

SABOTAGE THE WAR!

Call for an international and internationalist mobilization against the war in Ukraine

The war currently unfolding in Ukraine is more than just another military conflict, and it is not simply a dispute over resources. Rather, it is **a crucial chapter of a wider rivalry between blocks of capitalist countries battling for control over the world**. Economic, military, and technological supremacy, together with the global geopolitical equilibrium, are at stake in this conflict. In fact, while fighting in Ukraine has continued for over a year and half, the prospect of military confrontation with China, the main enemy of western capitalism, becomes ever more tangible. We do not find it excessive or alarmist to say that **we are on a slippery slope which could lead to the Third World War**.

For the first time since World War II, a symmetric war is being fought in Europe, with a real risk of nuclear escalation. It is also the first ever direct conflict between Russia and NATO, involving the major nuclear powers of the world (Russian Federation, USA, UK, France).

War has always been an instrument of economic restructuring employed by capitalism in times of crisis. Today, it is once again accompanied by those state *interventismo*¹ politics, so loved by the left wing, which already preceded global conflicts. War is the most radical form of oppression wielded by states and capitalists against the exploited. For these reasons we believe that the ongoing conflict is a direct attack against all proletarians.

This war, which began in 2014 with the attack against the Russian-speaking communities of Ukraine, fits in the larger strategic context of NATO expansion in Eastern Europe. This expansion reached the “backyard” (and, economically, the commercial space) of a militaristic and authoritarian power which is not willing to tolerate any disorders within its sphere of influence, as the brutal repression of the revolts in Kazakhstan in January 2022 demonstrate.

The most dramatic consequences are suffered directly by the Ukrainian people and by the conscripted Russian youth, but other peoples are indirectly affected. Africans have to endure the increase in the price of wheat and the exacerbation of regional conflicts, while the exploited in the West are subjected to a growing militarization of their territories and a worsening of their living and working conditions.

Since 2014, Ukraine has seen the deployment of ferocious anti-Russian and anti-popular reforms, which have become even stricter after the Russian invasion of February 24, 2022: the abolition of Russian as second language in south-eastern Ukraine; the exclusion from the elections of political parties with alleged ties to Russia; the repression against members of the Russian Orthodox Church; the decommunization laws with sentences of up to 10 years of detention for the crime of “communist propaganda”; the celebration of war criminal Stepan Bandera, complete with official ceremonies and memorials; the inclusion of *Pravy Sector* and *Svoboda* nazis in the armed forces, starting from the National Guard and the creation of the infamous Udar and Azov battalions; the violence, attacks, rapes, homicides, and bombings against the people of Donbass (roughly 14.000 deaths between 2014 and 2022, including hundreds of children); the horrible massacre of Odessa

¹ The term *interventismo*, in the context of Italian history, refers to the heterogeneous movement which advocated Italy’s entrance in World War I. The term has now taken a broader meaning indicating a political position favoring intervention in a war.

of the 2nd of May 2014, when unarmed protesters calling for the independence from Ukraine, who were hiding in the local union building, were slaughtered and burnt alive by a crowd of armed nazis escorted by the police. These authentic **provocations** - which attacked the Russian state's international *prestige* and internal *approval* by targeting part of the Ukrainian population - are the root of the war.

Since 2014, Ukraine has become a sort of *feud* of the United States, a state *tailored* to multinational corporations and western capital - something that the United States and their allies had not achieved even in countries that they directly invaded and had military control over, such as Iraq. As an example, already in 2020 Zelensky abolished the moratorium preventing the sale of Ukraine's fertile black soil, effectively handing over millions of hectares to the cultivation of Bayer-Monsanto's GMOs, while at the beginning of the Russian invasion the collective agreements negotiated by unions ceased to apply to companies with less than 200 employees (which is the vast majority of Ukrainian companies), and strikes and protests were banned.

We consider it dangerous and disturbing that some comrades, in Ukraine and elsewhere, support the Kiev government and the "Ukrainian resistance" economically, with propaganda, and even militarily, without a single word on this. Historically, since World War I, this blindness derives from *interventismo*, the same *moral plague* which, in the aftermath of the first global conflict, opened the doors to the rise of fascism.

The parallel between the "Ukrainian resistance" and the partisan resistance against nazi-fascism (and with freedom struggles in general), which has become popular in the media, is historically, politically, and ethically unacceptable. Leaving aside the profound differences in historical context (and a small detail: the presence of nazi groups in the Ukrainian army...), the parallel is unacceptable because of the relationship between means and ends, between *what* the fighting is *for* and *how* the fighting is done. In the vast majority of cases, partisan combatants were deserters fighting against the official army of their own State, while the Ukrainian army is a regular army controlled by the government. Participation in the partisan armed struggle was *free* and on a *voluntary basis*, while Ukraine currently enforces martial law, and those refusing to fight end up in prison. The **political and military autonomy of partisan groups** was also related to the *means of combat* used: rifles, machine guns, hand grenades, and incendiary bombs can be used without a centralized coercive apparatus, whereas **satellite-controlled drones, rocket launchers, tanks, and long-range missiles reflect a precise hierarchy, namely the NATO chain of command.**

The participation of some anarchists and left-wing activists in the ongoing war forces them to fall under that same hierarchy: obedience to orders, identification of objectives by Western intelligence, subordination to a highly oppressive government and to the interests of international capital. Joining the NATO front implies giving up on any revolutionary and internationalist perspective, and on an ethical level it is causing criticism of the authoritarian, repressive, and anti-proletarian policies of the Kiev government to be pushed aside.

Saying this does not at all mean buying into Russian propaganda about the "special military operation" aimed at the "denazification" of Ukraine. **We have no sympathy for the heinous police state imposed by the Russian government on its people; we are not oblivious to the persecutions targeting the opposition and anarchists in Russia, and we support the many forms of insubordination taking place in the Russian Federation and in Belarus against the war.** Just as we denounce the deceptive myth of the "Ukrainian resistance", **we also reject the idea, common to some circles (neo-Stalinists, right-wing and left-wing populists, etc.) that the Russian-Chinese block can have a global emancipatory role.** Not only do we deplore the

death of the exploited in the name of their masters and leaders (even if these leaders are the *enemies of our closest enemies*); we also know that war is «first and foremost an affair of internal politics, and the most atrocious of all» (Simon Weil). When a State is fighting a war, that State is waging war also on *its own* people, and particularly against *its own* proletarians. **War always reinforces the power of the ruling classes, strengthening the enslavement and exploitation of the oppressed.**

What we are witnessing is also the chapter of a larger contest for **technological supremacy** (where the United States are up against Russia's main ally: China). Today, new deadly discoveries threaten life on Earth like never before. **Many of the technologies deployed in this war** - drones, intelligence and control systems, artificial intelligence, and predictive algorithms - **are tested on the battlefield and then taken up by police forces and technocrats from all over the world.**

«If you have ideas or simple pilot projects to test before mass production, you can send them to us and we will explain how to proceed. And in the end you will get your stamp, “tested in the field”. Start-ups end up with products that are competitive on the market because they have been tested in the field». These words do not belong to a “regular” manufacturer or to a tester of vehicles, software, or digital thermostats, but to General Volodymyr Havrylov, Ukrainian Vice Minister of Defense, addressing the National Defense Industrial Association Future Force Capabilities during the national conference in Austin, Texas, on September 21, 2022.

Historically, the development of the techno-sciences leads to war and, vice versa, war inevitably implies the development of the techno-sciences. Most of today's technologies are intrinsically *dual*. The separation between military and civil research, if it ever existed, has now disappeared. Thus, **it is not surprising that technologies tested on the battlefields are then used against proletarians in other parts of the world, including peaceful countries.** Usage and testing of new technologies intensify **control over populations**, making the liberation from State and capital ever more difficult.

Today, more than ever, the political significance of a State is determined by its ability to carry out research and development of new technologies competitively. Tech industries influence governmental decisions from the democratic West to China's “market socialism”. The Ukrainian conflict, given its magnitude and its players, accelerates so-called **digitalization**, which is a goal in the agendas of many States.

As is typically the case in conflicts of this size, every external front has a corresponding internal front. The repression increases not only in Russia and Ukraine, but in all countries involved in the war effort.

Police operations and special forms of detention have always been connected to the intensification of military conflicts. Their aim is to silence and eliminate any possibility of dissidence and real conflict. This is well known to us in Italy, where in recent times Alfredo Cospito has been subjected to the 41 bis prison regime, many anarchist periodicals and websites have been shut down, and a series of repressive operations have led to the arrest of tens of anarchists and activists. This preventive counter-insurrection is strictly correlated with the international crisis of capitalism and with the trend towards a global war.

One of the key aspects of the war in Ukraine is communication. Media accounts often misrepresented reality on the field; consider, for example, some of the most flagrant fake news, like the attribution of blame to the Russian armed forces for the bombing of the nuclear power plant Enerhodar-Zaporizhzhia and for the destruction of the Nord Stream pipeline. But what we are witnessing is something *more* than biased information, it is actual **war propaganda**. This

propaganda is in line with the levels of mass conditioning which were used during Covid to impose the dominant narrative, and tragically resonates with episodes from World War II: the humiliation of Russians (with, for instance, the laughable news on their supposedly obsolete and low-quality equipment) and their demonization, the glorification of “our heroes” (including the openly Nazi ones), the elusive “secret weapons” which will change the course of events...

This type of information makes it apparent that we are at war, although for now this war is not being fought in our vicinity. **The war of information is first and foremost a war against our brains, which aims to enlist us and convince us that this massacre is not only inevitable but also just and advantageous. For this reason it must be clarified that those responsible for this information are integral parts of the war machine, and should be treated as such.**

For these reasons, and for many more, it is urgent to revive the internationalist initiative in order to stop the ongoing carnage and avoid further dangerous escalations.

The enemies are not the conscripts forcibly sent to the front, nor the workers of the opposing country, but all the masters, their governments, their States and their armies. While our sisters and brothers are subjected to the most brutal atrocities, there is a bourgeoisie which becomes richer through the production of weapons and speculates on the consequences of the war (the division and reconstruction of Ukraine, the selective reception of migrants, inflation, etc.).

Let us bring our focus back to the criticism of the State and let us refuse to be enlisted in any front, with the belief that the only force that can stop the war is the mobilization of the exploited throughout the world.

Internationalism for us means defeatism, namely the critique of every government starting from “our own”, the attack against all masters and national bourgeoisies starting from the ones that exploit us every day. Thus, *on this side of the front*, we want to do our best to oppose and sabotage NATO (the main military alliance in the world, and the armed wing of western capitalism) just like our brothers and sisters in Russia fight against the war machine of their *side* (as attested by reports of attacks against military transport infrastructures and recruitment centers), and just like other brothers and sisters in Ukraine confront the war effort of their government. Despite the censorship, we know that in Ukraine there are people spreading anti-war propaganda and unrest, and opposing the war, *in practice*, by for instance helping fugitives and deserters leave the country, or by giving them shelter. This is *coherent* defeatism as well.

As anarchists, our position is defeatist because history teaches us that it is always and only in the ruins of the State that revolutionary prospects open up for the oppressed. **We consider defeatism an act of solidarity towards those who have to directly pay the price of war, and as an act of class revenge for the suffering endured by our sisters and brothers in all military conflict zones. We feel solidarity with all the victims of war in every corner of the world, with those who try to escape and have to face the obstacle of borders, with those who die traveling by land and by sea, and are subjected to brutal exploitation if they survive.**

The tensions, both past and present, in Kosovo, in Kaliningrad, and in Taiwan, the uprisings in Niger, Gabon, and in other Central African countries are part of a tendency towards the globalization of conflict and are indicative of the high stakes: **if we will fail to destroy *all fronts* by each attacking our own State and our own ruling classes, the annihilation of humanity or its ruthless enslavement in a condition of *endless war* are around the corner. Vice versa, revolutionary possibilities might open up.**

Although no significant movements opposing the war have emerged up until now, it is important to highlight that, despite the incessant propaganda, a substantial part of the population, even within the West, is against supporting the war effort. We must consider this in the perspective of building a mass mobilization.

We therefore call for the construction of a radical, international and widespread mobilization which should, by sabotaging the war, aspire to impose the cessation of hostilities from below. We have nothing to ask of governments, nor do we place any trust in them, instead we are aware that the direct action of the exploited throughout the world is the only real force that can put an end to the massacre. For this reason we believe that it is necessary to oppose the war machine both in Russia and in Ukraine, as well as in the Western capitalist countries that are responsible for this conflict and for all the main wars of the last thirty years.

- Let us support desertion on all fronts, offering refuge and solidarity to all those who evade military conscription and refuse to take part in the massacre!
- Let us sabotage the military machine, block the production of armaments and stop the flows of military logistics!
- Let us unmask the propaganda machine. In this hybrid war the media are an integral part of the war apparatus!
- Let us oppose the military occupation of territories, contesting and contrasting military bases, war exercises, and the militarization of public life!
- Let us support the necessity of a true general strike, which, going beyond the ritual and testimonial aspects, will concretely stop the industry and logistics of the countries involved!
- Let's unmask the connivance of the university and of research with the military-industrial apparatus and with the capitalist economic interests at the root of every war!

LET US FIGHT TO TURN THE WAR OF THE MASTERS INTO WAR AGAINST THE MASTERS

Roma, 2 September 2023

Anarchists from Roma, Genova, Carrara, Cosenza, Modena, Milano, Lecco, Torino, Umbria, Trentino, and Central Italy

Contact: appelloantimilitarista@anche.no