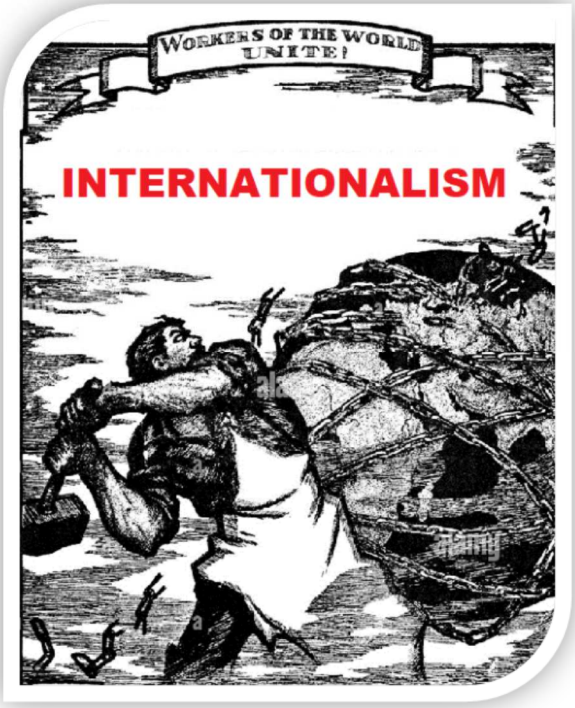
Workers of the world unite!

Discussion Bulletin

Spring 2023



Groups of the Communist Left

Spring 2023

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Short presentation of the bulletin

At the beginning of the war in Ukraine the International Communist Current proposed a joint Internationalist statement on the war in Ukraine to the other groups of the Communist Left. This joint statement is appended to this bulletin. Of these groups three affirmed their willingness to participate and a statement was discussed, agreed, and published by these different groups.

The principle behind the joint statement was that on the fundamental question of imperialist war and the internationalist perspective against it, the different Communist Left groups were agreed and could unite on this question to provide, with greater force, a clear political alternative to capitalist barbarism for the working class in different countries.

The other side of the joint statement was that on other questions, particularly on the analysis of the present imperialist war, its origins and prospects, there were differences among the constituent groups which should be discussed and clarified. Consequently the groups have decided to produce brief statements on these questions and publish them in a bulletin.

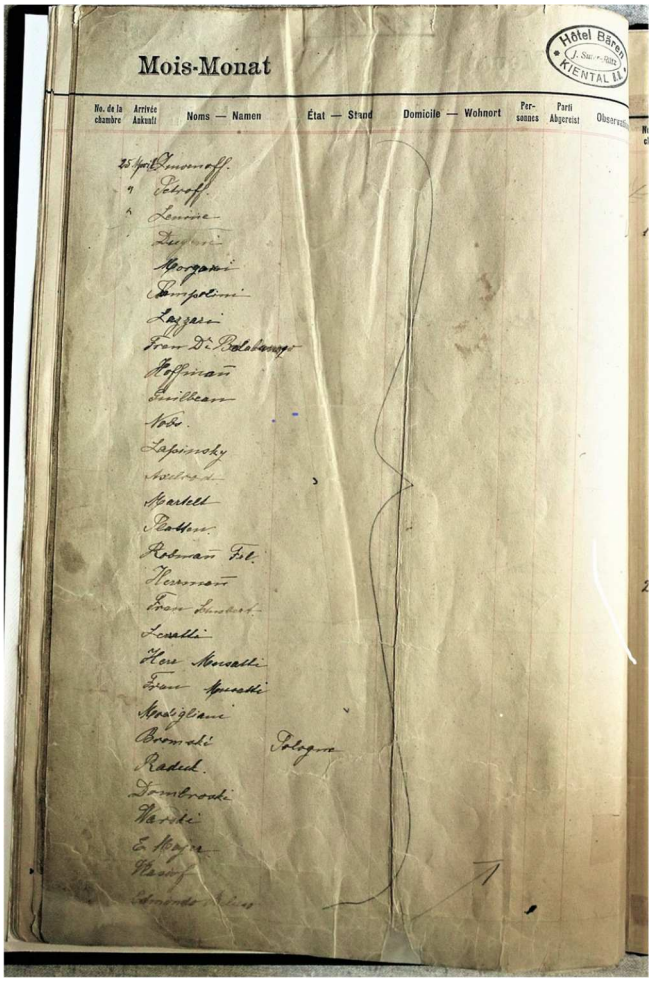
Workers have no country!

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.

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This is the first English edition of this bulletin. Other editions will follow in Farsi, Italian, Korean, ...





At the top: *Headline of the first bulletin published on 21.9.1915 by the International Socialist Commission created by the International Conference held in Zimmerwald from 5 to 9.9.1915.*
On the left: *List of participants at the Second Zimmerwald Conference held in Kiental, 24-30 April 1916.*

In the midst of the First World War massacre, long before larger masses of workers came together on the streets to protest against the war, a small but determined number of internationalists had gathered in the Swiss village of Zimmerwald in September 1915 to defend internationalism and to stand up for the unification of workers across the world rejecting pacifist illusions and opposing the various fronts of imperialism. **Revolutionaries cannot wait for the big masses of the working class to start moving, they must show the direction**.

Correspondence among the groups before the Joint Statement

ICC to groups of the Proletarian Political Milieu

The 25/02/2022

The ICC to

- The Internationalist Communist Tendency

- Parti Communiste International (*Programma Comunista*)

- Parti Communiste International (*Il Comunista*)

- Istituto Onorato Damen

- Internationalist Voice

- *Fil Rouge*

Comrades,

The imperialist war has once again struck Europe on a massive scale. Once again the war in Ukraine is a dramatic reminder of the true nature of capitalism, a system whose contradictions inevitably lead to military confrontations and massacres of the populations, especially the exploited. Since the beginning of the 20th century, the political organisations of the proletariat have, beyond their differences, united their forces to denounce the imperialist war and to call on the proletariat of all countries to engage in the struggle for the overthrow of the system which generates it, capitalism. The congresses of Stuttgart in 1907, Basel in 1912, the conferences of Zimmerwald in 1915, Kienthal in 1916 opened the way that would lead to the communist revolution of October 1917 in Russia and to the end of the imperialist slaughter.

During the 1930s and during the second imperialist slaughter, it is the honour of the Communist Left to have firmly brandished the banner of proletarian internationalism in the face of all those who called on proletarians to fight each other in the name of "anti-fascism", the "defence of democracy" or the "defence of the socialist fatherland". Today, it is the responsibility of the groups which claim to be part of this communist Left to firmly defend proletarian internationalism, and in particular:

- to denounce the lies of all the national sectors of the ruling class in order to involve the proletarians in the imperialist war or to associate them in their imperialist policies by calling them to side with this or that imperialist camp:

- to call on the proletarians of the whole world to refuse all the sacrifices that the ruling class and its states want to impose on them, to lead the class struggle against this system which exploits them ferociously and aims at making them cannon fodder;

- to recall the importance and the topicality of the old slogans of the workers' movement: "Proletarians have no country", "Proletarians of all countries, unite!

We are convinced that your organisation, like ours, will not fail to assume its internationalist responsibility in the face of the current war. However, the ICC believes that the affirmation of internationalism would have a much greater impact if the positions taken by each of our organisations were backed up by a common position of our organisations based on the fundamental positions we all share. We therefore call on you to vote on our proposal and, if you are in favour, to contact our organisation as soon as possible in order to prepare this common position.

Receive, comrades, our communist and internationalist greetings

Internationalist Communist Current

Reply of Internationalist Voice

3 March 2022

Dear comrades!

We welcome your initiative to make a joint statement on the war and agree with you that a joint statement would have a much greater impact. However, an essential point for us is who has received this letter, and we can trust you that only revolutionaries have received it.

A statement has already been published; see attached, and the English version will be available soon.

Internationalist greetings

Internationalist Voice

Letter of Istituto Onorato Damen

03/03/2022

Comrades,

We welcome your proposal.

We think, like you, that internationalist communists of all the world have the responsibility to clarify the causes of the imperialist war and to take a position on the war.

Our organisation believes that the communist political perspective, based on proletarian internationalism, revolutionary defeatism and rejection of all imperialist camps, increasingly represents the only possible response of the working class to imperialist slaughter and capitalist barbarism. It is the only possibility of a future for humanity, in a society that is finally humane: a communist society.

We welcome the idea that revolutionaries, beyond the differences between organisations, must be united in denouncing the imperialist war and supporting among the world proletariat the perspective of international communist revolution.

Our organisation therefore agrees to the preparation of a common statement, supported by different internationalist revolutionary communist groups, in addition to the statements and analyses that each organisation will publish independently.

It would represent a stronger internationalist voice; we also think that it could represent a step forward along the road of a fraternal and frank confrontation between communists, in the perspective of building the future World Communist Party, on the basis of programmatic clarity.

Regarding how to prepare this common statement, we suggest that the ICC prepare a draft on which to work together.

With our fraternal communist greetings

IOD

ICC to the Proletarian Political Milieu concerning the appeal

13th March 2022

ICC to:

Internationalist Communist Tendency

PCI (*Programma Comunista*)

PCI (*Il Comunista*)

PCI (*Il Partito Comunista*)

Istituto Onorato Damen

Internationalist Voice

PCI *(Le Prolétaire*)

Dear comrades,

We write following our letter of 25 February 2022 proposing a common public statement of fundamental internationalist principles against the war in Ukraine shared by the tradition of the Communist Left as a whole.

We have received positive support for this proposal from Institute Onorato Damen and Internationalist Voice. The International Communist Tendency has also replied positively to the main principles that we proposed for the statement but had some questions regarding the analysis of the situation, the invitees and the possibility of other common initiatives. PCI *(Programma*) made a short reply rejecting the proposal saying it was 'time for action, not talk'. The other invitees have not replied yet.

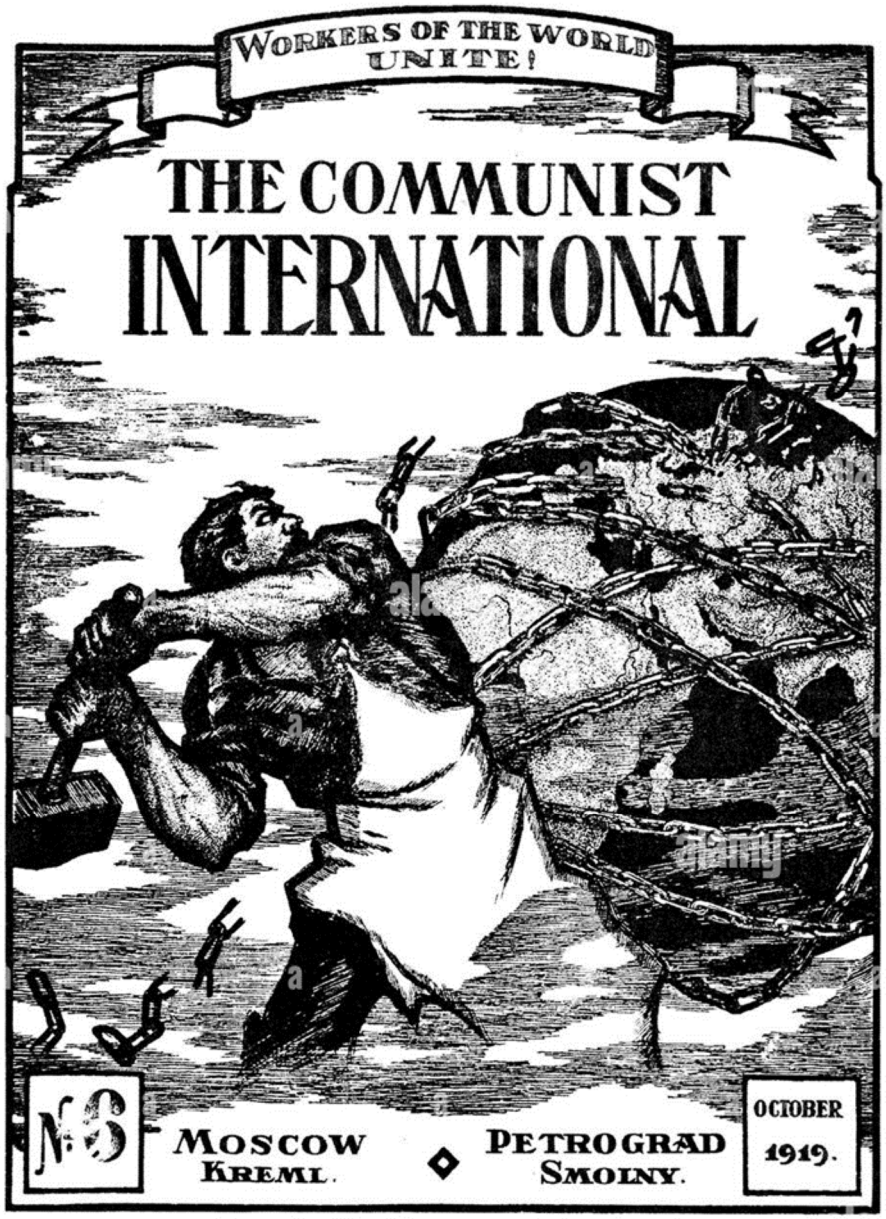
The main task for the Communist Left today is to speak with a united voice on the fundamental internationalist principles of our tradition concerning the imperialist nature of the war, the denunciation of pacifist illusions and the alternative perspective of the working class struggle leading to the overthrow of capitalism. We must affirm the only political tradition which has upheld these principles in tests of fire in the past.

In our view the function of the statement is therefore not to go into any depth into the analysis of the situation on which there are no doubt differences of appreciation between the organisations claiming the Communist Left; nor is the statement the place we think to go into questions of other common initiatives. A common statement by the groups of the Communist Left would, in any case, not be an obstacle to discussing differences and alternative approaches in other contexts.

The comrades of the IOD suggested that the ICC draft the common statement. In order to speed up the process we have accepted this suggestion and the draft appeal is attached with this letter. We have attempted to present the internationalist principles in a way in which all the signatories can accept. However, comrades are welcome to propose any alternative formulations to the existing ones in order to fulfil the common objective of the statement. But we hope that comrades, appreciating that time is pressing, will limit themselves to changes which they consider essential to fulfil the joint project, so that a final version can be quickly produced.

We are confident that the common statement of the Communist Left will make these principles and this tradition more widely known amongst the working class today.

Looking forward to your rapid reply.



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

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.

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Workers have no country!

Down with all the imperialist powers!

In place of capitalist barbarism: socialism!

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 imperialist 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 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 insurrections 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 (www.en.internationalism.org)

Istituto Onorato Damen *http://www.istitutoonoratodamen.it*

Internationalist Voice (en.internationalistvoice.org)

Internationalist Communist Perspective (Korea) fully supports the joint statement (국제코뮤니스트전망 - International Communist Perspective (jinbo.net)

About the war in Ukraine

- The anti-historicity of the capitalist system is fully revealed in the recurrence of its crises, when the accumulated contradictions explode in all their force. In these circumstances, the paradox arising from the enormous development of the productive forces, which at a certain point are no longer able to guarantee an adequate profitability of the invested capital, emerges with great clarity. As a result, a contrast emerges between the ever-increasing wealth produced and the simultaneous spread of uncertainty and poverty among workers and in society.

- We are living a particularly complex historical era requiring a careful use of the critique of the political economy and of the historical materialism in order to understand how the contradictions of the world most important economy are going to cause a global crisis. According to revolutionary Marxism, war is always the result of capital contradictions and economic crisis. Since the Capitalism represents the leading economic and social form on international scale, wars are fought in the name and on behalf of the capital interests. War is always a Capital war fought against proletariat interests. These statements of principles, obviously always true all the history of Capitalism long, don't authorize us to propose again scholastically the theoretical elaborations carried out by the revolutionary movement during its centenary history.

- Imperialism is not a politics of the bourgeoisie but it is the result of the accumulation process forcing the capital to widen ceaselessly its reproductive basis. The imperialistic war inserts itself dramatically into the capital cycle: expansion, crisis and war are the three different moments of each accumulation cycle which characterized the life of Capitalism in this imperialistic phase. Moreover, when it materializes, at last, by destroying surplus capitals, it enables the restoration of more advantageous economic and political conditions aiming at starting a new accumulation cycle on a wider and wider scale. That's why it occurred again on world scale in simultaneity with the crisis of the first and second accumulation cycles: that is it, in turn, occurred cyclically.

- In the fictitious capital supremacy era, war has become a permanent factor since the reasons pushing the imperialistic powers to unleash conflicts to defend their class interests are permanent.

- War doesn't represent anymore a moment in the economic cycle, as it happened when the imperialistic forms based exclusively on the exportation of financial capital dominated, but it has become a constant in the way Capitalism shows itself in the recent imperialistic phase, because the conservation of the control of the fictitious capital production needs constantly the use of force.

- The American bourgeoisie grabs a very large part of surplus value extorted from the proletariat on international scale (thanks to the role played by the dollar in the world economy. This surplus displacement towards the USA is the tribute the other countries have to pay to the American imperialism and is a price becoming higher and higher as the economic crisis gets worse. In a context where the parasitical appropriation forms through fictitious capital production dominate and where also other imperialistic powers, such as Eurozone countries, try to place themselves on the same level of the United States, war has become a constant of the Capital way of being.

- In our time, every war, even if disguised as a war of religion or national liberation, as a "humanitarian" war for the defense of human rights and respect for international law, and so on, is always a moment of that *permanent imperialist war* that has been raging for decades throughout the world, sowing death, hunger and destruction.

- The narrative that distinguishes between "attacked" and "aggressor" is a miserable ploy to conceal the true nature of the imperialist war, and to engage on the war front its real victims, namely the millions of proletarians forced to fight, die under bombs or flee their homes so as not to end up under a pile of rubble.

- The war in Ukraine represents an improvement in quality: the difference from the wars of the recent past is not only that it is being fought in the heart of Europe, or that it sees the two nuclear superpowers dangerously in contact, but because of the economic and social context in which it is being fought: Capitalism in recent years is experiencing a historical crisis, which the pandemic has only aggravated but not generated. A structural crisis whose reasons are to be found in the increasingly strident contradictions of the capitalist system. An immense mass of fictitious capital can no longer be adequately remunerated, thus paroxysmally fueling the tendency for war on the part of the holders of such capital. This is the reason that has turned war into a permanent factor in capitalism's *modus operandi*, so much so that the current Ukrainian conflict represents only a tragic episode in a much larger and more complex story.

- In this war, the United States, Russia and China have a shared interest in preventing the EU from having a common foreign policy and a common army, so as to be able to compete with them on the geo-strategic world stage on equal terms.

- U.S. imperialism with the Ukrainian conflict, perhaps even unexpectedly, has some strategic goals: 1) to get Russia mired in a long-lasting conflict, which would wear down the Russian bear while also creating internal problems for Putin himself; 2) to break the axis that had been created between Moscow and Western Europe over the past 15 years and that risked downsizing Washington's presence on the old continent; 3) put the main economies of the old continent, Germany and Italy *in primis*, in trouble because of their dependence on Russian gas.

- On the level of immediate benefit, there is undoubtedly sharing at least between Russia and the USA so that on the world market a price of gas and oil is formed as high as possible, being Russia and America producing and exporting countries.

- Sharing ceases, however, when it comes to determining whether on the international market that price should be quoted in dollars, or in euros, rubles, yuan or any other currency: to date, most of the oil and gas extracted in the world is sold through the dollar. This "gives" the United States an enormous financial income, but Russia has begun to sell a good portion of its energy products in exchange for euros, rubles, yuan or special account currencies; China is also doing the same with its goods: the use of the dollar is shrinking and therefore the resulting income is also declining.

- The conflict in Ukraine also shows that the United States is willing to play its military power to the hilt in order to defend the dollar's dominance in world markets. A bribe imposed on the rest of the world that becomes increasingly vital to the United States, which is itself grappling with a domestic economic and social crisis that is unparalleled in its history. The more the domestic situation threatens to explode socially, the more aggressive the United States becomes internationally, as only the privilege of the dollar will be able to guarantee those resources necessary to contain social unrest and at the same time reassert its imperialistic dominance.

- Germany was forced to postpone *sine die* the start-up of that *North Stream 2* so disliked by America, which could not do better: it obtained what it wanted practically *gratis et amore Dei.* The other side of the medal is that this war could give a strong acceleration to the integration process of the European Union, so hated by America.

- About Russia: thanks to the non-opening of *North stream 2, the* price of gas could reach 2000 euros per cubic meter. If this were the case, Russia would only collect from Europe the same amount of euros as today by selling half of the gas it sells now, to divert the surplus to China. Moreover, barring a total and unlikely military defeat, it will definitively annex the self-proclaimed independent republics of Donetsk and Lugansk, that is, the most industrialized and wealthy area of the Donbass: in short, even for Moscow, while taking into account the negative effects of sanctions, which are normally more harmful to those who impose them than to those who suffer them, there could be a good haul. Here too, of course, there is a downside. It runs the risk, once closed all the doors to the West, to find itself without any possibility to free itself from the coils of the Chinese dragon.

- The Chinese dragon is an interested bystander to the massacre being perpetrated on the skin of Ukrainian proletarians. China does not support Moscow militarily, but at the same time it supports it politically, and this political support will result in supplies of raw materials from Russia at surely advantageous prices.

- We can not exclude that the war will become widespread, putting the survival of humanity itself at risk, because of the strong instability of the current inter-imperialist balances and the ongoing clash for their redefinition, with the United States in decline and China on the rise.

- **The conflict in Ukraine demonstrates once again how war is generated by the contradictory mechanisms of the capitalist system and that the real victims of the disasters of war are primarily the proletarians: he whole proletariat, the Ukrainian proletariat as well as the European one, the Russian one as well as the American one, the Chinese one and the one of the whole world.**

- **The deterioration in living conditions and the lack of prospects for a society radically opposed to capitalism, without exploitation and without social classes, has led many proletarians into the trap and into the arms of the reactionary and populist parties of capital. The ideological control of the ruling class, in any case, cannot resolve the gigantic and insoluble contradictions of the capitalist mode of production. Nor can it mystify the nature of a system based on exploitation and the transformation of every aspect of human life into cash.**

- The proletariat, however, is in a state of total political, ideological and organizational disarmament, so it is easier for it to remain entangled in the logic of imperialist war following this or that fraction of the international bourgeoisie than to stand up against the war and the causes that cause it.

- It is necessary to take note that so many changes have taken place in the organization and in the international division of labor that it is simply impossible to overcome so much subalternity by remaining anchored to the

same theoretical and organizational framework that was that of the Third International. It must be clearly stated: the path that in 1917 led to the October Revolution in Russia is unrepeatable in its specific terms, capitalist development itself having overcome many of its peculiar presuppositions.

It is necessary to take note of it and to proceed to a new systematization of all the elements inherent to the condition of the modern proletariat, and from there to identify the paths along which to develop the process of building a new communist party on a world scale, without which the same watchword "*revolutionary defeatism*" - despite all its compelling relevance - is destined to remain devoid of any meaning.

Istituto Onorato Damen

Basic positions on the imperialist war

Following the collapse of the bipolar world, the US emerged as the world's only superpower. However, its undisputed dominance was short-lived, and all the other imperialist powers pursued their own imperialist share and interests. The US was no longer able to exercise its hegemony as it had done during the Cold War. Therefore, in order to maintain its hegemony in the new world order and to weaken its rivals, the US tried to line up the other imperialist powers behind itself by waging wars, albeit with humanitarian words.

The goal of the US and NATO was to besiege Russia by merging the countries of the former Eastern Bloc into NATO or by launching "colour revolutions" in countries that were not at that time members of NATO. The West, led by the US, has been advocating "colour revolutions" in the former Soviet Union for the sake of its imperialist interests, so that pro-Western governments can come to power.

In recent years, the countries that made up the former Western bloc have become more fragmented than before.

Contrary to the demagoguery of the American bourgeoisie on de-escalation, the American bourgeoisie not only seeks tension but also seeks to fuel tensions associated with the alignment of NATO members and other states behind the US in order to regain the lost hegemony of the US. Another US goal in dealing with Ukraine has been to disrupt relations between Russia and the EU, to line up Europeans behind itself, and to strengthen other countries' military dependence on the US.

After the fall of the Soviet Union, it took time for Russia to finally reassert its imperialist ambitions as a claimant to world power. Withdrawal of NATO military equipment from these countries and the failure of NATO's siege of Russia would mean that Russia could expand its sphere of influence.

The US goal is to weaken Russia as much as possible because an incapacitated Russia would not pose a threat to the US. A weak Russia, on the other hand, would not be a good ally for China.

China is a tough competitor to the US. It is projected to become the world's largest economy by 2030, overtaking the US. It is clear to the American bourgeoisie that China's progress and rise to power is directly related to America's decline in power. Trump and the Republican Party are not the only ones to have highlighted the threat posed by China, The Democrats are no less concerned than the Republicans about this rival, and the entire American bourgeoisie opposes China's progress.

It can be stated that the Russian military operation has been in the interest of the US in the short term, and the US has been able to consolidate its hegemony for the time being. Having cut trade ties with Russia, the EU has become partly dependent on the US for energy.

Although the US has managed to line up behind itself NATO members, Japan and Australia, etc., and has apparently formed a united front, support for this has not been unanimous, with an abstention vote on the part of Latin American countries, India and especially the Gulf Arab states (which were allied of the US) of the resolution condemning Russia in the thieves' nest (UN), Turkey's objection to the admission of two new NATO members (Finland and Sweden) shows a weakness in the united front. France and Germany, two key members of NATO, are pursuing their own imperialist interests more clearly and openly, and this will threaten the iron alliance of the NATO front in the long run.

Russia, China and Iran, have converged in their opposition to the US, each pursuing its own imperialist interests, which are sometimes at odds with one another.

We will see more chaos and conflict, a new round of imperialist tensions and instability from Europe to the Middle East, from the Caucasus to Southeast Asia.

The US focus has been on confronting China. The undeniable fact is that today's tensions are a foretaste of future imperialist tensions. The main confrontations will be between the US and China. The US wants to contain China, which is a strategic enemy, and its containment strategy began long before Trump. Biden is continuing this policy. In the new situation, the US, by lining up NATO and other countries behind itself, wants to create serious problems in order to curtail China's imperialist progress and thwart its ambitions in the name of the Silk Road. The New Silk Road, with its infrastructure, will allow China to access the ends of the earth and expand its imperialist power everywhere.

Proletarian internationalism is a reaction to the imperialist war, and the international proletariat is the only force capable of stopping this imperialist war. Is today's proletariat in a position to advance its historical alternative, i.e., a social revolution? The fact is that a serious response has yet to be elicited from the international proletariat against the imperialist war, either in metropolitan capitalism or in peripheral capitalism. The proletariat – as a social class – is currently watching. It is a spectator. Although we are witnessing workers' protests in countries such as Iran, the global working class has nevertheless retreated from its positions globally, signalling a retreat from its class identity.

An imperialist war is not favourable ground for fruitful proletarian struggles, but the crisis of capitalism provides the best conditions for growth of class consciousness and concerted proletarian struggles.

Peace carnivals and anti-war campaigns in Western and European countries are part of NATO war propaganda, in line

with NATO's imperialist goals. Within the capitalist system, the flames of war will continue to burn.

In the current situation, revolutionaries should not wait for the working class to make a move. The activities of the revolutionaries will not be taking place in a vacuum and will not be ineffectual. Most importantly, the imperialist war is bringing to the fore the need to raise the banner of internationalism, even if this leads to isolation of the working-class masses. This is one of the teachings of Lenin and Luxembourg, and it still inspires revolutionaries.

The war in Ukraine is not just being waged on a military level. Just as insidious is the propaganda war that is underway, poisoning the global working class. Both sides of the imperialist war are aware of the potential of the working class, and history bears witness to the fact that only this social class can end the war.

The bourgeoisie has made heinous attacks on the living standards of working-class people, who are paying the price for war with staggering inflation and falling living standards. The working class is being forced to defend its standard of living, which is likely to involve a confrontation with the imperialist war.

Only the working class can bring real peace to humanity, through class struggle and by challenging capitalism. The destruction of humanity is inevitable if the working class does not act on its historical decree, which is to overthrow capitalism through the communist revolution.

Internationalist Voice

Contribution of the ICC to the debate on the assessment of the war in Ukraine and the responsibility of the working class in the situation

To begin this presentation, we would first like to go over the causes of this war, which we have already developed in our previous public meetings and in our press:

- the United States wants to maintain and revive its role as the leading power in the world;

- this is why they tricked Russia into invading Ukraine, saying that in case of invasion they would not intervene;

-following the invasion, they have unleashed a campaign to support Ukraine by forcing European countries to line up behind them;

- the immediate objective is to weaken Russia significantly, both militarily and economically, and to do this they are counting on a long war, which will exhaust Russia on both counts;

- in this way, they also weaken China by weakening its most important ally, and issue a warning to China about what it can expect in case of an invasion of Taiwan (the US having said that it would defend Taiwan's independence);

- finally, they forced European countries to fall in line behind them, which is not exactly the ambition of these countries (notably France and Germany).

Today, after 6 months of war, it appears that none of this has been put into question: the war continues, and it is highly likely that it will continue for many more months, if not years. Indeed, Russia cannot end it without signing its own death warrant as a major player on the international scene. And even if it succeeded in gaining total control of the Donbass, it would have to maintain a strong military presence there to face the "partisan" war that the Ukraine, with the help of the USA, would wage against it. The US, on the other hand, has an interest in the continuation of the war in order to go as far as possible in its objective of bleeding Russia dry. On the Russian side as well as on the US side, the cost, the material damage, the deaths and the devastation do not matter: the war must go on to the end.

The recent NATO summit (which announced the will to intervene all over the world); the provocation towards China through Nancy Pelosi's trip to Taiwan; the assassination of the leader of Al Qaeda, Ayman al-Zawahiri, in Kabul; Biden's trip to Saudi Arabia: all this confirms this will of the USA to impose itself as the only global power, whatever the cost.

This war therefore fully confirms the framework of analysis that the workers' movement has developed on war in decadence, and which the ICC, in continuity with this, has developed on war in the final phase of decadence, the phase of decomposition:

- there is no longer any economic rationality for war, on the contrary. In the ascendancy of capitalism, if there could be wars without a dominant economic aim (i.e. with mainly political aims), most of them were aimed at expanding the control of wealth and markets. In decadence, war itself has more and more become an economic aberration. Because beyond the horrific direct effects of military operations, this war has important repercussions on the global economy: the acceleration of the recession, the increase in inflation, and the growing difficulties in maintaining the globalisation that had allowed for a certain level of economic growth. It has consequences on the social level, with the famines it causes due to the lack of cereals on the market, with the wave of refugees fleeing directly from the war or its economic consequences, environmental consequences, with the ecological destruction in Ukraine (not to mention the danger of nuclear accidents with the bombing of areas containing nuclear power stations); finally, because it implies a race to increase military expenditure (Germany adding 100 billion to its military budget, France, Italy and Japan increasing their budgets), and therefore a development of the war economy, i.e. the tendency to subject the economy to the demands of war;

- war in decadence and decomposition is thus marked by total irrationality: no party to the war and no power involved will gain anything from it, on the contrary. All that will be left of Ukraine is a wasteland and the enormous expenses incurred will be irrecoverable. Even if there were markets to be recovered, shale gas to be sold, how many years, decades, centuries even, would it take for the profits to compensate for the expenses incurred in the war? Western aid to Ukraine now amounts to more than 75 billion dollars, and counting!

- finally, the fundamental characteristic of imperialist relations in the phase of decomposition is verified here again: the development of every man for himself. Beyond the immediate success obtained by the USA, its will to remain the only leader of the world is and will be challenged not only by China and Russia, but also by its current "allies" who do not want to give up defending their own interests on the imperialist level. Turkey is already doing so in an open way, but also the increase in military spending by Germany, France, and perhaps Japan, are a clear sign that these countries are not giving up their own ambitions, which means an exacerbation of imperialist tensions. Today, the alignment of the great European powers behind the United States is a forced, conjunctural alliance, which has not at all extinguished the will of each of these countries to take their place on the imperialist scene.

This war is part of a series of phenomena: the warlike tensions all over the world, the pandemic, climate change, uncontrollable fires and the strong nuclear threat contained in this war... these phenomena are not isolated and conjunctural, they express the fact that capitalism is in a specific period of its decadence, a further stage marked by the general decomposition of society which carries within it the threat of the annihilation of humanity. The only future that capitalism promises to humanity is one of chaos, misery, famine and despair. And ultimately, extinction.

This is what is at stake in the current historical situation, and revolutionaries have the duty to make the proletariat see this. We have tried to do this with our web and paper press, with an international leaflet distributed in all the countries where it was possible, with physical and online public meetings and with the appeal to the proletarian political milieu that gave rise to the Joint Declaration of three groups of the internationalist milieu, available in our press.

The response of the working class

But it would be illusory to think that the proletariat can, today, fully hear our calls and respond on its own class terrain to the war (which would mean developing the revolution).

First of all, because war is not a favourable terrain for the working class. We see this with the Ukrainian proletariat, which is suffering the worst consequences of the war, because it has suffered a major political defeat, being dragged behind the bourgeoisie in the "defence of the fatherland". It is also a clear confirmation that the proletariat of the peripheral countries is not the best equipped to resist the weight of the nationalist, democratic and warlike ideology of the bourgeoisie.

Thus, the Russian proletariat has not managed to oppose the war either: even if it has not been totally dragged behind its own bourgeoisie, it does not have enough strength to actively demonstrate its hostility to the war.

And finally, even if the proletariat of the Western countries is the one that has the greatest potential to oppose the war, the war also brought a moment of paralysis, in addition to the impact of the pandemic, which had interrupted the tendency towards the revival of combativity shown by the struggle against the pension reform in France and the strikes in different countries (USA, Italy, Iran, Spain).

Even today, the situation shows that the main ally of the working class in its historical struggle is the crisis. And the war in Ukraine, which follows the Covid pandemic, is producing devastating effects at this level: inflation, an economy turned towards war which requires increases in productivity, an ever-increasing debt etc. The bourgeoisie will have no choice but to attack the working class and is already preparing for it. The working class of these countries, already under enormous pressure to pay the bill for the pandemic, already directly affected by inflation, will suffer massive new attacks.

But the proletariat of the Western countries is not defeated, it is not ready to accept the sacrifices that the economic crisis of capital imposes on it (and obviously even less the sacrifices that a war directly involving these countries would imply). It had shown this before the pandemic, it had shown this at the end of 2021, it is beginning to show this again through a series of strikes and demonstrations that are developing in several countries, some of them unprecedented in their scale for several years, which show that the accumulated anger is beginning to be transformed into a will to struggle.

These strikes and demonstrations have developed in several countries: the United States, Spain, last autumn and winter, France, Germany, Belgium this summer, and in others they are expected: France, Italy. A hot autumn is being prepared everywhere.

But first it is the working class in Britain that is telling us that the working class is beginning to react with determination to the consequences of the crisis. This massive movement called "The Summer of Discontent", in reference to the "Winter of Discontent" of 1979, involves workers in more and more sectors every day: the trains, then the London Underground, British Telecom, the Post Office, the dockers of Felixstowe (a vital port in Britain), the dustmen and bus drivers in different parts of the country, Amazon, etc. Today transport workers, tomorrow health workers and teachers.

All the journalists and commentators note that this is the biggest working class movement in this country for decades; you have to go back to the huge strikes of 1979 to find a bigger and more massive movement. A movement of this scale in a country as important as the UK is not a "local" event, as we said in our leaflet published at the end of August, it is an event of international significance, a message to the exploited of all countries.

These strikes are a response to decades of attack, and decades of apathy on the part of the British working class, which was not only paying for the disarray that hit the working class worldwide with the collapse of the Eastern bloc and the "death of communism" campaigns that followed it, but also the heavy defeat of the miners in the mid-1980s. In particular they are a response to the loss of purchasing power caused by inflation and wage stagnation. Today's struggles are indispensable not only to defend ourselves against the attacks but also to regain our class identity on a global scale, to prepare the overthrow of this system, which is synonymous with misery and catastrophes of all kinds.

All over the world, the working class is living in a situation where inflation is eroding its purchasing power, where it is suffering from floods and droughts caused by climate change, the casualisation of work, etc. Today, the proletarians of the Western countries are being asked by their governments for new sacrifices, to cope with inflation and the energy crisis caused by the war in Ukraine, while they increase military spending for their imperialist ambitions. This is also what the proletarian strikes in the UK bear the seeds of, even if the workers are not always fully aware of it: the refusal

to sacrifice more and more for the interests of the ruling class, the refusal to make sacrifices for the national economy and for the war effort, the refusal to accept the logic of this system which is leading humanity towards catastrophe and, ultimately, to its destruction.

If the current struggles in the UK herald this revival of combativity and all the potential that this contains, we must not forget all the obstacles and traps that stand in front of the class and that the bourgeoisie puts forward to prevent the development of this potential.

On the ideological level, with:

- nationalist ideological hype to support one side against another, under the banner of the "defence of democracy" against "autocracies";

- pacifist ideology in the face of destruction and death;

On the level of the struggles themselves:

- the danger of interclassist struggles (the crisis also affects petty-bourgeois layers);

- the sabotaging action of the left-wing parties and above all of the trade unions. The great majority of the current strikes have been called by the trade unions, which thus present themselves as indispensable for organising the struggle and defending the exploited. The unions are indispensable, yes, but for the defence of bourgeois order and for organising the defeat of the working class. We know that the unions mobilise to prevent the class from fighting autonomously, their task being precisely to control and sabotage the workers' combativity. By taking the lead, these servants of the bourgeois state aim to avoid being overwhelmed by the workers' anger.

Today we must avoid the danger of getting carried away and falling into activism. We must be clear that the working class does not have the immediate capacity to end the war. It is a slow and bumpy process that will involve confrontation with trade union sabotage, with the impossibility of the bourgeoisie to concede significant improvements to the living conditions of the proletarians, and also with the repression of the bourgeois state. It is through this process that the proletariat will be able to advance in its consciousness. And, increasingly, faced with all the different manifestations of the bankruptcy of the system (and thus also with the question of war), the proletariat will be obliged to reflect on the necessity for a head-on confrontation with capitalism.

Revolutionaries have an essential role to play in this process, by denouncing the war, by highlighting the central responsibility of capitalism in the situation and its consequences, by insisting on the necessity for the working class to oppose the sacrifices imposed by the ruling class .

What the workers' movement declared in 1907 at the Stuttgart Congress of the Second International remains totally relevant: "*revolutionaries have the duty to use with all their strength the economic and political crisis created by the war to stir up the deepest popular strata and to hasten the downfall of capitalist rule",* Proletarian internationalism is a principle which must be defended without concession: "no support for one side or another, proletarians have no fatherland".

This slogan must permeate our intervention from today, without any illusion about its immediate impact within a profoundly disoriented proletariat, but without the slightest doubt about the fact that the alternative today remains "socialism or the destruction of humanity" and that there is no force other than the working class that is capable of stopping capitalism’s plunge into chaos and barbarism.

ICC, September 2022

Only the international class struggle to overthrow the capitalist system can stop the imperialist war

Ten months have passed since Russia invaded Ukraine. The United States and Western countries have imposed all-round sanctions against Russia, but Russia has not stopped its aggression. In the war, the European Union (EU) was the first to finance Ukraine's arms procurement, and Putin warned against the use of nuclear weapons. This war is unprecedented since World War II, and humanity as a whole is faced with a more generalized war crisis.

In 2006, the crisis of war also escalated on the Korean Peninsula, and at the first “International Communist Conference” held in Korea at that time, there was an “Internationalist Declaration Against the Threat of War”. The declaration made it clear that it is the worldwide struggle of the working class that alone can stimulate the defence of internationalist principles and put an end to imperialist war . “We declare that it is the worldwide struggle of the workers that can forever put an end to the barbarism and imperialist wars and the threat of nuclear destruction that are swarming mankind under capitalism.”

Fifteen years have passed since the Declaration of Internationalism. The danger of war on the Korean Peninsula persisted, the capitalist economic crisis intensified the imperialist clash, and another war in Europe was provoked. In this crisis, the international solidarity of the working class for the defence of proletarian internationalism and the revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist system, the cause of war, has become more and more important.

The long-standing capitalist crisis that has not been resolved since the collapse of the speculative bubble in 2008 has accelerated since the COVID-19 pandemic. Now, in the capitalist world, the threat of imperialist war is escalating amid the deepening economic crisis, the risk of infectious diseases, and the increase in environmental disasters, creating cracks everywhere. The war in Ukraine that occurred under these circumstances was not Putin's sudden action, but meant a new phase of the imperialist clash that was on the verge of a generalized war amid a prolonged economic crisis. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, NATO continued to ex-

pand its influence into Eastern Europe, and Russia tried to regain the status of an imperialist power again. The war in Ukraine united NATO and the European Union (EU) around the United States and brought Russia into the arms of China, setting the stage for an extensive imperialist war.

All the damage of war for the interests of the ruling class fell miserably on the proletariat. Tens of thousands of Ukrainian civilians and soldiers on both sides have already been killed and millions of refugees have been driven into the streets. The war will cause further increases in energy and grain prices, exacerbating poverty and worsening living conditions for workers around the world. Those who benefit from this war that destroys the lives of the working class are the ruling class exploiting the working class. They make the working class die and kill each other through nationalist ideology and war propaganda machines for economic, political and military dominance and profit.

All wars today have the character of imperialist warfare, which has only brought suffering, death, and further destruction to mankind. In these wars, the result of the struggle for national liberation was not the weakening of imperialism, but the replacement of other imperialist forces. This proved that the so-called "national liberation struggle" is far from the "anti-imperialist struggle" because it forces the working class to choose one side of the ruling class or the other of imperialism to identify themselves with some of the ruling class.

In the midst of the deepening imperialist conflict, the position of internationalists against the nationalist ideology that still insists on defence of the motherland and national independence has not changed. It is proletarian internationalism to convert the “imperialist war into civil war” raised by revolutionaries in the First World imperialist genocide war. In 1917-18, the working class put an end to the imperialist genocide by forcing the bourgeoisie through revolutionary struggle. The same is true of the attitude of the working class to the war in Ukraine. It is to turn the imperialist war into a “class war” against the ruling class without taking sides in the war between the ruling classes, where the working class kill each other.

Supporting one side in an imperialist war is supporting the ruling class, and pacifism that refuses to turn an imperialist war into a class war neutralises the class struggle. There is only one way for the working class to escape from the crises of capitalism, suffering and the deadly threat of war. It is to reject all ruling ideologies, including nationalism, and fight in solidarity internationally for the common interests of the working class. It is to stop the imperialist war through international class struggle, recognising that the only war worth fighting for the workers is a class war, a war against the exploiters.

The war in Ukraine expresses the deep and old crisis of capitalism. Today, the war is not only taking place in Ukraine, but also local warfare in more than 60 - 3 - regions. The crisis of mankind as a whole is progressing not only through war, but also through poverty, infectious diseases, and environmental destruction. We live in an increasingly dangerous world. War destroys the lives of the working class and families, but the ruling class fights for its own benefit. The race to war is a result of the operation of the capitalist system itself. It's not because of some bad leaders, it's a problem with the capitalist system. The working class now has no prospects without the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism. Therefore, the real alternative we face is 'War or Revolution?' In order to fundamentally end the imperialist war that will lead to the destruction of mankind, it is necessary for the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism through an international class war and to build a new system, a world community of freely united producers.

The working class must reject all the logic of war and peace led by the ruling class in the imperialist war and take a position of its own. In addition, it is necessary to clarify the internationalist position against the hypocrisy of all pacifist anti-war movements that are not associated with the movement to change the capitalist system, and against the support of “less bad”one side of imperialism claimed by pseudo-socialists.

Even if the internationalist workers are a minority now and a revolutionary movement like 100 years ago does not exist, the international action of the communist left and internationalists will contribute to the revival of class struggle, the creation of working class own methods, and the emergence of a new subject.

Workers have no country!

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

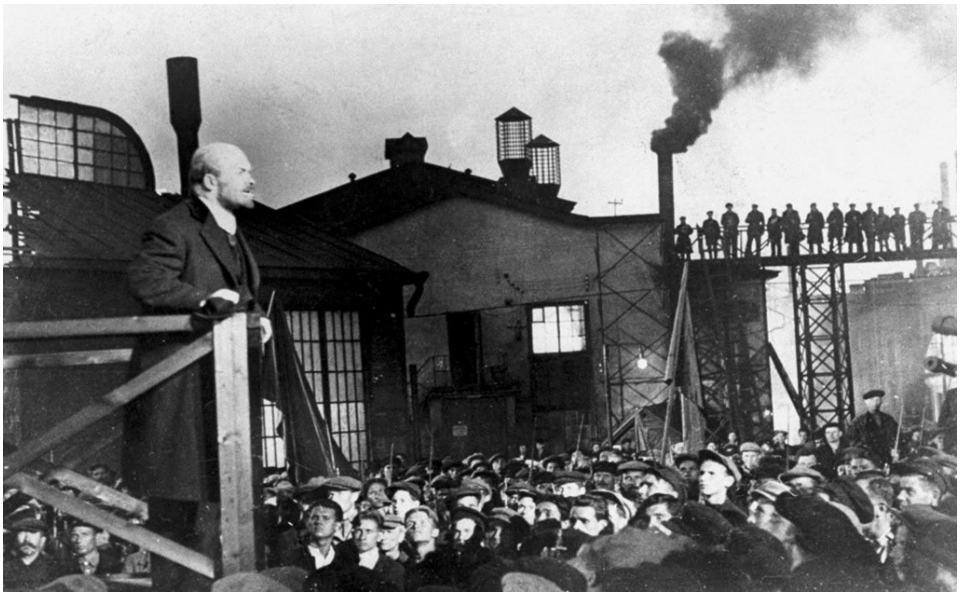
No War But the Class War!

Let's spread the struggle for the right to live against making the workers pay for the capitalist crisis!

Let's end the imperialist war with the international class struggle to overthrow the capitalist system!

December, 2022

Internationalist Communist Perspective



Lenin speaks to workers in a factory

A balance sheet of the Public Meetings about the Joint Statement by groups of the Communist Left on the war in Ukraine

Following the publication of the Joint Declaration by groups of the Communist Left (International Communist Current, Internationalist Voice, and Istituto Onorato Damen)[1], two public online meetings were held by these groups, one in Italian and one in English, to discuss and clarify the need for the Joint Declaration and the tasks of revolutionaries in the face of imperialist war and new world conditions. The meetings were held in a serious and cordial atmosphere; differences of opinion did not prevent a camaraderie or lively discussion. The significance of the Joint Declaration is that it follows the spirit of the Zimmerwald Conference of 1915, where revolutionaries were able to issue a joint internationalist declaration in the face of World War I. In the 1930s, on the other hand, Italian and Dutch left-wing communists opposed the Spanish War but were unable to issue a joint declaration. Similarly, during the Sino-Japanese War, World War II and the Korean War, internationalist communists failed to issue a joint statement. It is undeniable that today communist left groups do not have the influence that revolutionaries had in 1915. However, a common voice is necessary, not for its immediate consequences, but for the perspective of future battles. It is not possible to reflect the discussions of both sessions in a short article, but we want to give a summary of the topics discussed.

Italian-language meeting

In the Italian-language meeting, all participants, without exception, assessed the nature of war as imperialist and stressed the need to defend internationalism, that is, not to support any of the imperialist camps. Rejecting any pacifist illusions, they saw the working class and the class struggle as the only force capable of opposing the war. The participants, without exception, stressed the importance of the Joint Declaration. The participants believed that although the situation today is not comparable to that of 1915 and the revolutionaries do not have the influence they had on the working class in 1915, the spirit of the Zimmerwald conference, like a compass, is still valid today. The Zimmerwald conference is a reference for revolutionaries, to which they refer in their struggle against the imperialist war. Only one participant declared the reference to the Zimmerwald conference invalid, arguing that the currents that signed the joint declaration do not have the influence of Lenin or Luxemburg on the working class. Others responded that the importance of a joint declaration lies in a common voice of positions internationalists that the currents of the communist left had previously been unable to express in the face of the war.

The fact that other groups of the Communist Left refused to sign the joint declaration reflects the weakness of the proletarian political milieu. The majority of participants deplored the refusal of other left communist groups to refer to Lenin on the need for a common response, despite theoretical differences. In Zimmerwald, participants had differences of opinion and analysis, but this did not prevent them from making a statement in unison. The majority of participants disagreed with the reasons given by Internationalist Communist Tendency[2] for not signing the joint statement. While some of the participants talked about continuing the discussion with ICT to encourage them to sign the joint statement or, at least, to develop joint action with them, others stressed that we should avoid getting into controversial discussions and move on without paying attention to others. In any case, all participants in the meeting shared the view that the No War But the Class War proposal drafted by the ICT represents a huge step backward from their own political tradition, effectively delegating to the working class in general the functions that the revolutionary vanguards should be performing instead.

The participants stressed that it is not possible to fight the war without fighting capitalism. After the war, inflation increased not only in the periphery of capitalism, but also in the metropolitan centers, and thus the cost of living for the proletariat increased, which means that the standard of living of the working class decreased. The living and working conditions of the working class, with the outbreak of the ongoing imperialist war, are bound to worsen, and may induce, in the more or less near future, the proletariat to retaliate against the continuous attacks launched by capital.

Another point of discussion stressed that the struggle of the proletariat can develop in a revolutionary direction only if it is based on the historical continuity of the positions of the Communist Left. Of course, this does not mean that only left communist groups can support these positions, but that they must serve as a point of reference to show the way forward. It was agreed during the discussion that it is the task of revolutionaries to work to build the future international and internationalist party of the proletariat, without which all eventual struggles of the working class will inevitably be doomed to defeat. And this is perspective of the declaration against imperialist war signed by the various adhering groups.

Meeting in English

In the English-language session (in which the comrades of the IOD could not participate), as in the Italian-language session, participants unequivocally assessed the nature of the war as imperialist and, rejecting any peaceful illusions, they saw the working class and the class struggle as the only force that could counter the war. At the meeting, except for the ICT/CWO delegate, participants stressed the importance of the Joint Statement. One participant stated that although he did not fully agree with the Joint Statement, he still supported it. As in the Italian meeting, the participants, with the exception of the ICT/CWO delegate, also put forward that, although the situation today was not comparable to that of 1915 and that revolutionaries did not have the influence they had in the working class in 1915, the spirit of the Zimmerwald Conference has to act as a compass, which is still valid today, a reference point revolutionaries in the struggle against imperialist war.

At the meeting, the ICT (CWO) delegate had the opportunity to state their reasons for refusing to sign the joint statement. He put forward their reasons but their

arguments not only did not convince the audience but also fuelled further discussions. The ICT/CWO representative stated that not signing the statement was not a matter of principle, but the ICT/CWO considered the criteria for those who should sign was too narrow. According to the comrade, they want to bring together those who agree with the No War but the Class War initiative. By signing the Joint Statement the ICT would be implicitly endorsing the ICC's views on parasitism. They work with Controverses and International Group of the Communist Left, and the ICC does not; the ICC has labelled comrades who have been fighting for years as parasites. May be the ICT can pull them back into the Communist Left through the NWBCW.

Several participants who were former members of the ICC rejected the ICT/CWO representative's statement that every militant who leaves the ICC is labelled as a parasite, stating that they have never been deprived of any activity and that comrades of the ICC are always very open to discussion and solidarity. They emphasised that the problem of parasitism is related to behaviour that was not proletarian.

Some participants intervened with criticisms of the NWBCW initiative; however the presidium asked participants to postpone the discussion about NWBCW to the next public meeting. In the discussions, it was argued that the internationalists could not issue a joint statement in the face of the Spanish War, World War II, the Korean War, etc. Today the adoption of the Joint Statement was a blow to sectarianism in the proletarian political milieu and a step forward. At the beginning of the meeting, some comrades who had given credit to the ICT for refusing to sign the Joint Statement became convinced by the discussion of the necessity of the latter. A comrade said in the conclusions that he believed that the discussion was constructive, even if the differences between the ICC and the ICT were significant. These differences need to be articulated more and developed in common discussions. Another participant stated that although he disagreed with some of the CWO's positions, he was convinced that the Communist Left would not be able to carry out its historic tasks without the participation of groups such as the Bordigists or the ICT. According to him it is a pity that they did not understand the importance of this action on the Ukraine war.

The prevailing view at the meeting was that although only a minority of all the groups of the Communist Left signed the Joint Statement, the latter would still become a point of reference in the left communist tradition, to which other groups and militants could refer.

Internationalist Voice

Istituto Onorato Damen

International Communist Current

June 15, 2022

[1] https://en.internationalism.org/content/17159/joint-statement-groups-international-communist-left-about-war-ukraine.

https://en.internationalistvoice.org; *http://www.istitutoonoratodamen.it*

[2] https://www.leftcom.org/en

The Zimmerwald Manifesto

(Continued from page 16)

In the name of the International Socialist Conference:

For the German Delegation: George Ledebour, Adolph Hoffman

For the French Delegation: A. Bourderon, A. Merrheim

For the Italian Delegation: G.E. Modigliani, Consanino Lazzari

For the Russian Delegation: N. Lenin, Paul Axelrod, M. Bobrov

For the Polish Delegation: St. Lapinski, A. Warski, Cz. (Jacob) Hanecki

For the Inter-Balkan Socialist Federation:

(For the Rumanian Delegation) G. Rakovsky

(For the Bulgarian Delegation) Vasil Kolarov

For the Swedish and Norwegian Delegation: Z. Hoglund, Ture Nerman

For the Dutch Delegation: H. Roland-Holst

For the Swiss Delegation: Robert Grimm

September 1915.

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The Zimmerwald (anti-war) Conference was held in Switzerland in September 1915. Though only 42 delegates attended, (four coaches held them all, Trotsky relates) the Conference laid the foundations for a new International, the Third International.

Declaration of the Left

The undersigned declare as follows:

The manifesto adopted by the Conference does not give us complete satisfaction. It contains no pronouncement on either open opportunism, or opportunism that is hiding under radical phraseology—the opportunism which is not only the chief cause of the collapse of the International, but which strives to perpetuate that collapse. The manifesto contains no clear pronouncement as to the methods of fighting against the war.

We shall continue, as we have done heretofore, to advocate in the Socialist press and at the meetings of the International, a clear-cut Marxian position in regard to the tasks with which the epoch of imperialism has confronted the proletariat.

We vote for the manifesto because we regard it as a call to struggle and in this struggle we are anxious to march side by side with the other sections of the International.

We request that our present declaration be included in the official proceedings.

Signed: N. Lenin, G. Zinoviev, Radek, Nerman, Hoglund, Winter

Mailing addresses of the groups that signed the Joint Statement

International Communist Current
uk@internationalism.org;
international@internationalism.org

Istituto Onorato Damen
amministrazione@istitutoonoratodamen.it

Internationalist Voice
contact@internationalistvoice.org

Internationalist Communist Perspective
communistleft@gmail.com

The Zimmerwald Manifesto

Workers of Europe!

The war has lasted for more than a year. Millions of corpses lie upon the battlefields; millions of men have been crippled for life. Europe has become a gigantic human slaughterhouse. All science, the work of many generations, is devoted to destruction. The most savage barbarity is celebrating its triumph over everything that was previously the pride of mankind.

Whatever may be the truth about the immediate responsibility for the outbreak of the war, one thing is certain: the war that has occasioned this chaos is the outcome of Imperialism, of the endeavours of the capitalist classes of every nation to satisfy their greed for profit by the exploitation of human labour and of the treasures of Nature.

Those nations which are economically backward or politically feeble are threatened with subjugation by the great Powers, which are attempting by blood and iron to change the map of the world in accordance with their exploiting interests. Whole peoples and countries, such as Belgium, Poland, the Balkan states, and Armenia, either as units or in sections, are menaced by annexation as booty in the bargaining for compensations.

As the war proceeds, its real driving forces become apparent in all their baseness. Piece by piece the veil which has hidden the meaning of this world catastrophe from the understanding of the peoples is falling down. In every country the Capitalists who forge the gold of war profits from the blood of the people are declaring that the war is for national defence, democracy, and the liberation of oppressed nationalities. THEY LIE!

In reality they are actually burying on the fields of devastation the liberties of their own peoples, together with the independence of other nations. New fetters, new chains, new burdens are being brought into existence, and the workers of all countries, of the victorious as well as of the vanquished, will have to bear them. To raise civilization to a higher level was the aim announced at the beginning of the war: misery and privation, unemployment and want, underfeeding and disease are the actual results. For decades and decades to come the cost of the war will devour the strength of the peoples, imperil the work of social reform and hamper every step on the path of progress.

Intellectual and moral desolation, economic disaster, political reaction—such are the blessings of this horrible struggle between the nations.

Thus does the war unveil the naked form of modern Capitalism, which has become irreconcilable, not only with the interests of the working masses, not only with the circumstances of historic development, but even with the first conditions of human communal existence.

The ruling forces of Capitalist society, in whose hands were the destinies of the nations, the monarchical and the Republican Governments, secret diplomacy, the vast employers' organizations, the middle-class parties, the Capitalist Press, the Church—all these forces must bear the full weight of responsibility for this war, which has been produced by the social order nourishing them and protecting them and which is being carried on for the sake of their interests.

Workers!

Exploited, deprived of your rights, despised—you were recognized as brothers and comrades at the outbreak of the war before you were summoned to march to the shambles, to death. And now, when militarism has crippled, lacerated, degraded, and destroyed you, the rulers are demanding from you the abandonment of your interests, of your aims, of your ideals—in a word, slavish submission to the "national truce." You are prevented from expressing your views, your feelings, your pain; you are not allowed to put forth your demands and to fight for them. The press is muzzled, political rights and liberties are trampled upon—thus is military dictatorship ruling today with the iron hand.

We cannot, we dare not, any longer remain inactive in the presence of a state of things that is menacing the whole future of Europe and of mankind. For many decades the Socialist working class has carried on the struggle against militarism. With growing anxiety its representatives at their national and international conferences have devoted themselves to the war peril, the outcome of an Imperialism which was becoming more and more menacing. At Stuttgart, Copenhagen, and Basle the International Socialist Congresses indicated the path that the workers should follow.

But we Socialist Parties and working-class organizations which had taken part in determining this path have since the outbreak of war disregarded the obligations that followed therefrom. Their representatives have invited the workers to suspend the working-class struggle, the only possible and effective means of working-class emancipation. They have voted the ruling classes the credits for carrying on the war. They have put themselves at the disposal of their Governments for the most varied services. They have tried through their press and their envoys to win over the neutrals to the Government policies of their respective countries. They have given to their Government Socialist Ministers, as hostages for the observance of the national truce, and thus have taken on themselves the responsibility for this war, its aims, its methods. And just as Socialist Parties failed separately, so did the most responsible representative of the Socialists of all countries fail: the International Socialist Bureau.

These facts constitute one of the reasons why the international working-class movement, even where sections of it did not fall a victim to the national panic of the first period of the war, or where it rose above it, has failed, even now, in the second year of the butchering of nations, to take up simultaneously in all countries an active struggle for peace.

In this intolerable situation we have met together, we representatives of Socialist Parties, of Trade Unions, or of minorities of them, we Germans, French, Italians, Russians, Poles, Letts, Rumanians, Bulgarians, Swedes, Norwegians, Dutch and Swiss, we who are standing on the ground, not of national solidarity with the exploiting class, but of the international solidarity of the workers and the working-class struggle. We have met together in order to join anew the broken ties of international relations and to summon the working class to reorganize and begin the struggle for peace.

This struggle is also the struggle for liberty, for Brotherhood of nations, for Socialism. The task is to take up this fight for peace—for a peace without annexations or war indemnities. Such a peace is only possible when every thought of violating the rights and liberties of the nations is condemned. There must be no enforced incorporation either of wholly or partly occupied countries. No annexations, either open or masked, no forced economic union, made still more intolerable by the suppression of political rights. The right of nations to select their own government must be the immovable fundamental principle of international relations.

Organized Workers!

Since the outbreak of the war you have put your energies, your courage, your steadfastness at the service of the ruling classes. Now the task is to enter the lists for your own cause, for the sacred aims of Socialism, for the salvation of the oppressed nations and the enslaved classes, by means of the irreconcilable working-class struggle.

It is the task and the duty of the Socialists of the belligerent countries to begin this struggle with all their power. It is the task and duty of the Socialists of the neutral countries to support their brothers by all effective means in this fight against bloody barbarity.

Never in the history of the world has there been a more urgent, a more noble, a more sublime task, the fulfilment of which must be our common work. No sacrifice is too great, no burden too heavy, to attain this end: the establishment of peace between the nations.

Working men and women! Mothers and fathers! Widows and orphans! Wounded and crippled! To all who are suffering from the war or in consequence of the war, we cry out over the frontiers, over the smoking battlefields, over the devastated cities and hamlets:

"Workers of all countries unite"!

(Continued on page 15)