

AN INTERVENTION ON THE UKRAINIAN ISSUE

We receive and gladly publish the speech of a member of the editorial staff of the “Red Sting” at a meeting on the war in Ukraine held in Lucca, Italy, in recent days. It is in fact a stance that basically corresponds to the way we see the issue. We just observe that the author, Pietro Basso, perhaps for the sake of synthesis, homologates the Russo-Ukrainian conflict to an immanent Russia-NATO clash, where perhaps it would be better to speak of its premise and embryonic stage. But what is important is to highlight the common thread linking the partial current crisis with the general crisis of tomorrow that it prepares and foments, and the delivery therefore of defeatism on both fronts, against any choice of camp in favor of one of the contenders. We would also have liked the effective intervention to remind us how it behooves Russian proletarians to demand the unconditional self-determination of Ukraine, and Ukrainian proletarians to recognize that of the Donbass, Crimea and Transnistria. In each case these conclusions are implicit in the general content of the position statement.

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Lucca, June 24th

I have three premises to make. The first, obvious; the second, a little less; the third, unusual.

The first. What is being fought in Ukraine is not a war between Russia and Ukraine. It is a war between NATO / the West and Russia (with China behind it), and is the sequel to Euromaidan's inauspicious 2014, the outcome of the global dispute that began in 1991 to grab Ukraine's enormous natural wealth and manpower. A contest in which "our" squalid Italy was and is in the front row, appropriating the lives of 200,000 women of all ages and fertile lands, planting more than 300 firms, sowing corruption and the seeds of war.

Second premise. The ongoing war in Ukraine does not stand alone. It is part of a chain of traumatic events of all kinds that, together, make up the gigantic chaos into which global capitalism has been plunging us since the beginning of the 21st century. Amid such chaos, the stakes in this war are not the only Ukraine or the Donbass. It is **a new world order** in which the United States, the West, the dollar no longer have the command post - Putin and Xi Jin Ping are declaring it ever more explicitly. Even the US and European circles of power know perfectly well that this is what it is about, not the freedom and self-determination of Ukraine, which they cannot care less about. Therefore, **the position to be taken on the current war is inseparable from the position on the clash around the new world order.**

The third premise. When it comes to the war in Ukraine, in 99.9% of cases the subjects of the speech are: Ukraine, Russia, United States, European Union, Italy, Poland, Turkey, China, etc. In short: states, national capitalisms, and their related interests. Or, simplifying: Zelensky, Putin, Biden, etc., as managers of these interests. But something absolutely essential is missing from these speeches: **workers** from Ukraine, Russia, the United States, the European Union, Italy, etc. are missing - the proletarians, the wage-earners, those who live off their own work, and not on the exploitation of the work of others. They are missing, because it is taken for granted, or they want, that they are in the tow of their respective governments, of their respective national states, imperialist or not. Extras,

pawns that the powerful can move at will, meat for slaughter. But, like all Marxists and internationalists, I consider them **subjects of history**. And I ask the missing question: what interest do the workers have in the continuation and extension of this war, whatever is a possible, provisional armistice? what interest do they have to take sides behind their respective governments and states and capitalists in the fight to the death for the defense of the old or for the construction of a new world capitalist order?

I begin with **Ukrainian workers and female workers**. And I answer without hesitation: **zero interest**. This war has plunged them into the deepest groups of hell. The USSR and the Comecon were certainly not the socialist paradise of which still some too nostalgic comrades are fabled. However, since Ukraine was among the most industrialized areas of the USSR, as of 1991 its workers still enjoyed modest, but real, guarantees of job stability and welfare. With the advent of independence, Ukraine suddenly found itself competing on the global market with economies at much higher labor productivity rates, without protective barriers. Its economic structure and its social life have been crushed. Because the world market is a dictatorial mechanism on which the strongest capital aggregations dictate the law.

Hence the multinationals and Western banks, the IMF, stock exchanges, investment funds (not only Western - in recent years the first foreign investor in Ukraine has been China), have feasted on the impoverishment of Ukrainian workers. The nefarious policies adopted by Ukrainian rulers, both more or less pro-Russian (Kucma, Yanukovic) and pro-Western (Juscenko, Timoshenko, Poroshenko) contributed to the disaster. Their only ambition was to grab shares of the residual privatized national wealth, or to guarantee the oligarch friends who, in 80, have come to control 100% of the national capital. Result: between 1991 and 2017, the Ukrainian economy was the fifth worst in the world out of 200 countries! And the ongoing war has allowed Zelensky, their worthy heir, and his party to ban all forms of political opposition and to present to the parliament, which is about to approve it, a labor law that abolishes national collective bargaining agreements for 70% of workers.

In twenty-five years, more than 7 million people (over 15% of the population) emigrated from Ukraine to Russia, Western Europe, the United States, Kazakhstan, etc. I studied Ukrainian emigration to Italy, made up of 80% by women. I have rarely experienced so much pain firsthand as in the experience of the Ukrainian carers serving in Italy, forced to live where they work 24 hours a day, an experience of a total institution. Women often affected, such as Romanian, Moldovan, Bulgarian women, by the cd. Italy syndrome: a severe form of depression, which becomes devastating when - gone home for a while or forever - they see themselves rejected by their sons or daughters as if they were strangers. On the one hand, white orphans in their homeland, children who grew up without their mother beside them, also exposed to forms of depression that can also lead to hundreds of suicides; on the other hand, their mothers worn out here because they had to replace the lack of care and love for the elderly and the non self-sufficient that we have spread: this is a bright aspect of Italy's civilizing mission in Ukraine and other Eastern European countries . There is a lot of hype today about Ukraine's entry into the EU (in 10-20 years) - but the EU and Italy have already penetrated Ukraine since thirty years, without having to ask for permission, gutting the existence of hundreds of thousands of families of the working classes. And it is sickening that "our" rulers and "our" mass media pose as friends and defenders of the Ukrainian people.

The Russian invasion, the bombings and all the rest completed the devastation, causing the flight of millions more, the death and injury of tens of thousands, at least, ordinary Ukrainians, proletarians. As these are certainly not the children of the oligarchs or the parents of NATO puppets like Zelensky, sheltered in Israel in armored extra-luxury villas. Some say: but the Russian army is denazifying the Donbass, isn't that good? I understand the relief of many, especially in the Donbass, in witnessing the surrender of the Nazis or Nazis of the Azov battalion, and similar criminals. However, I invite you not to idealize the reality of the so called Donbass People's Republics. Listen to what the militants of the Donbass Workers' Front and the Workers' communist Organization of the Lugansk People's Republic just said on February 19:

"The DNR and the LNR have long since lost the original spirit of popular democracy. The naive and sincere impulses to establish real people's power are largely buried. Through the efforts of the local and Russian bourgeoisie the usual capitalist regimes have been established: reactionaries, with a reduced democracy, a high degree of exploitation of workers, a social stratification. The authorities cynically cover up their abominations, from the non-payment of wages to the prohibition of any protest and strike to the exclusion from political life and from elections, with martial law, of workers, miners, tractor drivers. Thus the working class of Donbass, like the working class of Russia and Ukraine, wages a common struggle against the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie".

Harsh, clear words that come from the field (and I would like to say that these are not organizations with my same ideological-political orientation). In recent days there has been an appeal-protest addressed to the president of the Donetsk People's Republic in which it is denounced that many inhabitants of Donbass have been sent to the front line in Mariupol without the necessary training. 40% of their battalion is dead... Liberated or cannon fodder? I feel by their side, as I am with the Ukrainian women who stormed the military enlistment office in Khust at the end of April to prevent the forced conscription of young people. After all, from the first moment we took sides, as the editorial staff of the blog *Il Pungolo rosso* (The Red Sting), against the sanctions against Russia, against the sending of weapons to the Zelensky government, against the activation of the Italian drone system in favor of the Ukrainian army and the NATO, against the demented Russophobic campaign that has targeted Russian writers, Russian musicians, Russian artists, Russians as such. Against, radically against OTAN-Russia war, and above all against "our" government and NATO, which foment it in every way.

Even the working class of Russia has nothing to gain from the ongoing war, and from the ensuing wars it begins. I do not want to cover myself up behind the superior authority of Lenin, recently attacked by Putin, in matters of great-Russian chauvinism, which he regarded as a dangerous poison to fight. I limit myself to asking: which young Russians, because are they young people, are dying in Ukraine today? The children of the managers of Gazprom, Gazprombank or Sherbank, or Tupolev? Or are they instead young children of proletarian, peasant, popular strata families, almost always coming from the poorest areas of Russia where the profession of the soldier is the only job that gives guarantees? How come that the small and poor Buryatia (less than a million inhabitants), the land of the excavator operator Vitaly Chingisovich, belonging to the 30 brigade, who died at 24 on 1 June, had 91 "recognized" deaths, while the city of Moscow, where the presence of middle and wealthy classes is large, and where 9% of the inhabitants of all of Russia (12 million inhabitants) live, has only 3 recognized deaths? And who will pay the costs of the inevitable economic crisis

triggered by Western sanctions and the war? Who will pay for the necessary long-term increase in military spending? Who will be affected by the repressive squeeze against those who have made and will resist war and enlistment in the army and in the National Guard? What will happen - beyond the dismissal - to those who, like the 115 members of the Nalchik National Guard Corps in the North Caucasus, refuse to go to war outside Russia's borders? What to the groups of women (were they perhaps from Petersburg' high society?), who dared to demonstrate against the war and today demand news of their loved ones who have disappeared?

As for the Italian and European workers, just consider what happened in Italy. The Draghi government immediately deployed Italy in the war, launching it at the forefront of provocations against the Kremlin. To support this choice Draghi & Co. immediately proclaimed a **war economy**, with the doubling of military spending and further cuts in social spending. The upheaval in international trade that the sanctions decreed by Western countries are causing brings with it further inflation, rate hikes and economic recession in a short time, with brutal effects on wages, the swelling of private and state debt, unemployment. The Confindustria's president Bonomi immediately took advantage of it to inform that the bosses cannot grant wage increases, while they demand further support from the state and further flexibility from the workers. And we are only at the first act of the dreaded sequence of NATO conflicts against Russia / China and their allies (beware of the maneuvers already advanced for new wars in the Balkans ...). It is no coincidence that the German government has allocated 100 billion euros overnight. The European rearmament is off to a great start, woe to underestimate it!!

Finally, as regards the consequences that the war in Ukraine has and will have on workers in the rest of the world, it is certainly vulgarly instrumental to attribute the world food crisis to the blockade of the port of Odessa, which has multiple, different, long-term causes, all deriving from the functioning of global capitalism and its aggression against nature. But the fact is that the war events in Ukraine aggravate this crisis which is already afflicting the countries of black and Arab Africa, as they aggravate the environmental catastrophe. Inter-capitalist war being in general the primary factor of pollution of the earth and air, as well as of minds and hearts. And this war being the good pretext to return to coal and launch the ultra-polluting use of liquefied gas imported from America ...

I stop here. Male and female workers all over the world, starting with the Ukrainians and Russians, have no interest in being drafted into either this war or the other upcoming capitalist wars. How they have no interest in enlisting in the economic competition for world market domination. Whether it is the old, detestable order dominated by the United States and the West, or the new, very hypothetical, more "pluralist" and "balanced" order, **however and always hyper-capitalist**, envisaged by Putin and Xi Jin Ping.

We are on the threshold of an era of upheaval that brings the magnificent prediction, perhaps too anticipated, of Rosa Luxemburg to the fore: "socialism (anti-capitalist social revolution, that is) or barbarism". And it invites us to take up an ancient sign that is always fresh and vital: **war on war!** The main enemy is here, in "our" house, it is "our" government! Proletarians and proletarians of all countries, let us not be divided by pestiferous nationalisms, let us unite against the wars of capital!

I say this knowing full well that the signs that go in this direction are very weak today. What prevails, up to now, is the nationalist unification or queuing of workers around governments. But the terrible

experience of the war, the wars and the crises that are coming, the price they will impose on the exploited and the oppressed, will open the eyes of many. They will show even the blind which is the only way of liberation from the monstrosities that capitalism is preparing for us.