



world revolution

War in Ukraine

Against imperialist war, the class struggle!

It only took one night for the thunder of guns and the howling of bombs to resound again in Ukraine, at the gates of the historical cradle of a now rotting capitalism. In a few weeks, this war of unprecedented scale and brutality will have devastated entire cities, thrown millions of women, children and old people onto the frozen roads of winter, sacrificing countless human lives on the altar of the Fatherland. Kharkiv, Sumy or Irpin are now in ruins. In the industrial port of Mariopol, which has been completely razed to the ground, the conflict has cost the lives of no less than 5,000 people, probably more. The devastation and horrors of this war are reminiscent of the terrifying images of Grozny, Fallujah or Aleppo. But where it has taken months, sometimes years, to reach such devastation, in Ukraine there has been no “murderous escalation”: in barely a month, the belligerents have thrown all their forces into the carnage and devastated one of the largest countries in Europe!

War is a terrifying moment of truth for decadent capitalism: by exhibiting its machines of death, the bourgeoisie suddenly removes the hypocritical mask of civilisation, peace and compassion that it pretends to wear with unbearable arrogance, typical of ruling classes that have become anachronistic. It is pouring out a furious torrent of propaganda, all the better to conceal its real face – that of a mass murderer. How can one not be seized with horror at the sight of these poor Russian kids, conscripts of 19 or 20 years old, with their adolescent faces, transformed into killers, as in Bucha and in other recently abandoned areas? How can we not be indignant when Zelensky, the “servant of the people”, shamelessly takes an entire population hostage by decreeing the “general mobilisation” of all men from 18 to 60 years old, henceforth forbidden to leave the country? How can one not be horrified by the bombed hospitals, by the terrified and starving civilians, by the summary executions, by the corpses buried in kindergartens and by the heart-rending cry of the orphans?

The war in Ukraine is an odious manifestation of capitalism’s dizzying plunge into chaos and barbarism. A sinister picture is emerging before our eyes: for the past two years, the Covid pandemic has considerably accelerated this process, of which it is itself the monstrous product.¹ The IPCC is predicting cataclysms and irreversible climate change, further threatening humanity and biodiversity on a global scale. Major political crises are multiplying, as we saw after Trump’s defeat in the United States; the spectre of terrorism hangs over society, as does the nuclear risk that

1. In China, the pandemic is making a strong comeback (as shown in Shanghai, in particular). It is also far from being under control in the rest of the world.

this war has brought back to the fore. The simultaneity and accumulation of all these phenomena is not an unfortunate coincidence; on the contrary, it bears witness to the condemnation of murderous capitalism in the court of history.

If the Russian army has crossed the border, it is certainly not to defend the “Russian people” “besieged by the West”, nor to “help” the Russian-speaking Ukrainians who are victims of the “Nazification” of the Kyiv government. Nor is the rain of bombs falling on Ukraine the product of the “delirium” of a “mad autocrat”, as the press

repeats every time it is necessary to justify a massacre² and to conceal the fact that this conflict, like all the others, is first of all the manifestation of a decadent and militarised bourgeois society that has nothing left to offer to humanity but its destruction!

They don’t care about the death and destruction, the chaos and instability on their borders: for

2. Of course, it is true that from Hitler to Assad, via Hussein, Milosevic, Gaddafi or Kim Jong-un, the “leaders” of the enemy class frequently suffer from serious psychological disorders.

Putin and his clique, it was necessary to defend the interests of Russian capital and its place in the world, both of which have been weakened by the West’s increasing advance into its traditional sphere of influence. The Russian bourgeoisie can present itself as a “victim” of NATO, but Putin has never hesitated, faced with the failure of his offensive, to carry out a dreadful campaign of scorched earth and massacres, exterminating everything in his path, including the Russian-speaking populations that he had supposedly come to protect!

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Joint statement of groups of the international communist left about the war in Ukraine

Workers have no country!

Down with all the imperialist powers!

In place of capitalist barbarism: socialism!

The organisations of the communist left must mount a united defence of their common heritage of adherence to the principles of proletarian internationalism, especially at a time of great danger for the world’s working class. The return of imperialist carnage to Europe in the war in Ukraine is such a time. That’s why we publish below, with other signatories from the communist left tradition (and a group with a different trajectory fully supporting the statement), a common statement on the fundamental perspectives for the working class in the face of imperialist war.

The war in Ukraine is being fought according to the conflicting interests of all the different imperialist powers, large and small – not in the interests of the working class, which is a class of international unity. It’s a war over strategic territories, for military and economic domination fought overtly and covertly by the warmongers in charge of the US, Russia, the Western European state machines, with the Ukrainian ruling class acting as a by no means innocent pawn on the world imperialist chess board.

The working class, not the Ukrainian state, is the real victim of this war, whether as slaughtered defenceless women and children, starving refugees or conscripted cannon fodder in either army, or in the increasing destitution the effects of the war will bring to workers in all countries.

The capitalist class and their bourgeois mode of production cannot overcome its competitive national divisions that lead to imperialist war. The

capitalist system cannot avoid sinking into greater barbarism.

For its part the world’s working class cannot avoid developing its struggle against deteriorating wages and living standards. The latest war, the biggest in Europe since 1945, warns of capitalism’s future for the world if the working class struggle doesn’t lead to the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and its replacement by the political power of the working class, the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The war aims and lies of the different imperialist powers

Russian imperialism wants to reverse the enormous setback it received in 1989 and become a world power again. The US wants to preserve its super power status and world leadership. The European powers fear Russian expansion but also the crushing domination of the US. Ukraine is looking to ally itself to the most powerful imperi-

alist strong man.

Let’s face it, the US and the Western powers have the most convincing lies, and the biggest media lie machine, to justify their real aims in this war - they are supposedly reacting to Russian aggression against small sovereign states, defending democracy against the Kremlin autocracy, upholding human rights in the face of the brutality of Putin.

The stronger imperialist gangsters usually have the better war propaganda, the bigger lie, because they can provoke and manoeuvre their enemies

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United States, Russia, European Union, Ukraine... all states are responsible for the war!

Bourgeois society, rotten to the core, profoundly sick, once again vomits its filthy torrent of iron and fire. Each day the Ukrainian butchery displays its cortege of massive bombardments, ambushes, sieges, with columns of refugees fleeing by the million the constant fire of the belligerents.

In the midst of the flood of propaganda poured out by the governments of every country, two lies particularly stand out: the first presents Putin as a “mad dictator” readying himself to become the new Tsar of a reconstituted empire while getting his hands on the “riches of Ukraine”; the other attributes the main responsibility for the conflict to the “genocide” against the Russian-speaking populations of the Donbass whose lives the “heroic” Russian soldiers have come to save. The bourgeoisie always takes particular care to mask the real causes of war by draping them with ideological veils like “civilisation”, “democracy”, “human rights” and “international order”. But the real responsibility for the war lies with capitalism!

Another step towards chaos

Since the arrival of Putin to power in 2000, Russia has made important efforts to provide itself with a more modern army and to reconquer its influence in the Middle East, notably in Syria, but also in Africa with the sending of mercenaries to Libya, Central Africa and Mali, sowing more chaos. These last years it has not hesitated to launch a direct offensive in Georgia in 2008, then occupying the Crimea and Donbass in 2014, in order to try to restrict the decline of its sphere of influence at the risk of creating major instability on its frontiers. Following the US retreat from Afghanistan, Russia thought that it could profit from the weakening of the Americans in order to bring Ukraine into its sphere of influence, a territory essential to its position in Europe and the world, especially since Kyiv was threatening to link up with NATO.

Since the collapse of the Eastern Bloc in 1989, this is certainly not the first time that war has broken out on the European continent. The Balkans War in the early 1990's and the conflict in Donbass in 2014 had already brought misfortune and desolation to the continent. But the war in Ukraine already has much more serious implications than the preceding conflicts, illustrating how the tide of chaos more and more approaches the main centres of capitalism.

Russia, one of the world's main military powers is, in effect, directly and massively involved in the invasion of a country occupying a strategic position in Europe, up to the frontiers of the European Union. At the time of writing, Russia has already lost around 10,000 soldiers and many more have been wounded or have deserted. Some towns have been razed to the ground by a blitz of bombing. The number of civilian casualties is probably considerable. And this hardly a month into the war!

The region will henceforth see an enormous concentration of troops and advanced military material and equipment, with soldiers and mercenaries coming from all over the place, but also in Eastern Europe with the deployment of thousands of NATO soldiers and the mobilisation of the only ally of Putin, Belorussia. Several European states have decided to considerably increase their re-armament programmes to the first rank including the Baltic States, but also Germany which has doubled its “defence” budget.

For its part, Russia regularly threatens the world with reprisals and shamelessly brandishes its nuclear arsenal. The French Minister of Defence also warned Putin that he will have to face “nuclear powers”, before calming down to a much more “diplomatic” tone. Without even talking about a nuclear conflict, the risk of a major industrial accident is on the cards. Some ferocious fighting has already broken out at the nuclear facilities of Chernobyl and Zaporizhzhia, where buildings (fortunately only administrative ones) have caught fire following bombardments.

To all this can be added a major migrant crisis in Europe itself. Millions of Ukrainians flee towards bordering countries in order to escape the war and

forced conscription into Zelensky's army. But taking account the growth of populism in Europe and the sometimes explicit will of several states to cynically instrumentalise migrants for their imperialist ends (as we've recently seen on the Belorussian frontier or through the regular threats of Turkey against the European Union), in time this massive exodus could create serious tensions and instability.

In sum, the war in Ukraine carries a major risk of chaos, destabilisation and destruction at the international level. If this conflict doesn't open up a still more bloody conflagration, it can only increase such dangers, with the risk of an uncontrolled “escalation” that could involve unimaginable consequences.

Is Russia alone responsible for the war?

If the Russian bourgeoisie has opened hostilities in order to defend its sordid imperialist interests, the propaganda presenting Ukraine and the western countries as victims of a “mad dictator” is a hypocritical masquerade. For months the American government has been warning of an imminent Russian attack, a clear provocation, while claiming that it wouldn't put boots on Ukrainian soil.

Since the dislocation of the USSR, Russia has been continually threatened on its borders as much in Eastern Europe as in the Caucasus and Central Asia. The United States and the European powers have methodically pushed back at the Russian sphere of influence by integrating a number of eastern European countries into the EU and NATO. This was also the significance of the eviction of the ex-President of Georgia, Shevardnadze, in 2003 at the time of the “Rose Revolution” which brought an American clique to power.

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into firing first. But remember the oh-so peaceful performance of these powers recently in the Middle East, in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan, how US air power recently flattened the city of Mosul, how the Coalition forces put the Iraqi population to the sword with the false excuse that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction. Remember further back the countless crimes of these democracies against civilians over the past century whether it be during the 1960s in Vietnam, during the 1950s in Korea, during the Second World War in Hiroshima, Dresden or Hamburg. The Russian outrages against the Ukrainian population are essentially drawn from the same imperialist playbook.

Capitalism has catapulted humanity into the era of permanent imperialist war. It is an illusion to ask it to ‘stop’ war. ‘Peace’ can only be an interlude in warlike capitalism.

The more it sinks into irresolvable crisis the greater the military destruction capitalism will bring, alongside its growing catastrophes of pollution and plagues. Capitalism is rotten ripe for revolutionary change.

The working class is a sleeping giant

The capitalist system, more and more a system of war and all its horrors, does not currently find any significant class opposition to its rule, so much so that the proletariat suffers the worsening exploitation of its labour power, and the ultimate sacrifices imperialism calls on it to make on the battlefield.

The development of the defence of its class interests, as well as its class consciousness stimulated by the indispensable role of the revolutionary vanguard, conceals an even bigger potential of the working class, the ability to unite as a class to overthrow the political apparatus of the bourgeoisie entirely as it did in Russia in 1917 and threatened to do in Germany and elsewhere at the time. That is, overthrow the system that leads to war. Indeed, the October Revolution, and the insurrec-

The same goes for the “Orange Revolution” of 2004 in Ukraine and all the conflicts which have followed between different factions of the local bourgeoisie. The active support of the Western powers for the pro-European opposition in Belorussia, the war in the High-Karabakh under the pressure of Turkey (a member of NATO) and the settling of accounts at the top of the Kazakh state have only accentuated the feeling of urgency within the Russian bourgeoisie.

Just as much for “Tsarist” as “Soviet” Russia, Ukraine has always represented a central stake in its foreign policy. For Moscow in fact Ukraine is the sole means for direct access to the Mediterranean. The annexation of the Crimean Peninsula in 2014 already followed this imperative of Russian imperialism, which is directly threatened by encirclement through regimes backed by the Americans for the most part. The will of the United States to draw Ukraine towards the West is thus seen by Putin and his clique as a real provocation. In this sense, even if the offensive of the Russian army seems totally irrational and doomed to failure from the beginning, it is for Moscow a desperate “power grab” destined to maintain its ranking as a world power.

Perfectly lucid about the situation in Russia, the American bourgeoisie, although divided on the question, did not fail to push Putin into action by multiplying these provocations. When Biden explicitly assured everyone that he would not intervene directly in Ukraine, he deliberately left a vacuum that Russia immediately used in the hope of stemming its decline on the international scene. This is not the first time that the United States has used such cold Machiavellianism to achieve its ends: already in 1990, Bush senior had pushed Saddam Hussein into a trap by claiming

not to want to intervene to defend Kuwait. We know the rest...

It is still too early to predict the duration and extent of the already considerable destruction in Ukraine, but since the 1990s we have known about the massacres of Srebrenica, Grozny, Sarajevo, Fallujah and Aleppo. Anyone who starts a war is often doomed to get bogged down. In the 1980s, Russia paid a heavy price following the invasion of Afghanistan, which led to the implosion of the USSR. The United States has had its own fiascos, weakening it both militarily and economically. All these adventures ultimately ended, despite apparent initial victories, in bitter setbacks and considerably weakened the belligerents. Putin's Russia, if it doesn't suddenly fall back after a humiliating defeat, will not escape the stalemate, even if it manages to seize the major Ukrainian cities.

All countries and all wars are imperialist

“A new imperialism threatens peace in the world”², “The Ukrainians have fought Russian imperialism for hundreds of years”³.

“Russian imperialism”, the bourgeoisie says - as if Russia were the quintessence of imperialism in contrast to the helpless Ukrainian chick. In reality, since the entry of capitalism into its period of decadence, war and militarism have become fun-

2. “Against Russian imperialism, for an internationalist leap”, *Mediapart*, March 2nd 2022. This article with an evocative title borders on farce, especially on the part of its author, Edwy Plenel, a great defender of French imperialism who openly calls for war.

3. “To understand the Ukraine-Russia conflict, look to colonialism”, *The Washington Post*, 24th February, 2022.

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tions it gave rise to in the other imperialist powers, are a shining example not only of opposition to the war but also of an attack on the power of the bourgeoisie.

Today we are still far from such a revolutionary period. Similarly, the conditions of the proletariat's struggle are different from those that existed at the time of the first imperialist slaughter. On the other hand, what remains the same, in the face of imperialist war, are the fundamental principles of proletarian internationalism and the duty of revolutionary organisations to defend these principles tooth and nail, against the stream when necessary, within the proletariat.

The political tradition that has fought for, and continues to fight for, internationalism against imperialist war

The villages of Zimmerwald and Kienthal in Switzerland became famous as the meeting places of the socialists from both sides in the First World War to begin an international struggle to bring the butchery to an end and denounce the patriotic leaders of the Social Democratic Parties. It was at these meetings that the Bolsheviks, supported by the Bremen Left and the Dutch Left, brought forward the essential principles of internationalism against imperialist war that are still valid today: **no support of either imperialist camp; the rejection of all pacifist illusions; and the recognition that only the working class and its revolutionary struggle could put an end to the system that is based on the exploitation of labour power and permanently generates imperialist war.**

In the 1930s and 1940s it was only the political current now called the Communist Left which held fast to the internationalist principles developed by the Bolsheviks in the First World War. The Italian Left and the Dutch Left actively opposed both sides in the second imperialist world war, rejecting both the fascist and anti-fascist

justifications for the slaughter - unlike the other currents which claimed the proletarian revolution, including Trotskyism. In so doing these Communist Lefts refused any support to the imperialism of Stalinist Russia in the conflict.

Today, in the face of the acceleration of imperialist conflict in Europe, the political organisations based on the heritage of the Communist Left continue to hold up the banner of consistent proletarian internationalism, and provide a reference point for those defending working class principles.

That's why organisations and groups of the Communist Left today, small in number and not well known, have decided to issue this common statement, and broadcast as widely as possible the internationalist principles that were forged against the barbarism of two world wars.

No support for any side in the imperialist carnage in Ukraine.

No illusions in pacifism: capitalism can only live through endless wars.

Only the working class can put an end to imperialist war through its class struggle against exploitation leading to the overthrow of the capitalist system.

Workers of the World, Unite!

International Communist Current

(internationalism.org)

Istituto Onorato Damen

(www.istitutoonoratodamen.it)

Internationalist Voice

(www.internationalistvoice.org)

International Communist Perspective (Korea) fully supports the joint statement. (communistleft.jinbo.net/xc)

6 April 2022

1. For a comparison, the USSR lost 25,000 soldiers during the nine years of the terrible war which ravaged Afghanistan.

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United States, Russia, European Union, Ukraine... all states are responsible for the war!

damental characteristics of this system. All states, big or small, are imperialist; all wars, whether they claim to be “humanitarian”, “liberating” or “democratic”, are imperialist wars. This is what revolutionaries had already identified during the First World War: at the beginning of the 20th century, the world market was entirely divided into the preserves of the main capitalist nations. Faced with increased competition and the impossibility of loosening the grip of the contradictions of capitalism through new colonial or commercial conquests, national states built up gigantic arsenals and subjected the whole of economic and social life to the imperatives of war. It was in this context that the World War broke out in August 1914, a slaughter then unequaled in the history of humanity, a dazzling expression of a new “era of wars and revolutions”.

Faced with fierce competition and the omnipresence of war in every nation, small or large, two phenomena have developed which constitute the major characteristics of the period of decadence: state capitalism and imperialist blocs. “*State capitalism [...] responds to the need for each country, with a view to confrontation with other nations, to obtain the maximum discipline within it from the different sectors of society, to reduce to the minimum clashes between classes but also between rival fractions of the dominant class, in order, in particular, to mobilise and control all of its economic potential. Likewise, the constitution of imperialist blocs corresponds to the need to impose a similar discipline between different national bourgeoisies in order to limit their reciprocal antagonisms and to bring them together for the supreme confrontation between the two military camps.*”⁴ The capitalist world was thus divided throughout the 20th century into rival blocs: Al-

4. “Militarism and decomposition”, internationalism.org

lies against Axis powers, Western bloc against Eastern bloc.

But with the collapse of the USSR at the end of the 1980s, the final phase of the decadence of capitalism began: the period of its generalised decomposition,⁵ marked by the disappearance of imperialist blocs for more than 30 years. The relegation of the Russian “policeman” and, *de facto*, the dislocation of the American bloc, opened the way to a whole series of rivalries and local conflicts hitherto suppressed by the iron discipline of the blocs. This trend of *every man for himself* and increasing chaos has since been fully confirmed.

Since 1990, the only “superpower”, the United States, has tried to establish a minimum of order in the world and slow down the inevitable decline of its own leadership... by resorting to war. As the world had ceased to be divided into two disciplined imperialist camps, a country like Iraq thought it possible to lay hands on a former ally of the same bloc, Kuwait. The United States, at the head of a coalition of 35 countries, launched a murderous offensive intended to discourage any future temptation to imitate the actions of Saddam Hussein.

But the operation could in no way put an end to every man for himself on the imperialist level, a typical manifestation of the process of the decomposition of society. In the Balkan wars, the fierce rivalries between the powers of the former Western bloc were already exposed to broad daylight, in particular France, the United Kingdom and Germany which, in addition to the murderous American and Russian interventions, waged war through the means of the various belligerents in the former Yugoslavia. The terrorist attack of September 11, 2001, in turn, marked another sig-

5 “Decomposition: the ultimate stage of decadent capitalism”, *International Review* 107, internationalism.org



Anti-war protest in Russia

nificant step in the chaos striking at the heart of global capitalism. Leftist theories about American greed for oil profits being a major cause of these wars were fundamentally refuted by their staggering cost. It was above all in the context of the USA’s efforts to reassert its global authority that it had to unleash the invasions of Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003, in the name of “*the war against terrorism*”.

American imperialism launched itself into a veritable headlong rush: during the second Gulf War, Germany, France and Russia were no longer content to just drag their feet behind Uncle Sam, they flatly refused to engage their soldiers. Above all, each of these operations only engendered such chaos and instability that the United States ended up getting bogged down, to the point of having to leave Afghanistan in a humiliating fashion 20 years later, leaving behind them a field of ruins in

the hands of the very same Taliban they had come to depose, just as they had already had to abandon Iraq in the grip of an immense anarchy, destabilising the whole region, in particular neighboring Syria. In the period of decomposition, precisely by seeking to maintain its rank as the first world power, the United States became the main propagator of chaos.

The United States provokes chaos on the doorstep of one of the principal centres of world capitalism

Today, the United States has undeniably scored points on the imperialist level, without even having to intervene directly. Russia, a long-time adversary, is engaged in an unwinnable war that will result, whatever the outcome, in major military and economic weakening. Already, the European Union and the United States have announced the way it’s going: according to the head of European diplomacy, it is a question of “devastating the Russian economy”... and so much the worse for the proletariat in Russia who will pay for all these retaliatory measures. Along with the Ukrainian proletariat, it is the first victim and the hostage of the unleashing of military barbarism!

The Americans have also regained control of NATO, which the French President recently announced was “brain dead”, considerably strengthening their presence in the East and forcing the main European powers (Germany, France and the United Kingdom) to assume more of the economic burden of militarism for the defense of Europe’s eastern borders. This is a policy that the United States has been trying to implement for several years, notably under the presidency of Trump, and now continued by Biden, in order to concentrate its force against its principal enemy: China.

For the Europeans, the situation represents a diplomatic defeat of the first order and a considerable loss of influence. The conflict fueled by the United States was not wanted by France and Germany which, because of their dependence on Russian gas and the market that this country represents for their own goods, had nothing to gain from this conflict. On the contrary, Europe will experience a further acceleration of the economic crisis under the impact of the war and the sanctions imposed on Russia. The Europeans therefore have had to line up behind the American shield after the diplomatic weakening caused by Trump’s flippancy had made them hope for a strong comeback of the old continent onto the international scene.

Is the fact that the main European powers are forced to line up behind the United States the beginnings of the formation of a new imperialist bloc? The period of decomposition does not, in itself, prohibit the constitution of new blocs, although the weight of every man for himself considerably hampers this eventuality. Nevertheless, in this situation the irrational will of each state to defend its own imperialist interests is greatly reinforced. Germany has been dragging its feet somewhat in enforcing sanctions and continues to walk on eggshells over the question of further sanctions on the Russian gas exports on which it

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Against imperialist war, the class struggle!

Nor is there anything to expect from Zelensky and his entourage of corrupt politicians and oligarchs. This former comedian is now playing to perfection his role as an unscrupulous flatterer for the interests of the Ukrainian bourgeoisie. Through an intense nationalist campaign, he has succeeded in arming the population, sometimes by force, and in recruiting a whole pack of mercenaries and gunmen who have been elevated to the rank of “heroes of the nation”. Zelensky is now touring Western capitals, addressing all the parliaments to beg for the delivery of more and more weapons and ammunition. As for the “heroic Ukrainian resistance”, it does what all the armies in the world do: it massacres, plunders and does not hesitate to beat or even execute prisoners!

All the democratic powers pretend to be indignant about the “war crimes” perpetrated by the Russian army. What hypocrisy! Throughout history, they have never stopped piling up corpses and ruins in the four corners of the world. While crying over the fate of the population victimised by the “Russian ogre”, the Western powers deliver astronomical quantities of weapons of war, provide training and all the necessary intelligence for the attacks and bombings of the Ukrainian army, including the neo-Nazi Azov regiment!

Above all, by multiplying its provocations, the American bourgeoisie has done everything possible to push Moscow into a war that is lost in advance. For the US, the main thing is to bleed Russia dry and to have a free hand to break the hegemonic pretensions of China, the main target of US power. This war also allows the United States to contain and thwart the great Chinese imperialist project of the “New Silk Road”. To achieve its ends, the “great American democracy” did not hesitate to encourage a totally irrational and barbaric military adventure, and consequently increasing destabilisation and chaos in the vicinity of Western Europe.

The proletariat must not choose one side against the other! It has no homeland to defend and must fight nationalism and the chauvinist hysteria of the bourgeoisie everywhere! It must fight with its own weapons and methods against the war!

To fight against war, we must fight against capitalism

Today, the proletariat in Ukraine, crushed by more than 60 years of Stalinism, has suffered a major defeat and has allowed itself to be seduced by the sirens of nationalism. In Russia, even if the proletariat showed itself to be a bit more reticent, its inability to curb the warlike impulses of its bourgeoisie explains why the ruling clique was able to send 200,000 soldiers to the front without fearing any workers’ reactions.

In the main capitalist powers, in Western Europe and in the USA, the proletariat today has neither the strength nor the political capacity to oppose this conflict directly through its international solidarity and the struggle against the bourgeoisie in all countries. It is for the moment not in a position to fraternise and to enter into a massive struggle to stop the massacre.

However, although the current tide of propaganda with its attendant demonstrations risk leading it into the dead end of defending pro-Ukrainian nationalism or into the false alternative of pacifism, the proletariat of the Western countries, with its experience of class struggles and the shenanigans of the bourgeoisie, still remains the main antidote to the death spiral of the capitalist system. The Western bourgeoisie has been careful not to intervene directly in Ukraine because it knows that the working class will not accept the daily sacrifice of thousands of soldiers enlisted in military confrontations.

Although disoriented and still weakened by this war, the working class of the Western countries retains the potential to develop its resistance to the

new sacrifices generated by the sanctions against the Russian economy and by the colossal increase of military budgets: galloping inflation, the rising cost of most of the products of everyday life and the acceleration of all the other attacks against its living and working conditions

Already, proletarians can and must oppose all the sacrifices demanded by the bourgeoisie. It is through its struggles that the proletariat will be able to create a balance of force against the ruling class and thus hold back its murderous arm! For the working class, producer of all wealth, is, in the long run, the only force in society capable of putting an end to war by taking the path of overthrowing capitalism.

This is, moreover, what history showed us when the proletariat rose up in Russia in 1917 and in Germany the following year, putting an end to the war in an immense revolutionary wave. And before that, as the World War raged on, revolutionaries stayed at their posts by intransigently defending the elementary principle of proletarian internationalism. It is now the responsibility of revolutionaries to pass on the experience of the workers’ movement. In the face of war, their first responsibility is to speak with one voice, to firmly wave the flag of internationalism, the only one that can make the bourgeoisie tremble again!

ICC 4.4.22

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ICC public meetings

Who can put an end to capitalist wars and barbarism?

We are currently experiencing the most intense campaign of war propaganda since the Second World War – not only in Russia and Ukraine, but across the globe. It is therefore essential for all those who are seeking to respond to the drums of war with the message of proletarian internationalism to take any opportunity to come together for discussion and clarification, for mutual solidarity and support, and for the definition of serious revolutionary activity against the bourgeoisie's war drive. This is why the ICC has been holding a series of online and physical public meetings in a number of languages – English, French, Spanish, Dutch, Italian, German, Portuguese and Turkish, with the intention of holding further meetings in the near future.

In the space of this short article, we cannot attempt to summarise all the discussions that took place at these meetings, which were marked by a serious and fraternal atmosphere, a real desire to comprehend what is going on. Instead, we want to focus on some of the main questions and themes that emerged. We are also publishing on our website some contributions by sympathisers which provide their own view of the discussions and their dynamic¹.

The priority of internationalist principles

The first and probably the most vital theme of the meetings was a broad agreement that the fundamental principles of internationalism – no support for either imperialist camp, rejection of all pacifist illusions, affirmation of the international class struggle as the only force that can really oppose war – remain as valid as ever, despite the enormous ideological pressure, above all in western countries, to rally to the defence of “plucky little Ukraine” against the Russian bear. Some might respond that these are no more than banal generalisations, but they should by no means be taken for granted, and they are certainly not easy to put forward in the current climate where there are very few signs of any class opposition to the war. Internationalists have to recognise that they are, for now, swimming against the stream. In this sense they are in a similar situation to the revolutionaries who, in 1914, had the task of holding on to their principles in the face of the war hysteria that accompanied the early days and months of the First World War. But we can also take inspiration from the fact that the eventual reaction of the working class against the war would turn the general slogans of the internationalists into a guide to action aimed at the overthrow of the capitalist world order.

A second key element of the discussion – and one which was less widely shared – was the need to understand the gravity of the current war, which, following the Covid pandemic, provides further proof that capitalism in its epoch of decay is a growing threat to the very survival of humanity. Even if the war in Ukraine is not preparing the ground for the formation of new imperialist blocs that will take humanity into a third – and no doubt final – world war, it still expresses the intensification and extension of military barbarism which, combined with the destruction of nature and other manifestations of a system in agony, would in the end have the same result as a world war. In our view, the present war marks a significant step in the acceleration of capitalism's decomposition, a process that contains the threat of overwhelming the proletariat before it is able to muster its forces for a conscious struggle against capital.

The need for a coherent analysis

We will not elaborate here our reasons for rejecting the argument that we are seeing the reconstitution of stable military blocs. We will simply say that despite real tendencies towards a “bipolarisation” of imperialist antagonisms, we still consider that they are outweighed by the opposite tendency for each imperialist power to defend its own particular interests and resist being subordinated to a particular world power. But this latter tendency is

1. See readers contributions “Some impressions of the ICC meetings of the 5th and 6th of March 2022” and “Brief position statement on the war in Ukraine”, internationalism.org

synonymous with a growing lack of control by the ruling class, an increasingly irrational and unpredictable slide towards chaos, which in many ways is leading to a more perilous situation than the one in which the globe was “managed” by rival imperialist blocs, i.e. the so-called “Cold War”.

A number of comrades present at the meetings posed questions about this analysis; and some, for example members of the Communist Workers Organisation at the English-language meetings, were clearly opposed to our concept of the decomposition of the system. But there can be little doubt that a central component of a consistently internationalist position is the capacity to develop a coherent analysis of the situation, otherwise there is a danger of being disoriented by the rapidity and unpredictability of immediate events. And in contrast to the interpretation of the war by the comrades of *Cahiers du Marxisme Vivant* at one of the meetings in France, we don't think that simple economic explanations, the hunt for profit in the short term, can explain the real origin and dynamic of imperialist conflict in an historic epoch when economic motives are increasingly dominated by military and strategic necessities. The ruinous costs of this war will provide additional evidence for this affirmation.

Equally important as an understanding of the source and direction of imperialist conflict is to make a sober analysis of the situation of the world working class and the perspectives for the class struggle. While there was a general agreement that the war campaign is inflicting serious blows against the consciousness of a working class which had already been suffering from a deep loss of confidence and self-awareness, some participants at the meeting tended towards the view that the working class was no longer an obstacle to war. Our response was that the working class cannot be treated as a homogeneous mass. It's evident that the working class in Ukraine, which has been effectively drowned by the mobilisation for the “defence of the nation”, has suffered a real defeat. But it's different in Russia where there is clearly widespread opposition to the war despite the brutal repression of any dissent, and in the Russian army where there are signs of demoralisation and

even rebellion. But most important, the proletariat in the central western countries cannot be counted on to sacrifice itself either on the economic or the military level, and the ruling class of these countries has long been unable to use anything but professional soldiers for its military adventures. In the wake of the mass strikes in Poland in 1980, the ICC developed its critique of Lenin's theory that the chain of world capitalism would break in its “weakest link” – in less developed countries on the model of Russia in 1917. Instead, we insisted that the more politically developed working class of western Europe would be key to the generalisation of the class struggle. In a future article, we will explain why we think this view remains valid today, despite the changes in the composition of the world proletariat that have subsequently taken place.²

What is to be done?

The participants at the meeting shared a legitimate concern about the specific responsibility of revolutionaries in the face of this war. In the French and Spanish meetings this was the main focus of the discussion, but in our view a number of comrades veered towards an activist approach, overestimating the possibility of our internationalist slogans having an immediate impact on the course of events. To take the example of the call for fraternisation between proletarians in uniform: while it remains perfectly valid as a general perspective, without the development of a more general class movement such as we saw in the factories and streets in Russia and Germany in 1917-18, there is little chance of the combatants on both sides of this present war seeing each other as class comrades. And of course, genuine internationalists are such a small minority today that they cannot expect to have any immediate impact on the course of the class struggle in general.

Nevertheless, we don't think that this means that revolutionaries are doomed to be a voice in the wilderness. Again, we must take our inspiration from figures like Lenin and Luxemburg in 1914 who understood the necessity to plant the flag of

2. “Critique of the weak link theory”, *International Review* 31, internationalism.org

internationalism even when they were isolated from the mass of their class, to keep on fighting for principles in the face of the treason of former workers' organisations, and to develop a profound analysis of the real causes of the war in the face of the alibis of the ruling class. Equally, we must follow the example of the Zimmerwald and other conferences which expressed the determination of the internationalists to come together and issue a common manifesto against the war, despite holding to different analyses and perspectives. In this sense we welcome the participation of other revolutionary organisations at these meetings, their contribution to the debate, and their willingness to consider our proposal for a joint statement of the communist left against the war³. We can only regret the subsequent decision by the CWO/ICT to reject our proposal, a problem we will have to come back to in a future article.

It was also important that, in answer to questions from comrades about what could be done in their particular locality or country, the ICC stressed the primacy of establishing and developing international contacts and activities, of integrating local and national specificities into a more global framework of analysis. Working on an international scale provides revolutionaries with a means to fight against isolation and the demoralisation that may result from it.

A major imperialist war can only underline the reality that revolutionary activity only makes sense in relation to revolutionary political *organisations*. As we wrote in our report on the structure and functioning of the revolutionary organisation, “*The working class doesn't give rise to revolutionary militants but to revolutionary organisations: there is no direct relationship between the militants and the class*”⁴. This highlights the responsibility of the organisations of the communist left in providing a framework, a militant reference point around which individual comrades can orient themselves. In turn the organisations can only be strengthened by the contributions and active support they receive from these comrades. **Amos**

3. See page 1 for the statement.

4. “Report on the structure and functioning of the revolutionary organisation”, *International Review* 33, internationalism.org

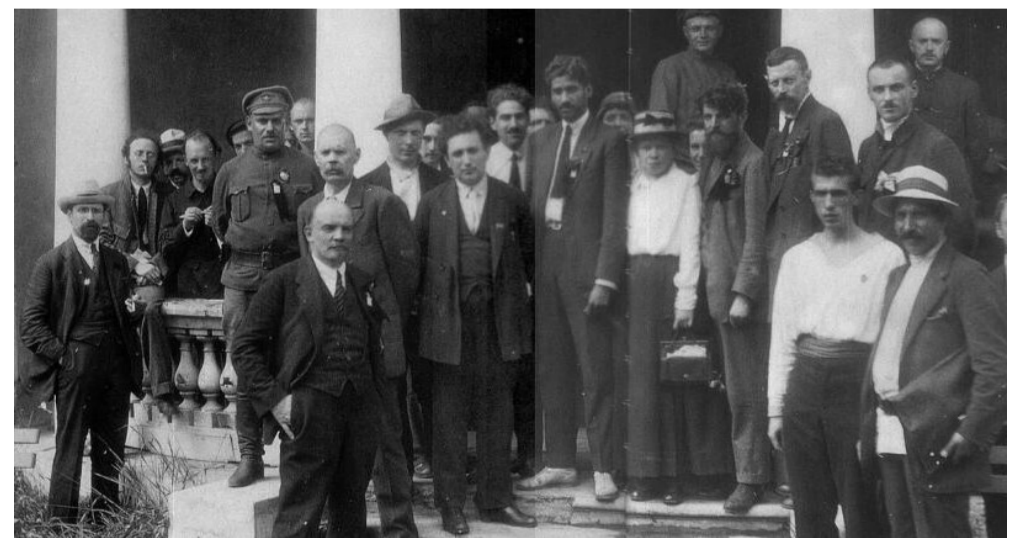
Zimmerwald Conference

An indispensable reference for the defence of internationalism

The struggle against war can only be taken in hand by the working class through the struggle on its own class terrain and its international unification. Revolutionary organisations cannot wait for a massive mobilisation by the working class against the war: they must act as a determined spearhead in the defence of internationalism and point to the need for the overthrow of the system. This demands that the working class and its revolutionary organisations reappropriate the lessons and the attitudes of previous struggles against war. The experience of the Zimmerwald conference is enlightening in this respect.

Zimmerwald is a small town in Switzerland, and in September 1915 it was host to a small conference: 38 delegates from 12 countries - all the internationalists transported there in a couple of taxis, as Trotsky joked. And even among these few, only a small minority defended a really revolutionary position against the war. Only the Bolsheviks around Lenin and some of the other German groups stood for revolutionary methods and revolutionary goals: transformation of the imperialist war into civil war, the destruction of capitalism as the source of all wars. The other participants had a centrist position or even leaned strongly to the right.

The result of the fierce debates at Zimmerwald was a manifesto to the proletarians of the world which was in many ways a compromise between the left and the centre, since it did not take up the Bolsheviks' revolutionary slogans. Nevertheless



its ringing denunciation of the war and its call for class action against it still enabled it to articulate and politicise the anti-war sentiments that were growing among the mass of the working class.

The struggle for internationalism needs political organisation

The example of Zimmerwald demonstrates that, for revolutionaries, the struggle against war takes place at three distinct but interconnected levels:

- Propaganda and agitation: Revolutionaries did not wait until the class started moving: they started agitation against the war at the first day of hostilities, well before the class was able to react. The regroupment of revolutionaries into po-

litical organisations enabled them to develop their propaganda and agitation through the medium of a regular press and mass-produced leaflets, and to speak in the workers' assemblies and councils which arose later, not as individuals representing only themselves but on behalf of a definite political tendency within the class movement.

- Organisational: the betrayal of the majority of the old parties demanded that the minority of internationalists had to work as an organised fraction, to work either for the expulsion of the traitors or, when this proved impossible, as it

Continued on page 7

“Humanitarian” propaganda in the service of war

Faced with the barbarity of war, the bourgeoisie has always used cynical lies to conceal the murderous responsibility of its own system. The war in Ukraine has not escaped the torrent of propaganda and the shameless instrumentalisation of the suffering it has generated. Not a day goes by without the mass exodus and distress of Ukrainian families fleeing the bombings being shown on all the television channels and front pages of all the newspapers, which are usually so discreet about the misfortunes that capitalism inflicts on humanity. The media have displayed endless images of traumatised Ukrainian children and victims of war.

Humanitarian mystification is a weapon of war

This propagandistic exploitation of the legitimate shock provoked by the atrocious images of bombardments, murder, and mass exile, the war in Ukraine has allowed the bourgeoisie of the democratic countries to recuperate a spontaneous surge of sympathy and compassion to orchestrate a gigantic “humanitarian” campaign around the “citizens’ initiatives” towards the Ukrainian refugees (and even around the ferocious repression of the Russian demonstrators and opponents of the war). They are making use of the distress and despair of the victims of the biggest exodus of populations since the end of the Second World War. Everywhere, “humanitarian corridors” and “citizens’ networks” are being organised to help Ukrainian refugees, in order to justify the supply of an immense arsenal of death-dealing weapons intended to “defend a martyred people” from the “Russian ogre”. Even in small villages, collections, donations and all sorts of “initiatives” or performances in solidarity with Ukrainian refugees are organised and encouraged by the authorities.

Behind the tributes to the martyrdom of the “Ukrainian people”, there is the sordid exploitation of real impulses of generosity, exploited by states, all of them warmongers, who don’t care about the tragic fate of a population held hostage between Russia’s bombing and the forced “general mobilisation” of the Zelensky government. In the eyes of the bourgeoisie, the “Ukrainian people”

serve above all as cannon fodder in a “patriotic struggle” against the invasion. The same cynicism explains why the Western bourgeoisie has cast a modest veil over the massacres perpetrated by the Ukrainian government, since 2014, in the Russian-speaking regions of Lugansk and Donetsk, where nearly 14,000 people have been killed in 8 years.

The so-called humanism of European states is a huge lie and a pure mystification. The effort to receive and help refugees is, for the most part, due to the initiative of the populations and in no way due to the states. It is undeniable that, since the outbreak of the war and from the very beginning of the exodus of families, there has been an enormous spontaneous surge of solidarity. There has been a profoundly human effort to bring relief, assistance and help, by offering shelter and providing meals to those suddenly plunged into distress and despair.

But this elementary solidarity is not enough. It is not the product of a collective mobilisation of proletarians on their class terrain. It comes from a sum of individual initiatives that the bourgeoisie never fails to recuperate, to exploit and to instrumentalise for its own benefit. Moreover, these reactions were immediately diverted onto the terrain of bourgeois propaganda to justify the war, to peddle the deadly poison of nationalism and to recreate a climate of Sacred Unity against “the infamous Russian invader”.

The democratic powers of Western Europe had no choice but to open their borders to Ukrainian refugees, unless they were to forcibly block hundreds of thousands of them inside the Ukrainian border. Then their entire anti-Russian war propaganda would collapse. Indeed, if they declare themselves ready to welcome the Ukrainians, it is to ideologically justify a war mobilisation and especially arms deliveries to Ukraine against “Putin’s war crimes” and thus to defend their own national imperialist interests.

At the same time, these campaigns serve to conceal the fact that the responsibility for this dramatic situation lies with all states, with the logic of competition and imperialist rivalries that derive from the capitalist system itself. It is this system which has generated the multiple war zones, the

impoverishment and mass exodus of populations, the mounting chaos and barbarism.

The odious cynicism of a class of scavengers

All the scavenger states are now shedding crocodile tears over the Ukrainian refugees they claim to welcome with open arms in the name of the so-called “right of asylum”. These fine promises to welcome refugees are nothing but smoke and mirrors. Everywhere, Western European states have introduced reception quotas for migrants fleeing misery, chaos and war. These barefoot refugees are not like the majority of Ukrainians, blond, blue-eyed Europeans; they are most often not Christians, but Muslims. They are sorted like cattle between “economic refugees”, who are totally undesirable, and “war refugees” or “political refugees”. We should therefore sort out the “good” and “bad” refugees...

All this with the blank check of the European Union and its major democracies. Such a selection process, such a difference in treatment is totally abject. In France, for example, less than two years ago, the Macron government sent its cops to forcibly dislodge migrant families who had set up their tents in the Place de la République in Paris; the cops beat up these undesirables and lacerated their tents with knives. Only recently, when Iraqi refugees were knocking on Europe’s door, used as leverage by the Belarusian state, they were smashed against the barbed wire of the Polish border by the armed robocops of the European Union. The “big democracies” were much less welcoming then, despite the very visible suffering of people dying of cold and hunger.

What is the reality behind the variable geometry of this false compassion, this so-called solidarity of states? The bourgeoisie has taken care in most of the “host” countries to create a “special status” for Ukrainians, totally distinct from that of other refugees, in order to create opposition and divisions among the population and the working class. In Belgium, for example, the government decided to give Ukrainians a status quite distinct from other war refugees. While the latter usually first have to undergo a severe screening and control in order

to receive a possible authorisation to work in the “host” country, Ukrainian nationals are granted such authorisation straight away and also receive a much higher subsidy than others. Even the amount of their allowance is higher than the minimum wage of “local” employees... This filthy manoeuvre in the service of imperialist propaganda allows the government to create not only antagonism between Ukrainians and other refugees but also to create an additional factor of division, a climate of competition, within the working class¹.

A highly qualified minority of Ukrainian refugees will, to the delight of the bourgeoisie, be integrated into the economy of certain countries, such as Germany, where there is a significant shortage of this type of labour. For the others, the vast majority, their massive influx will pose major problems for the European bourgeoisie, which is incapable of absorbing them. Sooner or later, in the coming period, the vast majority of them will be exposed to the nauseating breath of populist ideology, serving as scapegoats for the social and economic problems that the entire bourgeoisie will then have an interest in highlighting.

Above all, workers must at all costs refuse to be lured by the siren songs of these humanitarian campaigns. They must avoid their ideological traps by categorically rejecting any unity with their exploiters in the face of war. But at the same time, they must fight to defend their own class interests in the face of intensified crisis and war attacks. Only through the international development of this struggle, beyond the borders and conflicts set up by the ruling class, will they be able to fully express their class solidarity with the refugees and all the victims of the growing barbarity of capitalism, offering them a very different perspective: a society liberated from the law of profit and the deadly dynamics of this system. **Wim, 03.04.2022**

1. Some countries, however, have been more “welcoming” than others. The British bourgeoisie in particular still erected all kinds of bureaucratic barriers to Ukrainian refugees entering the country. In another article, we will analyse the differences between the British bourgeoisie and its “friends” on the continent regarding the war in Ukraine.

Trotskyism: beating the drums of imperialist war

Since its passage into the bourgeois camp, Trotskyism has never missed an opportunity to attack the consciousness of the working class by pushing proletarians to take the side of one imperialist camp against another during the conflicts that have followed one another since the Second World War. Their position in the face of the military chaos in Ukraine confirms this once again. These watchdogs of capitalism oscillate between openly warmongering positions, calling for support for one of the warring camps, and others, apparently more “subtle” and “radical”, but still justifying the continuation of barbaric militarism. The lies and mystifications of Trotskyism are a real poison for the working class, intended to disorientate it by posing as a form of Marxism!

The position of the Nouveau parti Anticapitaliste (NPA), in France belongs to the category of patent warmongers: “No to the war! Solidarity with the resistance of the Ukrainian people! [...] In situations like the one in Ukraine at the moment, as long as the bombing continues and as long as Russian troops are there, any abstract ‘pacifist’ position such as the call for ‘calm’, ‘stop the violence’ or ‘ceasefire’, de facto sets the parties back to back and is tantamount to a denial of the rights of Ukrainians to defend themselves, including militarily.” It could not be clearer! This bourgeois group openly calls on proletarians to serve as martyrs for the defence of the Fatherland. In other words, for the defence of the national capital that feeds itself on their exploitation.

With the same contempt, but with greater subtlety and a perfidious double language, Lutte Ouvrière (LO), in the name of the defence of ‘internationalism’, pretends to condemn a war which “is being

waged on the backs of the peoples” in order, in the final analysis, to call on the proletarians to be used as cannon fodder in the name of “resistance to imperialism” and the “the right of nations to self-determination” ... behind their national bourgeoisie. Its candidate in the French presidential election, Nathalie Arthaud, did not hesitate to urge “the workers” to defend the poor little Ukrainian state against “bureaucratic” Russia and “imperialist” America: “Putin, Biden, and the other leaders of the NATO countries are waging a war with the skin of the peoples for whom they share the same contempt”.

As if Zelensky and his clique of corrupt oligarchs were not themselves responsible for the dismemberment of the Ukrainian population and in particular of the working class, whose men are forced to fight for interests that are not their own. Le Mouvement Socialiste des Travailleurs (MTS), a South American member of the so-called Fourth International, denounces both the Russian invasion of Ukraine and NATO interference. But behind this supposedly internationalist position, we find this time the recognition of the “right of the people of Donbass to self-determination”, which is exactly the alibi put forward by Putin to invade Ukraine!

In the UK and the US, the Internationalist Bolshevik Tendency (IBT) develops an even more tricky position: in an article entitled “Revolutionary Defeatism and Proletarian Internationalism”, after recalling Lenin’s already ambiguous position that “in all imperialist countries the proletariat must now desire the defeat of its own government” (what he calls “dual defeatism”), the IBT adds: “Dual defeatism does not apply when an impe-

rialist country attacks a non-imperialist country in what is effectively a war of conquest. In such cases, Marxists not only call for the defeat of their own imperialist government but actively favor the military victory of the non-imperialist state.”¹

It is thus enough to define Ukraine as a non-imperialist state and the choice is quickly made to push the proletarians to the massacre! It is true that the IBT exploits to the absurd a weakness in Lenin’s position on imperialism². The error of the Bolsheviks and the Communist International, who lived directly through the transition from the ascendant period of capitalism to its decadent one, without having drawn all the implications, is understandable. But, after a century of wars of aggression by any country against any other (Iraq against Kuwait, Iran against Iraq, etc.), to peddle the same position is pure mystification!

The whole mystification is based on the bourgeois motto of “the right of the nations to self-determination”, making imperialism a struggle

1. It is worth pointing out here that the Spartacists, now called the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), from which the IBT split in 1982, has a similarly profound analysis, but in reverse: in one and the same leaflet, they issue an apparently revolutionary call “to turn this war between two capitalist classes into a civil war where workers overthrow both capitalist classes”, and then tell us what they would do if the war escalates: “should NATO or any imperialist power directly enter this war, it would be an obligation for any revolutionary to side militarily with Russia for the defeat of the imperialists”. With leftism, you always have to read the small print! (*Spartacist 4 Supplement, 27.2.22*)

2. With his definition of imperialism as the policy of the great capitalist powers, Lenin was not always clear on the question of imperialism, unlike Rosa Luxemburg.

between the “great powers” alone. But, as Rosa Luxemburg stated as early as 1916 in *The Crisis of Social Democracy*: “Imperialism is not the creation of any one or of any group of states. It is the product of a particular stage of ripeness in the world development of capital, an innately international condition, an indivisible whole, that is recognisable only in all its relations, and from which no nation can hold aloof at will”. The so-called national defence struggles can no longer be part of the demands of the working class. On the contrary they are a real poison for its revolutionary struggle, a mystification aiming, under a revolutionary verbiage, at enrolling the proletarians under the flags of imperialism, whatever the camp they choose to support! **H., 27 March 2022**

Stop the War Coalition: an instrument of anti-American imperialism

See page 6

Confronted with war and economic crisis, the working class must not make any sacrifices

Unleashing the barbarism of war in Ukraine means that the whole world is threatened with its collateral “damage”, in particular in the growth of poverty worldwide and through the mounting attacks on the living standards of the working class: increased exploitation, inflated prices and widespread unemployment.

In addition to the threats of possible nuclear strikes by Russia and the risk of radioactive gases escaping from Ukrainian nuclear power plants damaged by the fighting, measures are being taken or planned by a numerous countries in order to bring the Russian economy to its knees, which carries the risk of destabilising the world economy. Moreover, a tragic illustration of the current escalation of war, the notable tendency to increase military budgets (Germany has suddenly decided to double its budget), will constitute an additional factor in weakening the economies of the countries involved.

Towards a new global economic depression and renewed wars

The retaliation with economic sanctions against Russia is going to lead to shortages of raw materials in a large number of European countries and the loss of markets in Russia for some of them. The prices of raw materials will keep rising for a long time and, as a result, so will the prices of many other goods. The recession will affect the whole world, bringing with it widespread poverty and an increased exploitation of the working class.

This is no exaggeration, as is shown by the statements of German experts reassuring a “well-informed public” anxious to know what the future holds while also protecting the best interests of the bourgeoisie: “We are talking about a serious economic crisis in Germany and hence in Europe”. “Business collapses and unemployment” would be on the horizon for a long time: “We are not talking about three days or three weeks”, but rather “three years”.¹ In this context, high energy prices sustained at a historic level would have consequences far beyond Germany and Europe and would affect the poor countries most of all. Ultimately, such a rise in energy prices could, it was said yesterday, “lead to the collapse of entire states in Asia, Africa and South America.”²

The scale and the depth of the measures taken against Russia, despite their undeniable severity, do not in themselves explain the economic tsunami that will hit the world. The current level of the decline of the world economy, which is the product of a long process of a worsening of the global crisis of capitalism, must be taken into account. But it is on this question that the “experts” chose to remain silent, so as not to have to admit that the cause of the decline of world capitalism lies in its historical and insurmountable crisis, just as they are careful not to identify this war, like all those that have occurred since the First World War, as a product of decadent capitalism. Nor do they mention certain consequences of a new plunge of the economy into crisis and the accentuation of the trade war that is inseparable from it: a new worsening of imperialist tensions and a new headlong rush into armed conflict.³ Following a similar defence of capitalism, some are worried about the very likely consequences of a severe shortage of basic foodstuffs, those produced in Ukraine previously, together with the resulting social unrest in a number of countries, without any obvious concern for the suffering of the starving populations.

A global economy overwhelmed by the accumulation of the contradictions of capitalism

The Covid pandemic had already exposed the growing vulnerability of the economy to the convergence of a number of unique factors in the period of capitalism’s life since the collapse of the Eastern bloc and the subsequent dissolution of both blocs.

1. “Habeck: Examining ways to moderate energy prices”, *Sueddeutsche* (8 March 2022)
2. “U.S. puts an oil embargo on the agenda”, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (8 March 2022).
3. “Resolution on the international situation”, *International Review* no. 63 (June 1990).

In fact an increasingly short-term vision has led capitalism to sacrifice a certain number of imperative necessities for any system of exploitation - such as maintaining the health of those it exploits - to the demands of the crisis and of global economic competition. Thus, capitalism has done nothing to prevent the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, which is itself a pure social product given the way it has been transmitted from animals to humans and spread across the globe, even though scientists had warned of these dangers. Moreover, the deterioration of the health care systems which has taken place over the last 30 years has contributed to making the pandemic much more deadly. In the same way, the extent of the disaster and its repercussions on the economy have been further fuelled by the exacerbation of the “every man for himself” attitude at all levels of society (a characteristic of the current phase of decomposition of capitalism), thus aggravating the classic manifestations of competition and giving rise to incredible episodes such as the war for masks, respirators, vaccines, etc., not only between countries, but also between state and private services within the same country. Millions of people have died around the world, and the partial paralysis of economic activity and its disorganisation led to the worst depression since the Second World War in 2020.

By affecting the worldwide economy, the pandemic would also reveal new problems for capitalist production, such as the increased vulnerability of supply chains to various factors. Indeed, it only takes one link in the chain to be defective or inoperable due to disease, political instability or climatic disasters, for the final product to suffer a delay, sometimes a very significant one that is inconsistent with the requirements of the market. Thus, in some countries, a considerable number of cars could not be put on the market because they were immobilised on the assembly lines waiting for missing parts, in particular those delivered by Russia. Capitalism is thus confronted with the boomerang effect of the excessive “globalisation” of the economy that the bourgeoisie had progressively developed from the 1980s onwards, the aim being to improve the profitability of capital through the outsourcing of production and the employment of a much cheaper workforce.

Moreover, capitalism is increasingly confronted with disasters resulting from the effects of global warming (huge fires, rivers that violently burst their banks, extensive floods...) which, in an increasingly significant way, affect not only agricultural production but production as a whole. Capitalism is thus paying the price for the relentless exploitation and destruction of nature since 1945 (the impact of which became more widely perceptible from the 1970s onwards) through the heightened competition between the various capitals in the search for new and increasingly limited sources of profit. The picture we have just sketched is not a recent discovery, but the result of more than a hundred years of the decadence of capitalism, initiated by the First World War, during which this system had to deal repeatedly with the effects of the crisis of overproduction, which lies at the heart of all the contradictions of capitalism. This crisis was at the origin of all the recessions of this period: first the Great Depression of the 1930s and then, after a semblance of economic recovery during the 1950s and 1960s, which became known as the “Post war boom”, the open crisis which appeared again at the end of the 1960s. Each of its expressions resulted in a more severe recession than the previous one: 1967, 1970, 1975, 1982, 1991, 2001, 2009. Each time, the economic system had to be revived by a resort to debt which, in an ever-increasing proportion, would only be repaid by resorting to new debt, and so on... So that each new open manifestation of the crisis is at the same time more devastating, while the means used to deal with it, debt, constitutes a growing threat to economic stability.

The slowdown in growth ten years after the financial crash of 2008 required a further boost to debt, while the fall in production in 2020 that was intended, as we have seen, to support the economy in the face of a set of “new” factors (pandemic, global warming, vulnerability of supply chains,

etc.), contributed to a new record high in world debt, tending to disconnect it even more from the real economy (it jumped to 256% of the value of world GDP). This situation is not insignificant. It is a factor in the devaluation of currencies and therefore in the development of inflation. A long-term price explosion contains the risk of social unrest of various kinds (inter-classist movements and class struggle) and constitutes an impediment to world trade. This is why the bourgeoisie will increasingly be forced to perform a balancing act - which, although familiar to it, is becoming more and more perilous - in order to respond to two conflicting requirements:

- Raising interest rates to curb soaring inflation, which has the consequence of reducing the flow of credit;
- Sustaining an economy that cannot function without permanent injections of credit.

And this in a context tending towards economic stagnation combined with high inflation.

Moreover, such a situation is conducive to the bursting of speculative bubbles that can destabilise global business and trade (as in the real estate sector in the United States in 2008 and in China in 2021).

The lies of the bourgeoisie

Faced with each and every catastrophe in the world, whether it be war or the expressions of the economic crisis, the bourgeoisie always provides a panoply of spurious and diverse explanations which all have in common the fact that they place no blame on capitalism for the calamities plaguing humanity.

In 1973 (a year that was only a moment in the deepening of the open crisis that has since become more or less permanent) the development of unemployment and inflation was explained by the rise in the price of oil. However, the rise in oil prices is a by-product of capitalist trade and not of something that is external to this system.⁴

The current situation is a new illustration of this rule. The war in Ukraine is blamed on authoritarian Russia and not on crisis ridden capitalism, as if Russia were not an integral part of world capitalism.

Faced with the prospects of a considerable worsening of the economic crisis, the bourgeoisie is preparing the ground to make the proletariat feel it should accept the terrible sacrifices that will be imposed on it, presenting them as the necessary consequence of the retaliatory measures against Russia. It has this well-prepared message: “the population can choose to turn down the heating or to reduce what it eats in solidarity with the Ukrainian people, because this is the price of the essential task of weakening Russia”.

Since 1914, the working class has been through hell: either as the cannon fodder in two world wars and in the incessant and deadly regional conflicts; or as the victim of mass unemployment during the Great Depression of the 1930s; or being forced to roll up its sleeves to rebuild countries and economies ravaged by two world wars; or being thrown into the precariousness and poverty with each new recession since the return of the world economic crisis at the end of the 1960s.

With a new descent into economic crisis, and faced with the ever-growing threat of war, it would be a total disaster if the working class listened to the bourgeoisie’s demands for sacrifice. Quite the contrary, it must profit from the contradictions of capitalism that are expressed by the war and the economic attacks so it can push forward the class struggle, consciously developing the perspective of overthrowing capitalism. **Silvio, 26.3.22**

4. Read our article, “The rise in oil prices: an effect not the cause of the crisis”, *International Review* no. 19

Stop the War Coalition: an instrument of anti-American imperialism

Stop the War Coalition (STWC), with Jeremy Corbyn as one of its most prominent supporters, presents itself as a movement aiming for peace and to end the war in Ukraine. But reality is far removed from its narrative. Apart from the fact that peace in capitalism is an impossibility, STWC has always contributed to the increase of the military tensions by taking side in the various wars that have taken place since it was founded in 2001.

With the war in Syria STWC refused to campaign against the indiscriminate bombing of cities and towns by Russian imperialism and against the atrocities of the Assad regime. For years, the coalition has either remained silent, or systematically promoted Assad justifications¹.

Over the annexation of Crimea, Counterfire, a website formed by leading activists in STWC, approvingly published articles which said that if a side had to be picked in the Russia-Ukraine conflict, then it should be Russia: “Russia has more right on its side than the West”².

In the run-up to the war in Ukraine, STWC mainly showed understanding towards what it called “the legitimate security concerns of Russia” and underlined the fact that “the conflict is the product of 30 years of failed policies, including major wars of aggression by the USA, Britain and other NATO powers”³.

At an online teach-in on Saturday 26 March 2022, Vijay Prashad added that NATO is “Washington’s instrument, a trojan horse for US power”⁴.

Of course NATO is an instrument of US imperialism, which has provoked its Russia rival into launching this war. But STWC can never take the side of the working class against all imperialist camps: on the contrary, it is always looking for one to support. Thus, STWC appeals for British imperialism to project a foreign policy that breaks free of Washington and aligns the UK within a European political and military alliance: “There now needs to be a unified effort to develop pan-European security arrangements”⁵.

Although it operates very subtly, and does not openly say that it supports Russia, STWC actually functions as a means of leading sincere anti-war sentiment into the dead end of support for anti-American imperialism.

1. See: “For avoidance of doubt: Here’s a list of (some of) the times Stop the War Coalition were apologists for the Assad regime” (The Eternal Spring)
2. “In the game of Great Power politics, if we have to pick a side over Crimea, let it be Russia” (Counterfire)
3. “Stop the War Statement on Ukraine 20.2.22”
4. Quoted from “Stop The War teach-in debates how to oppose Russian invasion - and Nato escalation”
5. “Stop the War Statement on Ukraine – 22-02-2022”

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International leaflet

the development of massive and conscious workers’ struggles everywhere in the world. And in particular, these struggles must become conscious of the fact that they constitute a preparation for the overthrow of the system responsible for the wars and all the barbarity that increasingly threatens humanity: the capitalist system.

Today, the old slogans of the workers’ movement, which appeared in the Communist Manifesto of 1848, are more than ever on the agenda: **Workers have no fatherland! Workers of all countries, unite!**

For the development of the class struggle of the international proletariat!

International Communist Current, 28.2.22

ICC public meetings

Imperialist conflict in Ukraine and the responsibilities of revolutionaries

1pm, Saturday 7 May ('live', but with online connection)
London (Venue to be confirmed, check en.internationalism.org for details, or write to uk@internationalism.org)

5pm UK time, Sunday 8 May: online
If you want to connect online, please write to uk@internationalism.org, indicating which meeting you want to attend.

In the face of the war in Ukraine the ICC draws on the historic contributions of the Communist Left to defend an internationalist position. In practice this means:

- No support for any side in imperialist conflicts
 - Opposition to pacifism
 - Only the working class is a force for social change, ultimately in the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism
 - In the struggles and reflections of the working class, revolutionary organisations have an essential role to play in the development of class consciousness
- Come to the meeting to discuss the issues raised by the war in Ukraine and the tasks of revolutionaries.

Continued from page 3

...all states are responsible for the war!

heavily depends. Moreover, it has not ceased, with France, to intervene by offering a diplomatic exit to Russia, which Washington is of course seeking to delay. Even Turkey and Israel are trying to offer their "good services" as intermediaries. Eventually, with the increase in their military spending, the major European powers could even seek to emancipate themselves from American tutelage, an ambition that Macron regularly defends through his "European defense" project. While the United States has undeniably scored points in the short term, each country therefore also tries to play its own cards, compromising the constitution of a bloc all the more easily since China, for its part, is unable to gather any significant powers behind it. The war is currently holding back China's ability to defend its own interests and objectives.

China is the ultimate objective of American strategy

However, the manoeuvres of the American bourgeoisie are not aimed solely or primarily at Russia. The confrontation between the United States and China today determines global imperialist relations. By creating a situation of chaos in Ukraine, Washington has above all sought to fetter China's advance towards Europe blocking, for a still indefinite period, the "silk roads" which were to pass through the countries of Europe from the east. After threatening China's sea lanes in the Indo-Pacific region with, among other things, the creation of the AUKUS alliance in 2021,⁶ Biden has just created a huge divide in Europe, preventing China from transporting its goods by land.

6. "AUKUS military alliance: The chaotic sharpening of imperialist rivalries", ICC online, internationalism.org

Nation or class?

To invoke today Marx's attitude towards the wars in the epoch of the progressive bourgeoisie and to forget Marx's words: "The workers have no fatherland", words which refer precisely to the epoch of the reactionary bourgeoisie, to the epoch of the socialist revolution, is to cynically distort Marx's thought and to substitute the socialist point of view for that of the bourgeoisie.

"The world war serves neither the national defence nor the economic or political interests of the masses of the people whatever they may be. It is but the product of the imperialistic rivalries between the capitalist classes of the different coun-

The United States has also succeeded in showing China's impotence in playing the role of reliable partner on the international scene since it has no other choice but to support Russia in a very weak way. In this sense, the American offensive that we are witnessing is part of its more global strategy of containment of China.

Since the wars in the former Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and in the Middle East, the United States has become, as we've seen, the main factor of chaos in the world. So far, this trend has been confirmed first in the peripheral countries of capitalism, although the central countries have also suffered the consequences (terrorism, migration crises, etc.). But today, the first world power is creating chaos at the gates of one of the main centres of capitalism. This criminal strategy is led by "democrat" and "moderate" Joe Biden. His predecessor, Donald Trump, had a well-deserved reputation as a hot-head, but it now seems obvious that to neutralise China, only the strategy differs: Trump wanted to negotiate agreements with Russia, Biden and the majority of the American bourgeoisie wanted it bled white. Putin and his clique of assassins are no better, just like Zelensky who does not hesitate to take an entire population hostage and sacrifice them as cannon fodder in the name of the defense of the fatherland. And what about the hypocritical European democracies which, while crying crocodile tears over the victims of war, deliver phenomenal quantities of military equipment?

From left to right, democratic or dictatorial, all countries, all bourgeoisies are leading us on a forced march towards chaos and barbarism! More than ever, the only alternative available to humanity is: socialism or barbarism! **EG, 21.3.22**

tries for world hegemony and for the monopoly in the exploitation and oppression of areas still not under the heel of capital. In the era of the unleashing of this imperialism, national wars are no longer possible. National interests serve only as the pretext for putting the labouring masses of the people under the domination of their mortal enemy, imperialism."

Rosa Luxemburg, Theses on the Tasks of International Social-Democracy, 1915

Read the pamphlet online at internationalism.org

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International Review 167

24th ICC Congress

Understanding the historical situation and preparing for the future

Resolution on the international situation

The pandemic and the development of decomposition

Report on the international class struggle

Report on the economic crisis

Report on imperialist tensions

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Zimmerwald Conference
An indispensable reference for the defence of internationalism

did in the majority of cases, to fight to win over the maximum number of healthy elements and to prepare the ground for a new party, a new International. This demanded a relentless battle against centrism and opportunism, against the ideological influence of the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie. Thus the Zimmerwald left in particular was the driving force behind the formation of the Third International in 1919. In a situation of war or impending revolution, the heroism of individual militants like Luxemburg, Liebknecht, John Mclean or Sylvia Pankhurst was certainly vital, but could never be enough on its own. It could only have a real meaning in the context of collective organisation around a clear political programme;

- Theoretical: the necessity to understand the characteristics of the new epoch demands a patient work of theoretical elaboration, an ability to step back and reassess the whole situation in the light of the past and of the perspectives for the future. The work of Lenin, Bukharin, Luxemburg, Pannekoek and others enabled the re-emerging political movement of the class to understand that a new epoch had dawned, one in which the class struggle would take on new forms and new methods to achieve directly revolutionary objectives. There were considerable divergences on a number of questions, for example between Lenin and Luxemburg on national self-determination, but this did not prevent them from taking a common position against the war while continuing to debate as passionately and intensely as before.

We cannot go into more detail here, but encourage our readers to read the following articles:

Zimmerwald (1915-1917): From war to revolution, *International Review* 44

Zimmerwald and the centrist currents in the political organisations of the proletariat, *International Review* 155

Zimmerwald Conference 1915: Revolutionaries against the imperialist war, *World Revolution* 290

All available on internationalism.org

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(Please note we suspended use of the BM Box during the pandemic lockdown so there will be a delay in getting anything sent by post.)

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Capitalism is war, war on capitalism!

We publish here the international leaflet which the ICC began distributing on 28 February this year. We have made an effort to make it accessible in languages spoken in countries where the ICC doesn't have any militants, and a number of contacts have helped us in this work. The leaflet is currently available in the following languages: English, French, German, Italian, Swedish, Spanish, Turkish, Dutch, Portuguese, Greek, Russian, Hindi, Farsi, Korean, Japanese, Tagalog, Chinese, Hungarian, Finnish and Arabic. With a certain number of these languages, the leaflet can be downloaded from our site as a PDF, so that it can be printed and distributed physically.

Europe has entered into war. It is not the first time since the second world butchery of 1939-45. At the beginning of the 1990s, war ravaged the former Yugoslavia, causing 140,000 deaths, with huge mass massacres of civilians, in the name of "ethnic cleansing" as in Srebrenica, in July 1995, where 8,000 men and teenagers were murdered in cold blood. The war that has just broken out with the offensive of the Russian armies against Ukraine is not as deadly for the moment, but no one knows yet how many victims it will ultimately claim. As of now, it is much larger in scale than the war in ex-Yugoslavia. Today, it is not militias or small states that are fighting each other. The current war is between the two largest states in Europe, with populations of 150 million and 45 million respectively, and with huge armies being deployed: 700,000 troops in Russia and over 250,000 in Ukraine.

Moreover, if the great powers had already been involved in the confrontations in the former Yugoslavia, it was in an indirect way, or by participating in "intervention forces", under the aegis of the United Nations. Today, it is not only Ukraine that Russia is confronting, but all the Western countries grouped in NATO which, although they are not directly involved in the fighting, have taken significant economic sanctions against this country at the same time as they have begun to send arms to Ukraine.

Thus, the war that has just begun is a dramatic event of the utmost importance, first and foremost for Europe, but also for the whole world. It has already claimed thousands of lives among soldiers on both sides and among civilians. It has thrown hundreds of thousands of refugees onto the roads. It will cause further increases in the price of energy and cereals, which will lead to increased cold and hunger, while in most countries of the world, the exploited, the poorest, have already seen their living conditions collapse in the face of inflation. As always, it is the class that produces most of the

social wealth, the working class, that will pay the highest price for the warlike actions of the masters of the world.

This war, this tragedy, cannot be separated from the whole world situation of the last two years: the pandemic, the worsening of the economic crisis, the multiplication of ecological catastrophes. It is a clear manifestation of a world sinking into barbarism.

The lies of war propaganda

Every war is accompanied by massive campaigns of lies. In order to make the population, and particularly the exploited class, accept the terrible sacrifices that are asked of them, the sacrifice of their lives for those who are sent to the front, the mourning of their mothers, their partners, their children, the terror of the civilian population, the deprivations and the worsening of exploitation, it is necessary to fill their heads with the ideology of the ruling class.

Putin's lies are crude, and mirror those of the Soviet regime in which he began his career as an officer in the KGB, the political police and spy organisation. He claims to be conducting a "special military operation" to help the people of Donbass who are victims of "genocide" and he forbids the media, on pain of sanctions, to use the word "war". According to him, he wants to free Ukraine from the "Nazi regime" that rules it. It is true that the Russian-speaking populations of the East are being persecuted by Ukrainian nationalist militias, often nostalgic for the Nazi regime, but there is no genocide.

The lies of Western governments and media are usually more subtle. Not always: the United States and its allies, including the very "democratic" United Kingdom, Spain, Italy and... Ukraine (!) sold us the 2003 intervention in Iraq in the name of the - totally invented - threat of "weapons of mass destruction" in the hands of Saddam Hussein. An intervention that resulted in several hun-

dred thousand deaths and two million refugees among the Iraqi population, and several tens of thousands killed among the coalition soldiers.

Today, the "democratic" leaders and the Western media are feeding us the fable of the fight between the "evil ogre" Putin and the "good little boy" Zelensky. We have known for a long time that Putin is a cynical criminal. Besides, he has the looks to match. Zelensky benefits from not having such a criminal record as Putin and from having been, before entering politics, a popular comic actor (with a large fortune in tax havens as a result). But his comedic talents have now allowed him to enter his new role of warlord with brio, a role which includes forbidding men between 18 and 60 from accompanying their families trying to take refuge abroad, and calling on Ukrainians to be killed for 'the Fatherland', i.e. for the interests of the Ukrainian bourgeoisie and oligarchs. Because whatever the colour of the governing parties, whatever the tone of their speeches, all the national states are above all defenders of the interests of the exploiting class, of the national bourgeoisie, both against the exploited and against competition from other national bourgeoisies.

In all war propaganda, each state presents itself as the "victim of aggression" that must defend itself against the "aggressor". But since all states are in reality brigands, it is pointless to ask which brigand fired first in a settlement of accounts. Today, Putin and Russia have fired first, but in the past, NATO, under US tutelage, has integrated into its ranks many countries which, before the collapse of the Eastern bloc and the Soviet Union, were dominated by Russia. By initiating the war, the brigand Putin aims to recover some of his country's past power, notably by preventing Ukraine from joining NATO.

In reality, since the beginning of the 20th century, permanent war, with all the terrible suffering it engenders, has become inseparable from the capitalist system, a system based on competition between companies and between states, where commercial warfare leads to armed warfare, where the worsening of its economic contradictions, of its crisis, stirs up ever more warlike conflicts. A system based on profit and the fierce exploitation of the producers, in which the workers are forced to pay in blood as well as in sweat.

Since 2015, global military spending has been rising sharply. This war has just brutally accelerated this process. As a symbol of this deadly spiral:

Germany has started to deliver arms to Ukraine, a historic first since the Second World War; for the first time, the European Union is also financing the purchase and delivery of arms to Ukraine; and Russian President Vladimir Putin has openly threatened to use nuclear weapons to prove his determination and destructive capabilities.

How can we end war?

No one can predict exactly how the current war will develop, even though Russia has a much stronger army than Ukraine. Today, there are many demonstrations around the world, and in Russia itself, against Russia's intervention. But it is not these demonstrations that will put an end to the hostilities. History has shown that the only force that can put an end to capitalist war is the exploited class, the proletariat, the direct enemy of the bourgeoisie class. This was the case when the workers of Russia overthrew the bourgeois state in October 1917 and the workers and soldiers of Germany revolted in November 1918, forcing their government to sign the armistice. If Putin was able to send hundreds of thousands of soldiers to be killed against Ukraine, if many Ukrainians today are ready to give their lives for the "defence of the Fatherland", it is largely because in this part of the world the working class is particularly weak. The collapse in 1989 of the regimes that claimed to be "socialist" or "working class" dealt a very brutal blow to the world working class. This blow affected the workers who had fought hard from 1968 onwards and during the 1970s in countries like France, Italy and the United Kingdom, but even more so those in the so-called "socialist" countries, like those in Poland who fought massively and with great determination in August 1980, forcing the government to renounce repression and meet their demands.

It is not by demonstrating "for peace", it is not by choosing to support one country against another that we can bring real solidarity to the victims of war, the civilian populations and the soldiers of both sides, proletarians in uniform transformed into cannon fodder. The only solidarity consists in denouncing ALL the capitalist states, ALL the parties that call for rallying behind this or that national flag, ALL those who lure us with the illusion of peace and "good relations" between peoples. And the only solidarity that can have a real impact is

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Political positions of the ICC

World Revolution is the section in Britain of the **International Communist Current** which defends the following political positions:

* Since the first world war, capitalism has been a decadent social system. It has twice plunged humanity into a barbaric cycle of crisis, world war, reconstruction and new crisis. In the 1980s, it entered into the final phase of this decadence, the phase of decomposition. There is only one alternative offered by this irreversible historical decline: socialism or barbarism, world communist revolution or the destruction of humanity.

* The Paris Commune of 1871 was the first attempt by the proletariat to carry out this revolution, in a period when the conditions for it were not yet ripe. Once these conditions had been provided by the onset of capitalist decadence, the October revolution of 1917 in Russia was the first step towards an authentic world communist revolution in an international revolutionary wave which put an end to the imperialist war and went on for several years after that. The failure of this revolutionary wave, particularly in Germany in 1919-23, condemned the revolution in Russia to isolation and to a rapid degeneration. Stalinism was not the product of the Russian revolution, but its gravedigger.

* The stratified regimes which arose in the USSR, eastern Europe, China, Cuba etc and were called 'socialist' or 'communist' were just a particularly brutal form of the universal tendency towards state capitalism, itself a major characteristic of the period of decadence.

* Since the beginning of the 20th century, all wars are imperialist wars, part of the deadly struggle between states large and small to conquer or retain a place in

the international arena. These wars bring nothing to humanity but death and destruction on an ever-increasing scale. The working class can only respond to them through its international solidarity and by struggling against the bourgeoisie in all countries.

* All the nationalist ideologies - 'national independence', 'the right of nations to self-determination' etc - whatever their pretext, ethnic, historical or religious, are a real poison for the workers. By calling on them to take the side of one or another faction of the bourgeoisie, they divide workers and lead them to massacre each other in the interests and wars of their exploiters.

* In decadent capitalism, parliament and elections are nothing but a masquerade. Any call to participate in the parliamentary circus can only reinforce the lie that presents these elections as a real choice for the exploited. 'Democracy', a particularly hypocritical form of the domination of the bourgeoisie, does not differ at root from other forms of capitalist dictatorship, such as Stalinism and fascism.

* All factions of the bourgeoisie are equally reactionary. All the so-called 'workers', 'Socialist' and 'Communist' parties (now ex-'Communists'), the leftist organisations (Trotskyists, Maoists and ex-Maoists, official anarchists) constitute the left of capitalism's political apparatus. All the tactics of 'popular fronts', 'anti-fascist fronts' and 'united fronts', which mix up the interests of the proletariat with those of a faction of the bourgeoisie, serve only to smother and derail the struggle of the proletariat.

* With the decadence of capitalism, the unions everywhere have been transformed into organs of capitalist order within the proletariat. The various forms of union

organisation, whether 'official' or 'rank and file', serve only to discipline the working class and sabotage its struggles.

* In order to advance its combat, the working class has to unify its struggles, taking charge of their extension and organisation through sovereign general assemblies and committees of delegates elected and revocable at any time by these assemblies.

* Terrorism is in no way a method of struggle for the working class. The expression of social strata with no historic future and of the decomposition of the petty bourgeoisie, when it's not the direct expression of the permanent war between capitalist states, terrorism has always been a fertile soil for manipulation by the bourgeoisie. Advocating secret action by small minorities, it is in complete opposition to class violence, which derives from conscious and organised mass action by the proletariat.

* The working class is the only class which can carry out the communist revolution. Its revolutionary struggle will inevitably lead the working class towards a confrontation with the capitalist state. In order to destroy capitalism, the working class will have to overthrow all existing states and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat on a world scale: the international power of the workers' councils, regrouping the entire proletariat.

* The communist transformation of society by the workers' councils does not mean 'self-management' or the nationalisation of the economy. Communism requires the conscious abolition by the working class of capitalist social relations: wage labour, commodity production, national frontiers. It means the creation of a world community in which all activity is oriented towards the full satisfaction of human needs.

* The revolutionary political organisation constitutes the vanguard of the working class and is an active

factor in the generalisation of class consciousness within the proletariat. Its role is neither to 'organise the working class' nor to 'take power' in its name, but to participate actively in the movement towards the unification of struggles, towards workers taking control of them for themselves, and at the same time to draw out the revolutionary political goals of the proletariat's combat.

OUR ACTIVITY

Political and theoretical clarification of the goals and methods of the proletarian struggle, of its historic and its immediate conditions.

Organised intervention, united and centralised on an international scale, in order to contribute to the process which leads to the revolutionary action of the proletariat.

The regroupment of revolutionaries with the aim of constituting a real world communist party, which is indispensable to the working class for the overthrow of capitalism and the creation of a communist society.

OUR ORIGINS

The positions and activity of revolutionary organisations are the product of the past experiences of the working class and of the lessons that its political organisations have drawn throughout its history. The ICC thus traces its origins to the successive contributions of the *Communist League* of Marx and Engels (1847-52), the three Internationals (the *International Workingmen's Association*, 1864-72, the *Socialist International*, 1884-1914, the *Communist International*, 1919-28), the left fractions which detached themselves from the degenerating Third International in the years 1920-30, in particular the *German, Dutch and Italian Lefts*.