

# The Communist Party

WHAT DISTINGUISHES OUR PARTY – The line running from Marx to Lenin to the foundation of the Third International and the birth of the Communist Party of Italy in Leghorn (Livorno) 1921, and from there to the struggle of the Italian Communist Left against the degeneration in Moscow and to the rejection of popular fronts and coalition of resistance groups – The tough work of restoring the revolutionary doctrine and the party organ, in contact with the working class, outside the realm of personal politics and electoralist manoeuvrings

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## **Capitalism Needs War Government Armies and “People’s Resistance” are being Used Against the Working Class**

- War is an inevitable economic necessity of capitalism. Uncontainable forces constrain all States to a policy of aggression in order to survive their general crisis, caused by the immense overproduction of goods, which nobody wants and nobody needs.

- Therefore, war is not the product of the wickedness or madness of some leaders. Not even the one in Ukraine is a clash between liberal-democratic systems and totalitarianism, but between imperialist powers.

- The war is between imperial fronts, between alliances of States, not between nations. It is not to guarantee freedom to peoples but for more tyranny and oppression. Freedom is only a pretext to throw the working class into the furnace of war.

- Ukrainian nationalism is a mask for Western imperialism, just as the defense of Russian minorities in Ukraine serves to justify the Russian one.

- It is a war by proxy: the capitalists of Russia intend to recover markets for their products and the capitalists of the West are arming the Ukrainian army and the "resistance" to fight for their expansion to the East.

- The Russian army, the Ukrainian army and the "partisans" are laying siege to the workers of the Ukraine. In it is this way, the workers are being held hostage by the two rival bourgeoisies, which are allied in this. The "Partisan" fight for the opposite, the negation of class struggle.

- Meanwhile, the bourgeois police in Russia arrest and repress those who oppose the war.

- This is part of a reactionary war, one pitted against the working class. Today that war is in the Ukraine and Russia, but it is always of the entire world, both in the immediate and in the general historical sense.

- The war is for the preservation of capitalism globally. It's against communism, which is always an invisible but ever-present spectre. A current which is maturing and presses from inside of capitalism in its monstrous phase. Because communism, denied by all, is already ready to be born, once the dictatorship of capital is overthrown.

- The working class has no homeland to defend. It has to defend and affirm only itself, against all the States of their masters, whose first function is to keep it subdued.

- For the workers of Ukraine, as well as for those of Russia, nothing will change in being exploited by Ukrainian or Russian capitalists or taxed by Ukrainian or Russian rulers.

- Equally for Russian, American, European proletarians nothing would change in their miserable condition whether their masters prevail or are overpowered by the rival imperialist bloc.

- Bourgeois pacifism, faced with the reality of war, obediently hides the flag of peace to take up the blue and yellow of the bourgeois Ukrainian State. The word Peace to morphing into praise for a War "for Freedom".

Communists call for opposition to all bourgeois wars, by encouraging fraternization among the soldiers, young proletarians, who, by revolts and mutinies can put an end to the war from within. Communists also oppose the war through generalized social class struggles, encouraging a rebirth of international worker's solidarity at the level of trade unions, strikes and building the communist party, which is the sole organization which can guide the class to its final liberation from capitalism.

The following are slogans of Proletarian anti-militarism to be shared

**WAR ON WAR  
CLASS STRUGGLE  
AGAINST MASTERS AND STATES  
IN PEACE AND WAR: FORWARD TO COMMUNISM**

**Florence, Saturday, March 26, 2022**

**Only a mobilization of the working class can stop the war!**

**For a class union front for the defense of living and working conditions!**

The international working class is today facing what is the highest form of its oppression in capitalism: the imperialist war.

It is clear that the war in Ukraine is not just a war waged solely between the Russian and Ukrainian bourgeois states but also involves all of the major imperialist powers: the USA, China, Germany, France, Britain, Italy, etc. The permanent confrontation between imperialisms which brought war to the Ukraine, just as it devastated the Balkans, Central Asia and the Middle East in recent years, is still sweeping over many other "hidden" regions, or rather, countries overlooked by the capitalist regime's media.

The fact that the war is approaching the heart of one of the centers of world imperialism – Europe – indicates that the Ukraine conflict is a decisive step towards the third world war. An outcome which the capitalist world needs in order to overcome its internal contradictions.

War is an economic necessity of capitalism. It's the military continuation of the competition between capitals, between the large economic interests protected by competing bourgeois states. It is a bitter competition which becomes more and more ruthless with the advance of the world economic crisis of overproduction.

The defense of democracy from autocracy, of anti-fascism, or the defense of Ukrainian nationality or Russian minorities, are all propaganda and hypocritical justifications to hide the real interests of the capitalist blocs. They also serve as encouragement for workers to become cannon fodder (on both sides).

All bourgeois parties are responsible for the conflict because it is provoked by capitalism as a whole. Even if a cease-fire in Ukraine and a perilous peace are achieved, war will continue. There are no bourgeois policies or reforms which can prevent the system from rotting and combusting.

The capitalist states are driven to ever greater aggression by the inexorable advance of the world economic crisis: they are all confronted by the historical decline of capitalism, whose

defense at any cost – whether in destroying goods and lives or devastating nature – is the *raison d'être* of the national state machines and their formidable military apparatuses.

Imperialist war is not a legacy of a the past entrenched in only some of the particularly regressive regimes. It is the product of the most modern and immense economic interests. Capitalism itself is an anti-historical society, which survives on itself, and which opposes by all means the movement of communism – international and not mercantile – which is pressing to be born from within, and is already materially mature. And it opposes it by oppressing the social class which, unconsciously, by the mere fact of having to fight for its survival against this dying world, is its carrier: the proletariat.

The imperialist war between states is a mechanism for the partition of the world market, and is at the same time a bloodletting that capitalism requires in an attempt to heal itself of the cancer of overproduction, which, like all cancers left to fester, condemns it to death: it destroys cities, factories, infrastructure and an enormous surplus of goods – including labor – which flood the market, preventing the further accumulation of capital.

All capitalist states are united – beyond their differences – in wanting war, and for workers to fight and die in it. The real enemy of every bourgeois nation-state is not their rival power, but the proletariat that refuses to fight at the orders of its class enemy! That is why in all countries the regime media exalt nationalism, militarism, patriotism, national solidarity and partisanship.

The imperialist war is therefore an instrument to stop the approaching revolution. Conversely, stopping the war means paving the way for revolution.

The economic crisis immiserates the workers and increases our exploitation. It pushes for a return to class struggle. The crisis has found expression in the social uprisings of recent years, from the so-called Arab Springs, to those in Chile, Ecuador and Colombia, and most recently at the beginning of the year in Kazakhstan, which

was bloodily suppressed with the consent of all the bourgeois states of the West and East, democratic and autocratic. The persistent increase in strikes the last few years in the United States reminds us that the social crisis, which began by hitting the capitalistically weaker countries first, will come to set in motion the struggle of workers in all imperialist countries.

Only the mobilization of the working class – not a vague pacifist-minded movement – can stop the war, in a de facto defeatist attitude, which denies any national unity between the exploited class and the bourgeois class, and instead seeks workers' class unity beyond the borders of war.

A strong movement of strikes in every factory and workplace, in defense of improvements in the conditions of the workers' lives and work, will generate social and political conditions more favorable so that among the proletarians forced to wear a military uniform and fight, discipline is broken and fraternization is spread across lines of the war front, that is, among proletarians otherwise forced to kill one another. The first step towards proletarian unity and revolutionary defeatism in the bourgeois war lies in the elementary refusal of the workers to bear the sacrifices demanded of them by nationalism.

In recent days the states of Europe, with the total consent of their parliaments, have approved a staggering increase in military spending, which will fall on the working class, while the increase in utilities and food will eat up a substantial part of wages.

It is the inescapable duty of class unionism to organize the struggle of the workers to defend themselves from the effects of war, the consequences of which are already felt.

Instead, in the face of a historical fact of this gravity and the tasks that it imposes, the conduct of the leadership of the fighting unions has so far been in default. A month after the beginning of the war, there has still not been organized, nor is there any trace of willingness to promote a united mobilization by the fighting base unions. On the contrary, the leaderships of the major grassroots unions are

persevering in their usual opportunistic conduct while continuing to ignore each other.

We need to create unions with combative readiness, doing so will multiply their strength and value by their will, constantly expressed and put into practice, to put it to use in the workplace struggle but also in the service of the working class as a whole.

In Italy workers sought unity with the struggles of other workers, regardless of which union the others were organized in, thereby taking a practical step in the direction of the unified class union front which is necessary to both put the workers' movement back on its feet, as well as to defeat the regime unionism of the CGIL, CISL and UIL; these are unions that, with their defeatism within the workers' struggle, have hamstrung workers in the face of bourgeois aggression.

In the face of the imperialist war, the most militant of workers must continue to expand the struggle for unity of action, in order to achieve as soon as possible a united general strike of all the fighting unions against the imperialist war and its effects on the working class, for a general increase in wages, unemployment benefits, redundancy pay and pensions. We need to have the ability to promote an international general strike against the war.

It will be up to the workers and militant union fighters to stand and fight so that the combative trade union organizations act concertedly, without wasting any more time, to defend the working class from the imperialist war, to firmly demand the end of the war before it spreads to other countries!

**War against War!**  
Against imperialist war, for the war between the classes!  
For the united class union front!

For the united general strike of all combative unions against the war!

March 8, 2022

Women and the International Communist Revolution

# International Women's Day during war-time

This text was prepared to be published on International Women's Day 2022. Today, when a bourgeois war rages in Europe, we are reminded an army of Ukrainian women who, for decades, have left their families to work as housekeepers in the richest countries of the West. They have been forced by a capitalist regime of misery and oppression no better for proletarians in their host countries than those of the Ukraine. No bourgeois has ever denounced the sacrifice of these women and their children. It is that same bourgeois propaganda that today pretends to weep over the trials and tribulations of war refugees, but is actually used only for war propaganda, setting workers of different countries to fight against each other.

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It was not the bourgeois feminist movement but the Socialist International, then Communist that proclaimed the International Women's Day (IWD).

## So what remains of the original IWD today?

The oppression of women originates with the class society

The goals of the bourgeois feminist movement, compatible with capitalist relations of production, diverge radically from those propagated by socialist women in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These women asserted that without class struggle, and without proletarian revolution, the struggle for all oppressed peoples, including women is illusory.

The oppression of women of all nations has its origins within the development of class society, where this abuse has taken the form of the family, and the patriarchy. This oppression of women made manifest by class society can only end with the destruction of our social system based on private property, wage labor and exploitation of man by man and woman by man. Only the communist revolution will be able to pull down the monstrous edifice of the capitalist mode of production and its infinite forms of division and oppression: on workers, on women, as well as on every group identifiable by religious, ethnic, sexual, traits.

## Marxist classics point communists in the correct direction.

Class society is not natural and eternal. There was a before capitalism, there will be an after capitalism as well.

In primitive communism, reproduction was essential for the survival of human groupings. Hence, families were structured by mothers and there was a worship of mother-goddesses. But there was no oppression of women over men, there was no "matriarchy", and societies were without the private accumulation of goods.

Towards the end of the Neolithic era, the development of productive forces, agriculture and animal husbandry, gradually allowed the transition to a mode of production based on class division and private ownership of goods. It was structured around the family and patrilineal descent. The condition of women was reversed. Formerly the procreator, the woman was now reduced to the custodian of the temple of patriarchal property.

Capitalism, with its disruptive development of productive forces, which also lays the material foundations of a future classless society, although now dragging on like a rotting corpse, sowing death and despair while waiting for its gravedigger, the revolutionary proletariat. The communism of the future will rise on the ruins of the capitalist mode of production and its system of exploitation, leading humanity to find itself again.

Clara Zetkin, socialist and later communist (in 1918 she collaborated in the foundation of the German Communist Party), paid tribute to the book "Woman and Socialism" published in 1879 by the social-democrat August Bebel: "It was more than a book, it was an event – a great deed. The book pointed out for the first time the connection between the women's question and historical development. For the first time, there sounded from this book the appeal: We will only conquer the future if we persuade the women to become our co-fighters".

At the end of the book Bebel summarizes the position that would later be taken by the proletarian women's movement: "Woman, too, and especially the proletarian woman, has been called upon, not to lag behind in this struggle that is being fought for her liberation and redemption also. It is up to her to prove that she has recognized her true position in the movement, in the struggle of the present for a better future, and that she is determined to participate. It is the duty of the men to help her to cast aside all prejudices and to take part in the great struggle. Let no one underestimate his strength, and think that his help is of no consequence". By 1913, the book had been reprinted 50 times.

Similarly, Engels' 1884 book "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State" gives an illuminating explanation of the causes of women's oppression and that the employment of women's labor on

a large scale, made possible by capitalist economic development was an essential step on the road to their emancipation.

Engels in "Anti-Dühring", congratulating Charles Fourier for being the first to realize this, argues that "The degree of emancipation of woman is the natural measure of general emancipation", and therefore also of the male. Marx in the "Holy Family" quotes Fourier: "The humiliation of the female sex is an essential feature of civilization as well as of barbarism. The only difference is that the civilized system raises every vice that barbarism practices in a simple form to a compound, equivocal, ambiguous, hypocritical mode of existence.... No one is punished more severely for keeping woman in slavery than man himself".

## The Socialist and Communist origin of International Women's Day

As capital developed and needed more and more female labor, demands for more equal social recognition between men and women took hold. However, the so-called "feminist" movement soon took two paths: the bourgeois one, which did not question the exploitative relationship of wage labor, and the social democratic and marxist one.

Within the German Social Democratic predominated Second International, it was Clara Zetkin who dealt with the problem of women's oppression. Zetkin denounced the feminist movement as "bourgeois", as it did not question capitalism and especially did not bring women to the class struggle. At the founding congress of the Second International in 1889, Zetkin recalled that «the question of women's emancipation is ultimately the question of female labor», and called for legislation that would respect the principle of «equal pay for equal work». Even today, this call remains a pious hope, even in the most "developed" countries!

It was a matter, then, for socialists at the beginning of the 20th century to involve working women in the political movement of the class struggle. At the 1896 Congress of the German Social Democratic Party, held in Gotha, Germany, Zetkin ardently argued for a separation between the proletarian women's movement and a bourgeois "women's rights" movement. These two movements have no more in common with each other than social democracy has with bourgeois society, Zetkin argued. Zetkin saw proletarian women as fighters in the class struggle and their emancipation could not come from cross class women's struggles. Only the entire

proletariat, without distinction of gender, could bring about the emancipation of the proletarian woman.

And, we add the emancipation of all women will only come from a successful communist revolution!

A tireless propagandist for a socialist women's movement, Zetkin was began a proletarian women's movement in opposition to the bourgeois women's movement. German women were not allowed to join the Social Democratic Party until 1908, due to a ban on female participation in politics passed in 1850. Zetkin therefore organized a parallel and autonomous structure within the SPD and from 1900 a women's conference was held before each party congress. When women were finally allowed to participate in politics, the Social Democratic Party proposed to abolish the women's section, Zetkin objected as the time was not ripe.

The first international congress of socialist women took place in Stuttgart, bringing together the women's movements of the various parties of the Second International, forming the Socialist International Women, SID. The conference rejected any cross class alliances. It demanded universal suffrage for working women. In fact, the bourgeois movement of the "suffragettes" demanded the right to vote under the same conditions as men: that is, on the basis of census and property ownership, which excluded workers in many countries. But, unlike the bourgeois feminists, this democratic claim was not an end in itself; for the socialists it had a clear class connotation.

The first National Women's Day was held on February 28, 1909, called by the Socialist Party of America, and was held until 1913. The "feminist" movement there had been highly developed since the mid-nineteenth century and aimed, among other things, at women's electoral suffrage, which it achieved in 1920.

The second international conference, which brought together women from 17 countries took place in August 1910 in Copenhagen. It established International Women's Day. The date of March 19 was proposed as a tribute to the success of the 1848 insurrection in Prussia, Berlin, and considered inseparable from the struggle of all workers regardless of their gender. The anniversary was successful for the first time on March 19, 1911: more than a million women, not just those organized by the Social Democratic parties, demonstrated for women's suffrage in Germany, Austria, Denmark and Switzerland, and countless meetings were organized on that occasion.

In 1913, on the last Sunday of February, Russian women celebrated the first International Women's Rights Day, as part of a broader anti-war movement.

The propaganda work was extremely effective. In the SPD the number of women activists increased from 4,000 in 1905 to 174,754 (out of 1,085,905 members) in 1914, most of them were sympathizers of the left wing of the party. The newspaper founded by Zetkin, "Die Gleichheit" ("Equality") whose subtitle ran "a newspaper in the interests of working women," published from 1892 to 1923 (Zetkin was removed from the editorial staff in 1917), became the main publication of the women's organization of the German Social Democratic Party. Circulation grew from 4,000 copies an issue in 1902 to 124,000 in 1914.

In German trade unions in 1914 there were 216,000 women out of a total membership of 2.5 million.

A conference of the International Congress of Socialist Women was held in Switzerland, in 1915, during the first World War.

It was the demonstrations of women workers in Petrograd on March 8, 1917 (February 23 in the Russian calendar of the time), who demanded bread and the end of the war, that started the revolutionary insurrection in Russia. Since then it was to move to this date the mobilization of women by communist parties. The Russian revolutionary torch would light up the rest of the proletarian world for a few years, giving a glimpse of the light of the future communist society.

It must be remembered that despite these efforts, within the socialist political organization itself, the situation for women was not always easy. While the SPD became increasingly reformist, with the support of the unions led by Legien, the work of female militants within the party was increasingly hampered, especially in the years leading up to World War I. Zetkin encountered opposition in her party from women and men who blamed her, including Bebel, for her intransigence toward the bourgeois feminist movement. As early as 1908 Karl Legien threatened to found a women's trade union newspaper to compete with "Die Gleichheit" because of its support for the mass strike, which was opposed by trade unionists and social democratic reformists. In 1910 the party headquarters refused to convene the socialist women's conference before the congress, citing financial difficulties as a pretext. The women's section of the SPD was disbanded in 1912, and Zetkin was increasingly marginalized, along with the entire left wing around Rosa Luxemburg.

## Women's right to vote

One of the key demands, in addition to wage labor rights, was the right to vote. The German Social Democratic Party already in 1891 included in its program the right to vote for all citizens, men and women, the only one to

do so. Beginning in 1891, the first women's socialist newspaper, "Die Arbeiterin" ("The [Woman] Worker"), was published. Universal suffrage for men had existed since the founding of the Reich in 1871, but in Prussia the census system remained at three levels, with votes having different weights depending on tax revenue, which obviously excluded workers.

In April 1917, the emperor announced, as a reward for the war effort, the abolition of class suffrage in Prussia, but he did not grant it to women, even though they had been heavily involved in the war sacrifices in the national body. On October 2, 1918, with Germany in the grip of revolutionary fever, parliament approved equal voting rights, but only for men!

At the beginning of November 1918 large rallies of bourgeois and social democratic women were organized in Berlin, Hamburg and Munich. The insurrection of November 9 brought to power the government of "people's commissars", an alliance of right-wing and "left-wing" social democrats, who were reaping the benefits of a mass movement that they would soon suppress. They promised democratic freedoms, the 8-hour day, collective agreements, unemployment benefits, etc., which the bosses would have to ratify on November 15-16. On November 12, the government of the "people's commissars" proclaimed universal suffrage for men and women. In reality this government was already planning to take back power from the workers' and soldiers' councils by means of elections to a national assembly whose date was decided in December for January 19, 1919. The assembly took place, but over the dead bodies of the Berlin insurrectionaries! This is a dramatically significant example of the use of elections by the ruling classes.

Germany was then one of the first European countries, after Finland in 1906, Norway in 1913 and Russia with the revolution of February 1917, to introduce women's suffrage. This was hailed in an article in the Spartacist organ, "Die Rote Fahne" No. 7, of November 22, 1918, an article commissioned by Rosa Luxemburg, written by Clara Zetkin, entitled "Women and the National Assembly" with a paragraph entitled "Thanks to the Women". Working women were reminded of the importance of their participation in politics, denouncing the nonsense that had deemed them "immature" to be able to vote. But it was clear that this advancement of women could only be important within the framework of the proletarian movement and not outside it, as was the case in later years in all countries that granted it. From then on it was only one means among others to entice women into the democratic illusion in favor of the ruling classes.

In spite of the unrest caused by the events in Berlin, with the arrival in power of the traitorous social democrats, on November 9 there was the failure of the councils of workers and soldiers, who the next day handed over to

the government all their powers gloriously acquired in the struggles of the previous weeks throughout Germany. The Spartacists with their newspaper and in meetings denounced the misdeeds of the Social Democrats, despite the increasingly vile attacks by the bourgeois and Social Democratic press against the "Spartacist bandits."

Luxemburg and Zetkin paid great attention to the question of women in the revolution. Rosa always stressed even in the revolutionary period of November-December 1918 in Germany the importance of women's agitation, their crucial role in the revolution. On November 24, she proposed to Clara the writing of a daily supplement to Die Rote Fahne focusing on women's issues, or even a separate newspaper. But the events of January 1919 and the terrible repression against the Communists frustrated their joint efforts.

In April 1920, the Women's Communist International (ICF) was created, associated with the Communist International. Its secretariat, chaired by Zetkin, included eight women, six of whom were Russian, one Dutch, and one Swiss. In August 1920, a conference with 82 delegates from 28 countries was held in Moscow in parallel with the 2nd CI congress. At the 3rd CI congress in 1921, the Kollontai report on propaganda among women was approved. The ICF also published a magazine called Women's CI, a bimonthly, which appeared from 1921 to 1925. Other Communist parties also published women's magazines such as the Communist Party of Italy's "Compagna", the Netherlands' "La Messagère", three magazines in Czechoslovakia, and three in Russia. But if the propaganda work organized by Kollontai was enormously successful in Russia, the ICF had more difficulty in other countries.

Zetkin gave prominence to International Women's Day on March 8 and became involved in organizing women in the communist movement.

But already in 1925 the degenerating executive committee of the CI decided to reorganize the communist women's movement; the International Women's Secretariat became a women's section of the executive committee, the publication of the ICF was suspended "for financial reasons". The autonomy of the communist women's movement thus ended with the end of a specific women's organization in the Communist International, which had become counter-revolutionary. The ICF was officially disbanded in 1930!

## Alexandra Kollontai's "new woman"

In fact, Communist Alexandra Kollontai, who represented the textile workers of St. Petersburg at the 1910 congress of the ICF, joined Zetkin's struggles. As early as 1900 in the Russian Social Democratic Party she had called

for a special commission for women in the party. She had to flee Russia in 1908 only to return in 1917. She joined the Bolsheviks in 1915, served as people's commissar for social affairs and women's issues in the Communist government of 1917, then as ambassador to Norway in 1923. She was the first woman minister and ambassador in history!

She was an incredible propagandist for women's emancipation, advocating for right of divorce, for free unions/relationships, the legal recognition of children born out of wedlock, the right to abortion and contraception, equal pay, etc., with Lenin's full support.

Her conception of "free love", where sexuality was dissociated from love — notions that Lenin and Zetkin were very skeptical of — earned her some challenges. She was head of the department in charge of women's work created in 1919 and dissolved in 1930.

In her 1913 book "The New Woman", she wrote:

«Who, then, are these new women? They are not the pure, "nice" girls whose romance culminates in a highly successful marriage, they are not wives who suffer from the infidelities of their husbands, or who themselves have committed adultery. Nor are they old maids who bemoan the unhappy love of their youth, just as little as they are "priestesses of love," the victims of wretched living conditions or of their own depraved natures. No, it is a wholly new "fifth" type of heroine, hitherto unknown, heroines with independent demands on life, heroines who assert their personality, heroines who protest against the universal servitude of woman in the State, the family, society, who fight for their rights as representatives of their sex. Single women are the ones who more and more determine this type».

But for Kollontai, the struggle of women was inextricably linked to the class struggle. Her agitation among working women was carried out through meetings, women's sections in neighborhoods, businesses, and workshops, with branches scattered throughout the Soviet territory.

At the 3rd Congress of the CI in June 1921 the theses for propaganda among women, presented by Kollontai, supported by Zetkin, stated:

«In order to accomplish the main mission in the sections, namely, the communist education of the great female masses of the proletariat and the strengthening of the cadres of the champions of communism, it is indispensable that all communist parties of the East and West assimilate the basic principle of work among women, which is this: 'Agitation and propaganda by action.'

'Agitation by action means above all action to awaken the initiative of the working woman, to destroy her lack of confidence in her own strength by training her in practical work in the field of organization and struggle, to teach her to understand from reality that every achievement of the Communist Party, every

action against capitalist exploitation, is an advance which alleviates the situation of women (...) The propaganda of the communist idea with facts consists, in Soviet Russia, in bringing the worker, the peasant, the housewife into all Soviet organizations, beginning with the army and the militia and ending with all works aimed at the emancipation of women».

It is worth noting that in the various German insurrections of the 1920s, in the formation of the revolutionary armed troops, historians never mention the existence of women's battalions, while in the Russian revolution, after the revolution of February 1917, fifteen women's combat formations were formed, two of which were employed at the front, and many others in cities throughout Russia. These women's battalions were gradually disbanded due to the hostility of Bolshevik soldiers and officials as early as 1918.

In 1926 the executive committee of the Russian party opposed the establishment of separate proletarian women's organizations. And with the degeneration of the CI, the Stalinist counterrevolution imposed a return to the traditional family model.

The sad dissolution of International Women's Day in democratic illusions

After 1945, the communist origin of March 8th was forgotten, drowned in the "national solidarity" supported by the counter-revolutionary Stalinist parties.

For many years the 8th of March was celebrated only by the so-called "communist" countries and parties. Since the 1960s and the 1968 movement, with its "feminist" wave March 8 demonstrations have multiplied and have thus been adopted by democratic parties of all kinds! In 1975, the United Nations declared the International Year of Women and in 1977 made March 8 its own as "International Woman's Day", becoming "International Women's Day" in 2016. In short, this day has become an opportunity for many bourgeois and petit-bourgeois movements to denounce the wrongdoings suffered by women, whatever their class, often exploiting their status as victims to deny their ability to fight.

The day of March 8 is now a "popular" holiday, led by a jumble of movements, from left-wing groupings to right-wing parties, nullifying any revolutionary message. A democratic ritual that extinguishes the slightest spark of class struggle. It perpetuates the

illusion of a struggle of women, with their list of demands, subdued within democracy. In the meantime, aggression's against women are perpetuated, inside and outside families, unjust dismissals, sad testimony of the patriarchal system, which the current economic crisis is accentuating.

This is the lesson of the great activists of the women's communist movement: without class struggle and without the leadership of the communist party and class union organizations there is no real struggle of women. Without communist revolution there is no way out to end women's oppression!

The path of women's struggle against their oppression can only be against all oppression. As Zetkin stated, "The proletarian woman does not obtain her emancipation like the bourgeois woman, by fighting against the man of her own social class; on the contrary, she conquers it alongside the man of her social class by fighting against bourgeois society and even against the bulk of the ladies of the bourgeoisie".

Women, in order to free themselves definitively from the oppression they suffer, have no choice but to join their fellow workers in the struggle to destroy the present society and build a new society, a society without classes and without oppression!

There will have to be a revolution in which proletarians of both sexes take to the struggle together and without a distinct gender role.

## War maneuvers in Europe (con't)

but this year China alone is already a bigger market. Beijing predicts that it will increase its imports of gas by 20%, in order to reduce the amount of polluting coal it uses to generate electricity, and that it will take up to 186 billion cubic meters". And even if, as evidenced in the article, the agreement only stood for ten years, the fact that it was signed in the middle of the Ukraine crisis was a clever move on Moscow's part.

This is what Fulvio Scaglione, vice-director of the Catholic weekly magazine Christian Family, had to say about the agreement, in Limes [an Italian geo-political publication]: "Going back to Russia and China, one thing is certain. The agreement on gas puts in direct contact, for the first time, the major holder, extractor and exporter of energy resources with the main consumer of same. To this we could add additional facts: China, the most populous country in the world is linking up with Russia, the biggest country in the world and one endowed with 10% of the fertile land on the planet. Russia, the state with the richest mineral resources (...) is making a strategic alliance with China, that is with the economy that drives the world consumption of raw materials".

Apart from the economic aspect and the drawing together of the two states that this deal involves, it is also clear that the Kremlin can use it as a warning, to its European customers, who depend on Russian gas, not to push things too far because Moscow will soon have an alternative outlet for its merchandise. So it is really with the prospect of an agreement with Ukraine in view, but mainly with Europe, that we should interpret Moscow's move in June last year, when it switched off the supply of gas to the Ukraine: "On 16 June 2014" Scaglione continues, "Putin gave the order to cut off the supply of gas, that is, to not to release more than the 40 billion cubic meters per annum which constitutes the Ukraine's quota of the gas sent to the West. A strange energy war this, that starts during the first days of Summer (...) The Kremlin's decision seems to imply an invitation to negotiate, to profit from the hot months in order to return to the table to discuss the matter".

Also, the threat of sanctions against Russia by Europe and the United States are only explicable in view of an imminent clash between the powers. Beyond gas, there are important trading links with Russia: in order of the amount of trade they conduct with Russia, the first two countries in Europe are Germany and Italy. Leaving aside the cowardly Italian bourgeoisie, that has neither the strength nor character to go up against states that are more powerful than itself, what would Berlin, the most powerful economy in Europe, stand to gain from the sanctions? What is the quid pro quo, what could Washington offer it to make it break with Moscow? Or what threats could it make?

The German economy is stalling, and it needs to grow, not restrict its own markets. Over and above Chancellor Merkel's official declarations there are accounts that need to be squared in German businesses. The same evaluation does not follow for the United States, which have few commercial links with Russia, and in fact intend to compete with it as a supplier of gas from what they manage to extract from shale.

These agreements between states, these business deals which involve the sale of gigantic quantities of merchandise, these struggles to acquire new markets, and important strategic and military positions, what good are they to the proletariat? In the media orgy of bourgeois information, composed of sensationalistic headlines and little else, we read that the battle in the south-east of the Ukraine has resulted in around 3,000 dead, plus an unspecified but certainly very high number of wounded and almost a million refugees, who have been forced to abandon their homes and jobs to escape the war. For the most part these victims are members of the proletarian class which, unaware of its strength and historic mission, will be forced, in all parts of the world, to pick up a gun in defense of interests that are in direct opposition to its own.

The Ukrainian bourgeoisie, the "oligarchs", have been able to enrich themselves out of all proportion over the last few years by selling themselves to the best bidder, by lining their pockets, and by looting and plundering, naturally all in the name of a "free and independent" Ukraine. Like every other bourgeoisie they just seek profit in order to increase their own capital.

The Ukrainian proletariat, on the other hand, has nothing to gain from lining up on either side in this inter-imperialist struggle. It is not true that proletarians in the Donbass would see their standard of living and working conditions improve if the region were independent or annexed to Russia. And neither would it gain anything if, despite the promises made to them by the rightwing pro-western parties, the Ukraine were to cross over to the European Union and NATO zone. The Ukrainian proletariat will be redeemed only by itself, by organizing itself separately, by refusing to get drawn in by nationalist or chauvinist appeals, and by reconnecting itself to the internationalist traditions of revolutionary communism.

War is one of the factors which determine the stages of the capitalist cycle in both its rise and its decline. In the third millennium, the wars between states, all of them bourgeois, are part of their strategy of counter-revolution and conservation of capitalism. The proletariat needs to march in the opposite direction to the war fronts; not against the national enemy, but by turning men and weapons against the domestic enemy, against its own state, against the class power of the bourgeoisie. This is the one way forward which the true communist party indicates to the international proletarian class, and therefore also to Ukrainian proletarians.

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# In the Ukraine: Stale nationalisms are used to cover up inter-imperialist conflict

This article originally appeared in May-June 2014, in issue no 395 of our Italian language newspaper "Il Partito Comunista").

The Ukraine, due to its strategic position as a borderland between Europe and Russia, has for centuries been a much sought-after prize for the stronger state entities surrounding it, determined to enforce their control over it. Although enjoying fertile land, and today important mineral resources and an impressive industrial base – despite the latter being antiquated in some respects – it is severely hindered by a large public debt and the fact that its energy needs are met from abroad.

The economic crisis that struck world capitalism in 2008 resulted in a general drop in the standard of living of the lower classes in the Ukraine, among the proletariat and petty bourgeois strata, as in other countries with a weaker economy such as in Greece, Spain and Portugal in the south of Europe, and Rumania and Hungary in the east.

In the Ukraine the working class suffers from a high rate of unemployment and low pay. But, lacking a class perspective, that is, lacking the indispensable orientation of its political party, the proletariat there has been unable to respond effectively and is still suffocated in the inter-classist embrace of the "people as a whole". The workers are allowing themselves to be organized, as individual citizens, in the electoral herd, mistakenly believing that they can use their votes in elections to impose policies on the demagogues of career politics, all bankrolled by big capital, and membership of one or the other of the imperialist formations competing to control the country.

Lacking a revolutionary perspective and trade unions as well, bound to the clique in power, weakened by rampant unemployment and increasing uncertainty in the future, the Ukrainian proletariat has been unable to oppose the gangs mobilized by the various bourgeois parties, ranging from the fascist ones of "Pravy Sektor" (Right Sector), to Yulia Tymoschenko's Patria, to the nationalist ones, "Svoboda", and the national-communists and Stalinists. A part of it seeks consolation in an illusory "identity" provided by the various churches that have traditionally divided up between the region's souls.

The question of the territorial integrity of the Ukraine, which the governing party in Kiev lays claim to, is of no concern either to the proletariat, which has nothing to gain from it, or the communist revolution, and it should not be considered progressive, or any less reactionary than its division; on the other hand, we must view in

the same way the "reconjoining" of the Crimea to the Russian mother country, which is what the nationalists of "Russian Unity", in the pay of Moscow, want, or any future annexation of the eastern regions of the country in the future. In the clash between the two "global" imperialisms there is no room left for the proletariat, except to fight its own autonomous battle, against both sides.

The fact of the matter is that the transfer of Crimea to Russia has served to considerably swell the forces of nationalism throughout the region, and to divide workers – who for over a century have been living alongside one another under the same economic and civil conditions – by aggravating and reinforcing new ethnic and religious divisions, and by concealing the class ones.

Before the imperialisms can unleash a counter-revolutionary "ethnic" war, as happened in Yugoslavia ten years ago, they will need to divide the working class.

An international war of the capitalisms such as the current one, disguised as a "civil war", would be severely detrimental to the proletariat and the revolution, not only because of the toll it would have to pay in its own blood, because of the privations and terror it would be subjected to, but because the war represents for capital the submission of proletarians to its dictatorship. To try nowadays to brush up the old divisions based on ethnicity, religion or nationality within the borders of the Ukrainian state, where a developed capitalism is to be found, along with a strong proletariat, is just an "irredentist" pretext, clumsily justified with the "right of self-determination" of this or that national minority. It is just bourgeois war propaganda, and a reactionary attempt to destroy in advance any possibility of proletarian union and a proletarian counterattack. The national-communists, the orthodox Muscovites, the Stalinists, the Cossacks who are fighting for unity with Russia are no better than the fascists and Nazis who, along with the so-called liberals, and the followers of the Ukrainian orthodox church, are clamoring to unite with Europe and are calling for Washington to protect them.

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In the ruthless war between the bourgeois states the outward justifications are of no interest; that is, whether or not the Kremlin's coup de main, which in a few days succeeded in militarily occupying the Crimea and securing its old naval base in

Sebastopol, was in compliance with "international law"; and we are equally uninterested in knowing whether or not Moscow has reacted to the attempt by the United States to move NATO's missiles even further to the east, or if NATO has been forced to respond to the maneuverings of Russia, preparing to occupy a part or all of the Ukraine.

The pro-Russia militias in the Donbass, refusing to accept orders from the new regime in Kiev, have organized a referendum, using the "popular will" to sanction their request for the region, baptized New Russia, to be united with Moscow, following in the footsteps of the Crimea. Their intention is thereby to head off the outcome of the national elections on May 25, which is bound to sanction the victory of the pro-western governing parties in Kiev.

The proletariat, which is particularly numerous in that region because of the mines and metallurgical factories situated there, is seemingly assenting to its "passage" to Russia, not out of patriotism but because, or so it believes, it would obtain, if not higher wages, at least greater social security and higher pensions and so on.

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In the Ukraine the crisis has been presented as a clash within the country between those who have an interest in joining the European Union and those who want to strengthen collaboration with the Russian Federation. But the reality is that the causes of the crisis are to be found outside its borders.

As far as France is concerned Le Monde writes: "Despite the crisis in the Ukraine, France has no intention of suspending the supply of two *Mystral* warships to Russia, a contract worth 1.2 billion dollars. The controversy was inflated after the American deputy secretary of state for Europe openly cautioned France against going ahead with the sale to Russia".

As for Germany Spiegel on line writes: "On May 22 the International Economic Forum will take place in St Petersburg, and the directors of the main

German companies—E.On, Metro, BASF, Daimler—will certainly be attending, despite the threats from the United States; the leader of the Kremlin will make his official speech, and the German top managers will of course have to applaud vigorously.

The major capitalist states in Europe have very strong links with Russia, where they export commodities in exchange for gas and petrol; but they are tied to the United States in a military alliance, NATO, which for many years has protected them.

The United States are pushing in two directions: they want to reduce the economic links between Europe and Russia and tie Europe in more with their economy. At the same time, they are trying to strengthen NATO by providing themselves with a string of military bases and missile launch sites positioned as far to the east as possible, relying on countries in Eastern Europe which are traditionally anti-Russian, and now they are maneuvering to get The Ukraine to join NATO.

For Russia's part it wants to maintain and increase the interchange with Europe but is very fearful of NATO moving ever further east, to the extent it has been willing to make major financial investments in the Ukraine to retain its loyalty.

All this during a phase of the economic crisis that is making a new inter-imperialist confrontation on a vast scale ever more inevitable.

Today the first signs of war seem to be emerging from the China Sea, where Beijing is trying to put into question the fragile equilibrium in the area which emerged after the 2nd World War, which is currently entirely favorable to the United States, by provoking major friction with Japan, South Korea, Viet Nam and the Philippines.

As regards the Ukraine China has been very cautious, whereas as regards Syria it has supported Russia in preventing an American military attack.

The revolutionary communist party cannot ignore the relations between the imperialist states, and must evaluate their strength and their policies and prevent the consequences of their conflict; but it does not have to align itself with any of the fronts. It prepares its army and prepares for its war, the international revolutionary war is opposed to all of the imperialist fronts, just as was the case in Revolutionary Russia in the early years of its life, before it was crushed by the imposition of the Stalinist counter-revolution.

## Life Of The Party: New Publications

Il Partito Comunista, n. 414, February 2021

### Party Meetings in the US

Denver First Saturdays at therizo cafe, 2890 Fairfax St Denver, 11am  
Minneapolis: First Saturdays at Jakeeno's Pizza, 3555 Chicago Ave, Minneapolis - 3-5pm  
Portland, OR: First Saturdays at Neighbors Taproom 1306 E Burnside. 11am. All ages  
Pittsburgh First Saturdays at 61C Cafe 1839 Murray Ave. 4PM

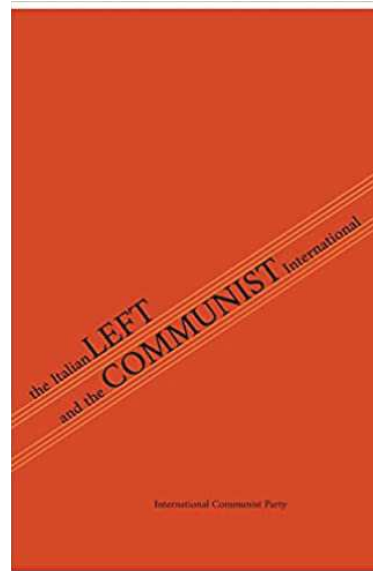
Meetings also in: Akron, Charlotte, Raleigh, Tampa, Yakima

to contact email:

icparty@interncommparty.org.

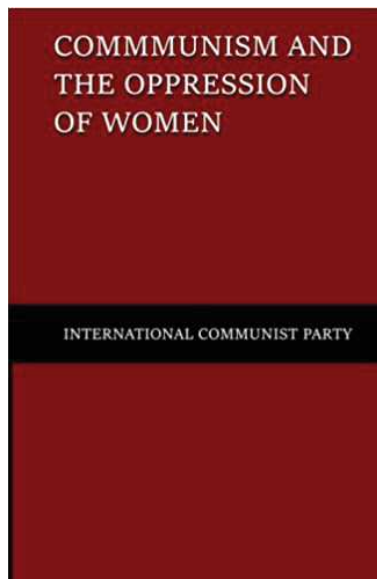


This study on the Paris Commune is part of a wider work on the workers' movement in France undertaken by our International Communist Party, following what had been done in the sixties. Reclaiming our own history, that of our class, is a vital necessity for the objectives we set ourselves, the communist revolution and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the logical outcome of the long tormented journey of humanity. The restoration of the doctrine goes through the study of the proletarian movement, of its defeats as well as its victories, in order to draw all possible lessons from it that will be profitable for the resumption of the class movement on these healthy bases. This work is done in conjunction with the vast research on the History of the Communist Left in the 1920s, work and continuity that we are, here again, alone in pursuing...

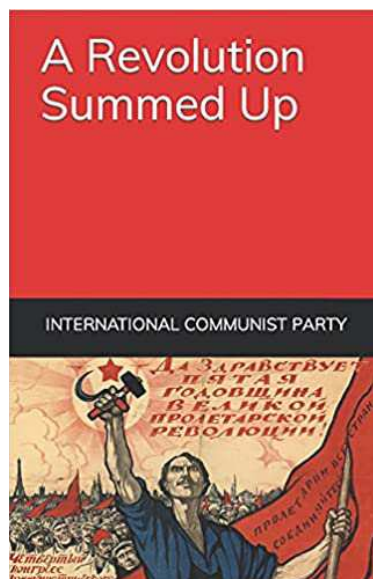


## The Italian Left and the Communist International

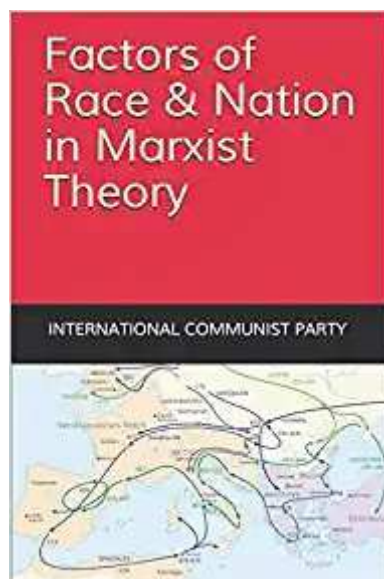
The Italian Communist Left (aka the Promoteo group) has been slandered and misrepresented by the other dissident communist currents making up the so called "Left Opposition." Consisting of a 12 part collection, written over the course of two decades, this work provides a clear history of the creation of the Third Communist International (Comintern), the formation of the Communist Party of Italy, and the genesis of counterrevolution in Russia. Included in this volume is a collection of the many foundational theses by the Communist Left. As the last vestiges of Stalinism fade into history, readers will find the admonitions of the Italian Communist Left about the burgeoning calamity of counterrevolution ring true today.



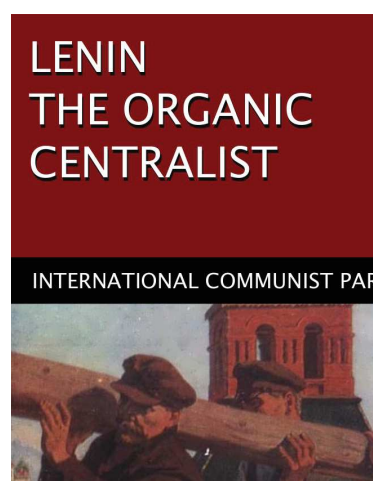
The following text and the title given to it do not call for further comment. One could not propose only an essay on the millennial oppression of women in class societies because the oppression of women can be solved only in classless and stateless society, by communism. This is how we propose to the reader a text written by several authors of different ages who, in the historical arc of more than a century, represents the organic and univocal interpretation of the "woman question" according to the tradition of and the method of revolutionary Marxism, invariant in time and space, until the day when there will no longer be a single woman crushed by the double oppression to which the regime of private property subjects her. It is the demonstration that we have nothing to invent, to discover, to propose on the question, that the general theory of the proletarian class does not already know.



An assessment of the impact of the Russian revolution, written 50 years later (in 1967-68), reasserting the international nature of the movement that made it possible and refuting the Stalinist doctrine, still prevalent at the time, that socialism can be built in one country. The study unpicks the various false interpretations of the revolution (conservative-liberal, social democratic, anarchist and Trotskyist). In the second half it analyses the evolution of the Soviet economy through war communism, the New Economic Policy, the debates within the Party after the death of Lenin and the triumph of the counter revolution under the influence of Ustryalovism; the horrors of "dekulakization" and forced industrialization, the sham socialism of the "collective farms", followed by the liberalization and steady adjustment to capitalist norms in the Khrushchev era. Already, in 1967, the post-Stalinist reforms and the growth of foreign trade pointed to the so-called "fall of communism" in 1991, made inevitable by the USSR's inability to keep up with the USA. The Communist Left was the only current that made such a thorough materialist analysis of the degeneration of the USSR, starting with its intervention at the Enlarged Executive



This text is the written report of a meeting on the topic that took place on August 29-30, 1953, in Trieste, and which appeared in issues 16-20 of Il programma comunista ("the communist programme"). At that time the destiny of the "Free Territory" was still uncertain, one of the many political and economic monstrosities of the post-war "settlement" in Europe and the world. The Trieste drama was a small event in the world picture, but nevertheless enormous for those who had to endure it. During the war, Istrian Italians had suffered ethnic cleansing at the hands of Tito's partisans, but this was kept out of mainstream information channels by the Italian Stalinists, who did not want "communism" to be associated with the persecution of ethnic Italians. These sordid contemporary events gave the International Communist Party the opportunity to present fundamental and classical Marxist theses, in a trenchant way, directly antithetical to the deformation operated on them by opportunism; deformations coming either from the Stalinist counter-revolution or from false left groups; all of them unable to appreciate factors such as those of race and nation which, although not belonging to the totality of direct objectives of the communist revolution, are historically present on the path that dialectically leads to it. In this quality, such factors draw the revolution closer



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# War maneuvers in Europe

(From *Il Partito Comunista*, no.367, September-October 2014)

Over the last weeks, the events in the regions of the South-East of the Ukraine, which have seen clashes between the Ukrainian army, supported by volunteer militias, and pro-Moscow rebels supported by divisions of the Russian army, confirm what we have been saying over recent months: that this conflict is not an internal matter of the Ukrainian state but is between alignments of imperialist states.

Let us recall recent events.

At the end of June, following the annexation of the Crimea by Moscow and the outbreak of the revolt in the Eastern regions of the country, the Ukraine signs the economic part of the agreement of association with the European Union, while Moscow and Washington seemingly try to put an end to the military actions in the Donbass. However in early July Kiev's army launches an offensive which on 5 July results in the city of Slovyansk being taken. On 17 July a Malaysian Airlines plane with 295 passengers is shot down. Each side accuses the other for the shooting down. At the end of July, the Ukrainian prime minister, Arseniy Yatsenyuk announces his resignation, denouncing the reduction of the government's parliamentary majority due to the Rada, the Ukrainian parliament, having failed to approve a series of measures requested by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to release a new loan.

According to the parties of the nationalist right, following the fall of the Viktor Yanukovich government in February, the Ukrainian people were called on to choose a new president but not a new assembly. As stated by the leader of the nationalist Svoboda party: "We believe that in the present situation a parliament such as this, which protects state criminals, agents of Moscow, and which refuses to withdraw immunity from those working for Moscow, should no longer exist".

President Poroshenko, a month after the fall of the government, is obliged on 25 August to dissolve the Rada and call new elections for the 26 October. However, in clear demonstration of the hesitation and wavering that also afflict the Ukrainian bourgeoisie, which is forever undecided about which boss to sell itself to, it is Poroshenko himself who, on 26 August, takes part in the Minsk summit where he meets Putin, and the presidents of Byelorussia and Kazakhstan, who are members of the Eurasian Customs Union, and representatives of the European Union. The meeting, it seems, did not produce a positive outcome.

Meanwhile on the battlefield, by the second half of the month of August, rebel troops, with the support of divisions of the Russian army, have conquered

more territory, pushing back and encircling Kiev's troops on several occasions.

On 29 August the Ukrainian prime minister Yatsenyuk, despite having resigned, confirms he will introduce a bill to Parliament on the Ukraine joining NATO. On 2 September the European Union announced new sanctions against Russia, on 3 September France would postpone the delivery to the Russian navy of the first of three Mistral landing craft, due in October. The same day Presidents Putin and Poroshenko hurriedly try to agree a ceasefire, which is achieved a few hours later. This fragile truce serves to gain some time in order to prevent a broadening of the conflict which would see some of the largest global military powers opposed to one another and would form the backdrop to the extraordinary summit meeting called by NATO for 4-5 September, precisely in order to consider the Ukrainian question.

A war in the heart of Europe today still seems premature, but the economic crisis is leaving increasingly less room for maneuvering and diplomatic agreements and it is pushing the various states to defend their interests by using armed force and by remaining in a state of perpetual readiness for a future armed conflict on a global scale. And this preparation is taking place not only on the military level but also in the media, by getting so called "public opinion" used to the possibility that it may happen.

Bourgeois propaganda can no longer conceal the possibility, a certainty as far as we are concerned, of a future war between imperialist states, and the tone of the current declarations over recent days proves it. Putin and Obama are exchanging reciprocal accusations and menaces in preparation for a military undertaking that will fall on the shoulders of the proletariat on each of the fronts.

According to "Il Sole 24 ore" of 2 September, four thousand soldiers from nine countries, with the support of armored vehicles and aircraft, are participating in NATO military exercises on the eastern border which will be concluded in early October. The Atlantic alliance explains that the maneuvers were initially to have been led by the United States, but it was then decided to pass them under the aegis of NATO, against a backdrop of the current effort underway to reassure the eastern countries in the face of the aggressive moves by Russia. Other military initiatives are also underway: in the Black Sea joint exercises are being held by the United States and Ukrainian navies; "The exercises, in which Spain, Canada, Rumania and Turkey are also participants, are focusing on the technical aspects of managing an international operation to maintain the security

of shipping in a region hit by a crisis". Another exercise "on a vast scale", employing 5,000 participants from the United States along with some European allies, is currently being held in the south of Germany; the exercise simulates in particular the liberation of a city. "These exercises have the objective of demonstrating that NATO is capable of discouraging and preventing aggression by Russia if any one of our allies is attacked", says USA General Frederick Hodges, in order to make even more indigestible the message being sent to the Kremlin ("Il Messaggero", 9 September).

The NATO summit, held in Cardiff and Newport on 4 and 5 September, precisely in order to take concrete measures regarding the matter of the war in the Ukraine, saw the war-mongering positions defended by the United States and Great Britain clearly prevail. The final declaration openly commits the 28 members of the Atlantic Alliance to "reverse the tendency for defense budgets to decline", an appeal openly addressed to the countries in central-southern Europe which, over recent years, due to the impact of the economic crisis, had reduced their military expenditure. The document commits all countries to bring their military expenditure up to at least 2% of their GDP, an enormous amount for the industrialized countries.

What is more, a special support fund was created for the Kiev government, ("candidate to join NATO along with Georgia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro and Macedonia, extending the Atlantic Alliance further to the east" (Manlio Dinucci, "Il Manifesto", 6 September).

The intentions of the United States had already been declared by President Obama in the speech he gave in Tallin, in Estonia, the day before: "The vision [of a free and peaceful Europe] is threatened by Russia's aggression against Ukraine. It is a brazen assault on the territorial integrity of Ukraine -- a sovereign and independent European nation. It challenges the most basic principles of our international system. Borders cannot be redrawn at the point of a gun". Obama supported the principle that "NATO's doors will remain open to all", in open antithesis with Moscow's position, which has stated, over and over again, that it would not tolerate NATO pushing missiles up to the Russian border. In short, he anticipated the final decisions made at the summit in Cardiff and Newport by declaring that a military immediate intervention force would be formed for deployment in the Baltic countries. Later in the summit it would be specified that this force of a few thousand men would have five bases/depositaries in the Baltic countries, in Poland

and in Rumania, that it would be very "reactive", and that it would maintain a continuous presence in the countries of Eastern Europe.

The NATO summits threaten, furthermore, to establish military bases in Norway (a member of NATO) and even in Finland (which isn't), a hypothesis that can only reinforce the Kremlin in its nationalist onslaughts; and it won't be the last time we hear Putin's declaration that if he wanted to he could occupy Kiev in two weeks.

Russia is however aware that it cannot allow itself to sever its economic ties with Europe nor get into an open military confrontation with NATO: It can bare its teeth, but only in order to arrive at a compromise, counting on the support of Europe and Germany in the first place, and also on the indirect protection of China, which is certainly not in favor of NATO's expansion into Eastern Europe.

Commercial and military collaboration between Russia and China has intensified over recent years. Already at the beginning of July last year the two countries had planned "Six days of maneuvers in the Gulf of Peter the Great, on which Vladivostok is situated. Joint Sea 2013, as it is known, was the biggest naval exercise ever planned by the two countries. From what has emerged, 12 Russian and 7 Chinese ships took part, plus an unspecified number of aerial combat planes. Despite this certainly not being the first time the two countries have carried out joint maneuvers, the Beijing media underlined the importance of the operations, which concluded on Wednesday 10 July: it was the first time, in fact, that China had chosen to send a military force of this size abroad 'to take part in exercises in an unfamiliar maritime area' wrote the China Daily" (Gabriele Battaglia, "Lettera 43").

To strengthen the collaboration between China and Russia, in May last year, after ten year's of negotiations, there came the announcement of a deal between Moscow and Beijing on the future supply of gas. In the May 24 issue of "Il Sole 24 Ore" we read: "the agreement -- announced by the New China agency -- was clinched during the visit of the Russian president Vladimir Putin to China, following a long phase of deadlock over the price of natural gas. The contract stipulates that Russia will supply methane to China for thirty years, at a rate equivalent to 39 billion cubic meters per annum (half of what Italy consumes), guaranteed by a yet to be built 2,200 kilometer pipeline to run from Siberia to eastern China. The deal is worth 400 billion dollars over the thirty-year period. It will begin in 2018 (...). The signing of the contract, which took place in the presence of Putin and Xi Jinping, represents an important development for Moscow which from the beginning of the Ukrainian crisis has been looking for alternative customers for its gas. Up to 2013 Europe was Moscow's main client with 160 billion cubic meters purchased,