

# Europe, year zero

In the Oval Office of the White House, while he shouts in Zelensky's face "*You guys are going around and forcing conscripts to the front lines because you have manpower problems,*" JD Vance is merely revealing to the whole world what has been hidden for three years by the Atlantic war propaganda, and is now being held up to the world – instrumentally and certainly not on ethical grounds – by the new U.S. course, in front of a war that has evidently been lost and is now shamelessly dumped on the European populations. A Europe whose ruling class – reaffirming the need to defend Ukraine *to the last Ukrainian* with the rhetoric of a "just peace" – announces with democratic patriotism heinous plans for rearmament and nuclear deterrence.

## **War is the terrible historical horizon of our time.**

In Sweden and Norway, governmental pamphlets and the expansion of cemeteries prepare people for the possibility of war with Russia; Von der Leyen declares that she wants "*peace through force*"; Macron proposes extending the French *force de frappe* to Europe; Lombardia [region of northern Italy, translator's note], is increasing its iodine stocks in the event of a nuclear attack; NATO promotes the mobilization of civil society of allied countries in the Indo-Pacific to prepare for a conflict with China; the Italian army prepares to enlist forty thousand more soldiers.

Against the backdrop of technological and financial interdependence between China and the United States, the election of Trump brings to light the years-long clash between the *globalist* and *sovereignist* factions of the Western ruling classes. In a nutshell, the former is bent on a direct confrontation *at any cost* with Russia, the latter is in favor of coming to terms with the Kremlin to aim its efforts, within a few years, *directly* against China. Both factions, however, converge on a specific point: European rearmament (which was decided and announced long before King Donald's return). A game of mirrors and provocations that, while it could result in the nuclear annihilation of all humanity any day now, will turn Europe, if not into a pile of radioactive rubble, into an armored and militarized fortress, dominated by a war economy that will absorb all energies and social resources.

## **The warfare of our century is hybrid, full-scale, asymmetric, civil. Its battlefield is everywhere.**

The war of the 21st century is a war without limits which takes on varied and pervasive forms. It unfolds through energy flows, takes the form of assassinations and sabotages carried out by State actors, and fully incorporates money, media, and social networks. The centrality assumed by technology and scientific development reverberates in every sphere of the war, through drones, apps which engage the population in intelligence services (e.g., to signal the positions of enemy units), as well as with the artificial intelligence revolution in military doctrines, which has a weight and consequences comparable to the invention of nuclear power. While AI and digital systems are fundamental to military operations, the quest for primacy over these technologies fuels competition on an international scale for the plunder of raw materials and the control of energy resources. At the same time, hypotheses of "bacteriological deterrence" and the overtly military role of bio-laboratories make warfare coincide with *war against the living*.

But “traditional” and bloody forms of warfare are not disappearing. Rather, they are re-emerging on the fronts of a world war that, while it may be “piecemeal” for now, is clearly a product of the crisis of U.S. global hegemony and U.S. contention with its challengers, particularly China. On the Ukrainian front, mass conscription and positional warfare are reminiscent of what happened during World War I. On the Middle Eastern front, where the U.S. is defending Israeli settler colonialism – which arose as an outpost of Western interests – in an effort to preserve its own dominance over the region, the Zionist genocide in Gaza and in the West Bank brings back what happened during World War II. In no case, however, is it a return of the twentieth century, but rather the mutual reinforcement of technical progress and general mobilization into the total war of the twenty-first century.

**The increase of technological power is now the principal domain for the forces competing for world domination.**

With a reversal between the concepts of means and ends, technology driven by modern science establishes itself according to its own logic. The role which Starlink, Elon Musk’s satellite system, acquired with the war in Ukraine is indicative of an unprecedented prominence of high-tech multinational companies. But, as in other phases of the industrial revolution, the role of the State is not diminished; on the contrary, the State takes on a renewed centrality. It is no accident that the new U.S. administration’s Stargate Project – 500 billion for AI development – has been compared to the Manhattan Project, which led to the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The automated nature of the genocide in Gaza appears to be the experimentation on the “savages of the colonies” of what is likely to happen to the civilized themselves, in the same way that the genocide of the Hereros in Namibia by German colonialism (and the set of genocides committed by other colonial powers) preceded and prepared for the death camps of Nazism. While it becomes increasingly clear that in the organization of the war-world there is an excess humanity which is not necessary and must be managed or eliminated, the idea that *humanity as such* can be replaced is increasingly being legitimized (as openly advocated by some technocratic currents not far from the control rooms).

**War is first and foremost a matter of domestic politics – and the most heinous of all.**

With these words Simone Weil, aged 24, in her *Reflections on War* (1933), warned against the mistake of viewing war as a foreign policy matter. Although the dramatic events we witness every day in live streaming may feel distant from us, war is closer than we unconsciously hope.

The material infrastructures of war, in fact – increasingly nurtured by massive rearmament plans – are often just a stone’s throw away from us: from decision-making centers to weapons and ammunition factories, to logistics hubs that are integral parts of military logistics and to the academic system that serves as a laboratory for the war industry. And in the data-driven and digitized world, the boundaries between civilian and military are constantly surpassed in both directions: a smartphone app that is used today to profile us as consumers, medical patients, or “digital citizens” may serve, elsewhere as well as here, to ban, enlist, or eliminate a part of humanity considered to be threatening or useless, while the data we produce every day is directly at the service of surveillance and armies.

If it is true that war *starts here*, it is equally true that war *comes back*. It comes back as a need to “pacify” the zones behind the front lines by militarizing them: the experimentation of “red zones” after New Year’s Eve [since December 2024, several major Italian cities are deploying “red zones”, from which the police can arbitrarily remove anyone considered “dangerous”, n/t], the attempt to enact a martial law code with the “security package” [a set of repressive laws proposed by the current Italian government which targets workers’ struggles and dissent, increases police powers and lengthens jail sanctions on a number of “crimes”, as well as introducing new felonies, n/t] (also signed by the Minister of Defense), the extension of the “Caiva-

no model” to other cities [a gang rape committed in 2023 in Caivano (Naples) was used by the Italian government as a justification to introduce new local repressive measures, a “model” which is now being extended to other metropolitan areas, n/t]. Domestically, there are numerous cascading consequences of the conflict between States whose costs are pushed onto the dominated classes – rising bills, further precarization of labor, the end of what remains of the so-called “welfare state.” These costs are justified by the needs of national and European rearmament and defense, with the constant use of emergencyism and the militarization of emergencies. This is what we widely experienced during the “pandemic” period, when the war on the virus, with its large-scale experimentation of general mobilization, set the stage for the current war.

**Total war is simultaneously global civil war.**

The conditions of this civil war are largely in place at our latitudes as well, as has been noted multiple times already in the last century. The breakdown of ideological glues, the conflict within the State and even within the fractured classes are symptoms that barbarism is not something far away, but also unfolds within the walls erected by “civilization” and “progress.” Just think of what is happening in the *banlieues* as a reflection of the “war between the poor” – Italians versus foreigners, unemployed versus illegal workers, licensed shopkeepers versus unauthorized sellers, legal versus illegal migrants, public housing residents versus squatters, citizens versus Roma, antagonists versus “maranza” [slang term indicating youth groups especially of the outer city, n/t]... If we move to the UK, we see the return of nothing other than *pogroms* (with migrants and Islamists instead of Jews and Roma). While modern insurrections and revolutions are always civil wars, the two terms do not coincide. Today we are precisely in the presence of ubiquitous and horizontal civil war *in the absence of social war*.

It happens, however, that sometimes the conflict is expressed *vertically*, as in the George Floyd riots and then, with a socially different, and in some respects opposite composition, in the assault on Capitol Hill (U.S., 2020 and 2021: first proletarians *of all colors* against masters and institutions, and in particular against the police; then a mixture of classes, but mostly plebeian and *white*, against the election of Biden); in the clashes of native peoples against the agro-industry’s *marco temporal* (Brazil, 2023); in the riots in the French *banlieues* (from 2005 to the most recent “Nahel riots”) and, at our latitudes, in the heated anti-police demonstrations after the murder of Ramy Elgaml in Milano by the Carabinieri [Italian military body with policing role, n/t].

In any case, the phenomena of social disintegration represent a threat to the established order to which the state responds in an authoritarian manner, regardless of the formal taxonomies of government (democracy vs. autocracy) and without mediations other than those offered by technical progress. For example, through the digitization and biometrization of legal identities, civilian identity becomes indistinguishable from an automated surveillance device. Today the “citizen” who revolts or fails to obey is increasingly “banned” in a mechanical way.

**To acknowledge the trend toward war is not to accept its inevitability.**

Although the religion of inevitability is the driving force of our time, some signs seem to undermine it. In Ukraine, after the nationalist fever, support for the war has given way to forms of mass refusal, desertion and non-cooperation that weigh in no small measure on the fate of that conflict and hint at a possible collapse of the Western front. Meanwhile, the genocide in Gaza has fueled a vast and articulate global movement that, thanks to a few stubborn minorities, has rediscovered forms of direct action and brought the *intifada* to U.S. campuses, taking it upon itself to say the unspoken: the warmongering and genocidal foundation of Western capitalism. The extension of war to all spheres of society multiplies opportunities for mutiny and sabotage, giving the “human variant” unprecedented opportunities to jam the deadly machine.

Instead, war propaganda – paradoxically – has had a grip on some of the antagonistic minority, who have gone so far as to express support for a self-proclaimed, and *nonexistent*, Ukrainian resistance while hesitating to support the Palestinian resistance, with a total inability to distinguish between a nationalist wave fomented and armed by NATO (and with genuine *Nazis* in its front rows, in parliament, death squads, army, police, and National Guard) and an anti-colonial resistance against an ongoing *settler colonial project*. If the parliamentary socialists of yesteryear voted for war credits, their ridiculous and corrupt “progressive” heirs, after a century of class collaborationism, support the “ReArm Europe” rearmament plan and call for warmongering demonstrations “for freedom,” aimed solely at supporting the continuation of the massacre in Ukraine [the reference is to the pro-European rallies of March 15<sup>th</sup> held in Rome and in other Italian cities, n/t].

One hundred and ten years after Italy entered the First World Massacre and eighty years after the end of the Second, it is the history of revolutionary anti-militarism and even more so that of those who abandoned it by embracing the cause of a “just war” that tragically illuminates the way forward. The only way to evade fratricidal wars is to take on the logic of *defeatism* and its implications, that is, to work for the ruin of the capitalist side that wants to enlist and entrench you. And the only way to prevent defeatism from working for the opposing capitalist camp is the logic of *internationalism*: the one by which every exploited person sees his or her enemy in their “own” ruling class, solidarizing with his or her brothers and sisters on the other side of front.



This is the perspective on the world at the core of the project of **disfare**, a periodical bulletin partly dedicated to addressing matters which are crucial for interpreting the bleak horizon in which we act, and partly to circulating texts against the total war, mostly unpublished in Italian, from the world’s various fronts and from the past.

The bulletin will come out in four annual issues, an exceedingly slow pace for keeping up with the dizzying pace of current events, but one that seems better suited for trying to push our thinking beyond the surface – as well as compatible with our limited resources. We rely on paper, not excluding that it may be accompanied by other tools in the future, because we are convinced that in the digital dimension everything dashes past and little or nothing settles, background noise that is not more important than any other noise.

In the face of the acceleration of events of historical significance that we are currently witnessing, we find it useful to equip ourselves with a publication that can offer a space for discussion and in which experiences of struggle and analysis, even geographically distant and perhaps divergent from each other, can come together and enter a dialogue, with the desire that this may stimulate thought and action. Therefore, we invite those who read us to contribute with texts, illustrations, reports, criticism, distribution. In the hope that the escalation of these dark times will not find us entirely unprepared.