the revolutionary dynamic to its ultimate consequences, how to expropriate the possessing class and reappropriate our means of existence... and above all how not to go backwards!? This is where the genuine human adventure begins...

Class War – July 31st, 2022

ANARCHIST ORGANIZATION IN TIMES OF WAR AND CRISIS

Article by Ukrainian anarchist Saša Kaluža on the situation following the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine.

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On February 24, Russian Federation troops began a so-called operation in Ukraine with the officially stated goal of demilitarizing and denazifying the country and overthrowing the current president and the rest of the top brass of the current government in Ukraine. It is worth noting that the Russian Federation does not use the word war in official statements, instead using the concept of operation, while the Ukrainian authorities call it war, but nevertheless have not officially declared war on Russia. Both sides use the concepts of war, occupation, invasion, liberation, demilitarization, and others against each other for propaganda, disinformation, and to raise patriotic and nationalist sentiments. This is a modern way of falsifying concepts and engaging in false rhetoric about war. If it is an operation and not a war, the figures provided about military losses or civilian casualties may no longer sound so scary. If it is an occupation, it sounds scarier than just an attack, it means that the attack does not end in defeat, but is followed by

something even more lasting. The terms fascism and nazism sound here and there, losing any of their original meaning.

The Russian armed forces' attack on Ukraine is a good example of modern unconventional warfare, where there are no clear borders and front lines, the tactics of capture and hold are not used everywhere, but mainly in strategically important places, a wide range of modern technological weapons and countermeasures to them are used. In the first days instead of a repressive policy of occupation and total destruction a more cunning tactic of dynamic passage and occupation of the most important objects in the country is used (Kherson dam, Chernobyl nuclear power plant, blocking of large cities, seizing airfields, major logistical hubs, highways, road junctions and so on) which can immediately be used for more political and economic pressure and propaganda. In the application of such intensive tactics of passage, the countryside, which covers a huge part of Ukraine, remains poorly or uncontrolled if no important, large military bases or strategic facilities are located there. Creating counterinsurgency or guerrilla-type structures in the countryside and acting proactively using hit-and-run tactics from the first days of the war could significantly alter the balance of power early on and significantly reduce the speed of Russian troop advance. However, the Ukrainian government and the Ukrainian Armed Forces decided to act in the classic way, to form volunteer armed structures primarily in urban centers and concentrate most of the military forces there, perhaps because the government wanted to protect what was more valuable, closer and more understandable to them, or because it lacked understanding of military affairs. In this way in the first week of fighting, almost all large cities in eastern and central Ukraine, including Kiev, are surrounded by Russian troops and will probably experience a complete blockade in the near future.

Another distinctive feature of the events of recent weeks has been the so-called "cyber war," which for the first time is taking place on such a large scale and using many resources on both sides, aiming both to obtain com-

promising or intelligence data and to obstruct state and civilian resources and infrastructures. So is the intense, global information warfare coming from all directions and to all corners of the world, as is usually the case when wars are fought within Europe. While wars and conflicts in the Middle East, Africa and other regions of the so-called Third World are no longer of interest to the European media or to the media in those regions anymore.

Crisis situation

Immediately from the first days of hostilities, people all over Ukraine were able to observe all the related war factors: all the large-scale panic, lack of relevant and credible information, spontaneous population displacement from the country, the ensuing transport collapse, strikes against civilian objects and disruption of transport and logistics infrastructures, numerous civilian casualties and victims and lack of assistance and support provided to them. The Ukrainian state, like any other in such a situation, is unable to support its population and provide for its immediate needs, as all resources have been thrown into defense and the confrontation with Russia. As a consequence, the government is losing the trust of the ordinary people of the country. The situation is further aggravated by impulsive decisions of the government and the Department of Defense, such as the poorly controlled distribution of weapons and the consequent shootings of civilians and its own military, the provoked “witch-hunt” and the increase of banditry and looting in the streets, which the state security agencies are no longer able to fully control. Nor are any state initiatives involving volunteers, such as the “territorial defense,” which is part of the Ukrainian armed forces and for which decisions and orders are taken from above.

Territorial Defense is a good and telling example of how volunteer structures initiated and controlled by the state can only perform volunteer support functions within the state, by state methods and only to protect the state itself, and cannot actually help the population with security and other prima-

ry needs that arise in crisis situations, which provokes an even greater exodus of people from the country and more victims.

Assurances from Ukrainian pro-government resources that Russia cannot fight for long, that it should focus on supporting the army and engage in territorial defense, are in fact shortsighted. The Russian government has plans, ways, and has more resources to beat the crisis at home than does the Ukrainian government. The supply of weapons and finance by European countries to Ukraine does not change the fact that the strategically important military, civilian and logistical infrastructure continues to be destroyed by Russian military strikes and its restoration will require a long time and enormous resources that the Ukrainian government currently lacks. The war threatens to plunge Ukraine into a deep humanitarian crisis and make the country a wasteland, uninhabitable for years to come.

Anarchist Action

Crisis situations like the one that is currently taking place in Ukraine always contribute to a change in society's self-esteem and self-consciousness, a loss of trust or a rethinking of power and the state system, no matter whether it is the state of Ukraine or the Russian state. When there is a loss of trust, a sense of deceit or abandonment, society is more open to self-organization, initiative and creation or participation in structures or initiatives that are an alternative to the state, created horizontally, with an open possibility to participate for all, in accordance with their desires or abilities and providing the most important aspects of life and urgent needs that society is experiencing at the moment. For example, ensuring security in one's neighborhood, town, or village, keeping the staff and vital facilities such as power plants, water supply stations, boilers, hospitals, and fire stations, as well as supplying facilities such as grocery stores, pharmaceutical stores, and businesses. Ensuring the safety of movement in the city, in neighborhoods and on roads, taking measures against banditry, robbery, attacks, whether by organized criminal groups or individuals, military or

security forces of any states and structures presently in the territory.

The anarchist ideology that refuses to accept any form of power, authority and discrimination, and implies the creation of horizontal alternatives, self-organization, self-sufficiency and self-protection of society, in which anyone willing to participate as equals, regardless of gender or nationality, could participate and fully play their role – can be successfully put into practice in the current situation in Ukraine. As written above, many people are losing trust in a government that can't meet their safety and primary needs, and are thus much more actively seeking all sorts of alternatives to organize themselves, either on their own initiative or on the initiative of others. Anarchists can put forward such initiatives, despite the fact that for 8 years now the Ukrainian state has promoted patriotism propaganda, a military cult, supported nationalist and fascist organizations and movements, and repressed the anarchist movement.

By starting to act in an organized way, locally, starting with small neighborhoods and groups, you will already see results, acceptance and support of a self-organizing society without the government and the state. A good example that I came across was in Melitopol, local residents organized a daily gathering at the local House of Culture and signed up everyone who wished to patrol the city and monitor safety; they split into groups of 5 people based on their neighborhoods, appointed a senior for each group, chose a time of service and began patrolling the areas and streets. They made a separate 24-hour phone number for calls and emergencies and distributed it among the population. In essence, an alternative to the police, which no longer functioned in the city, was created without the involvement of any state institution.

The further the war and crisis progresses, there will be more of such examples and the anarchist movement may be in a prime position to organize such examples and experiences.

It's a good idea to walk around in your neighborhood, village, or town and

ask the people there (if you don't already know) what their biggest needs are, what kind of service they need, and what kind of help they need. After that, get together with like-minded people and figure out how to work out how to solve these things together and organize with the residents. How to ensure food supplies in an organized manner, under regular shelling, to keep the risk of being killed to a minimum. How to restore water supplies, repair broken electrical wires, or find alternative sources for heating and electricity. How to collect life-saving medicines for those in need or provide medical care when medical institutions are not functioning.

We and people who live in our neighborhoods can have knowledge of such issues. We do not need the state and the power of some over others to solve such problems. By organizing ourselves in such a situation, a community of people will be able to achieve self-sufficiency in meeting its basic needs, without the involvement of any forces from outside, be it humanitarian aid from Russia or the EU, and to show an example of successful self-organization to others.

Without cooperating with any state, without falling into the patriotism and Russophobia that the Ukrainian media so easily use, by organizing ourselves on the principles and methods of anarchism, primarily among the most needy and suffering from the wars of two states, ordinary people who are abandoned by the state and left to their fate, we can set an example of anarchist practice.

Initiatives such as the Resistance Committee are formed within the military structure of the Ukrainian state. They are not anarchist initiatives, even though most of the participants are anarchists. All territorial defense structures are controlled by the Ukrainian Armed Forces, their actions and capabilities are limited by the strategy and policies of the state and the Ministry of Defense. We can only have a dialogue or compromise with the state when we have strength and sufficient support from the people, otherwise we will end up repressed in prisons or destroyed by any of the opposing

forces, whether it is the Ukrainian armed forces and the nationalist formations on their side or the Russian armed forces and the FSB. Perhaps we will see more positive examples of anarchist organizing in Ukraine, military and civilian in the future.

The goal of the Ukrainian state and their military structures in this war is to keep their power, the goal of the Russian state and their military structures is to seize power. The participation of anarchists in the structures of either of these states does not make the situation any easier for the people living in Ukraine, who are suffering from the war between two states. All the words about the army defending people, society and their land are only part of state propaganda, and history shows this. It is only possible to stop the war by opposing both states.

Once we start practicing anarchist ways of organizing and showing others how we can organize ourselves, we will see how widespread the support will be, both from the people we organize with and from foreign anarchists and others willing to support and participate in anarchist initiatives. Instead of a policy of senseless destruction and annihilation that is inherent in states, create a policy of reconstruction, self-defense, participation, and assistance. We can achieve this by believing in ourselves, organizing and acting together with others.

REVOLUTIONARY DEFEATISM AND ITS ENEMIES

CW's presentation:

Here we publish the Barbaria group's latest contribution on the war in Ukraine and the struggle against the two bourgeois camps involved. Barbaria correctly reaffirms the only proletarian alternative to the negation of our humanity, whether at work or at war: revolutionary defeatism and the transformation of the capitalist war between States into a revolutionary war between classes.

However, there is a problem that we find hard to swallow: we refuse to follow the comrades of the Barbaria group when they quote Lenin (even if the quotation may be correct), as if this figure had been a comrade of our class, of our party, as if he (and his party as a political structuring) had not been, in all the processes in which our class tried to emerge from the void of its alienation, one of the most radical elements of historical social democracy (i.e., the bourgeois party for the workers) and thus of the reconstitution of the State in Russia shaken by the wave of proletarian insurrection.

Moreover, as far as Lenin's role in the anti-war struggle is concerned, we simply affirm that neither the Zimmerwald Conference, which was in fact a meeting of the "non-warmongering" and pacifist international social-democracy, nor even the so-called "Zimmerwald Left", which only had the

color of revolution without really having any of its attributes, represented any kind of genuine response from our class to the global carnage. On the other hand, we do indeed claim all the communist (and/or anarchist) ruptures that will affirm themselves outside and against the fact to bring the proletariat into line.

And consequently, we also refuse to consider the group Matériaux critiques (Critical Materials) as “comrades”, as Barbaria’s text asserts. Whatever the importance of certain statements made by this group, it has never, ever, truly broken with Leninism, with Bolshevism – quite the contrary!

That being said, we hope you will enjoy reading this contribution...

Class War – May 29th, 2023

#

«Shamed, disgraced, swimming in blood and dripping with filth: this is how we see capitalist society. Not as we always see it, playing roles of peace and righteousness, order, philosophy, ethics, but as a vociferous beast, an orgy of anarchy, pestilent mist, devastator of culture and humanity: thus it appears to us in all its horrifying crudity.»^[1]

- Rosa Luxemburg -

INTRODUCTION

A year into the Ukrainian war, in light of the course of events, it should be more evident than ever that this is an imperialist war. We have seen how, progressively, a greater number of states have become more and more involved in the massacre of Ukrainian and Russian proletarians for the defense of their geopolitical interests. In this context, it should be more evident than ever what are the revolutionary positions to defend regarding the war. However, this is not always the case. Within some currents which claim to be revolutionary, campist positions continue to be affirmed on the basis of the most diverse arguments which deny revolutionary defeatism

and, therefore, the past lessons of our tradition.

In our understanding, these currents, by choosing an imperialist side, have decided to turn their backs on internationalism and the principle of class independence and, with this, have automatically abandoned the revolutionary camp. In this text, we propose to give an account of the arguments of organizations which without coming from the left of capital separate themselves from class positions by abandoning the positions of revolutionary defeatism, as well as those of other organizations which do come from the left of capital and which by not breaking with the ideological counterrevolution, reproduce the campist arguments of always choosing a lesser evil within the inter-capitalist conflicts.

THE CAMPIST POSITIONS

Supporting the Ukrainian people: the workerist fetishism of self-organization

One of the arguments that has been used to defend a pro-Ukrainian campist position is the idea that one should be in solidarity with the Ukrainian people who are self-organizing for the defense of their homes and land. In the text of John Garvey^[2] published in the magazine *Insurgent Notes* he says he supports not the Ukrainian state but the Ukrainian people, the Ukrainian workers self-organized in militias against the offensive of the Russian state. In *Avtonom* they emphasize that not only the Ukrainian army fights against the Russian army, but also the territorial defense units: ordinary people who now have weapons and could keep them from now on and demand respect from the authorities^[3].

The ties that these ordinary armed people are weaving fighting together with their bourgeoisie to defend the Ukrainian state are not going to disappear overnight. Their experience of collaboration against an external enemy is not going to lead the proletariat, once the war is over, to fight against its bourgeoisie, however armed it may be. History has shown that

interclass collaboration in defense of the state in war does not favor a greater class struggle but the opposite: the popular fronts and the victory of the Allies in World War II did not lead to a wave of revolutions but contributed to nullify the class struggle; and the same happened in the anti-colonial wars of national independence. On the other hand, the proletarian revolution did go hand in hand with the revolutionary defeatism that managed to put an end to the First World War.

Indeed, there are self-organized militias calling themselves anarchists formed by sociologically proletarian people^[4]. However, proletarian people do not always act in a revolutionary sense, they do not always act as proletariat, as a class, no matter how many radical denominations they identify themselves with. The proletariat only constitutes itself as a class to the extent that it achieves class independence, appropriates its doctrine and adheres to its historical program. Insofar as these militias do not turn their arms against the Ukrainian state and its bourgeoisie but defend it and depend on it, supporting them means directly supporting interclassism and the defense of the bourgeois state. And this is the opposite of defending the revolution.

We regret that some groups that think they are revolutionary are ready to exchange the principles of class independence and internationalism for workerist support for any practical activity in which the sociological working class is present even if it goes directly against the historical and immediate interests of the proletariat. In this situation, we consider it necessary to criticize these positions which, defending these forms of self-organization, end up supporting an interclassism which undermines the real possibility of the self-organization of the class. It is necessary to clearly oppose these self-styled libertarian organizations in Ukraine such as RevDia, Black Flag or Black Headquarter^[5], which have armed and organized themselves into militias to fight side by side with their bourgeoisie for the defense of the territory against the Russian invasion, as well as initiatives such as Solidarity Collectives^[6], previously Operation Soli-

clarity, a network that collects funds to arm «non-authoritarian» anti-fascist and anarchist battalions in Ukraine. These organizations must be seen as enemies of our class, as they actively work to keep Russian and Ukrainian proletarians killing each other instead of uniting and confronting their real oppressors.

Solidarity with lesser imperialism

There are also those who justify their pro-Ukrainian defencist positions by arguing that this war is only imperialist on one side. It would be an imperialist country, Russia, subjugating a smaller country, Ukraine, which is simply trying to defend itself. For example, the Militant Anarchist group states:

«All states are concentration camps. But what is happening now in Ukraine goes beyond this simple formula, and the principle that every anarchist must fight for the defeat of his country in the war. Because this is not simply a war between two broadly similar powers for the redistribution of spheres of influence of capital (...). What is happening in Ukraine now is an act of imperialist aggression»^[7].

Since it is not a war between equal powers, Militant Anarchist, like the Avtonom group or the article quoted from Insurgent Notes, have concluded that the correct thing to do was to show solidarity with the weaker power and its defense of its territory against the Russian invasion; to show solidarity – they will say – with the Ukrainian people, with the people defending their land and their homes. But what kind of solidarity is that which sends the proletariat to die and kill other proletarians for the national bourgeois interests, even if it is a weak nation? Solidarity to defend a state which forbids men to flee the country to safety, forcing them to fight and die for the fatherland? With whom are they really showing solidarity? Certainly not with the proletariat.

For us, solidarity is the comradeship between Russian and Ukrainian pro-

letarians against the imperialist war, against their respective bourgeoisies. The mass protests in Russia, with thousands of arrests; the disobedience, desertion and flight in the face of forced mobilization in both countries; or the railway sabotage in Belarus, etc.; these are signs of internationalist solidarity and proletarian instinct. We support those who oppose their ruling classes, boycott their plans and refuse to kill or be killed in the name of the nation. This implies a critique of all national bourgeoisies and, therefore, no solidarity with any in the name of a lesser evil.

It is not a question of making a moralistic critique of the actions of the Russian or Ukrainian government or of the US and European governments, but of understanding the intrinsically imperialist tendency of every state, also of the smaller or “subaltern” states like Ukraine. Imperialism is the political and international expression of the accumulation of capital, of world capitalist competition. Every state has a capital and a territory to defend, a bourgeoisie in struggle with other bourgeoisies to appropriate its share of surplus value and to have access to natural resources and a certain labor force. On certain occasions, capitalist competition pushes states to wage war, both in the case of large or dominant states and in the case of small or subaltern states^[8]. Both dominant and subordinate states are imperialist and will fight their wars against other states sacrificing the lives of their proletariat to protect the interests of their bourgeoisies.

Indeed, it is not a war between equal powers and yet this does not mean that it is not an imperialist war and should not make us doubt about the relevance of revolutionary defeatism. On the other hand, we should not forget that the present war is not only between Russia and Ukraine, but that the whole Western imperialist bloc is also involved in the defense of the Ukrainian state. In any case, we cannot choose an imperialism for the fact of being minor or defend a state for the fact of having been the invaded one. Nor is it a question of thinking under what circumstances a state has the right to use bellicose means – in the face of an aggression on its territory, for example – and under what circumstances it does not, what

measures are lawful and what are not, and, then, on the basis of all this, to choose the supposedly more «just» side. Let us leave this to the deliberations of bourgeois theoreticians, since it does us little service^[9]. As we already argued in *Why Revolutionary Defeatism*, the Ukrainian proletariat, «*does not defend its existence in the imperialist war, but becomes cannon fodder for interests which are not its own: they are those of the Ukrainian bourgeoisie and those of the Western imperialist bloc which is behind it*». We know that every state will always go against the proletariat and that the only revolutionary side is that of the proletariat in struggle against its own state and bourgeoisie. That is why, in any imperialist war, the only revolutionary position is revolutionary defeatism: to turn the imperialist war into class war.

The tactic against principles: defend Ukrainian democracy against authoritarian Russia.

As during World War II, the question of the lesser evil embodied in the anti-fascist discourse is the leftist fuel to defend the imperialist carnage in favor of one of the two sides. In this case, the slogan of Spanish Stalinism during 1936 of «first win the war and then make the revolution» reappears and with it the alliance with the most progressive bourgeoisie. So what would have to be done is to fight against Putin since Russia is an authoritarian or directly fascist regime, and, therefore, Putin's victory would result in a much worse situation than the present one and the capacity of the revolutionaries to act would be much less. This is how John Garvey explains it to us in the American magazine *Insurgent* notes: “*On the other hand, it is essential that those who believe that each of the states at war is as bad as the other and that all nationalism is poisonous join in the arguments. We need to do away with false equivalents: a bourgeois republic, marred by excessive corruption, is not the same as a quasi-fascist autocracy. In the one, politics is possible; in the other, nothing but mindless consumption and collaboration is the rule of the day.*”^[10]

The same arguments have always been used by the bourgeoisie. The same arguments that anti-fascism has always used: there is always a lesser evil, a bourgeoisie to defend for the sake of a supposed future that never comes and never will come because the break with revolutionary principles will never create better conditions for the proletariat to organize. The only possibility is the defense of revolutionary defeatism against all bourgeoisie. We revolutionaries refuse to defend the politics of the possible because that is always under the corpses of our proletarian brothers. Yes, all nationalism is poison. Yes, all defense of the national bourgeoisie implies the negation of class independence. And when we deny proletarian internationalism and class autonomy we break with any real revolutionary perspective.

For this reason, when we speak of revolutionary defeatism we do not refer to a position to be taken at a given moment but which can vary depending on the situation of the class struggle. It is not a tactical question but the only weapon we have as a class to confront as revolutionaries the imperialist conflicts, any other alternative always leads to collaboration with the national bourgeoisie in defense of its interests. In this sense, nothing better than to let speak those who renounce a class policy in defense of an imperialist side. Specifically, to a Russian volunteer of the International Anti-authoritarian Forces of Ukraine who gives this opinion on defeatism:

“Revolutionary defeatism, NATO proxy war against Russia for me are quite insulting foreign myths for those who know what the Russian world brings. The society is almost united in its perception of the invasion as an attempt to oppress the people.” [11]

Here it is quite explicitly what we mean when we speak of abandoning the interests of the proletariat. We are told class antagonisms have all but disappeared – all are united harmoniously in sacred union under the national flag – despite that during the same interview there is talk of the problems of the Russian volunteers with the Ukrainian authorities because they are

Russians. And we should not expect otherwise, since in their national Eden there is no place for internationalism, given that the fundamental antagonism is national and not class-based. Better the national bourgeoisie than the foreign proletariat. Defending interclassism and the disappearance of any hint of class independence to avoid the Russian victory will not help to extend the class struggle when the war ends, nor will it help revolutionaries to be in a better position among the proletariat because we have sacrificed our principles for fleeting influence.

“Neither Putin nor NATO, but...”

Under this slogan which seemingly denounces the imperialist character of the war between blocs hides the support for the side opposed to that of the United States, which becomes the incarnation of capitalism. It is the same policy of the lesser evil in which the worst of the evils would be NATO as the armed wing of U.S. imperialism. In this case, instead of putting the spotlight on the Ukrainian «people» or directly on Putin’s authoritarian regime, what we should be talking about is NATO’s imperialist expansion towards the East.

Under this perspective, imperialism is fractured, placing the United States, and therefore NATO, at the top, to be followed by other imperialist powers, but of lesser importance. In this way, NATO and its interests are the cause of the war and as a consequence would be Russia’s response. In this sense, the analysis of the war in the last congress of the Spanish section of the International Marxist Current seems very relevant to us:

“This is not a war of Russia against Ukraine, it is a war of Russia against NATO and NATO is the imperialism of the United States. (...) It is an inter-imperialist war, but we have to be careful that the two imperialist powers involved in this war are not exactly the same. The United States is the most powerful and reactionary imperialist power in the world. Russia is an imperialist power that has imperialist ambitions but at the regional level.” [12]

A similar movement is the one that from the US and the United States has been moving in the same direction. A similar movement is that which from the publications of the Socialist Movement in Euskadi defends the People's Republics of Donbass as a third position differentiated from the support to Russia and Ukraine (which is obviously impossible, the republics of Donbass were always an appendage of Russian Imperialism). According to it, the Donbass Republics, which are in the East of Ukraine and on the border with Russia, would be defending their right to self-determination in the face of the increasing Western influence and the weight of fascism in the Euromaidan. Consequently, revolutionaries should not only support their struggle for independence but stand in solidarity with their anti-fascist resistance:

“Faced with this ethnocide led from the West, different collectives under attack united to defend themselves: anti-fascists, those who kept a good memory of the USSR, those who felt they belonged to Russia... but also those people who were persecuted for the simple fact of speaking Russian or those who did not think it was fair to endure poverty for living in the East. Thus, as it has been done in most Eastern countries, this question of class strata and multiple interests has been reduced to the mere struggle between «pro-Russian» and «pro-European.»” [13]

But this position breaks head-on with the two basic principles for revolutionaries: class independence and internationalism. The defense of the right of self-determination inevitably entails an interclassist position where class independence is subordinated to national interests, that is, to its national bourgeoisie. Thus, the proletariat instead of fighting against its exploitation should fight for a new state to administer that exploitation. On the other hand, any process of creation of a new state will inevitably imply rapprochement with one of the imperialist powers in search of economic and military protection, as we can now clearly see in the war. In this case, the Donbass Republics have to choose Russia's imperialist side in the conflict and those who defend them will have to support one of the imperialist

sides in the war. There is no third way:

“And what is the reaction of the Western «left» in the face of all this? In the Spanish state, as in many other places, the anti-Russian position has been a priority, before that of denouncing the fascism that is rampant in Kiev and the bombings in the East. The same people who, in the elections, are full of mouths against fascism in opposition to their rivals, have played into NATO’s hands by defending against «evil» Russia a government that has come to power in the heart of Europe with the explicit support of the Nazis. Meanwhile, the militias of the Donetsk and Lugansk People’s Republics are facing a professional army that has applied for NATO membership. In a war in which, due to a lack of resources, it is impossible for them to win from the beginning, they have no choice but to resist on the border with what they have at their disposal, making death and poverty their daily life.” [14]

The only possibility in the face of death and poverty is to fight the war, so they say, time and again. However, the way out of this crucible of misery, poverty, and war, is not for the proletariat to join the chorus of bourgeois in proclaiming a so-called the right of self-determination, but rather revolutionary defeatism. The proletariat can only fight against its exploitation if it maintains a position of class independence against any imperialist side and any national project.

As the comrades of Matériaux Critiques say, anti-imperialism is the most harmful by-product of imperialism[15] and under the umbrella of anti-imperialism everything fits because it simply gives a red varnish to the position favorable to an imperialist camp. Thus, in the end, it is the same to say that Russia is not imperialist or that it is only defending the right of self-determination of the Donbass republics as it is to put the spotlight on NATO as the greatest imperialist power, since the consequence in practice is the same, either in a more direct way or through brainy geopolitical analysis. As revolutionaries, we can only maintain a position of revolutionary defeatism.

Revolutionary defeatism: the only alternative

We have already seen the different ways in which defencism is expressed and attempts are made to justify support for one of the contending camps under a so-called revolutionary pretext. We have also seen that under the guise of denouncing the inter-imperialist conflict, NATO is placed with respect to Russia or Russia with respect to Ukraine as a greater imperialism and, therefore, the class barrier which must be, at all times, impenetrable, is blurred.

When we speak of revolutionary defeatism, we refer to the transformation of imperialist war into class civil war. It could be said that it is an empty phrase, a mere slogan without real political content behind it and, even, an accurate slogan but only for moments of strong class struggle. But reality shows us the opposite, the actuality of revolutionary defeatism is greater than ever, since it is the manifestation of the two foundations of all revolutionary politics: class independence and internationalism. The opposite of this still has the same character as what Lenin denounced in 1915:

“Today, unity with the opportunists means in fact the subordination of the working class to «its» national bourgeoisie and the alliance with it to oppress other nations and to fight for the privileges of every great power, which represents the split of the revolutionary proletariat of all countries.” [16]

It is important to stress the centrality of this programmatic position since, as we have explained in the article, although in different forms, to relent on this matter always implies the subordination of the proletariat to its national bourgeoisie and the fallacious suspension of the class struggle for the interests of the nation. The proletariat ceases to be a worldwide class with the same interests determined by its social position and is divided by nations with conflicting interests, since its interests are those of national capital competing in the world market. When we say that once revolutionaries position themselves with an imperialist camp there is no turning back –

i.e., that they become part of the bourgeois camp – this is what we mean. That is why revolutionary defeatism is not a mere tactical question that has its usefulness in moments where the class has a revolutionary role, but a question of principle that separates the revolutionary camp from the bourgeois camp in a fundamental way. And the fact is that communists do not act according to the present moment and the capacity we have to act on the immediate, but our task is to maintain the line of the future in the present. Thus, maintaining and defending the importance of the positions serves so that the class can make them its own in the future.^[17]

[1] Quotation from «The Crisis of German Democracy», by Rosa Luxemburg.

[2] To be able to consult it, we leave you the article, called «Against the Russian Invasion of Ukraine, for the Successful Resistance of the Ukrainian People» from Insurgent Notes.

[3] Here is the article from Avtonom or Autonomous Action, called «Misconceptions about imperialism, and anarchist collective traumas».

[4] Here you can read more information about the Ukrainian self-styled anarchist militias.

[5] Ukrainian anarchists organize themselves into armed militias to fight Russian invaders, Público, 11/03/22.

[6] You can see their manifesto. A post on the (now disused) Operation Solidarity (the former organization from which Solidarity Collectives comes) page shows us the money spent by them and we can see that the vast majority of money in July 2022 had gone for military supplies.

[7] The position of Militant Anarchist on Russia's attack on Ukraine», in Russia: The position of anarchists against the invasion of Ukraine.

[8] This is developed by Matériaux Critiques in the text «Imperialism/anti-imperialism: Formulas for confusion.

[9] This point can be seen developed in our text «Ukraine, Russia and the importance of questions.

[10] The translation is ours.

[11] Here you can listen to the whole interview.

[12] Session of the Congress of the International Marxist Tendency in 2023.

[13] Ukraine and Novorossia five years later: the bloodshed between the three bourgeoisies.

[14] Ibidem. See also Jon Kortazar's articles in Gedar in defense of the Donbass republics. Articles written, as mentioned above, before the Russian invasion of February 2023, which in no way reduces the campist logic that animates these publications in defense of a lesser evil against Ukrainian fascism.

[15] We recommend the reading of the text of Matériaux Critiques, wherein they make a rigorous critique of anti-imperialism.

[16] V. I. Lenin (1915): Socialism and the war (The attitude of the P.O.S.S.D.R. to the war).

[17] Why revolutionary defeatism?

APPEAL: DAYS OF INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY WITH DESERTERS

The war in Ukraine continues with all the negative consequences for much of the world. However, acts of desertion and draft evasion also continue, which, if widespread, could lead to the end of the war. Anarchists from the Central European region are therefore publishing this call to organise active support for deserters. Wherever we live, let us make every other day a day of international working-class solidarity and resistance against the war. Let us organise in workplaces, schools and streets to strengthen the influence of desertions. Let us fight for dignified conditions for all who refuse to serve as a cannon fodder in the inter-imperialist war.

At least 200,000 people are fleeing Russia to escape Putin's military mobilisation, and tens of thousands more are avoiding mobilisation in Ukraine. Yet some voices claim that "the number of deserters is so negligible that it is strange to even begin to talk about it." These cynical attempts to "make invisible" people who choose not to serve in the army, to defect or to emigrate for political reasons, must be opposed. Their voices must be heard and practical help must be given.

Anti-war speeches do not yet have the subversive power needed to stop the

war, which is why it is necessary to create conditions that make it easier for other people considering a desertion to move from reflection to action. It is not a question of standing on the front line between the tanks of both armies and thinking that this will make the soldiers lay down their arms. It is about achieving the conditions at the international level that ensure that deserters can safely defect and live in another country without a risk of prosecution and social stigmatisation.

At present, opponents of the war in Russia and Ukraine have almost nowhere to go. They are trapped between national borders by their 'own' governments, while neighbouring countries refuse to accept them and provide them with decent material conditions. If people's choices remain limited to the options of 'either being forced to serve in the army or face persecution', we can hardly expect an increase in desertions. It is necessary to achieve the opening of borders not only for civilian refugees, but also for deserters from the armies on both sides of the war line. This is precisely what can significantly weaken the dynamics of war.

But this will never be done by negotiation with the various governments which are only the local minions of the world capital state, nor will it be done by a social-democratic call to "make concessions in the area of migration policy". Our only weapon for us, the proletarians, is the class struggle, it is the mobilization in the streets, it is the sabotage of the economy, and it is the direct action against permanent war... It is then, and only then, that the frightened ruling class is forced to let go, which will never constitute for us the goal of the struggle but only a moment from which new offensives must be carried out against the whole of this world of misery and war...

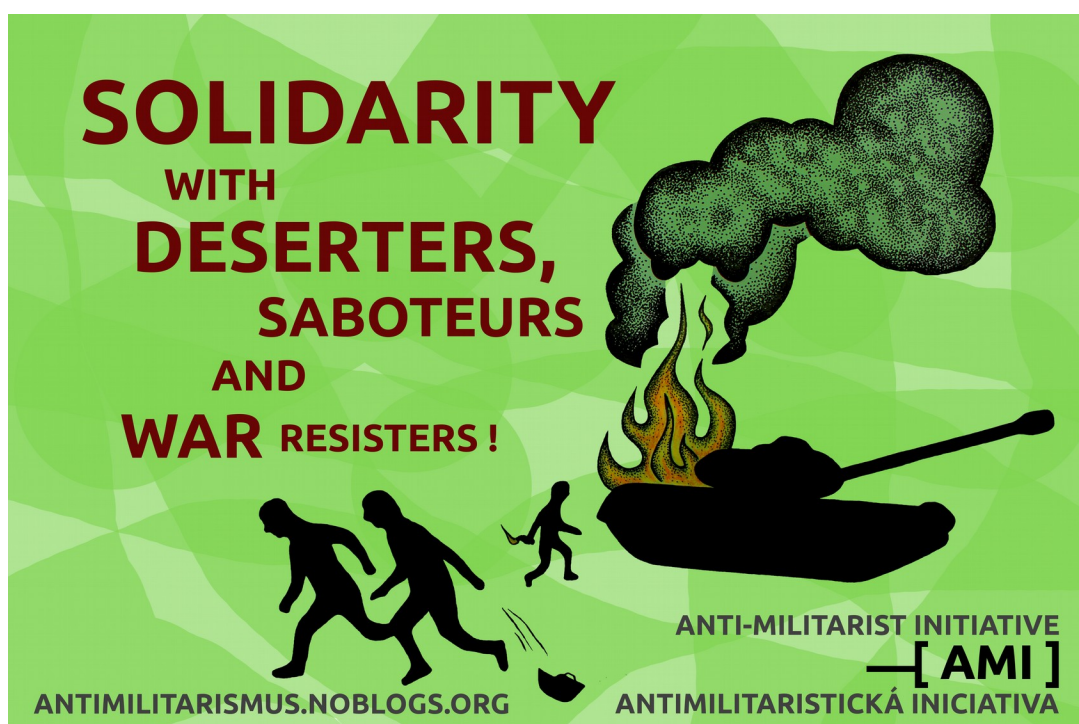
After all, the proclamations of politicians criticising the aggression of the Russian army are an expression of hypocrisy whereas they refuse to share material conditions and resources with people who refuse to serve in the army. And besides, why and how would they act otherwise, these worthy

representatives of the bourgeois order!)? It is necessary to stand consistently against Putin's aggressors, as well as against the statesmen of other countries who, through their own policies, allow the army to retain its war potential. It is the governments of the countries in which we live that effectively make it more difficult to desert, and thereby they contribute to the continuation of the war.

Those who are concerned about saving lives should be thinking about how to weaken the fighting capacity of armies, how to get soldiers off the front lines, how to get them to disobey, how to motivate them to use their weapons against those who force them to go to war. Let us think about this and organise direct actions that will turn these considerations into concrete results.

SOME ANARCHISTS FROM THE CENTRAL EUROPEAN REGION (NOVEMBER 2022)

source # <https://antimilitarismus.noblogs.org/post/2022/09/12/appeal-days-of-international-solidarity-with-deserters/>



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