

# AGAINST WAR AGAINST PEACE FOR THE SOCIAL REVOLUTION



The war game continues, its fanatical players reaching murderous euphoria as they move their pawns, on the one side for "freedom"—and "peace"—on the other for the "just" appropriation of the spoils of past colonial piracy—and "peace". To grandiose declarations and hymns are added the crocodile tears and eulogies of the dead child "heroes". And soon the tin crosses, the ribbons, all the bric a brac and paraphernalia reserved by the State assassins for their victims on such occasions will be dealt out ceremoniously on velvet cushions, symbolic gratification for the survivors of those who, their natural spirit of revolt extinguished, carried, used and were killed by arms in defence of a homeland that has sucked their own and their "enemies" blood for centuries.

Overnight, murder becomes legitimate, honourable, obligatory, as young men enact the sacrosanct duty of "killing, wounding and maiming people against whom they have no rancour, defending the interests of those whom, if they only paused to think for a moment, they would blow to pieces instead".

The sanguinary cult of patriotism is force-fed daily by the propaganda machine as the news headings get bigger and the jargon comes further from the depths of the

State subconscious. This cult, necessary to the general running of exploitation, comes to the fore and spreads with great alacrity during periods of legitimised murder known as wars.

That the official workers' movement is among the first and loudest to manifest this patriotic fervour causes neither surprise nor disillusion. When these aspirants to the future management of capitalist exploitation propose a smoother, more aseptic way of dealing with inter-State squabbles (negotiation, economic embargoes, etc.), it is the 'national interest' that is always at stake, never that of those whom they claim to represent, just as when they order workers to accept sacrifice and misery in the same name. That "War is the health of the State" is reconfirmed, as on both sides class divisions are transcended by those who normally make them their slogans.

Equally predictable was the reversed patriotism of the Leninists with their unconditional (verbal) support of "Argentina victims of imperialist exploitation", thus demonstrating the same interclassist logic as the fascist torturers, refusing to recognise that the exploited of colonised or "third world" States are doubly so, both by the internal and external bourgeoisie.

Although not showing

explicit signs of this patriotism, the remainder of the left and the anarchist movement could also become victims to it and are effectively functional to it so long as their analyses and proposals remain at the level they are now.

Pages fill with analyses of the "real" reasons for the war, exposé of the double-dealings and soaring profits of the arms producers, national expenditure figures, changes in international alliances between the various State mafiosi etc. Headlines and placards with slogans such as "Stop Thatcher's War Now", "Pause for Peace", "No military solution" (our italics) demonstrate the barrenness of the voices of the movement.

To have made "The War" the centre of these analyses was the first basic error, depriving them from the start of any possibility of reaching a revolutionary perspective. By accepting the State's definition of war and, consequently, that of "peace" a road is embarked upon that has no outlet in terms of liberation.

We cannot detach what the State calls war from the global project of capitalist exploitation. Our first task as anarchists is therefore that of demystifying the term, underlining what we all know: that we are living in a perpetual state of war, a war which has no national but class boundaries. Terrorism and violence is not the prerogative of the military structure, but is the underlying basis of everyday life. The casualties are not easy to find, concealed in the cold columns of government statistical reports, but a few figures show clearly that the number who fall every year on the front of exploitation proportionately far exceeds that of those fallen so far in the "war". In 1979 in Britain there were 711 recorded

## INSUBORDINATION NOW

by anarchist deserter Orazio Valastro

WE MUST DESERT THE ARMY to unmask its true nature, questioning the State's legitimacy and refusing to become accomplices and instruments of repression and the choice of death.

The army is one of the clearest manifestations of what is known as the State, instrument of coercion and social violence which represses in the name of the social order desired and supported by the bosses.

The Italian army is an example of this reality. It served for the forced unification of the peninsula under the Savoy monarchy and to control popular insurrections (elimination of banditry, the Milan massacre of 1898). From the beginning it unleashed its repressive nature, forgetting its claimed duty as "defender of the sacred frontiers" and beginning its colonial invasions (Eritrea, Libya) and the interventionist politics of the first world war. After the second world war, the greatest and most atrocious legalized genocide, armies have been used to enforce

coups d'etats (Greece 1967), to restore "order" (Czechoslovakia 1968; Poland 1970/81), or as a weapon of political blackmail (Italy, 1964; France 1968). Today therefore the existence of obligatory military service does not have the aim, as they try to make us believe, of an efficient defence of the "Nation" but maintains a purely political direction. This direction was clarified in the Atlantic Pact, signed in '49 as NATO, through which the Americans had occasion to concentrate their strength in Italy and the rest of Europe in defence of the capitalist structures of the member countries of the alliance, leaving the Italian army with the legalised task of repression within the country of any form of class struggle, any revolutionary action by the exploited and any ideology which denies authority as a social system.

The State also imposes consensus for the army and its structure as instrument of repression on the young through the

fatal accidents at the workplace, and that does not take into account the tens of thousands of fatal road accidents of people on their way to and from their places of exploitation or due to tension or failures of vehicles built to the requirements of capitalism, not safety. Still in 1979 another 632 workers' families received industrial awards as a result of deaths due to lung cancer, many caused by asbestos poisoning. Today 40,000 workers are still obliged to handle this substance, and it was estimated that in 1982 in North America 8,000 workers will die of cancer as a result of being exposed to it. Factory conditions, work pace, monotony, exhaustion, lead to hundreds of accidents every day: limbs severed, eyes lost,

progressive deafness, blindness, rheumatism and a vast variety of other occupational hazards await the great army of producers, and it is a statistical fact that some will leave home and never return.

No medals await these unknown soldiers, their deaths and deformities reach no newsreel or front page blow up. We have to seek out these war casualties from the small columns of the local press, although most go unreported. Those who, through necessity or choice, are not active participants in this army of producers run a high risk of being one of the 50,000 occupants of her majesty's prisons, or of the near 5,000 yearly suicides. The "Task Force" of Brixton and Northern Ireland (the latter 10,000 strong) continue



raiding, arresting, beating up, killing, in their respective areas of aggression.

As well as the perils of forced labour in heavy industrial production, the Argentinian workers, trade unionists and revolutionaries have had to face the junta's death squads: 20,000 victims, thousands more imprisoned and tortured by their "compatriots". To the horrors of military rule is added the misery of a soaring inflation rate, dramatically shrinking real wages and forcing workers on to the streets. March 30 saw the largest and most violent demonstration since 1975.

We cannot therefore join the flock of those who with their bleating for "peace" in the name of an idealist abstraction of human life are doing a great deal for patriotism and the interests of the boss class.

On the contrary, we must open our eyes to the real war that is being waged against all the exploited, see more clearly how the class enemies are aligned, and work out a real offensive in a libertarian class dimension. Once the struggle becomes our point of reference, no matter how confined or minoritarian it might be, the objectives are always the same: attack against the organisations and the individuals who put into act and make possible exploitation under all its forms, whether

they be missile bases, wars between States, work or the latest homicidal war, industry, "social peace".

By redimensioning our vision of the problems we no longer find ourselves hopelessly confronting tanks and guided missiles unarmed. We look to our minimal but determined resources, our classical instruments of counter-information and anti-State analyses, propaganda and direct action, all aimed at reaching the most sensitive areas of the exploited with proposals of struggle which encounter their natural spirit of rebellion. Only by overcoming the determinist obstacle within the anarchist movement which postpones revolutionary activity to infinity in the belief that things will sort themselves out in the end, and by involving ourselves directly in the war in act, and so developing concrete internationalism, will we avoid making the mistake of becoming pragmatic patriots as did Kropotkin, Grave, Malato, etc during the first "world war". The danger, and therefore the problem, might seem far off, because the "war" is far off and is so absurdly grotesque that it risks no chance of having to find justification by anarchists. But if it threatened to develop nearer our own doorsteps, would we still be as clear?

## INSUBORDINATION NOW (cont.)

obligation of military service. Before being called to military service I already had fairly clear ideas as to what the army and its real function within society is, conception which I developed through my anarchist militance. Then, finding myself like thousands of young people every year faced with the hostile reality of life in the barracks, I have chosen to refuse the role of proletarian in uniform, to refuse the obligation of military service. My act is directed towards underlining my critical attitude towards power and its repressive organisations, by denouncing the homicidal and destructive logic of the military structure and contributing to generalising the practice of desertion as struggle against the army, authoritarian appendix of the State.

In fact, the carabinieri, as branch of the army and the police, as armed structure of the State, are invested in first person with repressive action and used to strike every initiative put into act by the exploited in their attempt to reappropriate what has been taken from them, to heavily dissuade any rebellion against constituted order and to convince the rebels to return to their posts of exploitation in the factories, country and schools. These forces which defend exploitation and render it possible, often do not hesitate to assassinate the exploited in the streets and to terrorise with institutional violence: Modena 1950—demonstration against lockout—6 workers killed by the forces of order. Mussomelo 1954—demonstration because of lack of

# POLICE PROVOCATION IN SICILY

March 4, Catania, Sicily, anarchist group *Rivolta e Libertà* organised a public meeting at the Mirone Cinema along with other comrades who had formed an ad hoc committee on the theme of antimilitarism.

During the meeting anarchist comrade Orazio Valastro, who had deserted the army during military service the year before and for whom an arrest warrant was pending, had decided to turn himself in in public after making a declaration as to why, as an anarchist, he had decided to desert the army. He had chosen this road from the alternatives open to him, in order to create a moment of aggregation and a point of reference to carry forward antimilitarist and anti-State propaganda. Each of the groups present at the meeting was to participate in a debate on the role of the army and the repressive forces in general.

The days previous to March 4 were spent leafletting the schools and universities of Catania. March 3 a regional newspaper and TV carried an interview with Orazio.

On their arrival at the Mirone comrades found themselves faced with an array of police and carabinieri and the whole of the DIGOS out in force. Over 200 hundred comrades, plus journalists, cameramen, curious passers-by, had gathered. When the shutter was raised, there, standing inside the entrance was an assembly of carabinieri and police. Their presence was strongly contested by comrades who refused to enter the cinema with the police inside.

At this point Orazio, accompanied by two solicitors, began to approach the cinema. While still almost fifty yards away, he was jumped upon by two unidentified individuals and dragged into a nearby cafe. The whole crowd ran to his rescue, presuming he was the victim of a fascist attack. He was quickly surrounded by ten or a dozen thugs kicking him and pulling him by the hair. A violent scuffle followed, and eventually Orazio was dragged into a nearby poultry shop which was promptly barricaded off by a double line of carabinieri. This was the first intimation that Orazio's aggressors were police and that he had been arrested. In the scuffle another comrade, Roberto Fuzio aged 17,

was dragged by the hair into the poultry shop and handcuffed. A further contingent of carabinieri reached the scene including the whole general staff of Catania.

Leaflets containing Orazio's declaration were distributed in the street and it was unanimously decided to enter the cinema and hold the meeting as arranged, and decide how to organise in response to this police provocation. Orazio's declaration was read out and a brief debate followed. All the comrades present decided to meet that evening at the premises of *Rivolta e Libertà* to work out counter-information strategies.

Just as the meeting was about to break up (two hours after the arrests) Alfredo Bonanno, Salvo Marletta, Carmela Di Marca, Jean Weir, Turi Oteri and Orazio's companion, were taken to the carabinieri headquarters and held. A number of hours later they were invited to name solicitors and charged with: insulting behaviour and words; grievous bodily harm and attempting to procure an escape.

In the meantime the cinema was raided a second time, as were a number of adjacent houses. Orazio was transferred to Palermo military prison, Roberto to the juvenile wing of Catania prison where he was held in isolation for 10 days.

At the evening meeting the tiny rooms of *Rivolta e Libertà* were filled to capacity and dozens of comrades and sympathisers obliged to stand outside on the pavement, the work of counter-information was begun. All the schools were leafletted, as well as university refectories and the town centre. Local press coverage was for once, favourable to the anarchists and stated how the gratuitous and provocative violence of police and carabinieri had broken up what was to have been a peaceful demonstration, transforming it into a street confrontation with the forces of "order". Clearly the strategy behind this was to reduce the political content of the meeting to the level of a street scuffle, and to charge known anarchist comrades with heavy criminal offences.

IN FACT ... 6 days later, at 6 am on March 10, the home of comrades of *Anarchismo* editions was stormed by about twenty plain

clothes DIGOS and carabinieri officers brandishing machine guns and pistols. They were driven off, first to the barracks for fingerprints, photographs, etc., then to Catania prison where they were put into isolation cells. Turi Oteri (in whose name the group premises are rented) was kidnapped from his work as street sweeper in a nearby village and given the same treatment. All the above comrades were presented with formal charges sheet and arrest warrants with a list of offences making them liable to sentences of up to 10 years.

What the police and judiciary hadn't bargained for was the response of the comrades outside. The anarchists set to work right away, preparing leaflets, contacting groups, looking after what remained of the household of the arrested comrades. Nights spent running off thousands of leaflets. Mornings in front of the schools handing them out. Catania covered in graffiti, wall newspapers. A "committee against repression" is adhered to by all the forces of the left. Even the CP and trade union CGIL adhered, anxious not to let this emerging movement escape them. Radical lawyers form a defence committee, give a press conference. Each day regional radio, TV report the events, now known to the whole area. All schools come out on strike, and Roberto Fuzio's school present the judge with over a thousand signatures demanding his immediate release. He was released on Saturday, as were the two women.

Tuesday 16, about 500 comrades of all tendencies march through the streets of Catania. The route they had chosen passed in front of the prison and when they reached it the air filled with cries for freedom for those inside. Not since the early sixties had Catania seen such a demonstration in the streets, all the more significant today where the State's brutal and repressive strategy has eliminated all the space conquered by the revolutionary movement in the 'seventies.

By Wednesday, March 17, Melina, Jean, Salvo, Alfredo, and Turi have all been released. Provisional liberty is granted for Orazio on the 'attempted escape' charges, —he remains in prison awaiting trial for desertion.

drinking water—police shoot and kill three women and a man. Reggio Emilia 196—mass demonstration against the Tombroni government—5 dead.

At the same time, 4 dead in Palermo and one in Catania. Avola 1968—farm workers demonstrate—police kill two trade unionists. Battipaglia 1969—demonstration for work—police kill two workers. Milan 1970—demonstration one year after the State massacre and the murder of

Pinelli—police kill Saverio Santarelli with a tear gas canister.

No less heavy is the use of the military in situations which are difficult to control: Orgosolo 1969—shepherds are chased from the fields by firing manoeuvres; parachutists and carabinieri intervene, the village is encircled and "mopped up". Rome 1969—demonstration of 100,000 engineering workers, the Confindustria headquarters taken over by the military and surrounded by

tanks. I think these few examples will be enough to explain the true function of the Armed Forces. If I am here today it is to underline the repressive function of the State exercised against all those who—like myself and many other comrades—desert the army and are struggling for a society without exploitation and without privilege. So long as the State exists laws will exist to defend the dominant classes and their interests.