

Alternativa Libertaria

FOGLIO TELEMATICO DELLA FEDERAZIONE DEI COMUNISTI ANARCHICI

www.fdca.it

At the Antipodes

So, what number is the present conflict? The 3rd, 4th, 5th or 6th World War? Actually, none of the above. What we have now is a real Universal War, one of its kind, and nothing or no-one in the Islamic world, in any other world or in our Western civilizations can feel immune from involvement in the hostilities. This is not only because that irregular and well-camouflaged army of those who are commonly defined as the Enemies of the West can strike anywhere - it is above all because this siege mentality we are witnessing, this terrible fear masterfully cultivated by the mass media of crazed, bloodthirsty lunatics who strike out of the blue, all this is changing or serves to justify the changes in our habitual way of life. In other words it provides an alibi for an asphyxiating form of control over us which spells the end of any pretence of democratic guarantees.

The very notion of a war on terrorism provokes profound changes in the relationships between groups of people. And notice too the careful use of words: "war", not "fight". Both are forms of conflict, but of a very different nature. Fights are carried on in a variety of ways and can even be something positive. For example, you can fight for a different world, a better world. A fight does not require precise battlefronts, it does not require huge deployment of soldiers, it does not automatically require military discipline. War, on the other hand, demands all of this. It needs States and regular armies. So just why did they choose to call it a "war" on terrorism?

It seems obvious that terrorism (at least what is defined as such in the media) has its own ways of acting, ways which are totally different to those of conventional armies which have such a need for visibility that they even adopt uniforms which unmistakably identify their members and on which even hierarchical differences are evident. The more widely and easily identifiable an army's power is paraded, the more fearsome it becomes. Terrorism, on the other hand, acts with the maximum possible anonymity.

It might be an idea to examine for a moment the word terrorism, a term which is so frequently used, not to mention incorrectly and superficially. Historically, terrorism in its true sense it that policy adopted by the revolutionary government of France at the end of the 18th century: the famous Terror. By extension it includes any policy of the powers that be whereby any manifestations of dissent are repressed with violence and fear. Only recently has the term begun to be used to indicate the forms of bloody and violent revolt involving civilians being killed indiscriminately in the midst of the indistinct mass, a definition that ended up becoming the sole possible definition of terrorism in our minds. This only serves to cover up the fact that terrorism is primarily a practice of governments and States. We are dealing with a semantic shift which is by no means unimportant: it allows us to deplore the killing of 300 Ossetian children by Chechen terrorists and blithely ignore the extermination of 40,000 Chechen children by the army of the Russian State as if it were something normal. It would also be worthwhile examining closely the other word which is part of the Bush administration's watchword, to better understand both its continuous nature and (more importantly from the point of view of political analysis) its innovative nature. We need to examine the motivations that drive it and the ways in which it is carried out.

(The full text of this article is published in "Antipodi", No.3 which deals exclusively with war.)



On war, anti-militarism, peace and exploitation

Faced with the growing military occupation of civilian society (both physically and media-based) and with the spread of an aberrant conviction of a "state of necessity" for a military presence in every corner of the world in order to guarantee security (sic!), we must encourage the spread of a vigorous anti-militarist consciousness. Faced with the growth and the globalization of military alliances, we must seek to ensure the growth and continued political activity of an equally global movement, which is strongly anti-militarist and anti-war. This movement must unmask and denounce the firm link between militarism and capitalism. The FdCA therefore bases and develops its tactics on the following strategic lines:

* Wars always break out as a result of a clash between huge economic interests and geopolitical power.

Any reasons which may be given for war (anti-terrorism, humanitarian, nationalist, ethnic, religious, tribal, etc.) only serve to hide the true stakes and sow the seeds of hatred with the aim of setting the weaker, poorer classes against each other.

* Nationalism and ethnic or religious affiliation are the ideologies used ever more frequently by national States (often developing countries or "high poor" countries) and by economic-military power castes in order to obtain consensus for their protectionist economic policies.

These policies are designed to protect niche markets or the control of resources and strategic corridors as an integral part of the globalization process, paid for at great cost by the working classes.

Accordingly, fighting nationalism means

fighting capitalism;

* Militarism and the militarization of society are forms of social control which go hand in hand with nationalist ideologies. They constitute the global market for the arms trade. They open the way for imperialist interests. Fighting against militarism means fighting against capitalism.

* Anti-terrorist or "humanitarian" military interventions against various dictators and castes, or in support of warring national interests, do not lead to liberation or democracy but to a state of endemic war. Armies and military bases are semi-permanently based in war zones and in nearby countries, in order to protect the economic interests of international capitalism. Alongside this we see the growth of the hypocritical market in "humanitarian aid" and "reconstruction" with all the speculation, money-laundering and abuse of civilians that this entails. Fighting against military intervention means fighting against capitalism.

The anti-militarist struggle is part and parcel of the general anti-capitalist struggle. Accordingly, in its mobilizations against war, the FdCA places the strongest possible emphasis on the struggle against the dominant classes of any country; we do not place one people over another, neither do we promote the emancipation and liberation of any one people (taken to include all its classes) if this serves to perpetuate the class domination of a new national bourgeoisie over the usual exploited masses.



- From the "War & Anti-Militarism" motion passed during the FdCA's 6th Congress at

Butter or big guns?



On 22nd June 2004, the Italian government passed a decree extending Italy's international peace missions until 31st December 2004.

The measure contains two principal elements: the first is dedicated to the humanitarian missions of stabilization and reconstruction under the aegis of the Department of Foreign Affairs, while the second regulates the extension of these missions which are staffed by members of the Armed Forces and police. What emerges clearly is that the area of greatest interest for this country's missions is Iraq, with the allocation of €21m through a special reserve fund, directed at both the humanitarian work and the reconstruction of that Middle-Eastern country, under the direction of the Italian diplomatic representatives in Baghdad.

Under the decree, extensions are ordered for the missions in Iraq, Afghanistan, Bosnia, Kosovo and Albania, Hebron, Ethiopia and Eritrea. It should be remembered that in 2002, defence accounted for €13,665m of public spending, an increase of 8.2% on the previous year. Now, however, defence spending (which includes what is now Italy's fourth armed force, the Carabinieri) has reached €19,025m. Most of the increase is due to expenses for personnel (up by €682m, or 11.6% more than in 2001) and to investment costs, mostly on arms systems (increased by €241m, or 7.7% more than the previous year). The investment costs include the Joint Strike Fighter, 150 of which will be bought by Italy at a cost of between 20 and 30 million euro, and the new "Andrea Doria" unit which will cost around €2bn, despite being considered unnecessary the Defence Minister, Martino. To this will be added another Bill providing incentives for army enrolment, given that obligatory military service will end in December 2004.

We are in a war economy. This is a de-industrialized country with one of the most flexible and insecure workforces, where there is no investment in research or education, where public-sector employment is stagnant. The country's slim resources are ploughed into national security (by a government which says it "intends to promote the defence of the nation"), and the very concept of security is extended to include the safeguarding and "protection of national interests", as mentioned in the preparatory documents of this summer's Budget. Evidently, the Government intends, within 2006, to bring defence to 1.5% of GDP, in other words €6bn. Not bad for a country which no longer invests in anything.

Dada Knorr

www.sbilanciamoci.org ; decreto legge 10/07/2003;

ANTIPODI

Being at the antipodes can mean being upside down in the other hemisphere with respect to the dominant society; but in a round world defining just who is upside down depends on how you look at reality.

Looking at it from another point of view, being at the antipodes means having your feet firmly planted in the reality you want with respect to the world which is upside down, having lost the ability to reason properly.

Let's start looking at reality from this point of view - it might be useful along our path to the economic and social reality that we want.

Number 3 out soon
Wars

Available from: Crescita Politica Editrice
CP 1418 50121 Florence or fdca@fdca.it

We continue to receive messages of solidarity from all over Italy and even from abroad - from France, Spain, Sweden and Uruguay.

There are already over 200 signatures. In the letter below, Fabrizio thanks all those who have joined this battle for the defence of the right of expression guaranteed by the Constitution and of the right for workers to organise themselves in unions, a right which was won through struggle and the blood of generations of workers.

The solidarity that so many people in Italy and abroad have shown me in this period is incredibly moving. It is a sign that there are still those who can feel indignant when faced with similar injustices. The trial which begins on 25th November next is not only (any maybe not mainly) a trial against me, against a single worker and union representative. It is putting on trial that freedom of expression and those union rights which belong to all Italian workers.

Around this time too, Vito Belfiore, a train conductor from Ventimiglia who was fired along with 3 other colleagues from Liguria and Piedmont after taking part in the Report programme on TV, is facing a difficult legal battle in order to get his job back. But there are many, often little heard of, cases of workers and union representatives (particularly the more "difficult" ones) in industry and other sectors, who are being punished with suspensions and even dismissal, for simply speaking to the press or for vigorously exercising their union rights. In one of the messages of solidarity I received, someone used the expression "employer fascism".

I think that we are seriously running the risk of sliding (and not too slowly, either) into a regime of real employer fascism. When company rules reach the stage of prohibiting employees from speaking to the press without prior approval from their superiors, in my opinion we are witnessing nothing less than a direct attack on the constitutionally-protected freedom of expression.

When they calmly punish or fire militant workers and union reps, they are attacking union freedoms. I believe that due to the media impact which has in some way marked it, my own plight may serve to give voice to the many workers and union activists who are being persecuted in their own jobs. Workers and trade-unionists who do not have a voice. In one of the first messages of solidarity I received back in August 2003, the French comrades of the SUD-Rail union wrote bitterly: "freedom costs dear nowadays in Italy".

True, indeed. Freedom in this country costs very dear. Once again, a big thank you to every one of you.

Fabrizio Acanfora

FABRIZIO: ONE OF US

On 25th November 2004 at Rome's Civil Court, the trial will commence in the case brought by Trenitalia [Italian train company] against Fabrizio Acanfora, a syndicalist and member of the Federazione dei Comunisti Anarchici [Federation of Anarchist Communists - FdCA]. Having refused arbitration at the Provincial Labour Office, the company brought a case against Fabrizio in order to obtain recognition of the legitimacy of its disciplinary measures handed down to Fabrizio (10 days' suspension from work) in August 2003 by the regional department of Trenitalia.

Fabrizio, who is a train conductor from Genoa, had sent a letter to a national newspaper, "Il Secolo XIX", in which he demonstrated his solidarity both with the public who are forced to put up with chronically bad services and with his colleagues who work on the trains who for months have had to put up with insults in the newspapers and at work and who find no support whatsoever forthcoming from the train company.

Fabrizio, who at the time of the events was an elected union representative, was disciplined by the train company for having exercised his constitutionally guaranteed freedom of expression and for carrying out his duty as a workers' delegate.

We, the undersigned workers, citizens and public service users, agree with the contents of the letter sent on 16th July 2003. We too fight for an efficient public transport system and we fully support Fabrizio in his fight. On 25th November we will all be in the courtroom.

We will demonstrate that we have not forgotten and that we will not allow ourselves be intimidated.

We will show that by punishing one, they hit a hundred. And a hundred will reply!

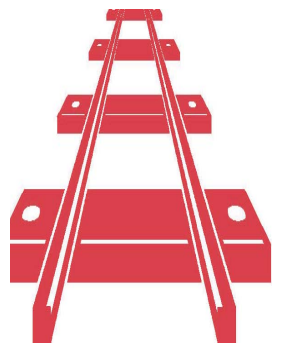
Genoa, 6th October 2004

Committee for Solidarity with Fabrizio Acanfora

- Simona Penco - Trenitalia train staff, Genoa
- Patrizia Lazzari - Trenitalia ground staff Genoa
- Elvira De Luca - Trenitalia ground staff Genoa
- Aldo Gnecco - Ferservizi Genoa
- Ernesto D'Acunto - RFI Genoa

A full list of signatories can be found at www.fdca.it/fabriziounodinoi

PER ADERIRE ALL'APPELLO
fabriziounodinoi@fdca.it



FABRIZIO'S LETTER

[Dear Mrs Forti,

In recent days I have read in your column some extremely critical readers' letters regarding the train services provided by Trenitalia SpA. The criticism expressed by these unhappy travellers is generally directed at Trenitalia and at times at the train personnel but not, and it is difficult to understand why, at the various governments, political parties and unions, the very ones who so desperately sought the dismemberment of the independent "Ferrovie dello Stato" (Italian State Railway Company -tr.), allowing such an essential public service as the railways fall victim to wild liberalization. Neither was criticism directed at the numerous executives of the Company and the FS Group who calmly lord it over the situation.] I am a train conductor based at the Train Personnel Depot at the station of Genoa Principe and an elected FILT-CGIL union representative. I travel almost every day on the Genoa-Milan line, one of the lines most frequently subjected to criticism from passengers. The problems which have been spoken of are real and travellers have more than enough reason to complain. However, the train personnel are by no means indifferent to these problems. Every day we fight against the thousands of "causes for criticism", as the Company's inefficiency is euphemistically called, and all too often we must answer personally for these, at times even facing legal problems, all in splendid isolation. If trains still travel, albeit amid a thousand difficulties and under conditions which are often unbelievable, it is largely thanks to the train personnel who share the disquiet of the passengers and who take direct risks in order to continue ensuring even minimally a public, social service while others, who do not even deign to be seen or answer openly, actively work (thanks to privatization) towards the elimination of the right of mobility of millions of citizens.

Over recent months, the train personnel of Genoa Principe have gone on strike twice in support of measures to ensure the primacy of safety in rail transport. We were demanding that the crew aboard all trains be provided with a working telephone and that the many tunnels in Liguria [the region around Genoa -tr.] be equipped in order to ensure communications between stations and trains, something which at present is not possible, with very few exceptions, except when trains are out in the open.

During the negotiations, train executives replied that they did not believe mobile phones could guarantee safety! In my opinion, only extremely conscious, responsible workers who are in no way indifferent, can, as part of their demands, place prime importance on the safety of the people they are transporting.

I would like to suggest that your newspaper calls for a public meeting between a delegation of regular train commuters, representatives of the Genoa train workers (union delegates) and the regional managers of Trenitalia in order to clear up certain misunderstandings, put an end to useless arguments and inaugurate a period of

useful relations in order to defend and improve public, social rail transport. With regards,

Genoa, 18th August 2003

The part within brackets was not published.



Let's turn the trial on 25th November next against Fabrizio Acanfora into a trial of employer fascism!

More information at: www.fdca.it www.controappunto.org

Supplement to Antipodi Magazine registered at the Tribunale di Firenze

Director:

Oreste Taliento

to contact the editorial collective:
fdca@fdca.it

Printed privately

c/o Sede Associazione Culturale

Alternativa Libertaria

Via Serravalle, 16

61032 FANO ITALY